

PROTESTANT UNBELIEF
or
RATIONALISM PAST and PRESENT

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THE MESSAGE FROM PATMOS
and
A SYLLABUS OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Dedicated to
The most beloved of all teachers,
PROFESSOR JOSEPH L. SHUNK, PH.D, D.D.

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In 1517 Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the church door in Wittenberg. This was the Fort Sumpter gun that precipitated the Reformation. During that century the Reformation spread to most of the countries in Western Europe. The greatest question discussed and settled in the Reformation was the Rule of Faith. The Roman Catholic Church had exalted the Church above the Bible. The Reformers promptly challenged this position, and established the principle for all Protestantism that the Bible, being the Word of God, is the Only Infallible Rule of Faith and Practice. This lasting benefit the Reformers conferred on the Protestant Church.

During the 16th and 17th centuries the Protestant Church was busily occupied extending its lines, repelling persecutions, and defining her doctrinal positions in the great Confessional statements, such as:

The Augsburg Confession and Apology 1530-1532.

The first and second Helvetic Confessions 1536, 1566.

The Formula of Concord published 1580.

The Articles of the Synod of Dort 1618-1619.

The Westminster Confession 1643-1649, and several minor ones.

A busy church it was during these two centuries.

At the beginning of the 18th Century the papal persecutions were much relaxed; and the doctrinal Confessions had been written, expounded, and defended. And now the Protestant Church had time and opportunity to take a look at itself and to consider, what sort of a being am I?

Rise of Rationalism

By this time certain new situations had arisen. The church, especially the Lutheran, had sadly degenerate since the Reformation. The zeal and evangelical fervor of Luther and his contemporaries were lost. The church was cold and mechanical. The ministers bawled out their discourses without interest or edification. Correct doctrine, good enough, took the place of correct living. Catechism and theological definition were required, while conversion and experiential religion were neglected. To execrate the Pope and defame Calvinism were, to many minds, sufficient for salvation.

This condition of the church was due to several causes. The thirty year's war, 1618 to 1648, too brutal and devastating for description, had left its blighting aftermath. Its horrors beggar language. Poverty, misery, neglect of family, home, and church, ensuing ignorance, depleted schools and treasuries, all combined to disrupt the work of the church, and leave a blight on the religious life of Germany.

Further, controversy over every possible religious difference was so extreme and so violent and long continued that many grew weary of the strife, and many knew not what to believe and so believed nothing. Some of these controversies were important, such as Antinomianism, but many were trivial, and served only to divide Protestantism to no purpose. A disputatious spirit was the curse of the age. The loss of practical piety was occasioned somewhat by a lack of discrimination between objective and subjective faith. The church lost the subjective in the objective, and this contributed to spiritual decline.

Prior to the 18th century the Arminians and Socinians had begun to undermine the foundations of faith held by all orthodox believers. Many of the orthodox were induced to abandon their former rigid stand, and gradually a moderate school of theologians began to compromise with the enemy, and eventually the vitals of Christianity began to be questioned: its evidence, reality of divine revelation, truth and authenticity of the gospels, validity of miracles, truth of prophecy, etc. But the development of this unbelief is yet to be traced.

Pietism had its rise in the 17th century. Spener (ob. 1705) was its reputed founder. It arose as a protest against the coldness of the orthodox church in Germany, severely attacked the church for its spiritual deadness, and was attacked in turn. It saved the day for genuine religion in the early part of the 18th century. It had something to say about sin and salvation, regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and empirical religion. It preached a fervent, enthusiastic, devotional and aggressive Christianity, most of which had been dropped into oblivion by the orthodox church. It would be wrong to imply that Pietism was not orthodox: it was strictly orthodox; but these were names that distinguished the one phase of Christian life from the other. And later when unbelief attacked both, the fundamental agreement of the two was recognized and acknowledged. The two sparring bodies were found at length to rest on the same foundation. They soon came to face a common enemy and to join hands in a common conflict. After Spener died in 1705, Francke became the leader of Pietism. He was Professor in the University of Halle, which long remained the headquarters of Pietism. From this school of evangelism there went out more than 6,000 men in a period of 30 years to preach a message of vital Christianity to Europe.

But Pietism lacked interest in advanced scholarship; neglected and even deprecated the study of science and philosophy as harmful to Christian faith. This feature was unfortunate in the face of a rising intellectualism, and contributed at length to the decline of Pietism, though its beneficial influence never has been entirely lost to the world.

Francke died in 1727 while the Wolffian philosophy with its trend to Rationalism was getting its grip on German thought. Baumgarten followed Wolff in the University chair at Halle. He favored the introduction of Deism into Germany, and trained Semler for his destructive work.

And by the middle of the century a new generation of professors had succeeded who lacked the spirit and fervor of their predecessors, and Pietism sank into deplorable decline.

Another thing that contributed to the growth of Rationalism was the Wolffian philosophy. Wolff (1679-1754) was an earnest Christian. He was disturbed by the many and bitter controversies over doctrine. He wondered if some conclusive proof might not be found that would be so convincing as to end all controversy. He learned that mathematics was an exact science, that its conclusions were indisputable. He conceived the idea of applying mathematical proof to the doctrines of Christianity. Accordingly he studied mathematics with a view to applying its method to Christian doctrine. Leibnitz, who really originated the philosophy, went so far as to try to demonstrate the Trinity and the significance of the Lord's Supper mathematically. We are not to assume that the proof was by algebraic equations, but by syllogistic processes.

The principle being assumed that the doctrines of Christianity were rationally demonstrable, did not end there. The corollary of this principle was this: that if certain doctrines were *not* demonstrable by reason, they need not be believed. To many minds this left a large residuum in the doubtful class, and led to their rejection.

But worse and more of it. Certain minds raised the question, if the doctrines of Christianity are demonstrable by reason then what is the need of any revelation? That is just what Deism asserted, out of which rationalism grew, viz., that no supernatural revelation is needed, and one has been given; that reason, working on the facts of natural religion, is all-sufficient for human guidance. In practical philosophy Wolff separated ethics from religion, and based ethics on reason. Thus throughout, a rationalistic complexion marked his philosophy, and the Wolffian school of theology became the history of dissolution of the orthodox system. Both the orthodox and the Pietists were alarmed at the drift. Leibnitz' doctrine of pre-established harmony first aroused the opposition of the Pietists. Besides, the eternal attraction of monads to one another seemed a dangerous heresy. The Biblical doctrine of Creation, and the doctrine of human freedom seemed to be imperiled by these theories.

Wolff taught at Halle, the seat of Pietism, from 1710 till 1723, when he was dismissed at the instigation of the Pietists who were alarmed at the encroachment of unbelief. But when Frederick the Great came to the throne in 1740, with his obsession for infidelity, he restored Wolff to his chair. He continued to teach at Halle till he died in 1754. But by this time the Rationalist Semler had been elevated to the chair of philosophy and theology in the University that had been the seat of Pietism; and sad to say, the school of evangelism became at length the Seminary of Rationalism. And by 1840 even Atheism appears in the *Year Books* of Halle.

The evil effects of this Philosophy were soon seen in the pulpits of the land. The effort to demonstrate everything made preaching cold, stiff and pedantic, and sometimes ridiculous. The warm, earnest appeal of Pietism that stirred the heart and turned the life Godward, gave place to unedifying, logical hair-splitting, - or illogical as the case might be. It must be remembered that it was the clergy and not the laity that were the agents of the great declension. So today the rank and file of the Church is true to the faith. It is the ministry that has introduced and promoted the current Modernism.

Rise of Deism

Another movement that culminated in the unbelief of the 18th century was English Deism. It arose about the middle of the 17th century. Its reputed founder was Lord Herbert of Cherbury (ob. 1648), friend of Grotius, and saturated with French skeptical thought. Deism proposed to present to the world a view in contrast to Atheism and Pantheism on the one hand, and uncritical Theism on the other hand. It was naturalistic if not pure naturalism. Design recognized

God as Creator, enjoined reverence for such a Being, advocated practical morality, and believe in divine recompense in this world and the next. But the personal God who made the world never intervenes in its affairs; He leaves the universe to the control of natural laws. Accordingly all miracle was ruled out, prayer useless, and revelation and atonement denied and repudiated. Deism's five points were, Deity, Reverence, Repentance, Morality, and Recompense.

The earlier Deists, Morgan, Tindal, Hobbes, *et al.*, were serious men and dealt with weighty subjects, with such learning as their time afforded. Many questions had arisen about the Bible, as yet unsolved, *e.g.*, relation of the Old Testament to the New, questions of biblical criticism, various readings, fulfillment of prophecy, apparent discrepancies, reason and revelation, whether revelation was necessary and cognizable, ethnological problems, comparative religions, how the *lex naturae* developed into the claim of a supernatural revelation, etc.

Matthew Tindal (ob. 1733) in his work, *The Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature*, produced the standard text-book of Deism. Starting with Locke's (ob. 1704) proposition of the identity of the truths of revelation with those of nature, he adduces a new array of arguments in support of that position.

Morgan followed Tindal in his *The Moral Philosopher*. And Henry Dodwell finds that the only proof proceeds from a mystic inner enlightenment, almost anticipating Schleiermacher a hundred years later.

The Deists marshalled all their learning against the authenticity of the Bible and a supernatural revelation. But the sober-minded English people never largely embraced this infidelity. It was too apparent that if God made the world with such evident care from the deepest research of the microscope to the loftiest sweep of the telescope, that it was irrational to suppose that He would not care for the world He had made, nor preserve it and rule it with the same meticulous scrupulosity. The logical, inflexible supernaturalism of Paly (ob. 1805) was considered as the final settlement of these long conflicts.

But before that occurred the serious Deism of the early years had degenerated into the scurrilous, blasphemous school of Bolingbroke (ob. 1751). Now ridicule and light wit superseded serious argument. But at this point the Deism of England began to develop into the Atheism of France and the Rationalism of Germany. They were all fruits of the same root, with minor differences in different lands.

French Infidelity

Just then came to England, in 1726, the young, witty, profligate Francois Arouet, known to history as Voltaire (1694-1778), and sat at the feet of Bolingbroke and rank in his ribald infidelity. He conceived the idea of making himself famous by introducing the Deistic philosophy into France. He succeeded beyond his expectations. The new infidelity caught and raged like wildfire. Soon all France was in the grip of it.

Then followed the combination known as Encyclopedists, Diderot, d'Alembert, Montesquieu, Helvetius, Rousseau, von Holbach, La Mettrie, Voltaire. The Encyclopedists proposed to arrange and present all human science in one grand work. So that if civilization became lost to the world all worth-while knowledge would be preserved therein. Such a work well executed would have some good points, but no so in this case. The *Dictionary Universal* was written from the standpoint of the current infidelity, and some of it very extreme. The first two volumes appeared in 1751. By this time Deism had proceeded to Atheism, and naturalism to Materialism.

The *System of Nature* is supposed to have been written by von Holbach; and it goes far beyond anything written by Voltaire. Voltaire according to the cult of Deism, believed in a God and immortality despite his profane and ribald mockery of revelation and Christianity in general. But in the *System of Nature* God is not regarded as a personal Being. His control of the universe is denied, and everything is ascribed to the rankest naturalism. According to Helvetius virtue is nothing but the habit of so ordering our acts that they will be to the advantage of the great number – a purely utilitarian ethic.

Germany

The Deism of England became Infidelity and Atheism in France, passed into Germany and is known as German Rationalism. Frederick the Great was brought up in his father's strict orthodoxy; but was the opposite of what his father hoped and intended. In early life he almost worshiped Voltaire whose books and portrait he kept before him in his study. When he came to the throne in 1740 he restored Wolff to his chair in Halle University, and invited Voltaire to come to Germany, and had him for his daily companion. The coterie of wits and literary lights who gathered at the royal table was soon inoculated with the virus of Voltaire's Deism. The result was that infidelity spread through Germany with amazing rapidity, promoted by the influence of the royal court. Voltaire and Frederick encourage each other in their efforts to exterminate Christianity. Both wished that they might live to see the strangled thing buried to rise no more.

The military successes of Frederick gave him great influence, and both his sword and pen promoted infidelity, for he could use the pen as skillfully as the sword. He wrote to d'Alembert that he had never lived under the same roof with religion. He replaced orthodox professors and pastors with free-thinkers; and dictated faith to Berlin and to Europe. Both Frederick and Voltaire, in true Deistic fashion, held indeed to the existence of a Supreme Being, but played their game by ridicule of the Pietists and Orthodox, together with what they called unwarranted assumptions and arguments.

The pulpits of Germany were sadly changed. Form preaching regeneration, justification by faith, saving grace and the kingdom of God, they discoursed on virtue, honor, freedom, toleration, manhood, human rights, etc.

With Rationalism, as with present-day Modernism, it was the clergy rather than the laity who drifted into unbelief. But the evil results were seen everywhere, in laxity of morals, and in lack of responsibility and bumptiousness of the rising generation, and in the blasphemous denunciations of Christianity. This continued through Fredericks's long reign of 46 years, and longer. But not even Frederick and Berlin could long tolerate Voltaire. Scandals and difficulties grew apace, and Voltaire, to preserve a whole skin, spent the last twenty years of his long and evil life near Geneva. He died at Paris in 1778.

Affects Learning

The wave of Rationalism advanced through several well-defined spheres, viz.: 1, Biblical Criticism and Theology; 2, Periodical literature; 3, Educational systems; and 4, Philosophy.

First, Biblical Criticism and Theology.

The time was ripe for historical and exegetical investigation. Many critical questions were unsettled, and some untenable positions were held and defended. The inspiration of Hebrew vowels points was defended by scholars none too orthodox on other points. Various readings had never been much investigated. The test, the history of the Bible, its formation, the nature of inspiration, the relation of reason to revelation, and many such questions called for new study.

The facilities for settling some of these questions had not been abundant. It was painful to some to see the Bible subjected to the scalpel like a corpse in the dissecting room.

The results at length only established the truth more firmly, but at first many were unsettled in their faith; and scholarly criticism was accompanied by unwarranted attacks on revelation itself. The question was not always, what is the text, and what does it say? but whether the Bible itself, to which Protestant theology had always made its appeals, was worthy of belief, or was an enemy to the human race. The drift was decidedly away from the authenticity of the Bible.

Wettstein was a pioneer in the field of textual criticism. He spent many years of his life furnishing a corrected text of the New Testament, which was published in 1751 and has been recognized by scholars as a worthy accomplishment.

Ernesti, professor at Leipzig, founded a school whose ground principle was to interpret the Bible according to its literal verbal sense, not yielding to personal or partisan prejudice, nor to allegorizing fancies, nor philosophical bias. In this he was right. But be it remembered that the Reformers had aimed at the same thing. It was a reversion to the principles of the Reformers, however much it had been lost sight of in the intervening time. But *Ernesti* was not always true to his basic principle and sometimes indulged in severe strictures on the subject-matter of revelation after the manner of sceptical Rationalists.

Semler, born in 1725, was reared among the Pietists from whose good influence he never escaped; happily making his life a strange contrast to his destructive doctrines. He was educated at Halle under Baumgarten, who prepared him for his disintegrating work. In 1752 he was elected to the chair of theology at Halle; and with this the reign of Pietism ended and the reign of Neology began.

Semler is called the father of Rationalism. The drift had begun before his day, but he gave it vogue, and contributed some distinctive features. One principal postulate was the distinction between belief and life. He sought to show how one might have religion without believing what had always been included in Christian faith. How little can a man believe and still be a Christian? This was the line of his inquiry. There was big danger in this line of procedure. It recalls Francis L. Patton's famous sermon head, "The if of minimizing Rationalism."

The same question, raised by Marcus Dods some 45 years ago, created a gale in the Free Church of Scotland. How little can a Christian believe? Can he dispense with the Deity of Christ, the truthfulness of the Bible, and the Atonement and still bear the name of Christian? All this discussion increased unbelief in *Semler's* day, and in our day.

The Auburn Affirmationists have declared certain basic doctrines of Christianity unessential, among which are the truthfulness of the Scriptures, the substitutionary atonement, and the resurrection of Christ. And they still maintain membership in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and are exalted to high position therein. This reproduces the methods of *Semler* and his times.

Further, *Semler* was the father of the Accommodation Theory, by which new meanings were read into old phraseology, *e.g.*, Christ's oneness with the Father was taken in a Pantheistic sense, *i.e.* God is in Christ just as He is in all men and all things. Incarnation too is but Pantheistic evolution. This accommodation scheme is gravely questionable, because when carried to a certain point it leads to a two-faced use of words and so to hypocrisy.

Semler held both Testaments to be developments and not inspired in the traditional sense, and not having the authority previously ascribed to them. He also narrowed the gap between Christianity and non-Christian religions, and embraced them all in the divine cosmic plan.

Semler's life was morally commendable, a left-over of his Pietistic training. The blighting effect of his teachings was seen in other and later lives. It is doubtful if Semler was a great scholar, but he possessed a wide influence. Semler was seemingly a Pietist and a Rationalist at the same time, and was therefore an enigma. Neither friend nor enemy could quite reconcile Semler with himself. He died in 1791 and left his negative criticism as an evil heritage to Germany. As the century advanced and Rationalism developed, criticism became more and more abusive and blasphemous.

Reimarus (ob. 1768) regarded Christ and the Apostles as imposters and tricksters who induced persons to feign themselves blind, deaf, dumb, lame, etc., and pretended miracles which never happened; that the disciples stole the body of Jesus and put over the story of the resurrection on a credulous public. His son revealed that Reimarus was the author of the Wolfenbuttel fragments of which we shall speak later.

Lessing (1729-1789) was the son of a Lutheran minister. In boyhood Lessing was a phenomenon. In school what was hard for others was play to him. His teacher said: "This is a horse which must have a double amount of provender. We shall not be able to keep him here much longer." His parents designed him for the ministry, but Lessing had no inclination that way, but devoted himself to literature and drama. He attended university at Leipzig and Berlin, and gathered around him Deists, free-thinkers and such sort. He was very thoroughly acquainted with all the doctrinal positions of the church, even more so than many who believed and taught them. It was his delight to propound difficulties and paradoxes, involve his opponents in confusion and laugh at their discomfiture.

While librarian at Wolfenbuttel he edited the Wolfenbuttel fragments six years after their reputed author Reimarus was dead. The publication of these Fragments raised a general commotion among religious people. Lessing found difficulty in getting a publisher; and afterwards was forbidden to publish anything on religious matters without official sanction, though he refused to obey.

In the Fragments the Apostles are regarded, not as imposing on us a mythical tale as Strauss later represented, but as men engaged in a secret plot. The aim of Jesus was, so said, to reform Judaism, and in defiance of the Roman power to establish an earthly Messiahship. When this plan failed and Christ had perished on the cross, the disciples gave it a spiritual significance, and invented the story of the Resurrection, and imposed it on the converts of that day. The stories of the Resurrection were regarded as contradictory; the evangelical history as a cool, deliberate deception, and the New Testament as generally unauthentic.

Lessing was a forceful dialectician, vigorous and assertive in debate, but not always fair. Lessing had great controversies, especially with Pastor Gotze, and charged Gotze with untrue and absurd positions. It was supposed that Lessing was much superior in debate; but we observe that such claims are usually made in debates between believers and unbelievers as, e.g., between Huxley and Gladstone and between Darrow and Bryan.

Lessing had no positive religion. He professed a belief in revelation, but as a disciple of the Accommodation Theory, he meant merely a constantly progressive development of God's plan in the education of the human race. He also distinguished between the Christian religion and the religion of Christ. The latter was a life or spirit within the heart, and neither stood nor fell with the gospel. The truth of religion, he held, had nothing to do with historical facts, and true religion would remain if the bible were lost and forgotten.

This was but walking in Semler's steps. Lessing could say some things on both sides of the question, but his influence was decidedly antagonistic to Christian faith. To reject the letter and profess to retain the spirit is contradictory, and ends in the destruction of Christianity. It has

been well said that the Christian religion stands or falls with the Bible. The religion of Protestantism is the religion of the Book.

Bahrdt was the last ditch of Rationalistic blasphemy and moral degradation in the ranks of professedly religious teachers. He labored as preacher, professor and author but the aim of his life was money, sensual indulgence, and defamation of the Scriptures. He studied theology at Leipzig, was professor of philosophy at Erfurt, and taught some time at Worms, published a translation of the New Testament, and produced considerable literature, his letters on the Bible being quite notorious. He strove to conceal his infidelity, when it suited him, by a show of piety. He writes:

One needs only to pronounce the name of Jesus very often, and with a very solemn tone to convince the crowd he is sound in the faith. So I did what prudence dictated and preached a sermon very full of Jesus, as the old ladies say. (His egotism is thus expressed.) I looked upon Moses, Jesus, Confucius, Socrates, Luther, Semler and – myself as the instruments of Providence – through which he is working for the welfare of man.

After giving lectures on morality he became the dispenser of wine and beer in a tavern at Halle. Even Semler rebuked him, on whose protection he had fondly counted. An imperial edict forbade his exercising any clerical function in Germany. Having been a patron of brothels, with the most licentious, he died the usual death of a libertine. He was infidelity gone to seed, the natural end of unbelief. But the infamy of his life was soon forgotten, and his teachings remained to corrupt the public mind in the succeeding generations; for he had his followers where his unbelief had permeated the German church.

The second sphere of Rationalistic invasion was that of Periodical Literature. The most powerful organ of its class was the *General German Library*, the avowed mouthpiece of infidelity conducted by Nicolai and a staff of 130 editors. It first appeared in 1765, and enjoyed long life and exercised wide influence. The clergymen of the day soon responded to the current literature; and doctrinal preaching was supplanted by a lighter kind. People heard little religious instruction, little of sin, redemption, justification, and conversion; but more of duties to neighbors, families, care of health, industry and sociological advice.

Preaching of good morals took the place of the underlying principle of Christian faith, and the grace of God. Not that preaching of morals is wrong, for morality is essential to religion, but a changed emphasis may starve the root that bears the fruit. This was the tendency of the times, and preaching ran too frequently into superficiality and frivolity.

Nicolai and his popular literature joined hands with all other sceptical forces in spreading infidelity far and wide. The critical forces professed great regard for truth and honesty. How open minded they were! How solicitous for facts! Such earnest seekers after truth! How humane and considerate in delivering mankind from superstition and tyranny! But if there were popes to be found in human affairs, the popes of that day reigned in the domains of literature and education. This well illustrates the illiberality of liberalism then and now.

The third sphere of Rationalistic development was in the systems of education. Some improvement in educational methods was desirable; but not exactly what happened. Hitherto education had been almost exclusively the function of the church, and too narrow in its sphere. Education had looked almost entirely toward theology, and the clerical profession. The religious education of youth was mostly confined to the Catechism and theological definitions. The fathers had thought, and rightly, that the fundamentals could not too early be impressed on the child's mind. Their method was to stock the mind with religious truth. And theological preparation

had the virtue at least of education in the ancient languages, though deficient in science and general literature.

But now a great change was to take place in method, objective, and agencies. The church was to be stripped of her exclusive privilege. The aim was to divorce education from religion and the church, and make it serve the world. It was to be moved own from a positively Christian basis to a so-called philanthropical one, and to lead to practical, every-day requirements – what we call *ad hockness*. Of what use then were the ancient languages? So it was assumed.

But after the educational systems had gained their independence they turned their batteries against the Church. Living should no more be directed by the church, but by the schools. The new method was not so much to instruct the mind as to draw it out. Education was not filling the mind with the accumulated wisdom of ages but to develop it from within. By this method the new system dug its own grave.

The pioneers in this new method were Basedow, Salzmann, Campe, and later Pestalozzi. *Basedow*, a pupil of Reimarus (enough said), not suited by education and taste for theology, started his career as a teacher. He made his teaching interesting, and soon won applause as an educational writer. He was a violent antagonist of the old theology. He founded a school to test and propagate his educational ideas. A prime object with him was to exclude all religious teaching. He assumed the worth and dignity of human nature whose innate propensities awaited development. This was quite flattering to the natural man. Human nature was not evil, but essentially good, whose impulses needed not repression but expression.

Basedow's system was continued by his pupils Campe and Salzmann and others who established schools elsewhere and continued the anti-religious education. Salzmann would rather have his son rob a bird's nest than learn a catechism. Old catechisms disappeared and new ones took their place, but soon were found to be more tedious and less practical than the old. Much protest was made against children committing verses and theological statements which they did not understand, forgetting that a day would soon arrive when such mental furnishing would make them intelligent, and enrich their lives.

Pestalozzi also opposed what was called the corrupt Christianity of memory and formulas, or the paper-science, as he called it. But he had no well-defined faith, and never attempted to make Christianity rational. He was not sufficiently interested, and wished rather to be what is called practical, not deeming religious knowledge a practical thing. However, he attained wide influence at length after all the ups and downs of his checkered life and the misfortunes that overtook him.

But this educational tangent destroyed itself, and it became the sober conclusion of thinking men that religious education is better than education with religion left out. The principles of this new system were at length grafted on home training. Children were not to be taught, they were to be drawn out. And the consequences!!! Instead of the former prudence and restraint there developed a jocose levity, and lack of respect for superiors.

A universal superficiality followed, and a premature skepticism among youth. Serious reading was replaced with frivolous fiction, and earnest purpose in life with butterfly existence. Children knew more than their parents. Juvenile impulse was given free rein. Even the impertinence of youth was considered lovely. Was it not the blossoming of innate nature? Impudence and dissoluteness, which appeared in a very glaring manner and continually increased in Pestalozzi's schools was looked upon as youthful love of liberty. The educational systems sowed the wind and the public reaped the whirlwind.

A fourth field invaded by unbelief was that of Philosophy. We have already referred to the Wolffian Philosophy with its incipient Rationalism. Later in the century came Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, by reputation the strong men of the modern era.

Kant (1724-1804) appeared in contrast to the empiricism of Locke, and the sensationalism of Hume. By stressing the innate powers of the human mind, overlooked by his predecessors, Kant wrote a new chapter in the history of modern Philosophy.

But the immediate effect of Kant's philosophy was to support Rationalism, because he reduced religion to morality. It might have had the opposite effect if the age had been disposed to give due weight to his insufficiency of the speculative reason to reach metaphysical certainty. But the age worshiped reason and saw only its favorite side. Kant designed, in the main, to curb the illicit exercise of reason; but his failure to indorse the great doctrines of our faith, because revealed, threw him on the side of the Rationalists.

But Kant's philosophy more directly led to Idealism because, first, he taught the subjectivity of time and space. If space is subjective, it follows inevitably that all things in space are also subjective. And, second, his phenomenalism. If substance is the unknown support of phenomena, then it seemed to Fichte that the unknown might be removed, and the substantial reality of matter denied. This Fichte proceeded to do, and landed in Idealism. And, third, Kant over-stressed the powers of the mind, rightly as they needed some stressing, and made phenomena too much dependent on the mind. His a priorism was carried too far. Fichte took the farther step and made the mind creative, and reached the last ditch of Idealism, where the world was only a mental conception. Thus Kant was the father of 18th century Idealism.

Fichte was Kant's favorite pupil. He made the mind creative both of the world and God, and declared that the moral order of the universe is God, and there is no other God. But while Fichte made the mind creative he still preserved the distinction between subject and object, logically necessary. The Ego sets a non-Ego. Of this non-Ego, man knows only that it is the contrary of Ego. It is nothing which has an independent existence out of our minds, nothing material or having extension in space.

Schelling followed Fichte. His system was called Philosophy of Nature, the Philosophy of the Absolute, or the Philosophy of identity. Fichte had at least preserved subject and object. Schelling identified them and landed in extreme Pantheism. His was indeed the Philosophy of Identity. Men felt the attraction of this philosophy. To feel that the same life that is in me throbs in the distant star, the cerulean sky, the waving forest and the ripening, gold harvest – to feel that I am one with the pulsating life of the mighty universe, has its appeal. But when sifted how empty it is! No intelligent God, no personal Being above and beyond, no loving Father; only blind force, relentless fate, and no immortality but to sink into the unconscious abyss from which all things involuntarily arose. Schelling made his appeal, and some were enthused for a while, till they were disillusioned; but Pantheism has always had an appeal to some minds and a tinge of it still marks some forms of unbelief in the present day.

Hegel, though five years his senior, followed Schelling in his philosophical productions. There seems to be little agreement as to what Hegel's philosophy was, if indeed he knew himself. The present writer is convinced that it was strongly Pantheistic; but this Hegel himself denied. However, Hegel's was an Idealistic Pantheism and puts mind at the beginning of the development instead of at the end. But Hegel sinks all individual existence in the universal. The individual object is unreal and illusory.

After his death his followers divided into three schools, right, center, and left. The Right held Hegel to be orthodox, the Center were middle-of-the-roaders, and the Left were rabid Rationalists. To the extreme left belonged David Strauss, of whom we shall speak later. What Hegel's positions was it is difficult to tell. He decried both reason and feeling, and exalted

authority and thus seemed to favor the orthodox; but the unbiased thinker concluded that Hegel's orthodoxy was not very serious. It is certain at least that his Trinity was not in accord with Athanasius, nor with the Confessions, nor with the Bible. Hegel was an enigma then, and is an enigma still; but it is evident that whatever his philosophy was, it was not the Christian Weltanschauung.

Defenders of the Faith

As the century wore on there were some strong defenders of the faith. These were not always clergymen, *e.g.*, Euler a mathematician, and von Haller a Swiss physiologist. These men immortalized themselves by their strong defense of Christian truth. So also on the clerical side Pastor Gotze; and John Albert Bengel in the first half of the century. Bengel was superior in keenness to any theologian of his time, a man of unceasing industry and a forcible preacher. Germany owes Bengel a lasting debt for scholarship and healthful influence. He did not indeed stem the tide which no man could stem, but he kept alive a healthy religion in a critical time; not a strict creedalist, but wise in his moderation.

Then as now there were many middle-of-the-roaders, men who compromised with unbelief, or pared down their testimony to suit the spirit of the age; *e.g.*, Zollikofer, Teller, *et al.* But the results of these half-way measures and men were far from satisfactory. They provided an easy pathway by which many drifted to Rationalism, and in the end they aided skepticism more than they cured it.

The question has been raised in our day whether there is any middle of the road. Are we not for God or against Him? Upholding His truth or destroying it? The man who habitually votes with the Modernists deserves the name, no matter what he may profess.

Reaction

Towards the end of the century a reaction came. The Rationalists and the half-way men had made good use of the proverbial rope. The death of Frederick the Great marked the turning point. This was in 1786. Frederick William II issued an edict rebuking the prevalent blasphemous propaganda, calling for a revival of the old orthodox faith, and forbidding the preaching of infidelity. Semler approved; Bahrdt railed and scoffed. The edict was not immediately successful. But what a royal edict could not effect, the mighty tide of public sentiment could and eventually did, though some weary decades ensued and some of the bitterest attacks were yet to be withstood.

The new era that dawned may be called the epoch of subjectivism, and the name that tops the list that of Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Schleiermacher was trained in youth among the Moravians, and they at first were subjectivists. Bengel brings the charge that in Zinzendorf's belief all religion was narrowed down to the feelings; that the great questions of duty are determined by the feelings alone. Schleiermacher had also drunk in the philosophy of Schelling, with whom he was a contemporary if not a protagonist. Thus early training, education, association, philosophy, and tendency of the age all combined to make Schleiermacher a subjectivist. In a speech at Barby he congratulates the Moravians that he had learned his mysticism from them which in later years attained its full development.

Schleiermacher was largely instrumental in supplanting Rationalism with Subjectivism, but it is a question if the cure wasn't worse than the disease. One can reason with a Rationalist because he recognizes reasoning as a legitimate process. But subjectivism, like Relativity, is out of the reach of argument. Subjectivism is subject to no law. It may assert anything out of the

quagmire of its own imagination. Subjectivism repudiates the word of God and substitutes itself. Practically all the impostors in the world have fallen back on their subjective claims.

Schleiermacher based his whole theology on a feeling of dependence on God. In opposing Deism he stressed God's immanence until his language parallels that of the Pantheists. In opposing Rationalism he turns from reason to feeling as the rule of faith, true to his Moravian training. He was accused of Pantheism and not without color. He published his *Addresses on Religion* in 1799. In them neither a personal God, nor personal immortality found a place. On the contrary there are passages in which the all, the universe, takes the place of a supreme personal Being; and it seems to be the highest human aim to be absorbed in the One and All. There was evidently a definite Pantheistic strain in his sentiments, though he could scarcely be called a pantheist at least in his later life; and he seemed to affiliate more with Jacobi than with Schelling.

But he turned away from the Deistical and Pantheistic conceptions, and just as really from the orthodoxy that made the Bible the rule of faith, and founded his Glaubenslehre on feeling. This obviated the necessity of debating the pros and cons of faith in the arena of dialectics, an easy refuge but a dangerous one as time has proved. Schleiermacher turned men's minds away from debate to contemplation and some good ensued from the changed attitude. And when Schleiermacher closed his eyes in 1834 he left Germany with a changed outlook; debate was not all ended, and some of the most subtle and dangerous unbelief was yet to come. The turn to orthodoxy was not all due to Schleiermacher; but because Deism and Rationalism had run their course, and proved unsatisfying to the heart, and also destructive of morals.

Recently a Presbyterian Seminary President, in an otherwise excellent article, has deprecated some criticism of Schleiermacher, and cited Charles Hodge's commendation of his devotional habits. Of course devotional habits are worthy of approval, but Dr. Hodge would be the last man in the world to o.k. Schleiermacher's subjectivism. The present Modernism is another chapter of subjectivism with a strain of Pantheism, which is ever apparent. Chicago has a Divinity Professor who identifies God with the laws of nature and scoffs at the supernatural. This out-Semlers Semler at Halle. What sort of a ministry will go out from such an institution?

Schleiermacher was far from being orthodox according to our view, but became more so as life advanced. He disclaimed any great authority for the Old Testament, denied the inspiration of the law and the historical books, cast some doubt on miracles, had defective views of the Trinity, held that Christ must be judged by us, not so much by the accounts of his life, as by his relation to us as Redeemer and Saviour, substituting experience for historical testimony. He discarded, as unnecessary to saving faith the Virgin birth, Resurrection, Ascension, and return of Christ to judge the world; and regarded the Holy Ghost as the common spirit of the Christian Church. These were his defects. Better recognize some things as essential to the truth of Christianity, than to deny their essentiality to saving faith. Who will say how much or how little is necessary to saving faith?

But Schleiermacher did great good by bringing into prominence man's moral and emotional nature. In the reign of Rationalism men forgot that they had hearts. They were nothing but thinking machines, and religion was based on rational demonstrations. It came almost as a revelation that besides heads and hands and feet, we are possessed of a heart, a conscience, and a consciousness. This new turn to religious life broke the hold of rationalism, or at least was a leading element.

But Schleiermacher was as one-sided as the Rationalism which he opposed. Man is a unity, He is not reason; he is not feeling; he is both, and more. The feelings cannot acquiesce in what the reason rejects, and religion must be both rational and emotional.

Subjectivism, whether in the 19th century or the 20th, which array the spirit against the letter, regards Christianity as a vague, undefined, and indefinable something which defies definite expression, ever changing, never settled. The Fundamentalist believes something, knows what he believes, and settles his creed by a "Thus saith the Lord."

New Dangers

After the spell of Rationalism had been broken other assaults on the Christian faith followed, more subtle and dangerous than before, though not so widely accepted.

David Strauss (1808-187), Hegelian left-winger, was in his student days much taken with the teaching of Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Hegel. Afterwards he taught Hegel's logic, and the history of modern philosophy at Tubingen. In 1835, at the age of 27, Strauss published his *Leben Jesu*. It created a sensation. It was called the earthquake of the 19th century. It met with an amazing popularity and sale, was read everywhere, and translated into other languages. It was brilliant in literary style and novel in content. It took the view that the gospels were not frauds as Reimarus had claimed, but that they were myths. The writers of the gospels had before them the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, and ascribed to Jesus the words and deeds which should have been his according to the prophecies; but often they added original ideas. So the gospels grew by gradual addition.

The mythical conception was derived from Hegel's philosophy of religion. Philosophical ideas are preceded by mythical presentations which are comparatively inaccurate, but are true to the intellectual state of the myth-maker. But even if the myth-maker resorts to fabrication, it is accepted and passed on sincerely by the multitude as being in harmony with their religious feelings and ideas. The myth requires time to develop, hence the gospels, according to Strauss, were not all written by eyewitnesses, but were the accumulating growth of many years.

This polyglot composition would of course lack harmony. No harmony could be expected. The alleged discrepancies are therefore natural, and need not be accounted for by any labored effort at adjustment. They are just what we would expect from different authors and different times. This conception of the gospels leads to the strange conclusion that the church created Christ and not that Christ created the church. There were of course the facts of his real existence as a man, a life of conflict with the officials, and an ignominious death, but all the wonderful and miraculous was only embellishment.

In 1864 Strauss wrote a new life of Jesus which is thought to be more destructive than the first. In 1872 he wrote *The Old and the New Faith*. It aroused a storm of criticism. To the question, "Are we still Christian?" he returns a blunt, "No." He held that the old belief in a personal God and immortality is gone. He accepted Darwinism, and professes to stand on the ground of natural science. Strauss' Life of Jesus was purely speculative, and did not proceed from solid historical data. Might-have-beens are not proof.

Ferdinand Baur (1792-1860) was brought up in the old Tubingen, which then was orthodox. The doctrines of Schleiermacher received his attention and found an echo in his earlier works. Later he was not so favorable. He found more affiliation with Hegel in his rigid law of development in intellectual as well in other spheres.

Baur sought to reconstruct the views of the church on the history of the New Testament by critical processes, giving his attention first to the epistles. He denied the genuineness of the Pauline epistles except Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians. He professed to find a conflict in the early church between the Pauline and the Petrine parties; and adjusted the New Testament to this supposition. Paul was assumed to be polemical and always ready for combat. If any epistle represented him in any different light it is *ipso facto* unauthentic. And if any epistle

reveals a conciliatory spirit, or magnifies the church and its unity of belief, that is proof of its origin in a post-Apostolic age. In 1847 he turned his attention to the Gospels and sought to disprove the authenticity of the gospel of John. His position was arbitrary, his arguments far-fetched, and unhistorical, and must be classed generally as *non sequitur*.

Bruno Bauer (1809-1882) belonged at first to the conservative wing of the Hegelian school. He was a fellow student of David Strauss and reviewed his *Leben Jesu* unfavorably, even accusing Strauss of entire ignorance of what criticism means.

In 1840 and 1841 in his criticism of John and the Synoptics he went far beyond Strauss, and that which Strauss attributed to religious enthusiasm and mythical development, Bruno Bauer attributed to the designed invention of an individual. After worse attacks on the traditional theology he was deprived of his academic post in 1842. In after years he renewed his attacks on the gospels, Acts, and Pauline epistles, even against the four admitted by the Tubingen critics.

Ritschl (1822-1889) must also be classed with the subjectivists. He was a follower of F. Baur in early years, but afterward broke with the Tubingen School. The "feeling" in Schleiermacher's scheme was replaced by "judgment," equally subjective. In this view the existence of God is not proved by arguments but is a postulate of the mind in order to meet its own ends and needs. Christ has for believers the religious value of God from the point of aesthetical ideal. Quite familiar language to us today. Ritschl rejected the doctrine of Christ as the second person of the Trinity, also the two natures in one person; and affirmed the Godhead of Christ as a judgment value. The Scriptures, according to Ritschl, are not a rule of faith, but are witnesses to primitive Christianity – not authoritative but subject to the judgment of the individual. The facts may be dispensed with, and little damage ensue. If the gospels be little more than legend, it makes little difference to faith. Pearl Buck has recently said nearly the same thing. Christianity said nearly the same thing. Christianity is not accepted on the ground of history, or syllogistic proof, but on a judgment of worth.

Ritschlianism is also expert in putting new contents into old terminology, reviving the tactics of Semler. The present-day unbelief voices Ritschl. The great question of the Reformers, as to the rule of faith, has been the question that has classified believers and unbelievers in all centuries since. The study of these centuries shows how Modernism has done little more than reproduce the unbelief of past ages. In fact is the left-over of Pantheism, Rationalism, Subjectivism, Evolution, and the Higher Critical theories.

During the periods referred to above, the evangelical cause was splendidly defended by Hengstenberg, Tholuck, Neander, Dorner and others and with them a period of reconstruction began. Some skeptical views of the gospels and New Testament may be listed as follows:

Reimarus said, Fraud.

Paulus said, Mistake.

Strauss said, Myth.

F. Baur said, Controversial.

Bruno Bauer said, Designed invention.

To summarize briefly: Pietism was at its height from 1700 to 1750. Rationalism prevailed from 1750 to 1800. Subjectivism grew from 1800 to 1850, with an outbreak of New Testament Criticism after 1835. Reconstruction from 1840 following.

Rationalism lost its theological grip by the emphasis placed on feeling by Schleiermacher. Its exegetics was refuted by the replies to Strauss' *Leben Jesu*, and it lost its political influence in the revolution of 1848. After that it was a fading cult.

Rationalism in Holland

Passing from Germany to Holland, Rationalism did its devastating work there, but not with quite so definite a story. The Synod of Dort set up a standard of orthodoxy, but 100 years passed and the church was lethargic and the ministrations of the clergy barren. The Cocceian School was liberal or progressive, and favored the entrance of new ideas. The Voetian School was conservative, and considered their opponents little better than atheists.

At length both schools ran into allegorical and fanciful interpretations, and approached each other. Deism came in from England with which Holland was friendly after the accession of William and Mary. Skepticism came in from France, and the result was a frivolous indifference to all religion. Voltaire sojourned there for a while, and was popular; but not for long. He presently bade a facetious good-bye to dykes, ducks, and Dutchmen, and said he never saw anything in Holland worth a fig.

The persecuted Huguenots fled from France to Holland and diffused new spiritual life through the land of their adoption, so that many of the unbelievers were led to lay aside their worldly habits. And even the civil and ecclesiastical authorities appointed days of fasting and prayer.

Napoleon's bayonets opened the way for French infidelity, but the ruin became too evident, and the blow that crushed the armies of Napoleon had a similar effect upon the French infidelity; and after the battle of Waterloo a new era for religion dawned for Holland and Europe.

The reconstruction period had its battles. The Gronigen School was little better, if not worse, than Tubingen in its denial of the essentials of Christianity. It claimed that the church neither possesses nor needs doctrines.

The Ethical-Irenical School in the middle of the 19th century stood opposed to all Rationalism. Its leaders were La Saussaye and Van Oosterzee. The former would not qualify 100 per cent with American Fundamentalists, but the latter has been a tower of strength to the orthodox cause in Holland. In later years Herman Bavinck and Abraham Kuyper deserve commendable notice.

Reconstruction in France

Even in skeptical France reconstruction took place. The Protestant Church took on new life. The improvement began about 1820. The Wesleyan Methodists established some missions and did effective work in stirring up the sluggish conscience of French Protestantism. But all was not smooth sailing. Comte with his Positivism was decidedly heterodox, or rather outside the pale of Christianity. The Critical School of Theology represented by Scherer (1815-1889), Colani, Renan and others was little better than the Encyclopedists with all their infidelity.

Renan (1823-1892) published his *Vie de Jesus* in 1863, which was immediately popular. His history of the People of Israel 1887 to 1891, complete his literary labors. The influence of this Critical School fired the zeal of many young theologians who fancied that popularity was to be found in progressive departure from the faith of the fathers. History shows that unbelief has always attracted the young, chiefly because it flattered them into thinking that they were wiser or smarter than their forbears. It seemed to say to them: Be a man; cast off your leading strings and show the world your progressive spirit.

French Protestant reconstruction is due largely to Monod, Guizot, and de Pressense 1824-1891. Although France is a Catholic country the Protestant church made rapid advance in the 19th century and still maintains its testimony. However, Auguste Sabatier, Dean of the Paris Protestant School of Theology, as late as 1897, in his published works, denied that God had

given a revelation to man, and as late as 1904 declared that all religious conceptions are human born.

Switzerland

Switzerland, the land of Zwingli and Calvin, also surrendered to Rationalism. Voltaire spent the last twenty years of his life there. He was favored and flattered by ministers of the gospel. The Encyclopedists regarded even the pastors of Geneva as co-laborers in the overthrow of the doctrines of the Gospel. The phase of unbelief that marked this retrogression was a revival of Arianism and Socinianism. It also took on the feature of English Deism in reducing all revealed truth to natural religion. Theological instruction declined. Men were sent into the ministry with no grounding in the doctrines of grace, justification, or the Divinity of Christ, or even the corruption of fallen human nature. The Theological Academy founded by Calvin became a school of heresy as bad as Halle or Tubingen.

The reconstruction was largely initiated by Robert Haldane from Scotland, who stirred the student life to evangelical convictions and fervor. Many of them were converted and faced the task of reforming their lost heritage. Some Methodists from England, too, added their zeal to the cause with a quickening of spiritual life. The effort was splendidly carried on by d'Aubigne, Gausson, author of *Theopneustia*, still an authority, and by Naville, Vinet and others.

An Evangelical Dissenting Church was organized and those who were dissatisfied with the unbelief in the National Church found a home in the new church organization, and added their influence to the work of the reformation. In 1839 David Strauss was invited to take a theological chair in Zurich. The people arose as one man against the appointment and overthrew the Council by a popular revolution. But reconstruction had its difficulties. Not all parts of Switzerland were so zealous as the people of Zurich; and Rationalism lingered a long time to undo the work of Calvin. Even the faculty in the Seminary of Zurich were far from evangelical, and the influence of Germany has unfavorably affected the Swiss in later years.

England, too, furnishes some interesting religious history after the days of Deism. Deism in England is reckoned to have closed its career with Hume (1711-1776), and Gibbon (1737-1794); the latter a historian, and the former a philosopher. Hume's philosophy was definitely and decidedly opposed to Christian beliefs. It is known as Sensationalism; and was derived from Locke's empiricism. In this philosophy mind has no substantial reality; but is just a succession of isolated impressions and ideas the system, if it is a system, is what we today call the Serial Theory, and which has been, in the last few years, so splendidly answered by Prof. Francis Tennant of Cambridge, England.

These two Deists wrote just when Rationalism was at its height in Germany. But England was saved to evangelical Christianity by the Wesleyan Revival. Methodism was born in 1738 and did more to save Britain to Evangelicalism than all the replies written to effect Hume's skepticism, though they have been many and conclusive.

In the 19th century, and reaching into the 20th, England developed a species of Rationalism, especially in the Broad wing of the Anglican Church. This was largely encouraged by German speculative writers and finds its representatives, among others, in Coleridge, in his earlier years, Prof. Jowett, Baden Powell, Maurice, Kingsley, Dean Stanley, and Colenso, the last in Old Testament Criticism.

Periodical Literature also took part. The *Westminster Review* as almost a duplicate of the General German Library of the former century, elaborated each new heresy, and attacked the

beliefs of orthodox Christians unsparingly. *Essays and Reviews*, being essays by prominent Oxford scholars and Anglican churchmen, presented such radical skepticism as to alarm the more orthodox and precipitate ecclesiastical discipline. But the accused together with Colenso were acquitted by the Privy Council in two trials and appeals, which caused great rejoicing on the part of the Skeptical sympathizers.

United States

The United States of America did not escape the influence of unbelief. The assistance of the French in the revolution of the Colonies opened the door for French infidelity. Skepticism became prevalent especially in our Universities, until there was scarcely a professing Christian in the student body of Yale University. The coming of Timothy Dwight as President wrought a wonderful change, and reconstruction had begun. Thomas Paine wrote his *Age of Reason* which was read everywhere and is still quoted in the present day. It is surprising that America did not go deeper into infidelity than she did; but the United States has never been favorable soil for infidel propaganda. Even Robert Ingersoll left no school, and while he ruined a few young men in his day, he was forgotten almost as soon as he was buried. The present A.A. A.A. stands in his tracks but has not made much of a dent in America. The United States of America has harbored a multiplicity of denominations. This was inevitable because of immigration from all parts of the world, every sect bringing its favorite form of worship and organization. But this has not been an unmixed evil, because it provides for toleration, and because the smaller denominations have more *esprit de corps*, are more aggressive and proportionately do better work.

Our fathers in founding the nation gave us a free church in a free state. Nothing could have been better for the purity of the church in American than to be free from political entanglements. Surely a Divine Providence directed that "Congress should pass no law establishing religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." That Amendment has been the safeguard of the churches ever since.

But Rationalism has had some repercussion in the United States. The denomination which first and most harbored these tendencies was the Unitarian Church with its seat in Boston and the principal sphere of its influence in New England. Unitarianism at first existed secretly until it had acquired a considerable foot-hold, and then stepped into the open. The first man ordained to the Unitarian ministry in the United States was James Freeman. After a definite separation from the Episcopal and Congregational churches Dr. Channing became the leader of the left wing.

The chief position of the Unitarian is antagonism to orthodoxy. Dr. Channing believed that orthodoxy was incalculably mischievous in its estimate of Deity, and of human depravity. The Unitarians dispute the doctrines of the Trinity, nature of Christ, the Fall, original sin, the Atonement, Inspiration, personality of the Holy Spirit, Regeneration, and favor Restoration rather than future punishment. In earlier days Unitarians were abusive and blasphemous in opposition to orthodoxy, and a similar accusation found utterance in a recent visit of Charles W. Elliot to Philadelphia. The Unitarian Church is small. America has not responded to their organizing efforts though they have persistently pushed their cult into evangelical bodies, and have done more by hypodermic than by visible organization.

Modern unbelief involves many varieties. Much of it is associated with the theory of Evolution. Whether Evolution be true or not, it has weighed heavily in the scale-pan of unbelief. Practically all unbelievers are Evolutionists.

In 1859 Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, and in the latter half of the 19th century Evolution captured most of the colleges and universities in the English-speaking world. A host of replies followed. At the present time, that which was peculiar to Darwin has few adherents, though Evolution is held in some form by a large but decreasing number. The facts of Paleontology are not favorable to a gradual ascent, and the New Geology enters the list against the theory. Mendelism and Mutation or Sports, put forth by Hugo de Vries, have undermined belief in continuous ascent, while the Polyphyletic Theory opposes the Monophyletic; and more significant, Austin H. Clarke, high authority, insists that no major animal group evolved from any other animal group, but that all arose directly from single-celled life. The "zoogenesis" looks like another chapter in Polyphyletics. And incidentally Maynard Shipley, evolution's ardent protagonist and debater, has been able to make out but a weak case.

Evolution has been applied to man's mental and moral nature, to the Scriptures, to religions, and even to God. Perhaps its worst recent feature was to put Jesus Christ in the light of an evolved brute. We could believe that faith moves mountains; but not that mud makes men.

Applied to the Scriptures, Evolution produced Higher Criticism. In Germany, Wellhausen, born 1844, died recently, has been chief advocate of the Higher Critical Theory. In Britain, Driver, Cheyne, and G.B. Gray. In Scotland, Robertson Smith, McFadyen and others, in America Prof. Briggs, W.R. Harper and others, a few names among many.

The replies have been many and vigorous by Harold Wiener, Margoliouth, Moody Stuart, James Orr, Wm. Henry Green, R.D. Wilson and others. The result has been that in Germany the ablest Orientalists have repudiated the theory. Driver is being rapidly forgotten in Britain, and in America the theory has made slight progress. That the law was written in Babylon by the school of Ezra does not command assent, and if it is shown that the Samaritan Pentateuch existed before the fall of Jerusalem the whole theory goes up in smoke. In the mean time the Higher Criticism has destroyed the faith of multitudes in the integrity of the Bible, and illustrated the old saw that "a lie travels half way round the world before truth gets its boots on." Epidemic-like, it has run its course and is now in rapid decline.

Modernism is the residuum or resultant of all the infidel systems that the world has hitherto known, and includes some features of all or most of them. Pantheism, Subjectivism, Rationalism, Evolution, Higher Criticism, Humanism, and what not have all contributed to Modernism. It has often been implied that Modernism lacks definition. A sufficient definition is that Modernism is the denial of the Bible in whole or in part. But whether it is exactly defined or not its disturbing reality is all too evident. Its stock in trade is attack on Biblical doctrines and traditional beliefs.

Prof. Briggs said: "We have undermined the breastworks of traditionalism, let us blow them to atoms." Witness, too, Dr. Fosdick's sermon: "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" A recent article by an official in an official organ deprecates the "blue print" use of the Bible as an authority on social moral problems. Modernism always seeks in some way to undermine the authority of the Bible.

The most virulent outbreak of Modernism in the present century was the making and signing of the Auburn Affirmation. The document declares: "There is no assertion in the Scriptures that their writers were kept from error" and that "the doctrine of inerrancy impairs their supreme authority for faith and life," almost the exact language of the early Unitarians. This is in the face of Christ's saying, "the Scriptures cannot be broken," and "Holy men spake from God as they were moved (borne along) by the Holy Ghost."

Further, if inerrancy impairs authority, it must follow that errors enhance authority, which is a *reductio ad absurdum*. Further, "The Confession of Faith does not make this assertion," *i.e.* inerrancy. The Confession of Faith says: "The Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New

Testament in Greek, being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic." Authentic means correct, true to fact.

The Affirmation declares unessential the Virgin Birth, Miracles, the truthfulness of the Bible, the Substitutionary Atonement, and the Resurrection of Christ. These doctrines are the heart of the Christian system, and the signers of the Auburn Affirmation have put their names to a virtual denial of the essential features of Christianity. The Affirmation further declares: "We are opposed to any attempt to elevate these five doctrinal statements, or any one of them, to the position of test for ordination or for good standing in our church." But these doctrines were already test for ordination since they are in the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are included in the ordination vows, viz.: "Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?"

The Affirmation further declares: "We are united in believing ... that all who hold to these facts and doctrines, *whatever* theories they may employ to explain them, are worthy of all confidence and fellowship." What alternative theory can there be to the Virgin Birth that is not a denial of the *virgin* birth? And the only alternative theory as to Christ's resurrection is that He did not rise at all. To affirm belief in a doctrine and *explain* it by denying the doctrine is not rational. In this document, inspiration means subjective urge. That "God was in Christ" may express nothing more than Pantheistic immanence. And "vicarious" has been given another sense than substitutionary.

What is left of Christianity when these doctrines are removed? It may be said: Its Ethics. That is just what German rationalism did, viz., repudiated the truth and authority of the Scriptures, and professed to maintain their ethics. But even ethics must have a doctrinal basis, and any ethical confession becomes a creed. The Auburn Affirmation is the last ditch of Modernism, just as the writings of Reimarus, Lessing, and Bahrtdt were the deepest ditch of Rationalism.

Modernism, like Rationalism, suffers little cleavage in its ranks. Fundamentalists may differ and draw apart, but not Modernists; for the reason that they present no constructive system. Their method and their concern is to attack; some here, some there, some this, some that. All are satisfied if only the fundamentals are attacked, however piecemeal it may be. In this, modern unbelief is true to type.

The latest eruption was The Laymen's Commission, and the resultant *Rethinking Missions*, or as some one called it, "Unthinking Missions." The whole project was aggressive Unitarian propaganda. And the Modern Missions Movement is an attempt to inoculate the conservative churches with this Unitarian virus, - more hypodermic.

These pages have traced the perambulations of unbelief, - a dismal ????. The story of faith and its sanctifying civilizing power would make a happy tale. Such a story is a reality and a subject for any pen, or angel's Song, but it is not the plan of this story.

But in closing a few brief, hopeful words may be added. Since Prof. Sayce issued his *Higher Criticism and The Monuments* in 1894, Archaeology has furnished an increasing witness to the integrity of the Bible. God buried the evidence ages ago and brought it forth for such a time as this. "God's Word is tried," and proved true. And there is every reason to believe that the ??? has not finished its story.

The Higher Criticism is now ??? Prof. Ernest Sellin or Berlin, Martin Kegel, Max Loehr of Koenigsberg, ?? Emil Reich, and plenty more, prove the scholarship of Germany has also abandoned the Graf-Kuenen-Wellhausen heresey, and a saner day in Biblical Criticism has dawned. Delitzch is dead, peace to his ashes.

Today Barth with his Theology of Crisis has stirred Germany with a strong position on the sovereignty of God. And backed up by Emil Brunner and Thurneysen the Barthian School is recalling Germany to a sounder faith. This School is far from being orthodox in our view, but has at least taken a step in the right direction.

The repercussion is heard in America, and certain former leaders of Modernistic thought have returned part-way, at least, from extreme positions or have confessed the emptiness of the unbelieving system, though "there remains yet very much land to be possessed."