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A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH IN RELIGION

AS HELD BY HENDRIK KRAEMER

With Regard To The Underlying Philosophical Assumptions And Problems; And Alternative Approaches, Especially That Of Radhakrishnan

Divinity

Master of Sacred Theology

The concept of religious truth is examined in a most crucial example of it as a problem: Christian Missiology, as propounded by Hendrik Kraemer. His claim that Jesus Christ is the truth is opposed by the truth-claims of other religions. The problem is viewed from the context of philosophical truth, an appendix surveying truth theories. Kraemer is found to adhere to an existential, singular, and absolutist form of truth. In comparison, Radhakrishnan is found to adhere to a similar form of truth whose content is the Absolute, which has pluralistic and relativistic features. It is concluded that Kraemer indicates that religion must be both particular, singular in content, but universal, or absolute, in application form. The historical context of his dialectical position, in opposition to Liberal Missiologist W.E. Hocking is noted in a second Appendix. Both religious and philosophical truths are seen as attempts to grapple with reality.

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## PREFACE

The vastness of the subject of Truth in general and Truth in Religion has necessitated a typological approach in the thesis. Truth is a term which has lost favour in some quarters of philosophy today, and never had much favour in some quarters of Religionswissenschaft. Many would see no point in an attempt to define it because of its generality. In addition, as truth appears to be intimately related to the whole question of the nature of reality, whether the reality of religion, science, philosophy, or the individual's experience, any consideration of it involves a confrontation with the problems of epistemology and ontology which some would not care to acknowledge or consider.

The question of truth in religion is viewed here in the context of the problem of truth as a whole. Truth in religion is especially seen in its most crucial instance, that of the relationship between religions, including the missiological aspect of the relationship. The instance is crucial because it is in this area that the truth-claims of religion are most clearly evident as they come into opposition with each other. Appendix A represents a sketch of the nature and problem of truth as it appears in philosophy and forms the vantage point from which the nature of religious truth is viewed. Aside from the works of H.H. Joachim and Brand Blanshard, few works which include all the major theories of truth up to the present have come



to my attention. F.H. Bradley cannot be ignored, nor can Haig Katchadourian's study of the coherence theory, but these refer to theories previous to linguistic analysis. On the other hand, the linguistic analysts do not appear too interested in theories of truth outside their own field of study. For this reason, and the fact that Kraemer and Radhakrishnan were concerned very little with the analysis of religious statements, little attention has been paid to this field. Furthermore, a full work would be needed to do justice to this field.

In dealing with Kraemer, I have not dealt in any detail with the influence of Barth upon him, nor with the question of whether he fully appreciated the positive aspects of Barth's conception of religion.

In carrying out a typological approach Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, as a contrast to Kraemer, presents many handicaps for one writing from a Western and Christian background. Chief of these is unfamiliarity with Hindu culture and religion firsthand, except for a brief tour of India prior to the conception of the thesis. Accordingly, no attempt has been made to decide to what degree Radhakrishnan interprets Hinduism faithfully. I have simply judged him on his own works, which being written for Western readers in many instances help alleviate the handicaps noted. Only a partial attempt has been made to provide a critique of Radhakrishnan and relate his ideas to central ideas in the philosophy of others, or philosophy as a whole.

It will be seen that religious truth involves

the intersection of various disciplines: theology, Religion-  
swissenschaft in its broadest sense, comparative religion,  
 philosophy of religion and philosophy, psychology and psychiatry,  
 in terms of religious experience, as well as sociology. Some-  
 thing of this intersection is in the background of the work in  
 terms of a very broad view of Religionswissenschaft, as well as  
 the fact that today psychiatrists and sociologists, etc., join  
 hands with scholars of Religionswissenschaft perhaps more than  
 in the earlier years of Kraemer's work. In addition, Kraemer's  
 survey of the problem of truth took him into a number of fields.  
 In relation to the psychology of religious experience no  
 attempt has been made to study the problem of religious truth  
 in terms of conversion at any length. Here, near-converts  
 such as C.F. Andrews, the Christian friend of Gandhi, would no  
 doubt cast light on the problem, even as did the convert Paul.

While the work of the Christian Institute for the  
 Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, India on truth in  
 Kraemer and in relation to Hinduism and Christianity in India  
 has been consulted, it is not cited in the thesis. It is  
 at such institutes that future developments in the plurality  
 of religious truth-claims will be made.

In the study of religious truth, the name of  
 D.G. Moses stands out, along with I.R.A. al Faruqi, Ninian  
 Smart, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Joachim Wach, and E.L.  
 Wenger. However, in Hendrik Kraemer one finds the question  
 faced head-on from within religion in its most crucial

instance of religious interrelationship and missiology, whereas in the others the question is posed more from philosophy, theology, and Religionswissenschaft than religion itself. In some ways it is unfair to take up a study of the philosophical assumptions and problems of Kraemer's position, because it is a dialectical one which to some extent lies in a dimension other than philosophy. Yet Kraemer himself says in his "Preface" to Religion and the Christian Faith that he wishes "to establish the scientific and philosophical legitimacy of a theological treatment of the problem of Religion and the pluralism of religions besides Christianity." (p. 7). It is this philosophical legitimacy which has engaged me. Here I find that while Kraemer experiences Jesus Christ as the Truth, a Platonic type standard of truth is also at work in his thinking.

The position of Kraemer is only part of the Protestant position on religious truth, as noted in Appendix B where reference is made to his struggle against the Liberal position. In addition, there is also the Roman Catholic position, rooted in Thomism, which has its counterpart in Protestant Liberalism. The Second Vatican Council documents, for example, make reference to the truth of other religions.

While Kraemer is not in sympathy with Tillich, it is interesting to note that Kraemer solves the problem of truth, to some extent, by going to the heart of Christianity: Jesus Christ, while Tillich feels in his work on relations between religions that if each man goes to the

heart of his own religion, all will be well.

Finally, one must add that in considering both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan, one can easily fall into the error of building their thought into a more complete system than actually exists, for both scholars never develop elaborate and exhaustive systems of thought.

The works considered have been only those available in English translations. The use of foreign words has followed the transliteration of the authors referred to. Only the works actually cited have been listed, as a bibliography would have been too lengthy. Reference has been made to the William Sargant lecture attended in its published form in the works cited, but the work was not available for consultation.

Acknowledgements are due Prof. J.C. McLelland, and the staff of the Faculty of Divinity Library, of McGill University.

This effort appears at a time when scholars are summing up and evaluating the work of Hendrik Kraemer, following his death in 1965. On that occasion, his assistant, Hans-Ruedi Weber said on November 15, 1965 in the chapel of the Ecumenical Institute:

"For Kraemer...Christ was a living person on whose presence he firmly relied...What he saw in studying the Scriptures he did not consider as the mirage of wishful religious thinking, but as the prime reality which he obeyed."

--The Ecumenical Review  
Jan. 1966, p. 98.

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## CHAPTER I

### HENDRIK KRAEMER'S CONCEPT OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH

#### I. THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH IN RELIGION

Today it is acceptable for scholars of the History of Religions to lay aside any question of the truth of a religion, or the problem of truth in Religion as a whole, even though scholars in the past attempted to face the issue. Hendrik Kraemer, however, was forced to consider the problem because he was both a professor of Religion and a Christian missiologist. The question appears as a theoretical one in the classroom, but it takes on a pragmatic and urgent note on the Christian mission field, threatening to erode the basic raison d'être of missions. It is the mission field which reveals so acutely that there is a problem of truth. Missions must wrestle with the question simply because it is the nature of traditional Christianity to assume that it has the truth, hence the need for missions to carry forward this proclamation.<sup>1</sup> As an integral part of Christian thought involves the concept of revelation, and Kraemer holds that the response to revelation consists of faith and witness, missions can be seen as the product of the response of witness.

As Christianity must proclaim its message to all men in all situations, it is brought face to face with the cultures, religions, and philosophies of life of those outside the faith, those who adhere to rival systems of thought and action. Kraemer holds that Christianity maintains it has a divine commission to bear witness to God and His acts. Its very essence and basic assumptions are founded on a claim to present the Truth, not a truth which can be inspected

indifferently, but rather the saving truth which demands a response. Christianity bases its outreach on its certainty of a given and knowable Truth, superseding and transforming all truth, and unveiling all falseness and distortion in human thought and action.<sup>2</sup> It is apostolic, believing that it continues the message and work begun by Christ.<sup>3</sup>

The knowledge that Christianity was not alone, but faced a plurality of religions and philosophies of life, together with the cultures in which they are embedded, was evident to the Church from its inception. The fact of plurality was encountered by the Early Church on all sides, while in the Middle Ages it tended to be much more isolated from other religions. Then came a period of gradually increasing encounter with other religions and philosophies until, at the present time, it is confronted by rivals on every hand, even within its own ranks.<sup>4</sup> The situation says Kraemer is accentuated by the maturity of the scientific study of religion and culture,<sup>5</sup> a factor missing in the Middle Ages, and by the crisis in the Church, a result of the break-up of Christendom as known in the past, as well as many other factors.<sup>6</sup> It is further made acute by the growth of those philosophies of life which act as substitutes for religion, or displacements of religion, including the political philosophies Communism and Fascism,<sup>7</sup> and other philosophies such as secularism.<sup>8</sup> These philosophies may blend into each other, may be so ill-defined in some cases as to appear to be more like moods than anything else, but nevertheless they present a host of rival claims to the absolute claim of Christianity.

In Kraemer's view, the claim of modern-day Christianity is contrasted with two of the philosophies of life



of the present day. One is the philosophy of relativism, arising out of the break-down of the second "system" of philosophy, the whole realm of absolutes of the past, both Christian and otherwise. These absolutes included a number which are analyzed by Kraemer as pseudo-absolutes. The cornerstone of the pseudo-absolutes had been the conviction that the human spirit was autonomous--that man was the measure of all things. Man took destiny into his own hands, "confident of finding the truth and standards of life in the depth of his own divine-human being."<sup>9</sup> Out of this immanentist view had grown some of the philosophical systems of the nineteenth century with their identification of Thinking with Being, or of Consciousness and Being, believing that reality could be taken hold of in the act of thinking and could be reached by the conception of the Idea. Descartes, as an example, began with human consciousness, rather than God.<sup>10</sup> Kraemer's objection to this approach is that the identification of Thinking with Being, or Idea with Ultimate Reality, is a false one. What is true for him is that Ultimate Reality is always the object of thought, remaining outside its grasp, ever receding with each attempt to approach it.<sup>11</sup>

The autonomy of man concept had been accepted warmly as it appeared to be the liberator of the human spirit. However, in time, man relying on himself became skeptical of the objective value of his systems of thought. The principle of autonomy ended in anarchy.<sup>12</sup> Kraemer writes of the situation:

"Belief in man as the measure of all things ends in the ignoring or denial of God, and ultimately in the destruction of man. Where all has become relative, nothing is really worthwhile, because it has no foundation in Eternity. Man cannot create for himself ... standards that are absolute, just because they are his own creation... One's creation can't become one's absolute authority."<sup>13</sup>

With the destruction of the principle, and the end of absolutes, the certainty of that period of time was followed by the dawn of present-day relativism, with its corresponding uncertainty, manifested in the West by disunity, and in the East by that very impact which the West had upon it. However, relativism has never become as pressing a situation in the East because the East has always had the concept of the relativity of all truth as described by man. For the East, Ultimate Reality and Absolute Truth are unfathomable, unattainable by man, (in contrast with the thinking of the West). Yet, even so, today something of the Western mood of relativism has been felt by the East, and something of the Eastern mood of relativism has been felt by the West.<sup>14</sup>

While relativism is never defined at any length by Kraemer, he does say in Why Christianity Of All Religions? that it means everything is comparative, and the only absolute is that there is no absolute, which results in a perpetual state of uncertainty, inquiry, and experiment.<sup>15</sup> He also gives many illustrations of relativistic thinking. As for absolutism, it is understood in terms of his personal experience of the Christian revelation. His thought continually runs between the two poles of absolutism and relativism, while at the same time moving on another plane between West and East.

In spite of the impact of relativism on the fact of religious, cultural, and philosophic plurality--which underlines diversities, making for disunity--there is a counter-force at work in the modern world: The trend toward one world culture. This trend, partly due to the technological advances of the modern period, and the spread of western cultural influence throughout the globe, results in a kind of unity. There emerges the dream of a great world cultural synthesis.<sup>16</sup> With the dream comes the variety of suggestions from many quarters about the possibility of a world-religion. However, the very forces which tend to bring the world together today also reveal the glaring differences in the religions, cultures and philosophies simply by their proximity to each other in the modern situation. Kraemer particularly sees the interaction of cultures, etc., in terms of the initial invasion of the East by the West, and the subsequent influence of the East upon the West, including the sometimes debatable resurgence of other religions with their movements of outreach.<sup>17</sup> Something of this atmosphere of change in the direction of world unity, with its underlining of dissimilarities, is felt both in the ecumenical and missionary activities of the Church, a fact Kraemer was aware of due to his work in both these fields.

The increasing disclosure of dissimilarities in the modern world has, maintains Kraemer, accelerated the dominance of relativism, (which in a sense is the attempt to deal with the fact of plurality and diversity), and such a dominance has increased man's feeling of uncertainty. Accordingly, man strives to find certainty, to return to some pseudo-absolute of the past, or to construct a new one. The question of truth enters intimately into the whole atmosphere of man's situation.

"The moving plight of man is that the fundamental fact of his existence is his being created unto the divine order of Ultimate Truth and Reality. Therefore the quest for Eternal Truth and Life is his prime life-necessity and by the nature of the case his prime obligation. Yet he cannot produce it by his own efforts."<sup>18</sup>

Man can never arrive at ultimate truth. He can only receive it, and receive at the hands of God alone. If man seeks truth in himself he destroys himself.

Against the foregoing background, no religion or philosophy can escape the problem of the nature of truth. Scholars of religion thus have also had to deal with the problem in some way, either laying it aside, as beyond their competence or calling, or else making very definite pronouncements about it. Some have demonstrated that Christianity was superior in this regard, claiming to be completely objective in their findings, and yet, holds Kraemer, being quite subjective. Others arrived at different conclusions, also claiming scientific objectivity but actually falling prey to unconscious biases. Kraemer's contribution at this point is to show that while subjectivity cannot really be avoided, it is better to acknowledge it and seek to delineate it. In his own case, his bias is that of being a Christian, and therefore he cannot but help himself from approaching the problem of truth in religion from this standpoint. He feels a personal standpoint is not necessarily an improper standpoint for anyone to take, provided they define what this is. In this sense his own viewpoint is subjective, as all viewpoints must be, in the final analysis. His own standpoint has involved a primary choice or decision--to become a Christian. He argues that it

is easier to study religion, and even judge it, if one is personally involved in some particular religion. If one is committed to a particular religion, one has a kind of "inside" view of the nature of religion. What is even more to the point, it appears to be the peculiar nature of religion to demand some sort of commitment, and one cannot fully appreciate this if one is not a believer or follower of some sort.

The warning is continually sounded in the writings of Kraemer that the problem of truth in religion, for Christians, (and here he particularly has Christian missiologists such as Hocking in mind), cannot be considered from any other standpoint than a Christian one.<sup>19</sup> His definition of such a standpoint is given in Religion and the Christian Faith as follows:

"This whole book is primarily concerned about the problem of Truth, because it is written as a small contribution to the endeavours in the past, present, and future, of explaining what is implied in Jesus' self-evaluation: 'I am the Truth', and what light is thrown on all other vindications of Truth, scientific and philosophical."<sup>20</sup>

## II. THE THEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

In delving more fully into Kraemer's position, his approach to religion as a whole, and the question of truth in religion, is seen to be from the stance of a theologian, in contrast with the outlook of many other scholars of religion. The basis of the theological approach, in this instance, lies in the revelation in Jesus Christ as personally experienced. Such a personal understanding is subject to the limitations of the individual in his grasp of the Christian revelation. The depth of understanding of the revelation may vary from time to

time depending on the working of the Holy Spirit in the individual.<sup>21</sup>

The apex of the theological approach is reached in its treatment of revelation as it is understood in light of the revelation Jesus Christ. Kraemer believes that from the Christian revelation has emerged a concept of truth in which it is defined as a relation between God and man, rather than an abstract idea; and which is defined transcendentally in terms of Christ, rather than immanently in terms of man and his self-realization. To examine revelation is to examine its watershed which is the Bible.

The merit of the theological approach, which for Kraemer lies in the biblical approach, is that it has more to say about an important factor, the religious consciousness of man, than many other approaches, as one of its postulates is that the key to the understanding of religion is the consciousness rather than the features of religion, (which are its manifestations). While religions may differ, what is common to them all is the religious consciousness of man.

The discrediting of the theological approach on the grounds of subjectivity is countered by Kraemer's argument, already alluded to, that no approach can avoid it. The whole problem of objectivity-subjectivity, involving epistemology, interpretation, and decision-making, is opened up by his argument. A case is made for a legitimate kind of subjectivity<sup>22</sup> in which one attempts to reveal one's bias, and act in light of it. In actual fact, while objectivity is a standard to be upheld, no one can be completely objective, or neutral. Everyone has some standpoint--there is no such thing as neutrality

masked as objectivity.

"...the ultimate, inexplicable fact in human consciousness with which we are confronted is that, prior to all fundamental ideas and attitudes which shape our religion or philosophy or Weltanschauung, there is a primordial decision and act of faith which determines our religion, philosophy or Weltanschauung."<sup>23</sup>

Hence, simply because Kraemer bases his theological outlook on the Christian revelation and his response to it, he is no more subjective or prejudiced than any other thinking man, as no thinking man can be without some such ultimate.<sup>24</sup> This does not excuse any attempt to avoid revealing the personal ultimate, or to avoid making allowances for it when trying to be objective.

### III. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

In spelling out his theological position on truth and religion, Kraemer emphasizes the Bible as the sourcebook of his understanding of revelation, but he acknowledges in Religion and the Christian Faith that the biblical orientation was never made explicit enough in his earlier efforts, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, and "Continuity or Discontinuity" in The Authority Of The Faith. He has sought to remedy this situation in Religion in the Christian Faith.

While making no pretence to be the first theologian to study religion as a theologian, he maintains that, with a few exceptions, (Calvin, Luther, J.G. Hamann, Brunner, and Barth), theological ventures in the field have lacked the radical biblical orientation which he finds indispensable.

Contrary to previous theological (or philosophical) thought, the Bible is not a set of ideas, nor a treatise on religion or the nature of God and the world, but rather, the record of the revelation of a series of divine acts which are connected with each other. These revelatory acts cannot be explained in abstract ideas but in the form of a story. They must be separated from the concepts which are derived from them and form the basis of theology and religion. To mark this boundary line, Christianity is distinguished from the Christian revelation by the use of the term "empirical Christianity".

In the Bible, God is seen as the Creator, the initiator, the Sovereign. It refers to a faith in God which has a coherence and rationality, (in the divine order of life revealed in Christ), that is of a different cast than the rationality of philosophy.<sup>25</sup> It does not speak of sweeping world-views, but instead, writes Kraemer, it proclaims certain realities, seeking that man, in his total being, should confront these realities, and make decisions on the basis of the confrontation.<sup>26</sup>

Although the Bible does not theorize about the nature of revelation, the latter, nevertheless, is one of its basic presuppositions. The process of revelation is not an idea held only by Christianity, but in other religions it often has different connotations from those in Christian theology. In the Bible it is that which is revealed and yet is still hidden---hence its correlate is believing, rather than knowing. Out of the correlate belief springs the second correlate of witness. Revelation is not a peculiar kind of epistemology, but instead gives to man a kind of knowledge which he cannot



attain by his own mind, especially the knowledge of Christ. To man, Christ is an offence because he wishes to redeem him and he desires to redeem himself, or to realize himself. Man cannot face his own nature as it is laid bare in the light of Christ, for his nature is that he wants to be god. Kraemer holds that this hubristic tendency is widely scattered in many religions and philosophies, in its highest form manifested as the idea that God or the Eternal Mind comes to self-consciousness in man when he withdraws into himself.<sup>27</sup>

These remarks on the general nature of the Bible would be incomplete without the recognition that the viewpoints of all the biblical writers are not identical, but, in spite of their differences, all have the same orientation point: God seen always as Creator, Judge, Lord, etc.<sup>28</sup>

Also important in the Old Testament, says Kraemer, is the picture of man as a creature of God, indicating his relationship to God. The relationship throws light on man's religious consciousness referred to above. Man bears an Imago Dei, not in the humanistic sense of his dignity, but rather, in the sense that he is created to live in community, in partnership with God. Due to the Fall, man's relationship to God is utterly changed. It is true that a relationship does still remain, but it is now one of estrangement, denial, independence, and loneliness, with the concomitant fabrication of gods and religions to replace the "loss" of God. Eastern theology, and to a certain extent, Western theology, has tried to minimize any suggestion that man's divine image was tarnished.<sup>29</sup> After the Fall, man finds himself in "an inescapably dialectical condition":<sup>30</sup> Sought by God, and seeking God, yet rebelling against Him. The condition is seen as the element

which constitutes man's religious consciousness. On the one hand, God's blessing, (and also, after the Fall, his curse), are evident, and on the other hand man's acceptance of God, and his rejection of God, make for a divine dialectic and a human dialectic. In this light, all religion is really part of man's rejection of God in the very process of seeking him--and there can be no change until man is re-made, until the Fall is overcome at the hands of Christ.<sup>31</sup>

Christ's attitude to Religion, to turn to the New Testament, is taken to be rather an irrelevant question by Kraemer. In the Gospels, Christ is seen to have little contact with religions other than Judaism, and is pictured as going beyond his own religion to disclose himself as the truth. He most certainly deals with man's dialectical condition, but Kraemer does not make reference to this in relation to the Gospels at any length. The main issue he handles in reference to the Gospels is his disapproval of the use of the Logos concept in John's prologue, by various theologians, to build a link between Christ and other religions. Looking back to the use of the possibly approximate term Chokma in the Old Testament Wisdom books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job, and the use of Logos in John, he concludes that Justin Martyr, and others, have abused the concept, forcing it into the role of a praeparatio evangelica.

Going forward to Paul's thought in Acts and Romans as dealt with in Kraemer's works, attention is here focused on Paul's insistence that God reveals his interest in man via his creation, never rejecting man, while at the same time never revealing himself in idolatrous religions. In religions as a

whole, man reveals his unrighteousness, knowing God, yet not wanting to know him, and not truly knowing him. In his dialogue with God, man continually says the wrong words. His encounter is negative. God in turn reveals his concern for man, including his anger at the religions he creates: The wrong responses to God's initiative. Man is both abandoned and sought by God.

In light of the Bible, Kraemer gives only the briefest explanation of his own understanding of Christianity. He speaks of the self-disclosure of God in Christ implicitly in all his works, and specifically in The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World refers to the incarnation, justification by faith, reconciliation and atonement, the announcement of the Kingdom of God, and a new way and quality of life.

#### IV. PRINCIPLES

Following the end of a summation of Kraemer's thought, what stands out? Out of the soil of the biblical background Kraemer derives a number of implications, although none of them is specifically drawn from particular sections of the canon.<sup>32</sup> Firstly, the importance of revelation cannot be underestimated. It is held to produce faith, and to witness to the faith, rather than to self-knowledge, or enlightenment, or intuition, or religious experience. Faith is both the response and the method of apprehending revelation, and the Bible is a record of this response, rather than being a record of religious experiences.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, the revelation in Christ is the paramount revelation. Thirdly, there is no continuity between the spiritual realities set forth in the Bible and

religious experience, whether it be labelled Christian or otherwise. Thus there can be no gradual, or rectilinear, transition from the world of religion, or philosophy, etc., to the world of revelation: To become a Christian, for example, means to break with the past, with the world of religious experience, etc.<sup>34</sup> The reason for the break in continuity is that the only way to maintain strongly that the Christian revelation contains the one way of Truth is to isolate it entirely from the whole range of human religious life.<sup>35</sup> Revelation and religion are two disconnected universes of discourse.

Many consequences flow from the foregoing principle of discontinuity. Any attempt to erect a structure of thought in which Christ is the keystone, or the fulfilment or perfection of some development must be rejected.<sup>36</sup> There is no process or system of which he becomes the crowning final part. Thus Christ is absolute in Himself, not being relative to something else, or equal to something else, (Kraemer seeing him as the true absolute who destroys relativism). In addition, the whole notion of general revelation is called to heel as a consequence of discontinuity. There is really only special revelation, General revelation simply becomes the ruse by which Christ is made less absolute, which is untenable. This is not to deny that God works outside of the sphere of biblical revelation, nor that there are other revelations in the Bible beside Christ. Kraemer never adequately treats these two possibilities.

"The problem whether, and if so, where, and in how far, God, i.e., the God and Father of Jesus Christ, the only God we Christians know--has been and is working in the religious history of the world and in man in his quest for goodness, truth and beauty, is a baffling and awful problem."<sup>37</sup>

Even in Christianity God is perceived imperfectly, as this is a man-made religion like all the others. Indeed in all religions, the underlying human origin is revealed from time to time in their evils. Kraemer does believe that God works among some non-Christians in so far as they have the spirit of Christianity, but man's response is often negative or "distortedly positive",<sup>38</sup> just as it is in Christianity. A similar query in reference to the possible operation of God in the various substitutes for religion, or pseudo-religions, or displacements of religion, is not fully dealt with by Kraemer. It appears that what holds good for religion would hold good for them--they represent man's attempt to deal with his dialectical situation.

Beside the challenge to the whole range of general revelation, a gauntlet is flung down before natural theology. The logos spermatikos concept of the Early Fathers is criticized, as well as its reappearance in medieval scholasticism as the praeambulum fidei and the praeparatio evangelica. The natural theology of Thomas Aquinas thus draws fire, as does the concept of rational religion in the eighteenth century.<sup>39</sup>

Other consequences of the principle of discontinuity include the conclusion that a union or synthesis of religions is impossible--they are not pieces of a puzzle which can be fitted together, as they do not ask the same questions about life.

Finally, the conclusion is deduced that Christ cannot be subsumed under some category or genus, as many missiologists and theologians have unwittingly attempted to do, and many philosophers and scholars of religion have deliberately attempted to do. In a category all his own, Jesus Christ is

held to be the Truth, the crisis of all religions as the standard against which they are measured, (rather than some other standard). However, it is not only all religions which come under his judgment: All vindications of truth, all philosophies and sciences come under his scrutiny, at the same time all becoming new in him.<sup>40</sup>

## V. RELIGION

As the standard or criterion, as the Truth, Jesus Christ judges the Christian religion along with the multitude of other religions. Others have overlooked this state of affairs, placing Christianity on the bench, forgetting that it must be distinguished from the Christian revelation. Kraemer acknowledges his debt to Barth in coming to this realization, making particular reference to the phrase in Church Dogmatics: "Gottes Offenbarung als Aufhebung der Religion", (the revelation of God as the dissolution of religion).<sup>41</sup>

With religion set in this perspective, a closer examination of it unearths its source in man's religious consciousness, (and indirectly, in God's acting upon the consciousness). Man in his religious consciousness seeks to understand reality or existence, and religion is the expression and record of this striving. Man's response to existence is total, and hence religion, which is the expression of such a response, is totalitarian in character. The reason there are surface similarities between various religions is due to the similarity of man's efforts to comprehend existence, and the fact all men have a similar religious consciousness.

The ground of the religious consciousness cannot really be arrived at--it would simply appear to be given with the fact of human existence. However, in seeking for its ground, some conclusions can be reached as to the direction in which the consciousness appears to be turned. For some, Jung, and Radhakrishnan among others, the consciousness appears to be focused on man himself. For Kraemer the direction in which the consciousness points is toward the exterior of man: The bent of the consciousness is held to be toward the beyond rather than toward the within. It is his assumption that the answer to the question of the ultimate source of the consciousness lies in this direction.

If the consciousness is "tuned" to the external realm, then is there any evidence of an encounter, or some interaction between man and the external? Kraemer maintains that there is, and what is more, it can be seen and understood in the light of biblical revelation, and most especially in the revelation Jesus Christ. On the contrary, if an immanentist view has been adopted, it is impossible to come to an adequate understanding of the religious consciousness and as a consequence it may be out of the question to deal adequately with the problem of external reality. Examining the consciousness under the rays of biblical revelation discloses evidence of encounters between God, (The Father of Christ), and man. The nature of the confrontation is dialectical, as already alluded to. The divine dialectic is in terms of self-forgetting love and saving wrath, and the human dialectic is in terms of rebellion, or escape, and the search for righteousness and truth. Thus the phenomenon of religion can only be understood in relation to the interplay of dialectics manifest in the religious conscious-

ness, (which is the factory of religion).<sup>42</sup>

The two possible directions in which the consciousness may be turned form the basis for Kraemer's classification of religions into:

- a) Prophetic religions of revelation--the outwardly orientated.
- b) Naturalist religions of trans-empirical realization--the inwardly orientated.

The first class includes what might be called the "Western" religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, whose features have already been discussed in reference to Christianity, taken as a specimen, (the best example of the class, Kraemer holds). The dominant characteristic of the group is that of revelation, which is quite distinct from the human religious experience of it, the experience being seen as the means of understanding the revelation rather than becoming the end in itself, as in the case of the second group of religions.

Kraemer's second classification of religions is that in which: "Man conceives all his efforts of meditation, religious practises, concentration, asceticism, etc., as means towards realizing and grasping the identity of his real self with divine reality."<sup>43</sup> These religions, which might be termed "Eastern", do not make the differentiation between religion and culture which Christianity makes. Hence to discuss them is to discuss also the cultures in which they grow. Hinduism is taken as the best example of the class.

In his description of these religions, Kraemer says that there is a great sense of continuity with the past, seen partly in the respect for the authority taken to reside in the



past. Within such a sense, the religions of India and pre-revolutionary China, taken as cases in point, are described as the modern, end-product, of enormous developments of "primitive" religion, which is defined as the primitive apprehension of the totality of existence. The characteristics of such an apprehension are threefold. Firstly, there is an inter-dependence between all the spheres of life, a totalitarianism, a monism, a primeval unity, a tendency toward synthesis--in opposition to the compartmentalization, the disunity, the fragmentation, the tendency toward analysis, of Western culture and religion. The mood of synthesis in the East means that similarities between the macrocosm and the microcosm are brought out, and that duality or plurality is eventually harmonized into a unity of some sort. Consequently, there can be contrasts or shades in religion, etc., but no ultimately irreconcilable elements.<sup>44</sup> Secondly, as a result, the East is captivated by the spirit of relativism--all must be brought into a harmony, eventually, nothing being allowed to stand in aloofness or contradiction--and so no absolutes are possible. Thirdly, Eastern religion is naturalistic: Man and nature are one. The vitalism of nature, of the universe, is expressed in man's desire for life, even imperishable life. The strengthening of individual and corporate life becomes the object of religion, i.e., religion is the means to the end of absolute happiness through the absolute realization of life. Man is not concerned with God, or fellowship with God, but, with the forces of nature, the forces directed toward the maximum realization of life, which may result in materialism, sensualism, and a cyclic view of existence.

The naturalistic religions, in Kraemer's view, have

inspired various systems of religious philosophy built on the features of syncretism, relativism, pragmatism, and subjectivism found in them. The background of these philosophies, such as Radhakrishnan's philosophy, is reminiscent of the Platonic theory of existence, with its illusory everyday world, and the real world of Ideas. Religion belongs to the world of illusion, containing only half-truth, or relative truth. complete or absolute truth lies in the real world, the world of ultimates or pure essences. Differences in the various religions are, therefore, not to be taken too seriously as they are not representations of absolute truth or reality. Religions which are contradictory or complementary, or both, can co-exist, as they are either almost completely or partially untrue--the differences between them being due to the element of untruth in each. In such a scheme of things, there is little need for a relation between man and the Divine, or Reality, or Being, because man, in his own essence, is one with the realm, or essence, of Ultimate Reality, or Being or the Divine.

Such religious philosophies form the justification of the relativistic, syncretistic attitude in the naturalist religions.<sup>45</sup>

## VI. JESUS CHRIST: TRUTH

Following this examination of the classifications and nature of religion, as seen by Kraemer, the emphasis must now be placed on his definition of truth in the conception of religion outlined. Essentially, for him, truth in religion is Jesus Christ, the revelation of God, because He has said, "I am the Truth..." There is no exhaustive argument to demonstrate

how he has arrived at the position beyond the discussion already noted in connection with the problem of subjectivity-objectivity. Life is a struggle of ultimates, and every man is forced, by the nature of existence, to choose his ultimate. Hence this starting point for Kraemer is (in one sense) an arbitrary, personal, inescapable, starting point, being inescapable, (and thus non-arbitrary), as a consequence of being a Christian. To be true to God, (and himself), he could choose no other position from which to begin. In his writings there is continual reference to Jesus Christ, but not the Jesus Christ of some particular Christology, (not at least openly, that is). There is little reference to the Jesus Christ of the Gospels in so far as little reference to the Gospels is made. It is the Jesus Christ of his experience to which he refers, and behind this, the Jesus Christ of the Christian revelation. Kraemer simply says that he is a Christian, that he has had the Christian experience of Christ and therefore sees Christ as the standard of all, including the standard of Religion and religions.

What Kraemer means in his preface to Religion and the Christian Faith when he says that the character of religious truth is dialectical is defined in terms of the condition of the human religious consciousness, being both desire for God and denial of God; and in terms of the character of Jesus Christ, seeing him as both saviour and judge. Thus to speak of Jesus Christ is to speak of dialectical truth. Christ so appears, and is so responded to, because man is in a dialectical situation.

Jesus Christ is the Truth for Kraemer in this personal, subjective sense, seen, via his religious

consciousness, in its ambivalent state, as the one who accepts and yet denies. In the apprehension of Christ in the religious consciousness, the degree of understanding varies with the working of the Holy Spirit in the individual, which means that the standard of Truth, Christ, in this sense, changes continually. Here is sounded the existential note in Kraemer's approach to truth, for the degree of understanding of Christ is a function of one's relationship with God, a function of one's living in communion with the world of spiritual reality at whose centre is God.<sup>46</sup> Truth is therefore not something grasped objectively, but a living in fellowship, or relationship, with God. As the quality of fellowship varies, so changes the degree of understanding of Truth. The very essence of such a kind of "living" truth is that it is absolute rather than relative. Jesus Christ is the Truth, absolutely, or else there is no truth in him at all--he cannot simply be a truth.<sup>47</sup> Such absolutism comes not from within, but from without.

Care must be exercised in speaking of Christ as the Truth in terms of an abstract idea, in terms of an absolute, because Jesus Christ is a person, and a person in the context of a living God, the Father. Jesus Christ exists quite apart from one's experience of him, and so is the referent of religious experience, but never the product of this experience. Kraemer stresses that too many have taken the religious experience to be the source of religion, going no further. Christ is thus a self-disclosure of God, who is beyond the experience, but God is never really seen in himself. Truth is accordingly a person who is never fully unveiled, and the

revelation is incomplete in so far as completion belongs to the eschaton. While the revelation is incomplete, this does not mean<sup>48</sup> it is continuing or progressive. There is only this one revelation, this special revelation, doctrines of general revelation being rejected. The revelation Christ is the culmination of the earlier revelations in the Bible, but as the revelation Christ differs qualitatively from these others, and is the criterion of all revelation, it can still be maintained that he is really the only revelation. This Christ is not the product of a particular Christology, but the Christ to whom all Christians refer.

To say that an absolute Truth comes from without is to mean that Truth in religion must be revelatory truth, (not in the sense of revealed truths, ideas, or doctrines, but in the sense of God's acts made manifest, in the sense of realities disclosed). If truth is revelatory in character, then the inference is that it is objective, or, in other words, external to man. As Jesus Christ is revelatory in character, he can be legitimately referred to by Kraemer as being objective, being external, being deposited, (by Himself), before man. In such a conception of objectivity, Jesus Christ can be taken to be the<sup>49</sup> objective standard, the truth.

The reality which is Christ is not discovered by man, as he would discover an object, or make an observation. Instead, Christ discovers a man. Man is seized by the Truth, rather than seeking it, and grasping it, (although because of the fallen situation in which he lives, a man is always searching for truth). God is not impassive in man's response to

Christ but is at work in it.

As the criterion of what is true in religion, and all else, Jesus Christ, because of man's sin, is seen as an offense, a threat to man's desire to build his own religions and philosophies, his own criterions; and to find truth in himself, or elsewhere, on his own; and to save himself or realize himself. To recapitulate, Jesus is the crisis of all religions and all other attempts to arrive at reality or truth, for He Himself is The Truth.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

1. Hendrik Kraemer, Religion and the Christian Faith, London, 1961, Lutterworth, p. 35; cf., The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, p. 23.
2. Ibid., p. 18.
3. Ibid., p. 29.
4. Hendrik Kraemer, Why Christianity Of All Religions?, Philadelphia, 1962, Westminster, pp. 55-56; cf., World Cultures and World Religions, p. 16; cf., Religion and the Christian Faith, pp. 19-20; p. 159; p. 173.
5. Ibid., p. 56; cf., p. 14, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World; cf., Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 22; p. 28.
6. The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, N.Y., 1938, Harper, p. 24 ff.
7. Ibid., p. 15.
8. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
9. Ibid., p. 8.
10. Ibid., p. 11, Kraemer holds that the most recent example of this philosophical approach is existentialism.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., pp. 9-10
13. Ibid., p. 10.
14. Ibid., p.23; cf., World Cultures and World Religions, p. 16; When Kraemer refers to the East he excludes Islam.
15. p. 38.
16. The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, p. 4.
17. Ibid., cf., Religion and the Christian Faith, pp. 20-27; World Cultures and World Religions, p. 16; "Continuity or Discontinuity", The Authority of the Faith, p. 14.
18. The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, pp. 11-12; cf., H.K., The Communication of the Christian Faith, Philadelphia, 1956, Westminster, p. 70.

19. e.g. H.K., "Continuity or Discontinuity", I.M.C., The Authority of the Faith, London, 1939, Oxford, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
20. p. 18; p. 32.
21. "Continuity or Discontinuity", op. cit., pp. 7-8.
22. Why Christianity Of All Religions?, pp. 12-14.
23. Religion and the Christian Faith, pp. 85-86.
24. "Continuity or Discontinuity", op. cit., p. 8.
25. The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, pp. 61-64; cf., Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 240.
26. Ibid., p. 65.
27. Ibid., p. 70.
28. Ibid., pp. 84-85.
29. Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 251.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., pp. 242-257.
32. "Continuity or Discontinuity", op. cit., passim.
33. Ibid., pp. 1-2, Kraemer coins the phrase "biblical realism" to express this; cf., Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 182; cf., The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, p. 116.
34. Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 338.
35. "Continuity or Discontinuity", op. cit., p. 3.
36. Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 65, Troeltsch is cited as an example of an attempt to erect a historical type of developmental system.
37. "Continuity or Discontinuity", op. cit., p. 14.
38. Ibid., passim; cf., Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 8; p. 232.
39. Ibid., p. 15; cf., Religion and the Christian Faith, pp. 154-161; 182 ff.; 348.
40. Ibid., pp. 5-9; Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 221.



41. Ibid., p. 18, footnote 1: Die kirchliche Dogmatik, Zweiter Halbband des ersten Teil, 1938, paragraph 17; cf., Religion and the Christian Faith, pp. 185-186; cf., The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, p. 61.
42. Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 8.
43. The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, p. 143, footnote 1.
44. Ibid., p. 154, Hegel's absolute idealism is similar to this.
45. Ibid., pp. 208-209; cf., H.K., "Syncretism as a Religious and a Missionary Problem", International Review of Missions, Vol. 43, 1954, p. 253 ff.
46. Why Christianity Of All Religions?, p. 74.
47. Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 373.
48. Ibid., p. 381. There is no sign of completion in Judaism, but the continuing presence of its followers is a puzzling sign of God, to be respected. H.K., "The Riddle of History", International Review of Missions, Vol. 32,(1941), p. 87.
49. Why Christianity Of All Religions?, pp. 72-76.

## CHAPTER II

### AN ANALYSIS OF KRAEMER'S POSITION

#### I. REVELATION

Having outlined Kraemer's general position, the next step is to stand back and regard what has been sketched. Besides a direct approach to his thought on truth, an indirect one is necessary due to the brevity of his definition of Jesus Christ as the Truth, and the lack of a detailed definition of truth in general. The indirect approach partly includes a consideration of his survey of approaches to Religion in Religion and the Christian Faith, where his rejection of most of them sheds some light on his own position.

As the nature of truth in Religion for Kraemer is revelatory, the locus of his thinking is the Biblical revelation, but only a partial account of his understanding of it is given in the work cited above. Kraemer assumes reasonably enough that his fellow Christians will understand his viewpoint on these matters--he does stress that he is deliberately writing from his Christian Weltanschauung. Aside from some rather brief laudatory remarks about Barth, Calvin, and a few others noted in the previous chapter, the influences working upon him and the foundations of his viewpoint are never explicitly revealed. However, his reference to Jesus Christ as the criterion of all other vindications of truth implies a position in which revelation is seen as the light illuminating all else. In other words, Kraemer

does not concentrate on Jesus Christ as love, mercy, etc., but as the truth and the revelation. Hence such an understanding of revelation is one in which all is put into a perspective because a focal point has come into the world.

Revelation in Christ for Kraemer negates the concept of revelation in the form of revealed truths, a concept no longer in vogue in many quarters. Revelation is Truth, and Jesus Christ is this Truth. Such a Truth is one which is a standard, indeed, the standard, as contrasted with other conceptions of truth, for example, truth seen as a value. The standard is found in a person, Jesus Christ, Son of God, who meets man in a dialectical fashion. Other conceptions of truth, and something of its general nature, will be mentioned in this chapter, but a fuller treatment will be found in Appendix A.

One theologian who casts light on just what Kraemer may mean by revelation in Christ is H. Richard Niebuhr for whom revelation is "that part of our inner history which illuminates the rest of it and which is itself intelligible."<sup>1</sup> This part of our inner history is Jesus Christ. It might be compared to a hill from which everything comes into view, or a time when everything "falls into place", when we suddenly see meaning in life and understand that which before was hidden, or not understood, or irrelevant. This personal approach is consonant with Kraemer's emphasis on his own standpoint, his own "legitimate subjectivity".<sup>2</sup>

Niebuhr says something very similar to Kraemer in relation to the question of whether or not revelation is continuous or progressive. Kraemer, as stated in Chapter I,

believes that revelation is incomplete, (being completed only at the eschaton), but it is not continuing in the sense that new revelations of equal or superior value arise. In short, after Jesus Christ, no further fulfilment takes place, except for his return at the End. Revelation does continue in so far as the Holy Spirit is at work and Christ is made known to us, but it does not continue in so far as we receive a revelation superseding Christ. Niebuhr writes:

"Revelation is not progressive in the sense that we can substitute for the revelatory moment of Jesus Christ some other moment in our history and interpret the latter through the former....Nevertheless revelation is a moving thing in so far as its meaning is realized only by being brought to bear upon the interpretation and reconstruction of ever new human situations in an enduring moment, a single drama of divine and human action".<sup>3</sup>

What Niebuhr means when he writes of "inner history" and uses the term history in general is found in his idea of revelation as history. History can be seen from the outside, from the historian's viewpoint, or from the inside, from the participant's viewpoint. However, both viewpoints are relative--relative to the person concerned, his Weltanschauung, his time and place. To truly understand what the Bible is saying about Christ, one must try to understand the outlook of those living at the time, not from the historian's viewpoint, but rather from their viewpoint, the participant's viewpoint. Thus one looks with Paul at Christ, instead of at Paul, or an historian's study of Christ.<sup>4</sup> In all this, revelation is not something man discovers, as Kraemer would agree. (Kraemer refers to the realities the Bible presents, which are

in a sense facts, but not discovered facts. These realities are experienced personally by the Christian). The revelation of God, of Jesus Christ, is such that we know that God knows us, for He reveals Himself to us. Jesus Christ, for the Christian, is part of his inner history, his experience, but this does not mean He is a product of the experience, for he is not discovered but revealed.

Niebuhr's conception of Jesus Christ as the point in one's life when meaning is found in one's existence is similar to Kraemer's idea of Jesus Christ as the criterion of all, in light of which all else is examined and judged, in which all receives evaluation.

There is one other similarity between Niebuhr and Kraemer which may suggest some better understanding of the latter. Kraemer talks of the empirical religion Christianity, the "objective" religion as it actually manifests itself with its good and its evil. Niebuhr speaks of "objective" history, in which Christianity is seen as it appears to those who do not experience it as Christians. Christians acknowledge this external view of themselves, and react to it, seeing some truth in it, and sometimes seeing a judgment in it.<sup>5</sup>

To turn to other matters, what does it mean to say that a person Jesus Christ is the Truth, rather than to say that a definition of truth is found in some abstract concept? Something of the meaning has already been indicated above in reference to the key point in one's inner history when Christ lights up one's life so that it can be understood. In this context, it is not the same thing to say that a person has the truth, as it is to say that a person is the

truth, which Kraemer is saying. Niebuhr, speaking in terms of subjective or internal history, and objective or external history says:

"There is no continuous movement from an objective inquiry into the life of Jesus to a knowledge of him as the Christ who is our Lord. Only a decision of the self, a leap of faith, a metanoia, or revolution of the mind can lead from observation to participation and from observed to lived history".<sup>6</sup>

Now as Kraemer acknowledges Christ as his Lord, which includes the idea of Christ as the Truth, it is possible, in light of the above reference to the existential phrase "leap of faith", that Kraemer is thinking of Jesus Christ as the Truth in an existential way. However, a comparison of Kierkegaard's definition of truth<sup>7</sup> with Kraemer's thought, plus Kraemer's negative reference to Kierkegaard's "leap of faith" in Religion and the Christian Faith,<sup>8</sup> and his negative reference to existentialism in The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World,<sup>9</sup> suggests otherwise. For Kraemer existentialism is simply a philosophy of the order of the anthropocentric pseudo-absolutes he deplores.<sup>10</sup> Yet, despite these negative comments, there is an existential aura about Kraemer's thought, in so far as he refers to his own personal standpoint, and acknowledges that standpoints are the result of choices; and in so far as he refers to the person Christ who lays claim upon him as the Truth, rather than an abstract idea of truth which is discovered or deduced.

Following along these lines, if one accepts Walter Lowrie's classification of J.G Hamann as an existentialist,<sup>11</sup> it is interesting to find Kraemer's brief but favourable comments about Hamann, (when so many of his comments on many

others are unfavourable due to his principle of discontinuity). Hamann's influence on Kierkegaard, and the latter's influence on Barth, as well as both Hamann's and Barth's influence on Kraemer, is a web of interaction which cannot be dismissed, though its importance can be exaggerated.

Lowrie refers to Hamann's conviction that the Bible deals with realities rather than ideas, and these realities are historical truths.<sup>12</sup> Compare this with Kraemer's biblical realism. Hamann does not see reason discovering God, or Christ, or Truth, but these are given by God's action and the appropriate response for man is faith. For Hamann, reality is known only by faith, for his friend Kant was showing that reason cannot discover reality, the thing-in-itself.<sup>13</sup> Christ is not seen by reason, but by faith. Existence is given, and revelation is given, both registered in man via his sense experience, and what is given in sense experience is accepted in faith because this is the only way that we can know reality.<sup>14</sup>

According to Hamann, the life of sense experience continually presents opposites which are found together. He gives the illustration of observers on different levels of a tower who accordingly give different reports of what they see.<sup>15</sup> The presence of opposites would violate the Aristotelian law of contradiction and so could not be tolerated by Kant's thinking, against which Hamann is continually speaking. The situation painted by Hamann is reminiscent of Kraemer's emphasis on his own relative viewpoint, rather than some "objective" viewpoint, as complete objectivity is held by him to be a fiction. It is also reminiscent of Kraemer's

emphasis on dialectic: The opposites seen in God and man, with man responding to God and rejecting God, even as God loves and judges him. Indeed, Kraemer refers to Hamann as a "dialectical thinker" in Religion and the Christian Faith. There is a common spirit of anti-rationalism and anti-idealism in Kraemer, rejecting the philosophical approach to religious truth in the above work, in Hamann, attacking Kant, and in Kierkegaard, attacking Hegel. Kraemer and these two strive to be realists, seeing truth as reality, rather than abstraction or ideal.<sup>16</sup>

One of the features of existentialism which no doubt irked Kraemer was its emphasis on man, man taking the leap of faith, etc., rather than the emphasis being on God, the initiator. However, his kinship with the existentialist current of thought is also found in two other Christian existentialists, Jaroslav Pelikan and Nicolas Berdyaev. Pelikan and Kraemer both emphasize Paul, Pelikan referring to Truth as being Christ, in Paul's thought.<sup>17</sup> Berdyaev believes that to say Christ is the Way and the Truth is to say that Truth is existential and that Truth is God and God is Truth.<sup>18</sup> Truth is seen here as the meaning of reality, rather than as reality itself. He writes:

"A critique of revelation presupposes reason clarified inwardly by the truth of revelation...A critique of revelation presupposes too that God is not higher than Truth and is not subordinate to Truth. He is existent Truth. God is mystery, but he is also Truth."<sup>19</sup>

The foregoing comparisons suggest a relationship between Kraemer and Christian existentialism, but it cannot be overdrawn because all Christian thought might be labelled



"existential", for various reasons, including its emphasis upon faith.

In closing this section on revelation, much might be made of Barth's influence on Kraemer at various points, but this has been omitted for several reasons. Firstly, the magnitude of Barth's thought would carry us beyond the bounds of this thesis, it being too easy to quote one part of his huge system out of the context of the whole. Secondly, acknowledgment of Kraemer's express gratitude to Barth has been made in Chapter I, and will also be found in Appendix B where the historical background of Kraemer's missiological stand is described. Thirdly, a close examination of Kraemer's critique of Barth reveals that he is not in complete agreement with Barth. Finally, in Religion and the Christian Faith, he reveals a greater debt to Calvin, who will be noted later, (P.60).

## II. VIEWPOINT

In attempting to understand what Kraemer means when he says that Jesus Christ is the Truth, reference has already been made to the subjective approach, and it is to be recalled that Kraemer explicitly states that he is entering the Science of Religion or Religionswissenschaft, with a subjective viewpoint. Thus he enters an "objective" study from a "subjective" position, but, none the less, a position which is no more subjective, he maintains, than that of other scholars in the field, including the "objective" scholars. Kraemer takes the view that behind every standpoint or attitude, or Weltanschauung, there is a decision made on the basis of belief or faith, which cannot be further derived.<sup>20</sup> Thus behind

everyone's position there is a Weltanschauung, and behind this is a primal choice. He desires that all in the field of religion should state as best they can what their fundamental viewpoint is, and the act of faith or choice behind it, just as he makes clear that he enters the arena as a Christian: One who worships God the Father of Jesus Christ the Truth.

In tracing the source of Kraemer's stand, one finds he attributes it to H.A. Hodges, who in turn is dependent on Wilhelm Dilthey, being a commentator on his works.<sup>21</sup> Hodges sees Dilthey's attraction to Hegel's dialectic, especially in connection with his endeavours as a philosopher of history. Dilthey found that while history is a process, the conceptualization of history, in descriptions of it, obscures this quality of movement, and also limits it to the viewpoint of the individual historian. Thus it is relative to the Weltanschauung of the historian, which Hodges, following Dilthey, defines as follows:

"Man thinks, feels, and desires...Life cannot be a unity unless these three ways of seeing the world are somehow combined, and their peculiar categories reconciled under the control of a single principle. What principle this is will depend on the relative strength of the three attitudes in a given mind; but one way or another, by subordination of two of them to the third or by some kind of combination or equipoise, in every mature mind a unity is established, and this unity is what constitutes a man's outlook (Weltanschauung)."<sup>22</sup>

To obtain a picture of man's experience of reality, all the "outlooks" would have to be added together and summarized, making a kind of composite of all the (relative)

views. Hodges says that this mass of "relativities" bothered Dilthey. On the one hand, no single point of view is true in the sense that it makes other points of view untrue, but on the other hand, no point of view is untrue, for it does present a record of someone's experience of reality. Thus by looking at many viewpoints, a more balanced view of existence is obtained. However, Hodges continues:

"This really will not do. It is in conflict with Dilthey's own admissions. For he himself has seen the psychological necessity of a Weltanschauung to give unity and direction to a life, and it is obvious that a Weltanschauung can only do this if it is not merely toyed with, but definitely held. And that means that its rivals must be definitely not held, i.e., must be rejected."<sup>23</sup>

Here Dilthey's interest in Hegel comes into play. The way Hegel dealt with situations of rivalry was by means of the dialectic movement from thesis and anti-thesis to synthesis. He avoided the necessity of making a choice between rivals; but this will only hold in the realm of abstract thought. In actual life, in moments of stress, when rivals appear, a choice must be made, as, following Kierkegaard, H. Richard Niebuhr, and others, we are no longer spectators but participants. Real life involves action, which in turn involves choice, rather than synthesis. When Hegel faced a violation of the law of contradiction, he synthesized, while Dilthey, and Kraemer made choices.<sup>24</sup> The quotation given above throws a great deal of light on why Kraemer spends so much space rejecting other viewpoints in Religion and the Christian Faith, and indeed, why he rejects almost all the viewpoints he surveys. It also underlines

Kraemer's act of decision in being a Christian.

If, from the foregoing, Kraemer's viewpoint is taken to be subjective and relative, but at the same time his rejection of many approaches to religion, (and his dissatisfaction with relativism), is taken as an indication of an absolutist viewpoint, then the possibility emerges that he has absolutized or objectified his subjective viewpoint. (He condemns this tendency in others when they do not acknowledge it, or seem unaware of it, refusing to analyze their assumptions). In a sense, everyone objectifies his own viewpoint if little, or no allowance is made for the viewpoint of others. Even if everyone does allow for other viewpoints, they must make choices, and thus they must reject viewpoints: As Dilthey theorizes, and Kraemer practises in his vast survey of approaches to religion in Religion and the Christian Faith. It might be argued that Kraemer starts out in one set of circumstances, in which viewpoints are relative, and ends up in another set, in which they are absolute. Kraemer would not refer to his own viewpoint as absolute, nor would he refer to the Christian religion as absolute, but only to Jesus Christ as the absolute. Nevertheless, he does emphasize his own viewpoint--it is the referent of this viewpoint, Jesus Christ, whom he sees as absolute, and hence his own viewpoint tends to become an absolute. In other words, he may be absolutizing, or objectifying that which is relative, or subjective, and so falling guilty of his own charge of relativism, made against many others, or even of his charge of pseudo-absolutism. One of the problems here is the type of epistemology which may

underly Kraemer's viewpoint. Firstly, if one is going to emphasize the concept of viewpoint, as he does, then it might be argued that no viewpoint can escape the label of relativism. Secondly, if the Kantian dichotomy of subject and object is ignored, then one's view of Christ is an accurate reflection of Him. However, both Kraemer and Barth seem to adopt a Kantian view in so far as they believe God reveals himself and yet is not revealed, i.e., seen in himself, seen as noumenon. If Kraemer has actually made his own viewpoint, the phenomenon of Christ in his experience, into an absolute, projecting it into existence so that he appears to refer directly to the noumenon Christ as the absolute, then he comes close to what Helmut Kuhn has said of the existentialists--that no truth which is their own, in a subjective sense, can be an objective truth.<sup>25</sup>

### III. THE ABSOLUTE

The nature of the concept "absolute" mentioned above makes its appearance in the beginning of The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World in a negative way. There Kraemer deplores the spirit of relativism abroad in the world, as he does in other volumes, and by implication, it would appear that he is taking an opposite position--that of absolutism. (As already mentioned, he may be a relativist himself). While he never explains the term absolute at any length, it would appear that Jesus Christ is his absolute, but a different kind of absolute than that arrived at by reason, such as Plato's Idea of Truth, or Hegel's Absolute. Such an absolute as Christ is not constructed in, and by, the mind, but is revealed to the mind by the working of the Holy Spirit,

and only in so far as man's sinful, imperfect understanding can accept Him, or comprehend Him. Now as Jesus Christ is linked to one's ability to grasp Him, under the action of the Holy Spirit, any reference to Christ is relative because it is tied to a viewpoint; and viewpoints are relative, (although the viewpoints of mystics might be taken to be absolute). However, Kraemer avoids the charge of relativism, in spite of his emphasis upon viewpoint, because he maintains that Jesus Christ exists whether there is anyone to receive the revelation of Him or not. Hence Christ is absolute, external, independent of anyone's viewpoint, and is the Object who is the Subject, (in Barth's sense), following out the line of thought developed in James Brown's Subject And Object In Modern Theology.<sup>26</sup>

To speak of Christ as existing, without reference to the mediation of experience, involves a pre-Kantian form of epistemology in which we believe that what we think is what actually exists, or that it mirrors existence closely.<sup>27</sup> Here objects are known as objects, rather than subjectively as "phenomena", in Kant's sense of the term. In addition, this whole trend of thought continually raises the term "object" when the term "absolute" is examined, as the absolute Jesus Christ appears to be external to man, just as an object appears to be external to man. If he is not external to man, then he would seem to be simply the product of man's religious experience, a position Kraemer would deny, and yet one into which his epistemology tends to lure him. However, the foregoing suggests a rational approach to the whole issue, with the mind discovering Christ, whereas He is only an object

in the sense of being an object of faith. An object of faith is not discovered; but it is revealed; and it exists in such a way that man becomes His object, (or "its" object, if Christ is not being referred to). One must remember that Kraemer believes faith is the appropriate response to revelation. Man becomes the object of Christ, where Christ is the Subject. Interpreted along the lines of Heidegger's philosophy, Jesus Christ would be seen as the free object-in-Himself, expressing Himself, being Himself, independent of man, rather than becoming the object of man--fitted into his theological or philosophical categories. Thus Jesus Christ is the truth and the absolute because He is free, freedom being the essence of Heidegger's understanding of truth. Jesus Christ is absolute, but not in any rationalistic sense of the term. He is absolute, in the sense of being free, rather than relative, in the sense of being dependent on man's discovery and objectification of Him.

To examine further the concept of the absolute, Kraemer is of the opinion that the focus of religion is external rather than internal. Therefore Jesus Christ is absolute, or independent, or objective, in the sense of being external to man, or not a part of man, (if one rejects the term "external" in deference to John A.T. Robinson or even Bultmann). In short, Jesus Christ is not found in man's religious experience alone, nor is he the product of that experience, but he is instead the referent of a Christian's religious experience. Kraemer understands the experience as pointing beyond itself, although others, for example, William James, tend to limit Christ to the experience. Kraemer's

careful distinction between empirical Christianity--the manifestation of the religious consciousness working in its dialectical condition of sin and God-createdness--and Jesus Christ the Truth, implies that the Truth is outside of man. Also, the Truth can never adequately be known by the religious consciousness, due to its fallen state. Without the Holy Spirit, even man's imperfect view would be impossible. Kraemer's rejection of religion, because it is the product of man's religious consciousness, which is unsound, affirms that Jesus Christ is not really in religion, which is man's handiwork, as a distorted response to God. Thus Christ is external, and independent, and absolute, in so far as he is not a product of man and his religion.

In terms of Religionswissenschaft,<sup>29</sup> and in terms of the absolute, it could be said that Kraemer has taken a main element of Christianity, (as he understands it), extracted it from the religion, and set it up as an absolute. It becomes a standard by which all religions, including his own, are judged, especially in regard to their truth value. The "element" extracted is Jesus Christ. The same method is used by other scholars of different religious persuasions who take some other "element" as the standard by which all religions are studied. Kraemer makes it clear that he takes the starting point he does because he is a Christian, but he does not always make it clear why he chooses Jesus Christ as Truth, rather than Jesus Christ as Love, etc., as the standard. Kraemer might say that he has not removed an element of a religion and set it up as a bench mark, but simply points to that which lies beyond Christianity, and indeed, all



religion. The problem then arises as to whether the referents of other religions could not be set up as standards, or more "correctly", recognized as standards, Kraemer's defence in this case would be that his classification of religions, (noted in Chapter I), indicates: (a) the prophetic religions do point beyond themselves, that is, beyond man, but all fall short of adequacy, except in so far as there is a tenuous link between Christianity and Christ; and (b) the non-prophetic religions do not point beyond themselves, but only to man. Hence one cannot arrive at absolute standards which are elements extracted from religions, because such elements are not found in the religions. The religions themselves do not point to such standards at all, in the case of the non-prophetic type, and very inadequately in the case of the prophetic type, even Christianity falling by the wayside. Hence Jesus Christ is seen as being absolute, the standard of religions, rather than an element extracted from a particular religion and made into an absolute.

#### IV. KRAEMER'S REJECTION OF OTHER POSITIONS

In Kraemer's lengthy survey of approaches to religion in Religion and the Christian Faith, his rejection of many of them, in whole or in part, casts light on something of the nature of his own position, to use an indirect method of approach.

The interest Kraemer takes in the religious consciousness of man might suggest that he would be enamoured of the psychiatric, psycho-analytic, and psychological explanations of religion and religious experience. However, he does not accept the work of Jung and Freud, etc., as

meaning that the origin of religious truth, and the origin of God, is in man, Freud's argument being that man needs god, therefore he invents him, and so religion arises. Truth in such a context is a product of psychological need, or the product of man's sub-conscious. While Kraemer does refer to man's desire for the absolute, for certainty, in The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World--and in the same book also refers to man's consequent erection of absolutes (which are false absolutes)--he differs from the psychologists, etc., in the source of man's desire. The source does not ultimately lie in man, although he does build religions, and seems to need to do so. The source lies in God. Man once had a better fellowship with God than he has today, and his building of religions is only an attempt to return to the state before the Fall. Man strives to restore his original situation at creation by his own efforts, but these are doomed to failure. He seeks for God in all his religious constructions because he was made by God and bears the divine imprint in his being. Hence man's religions point not to man himself, as the psychologists, etc., would hold, but rather, to man's ruptured relationship with his Maker. Even the religions classified by Kraemer as having their focus on man are nevertheless attempts to deal with existence, with reality, with something beyond man. Revelation is the proof that God is not the product of the human mind and the human need, but is above it, and so the source of religious truth is not to be found in man. Attention must not be limited to the religious experience of the religious consciousness, but it must go beyond, to what the consciousness is trying to record: Those realities which present themselves to man in the Bible, those

encounters with God.

The main criticism Kraemer makes of many approaches to religion is that they set up some philosophic ideal as their standard of investigation, relying too heavily on reason, when it is faith with which they are concerned. For example, Otto is described as not having done justice to faith.<sup>30</sup> In the Philosophy of Religion there is talk of the essence of religion, but no unanimity as to its nature. There appears to be, Kraemer believes, "...no universally acknowledged norm of religious Truth--and it is evident that there is not, indeed there cannot be one..."<sup>31</sup> Hence no arrangement of religions in terms of inferior and superior is possible. The value of a religion is not the measure of its truth, nor is some feature of it, such as mysticism. Judging the value of religions is not admissable as a key to their truth because Kraemer will not define Truth in terms of Value. To illustrate, any religion which has profound beauty might be classed as valuable, but does this mean it is true?

The Science of Religion, attempting to be impartial or objective, evidences no agreement among scholars as to their standard of reference. The goal of being objective is ultimately a fiction, each scholar starting with his own presuppositions. Indeed, Kraemer holds that all scientific approaches to religion start off in the wrong way because they try to explain man out of himself and ignore the question of truth.<sup>32</sup> The view of religion as pointing beyond itself, the questions of revelation and truth, and to some extent, an examination of theology as a fruitful ground of study--all these matters have been ignored by most of the scientists and

philosophers of religion, contends Kraemer. The whole issue of truth is avoided if some criterion such as objectivity is substituted, as in the phenomenological approach of Wach,<sup>33</sup> or Eliade, as examples; but Kraemer maintains that it is no solution to avoid the issue, for the problem of truth cries out in the hearts of men.

## V. TRUTH IN GENERAL

To continue an indirect approach, attention can now be shifted away from Truth as used in the context of Jesus Christ, as already noted, to the more general use of the term truth. Something of this other application spills over into Kraemer's declarations about Jesus Christ as the Truth. While Kraemer gives some explanation of what he means when he refers to Christ as the Truth, though this is far from being exhaustive, he does not define what he means by the general use of the term truth. It appears to be used as a household word which will automatically be understood by all.

To begin with, there is such a "thing" as truth for Kraemer, in contrast with logical positivists, linguistic analysts, and many scholars and scientists of religion who tend to regard the term as referring to an irrelevant, or even meaningless question, or idea.

Secondly, many references are made by Kraemer to truth as a problem. It is obvious that it is and has been a problem for many philosophers and others, but what is the context of Kraemer's utterance? There are three areas of his life and thought where it presented itself as a problem: In

Ecumenics, in Missiology, and in Religionswissenschaft.

In the ecumenical movement there is continual embarrassment when, facing the secular world, Christians do not agree on their understanding of their religion, nor even on their understanding of Christ. Kraemer gives an example of the tensions in the movement:

"In ecumenical meetings and discussion groups, uneasiness is frequently expressed lest the development of ecumenical consciousness and of an appreciative knowledge of the life and structure of other churches should lead to a confessional and ecclesiastical relativism which would disregard the great fact that the churches mean their confessions and structures to bear witness to the truth as they have been led to understand it in the course of history and in the light of Biblical evidence."<sup>34</sup>

The problem of truth is most acute on the mission front, (including today the secular home front), because of the counter-claims of other religions or philosophies of life. The problem of truth in Missiology is no abstract armchair topic, but a concrete problem to be faced daily. (The historical setting of Kraemer's Missiology will be found in Appendix B).

The question of truth has often been avoided in Religionswissenschaft, but its attempt to be a scientific study implies its use of the tool of objectivity: The attempt to arrive at a knowledge of reality, whether it consists of an examination of religious experience or otherwise. And a knowledge of reality may be one way of describing or defining truth, for what is untrue is generally regarded as unreal, as the product of error or illusion.

In the three fields noted above, truth appears as a problem because it is understood in relation to the law of contradiction in Aristotelian logic. This law implies that the nature of truth is singular, for it holds that A cannot be A and not-A at the same time. Thus if the Roman Catholic understanding of Mary is held to be true, the Protestant understanding cannot also be held as true. If the Christian claim that Christ is the Son of God is held to be true, then the Buddhist claim that there is no God cannot be held as true. Finally, if Soderblom's approach to religion is held to be true, then Kraemer's approach must be held to be false, etc. These illustrations of course are oversimplifications, as the various terms in each set of pairs noted may not be exactly opposite to each other. However, the general situation follows this pattern. In other words, if a singular form of truth is adhered to, rival truth-claims present a problem. If, on the other hand, the nature of truth is plural, then various truth-claims are not necessarily a problem. However, Christianity and various other religions make an absolutist claim to truth, a claim to truth given with a singular understanding of truth. Thus Christianity, or Christ, cannot be the truth for Kraemer, and for Christians as a whole, if it is not the truth for a Hindu, etc. The very spring of the missionary drive in Christianity arises out of its understanding of a truth such that rival truth, or plurality of truth, cannot be tolerated. This at any rate appears to be the implications of the kind of understanding of Christianity held by Kraemer. Many examples of Kraemer's understanding of truth in this singular form might be given, but the following will suffice:

"But if this sublimity, occurring in different religions in different forms were necessarily a proof of authentic Truth, we should be immediately driven to a self-destroying conclusion: Namely, that in this case many contradictory truths are all the same authentic Truth."35

and again:

"The later development of Hegelianism...led to an intellectual twilight, in which all religions were considered to be relatively true--a conception which, in the face of their conflicting claims, amounts logically to the statement that none is true or that there is no truth at all, or that all are equally true."36

and similarly:

"Hocking speaks about the 'scandal of religious pluralism', which tempts so many people into scepticism and indifference, because, as there is only one truth, the many religions cannot be true or even only very partially true."37

and also:

"...Descartes'/opinion on a project for a universal language made by Mersenne, ..../is/ that the invention of such a language depends on the true philosophy ('la vraie philosophie').

".....What is behind the fervent desire of a Descartes and why does he link it so intimately to the quest for the only true philosophy?"38

and finally the title of his book:

Why Christianity Of All Religions?

The first reference is a clear example of the law of contradiction being observed: "That..contradictory truths are all the same authentic Truth" is "self-destroying" or contradictory, or mutually exclusive. The next two

references describe the logical implications of relativism: No religion is true, or truth does not exist, or all religions are true, (involving some plural definition of truth, either in the form that each religion is completely true, or partially true). As Kraemer rejects relativism, these logical implications cannot be held, for Kraemer does hold that at least one religion is true, in so far as Christianity is related to Christ the Truth; and he does hold that Truth exists (in Christ). Furthermore, he rejects the suggestion that all religions are equally true--in a sense they are all false, even Christianity, if its link with Christ is obscured. In another sense, Christianity is more true, or is true, while others are more false, or are false. In the **fourth** reference--which is in the context of a discussion of language and communication--Kraemer says that, to give his own explanation, man reveals his desire to return to the ideal situation before the Fall, to certainty, to Truth, but he is unable to do so by his own efforts, the creation or discovery of the universal language or the true philosophy being one such effort. In talking of this true philosophy, the thinkers are refusing to acknowledge their dialectical situation, their dream of the return to the fellowship with God which man had in Eden. They are not consciously aware of the situation, or the longing. The fifth reference is self-evident.

Truth is thus a problem because the rival claims of religions, including the pseudo-religions (or philosophies of life), such as Communism, suggest that truth in the world may take a pluralistic form, while individual religions, and



men such as Kraemer, maintain that it is singular in form, as well as being absolute rather than relative. It is also a problem because man wants certainty, he wants one truth, rather than a conflict of truth-claims which lead him into a pit of scepticism, solipsism, relativity, and meaninglessness or absurdity. This point is clearly made in The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World and hovers in the background of the reference to Descartes made above in the fourth quotation listed. The rise of the pseudo-religions is simply man's attempt to fill the void left after religion, with the truth he needs, is removed. When man suffers the loss of religion, (which he needs due to his dialectical condition of sin), he becomes ill, as various psycho-analysts such as Jung, and psychiatrists, such as Paul Tournier, have indicated. Truth is a problem because man's dialectical situation is a problem; and the search for truth, and the centering of truth in religion is an attempt to overcome the dialectical situation. Furthermore, Aristotelian logic's law of contradiction, and the illness of conflict, or confusion, suffered by man when he tries to maintain more than one reference point of certainty, or loses a point of reference, (as indicated in psychological, psycho-analytic, and psychiatric studies), suggest that, by nature, man can only think in terms of a unitary conception of truth. (In contrast, George Orwell in Nineteen Eighty-Four pictures man as being able to change his reference point, or possibly even hold to two reference points. He expresses this by his term "doublethink", where truth is changeable, according to political expediency).<sup>39</sup> In Kraemer's Missiology, the practical question emerges--is the goal of missions to change

a person's reference point, to change his conception of truth (as enshrined in a religion)--or, is it to ask him to hold to more than one idea of truth? Then again, is it to form a synthesis of old and new? It is in this context that Kraemer disagreed with liberal missiologists such as Hocking, who opted for a kind of synthesis or reconception. Here a distinction is necessary between the "form" of truth, (unitary, etc.,) and the "content" of truth, (Jesus Christ, etc.) If Missiology adheres to a unitary form of truth, it may achieve its goals by urging the rejection of an old religion, including its form of truth; and by urging the acceptance of a new "form" and "content" of truth, Jesus Christ. Alternatively, Missiology may urge the erection of a unitary form of truth whose content is a synthesis of Christianity and elements of the religion previously followed. For Kraemer, the understanding of Christ in various cultural settings is desirable,<sup>40</sup> but not in terms of a synthesis. Instead, a radical break is needed, with the displacement of the old "truth" by the Truth of Christ. The Missiology of "displacement", (a term used by Hocking), involves the necessity of conversion; and William Sargant has made interesting observations on this process, comparing religious conversion with brain-washing. Sargant's study of the physiological and psychological factors in what might be termed religious experience, plus the present North American preoccupation with drug-induced "experiences" (of a possible religious nature), underline Kraemer's determination to differentiate between religion, with its religious experiences tied to man, and revelation, with its actions

tied to God. Jesus Christ is not the product of man, whether in some altered state of consciousness, in the case of drugs, or whether in the displacement of ideas by conversion or brain-washing. The whole category of trans-empirical realization religions, (Kraemer's second category), includes attempts by man to produce the referent of religion, whether it be by meditation, the use of physiological means, involving hyperventilation, music and dance, as noted by Sargant,<sup>41</sup> and others, or the use of drugs. In connection with the latter, Joseph Havens has referred to:

"...A sharp repudiation by 'theologians of the Word' of experience as the basis of religious faith. Karl Barth in his earlier writings is the clearest spokesman of this position. The gap between such Christian thinkers and those who support a more experiential religion (e.g. Jung, Tillich) may be widened."<sup>42</sup>

The negative alternative to the missiological demand for conversion, for the displacement of "false ideas", or a changed religious experience, or a knowledge of the Truth, is the actual physical destruction of the person holding a rival religious belief, as seen in the heresy trials and religious wars of Europe in the past, and the Hindu-Moslem massacres, riots, and India-Pakistan war in recent times. Men cannot hold different ideas of truth together in their own minds, and are loathe to tolerate them in the minds of others, or so psychology and military history would suggest.

A description of the nature of the problem of truth in reference to the demand for a singular conception

of truth in the face of plural claims for truth can be given in illustrations of various models, or systems, or language games. As an example, before the discovery of non-Euclidean geometry,<sup>43</sup> a singular, absolutist conception of space was held. What has emerged after the discovery is a situation in which each system of geometry is taken to have arbitrarily chosen starting points. The results of working outward from these points may suggest contradictions if it is forgotten that the individual terms employed are limited to their own particular system, i.e., are defined only in the context of their system, parallel lines, for example, meaning something different in each system. What is true in one system is not true in another--truth in this sense becoming relative to each system. In a like manner, there are mutually exclusive propositions in philosophical language games.<sup>44</sup> Somewhat similar examples may be found in sociology, where for example, it is "correct" to drive on the right-hand side of the road in Haiti, and the left-hand side of the road in Jamaica, only a relatively short distance away.

Kraemer was continually confronted by rival denominations in the ecumenical movement, rival Missiologies, rival religions, and rival explanations of Religion. All of these can be expressed, and indeed, are expressed, to a greater or lesser extent, in terms of systems. Thus, keeping geometric or language game models in mind, denominational credal statements may be compared. Ninian Smart has developed a method of study akin to this approach in his comparisons of statements of religious experience and doctrine in various religions, making use of their

sacred scriptures. He has also referred to the problem of devising tests of the truth of religions.<sup>45</sup> However, the whole tendency of this line of approach, and indeed the whole modern mood of scientific investigation of religion has been to shy away from the problem of truth. One scholar who has tried to reverse the trend and yet stay within the general framework of comparative systems is Isma<sup>c</sup>il Ragi A. al Faruqi who points out that for too long the scholars of religion have, very unscientifically, consistently overlooked one of the striking facts of religions--that they all do make truth claims of some sort. He has outlined the need to examine these truth claims very seriously, but to examine them in relation to the individual religion, or religious system, from which they come, i.e., each claim must be seen as relative to its whole. He is not unaware of the problem of trying to relate the various truth claims to each other, as well as to the religions in which they arise, but does not venture much further than to note the problem. He is careful to mention that Kraemer, and others, have also tried to grapple with the truth claims of religion, contrary to the general reluctance to do this in the field, but he dismisses Kraemer and others as being subjective, whereas he feels he is being more objective.<sup>46</sup>

If religions are seen as systems of thought which include truth claims, then it would appear possible to define the concept of truth which is held by each religion in terms of "form" and "content", and epistemology. In a way, Kraemer has divided religions into two types of truth-claim with his prophetic and non-prophetic (or trans-

empirical realization) categories of Religion. The first contains an absolutist view of truth, and the second, a relativist view. The one has a transcendent view of truth, and the other has an immanent view. The common typing of religions as either proselytizing or non-proselytizing reflects a division based upon the conception of truth held, the first being intolerant of rival conceptions, and the second ignoring rival conceptions. Following Kraemer's dual classification of religions another division would be into exclusive religions, (the absolutist type such as Christianity), and inclusive religions, (the relativist type such as Hinduism). The former demands the rejection of foreign elements, while the latter absorbs foreign elements, though not necessarily undergoing a complete synthesis. That both tendencies or attitudes or conceptions of truth may be found in a single religion is evident in the debate between Kraemer and Hocking, or even Barth and Brunner, in the problem of special and general revelation.

It is not only religions, or areas of single religions, which have different views of truth. Scholars of religion also have different ideas of the nature and "content" of truth. Some, such as Kraemer, reflect the conception of truth enshrined in their personal religion or philosophy of life. They all reflect also some more general conceptions of truth common to scholars; and common to the scientific outlook, to Aristotelian logic, to psychological need, and to the dialectical spiritual condition of man, etc. This is not to say that different scholars reflect identical general conceptions of truth: Both their specific

and more general conceptions of truth may differ. Thus both Kraemer and Hocking seem to have the identical specific idea of Jesus Christ being the Truth, in so far as both are Christian. In addition, however, both have a unitary conception of truth as their more general conception. Kraemer's general conception is exclusivist in character, or "form," while Hocking's is inclusivist. In other words, one is an absolutist and the other is a relativist. What Kraemer deplores in Hocking and many others is that they substitute this more general conception for the specific Christian conception or "content." They act as if their specific conception was Christian, but in actual fact adhere to some other specific conception, often a philosophical one: Thus claiming to be Christian, and yet not being Christian.

The conceptions of the nature of truth in general in relation to religious truth are exemplified in the divergent views of Roger Mehl, and David Gnanaprakasam Moses, representing two poles of thought.

Mehl believes that a great deal of the difficulty encountered in dealing with truth in relation to Christianity has been due to the attempt to marry two different conceptions of truth, forcing them into the same framework. Thus Christian truth and philosophical-scientific truth have been lumped together.

"Having received from Greece the idea that the truth must be one and homogeneous; and knowing that the total truth is to be found in Jesus Christ; yet unwilling to give up the truths they had learned at the school of the pagan philosophers, they could not but endeavour to integrate these elements of truth into the revealed truth."<sup>47</sup>

However, if the attempt to weld the two different conceptions of truth together is abandoned, and if the further attempt to subordinate one to the other is also abandoned, then much of the difficulty is removed. Mehl's first suggestion is that truth may have different orders, not being One, and not being homogeneous. Jesus Christ, or Revelation, is thus free to be the truth. As to the other orders of truth, that remains a problem, (although Mehl's second suggestion is that truth ultimately will be made One, becoming a unity in the eschaton).

Exactly the opposite conclusion is reached by Moses, (laying aside Mehl's second suggestion for the moment), who declares that truth in general is One and is a genus, but has various species or aspects, such as truth in science, in religion, in art, etc. The ways of knowing the truth vary according to the individual species.<sup>48</sup>

Between these two poles of thought, many other positions can be ranged. Tillich has some kinship with both positions in his system of circles of truth--the circle of philosophy, of science, and of faith. Each is independent, but not necessarily in opposition to the others. Tillich's task is to correlate them.<sup>49</sup> Toynbee sees truth under two different aspects, in terms of the two organs in man that apprehend truth: The conscious (or volitional) aspect, and the sub-conscious (or emotional) aspect. Fundamentally he holds that there is a common bedrock of truth on which the two views of truth are founded.<sup>50</sup>

Kraemer has a link with Mehl in so far as his principle of discontinuity removes Christ as the Truth from



synthesis with anything else, or subordination to anything else. Both draw heavily on the Bible, and appreciate Calvin's opinion of truth, (as noted on P.60). Kraemer has made a favourable reference to Mehl,<sup>51</sup> but it is not in regard to this particular book, or idea.

Kraemer gives a negative critique of Moses' book, with its ideas cited above. It is too philosophical, subjective and anti-Biblical. He also rejects Moses' critique of his own thought; but he is less severe with some fresh ideas which Moses<sup>52</sup> produced in a subsequent article.

In passing, it is to be recorded that Kraemer takes a negative view of Tillich in reference to the circles of truth mentioned. He does this not only on the basis of a study of Tillich's works, but also after a personal encounter with Tillich during academic sessions at the Bossey Institute. He finds Tillich sets out to be a theologian who simply works in the field<sup>53</sup> of philosophy.

## VI. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

While no final conclusions can be drawn until later, some steps toward these conclusions present themselves. To begin with, Kraemer's intention to enter the arena of the science of Religion from the standpoint of theology, (understood as biblical theology, rather than philosophical theology), must be taken more seriously than scholars of Religion would care to admit. Scholars of Religion have in the past neglected this avenue, in spite of the fact it can be a "science" or study; and in spite of the fact it is a

study which has primarily sought to deal with religion in its own way. In addition, Kraemer is simply trying to declare to scholars of Religion and missiologists the implications of being a Christian when these are taken to their logical conclusions.

The nub of Kraemer's thought is that the key to the understanding of religion is not so much in the phenomenon itself, but in man himself, who records, and in a very real sense, initiates, this phenomenon. Man's need to build religions is the product of his religious consciousness in its dialectical situation. Here Kraemer reveals his deep debt to Calvin. He says that Calvin terms this consciousness the sensus divinitatis and also the instinctus naturalis, and the semen religionis.<sup>54</sup> He goes on to interpret Calvin as holding that while God is revealed in nature and in the very fact man has a sensus divinitas, man cannot comprehend this properly due to his fallen state, or in Kraemer's terms, the dialectical condition of his religious consciousness. While Kraemer believes that Calvin's ideas constitute a kind of general revelation, he himself concludes that in the true sense of the term, there is only special revelation, and goes no further. He does not seem to feel any fundamental disagreement with Calvin, as the latter notes that man cannot make use of the general revelation to any extent, except to build up his own religions. In this way, Kraemer avoids the problem of general versus special revelation, in which other religions might be seen as part of a general revelation. He thereby rejects the logos spermatikos approaches to Missiology, of

early and modern vintage. He rejects Thomism's synthesis of natural and revealed religion, as well as the whole faith-reason controversy, the nature and grace controversy, and natural theology, etc. In the setting up of his argument, Kraemer, like Calvin, makes use of the opening sections of Romans. In light of this argument, ~~Kraemer~~ Kraemer evolves the principle of discontinuity.

In emphasizing the religious consciousness, the problem of the pluralism of religions is dealt with. The pluralism is simply the product of man's ingenuity in building religions--there is no pluralism, in actual fact, but only the one factor, the religious consciousness which is the same in all men. Ignorance of this factor has resulted in the multitude of conflicting concepts of the nature of Religion. The force of the idea of general revelation is likewise dissipated to a good extent when its source is found to be in the workings of man's religious consciousness. However, if general revelation is rejected, and only special revelation is allowed, how can Kraemer's emphasis on Jesus Christ as the revelation, (in sympathy with Barth), be squared with the fact that the Bible does record other revelations? Kraemer holds that Barth is in error here--there are other revelations, but they must be seen in terms of the font of revelation, Jesus Christ. Kraemer goes very little further in elucidating his difference with Barth on this matter, except to say that Christ is the final revelation of all the biblical revelations, and the criterion by which they are interpreted.<sup>55</sup>

To try and summarize Kraemer's understanding

of revelation, and this in effect means the revelation Jesus Christ, is to say that revelation is the means by which man's dialectical situation is begun to be overcome. It is to say that there is Jesus Christ seen as a fact, as existing, and hence, He must be encountered in some way, even if it is to avoid Him. For Kraemer, Jesus Christ is taken to have existed, whereas those of other religions, or even those of more liberal tendencies, would dispute the fact, or tend to weaken its implications as a fact. Furthermore, Kraemer does not simply say that this fact is true. He does not simply link this fact to something else which is understood to be the nature of truth, i.e., saying only that Jesus Christ is true; but rather, Kraemer says that Jesus Christ is this very something which is generally called truth, i.e., Jesus Christ is the Truth. Thus the credentials of the truthfulness of the fact are in the fact itself--it being self-authenticating. The fact is true, because it is identical with that which is the standard of truth. Jesus Christ is Truth because He is Reality, exposing man's sinful situation, his real situation, for, via the doctrine of the Trinity, He is the Son of the Creator of Reality. The self-evident character of truth seen in Jesus Christ cannot be emphasized enough in order to understand Kraemer fully and appreciate his very significant contribution to the methodology of the Science of Religion, acknowledged by such men as Joseph M. Kitagawa, in The History of Religions, (Mircea Eliade, ed., Chicago 1959, p. 14), for example.

To accept Jesus Christ as a fact is to bring in

the concept of reality. To bring in the concept of reality is not only to suggest an existential understanding of truth, as already mentioned, but also to suggest a theory of truth in which what corresponds to reality is said to be true. That is, it involves the correspondence theory of truth, as commonly held by many. The Platonic version of this theory is given in Appendix A, but modern allusions to it continually arise--Tillich's section on "Truth and Verification" in Volume I of his Systematic Theology being an example.

To say that Jesus Christ is the Truth is really to be speaking about truth in two senses. First, there is the "content" sense, where Jesus Christ, rather than a Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, or other interpretation of reality is accepted. Secondly, there is the "form" sense, where a standard, which is unitary, absolutist, exclusivist, etc., is meant. The complication of Kraemer's position arises, as referred to above, in so far as "form" and "content" are superimposed on each other, whereas in other notions of truth they remain distinct. Thus in Plato's sense, a person's understanding of Truth--or as well, of something being true--is quite separate from the eternal Idea of Truth, open to all men if they can grasp it.

The proclamation that Jesus Christ is the Truth invokes a general concept of truth, as referred to earlier, whether intended by Kraemer or not. His entrance into Religionswissenschaft and theology, means entanglement with their presuppositions, which include a general concept of truth, involving the idea of objectivity, (the attempt to

see reality), the idea of uniformity, etc.<sup>56</sup> Kraemer's acceptance of a unitary "form" of truth and his rejection of a relativistic "form" imply the rejection of certain other conceptions of the "form" of truth. Specifically, as listed on page 178 of Religion and the Christian Faith, and noted earlier, his rejection of relativism takes the form in the reference, (the "intellectual twilight" which followed Hegelianism), of a refusal to consider truth as being unrevealed or inaccessible. There is the refusal to consider the possibility of truth simply not existing, or being plural. This pluralism may take the "form" of truth, (as found in each religion) being the whole truth, in which case there are many wholes and many truths because there are many religions. On the other hand, to say, as Kraemer does at this point, that the implication of relativism is that all religions are equally true, can mean, not that truth is plural, but instead, that each religion is only a partial glimpse of the truth. Truth is thus fragmented; and is possibly incomplete even if all the religions are added together. Relativism can also mean that the same truth can be seen in many different ways. Thus truth is plural; or it is partial; or it is many faceted, although being singular in character. It may also consist of many degrees if one religion is held to be truer than the next, (with some students of Religion holding that Christianity is the truest).<sup>57</sup> A fuller treatment of the relationship between Kraemer's general conception of truth and various other conceptions of truth will be examined later, at the same time bearing in mind the various philosophical definitions of truth listed in Appendix A. Here it is to be repeated that

Kraemer rejects a pluralistic conception of truth, and this is perhaps a reflection of the monotheistic religion he follows, for pluralistic theories find more congenial ground in polytheistic religions. In such religions various gods are in a sense the Truths for the believer. The common employment of a unitary truth frame of reference in Western scientific thinking, which may have its roots in monotheism's outlook,<sup>58</sup> and in Aristotelian logic, overshadows other frameworks which allow for multiplicity. For example, besides the Western conception of medicine, including psychiatry, there are the Hindu and African conceptions, men such as Sargant having taken the African witch doctor's conception of "psychiatry" quite seriously. Alternative, and possibly mutually exclusive, theories in psycho-analysis can be interpreted as suggesting a plural conception of truth almost as readily as a unitary conception. The Soviet approach to physics, and some other sciences, also varies from the American approach, as documented by Michael Polanyi in Personal Knowledge, (Chicago, 1958, p. 13, footnote 1). However, James Brown has noted how deeply engrained the unitary conception of truth is:

"Beneath all surface differences all sane people still believe that the truth is one in the end (whether we can attain to that truth or not); which is as much as to say that there is a final objectivity which includes all others."<sup>59</sup>

He also believes that this truth is immanentist and eternal, (rather than historical), writing in a Hindu and also a Platonic vein of thought which Kraemer would reject in spite of his recognition of the unitary quality of truth.<sup>60</sup>

The struggle toward truth suggested by Brown may be seen in Tillich as the problem of the subjective-objective dialectic; in Plato as the attempt to look inward to the eternal ideas, (and in one sense to remember them); in Bradley and Hegel as Truth being more and more completely expressed; and in the logical positivists and linguistic analysts as the attempt to verify and define.<sup>61</sup> It may be seen also in Kierkegaard's leap toward affirming and being the truth. Finally, it may be seen in Kraemer's idea of the Fall being overcome in Christ and completed at the eschaton.

While the foregoing analysis of Kraemer has sometimes tended to be rather negative, the positive contribution he has made to the study of Religion will be noted later. Many of his fellow-delegates at the International Missionary Council meetings he attended also responded negatively, as he himself noted. Reviews of his works have also tended to be somewhat negative. However, part of this tendency may be a reflection of Kraemer's rejection of so many different approaches to religion. Part of his positive contribution has been to sweep the ground clear, refusing to water down the unique message of Jesus Christ. This point has frequently not been appreciated.

To cast Kraemer's position in a bolder outline, a comparison with Radhakrishnan follows. The latter has been chosen as being at the opposite end of a continuum of approaches to religion. Both he and Kraemer are scholars of religion who are also believers; and who do not hesitate to bring their faith into the realm of the study of Religion. While Kraemer represents an absolutist approach,



Radhakrishnan represents a relativist approach. Both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan think in terms of an East-West axis. In addition, Radhakrishnan has also been chosen because Kraemer makes a special effort to analyze his thought in Religion and the Christian Faith, and he is taken to be a good example of one who is steeped in the second category of religions arrived at by Kraemer.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning Of Revelation, N.Y., 1941, Macmillan, p. 93.
2. Hendrik Kraemer, Why Christianity Of All Religions?, Philadelphia, 1962, Westminster.
3. H. Richard Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 135.
4. Ibid., p. 73. Before one can understand Jesus, one must understand the Jewish presuppositions of Paul and others of his day. On this point see Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Focal Essay: The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth", James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr., eds., New Frontiers in Theology, Vol. III, N.Y., 1957, Harper and Row, pp. 104-106.
5. Ibid., p. 85 ff.
6. Ibid., p. 83.
7. See Appendix A for definitions of truth referred to in this chapter.
8. pp. 431-432.
9. p. 11.
10. Hendrik Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, N.Y., 1938, Harper, p. 8.
11. Walter Lowrie, Johann Georg Hamann, an existentialist, Princeton, 1950, Princeton Theological Seminary, p. 8.
12. Ibid., p. 12 f.
13. Ibid., p. 26; p. 44; pp. 56-57.
14. Ibid., p. 78.
15. Ronald Gregor Smith, J.G. Hamann, 1730-1788, N.Y., 1960, Harper, p. 47; see footnote 2, p. 46; letter to Kant, July 27, 1759, RI, 429-445 = BI 373-381.
16. In ref. to dialectic cf. E.L. Wenger, "The Problem Of Truth in Religion: Prolegomenon To An Indian Christian Theology", Ernest A. Payne, ed., Studies In History And Religion, London, 1942, Lutterworth, pp. 173-174.
17. Jaroslav Pelikan, Human Culture and The Holy, London, 1955, S.C.M., p. 47.

18. Nicolas Berdyaev, Truth and Revelation, London, 1953, Bles, p. 22. Kraemer would not agree that Truth is God, as he objects to Gandhi's similar formulation in Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 134.

19. Ibid., p. 66.

20. Hendrik Kraemer, Religion and the Christian Faith, op. cit., p. 82, footnote 1, ref. to H.A. Hodges, Language, Standpoints and Attitudes, p. 68.

21. Ibid.

22. H.A. Hodges, Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction, London, 1944, Kegan Paul, pp. 91-92; cf., R.G. Collingwood, The Idea Of History, N.Y., 1956, Oxford, p. 230.

23. Ibid., p. 105.

24. Ibid.

25. Helmut Kuhn, Encounter With Nothingness, Hinsdale, 1949, The Humanist Library, No. 11, pp. 44-58.

26. James Brown, Subject And Object In Modern Theology, London, 1955, S.C.M., passim.

27. Martin Rade, "Truth, Truthfulness", S.M. Jackson, ed., The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. XII, N.Y., 1912, Funk, p. 29.

28. See "Phenomenology", Appendix A.

29. Religionswissenschaft and Science of Religion are used interchangeably in this chapter, and are similar in meaning to the term "History of Religions" used in contemporary journals of Religion.

30. Hendrik Kraemer, Religion and the Christian Faith, op. cit., p. 44.

31. Ibid., p. 83; cf., p. 60.

32. Ibid., p. 139.

33. Ibid., p. 48.

34. Hendrik Kraemer, "The Formation of the World Council and its Significance for the Relations of the Churches to one another", The Ecumenical Review, Vol. I, No. 2, 1949, p. 262.

35. Hendrik Kraemer, Religion and the Christian Faith, op. cit., p. 84.

36. Ibid., 178.

37. Ibid., p. 375.

38. The Communication of the Christian Faith, Philadelphia, 1956, Westminster, pp. 69-70, cf., Carl G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, London, 1933, K. Paul.

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40. Hendrik Kraemer, From Missionfield to Independent Church, London, 1958, S.C.M., passim, in ref. to Indonesia, cf., Religion and the Christian Faith, op. cit., p. 323 f; cf., W.E. Hocking's remark on Kraemer in Indonesia, footnote 3, Appendix B.

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50. Arnold J. Toynbee, An Historian's Approach To Religion, N.Y., 1956, Oxford, p. 122 ff; cf., A Study Of History, N.Y., 1957, Oxford, abridged ed., London, 1954, Oxford, Vol. VII, pp. 465-506, sec. VII (c), unabridged ed.

51. Hendrik Kraemer, The Communication of the Christian Faith, op. cit., p. 11; p. 58; p. 62.

52. Religion and the Christian Faith, op. cit., p. 229 f.

53. Ibid., pp. 446-447.

54. Hendrik Kraemer, Religion and the Christian Faith, op. cit., p. 169.

55. Ibid., pp. 358-359.

56. Roger Mehl, op. cit., p. 197, quoting Hendrik Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, French trans. in Foi et Vie, 1939, No. I, no p. cited.

57. Cf., Why Christianity Of All Religions?, passim.

58. Donald Mathers, Queen's Theological College, Kingston, unpublished lectures in Systematic Theology attended by the writer in 1957-60.

59. James Brown, op. cit., p. 33.

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61. See Appendix A.

## CHAPTER III

## SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN'S CONCEPTION OF TRUTH IN RELIGION

## I. GENERAL POSITION

The span of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's work covers almost half a century and still continues, but the length of time has not made for any variation in the general themes enunciated in such early works as The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy, (London, 1920). These general themes are found to a limited extent in his commentaries on Hindu scriptures and philosophy, but more particularly in his other writings.<sup>1</sup>

Something of the nature of the major themes that sweep across the pages of his works over the years may be described as follows. To begin with, there is Radhakrishnan's great desire to explain the Hindu outlook to the West, to present a Hindu apologetic. The desire may be due to the philosopher's confrontation with Christianity under conditions of political servitude to the West, which made for a general down-grading of Hindu religion and culture.<sup>2</sup> Even with the independence of India in 1947, the need to explain Hindu thought to the "Christian" West is never completely lost sight of. The explanation is sometimes accompanied in Radhakrishnan, (and Gandhi for that matter), with a criticism of the wars and other evil actions of so-called "Christian" nations. The dialogue with the West is carried on in its own terms, due to Radhakrishnan's vast knowledge of Western thought and religion. His works are studded with references to

Western philosophers and Christian Scriptures, as well as Christian theologians and mystics. Whether he interprets many of these references in the same way as Western theologians is a question which will be noted a little later. The main vehicle transported over the bridge thus thrown up between East and West is the idea that the spiritual life of mankind has fallen into disrepair, and that the modern world needs and demands a new universal type of religion. Hinduism is declared to be of immense service in helping to found such a religion because of its depth and universal character. In this declaration, there is always the tension between Hinduism as the aid to the birth of a new religion, and as the actual religion which is so desperately needed, albeit with some renewal. The decay of spiritual life has had many ramifications. It has resulted in the growth of religion of a dogmatic character, intolerant of any who question its creeds, more interested in authoritative statements than authentic religious experiences of the human spirit. Radhakrishnan believed this dogmatism had crept into philosophy, and hence his corrective work The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy. The decline of true spiritual religion had resulted in various substitutes for religion, such as Communism. What man needs, in the modern world of shrinking distances and tremendous upheavals, is a universalistic religion of spiritual experience, with increasing fellowship among religions as a prelude. The inferior-superior or ignorant-enlightened atmosphere of former Christian missionary endeavours would have to give way to mutual respect.



Radhakrishnan has labelled his thought "monistic idealism" in his preface to The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy.<sup>3</sup> It is mainly in the closing chapter of this work that he reveals the essence of his thought, repeated and expanded in An Idealist View of Life (London, 1932). Much of The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy is devoted to a rejection of what is considered to be the opposite of monistic idealism, namely, pluralistic theism, and the rejection of other brands of idealism. In carrying out these two aims the book deals with Leibniz, James Ward, Bergson, William James, Rudolf Eucken, Bertrand Russell and others.<sup>4</sup> This early work is crucial for an understanding of Radhakrishnan's Eastern conception of truth, in general, and in religion, as he relates it to Western philosophies of truth, reality, and religion.

An appreciation of the final chapter of The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy is fruitful because it gives a concise explanation of the whole scheme of Radhakrishnan's thought in later works. The chapter is entitled "Suggestions Of An Approach To Reality Based On The Upanishads" and describes the first six sections of Chapter III of the Taittiriya Upanishad.<sup>5</sup> In these dialogues between a father and son, the son asks the nature of reality, or the Absolute, or Brahman, the three terms being used synonymously. Under the guidance of his father, the son meditates upon the question, being told that Brahman must include all else and must be understood as sustaining the universe.<sup>6</sup> Thus the problem is to find that in which all reality is unified, as reality presents itself to us as many

ways, including contradictions. Various definitions of Brahman are rejected due to the fact they are not all-inclusive: Matter, Life, Consciousness, (Mind or Perception), and Understanding, (Intellect, or Self-Consciousness), each in turn being dismissed. What is left is Intuition, which under a certain condition is Brahman. It is that condition in which the self does not distinguish itself from anything else, but, forgetting itself, realizes its unity with Reality. The condition of the Intuition is termed bliss or Ananda. Thus reality is a condition of the intuition, or more correctly, it is realized in this condition of bliss, neither the condition nor the intuition being identical with the whole of Brahman. In other words, Brahman is that which the self comes in contact with when it loses its self-identity. Then man peers into the depths of his being and grasps Reality. Thus Brahman is the self (or Atman), in so far as the self realizes it has reality within itself, or is a part of reality. To use an illustration, it is possible for man to grasp the nature of reality when he understands that he is like the branch of that tree which includes all else. In this sense, he is all, having achieved self-realization, and knowing he is of the same essence as Reality. In another sense, he is a part of all, but does not include all within himself. Only the Absolute includes all within itself.

From the brief portion of Hindu scripture referred to, there can be derived many illustrations of Hindu conceptions of reality. For example, it illustrates what is meant by the phrase neti neti, reality not being matter, not being life, etc. It suggests the nature of reality as being

without distinction, or qualities, or anything which would tend to limit it or give it a dualistic or pluralistic character. Reality is only realized by the self when divisions between self and not-self, when qualities and distinctions are passed over, or forgotten. Reality is arrived at when the distinction between subject and object is removed. It is found when contradictions are seen to have an underlying common ground. For Radhakrishnan, the last section of the portion noted suggests the principle of the analogy between the macrocosm and the microcosm, or nature and man,<sup>7</sup> to give another example of the potential of these lines of scripture.

In commenting on the foregoing conception of reality, the intuition is defined by Radhakrishnan as the religious consciousness.<sup>8</sup> In intuition, spirit is the ultimate reality experienced. There is no opposition between reason and intuition, because the latter lies above reason, experiencing what reason cannot experience.<sup>9</sup> It has its expression not only in religious belief, but also in literary and scientific creativity, as noted in An Idealist View of Life.

In connection with the dialogue between the father and the son, Radhakrishnan says that, while reality is revealed in man (in the self), the self is not the whole of reality. Reality or Brahman is above all in so far as all is included within itself. It is the nature of Brahman to grow, to manifest itself. The result is what appears to be a division into self, or God, and not-self or the matter of the universe. The latter is a reflection of God. God is

not the Absolute, but simply a manifestation of the Absolute. While God is the highest manifestation, this does not mean that the Absolute is completely manifested. The manifestation of the Absolute continues by further division which is really only apparent, as all is in One, and One is in all. So the universe evolves. When the Absolute has completely expressed itself, the process ends with self triumphing over not-self, the unity between the two being realized. Then the two dissolve back into the Absolute--an Absolute which has affirmed itself. The upward trend of this whole cosmic evolutionary process involves friction as the higher asserts itself against the lower, or in other words, suffering. Where there is no suffering, no struggle between spirit and matter there is no evolution or progress.<sup>10</sup> Thus the man who tries to achieve self-realization suffers, and his own spiritual evolution is a microcosm of the self-manifestation and "realization" of the Absolute.

## II. THE NATURE OF IDEALISM

The foregoing is a reference to the final chapter of the work which Radhakrishnan presented as the challenge of monistic idealism to theistic pluralism. While the final chapter is an illustration of monistic idealism, what does this term really mean? It is a philosophy, but what does Radhakrishnan understand by philosophy? Under his conception of idealism, philosophy must begin from religion. By the term philosophy Radhakrishnan is describing the attempt to grasp reality as a whole. Any philosophical theory must place all aspects of reality in some kind of whole or system

which itself does not require further explanation. Its explanation of the universe must be rational.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore:

"Philosophy is neither purely conceptualist nor merely empiricist, but is intuitional. Art is the living expression of the soul which feels itself to be in tune with the infinite. Morality is no more self-satisfaction or blind obedience to a set of categorical imperatives, but is the life of a soul which feels its grip firmly on the spiritual destiny of the world. Philosophy, art and religion become different expressions of the one feeling of unity with the universe."<sup>12</sup>

In the light of the above, and in light of W.C. Smith's contention that it is only in the modern West that religion is separated from the rest of life,<sup>13</sup> including philosophy, it is evident that religion is closely allied to philosophy in Radhakrishnan's mind, and in Hinduism. However, as pointed out in The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy and An Idealist View of Life, philosophy deals with reason, and reason of itself cannot explain reality. It can only seek to describe reality, including the religious experience of reality, but it cannot experience reality first-hand.

An idealistic philosophy thus tries to express its conception of oneness with the universe, and in this context the term idealism is understood in a teleological sense--it describes the aim and value of the cosmic evolution process described earlier. Idealism assumes that there is an aim, a purpose, a meaningfulness to the process.<sup>14</sup> Idealistic philosophy is that which allows us to see this purpose, and so interpret reality accordingly. It involves an understanding of the highest value, the value of the process, for value and reality are intimately linked. Idealism

is defined in these terms in "The Spirit In Man":

"The ideal of the cosmic process which at the same time is its goal and explanation is real in one sense though wanting to be realized in another. The ideal is the greatest fact in one way and a remote possibility in another. The values which the cosmic process is attempting to achieve are only a few of the possibilities contained in the Absolute."<sup>15</sup>

Hence there are dynamic and futuristic qualities in Radhakrishnan conception of idealism. There is also the quality of unity, of oneness, which is expressed by the adjective "monistic", in contrast to the pluralistic tendencies of the various philosophies studied in The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy. These philosophies lead to a dualistic or multiple view of ontology.

Radhakrishnan feels that it is only in Hindu thought that the separation between God and the universe is overcome, for he believes that any theory which does not overcome this separation is incomplete. Thus in opposition to the term "theism" he uses the term "idealism", rejecting at the same time pantheism and atheism.

### III. RELIGION

The discussion of monistic idealism has already involved a reference to religion. Religion for Radhakrishnan is the striving to experience reality, and so to achieve self-realization, or salvation, or truth. Philosophy's task is simply to describe reality as a whole. The task of science is to describe parts of reality. Man is felt by Radhakrishnan

to have an instinct for truth, to be continually searching for truth, which in effect means self-realization. It is in religion that this instinct for self-realization is satisfied,<sup>16</sup> or at least should be satisfied. The steps toward self-realization include purification and meditation. Self-realization is also termed "God-realisation" by Radhakrishnan, in Recovery Of Faith, (N.Y., 1955), because in it man gains an insight into reality and knows he is one with God. However, such insight goes even deeper. The mystics speak of going beyond God, to the heart of that reality of which He is only a manifestation.<sup>17</sup>

What the mystics receive in intuition is essentially inexpressible because the nature of the Absolute is without limitation. Any expression introduces restrictions and distinctions which make for a lack of unity. However, the scriptures of religions record the attempt of mystics to express the Absolute. Such expression necessitates the use of symbols and the use of current cultural references. Hence God may be spoken of as a person, in a symbolic way. Paul describes his religious experience on the Damascus road in reference to the person Christ, whom he had already heard of. St. Theresa, in her experience, speaks of the Trinity, with which she was already acquainted,<sup>18</sup> etc. Radhakrishnan makes a careful distinction between the experience itself and its expression, the expression is always inadequate, being limited to cultural frameworks and personal limitations. The cultural frameworks include linguistic inadequacies, such as philosophical terms which are misleading when applied to religion. Thus to speak of God may involve speaking of

the Absolute. The latter lacks some of the quality of what is associated with the word God. Nevertheless, it refers to what the mystic means by God, and the ground of God. In one sense, the Absolute is beyond God, in another, when God is seen as a manifestation of the Absolute, it is identical with the term God.<sup>19</sup>

After the mystic has gained insight, the process of conversion begins, when all is seen in light of the experience. The attempt to purify one's life begins on a higher level than previously. The various religions owe their origin to the insights of their founders whom Radhakrishnan calls the God-men.<sup>20</sup>

Heretofore religion has mainly been described in its best sense. However, Radhakrishnan also speaks of religion in a degenerate form--that which is dogmatic, claiming that only its own position is absolute. Such religion sets up objects of faith, for it is only by faith that its creeds, etc., can be held. Faith is unnecessary in "true" religion because reality is known, being directly experienced by the intuition. There is no need for faith, or proofs of the existence of God, etc., because the religious experience of the intuition is self-validating. The difference between pure and the degenerate forms of religion is that the former looks not only to the past experience of the mystics, but also to current and future mystical experience. The degenerate form of religion remains fixed on the past experience of a departed mystic. The one fastens on the Absolute, the unchanging, (in spite of its evolution). The other fastens on the changing, i.e., it fastens on one



particular manifestation of the Absolute. For example, it fastens on Jesus Christ's experience, or the Christian idea of a personal God. Karl Barth is singled out by Radhakrishnan as the most striking example of Christian dogmatism.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, Hocking is noted as a Christian thinker whose viewpoint is very broad.<sup>22</sup> The whole trend of dogmatic thinking leads to the understanding of God, or the nature of reality, as being external to man. In Hinduism, on the contrary, man's inner nature is an avenue to God. Dogmatic religion leads to an acceptance of authority, rather than experience, as its focal point.

The study of religious experience is what Radhakrishnan is dealing with when he examines religion in the framework of philosophy of religion. The task of philosophy of religion is to reconcile the apparent conflict between the Absolute seen as eternally complete and unchanging and the Absolute seen as the incomplete, changing manifestation "in the temporal process."<sup>23</sup> The philosophy of religion expounded by Radhakrishnan necessitates some of the pre-suppositions of comparative religion. In multitudes of references to various religions and philosophies, etc., he traces a parallelism of thought. (The dogmatic religionist, in contrast, emphasizes only differences in thought.) There are two explanations of parallelism, both of which are accepted by Radhakrishnan. The first involves the principle that as reality is one, different people will have similar religious experiences of it. In an analogous way, scientists in various places obtain similar results in similar experiments. The touchstone of Radhakrishnan's

conception of religion is that individuals can know God not only on the basis of the mystic's word, but also on the basis of their own personal experience. The second explanation of similar religious ideas is the theory that cultural diffusion has occurred. Radhakrishnan suggests that its direction has been from East to West--hence the similarity, for example, between various ideas in Christianity or Platonism, etc., and Hinduism.<sup>24</sup>

Philosophy of religion as conceived by Radhakrishnan explains why there is a plurality of religions in the world. More than one person has had religious insight and become the founder of a religion. The similarity of insight indicates that religion is essentially one because the reality experienced is essentially one. The plurality is only a first impression. Where differences seem deeper, it is only due to the differing cultural context of the expression of the insight. It is also due to the fact that the Absolute does manifest itself in more than one way, although being essentially one. The latter appearance of plurality is partly due to the continual manifestation of the Absolute at various evolutionary stages.<sup>25</sup> If man could completely grasp the nature of the Absolute, then no differences would arise. However, this would be impossible because no man can completely grasp that of which he is merely a part, although being in union with reality itself.

#### IV. TRUTH IN RELIGION

Some indication of Radhakrishnan's conception of truth in religion is already present in the description

of his general position. To be more explicit, his thought reveals that the boundary between truth in religion and truth in philosophy is never too rigidly maintained. There is no necessity to do so in Radhakrishnan's scheme of thought. Thus the nature of truth in religion is linked to the nature of truth in philosophy, which means it is linked to the nature of truth in general. The works of Radhakrishnan do not reveal any exhaustive treatment of the subject of truth, but the subject is implicit in many passages because it is essential to the nature of his idealistic philosophy. Such a philosophy envisages man in his religion striving toward a greater apprehension of reality. Man seeks, as it were, a greater reality. Radhakrishnan's idealism also envisages the whole of being or reality evolving by self-expression, (the manifestation of the Absolute). Higher and higher levels of reality are achieved. This movement or striving is expressed by the search for truth or reality. It is expressed by the movement towards truth or reality. As man realizes that matter is not the ultimate, that change and plurality are not the ultimate, he leaves behind the less-true for the more-true. It is not the case that matter, change, etc., is absolutely false, for Brahman is in matter, as in all else. On the other hand, it is not the case that the Absolute is alone true, for truth is found in its manifestations as well. The application of the term "truth" to the term "Absolute" would involve a distinction in the Absolute, a quality in it, whereas it is without quality or distinction, being formless. Still, the term truth is applied to the Absolute. Thus the Absolute, or even God might be

the Truth, (or Reality), and Truth might be said to be the Absolute or even God.<sup>26</sup> However, once a man experiences self-realization by becoming the truth or reality, the quality of truth applied to God and the Absolute drops away. It is no longer necessary to try to describe God or the Absolute by means of qualities such as truth, for one has now a direct experience of God, realizing that one is a part of God, and the Absolute.

In the idealistic conception of evolution, truth is a potential quality of the formless nature of reality or the Absolute. It is manifested during the process; and it is fully actualized at the end of the process in the final dominance of the Absolute over the expressions of the Absolute. Thus, in one sense, truth is only completely arrived at in the end. In another sense, it is present in every past and current manifestation of the Absolute, although it may seem to be only partially realized. In essence it cannot be less complete than in the Absolute, because it is a part of that same complete Absolute. In fact, however, it is less complete, being only a part, only a manifestation. Thus the doorway to complete truth is found in each manifestation, in so far as it reflects the Absolute and is the Absolute. However, it is not complete truth in itself.

As the Absolute is One, although manifested in the Many, each realization of the Absolute in each religion is true. In other words, the self-realization of the founder of each religion is true. Each founder has experienced the truth. Indeed, he has become the truth. He has become one with the Absolute, or Reality, whose quality is Truth because

it is truth. However, if religion becomes dogmatic and declares its intuition of the truth to be final and complete, then it is false. Thus all religions contain the truth, but only in part. Their experience is partial. It is impossible for them to comprehend completely the Absolute partly because it has not finished its evolutionary process. Even when finished, the potential is not exhausted. In another sense, religion is false in so far as it limits the inexpressible to an expression. It thereby distorts and falsifies it.

Truth in religion, for Radhakrishnan, is the experience that all is One, that self is not-self, that Atman is Brahman, in essence and in part. The experience of this truth is quite different from the mere knowledge of it by the aid of sense and reason in the study of the scriptures. While religious truth is in the context of all Radhakrishnan's works cited here, the nature of truth in general is mainly considered in The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy, although references do occur in other works. Truth in religion, in philosophy, in science, literature, and art, cannot really be separated in Radhakrishnan's works. Each conception casts light on the others, being essentially unified.

The epistemology affirmed by Radhakrishnan in relation to religious truth is one which focuses on intuition, rather than reason or sense experience.

Sense experience is inadequate in providing an understanding of ultimate reality. It can lead to the

conclusion that reality is divided, whereas Radhakrishnan holds that essentially it is united. Reasoning leads to knowledge, but knowledge of something is not the same as experiencing it. It is only the intuition which gives an experience of ultimate reality. Here the person establishes a link between self and ~~not~~ self. The link is now seen to be the presupposition of ordinary knowledge. That is, in ordinary knowledge we think in relation to an external reality which we can apprehend, although seeming to be separate from it. After self-realization has been achieved by the intuition, reason may try to express this experience, although inadequately. Such an expression would be termed knowledge, but it is always nothing like the actual experience of self-realization, being simply the attempt to describe it.

Intuition can be seen at work in various fields, such as poetry, art, and science. Here the person may labour for some time and then have an insight into the matter being considered. The intuition is not the result of reasoning, although in science much thought may precede and follow it. Intuition is that light which suddenly bursts upon one, that new meaning given to old facts, that sudden flash of inspiration. While intuition is found at work in these various fields, it is only in religion that it functions at its highest and most complete level. In all fields, intuitions appear as self-evident. It is only after an experience of them that the reason is employed to try to describe them and draw logical conclusions from them. In the sphere of religion, what Radhakrishnan means by intuition is akin to some extent to that meant by illumination in

Christian mysticism. However, in the ultimate intuitive experience of self-realization it appears to go far deeper: to union with the very source of enlightenment. In this experience, which does not last, one forgets the self and may appear to others as being in a dreamless sleep.<sup>27</sup>

While religious truth may express itself as a personal God, ultimate truth is impersonal. It is essentially unchanging, and yet changes from manifestation to manifestation, sometimes involving apparent contradiction, or apparent self-limitation. Its changes always imply evolution. Thus any "description" of it must not remain fixed, as it is changing.

Truth in religion is essentially public.<sup>28</sup> All who purify themselves sufficiently can realize it, just as all with eyes can see the material world. However, as not all are able to realize the Absolute at once, it appears to them to be unknown and unknowable. In one sense, it is unknowable because man cannot grasp it completely. It is really only the Absolute which can completely grasp anything. At the end of the cosmic process the Absolute completely grasps all its manifestations, no doubt man included.

One of the basic assumptions of Radhakrishnan's idealism is that the universe is meaningful, and thus, that there is a truth to be grasped, to be comprehended. Without the sense of meaningfulness, and direction, truth becomes relative and pragmatic and impotent. Hence meaningful religious truth exists for Radhakrishnan.

Finally, for Radhakrishnan, truth in general, ultimate truth, is absolute. This absolute truth is the truth of religion. It is independent and without qualification. It is the Absolute. It emerges as the Absolute actualizes its potentiality. It is even more than this, for the Absolute does not exhaust its potentiality and truth is a function of this potentiality. Such truth is unchangeable, being unaffected by man's realization of it, although its manifestations are changeable. There is the analogy in science of formulations constantly being revised as new data emerges while the essential task of seeking knowledge continues without any change. The very Absolute, (Atman), in man forces him to seek the Absolute, rejecting first this and then that. When Radhakrishnan speaks in The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy of absolutist idealism, he means just such an idealism that has an Absolute as its aim, or reference point. The latter is in contrast with the idealism of men such as Bergson whose thought ends in a chaotic pluralism of disconnected states. Radhakrishnan's idealism is absolutist in that it affirms the idea of teleology, and its concomitant, meaningfulness. It is the rejection of that relativism and subjectivism which is the product of pluralism.<sup>29</sup> The word absolutist is also used as a synonym for spiritual in "My Search for Truth" where it is applied to religion.<sup>30</sup>

## V. ANALYSIS

It is no surprise to find that Radhakrishnan's works teem with references to sources from many fields and



cultures because such is the natural result of his view that the task of philosophy is to be all-inclusive. He translates Hindu concepts into Western concepts by using illustrations from many facets of Western culture. He finds a parallelism in thought between East and West, ancient and modern, science and religion, etc. Thus the "proof" of a Hindu concept may be given by parallels--for example, in reference to enlightenment he says:

"Attempts to rationalize the mystery, to translate into the language of concepts that which is inexpressible in concepts have resulted in different versions. They all take their source in the aspiration of man towards an unseen world though the forms in which this aspiration is couched are determined by the environment and climate of thought. The historical statements of faith should not be confused with the inner meaning of religious life itself. This is the teaching not only of the Upanisads and of Buddhism but also of the Greek systems and Platonism, of Islam and of the Gospels and the Schools of Gnosticism. This is the perennial philosophy..." 31

Besides such sweeping references there are multitudes of more specific ones such as:

"Tat tvam asi (that art Thou).....is a simple statement of an experienced fact. The Biblical text, 'So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him', asserts that in the soul of man is contained the true revelation of God.... According to Plato man is potentially a participator in the eternal mode of being which he can make his own by living in detachment from the fleeting shadows of the earth. In the Theaetetus Socrates declares that we should strive to become 'like unto the divine'. 'I and my Father are one', 'All that the Father hath are mine', is the way in which Jesus expressed the same profound truth." 32

These many sources are used for the support of Radhakrishnan's thought only in so far as they are the means of translating his own interpretation of Hinduism into Western terms. The real support for his thought does not lie in these references, but in the Hindu scriptures themselves as he interprets them. While it is impossible here to determine the matter at length, due to the sheer volume of Hindu thought, he does state in his commentary on the Upanisads, (The Principal Upanisads, London, 1953), that he follows the commentary of Samkara. It is also significant that in the History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, (of which he was the editorial board chairman), his contribution is on Samkara. In this article he says that Samkara "established spiritual-absolutism or non-dualism as the main teaching of the Upanisads." <sup>33</sup> He also says that Samkara held that ultimate reality is known as a spiritual being by means of intuition, the experience being self-authenticating. Reality is undefinable, being falsified it is objectified. It is non-dual rather than one, for to say it is "one" would be to objectify it. However, this does not mean it is nothing. It is that which meets the test of all-inclusiveness mentioned earlier. This is really a test of non-contradiction, for if anything is contrary to the "Absolute", the latter must be less than the Absolute.

Samkara's understanding of the intuitive experience of reality is described by Radhakrishnan as one in which <sup>34</sup> "everything is felt as the self". This ultimate reality which is known is both being and consciousness. It cannot be denied, because one's own being cannot be denied. It is

subjective in the sense that it is discovered in the self, but this does not mean it is private, as others can experience it. Reality or Brahman is not one with the world, but it is also not different from the world. The latter is not absolutely real, but only relatively real, i.e., it is not nothingness.

In his article Radhakrishnan denies that Saṃkara was overly influenced by Buddhism; rather he is seen as simply being familiar with Buddhism, and referring to it in order to maintain his own Hindu position in the face of it.<sup>35</sup>

In carrying out his parallelisms, and in other ways indicating the universalistic character of his conception of Hinduism, Radhakrishnan extracts support from those who in his opinion are fellow idealists: Saṃkara, Plotinus, Parmenides, Plato,<sup>36</sup> Dante, Spinoza, Bradley,<sup>37</sup> Hegel, Bosanquet, and Joachim.<sup>38</sup> Radhakrishnan has also noted the idealism of Bergson and Eucken, etc., but found it wanting in each case.

The idealists who seem to hover most often in the background of Radhakrishnan's thinking include Plato, Hegel, and Bradley, (who was influenced by Hegel). There are many references to (Radhakrishnan's interpretation of) Plato's Ideas: The Good, the True, and the Beautiful. There are many references to Plato's doctrine of recollection and his emphasis on the intuition as the way to the knowledge of reality, in contrast with the less-real world of sense experience.<sup>39</sup> There is an analogy here between Brahman, as the condition of knowledge, and the Good, in whose light the

True is seen. In this case Truth is a good or value.<sup>40</sup>

Religion and philosophy are seen to merge in Plato's works, just as they do in Radhakrishnan's. This plays a part in Radhakrishnan's sympathy for Plato. In Plato's thought the idea of a former life and after-life, etc., may have been influenced by currents of Hindu thought, according to Radhakrishnan.<sup>41</sup>

In Hegel's great process of dialectic, Radhakrishnan finds a similarity, or at least an empathy, to his own idea of a cosmic process. However, to Radhakrishnan's consternation, in Hegelianism it is not the intuition but the reason which is made supreme:

"Hegel, by the exaggerated importance he attaches to conceptual thinking, is inclined to make reason organic to reality, if not to elevate reality to the rank of a concept. He makes logical opposition the prime condition of all being. Dialectic becomes for Hegel not merely a method of philosophical discovery and exposition, but also a description of the way in which things habitually come into being and grow."<sup>42</sup>

In seeking to reduce the supremacy of reason as the way to knowledge, Radhakrishnan cites Bradley's contention that the intellect falsifies reality by its consideration of it, breaking up its unity into "a system of separate terms and relations."<sup>43</sup> In the intellect truth is considered as if it exists in some way separate from that to which it is being applied. (This is another question again, noted in Appendix A.) In the intuition, "truth is completely identified with reality", or in other words, "truth when it

becomes existential nullifies the distinction between the knower and the known..."<sup>44</sup>

Although the general impression left by many of Radhakrishnan's works is that Hinduism can be found in essence in many places, he does reject some lines of thought. This is done mainly in The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy. Here various philosophies are rejected for their pluralism, conflicting as they do with Radhakrishnan's unitary or monistic outlook. They are also rejected for their theism, in contrast with Radhakrishnan's emphasis on the Absolute, which is beyond the notion of a personal god. Pluralism does not allow for the all-inclusiveness demanded by Radhakrishnan. In pluralism, contradictions, such as good and evil, are allowed to exist. Contradictions can not be the ultimate of a philosophic system Radhakrishnan protests. One of the roots of pluralism is theism. Theism does not conceive of an all-inclusive "something", but rather a personal, finite God, who is separate from the world in the sense that it is not a part of his being. Separation, and the finitude suggested by a personal god, indicate a pluralistic situation, which is intolerable to Radhakrishnan. He wants an inclusive, infinite, and impersonal kind of God, or in other words, the Absolute.

For Radhakrishnan, the outstanding example of pluralism is Leibniz, seen as the "type for all subsequent pluralistic conceptions."<sup>46</sup> He is held to conceive of the real as being plural, reality consisting of the monads, and the world we see simply being a subjective phenomenon.<sup>47</sup>

Another example for Radhakrishnan is James Ward's pluralistic conception of many spirits, which in the future ultimately end in unity with each other. On the contrary, says Radhakrishnan, "the absolutists hold it /unity/ to be in the past."<sup>48</sup>

Although Radhakrishnan does feel that William James is a pluralist, and he opposes pluralism, what he objects to most in James' works is that his conception of truth, (noted in Appendix A), ends in subjectivity. Truth is simply that which is expedient for the demands of a particular person. It is entirely relative to the person and situation. What is true for one can be false for another, whereas truth for Radhakrishnan is in a sense objective, i.e., available to the public, if they can attain to it. James' truth is constantly changing, as satisfaction or lack of satisfaction of personal demands takes place. The fact that something is proved by experience to be true does not mean that it, itself, is truth. Thus, when something has the quality of truth, this does not mean that it makes up the nature of truth. Radhakrishnan believes that James has confused these two points. In James' system, Radhakrishnan deplores the emphasis on human desire, and its satisfaction. This says Radhakrishnan is due to the rebellion of James against the rationalism of idealism. James displaces reason with mere personal whims which are elevated into utilitarian philosophies such as his own. Such over-emphasis on the individual and his freedom, or "democracy" as Radhakrishnan calls it, is criticized in other thinkers besides James in The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy.

In turning to criticism in a recent work, Religion in a Changing World, (London, 1967), one finds an attack on various representatives of linguistic analysis. A.J. Ayer is criticized because his system of thought lands one in a life without meaning. Radhakrishnan believes that Comte and Hume, whom he considers as forerunners of Ayer, landed in the same morass. In addition, Radhakrishnan would argue, they all over-emphasize sense experience. Rudolph Carnap the logical positivist also comes under the same criticism of increasing the meaninglessness of life, whereas idealism finds meaning in it.<sup>50</sup> Bertrand Russell, who is indirectly related to linguistic analysis, was taken to task by Radhakrishnan in the earlier The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy for his emphasis on the reality of subject and object, or consciousness of something and the something itself. Actually, holds Radhakrishnan, it is the mind which makes the distinction between object and subject, but these are not essentially two separate things, being simply aspects of the one thing. He says of Russell:

"The realist /Russell/ affirms a dualism between the world of meaning and the world of direct experience. To the realist every object in consciousness, whether a material thing, a feeling, or a universal, has independent reality. The idealist, on the other hand, believes that meaning and fact are organic elements in one concrete whole."<sup>51</sup>

It is fitting to sum up this section with the last words of Radhakrishnan in The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy:

"...the Upanishads being the earliest form of speculative idealism in the world, all that is good and great in subsequent philosophy looks like an unconscious commentary on the Upanishadic ideal, showing how free and expansive and how capable of accommodating within itself all forms of truth that ideal is."<sup>52</sup>

## VI. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The nature of truth in religion, and in general, which emerges from the works of Radhakrishnan suggests that the term cannot be used without reference to a meaningful, and in a sense, objective reality. This is contrary to the meaninglessness, solipsism, and subjectivity of life as seen by various philosophers of the present time, such as Sartre. In Radhakrishnan reality is objective in the sense that it can be known by the self. However it is not a product of the self, although--through the idea of Braham--it ultimately is seen to be linked to the self. The effect of this conception on the idea of truth, is that, first of all, in its best sense, truth is seen to be intuitive. Here one is so far beyond doubt that there is little need for the term truth to be used at all. Thus, in the intuition, truth is unnamed because it is self-evident. Secondly, this conception of reality suggests that in searching for the truth one has already found it, for one does search, convinced that there is some link between man and reality. In other words, even though man seems separate from external reality on the surface, the reason one searches for truth and reality is because one is dimly aware that man is in touch with reality, or is a part of reality. Here is some-



thing similar in effect to Plato's idea of recollection. Science and philosophy and religion are based on the conviction that reality exists and man can know it. They are attempts to affirm this conviction. In the intuition it is found that the gap between man and reality, between ignorance and experience, is a misconception.

To consider the matter in a different way--how can the problem of plurality, and the problem of being unable to get "out of ourselves", in order to examine ourselves, to enter the mind of others--how can these two problems be solved? The answer given by Radhakrishnan is to become the other--something which has always appeared impossible to epistemology. Its many labours have tried to deal with the problem of man in his mental prison of individuality. With this leap out of the self, which is what self-realization amounts to, many of the problems which have plagued religion and philosophy disappear. Some examples of the problems include faith and reason, good and evil, the plurality of religion, the One and the Many, change and the unchanging, etc. In addition, the acceptance of the concept of self-realization means that the problem of truth in religion disappears. Religion is seen as essentially singular rather than plural, and so the problem of religious truth evaporates. There may have even been an original universal religion, and all signs suggest the possibility of a new universal religion. (It is assumed by Radhakrishnan that all men do have similar faculties of intuition and that they do respond to reality in the same way.)

It is evident that, for Radhakrishnan, to speak of religion is to speak of mysticism and metaphysics in the same breath. Where does this leave men such as Barth who have little time for religion, mysticism, or philosophy? It will be seen that Radhakrishnan's method of inclusiveness and generalization, tends to gloss over differences and problems by the sheer weight of the many parallels drawn between Hinduism and Western thought. Furthermore, not everyone would agree that these parallels are valid. Isma<sup>c</sup>il Ragi A. al Faruqi, as noted in the previous chapter, is of the opinion that an element of a religion must be understood in relation to its whole. D.G. Moses, also noted in the same chapter, holds that mysticism is not the same for all, referring to Otto's classic study of Eckhart and Saṅkara.<sup>53</sup>

The kind of religion which is depicted by Radhakrishnan as being the best type is that which leads the person to self-realization or spiritual growth. Truth in this religious context is that which is a guide to reality, leading one to become the truth, to become one with ultimate reality. Intuition of this kind is not grasped without much labour.<sup>54</sup> In terms of literature and science, ideas come via intuition (or inspiration) only after much mental effort. The use of drugs and the receiving of revelations are quite foreign to this outlook.<sup>55</sup> In short, the mystic strives, and one day he "sees" reality. As Radhakrishnan believes that all religions have this mystic basis, such things as inter-religious dialogue and parliaments of religion are possible, with all respecting all.

In summary, the nature of Radhakrishnan's concept of truth in general and in religion may be described as one which becomes unnecessary if ultimate reality is arrived at. Here "truth" implies a lack of complete coincidence between the idea of reality and reality itself. It suggests the possibility of error, whereas in self-realization, error has been overcome, and idea and reality have been made one. It, further, is akin, though not identical with the Platonic conception of truth.

The nature of religious truth is phrased by Radhakrishnan in Platonic terms as follows:

"...the object of religion is not either the true or the good or the beautiful or a mere unity of them but God the universal consciousness who includes these values and yet transcends them...We have clear testimony that these values are absolute and this means faith in God. They are the thoughts of God...Truth, beauty and goodness are not existent objects like the things that are true, beautiful and good, and yet they are more real than the persons, things and relations to which they are ascribed... Truth, beauty and goodness cease to be supreme realities and become a part of the being and essence of God. From the eternal values we pass to a supporting mind in which they dwell. They thus acquire an objectivity and are not simply dependent on our individual minds."<sup>56</sup>

Bradley's conception of truth is related to Radhakrishnan's idea of truth but is more complete because Bradley suggests that subject and object can never come together.

Radhakrishnan's "truth" is one which is changeless and yet ever-changing, "becoming", increasing in its truthfulness

or approximation to ultimate reality. Such truth is thus relative to the current stage of evolution of the Absolute. It is real because it reflects the Absolute, which is reality. This truth has meaning and value. It is beyond transcendence and immanence, and is in a sense both past and future in its ultimacy. It is something sought and yet potentially already possessed. What Radhakrishnan opposes in his concept of truth is meaninglessness, (as in logical positivism and linguistic analysis), pragmatism, as in James, realism, as in Russell, mechanism, naturalism, relativism (to some extent), theism, subjectivism, and solipsism in various other thinkers. What Radhakrishnan affirms is that expounded by Śaṅkara in terms of philosophy:

"For Śaṅkara, as for some of the greatest thinkers of the world, Plato, Plotinus, Spinoza and Hegel, philosophy is the austere vision of eternal truth, majestic in its freedom from the petty cares of man's paltry life."<sup>57</sup>

Something of the nature and problem of truth he grapples with in The Reign of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy is touched on in the next chapter and in Appendix A.

The relationship between key ideas in Radhakrishnan's philosophy and philosophy in general, and some further criticism, will be noted in the next chapter.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. Norvin J. Hein, "Hinduism", Charles J. Adams, ed., A Reader's Guide to the Great Religions, N.Y., 1965, Free Press, makes a threefold division into historical, homiletic, world religious and cultural problems, p. 79.

2. S. Radhakrishnan, "The Spirit In Man", S.R. and J.H. Muirhead, eds., Contemporary Indian Philosophy, London, 1958, George Allen and Unwin, p. 475.

3. The Reign Of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy, London, 1920, Macmillan, p. vii.

4. See William James and Bertrand Russell in Appendix A.

5. The Reign Of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy, op. cit., p. 412; cf., S.R., ed. and trans., The Principal Upanisads, London, 1953, George Allen and Unwin, p. 56 ff; pp. 553-558. Cf., Swami Prabhavananda and Frederick Manchester, The Upanisads, N.Y., 1957, New American Library, pp. 58-59.

6. Ibid., p. 414.

7. Idem, The Principal Upanisads, op. cit., p. 557.

8. Idem, The Reign Of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy, p. 439.

9. Ibid., p. 438; cf., S.R. and Charles A. Moore, eds., A Sourcebook In Indian Philosophy, Princeton, 1967, p. xxvi.

10. Ibid., pp. 441-451; cf., S.R., The Principal Upanisads, op. cit., pp. 556-558.

11. Ibid., p. 412.

12. Ibid., p. 441.

13. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Questions of Religious Truth, N.Y., 1967, Charles Scribner's Sons, p. 67; cf., The Meaning and End of Religion, N.Y., 1963, passim.

14. S. Radhakrishnan, An Idealist View of Life, London, 1947, George Allen and Unwin, p. 15.

15. Cf., "While the universe is a developing process, it is not self-explanatory. Science can trace the facts and their interconnections but cannot offer any explanation of the world it attempts to describe. The Bhagavadgītā says: /sic/ Beginnings and ends are all unknown; we only know the middle which is in constant flux.<sup>1</sup> But the search for the beginnings and ends cannot be stifled." S.R., "Concluding Survey", S.R., et al., eds., History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, London, 1957, George Allen and Unwin, p. 441. /1. Radhakrishnan: The Bhagavadgītā, p. 111 (Allen and Unwin)/.
16. Idem, Recovery Of Faith, N.Y., 1955, Harper, pp. 75-76; cf., "The Spirit In Man", op. cit., p. 477.
17. Ibid., pp. 144-147; cf., An Idealist View of Life, op. cit., pp. 107-109.
18. Idem, An Idealist View of Life, op. cit., p. 99.
19. Ibid., p. 109.
20. Ibid., p. 89; cf., Recovery of Faith, op. cit., p. 178.
21. Idem, Eastern Religions And Western Thought, N.Y., 1959, Oxford U., p. 341, etc.
22. Ibid., p. 347, footnote 3; cf., Religion in a Changing World, London, 1967, George Allen and Unwin, p. 134, footnote 1; p. 163, footnote 1.
23. Idem, "The Spirit In Man", op. cit., p. 497
24. Idem, East And West In Religion, London, 1949, George Allen and Unwin, p. 33; cf., Eastern Religions And Western Thought, op. cit., pp. 143-151.
25. Idem, The Hindu View Of Life, London, 1927, George Allen and Unwin, p. 25; pp. 58-59.
26. Idem, Eastern Religions And Western Thought, op. cit., pp. 312-313, quoting Gandhi, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, op. cit., p. 21; cf., "No one can know the truth without being the truth". An Idealist View of Life, op. cit., p. 111. Cf., "God is Truth", Recovery of Faith, op. cit., p. 75.

27. Ibid., pp. 26-28; p. 50. Cf., S.R., Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, London, 1923, George Allen and Unwin, p. 170.
28. Idem, "The Spirit In Man", op. cit., p. 494.
29. Idem, The Reign Of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 181-182.
30. Idem, "My Search for Truth", Vergilius Ferm, ed., Religion In Transition, London, 1937, George Allen and Unwin, p. 24.
31. Idem, History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, op. cit., pp. 446-447.
32. Idem, An Idealist View of Life, op. cit., p. 104.
33. Idem, History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, op. cit., p. 273.
34. Ibid., p. 275.
35. Ibid., pp. 275-284; for a more detailed study of Śaṅkara see S.R., Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, London, 1927, George Allen and Unwin, Chap. VIII, "The Advaita Vedānta Of Śaṅkara."
36. Ibid., p. 95 footnote 1; p. 106; p. 149. Cf., The Reign Of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy, op. cit., p. 188; p. 257; p. 434, footnote 1. See Plato Appendix A.
37. See Blanshard in ref. to Bradley, Appendix A.
38. See Appendix A.
39. Idem, An Idealist View of Life, passim.
40. Ibid., p. 159; cf., William James' concept of truth as a utilitarian good.
41. Idem, Eastern Religions And Western Thought, passim.
42. Ibid., pp. 150-151.
43. Ibid., p. 135.
44. Idem, The Reign Of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy, op. cit., in ref. to Bergson, p. 189.
45. Ibid., pp. 136-143, especially the ref. to James Ward.
46. Ibid., p. 50.

47. Ibid., p. 67.
48. Ibid., p. 129.
49. See Appendix A.
50. Idem, Religion in a Changing World, op. cit., pp. 40-43.
51. Idem, The Reign Of Religion In Contemporary Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 332-333. See Appendix A.
52. Ibid., p. 451.
53. D.G. Moses, Religious Truth and the Relation Between Religions, op. cit., p. 104. See Rudolph Otto, Mysticism East and West, N.Y., 1962, Collier, p. 183 ff.
54. S. Radhakrishnan, An Idealist View of Life, p. 149.
55. Ibid., 215.
56. Ibid., pp. 199-200.
57. Idem, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, London, 1927, George Allen and Unwin, p. 447.



## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSIONS

## I. THE CONTRIBUTION OF HENDRIK KRAEMER

While Hendrik Kraemer is certainly not the first scholar of Religion to note the fact of religious pluralism, one of his major contributions to the field has been to underline and analyze the interaction of religions. Many have studied religions outside their own culture--Kraemer being numbered among them as a scholar of Islam--many have compared, classified, ranked, analyzed and synthesized religions, but Kraemer has studied the relationship between religions. He has presented the fact that today, more than ever before, religions come in contact with each other and influence each other. He has examined this state of affairs, as a professor of Religion with a grounding in Christian Missiology and a faith in Jesus Christ.

For Kraemer, the fact of pluralism in religion is a challenge to his Christian faith and to his scientific ability as a professor of Religion. Like every other labourer in the field of knowledge he must try to bring his data under some unifying principle or system. This is not a new effort in the study of religion. What is of great value in his work is the declaration that religions make claims to truth, to validity, and these must not be dismissed or ignored, as they have often been in the past. Part of the former treatment of such claims was simply to assume

without question that Christianity, or some theoretical essence of religion, etc., was true, and then act accordingly. Thus Kraemer's point is well taken that the presuppositions of the Science of Religion must be studied. His contribution then, is not only to indicate the fact that truth claims are made, but also that a study of methodology is critical for the Science of Religion. In his emphasis on the analysis of presuppositions he has an ally in Michael Polanyi. The latter, in his Personal Knowledge, (Chicago, 1958, Chicago University Press), has studied the assumptions of physical scientists in particular, as well as making some reference to the assumptions of workers in other fields. His conclusion is that scientists do have presuppositions which the layman might find totally unrelated to reality, (the apparent subject of science), and hence rather "unscientific". As examples: faith in reason, the principle of the uniformity of nature, cause and effect, order, symmetry--all these suggest theories, or categories into which reality is fitted. Science is thus a view of reality as it appears after it is ordered and analyzed. Scientists have not only held to the above assumptions, but many others as well, some of which have proved disastrous in their consequences.

Kraemer's special task has been to show the possibility of using a presupposition involving an experience of truth in the Science of Religion in much the same way as some of the presuppositions mentioned above are used by scientists in other fields. However, he declares his assumption, while other scientists and scholars of religion

do not always do so. His contribution is to replace some abstract idea of truth, (in the case of some scholars, the idea that Christianity is the ideal model of a "true" religion), with the concrete personal experience of Jesus Christ as the truth. In this way he shows that, for him, a referent of a religion, Jesus Christ, is a fact; and also, that this fact is self-validating in terms of truth. While this may be difficult for some to accept, Polanyi points out scientists had difficulty accepting the assumptions of Mesmer and Pasteur.<sup>1</sup> Thus the scholar or scientist has convictions, which, to him, are self-validating, or self-evident. There are some differences between many of the fields of study noted by Polanyi and the study of religion, but he does consider religion to some extent, and his general idea is most helpful in application to all fields. Critics of this idea may argue that religion deals with personal, private experience, whereas science deals with public experience available to everyone, given the right conditions. That is, they believe that religion deals with an inner reality, and science deals with an external reality common to all. Polanyi shows that scientists examine reality in terms of their personal experience of it, hence the title of his work Personal Knowledge. Thus the line between private and common experience is not rigid. As many scientists, may arrive at the same results or experience of reality, so many people who are Christians, may arrive at the same experience of Christ. No exact parallel between Kraemer and Polanyi is intended here, but the similarity in thought, and that fact that the physical sciences are always assumed

by the layman to be more exact than the science of religion makes Polanyi's ideas doubly interesting.

A further result of Kraemer's efforts has been to suggest to the Science of Religion that the validity of religious experience, or religions, must be taken seriously. Many scholars and scientists of religion have concentrated on an analysis of religion, but have never taken seriously its references to something beyond itself: the very point of religion it might be argued. Kraemer attempts to take these references seriously, believing they do point to reality, but reality as mediated by the religious consciousness. He believes that all religions are attempts to comprehend that reality which lies outside the religious consciousness. Thus, just as the physicist is dealing with reality, so the scholar of religion is dealing with some aspect, or some kind of reality. This reality is not simply the reality of one's own personal religious experience, or collective expressions of such experience in organized religions, but it is something beyond man.

Kraemer has shown that religions do make truth claims; and that this is an integral part of the phenomenon called religion, especially emphasizing the truth claim of Christianity. From this, he deduces that a problem exists--can rival truth claims be accepted by Religionswissenschaft as a characteristic of Religion? What is more, these truth claims should be taken seriously, particularly if Religion's reference to something beyond itself is taken seriously. Thus, to what do these truth claims point? They all claim

to refer to reality, but is it the same reality? While Kraemer holds that Jesus Christ is the answer to the problem, not all scholars would agree. However, his major contribution at this point is to outline a problem. It must not be forgotten that scientists and scholars who discover and define problems may make just as valuable a contribution as those who solve them. The problem outlined by Kraemer is really two-fold--what happens if the truth claim of a religion is taken seriously, and what happens if you have a plurality of truth claims which are not identical. In other words, the fact of the pluralism of religion, noted earlier, is a problem because it involves the pluralism of truth claims. If religion is not held to refer to anything more than personal experience, and thus any truth claim may be simply personal and so may be ignored, no problem is involved in the fact of the pluralism of religions. Here is simply a body of phenomena which could be classified in various ways under the heading of religion, the variations in each simply being attributed to variations in the psychical constitutions of the believers concerned. Again Kraemer makes a contribution by suggesting that the psychical constitution, or religious consciousness as he calls it, is the same in all men. Hence variations in experience are not due to differences in the organ by which they are experienced. Thus, says Kraemer, religion is universal, because man's religious consciousness is universal.

In summary, the contribution of Hendrik Kraemer to Religionswissenschaft has been to isolate and examine

religious pluralism and its attendant problems of inter-relationship and rival truth claims. He has sketched a solution to the problems posed in terms of Christ, and so introduced theology as a complementary discipline of Religionswissenschaft. His latter contribution to methodology has also raised the question of the presuppositions of past and current methodology. Finally, he has emphasized the religious consciousness of man as a key to the understanding of religion in regard to its origin, both within man, and in reference to that beyond man, thus raising the whole question of the validity of the subject matter of Religion. In this way, he has laid aside religion in order to consider what it is attempting to deal with, and whether someone or something beyond man is attempting to deal with him.

## II. THE IMPLICATIONS OF KRAEMER'S POSITION

The net result of Kraemer's efforts can be seen in two aspects of religion which he has brought to light. First, religion has a specific content in each of its manifestations. As Hocking puts it, religion is always "particular".<sup>2</sup> Kraemer outlines the specific content of Christianity as he understands it: Jesus Christ. He also sketches something of the content of other religions, although he never appears to have carried out the full description of them which he felt was necessary.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, Kraemer holds that the specific content of Christianity, makes an absolute or universal claim for itself. Thus for Kraemer, reality is seen in terms of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is said to be the Truth. Thus He is the true understanding of reality

because He is reality itself. In contrast, the specific content of Hinduism sees reality in terms of the self being a part of reality. Radhakrishnan shows how Hinduism is thus particular, but this particular is absolute or universal in application as described in Chapter III. Scholars prior to Kraemer had suggested that Christianity was the most universal religion to date, ranking other religions below Christianity in various sequences. In a similar way, Radhakrishnan has suggested that Hinduism is the most universal religion, with the possibility of an evolution to an even more suitable religion (whose roots are in Hinduism).

In brief, Kraemer has pointed out that religion is both particular and at the same time universal. The definition of the particular concerned will vary from one religion to another, from one branch of religion to another branch of the same religion, and even from one person to another person within the same branch. However, the focus is on the reality itself, to which the definitions point; and the individual experiences of reality will always be in terms of universality.

These two aspects of religion, the particular and the universal, produce a tension which Kraemer solved by his principle of discontinuity. One may illustrate this from Paul, who is the font of Kraemer's "biblical realism". In the opening chapter of Romans, Paul suggests the problem of general and special revelation--how can God be revealed in Christ to himself and yet not be revealed to others who lived in the past? In a similar way, Paul in his Areopagus

sermon, (Acts 17: 16-34), deals with the question of how God reveals Himself in Christ to people in one place while those in other places have not had this revelation. That is, how can God be the universal God of all people, and yet a God limited to one location in time and space in one Son Jesus Christ. Paul suggested that God revealed himself in creation, but men did not take advantage of this. (Whether they could or could not take advantage of this is too large a question to consider here, with its relation to the Fallen state of man). Hence Paul, in dealing with the scandal of particularity, tends to keep together both general revelation and special revelation, or in other words, the universal feature and the particular feature of religion already noted. The fact that followers of some religions are not too concerned with forcing their particular understanding of reality on those outside their individual religion does not limit the universal aspect of their religion. Hence, if a religion does not express this universal aspect in terms of missions, it can like orthodox Judaism, express it in terms of the rejection of others by the labelling of them as "Gentiles".

This universal aspect is also illustrated by the existential nature of a religion--followers of all religions hold to their faith with conviction or else they cease to be followers. Religion is not a matter of indifference, for it involves the whole of man's being. That is, religion is the collective expression of many individuals coming in contact with reality, and this reality involves the whole of their lives. Religious experience is the experience of the religious consciousness coming in



contact with reality in such a way that all areas of life are affected. It is a total experience. Thus everything from dietary laws to marriage rites are the result.

Religion is universal in two senses: it affects the whole of one's personal life and it affects one's attitude to all else.

Two illustrations of this universal aspect of religion arise in the physical and psychiatric sciences. The physical scientist fits all data into a theory. In certain types of insanity, patients, fit all facts into some mistaken idea. In these terms, conversion is simply the rejection of one particular aspect which is universal in application for another particular aspect which is universal in application, or possibly "more" universal in character, just as one scientific theory is ousted by a more comprehensive one, or one delusion is ousted by another. Conversion is similar to the idea of progressive revelation. Thus Paul, the converted Jew, has to grapple with the Jewish Law, just as he had to grapple with creation as a form of general revelation as these both were revelations prior to Christ. As described in Acts and the Pauline Epistles, both the Church and Paul had to wrestle with the problem of whether one had to first become a Jew in order to become a Christian, thereby passing from a knowledge of one revelation to a knowledge of a later revelation. In other words, Paul's predicament, Thomism's synthesis, Kraemer's principle of discontinuity, Barth's emphasis on Christ, and Tillich's correlation, etc., are all attempts to deal with the particularity and universality of Christianity. Other religions have the same problem--how to be universal in

scope when limited to a particular content which at the same time claims to be universal in application. Kraemer has shown that where man has lost his religion, he has set up substitutes for religion, and it would appear this same problem would apply to the substitutes. Indeed, in regard to Communism, (if it is taken as a substitute religion), its current ideological and national divisions are a source of embarrassment to it, for it claims to be a system which is universal in application. It will be recalled that in Chapter II the problem of singular and plural arose in regard to religious truth and truth in general. The discussion here on the universal and the particular is really the same problem again, the problem, in other words, of the One and the Many.

### III. THE IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO OTHER SCHOLARS

As partly suggested previously in various references, a number of other scholars have wrestled with the problem of the particular and the universal in religion, some of them referring to it in terms of truth. The problem has also been seen in terms of general and special revelation, faith and reason, nature and grace, the logos spermatikos concept, etc., each scholar dealing with the problem in his own way. Both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan include references in their works to those who have dealt with the problem.

While all scholars of religion have not seen the particular as universal in religion as did Kraemer, what they have done is to erect some universal concept of their own

and fit the particular content of each religion into it in some way. In so doing they have sometimes taken only certain aspects of religion under consideration. In a sense scholars of religion are no different from scholars or scientists in other fields: the task is always to find the universal under which particulars can be grouped.

#### IV. TRUTH IN KRAEMER AND RADHAKRISHNAN

The various scholars of religion could be ranked on various continuums in regard to the problem of universal and particular. In the case of Kraemer, his approach suggested a continuum in terms of absolutism and relativism, as already mentioned. This led to a view of the opposite end of such a continuum as occupied by Radhakrishnan.

To complete the comparison, what view of truth in religion do they ultimately have, and how does this relate to truth in general?

To begin with, both believe that there is such a thing as truth. They would agree truth can be known, but for Kraemer it all depends on God's willingness to reveal the truth, and man's ability to receive it in terms of his communion with God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. As man grows in fellowship with God, his understanding of Christ the Truth would become clearer. For Radhakrishnan, knowledge of truth depends upon man's ability to achieve self-realization. Even in this realization the whole of

reality, (and hence complete truth), cannot be grasped because man is a part of reality, and because reality continues to manifest itself. Yet in essence, there is a sense in which man does know the truth in self-realization, for beneath the many manifestations he sees the eternal one. Thus the epistemology of Radhakrishnan is vastly different from that of Kraemer.

However, in the case of both, truth or reality is not automatically arrived at--Kraemer must depend upon God to reveal Himself, while Radhakrishnan must depend upon a spark of insight, or inspiration, (which is intuition), on the artistic and scientific level or religious intuition, following purification and meditation. Both believe that in each case, respectively, they come in contact with reality. For Kraemer, the truth is known once and for all in Christ, although a deepening of spiritual life results in a deeper knowledge of Christ. As Christ is the criterion of all, all is continually brought under the view of the living Christ, and so new insight is gained as life progresses. For Radhakrishnan, the Absolute manifests itself anew, and thus truth is more and more shown forth, seeing itseever new facets. For Kraemer the Truth of Christ can be said to be, in a sense, an incomplete revelation, in so far as the eschaton is still to come, just as in Radhakrishnan, the Absolute has not yet reached the end of its current evolutionary process.

Kraemer and Radhakrishnan share a conviction

that truth is singular. This arises out of the fact that both see truth as absolute. If they held it to be relative, then this would imply pluralism of truth. Truth is quite clearly singular for Kraemer in so far as it concerns one person, Jesus Christ; and it is quite clearly singular for Radhakrishnan, epistemologically, in terms of the realization that the self and all else is a part of one reality Brahman. However, the kind of ontology espoused by Radhakrishnan suggests partial truth being present in all the manifestations of Brahman or the Absolute, and hence suggests a pluralistic and relativistic conception of truth. Thus, there is a plurality of partial "truths" in Radhakrishnan's thought, but essentially he believes complete truth is one. In addition the partial "truths" are really only facets of this one truth.

It will be seen that both have an absolute view of truth, which has singularity as its consequence, just as the relativism they both reject has pluralism as its consequence. In addition, this absolute is seen to be universal, although in Radhakrishnan this universal quality is so underlined, with all included in the Absolute, that it may lose some of its effectiveness, at least as a philosophical concept. In Kraemer, truth is universal because all is examined in light of Christ, the absolute, but all is not a part of Christ.

It goes without saying that the specific content of truth for Kraemer and Radhakrishnan is vastly different. For the former it is a person, for the latter it is simply formless reality, or, more accurately, that which lies

beyond reality, the latter being only its manifestation in distinction from non-reality, just as self is distinguished from not-self.

While Radhakrishnan believes that man has some idea of the truth, because he is really a part of it, as he is a part of reality or the absolute, Kraemer believes that it is man's separation from his Creator God, in short, from Truth, which drives him toward Truth. And yet at the same time, because of the separation, (a consequence of the Fall), man tends to reject the only source of Truth, God, as seen in Jesus Christ. Instead man erects false ideas and standards of truth of his own. For Radhakrishnan, the latter tendency might be described in terms of dogmatic religion--but it is just this element of dogmatism which is part of the strength of Kraemer's position.

In continuing a comparison between Kraemer and Radhakrishnan's view of religious truth, their relationship to other conceptions of truth is in order. While Kraemer thinks little of man's efforts to realize truth, and Radhakrishnan is not interested in waiting for God's revelation, both in their own way reject reason as the ultimate source of truth, or even the means by which truth is known. This is partly what the effect of the dialectical theology seen in Kraemer amounts to. On the other hand, for Radhakrishnan, truth is gained via the intuition, which lies, as it were, above reason. Thus, in Radhakrishnan's view, to say that reason arrives at truth is to limit truth to

man, rather than the ultimate reality which can be known via the intuition, albeit man is a part of that ultimate reality. Radhakrishnan notes Kant as an ally who has pointed out the limits of reason. In this sense, Radhakrishnan, although an idealist, is against those idealists who have emphasized reason, such as Hegel. In a different way, Kraemer also attacks those who have emphasized reason, thinking that reality followed reason, i.e., that the real was rational, and the rational was real. Here he gains assistance from Dilthey.

For both Radhakrishnan and Kraemer, Plato's Idea of Truth has its attraction as an absolute standard which in a way is external and objective in so far as there is a sense in which it is beyond man's mind. However, Radhakrishnan acknowledges his kinship with Plato's correspondence theory of truth, and his theory of recollection, while Kraemer would not acknowledge that it is present in his thought. Yet he does set up Christ as the standard of all truth, and this can be interpreted in a philosophical, as well as a religious way.

Both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan are similar in their attitude to pluralism, and the relativism which accompanies it. Kraemer condemns the mood of relativism present in the world he knew, and he sees men such as Radhakrishnan as only presenting another form of it. Kraemer believes that Jesus has been made relative by various scholars and theologians, hence the need for the principle of discontinuity. Radhakrishnan in turn deplores the pluralism

of Leibniz and its presence in lesser degree in others. He deplores the relativism of William James, in which truth is a mere personal whim. Kraemer also disapproves of James' ideas. There are other similarities between Kraemer and Radhakrishnan as well. Both refer to an organ by which religious experience comes: for the former it is the religious consciousness, and for the latter it is the intuition. Both refer to the falsity of religion and point to the reality which it is trying to express. Each in his own way is more homiletic than scholarly in some of the works noted, as they both deal with the problem of the inter-relationship of religions in reference to the virtues of their own religion. Each conducts vast surveys of religions and studies of religion, Kraemer rejecting much of what he examines because of his principle of discontinuity; and Radhakrishnan accepting much of what he examines because of the all-inclusive Absolute.

In the final analysis, religious truth for both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan is in terms of contact with reality of some kind, but while Radhakrishnan sometimes suggests truth is a kind of quality or aspect of reality, or God, or the Absolute at other times he suggests it is a kind of thing in itself, somewhat as Plato's idea of Truth is a kind of object in the sense of being a public thought, available to all who will but strive to see it, or remember it. However, Kraemer would say that Christ is Truth, but not that Truth is Christ, for this would subsume Him under a philosophic category or quality. For both, truth is a



kind of experience: in the case of Christ, we see the Truth, but in the case of Brahman, we become the Truth, or reality. In regard to religion, both see it as an attempt to express reality, but it itself is not that reality. Religion thus is not true, but its referent--reality--is ~~true~~.

It was said above that truth for both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan is defined in terms of reality of some kind. What this means in the case of Kraemer may be seen in his concept of biblical realism. Here he is simply stating that the Bible is not a book of ideas or propositions about God or Reality but presents encounters between God and man. These are not only in the past, but also in the present as men of today experience what the Bible is saying. These encounters are realities or facts. The supreme fact in the Bible is Jesus Christ. He is Reality, and men come in contact with him. As there appears to be an intimate link between Reality and Truth, it is possible to some extent to see what Christ means when he says he is the Truth. He is the Truth because He is Reality. Radhakrishnan would say that Christ is simply a man who achieved self-realization, or, as he also puts it, God-realization. While Jesus Christ does not say "I am God", or "I am Reality", but "I am the way and the life and the truth", the Church sees him as the Son of God, the Way to God, and in this way in effect says that He is God. However, the Church does not simply say that He is God. Via the Trinity doctrine, Christ Himself is not worshipped as God and yet is regarded as God Incarnate. Jesus Christ is the Truth in so far as He is meaning and light. It is

only in contact with reality that we have truth and meaning. Hence, because He is the meaning of Reality and He is also Reality itself, he is Truth. The response of man is to realize that he is in sin, that he is not the truth, and that he must either follow Christ, or reject him.

The difference between Radhakrishnan's understanding of religious truth and that of Kraemer can best be seen in man's response to truth: It is to say that "I, man, am a part of reality or Brahman." If Brahman is seen in its manifestation as God, this is to say that "I am part of God", or even, in a sense, that "I am God", which is radically different from a decision to follow Christ or to surrender to God. Truth for Radhakrishnan is thus this realization of unity with reality. This is truth because truth involves relationship to reality.

In conclusion, truth for both is a personal experience, but in Kraemer it is an experience which leads out of the self to a historic and living reality, whereas for Radhakrishnan, one "remains" in the self, sinking deeper into it. Yet ultimately, for both religious truth is an experience of reality, and for both it is inner. However, the feeling of sin before Christ, the feeling of separation from God, and the recognition of error in the face of Truth is quite different from the feeling of unity with reality described by Radhakrishnan.

## V. RELIGIOUS TRUTH IN GENERAL

What can be said about religious truth in general, in light of these two scholars, and others noted along the way? It would appear that religious truth always involves a coming into contact with reality in an existential, or in other words, experiential way. That is, it is concerned with the world of facts, not the world of statements about facts. Thus one can read that Christ is the truth in the Bible, or in works of theology, just as one can read of self-realization, but this is quite different from an experience of these two facts. Truth in religion refers to an experiencing of reality whether by revelation, self-realization, or possibly some other means. In the case of Christianity, reality is the person Jesus Christ. (Parallels to this might be found in other religions, but there would be a difference because of the doctrine of the Trinity). In Christianity, it is not simply that the revelation was experienced by those who lived in biblical times and recorded by them in the Bible. There is also the sense in which God's Word is spoken or revealed to man as he studies the Bible in so far as he is in communion with God, according to the action of the Holy Spirit. In brief, truth in religion varies from religion to religion, and scholar to scholar in regard to the specific content of truth, due to different views of the nature of reality. It also varies in regard to epistemology, e.g., revelation for Kraemer, self-realization for Radhakrishnan. The intimate link between ontology and epistemology is especially felt in religious truth.

## VI. TRUTH IN RELIGION AND IN GENERAL

What is the relationship between truth in religion, and truth in general? Again, this is really the question of universal and particular noted earlier. Truth in religion is a particular which is also a universal--all truth must be included in it. It must be all truth, in some way, for it is universal. In the case of Radhakrishnan, the content of religious truth--Brahman---is so broad and general that it is all-inclusive, all other truth of the arts, science, and philosophy, being seen as a manifestation of it. Thus Brahman is Truth. This has its parallel in the work of D.G. Moses noted in Chapter II, where Truth is a genus, and all examples of truth are species, except that for Moses, religious truth is simply a species of a philosophical truth in general. In Kraemer, Jesus Christ is the Truth, and hence the truth of philosophy, religion, etc., is seen in light of Him, but not as manifestations of Truth as in Radhakrishnan. All is compared with Christ as the criterion. He is the judge. He is Reality and Truth. These other vindications of truth are seen as human efforts filled with error or outright falsehood. In an analogous way, He is somewhat like a scientific theory or law--all the facts are classified under it, for it is the key to seeing their true significance or insignificance. Thus He is the key to an understanding of reality.

It is possible to consider the question of the relationship between truth in religion and truth in general in two ways at least. In what has gone before, religious truth has been related to philosophy in some references.

For Kraemer, there is a break between religious truth and philosophical truth, and the latter can only be considered in light of the former, but not in continuity with it. In the case of Tillich, there is a gap, but correlation takes place, tending to make philosophy equal with theology, or truth in religion, which Kraemer would not agree with. In Thomism, and in Radhakrishnan's thought, there is a continuity between truth in philosophy and truth in religion. In D.G. Moses, truth in religion is simply a species of truth in general, or philosophical truth. Here it must be understood that truth in general can be interpreted as philosophical truth. For example, Radhakrishnan has pointed out that philosophy tends to deal with the general. However, this is not to say that Moses' structure of (philosophic) truth as the genus, and religious truth as a species is being adopted here. Rather, in order to keep in view Kraemer's discontinuity between religious truth, (i.e., Jesus Christ), and philosophy, it is convenient to see religious truth as experience of reality, and philosophy and theology as the explanation of that experience. Both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan distinguish the experience from its expression. Thus one can have Jesus Christ the fact, accounts of experiences of Him and rational examination of both, which is theology. One can also have the examination of theology by philosophy, or philosophy seen as a study which refers to some of the same things that theology considers, but in a less existential way, as Tillich has tried to do via correlation. In this respect, Radhakrishnan deals with

both philosophy and theology, while Kraemer opts for theology. As philosophy and theology, (and science), seek to deal with reality, some of the questions which can arise out of a study of religious truth in Kraemer are also questions which arise out of a study of truth in philosophy as seen in Appendix A.

For Kraemer and Radhakrishnan, truth is the experience of reality. However, for Kraemer, truth is simply a kind of quality of Christ, who is the explanation of reality because He is reality. For Radhakrishnan truth sometimes becomes a thing-in-itself, or God, in the sense that Reality is true, and therefore it is said to be Truth. Kraemer would say that reality in Christ enters one's experience, via revelation, but that He, (Reality), also exists apart from experience. Radhakrishnan would say that ultimate personal experience is experience of reality. Thus the gap between self and not-self is a misconception. However, this is not to say that reality only exists when one has an experience of it. While there is a dichotomy in Kraemer's thought between subject and object, it does not exist for Radhakrishnan. The nature of reality has already been noted--for Kraemer it is Christ, and for Radhakrishnan it is the Absolute. Truth exists for both, because, for both, reality beyond one's ordinary fleeting experiences exists. It is just that in Kraemer, the underlying reality, God, is separate from His creature man whereas for Radhakrishnan the Absolute includes the creature man.

With the above in mind, various philosophical theories of truth can now be considered.<sup>4</sup> These may all be

viewed in terms of subject and object, or man and reality. The correspondence theory says that an idea, (the subject), is true when it agrees with reality, or in a sense mirrors reality, its object. The coherence theory says that subject or idea goes toward reality, and when it coincides with reality, absolute truth is achieved, for truth is intimately related to reality. However, most interpreters of this theory would suggest that while the gap between idea and its object is lessened, it is never completely closed. In the quality theory of truth, truth exists as a kind of independent "object", whether known by any subject or not. Existential phenomenology looks at the relationship between object and subject in the direction of object to subject. Thus Kierkegaard is concerned with God facing man, rather than man examining God. Thus Heidegger says let the Object speak to us. Sophism, solipsism, and pragmatism, all state that truth is simply related to man alone, and has little to do with reality. The sophist chooses what he will publically refer to as "truth", as does the pragmatist, although the pragmatist does relate it to reality in terms of what happens when he calls something truth. The solipsist says that truth is simply a personal idea which no one else can ever know, for it can never be made public. The linguistic analyst says that truth is a meaningless term.

It has already been mentioned that both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan appreciate the Platonic theory of correspondence, although Kraemer does not acknowledge this. While it is impossible to completely envision their reaction to all of the various theories of truth mentioned above,

some suggestions are possible. While Radhakrishnan accepts the coherence theory in his own way, Kraemer would reject it because of its emphasis on reason, or philosophy, and its relativism, as well as its implication that ultimate truth lies in the future. Ultimate truth is here and now in Christ, Kraemer would argue. As Radhakrishnan rejects Bertrand Russell's realism, and the theory of truth as quality given in Appendix A originates in Russell's thought, it would appear Radhakrishnan would ultimately reject it. As already noted in Chapter II, Kraemer's thought has similarities with existential phenomenology. Radhakrishnan too appreciates this school of thought, as seen for example in his reference to Kierkegaard and Heidegger in Religion in a Changing World.<sup>5</sup> As already noted, both Radhakrishnan and Kraemer reject James' idea of pragmatic truth. Sophism and solipsism would be rejected by both because they make truth entirely relative and, in the case of the latter, unknowable. Radhakrishnan has some negative references to linguistic analysis already noted. Kraemer would reject it because it would side-step the question of truth in reality, simply leaving one with battles over words, and ultimately rejecting the whole idea of truth.

It will be seen here as in Chapter II, that Kraemer has a view of religious truth which can be described in philosophical terms as being of the order of existential phenomenology. The "Object", Jesus Christ, is all important, confronting the subject, man, and dealing with him, rather than the other way round. There is a gap between subject and object, but it is overcome to some extent by revelation--



the "Object" reveals Himself. In Radhakrishnan, it is the coherence theory which is at work. In fact, he refers to coherence theory advocates such as Bradley. His view of Hindu self-realization is that in which the subject reaches the object, in which the gap is closed between subject and object. The two are realized to be actually one. The gap which we see in the day-to-day world is a misconception. Man strives toward reality, and finally achieves it.

In the foregoing it must be emphasized that both in the case of Kraemer and Radhakrishnan, philosophical or theological explanation comes after experience, and not vice versa, as what might be suggested is that Philosophy, or Theology came first, and then Christ and religious experience were fitted neatly into place. What both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan are saying is that man comes in contact with reality and then seeks to explain it by religion, theology, philosophy and Religionswissenschaft. Kraemer rightly objects again and again to the fitting of Christ into some neat classification in the philosophy of religion, Religionswissenschaft, or elsewhere.

In the references made above to philosophy, the intention has been to note parallels between philosophical and religious truth, but not to suggest that they are identical. Religious truth, for both Kraemer and Radhakrishnan deals with experience, and reality, while philosophy and theology seek to come to grips in a logical fashion with reality and experience.

## VII. RELIGIOUS TRUTH AND THE FUTURE

While Kraemer has pointed out that contacts between religions must not gloss over their differences but recognize them, Radhakrishnan has emphasized the similarities in religions, tending to ignore their differences. Both elements are needed in future confrontations between religions. Kraemer's concept of missions and the idea of conversion which results, involve two problems at least. First, there is the ethics of conversion--is it Christian to uproot a man's faith and present Christ to him? Secondly, if he accepts Christ, does this mean that revelation is progressive, or that general revelation is allowed. In terms of truth, is truth relative rather than absolute. In the case of Paul, for example, would he not say that he had some knowledge of God, of the truth as a Jew, but a greater knowledge has come to him in Christ. Or would he say that the old knowledge was false, or that both old and new were ~~true~~? Such is the problem the logos spermatikos concept and Kraemer's discontinuity principle have sought to deal with. References in previous chapters to singular and plural, relative and absolute, and particular and universal have sought to grapple with the same problem. Pannenberg has suggested that the Greeks had an idea there was a god, but it is revealed to them, the Unknown God is named, by the efforts of Paul under the guidance of the Spirit.

Hence, in the future, are progressive revelations to be looked for, is truth relative now, and only absolute in the future? No says Kraemer. Yes says Radhakrishnan.

Yet in a sense Kraemer would allow that God continues to reveal himself in the sense ~~that~~ people still have experiences of Christ. That is, revelation in a way continues, but it is the same revelation seen again and again. This comes close, in some respects, to Radhakrishnan's idea that all can achieve self-realization. The problem is that man will not stand still. As long as he exists on earth there will be new developments in religious truth. As Kraemer has shown, religion is the fruit of man's activity, in regard to his religious consciousness. However, this is not to say that reality, or Christ, continually changes, or that new revelations such as Mormonism, etc., are acceptable.

While Kraemer would look for the dissolution of religion, Radhakrishnan would look for its fruition. Experiments in religious synthesis such as Theosophy would appeal to him and be utterly rejected by Kraemer. Parliaments of Religion would in turn be accepted by the former and rejected by the latter.

While events have not stood still since the death of Hendrik Kraemer, there are two things which have not changed a great deal in regard to his field of study. First of all, truth is still very much a problem in the study of religion. Secondly, the same mood of secularism and relativism which he felt and expressed at Tambaram in The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World is still abroad in the world, albeit in various guises and fields, including theology and philosophy. This mood is felt in the following quotation from one of its expressions, the

Theater of the Absurd, which by its very name suggests that truth is an outworn term in the face of a human existence which has become meaningless. Martin Esslin writes of it:

"...Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless."

This...is, broadly speaking, the theme of the plays of Beckett, Adamov, Ionesco, Genet,... A similar sense of the senselessness of life, of the inevitable devaluation of ideals... is also the theme of...Sartre, and Camus..."

However, the difference between the work of the dramatists of the Absurd and Sartre and Camus is that they still, by their logical analysis of the situation, seem to be clinging to the idea that logic can yet offer a solution to man, that somehow "...an analysis of language will lead to the uncovering of basic concepts - Platonic ideas". Such an idea is folly, for influenced by the philosophy of linguistic analysis, even the truth of language has departed. Thus the trace of Plato in Kraemer and Radhakrishnan is foreign to the present mood. Yet in his concluding chapter Esslin says:

"...The Theatre of the Absurd...is also a symptom of what probably comes nearest to a religious quest in our age..."<sup>7</sup>

Certainly, here is the familiar note sounded in Kraemer's dialectic.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. Michael Polanyi, op. cit., ref. to Mesmer, pp. 51-52; Pasteur, p. 27; p. 137 f.
2. William Ernest Hocking, Living Religions and a World Faith, London, 1940, George Allen and Unwin, p. 17.
3. Hendrik Kraemer, "Continuity or Discontinuity", op. cit., passim.
4. See Appendix A.
5. pp. 68-70.
6. Martin Esslin, The Theater Of The Absurd, N.Y., 1961, Doubleday, pp. ix-xx. The quotation is from Eugène Ionesco, "Dans les Armes de la Ville", Cahiers de la Compagnie Madeleine Renaud-Jean-Louis Barrault, Paris, No. 20, Oct., 1957.
7. Ibid., p. 291.

## APPENDIX A

### THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH IN PHILOSOPHY

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of truth in philosophy is examined by means of a brief survey of major theories. It begins with theories which are absolutist, objectivist, idealist, and rational in character. It then goes on to those which are relativist, subjectivist, realist, and empirical in character. The absolutist theories involve monism, and the relativist theories involve pluralism.

Truth in all the branches of philosophy has not been considered, as for example in the various systems of logic, and ethics, (where truth would appear to be a value).

Prior to the discussion of the first theory of truth, it should be borne in mind that in the world of ordinary daily experience, one acts as if there was no question about the existence of reality outside one's own mind. In this way, the question of truth may never even arise over long periods of time because it is automatically taken for granted that what is perceived is real and that what is real is true. On this level, there is no doubt as to the reliability of sense experience. Perhaps this might be termed the naive realism theory of truth. As traces of this idea can be found in many places, no particular philosopher is cited here in this instance. From this view,

theories of truth would only really arise when one began to doubt the existence of external reality, the reliability of sense experience, etc. Extreme doubt ends in solipsism, the second last theory noted. In the final theory, linguistic analysis, one is faced with the situation which exists when truth is no longer a term considered to be of any real philosophical value, or in other words, one is faced with the absence of truth. Russell, and others, usher in this later stage. Finally, a brief reference has already been made at the end of Chapter IV to the situation in which one passes into the realm of meaninglessness, a stage away from the reasonableness of linguistic analysis, and some distance away from the ultimate meaningfulness of the idealists with which the survey begins. Thus, in this final stage, the meaninglessness of certain statements considered by the linguistic analysts could be said to be referred back to its source in a meaningless reality. For the linguistic analysts, however, the tendency is to disregard reality more and more, except for that reality which is the reality of language alone.

## II. CORRESPONDENCE: PLATO

While the treatment of this theory, (which appears to be the most common and obvious one), varies somewhat from philosopher to philosopher according to his peculiar stance, basically the theory can be reduced to the following formula: The agreement of subject with object,<sup>1</sup> in a one-to-one relationship,<sup>2</sup> where subject means idea or perception, and

object means object or quality in the external world or reality. This formula can be interpreted in a broad way. On the one hand, it is the notion that truth is the correspondence of ideas with external reality. On the other hand, it is the notion that truth is simply the agreement of ideas with sensations, both being found in the mind without reference to the external world, in deference to the solipsists.

Before viewing Plato as an expounder of correspondence, three cautions must be sounded. The concept of truth is a part of his doctrine of Forms or Ideas, which is touched upon in various works, but is nowhere elaborated as fully and systematically as might be desired.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, while modern usage of the conception of correspondence may involve the notion of the agreement of idea with elements of reality (taken as the world around us), Plato's conception of correspondence would involve the notion of agreement of idea with reality understood as the realm of Forms. Thirdly, Bernard Bosanquet contends:

"The term 'truth' is not so precisely restricted to a property of thought or assertion in Plato as in modern philosophy, the antithesis between knowledge and its object, which modern common sense assumes, not being familiar to ancient thought."<sup>4</sup>

Regardless of the definition of reality, Plato is committed to a version of the correspondence theory--relationship between idea and reality (of some kind).

The main references to truth in The Republic are found in connection with the doctrine of the Forms or Ideas.



The doctrine of the Forms, briefly recalled, is the notion that there exists an intelligible world of eternal Ideas or Forms beyond the external world. This intelligible world is true reality. The visible, external world, is to some extent simply a rather poor copy of this true reality. A triangle which one sees upon a sheet of paper is only a dim reflection of the triangle in general, the universal one would find in the world of Forms. This other world includes the Forms of justice, beauty, truth, etc., which all depend upon the Good.<sup>5</sup> This other world can only be apprehended by human thought in a limited way. For Plato, the terms truth, being, and reality are almost interchangeable.<sup>6</sup> The main reference to the doctrine of Forms in The Republic is found in connection with the analogies of the line,<sup>7</sup> the cave,<sup>8</sup> and the sun.<sup>9</sup> The three are really all symbolic representations of a continuum ranging from little or no reality or truth, to absolute reality or truth. In the analogy of the Good and the sun, the sun's light bathes certain objects which are then said to be illumined by truth and reality.

"When its /the soul's/ gaze is fixed upon an object irradiated by truth and reality, /e.g. a mathematical object/ the soul gains understanding and knowledge and is manifestly in possession of intelligence. But when it looks toward that twilight world of things that come into existence and pass away /e.g. a vase or a reflection of a vase/ its sight is dim and it has only opinions and beliefs which shift to and fro, and now it seems like a thing that has no intelligence..."<sup>10</sup>

Thus if the mind, or soul has the right object in view it has truth. Bosanquet, in commenting on the above passage,

believes that truth can be understood as knowability, and also as real existence, or what is.<sup>11</sup>

In the Theatetus, an approach to truth is given in the analogy of the lump of wax, which, for purposes of illustration, is said to be in each individual. In this analogy a perception (which one wishes to remember) is stamped on the lump of wax, leaving an imprint. Later one has a new perception. In order to understand the new perception, one applies to it what one believes is the appropriate imprint, (which one already has). If one matches the right imprint with the incoming perception, one has truth; if one applies the wrong imprint to the new perception, one has falsity. Thus one may see a man, ("new perception--B"), whom one believes one has seen before. Consequently, one would have an imprint of this memory, ("old perception--A"). However, one finds that this is not the case, and hence falsity arises, (the imprint of perception "A" applied to perception "B").<sup>12</sup>

In the same work, there also appears the analogy of truth in terms of an aviary. A person going into the aviary to catch a particular bird may seize the wrong one. In like manner, a person who knows that five and seven equal twelve may say at times that five and seven equal eleven, believing that he is actually referring to the right fact. However, when the idea of an eagle for example, is matched with the actual bird in hand, and this is identified as an eagle, then we have truth.<sup>13</sup>

The question of the actual existence of the Forms (including such Forms as Truth) arises in Parmenides. While

the dialogue is inconclusive, it suggests that the Forms are really patterns fixed in nature.<sup>14</sup> It also suggests that they could not exist only in the human mind,<sup>15</sup> as then they would not be absolute (and they are absolute by definition). The question of how one can know a self-existent Form or Idea is also raised<sup>16</sup> but here again the dialogue is inconclusive. In this work, Plato appears to be criticizing his own understanding of the Forms, (which he has not abandoned).

No attempt has been made in the foregoing to correlate Plato's doctrine of recollection with the doctrine of the Forms. It would appear on the surface that a person might know of truth because he remembers the Form Truth.

### III. COHERENCE: BRAND BLANSHARD

The problem of the relationship of thought to reality is the point of departure for Brand Blanshard's coherence theory of truth as described in The Nature of Thought, (London, 1939). A comprehensive attempt to set the stage for the theory is made by way of examining this problem. While the correspondence theory describes a kind of parallel between true ideas and their referents in the real world, which they mirror, the coherence theory essays to portray not simply a reflection, but an actual approximation of idea to object. Thus truth is the identification of an idea with its object, in the sense that it becomes its object. Blanshard says:

"We may look at the growth of knowledge, individual or social, either as an attempt by our own minds to return to union with things as they are in their ordered wholeness, or the affirmation through our minds of the ordered whole itself. And if we take this view, our notion of truth is marked out for us. Truth is the approximation of thought to reality. It is thought on its way home... To think of a colour or an emotion is to have that within us which if it were developed and completed, would identify itself with its object...thought is related to reality as the partial to the perfect fulfilment of a purpose."<sup>17</sup>

When the object and the end of thought are united, one has arrived at truth. An individual statement or proposition is judged in regard to its coherence, first with experience, and, secondly with a larger whole--the total of reality itself, or some unit of it. In this theory, the mind's demand for the organization of elements into a structure, and the mind's demand to approach reality act like pincers in this theory. The jaws of the pincers close upon knowledge, upon truth, upon reality. Thus the pursuit of knowledge leads to knowledge. (And in this is a key to the nature of reality--it is rational, intelligible).<sup>18</sup> Knowledge is an approach to reality. Complete approach, (identification), would be truth in a complete, absolute sense. However, absolute truth is not obtained. It is only possible to refer propositions to the sum of present knowledge to see if they cohere or do not cohere. In one way, the truth of a particular proposition changes in degree of truth according

to the system or body of knowledge to which it is related at a particular time. In another way, it does not change when it is related to the total of all knowledge toward which one strives.

In essence, the theory depicts the relationship of a given proposition, or sense datum to the knowledge or experience of particular individual at a given time; and secondly, to the body of knowledge or experience possessed by man; and finally, to all knowledge. A certain proposition is declared to be true if it is in agreement with all else known at that time. Each new proposition is a piece of a gigantic puzzle which an individual seeks to fit into its place. If the piece will not fit, it may be false, (although even false propositions have their place in the puzzle, and in a sense have their truth). Thus, that which coheres to the rest of knowledge is true. That which does not cohere, or does not "fit in", is false. To see the nature of false propositions in this theory consider a scale with ignorance at one end, and absolute knowledge at the other. When it is possible to relate propositions or ideas to each other, we approach truth, but when we cannot bring them together into a system we are proceeding toward the point of ignorance. In short, the concept of degrees of truth must be admitted to the field, (a concept which is also found in Plato's Republic).<sup>19</sup>

In giving substance to the theory, it must be maintained that if one had the sum total of absolute knowledge, one would have (absolute) truth. Truth would be a coherent

system of knowledge. When Blanshard speaks of "thought on its way home", (as quoted above), he admits that complete knowledge or complete truth has not yet been arrived at, (and may never be arrived at). Thus truth, as complete knowledge, is never fully realized.

In this theory truth is seen as that which enables us "to order most coherently and comprehensively the data supplied by immediate experience and the intuitive judgments of perception."<sup>20</sup> The theory describes both the test of truth and the nature of truth, though the two are carefully distinguished.<sup>21</sup>

The features of the theory may be summarized as follows: The assumptions are made that there exists a potentially coherent and intelligible body of experience and a potentially coherent and intelligible reality exist and that these two are being brought together in a meaningful relationship. Both experience and reality are assumed to be rational. The kind of truth envisioned is one of degrees of truth, with the goal being absolute knowledge or truth, as a totality. The driving force of the theory is the desire of man for knowledge, with truth as an ordering principle in the process of assimilating knowledge.

#### IV. EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY

##### (a) Phenomenology: Martin Heidegger

While some have classed Heidegger as an existentialist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty has included him in the phenomenological school,<sup>22</sup> the two denotations overlapping.

In his essay "On The Essence of Truth", Heidegger begins with the correspondence theory of truth. He examines carefully the relationship between the idea, (the subject), and what it stands for, (the object). He writes:

"All working and carrying out of tasks, all transaction and calculation, sustains itself in the open, an overt region /a region man can understand/ within which what-is /the object/ can expressly take up its stand as and how it is what it is, and thus become capable of expression. This can only occur when what-is represents itself...with the representative statement /which refers to the idea or subject/ so that the statement submits to a directive enjoining it to express what-is 'such-as' or just as it is. By following this directive the statement 'rights itself'... by what-is. Directing itself in this way the statement is right (true). And what is thus stated is rightness (truth)."<sup>23</sup>

Thus truth does not rest in the statement which represents the object. The statement is freed to right itself, to place itself in accord with the binding criterion given, (the object), and so it determines truth or arrives at truth. From this Heidegger deduces that the essence of truth is freedom. He says further, in seeking to explain this definition, which he admits is "strange", that truth is lowered to the subjective level.<sup>24</sup> Freedom is defined as freedom for the revelation of something which is already overt. It results in the revealment of what is, of the letting-be of what-is, (letting-be in the sense of concerning oneself with things or persons in the way in which they are,

rather than in the sense of having nothing to do with something). This means that a taking part in the revealed nature of what-is takes place. Freedom participates in the revealment of what-is, as such. The representative statement (the subject) takes that which is revealed (the object) as its criterion--standing apart from it and not tampering with it. Freedom is truth: The unconcealment of what-is; and freedom is the existence (ex-sistence) of being. Thus freedom is truth in the sense of propositional rightness.

E.L. Allen interprets Heidegger as meaning that there is truth only when Being reveals itself,<sup>25</sup> (but, points out Werner Brock, not in the theological sense of revelation).<sup>26</sup> Heidegger himself aptly brings out his argument by an etymological examination of the noun ἀλήθεια, (truth): ἀ-λῆθεια, "un-concealment", from the verb λανθάνειν, "to remain concealed, escape notice." That is, truth is unveiling, or dis-covering (un-covering).<sup>27</sup> Man can choose to see the light of Being, or he can choose to concentrate on particular objects around him, in which case Being, the vision of the whole, is blurred. Man chooses the former. One tries to impose a pattern of his own on what one should let be. Of this Allen has written: "/When we let things be/...we establish that mysterious connection with Being which enables us to enter into possession of ourselves. Truth is thus rather a quality of personal life than a property of our judgments. We are reminded of the Fourth Gospel where truth is not only known, but also done."<sup>28</sup>



Thus truth is seeing things as they are, in that "revelation" which has been brought about by freedom.

(b) Existentialism: Søren Kierkegaard

Existentialists have changed the emphasis in philosophy from objectivity, seen in the correspondence theory, to subjectivity. The shift produces a concomitant change in the conception of truth. Helmut Kuhn has drawn the conclusion that objective truth, for the existentialists, by virtue of its being known, becomes one's own truth and thereby ceases to be objective truth. At the same time, one's own truth, by virtue of its being objectified, ceases to be one's own. In other words, no objective truth can be "my" truth, and no truth which is "mine" can be objective truth.<sup>29</sup> With this in mind, it will be seen how the existentialists can emphasize truth in its subjective sense. Kierkegaard writing in Training in Christianity says that to be the truth is Truth: Hence Christ is Truth because he is the truth. In a reference to John 14:6a where Christ says "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life", Kierkegaard says that to be the truth is to know the truth.<sup>30</sup> David Ferdinand Swenson, commenting on Kierkegaard, remarks that truth is not to know the Truth, but to be it. One who only knows the truth is really in error in a sense. This is brought out in Kierkegaard's writings in the illustration of the worshipper before the idol and the worshipper within the true temple.<sup>31</sup> The man in the temple who is doing the "correct thing", and who knows the truth about God, is in error. The idol-worshipper is doing the truth, being the truth, living

in the truth, and so is not in error. Thus one can be in the truth, even if one is relating oneself to untruth, e.g., an idol.<sup>32</sup> John 3:21, "He that doeth the truth cometh to the light", illustrates the same point. For Kierkegaard truth is:

"...not something to be grasped by thought, but something to be ventured upon, something to which existing individuals have to relate themselves. Only thus does eternal truth come 'true' for me."<sup>33</sup>

In many other approaches to truth the emphasis is on truth as some impersonal external to be grasped and defined. For the existentialists, truth is not impersonal in the sense that it can be treated in a detached, objective way. Truth here becomes highly personal--indeed one's very life depends upon it. If Jesus Christ is called the Truth, then one stakes everything on this "claim" to truth, or this "definition" of truth. In like manner, one no longer believes that there is a God, but, rather, one believes in Him. In the case of Sartre, and others, one faces the consequences of believing that there is no God, or that He is dead.

A Copernican revolution has gone on here, concludes Swenson.<sup>34</sup> One no longer objectively examines objects, or seeks knowledge or defines truth. Instead, the former object of one's thought--God--places one under a microscope as it were. Formerly it was man who placed God the object under the glass. The emphasis is now shifted from man the thinker to man the living being. Truth is a matter of existence. Truth cannot be grasped by thought but only by relating oneself to it. According to such a viewpoint, the old objective study of being results only in a knowledge of secondary aspects,

but the subjective approach elicits a revelation of the original truth contained in primitive being. Therefore one does not prove that a stone exists, for example, but rather, that what exists is a stone.

In one of the entries in his journals Kierkegaard wrestles with the problem of the universal and the particular posed by his approach and writes of:

"A truth that is essentially a truth for the individual, his own personal truth, expressing his own primitive individuality, and yet having the universality which links him with the divine...The universe really centres in the individual man, because his self-knowledge is a knowledge of God; and as a subjective thinker the individual makes his own personality an instrument wherewith he may clearly express whatever is universally human."<sup>35</sup>

For Kierkegaard the relationship between truth and the person is of paramount importance. Eternal truth cannot be grasped by objective thought. It can only be known by subjectively relating oneself to the truth.

#### V. QUALITY: H.H. JOACHIM

In his attacks on various theories of truth in The Nature of Truth, Joachim criticizes a qualitative theory of truth which he has reconstructed from suggestive sections in the writings of Bertrand Russell, (including Principia Mathematica), and G.E. Moore, ("The Refutation of Idealism", Mind, N.S., Number Forty-Eight). In a chapter entitled "Truth as a Quality of Independent Entities" he theorizes:

"No matter whether I see it or not, the tree is green. Its greenness is there, an independent unchangeable fact."<sup>36</sup>  
 The same holds of something which is said to be true. "The 'true' is there, timelessly, unchangeably, independently itself; a complex, whose simple constituent elements yet eternally and inseparably cohere to form a single entity."<sup>37</sup>  
 In regard to a proposition, truth or falsity is the flavour of a proposition. However, a true proposition involves an element not contained in a false proposition. This element is assertion, according to Russell.

In this approach truth has the appearance of something independent, (truth-in-itself), whether known or not, something not produced by the mind in the act of experience or cognition, but already existent. This approach is part of Russell's realism. It might be found to have some similarities with Plato's Forms, although Plato is classed by Radhakrishnan and others, as an idealist rather than a realist.

## VI. PRAGMATIC TRUTH: JOHN DEWEY

The experimental method of science is the model for the pragmatists' conception of truth. In the experience of the person are a multitude of objects. For John Dewey, it is only after a particular object of experience has been taken up and tested satisfactorily that it is then termed an "object of knowledge", or in other words, is held to be true. Thus it is true that Mr. Jones has malaria because the testing of the hypothesis that he had malaria has been

carried out and the results have been positive. Truth is the process by which one arrives at truth or knowledge. A time lag comes into operation in the process--an object of experience must be tested over a period of time, however short, before it can be labelled as true. If, and only if, the results are conclusive, the object in question is then declared to be true. Should the testing of the object of experience be unfruitful, then it is not considered to be true, and may even be named as false. Truth describes the means by which a particular object of experience has been proved to be an object of knowledge, that is, proved to be true. It further describes how the object of experience can be proved to be true in the future. Truth states the goal which has been reached. To give a mundane example: "It is true that this is a loaf of bread on the table because I have eaten a slice and it tastes as bread usually tastes."

In Experimental Logic Dewey describes something of the epistemological character of his theory of truth:

"...Strictly speaking, data (as the immediate considerations from which controlled inference proceeds) are not objects /...of knowledge/ but means, instrumentalities, of knowledge... It is by the marks on a page that we know what some man believes..."<sup>38</sup>

He then goes on to point out the difference between a means of knowledge and an object of knowledge, which upon a cursory inspection might appear to be exactly the same. The object of knowledge is a more complete thing than a mere datum.<sup>39</sup>  
In a similar vein he writes:

"If a scientific man be asked what is truth, he will reply--if he frame his reply in terms of his practice and not of some convention--that which is accepted upon adequate evidence."<sup>40</sup>

Hence truth is what one has come to accept after an interval during which one sought to prove an hypothesis, arrive at a goal, or make a given datum of experience into an object of knowledge. As the matter is propounded in Reconstruction in Philosophy:

"That which guides us truly is true--demonstrated capacity for such guidance is precisely what is meant by truth... The hypothesis that works is the true one; and truth is an abstract noun applied to the collection of cases, actual, foreseen and desired, that receive confirmation in their works and consequences."<sup>41</sup>

Dewey's explanation of truth is interpreted by his fellow pragmatist William James as follows:

"Truth happens to an idea. An idea becomes true, is made true by events. True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we can not."<sup>42</sup>

In the pragmatists there is often a change from the word "truths" to the word "truth". This is a result of the absence of any notion of absolute truth, such as the form Truth in Plato's world of Forms, or the complete truth of the coherence theory. Dewey does not accept the contention that there may already be "the ideas of fixed Truth already in Existence."<sup>43</sup> Indeed, for these practical North American philosophers, truth is simply a relative matter--relative

to our experience. As one gains more experience, old truths may be discarded. Thus what is true today may be false tomorrow.<sup>44</sup> Actually truth is simply a matter of expediency, utility, or function; whichever idea identifies a verification process leading to something useful is termed true.<sup>45</sup> Truth is thus a collective name for the verification processes. In the course of experience truth is made by man.<sup>46</sup> In this school of philosophers, truth is seen particularly as a value, for it names that process which has led to something worthwhile, to something useful.

## VII. SOPHISM: PROTAGORAS

"Man is the measure of all things,"<sup>47</sup> is the watchword of Protagoras the Sophist (as mediated by Plato in his Theatetus, the original works of the Sophists having been almost completely lost). Man holds the criterion of truth within himself.<sup>48</sup> While Plato is not in agreement with this theory, he appears to present a fair expression of it, although one must take what he says with this factor in mind.

Socrates, in the Theatetus, indicates how every man has within himself the criterion of truth by using two everyday experiences: One man finds the wind cold and another does not; wine tastes sweet to a healthy man and bitter to a sick man. "Every such thing...exists as it is perceived."<sup>49</sup> What seems to be true for anyone is true (for him). What is perceived by each man is reality. Thus the opinions of all are true.<sup>50</sup> Argument hence becomes pointless. Socrates states that a man does not wittingly hold a false

opinion, for this is analagous to thinking of non-being, which in practice means the complete absence of thought.<sup>51</sup>

A person never thinks that what he does not know is what he knows.<sup>52</sup> A person may believe that all men are unicorns--which the majority hold is false--but this must be considered as truth for him, and, in the sense of Protagoras, as Truth.

The Sophistic approach helps to account for the differences of opinion between people, even though this may not have been its original intention. The net result of the Sophist position is a pluralistic conception of truth, with no sense of an absolute truth such as Plato described in his doctrine of the Forms. This was one of the very grounds on which he disagreed with Sophism. Thus there are many ideas of truth and no absolute Truth; and in this latter sense, no Truth at all, only each Sophist crying out more loudly that he has the Truth. The individual Sophist might have had a singular view of truth, rejecting the claims of all others--which could be construed as a repudiation of his own concept of truth which makes truth relative to the individual.

#### VIII. SOLIPSISM: BERTRAND RUSSELL

An underlying assumption of the correspondence theory is that there is an external reality to which true ideas and perceptions are related, but when the solipsistic approach to truth is examined, it will be found that this assumption is denied. For followers of this school truth becomes entirely a personal matter. Other minds, indeed



the whole of the external world, may not exist, or at least cannot be proved to exist. Bertrand Russell has dressed this approach in modern scientific garb in an essay "The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics." He maintains that we do have sensations, or sense-data, but it is impossible to correlate sense-data with objects of sense. We have sense-data in the form of a blue patch, for example, but we do not see the molecules of something which is blue. It is uncertain if the objects which produce sense-data exist when we no longer receive sensations from them. In fact, it is not even certain if they exist when we receive the sensations, because for us, the sensations are the so-called objects of sense. We have no other way of apprehending them. It is really the sensations after all which we have under scrutiny, not the objects in themselves. It may be conjectured that there are objects producing the sense-data we receive, but one may go no further.<sup>53</sup> John Stuart Mill, with his characteristic clarity, has said of this problem:

"...The sensations, which...we are said to receive from objects, are not only all that we can possibly know of objects, but all that we have any ground for believing to exist. What we term an object is but a . . . complex conception made up by the laws of association out of the ideas of various sensations which we are accustomed to receive simultaneously. There is nothing real in the process but these sensations... we have no evidence of anything, which, not being itself a sensation is a substratum or hidden cause of sensation. The idea of such a substratum is a purely mental creation, to which we have no reason to think that there is any corresponding reality exterior to our minds."<sup>54</sup>

Thus, the sense-data of the solipsists replaces the external reality, or the objects assumed to exist in the correspondence theory. A certain class of these sense-data is imagined to have its origin in other minds, which by introspection and analogy we may come to believe are like our own; another class of sense-data is said to be caused by objects. Thus, even if it is believed that other minds exist, and that these minds are understood as employing the symbol termed "truth", one can never know if the term is being used in the way it is used by oneself. In a similar way, one can never know if it is predicated of the same referent--all one has is the sensation of sound, said to be the words of another, or the marks on a paper, said to be the thoughts of another. Each man, then, has his own conception of truth, and there can be no concensus on the meaning of the term as communication is impossible. Even the existence of other minds is in doubt.<sup>55</sup>

#### IX. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS: A.J. AYER

Truth in linguistic analysis is somewhat like the Cheshire cat in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland--it has all but disappeared as an important concept. Ayer's treatment of truth in The Concept of a Person and Other Essays establishes the point that the term "true" or "false" predicated of a statement adds nothing to it, except to indicate an assertion or its contradictory.<sup>56</sup> However, simply to make a statement indicates assertion, and hence the term "true" may be omitted. In place of a statement containing

the term "false", its contradictory may simply be asserted, and so this term too may also be dropped. To ask what is truth is actually only to make a demand for an analysis of any statement of the form "p is true"; the resultant analysis is simply a way of asserting "p".

As the term "truth" is simply a means of referring to assertion, all philosophic debate about the problem of truth must be either rejected as pointless, or recast into a discussion of the problem of assertion. There is no separate problem of truth.

"If we understand how sentences can be used to refer to facts, and how we are justified in accepting them, we do not have to worry further about the nature of truth. The question with which the philosophers have really been concerned when they have tried to develop 'theories of truth' are questions of testability and meaning."<sup>57</sup>

The object of any theory of truth is really only to demonstrate how propositions are to be validated. In criticizing the linguistic analysts C.E.M. Joad has remarked that this school has not been seeking a definition of truth, in the sense of an explanation of our use of the term "true", but, instead, a criterion of validity.<sup>58</sup> Thus the question is not: "What is truth?" The question is: "What verifies a statement?" For the linguistic analysts, the whole query about truth is an illegitimate one.

With the shifting of the ground of the truth problem from attempts at an explanation of the nature of

truth to attempts at determining the validity of statements by some standard, philosophy enters a new phase. The linguistic analysts have hit upon what is termed the "verification principle" as the standard of validity. To demonstrate the principle in action consider the statement: "It is raining outside!" If someone actually steps outside and is drenched, or if someone looks out of the window and sees rain, then the statement is verified or validated. To state that: "It is true that it is raining outside!" is simply to emphasize that a test has been carried out. One could just as well say that: "It is raining outside!" Truth here would merely be defined as the appropriate test i.e., stepping outside, or peering out of a window. Questions about truth are really questions about the conditions under which a proposition is true or false. That is, question about how a proposition is validated or invalidated. Hence only those propositions which can be verified, which predict what sensations one is likely to have, are taken seriously. In all this there is a certain amount of probability. A statement may be verified at a given time, but this may not guarantee its validity at a future time, unless a second test is carried out at that time and occasions the same result.

For Ayer, there are only two kinds of propositions: The a priori and the empirical. The first includes assertions about the nature of truth, etc., and the second includes such assertions as the one about rain just examined. The a priori propositions produce no fact and so

are classed as tautologies. The empirical propositions, as suggested by their label, do produce new knowledge or facts. Propositions about truth therefore are tautologies. To refer to truth is simply to requisition the translation of a given sentence into an equivalent sentence which does not contain a certain symbol or its synonyms.<sup>59</sup> What is the criterion by which we test the validity of an empirical proposition? Ayer gives the answer that:

"...We test the validity of an empirical hypothesis by seeing whether it actually fulfills the function which it is designed to fulfill, (and its function is to enable us to anticipate experience). Accordingly, if an observation to which a given proposition is relevant conforms to our expectations, the truth of the proposition is confirmed. One cannot say that the proposition has been proved absolutely valid, because it is still possible that a future observation will discredit it."<sup>60</sup>

While the correspondence theory of truth and the coherence theory assume the existence of external reality, Ayer assumes only the existence of ideas and sensations. He is concerned only with the relationship between ideas or sensations and words, rather than an external world to which they refer. It is the trademark of the linguistic analysts that language and its analysis is the only task of the philosopher. In the light of this most basic tenet, examination of truth is dealt with purely in terms of language. Hence Wittgenstein's great emphasis on the function of language. For example, consider the function of the term "truth" in the statement (above) about the rain. Such a line

of thought results in the kind of remark indulged in by Tarski when he writes: " 'The sentence "snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white.' "61

Ayer has been termed a linguistic analyst in this description, although there is some confusion in the use of the term as he is also called a logical positivist. Actually, he might be considered to be both, in the final analysis. John Arthur Passmore has made distinctions between the two terms, and his classification of Ayer as a linguistic analyst has been followed here. The logical positivists, such as Rudolph Carnap, sought to destroy metaphysics, and in this attempt terms such as truth were thought to have been swept away, at least to some extent. In linguistic analysis, effort is concentrated on working with language (especially the defining of terms), rather than ultimate reality, etc., as in metaphysics.

The possibly negative aspects of linguistic analysis must be balanced with the many fruitful discussions about religious language going on at the present time, for example, D.D. Evans', The Logic of Self-Involvement.

#### X. OTHER DEFINITIONS OF TRUTH

The foregoing list of philosophical definitions of truth does not pretend to be exhaustive, although other definitions of truth generally can be reduced to one of the above. There are definitions of truth in other fields beside that of philosophy and religion. Some of these are noted in D.G. Moses work on truth cited in Chapter III. However,

his list is not exhaustive, no mentioning being made in it of the concept of truth in law, for example. There are other definitions of truth in religion than those given by Kraemer and Radhakrishnan, for example, authority. In this conception, something is taken to be true because it is given on good authority and a person may be morally bound to accept such authority. The nature of religious truth may have to be correlated with the nature of truth in psychology simply because Religionswissenschaft deals with human religious experience, and human experience is a field of psychological study.

#### XI. PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS TRUTH: BASIC ISSUES

In looking back over the various philosophical theories noted, there are various issues which arise again and again. Some of these issues are as follows:

1. The relationship of truth to reality, if any, depending upon whether or not the existence of reality is accepted, and if accepted, whether reality is knowable. The question involves such matters as:
  - (a) the possible identification of truth with reality
  - (b) truth as a quality of reality
  - (c) truth as a function of the nature of the mind, and/or the psychology of man
  - (d) truth as a fixed quality or standard or object in external reality
  - (e) truth as an idea or symbol
  - (f) truth as a value
  - (g) the domain of truth--public, private, or both.

2. The nature of reality, (arising out of the above):  
 existent or imaginary; knowable or unknowable; logical or  
 illogical; meaningful or meaningless; singular or plural;  
 homogeneous or heterogeneous. These matters would affect  
 truth in regard to:

- (a) the absoluteness or the relativity of truth
- (b) the possibility of knowledge of truth
- (c) the existence of non-existence of truth
- (d) the singularity or plurality of truth.

Some of the issues involved in religious truth  
 which have emerged are as follows:

1. The relationship between religious truth and reality,  
 involving:

- (a) religious truth related to the inner reality of  
 human experience alone
- (b) related to a reality external to man
- (c) the relationship between the two.

2. The nature of that reality, if accepted as reality,  
 experienced in the religious experience of all religions.

3. The relation of the above to reality in general.

4. The nature of the self-evident character of religious  
 experience.

5. The relationship between truth in religion and in general.

In Chapter IV some attempt has been made to relate  
 the religious truth of Kraemer and Radhakrishnan to the  
 various philosophical theories defined above. It will be  
 seen that while philosophy has gone from the absolutism of  
 Plato to the relativism of Wittgenstein's language games,  
 religious truth is seen by Kraemer and Radhakrishnan to involve



a rejection of the relative in favour of the absolute. While Kraemer has been examined from a philosophical viewpoint, his dialectic conception of truth involves dimensions other than the philosophical. At the same time he faces, in religion, the problem of pluralism, just as the linguistic analysts face it in language games and the concept of metalanguage.

## NOTES TO APPENDIX A

1. Cf., the following definitions of truth:  
Aristotle, Metaphysics, trans., Richard Hope, N.Y., 1932,  
Columbia U. Press, Book Theta, 1051 b, p. 197:

"...he who thinks that what is dissociated is dissociated, and what is combined is combined, holds the truth, whereas he whose thought is contrary to the state of affairs is in error ...it is not because we truly hold you to be white that you are white, but it is because you are white that we who assert this hold the truth."

Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans., Norman Kemp Smith, London, 1961, Macmillan, pp. 97-98.

"...nominal definition of truth, that it is the agreement of knowledge with its object..."

W.R. Inge, God and the Astronomers, London, 1933, Longmans, Green, p. 92.

"the correspondence of our thoughts with the nature of things."

F.H. Bradley, Essays on Truth and Reality, Oxford, 1914, Clarendon, p. 107.

"...truth consists in copying reality."

2. H.H. Joachim, The Nature of Truth, London, 1906, Oxford U. Press, p. 9.

3. Sir William David Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas, Oxford, 1951, p. 245.

4. B. Bosanquet, A Companion to Plato's Republic, for English readers, N.Y., 1895, Macmillan, pp. 205-206.

5. See D. Ross, op. cit., p. 242, where he claims that Beauty, Symmetry, and Truth are three conditions which the Good must satisfy. Cf., J.A. Stewart, Plato's Doctrine of Ideas, N.Y., 1964, Russell and Russell, pp. 108-109, where he claims the ideas are not things but explanations of things, and yet not doubles of one's own ideas.

6. B. Bosanquet, op. cit., p. 206.

7. Plato, The Republic, F.M. Cornford, trans., Oxford, 1942, Clarendon, lines 509D-511E, pp. 216-221.

8. Ibid., lines 514A-521B, pp. 222-226.

9. Ibid., lines 502C-509C, pp. 208-216.

10. Ibid., lines 507-508, pp. 214-215.

11. B. Bosanquet, op. cit., p. 247.

12. Plato, Theatetus, S.W. Dyde, trans., Glasgow, 1899, James Maclehose, lines 193-194, pp. 149-150.

13. Ibid., lines 197-199, pp. 154-156.

14. Plato, Parmenides, B. Jowett, trans., The Works of Plato, N.Y., Tudor, n.d., Vol. 4, part 2, p. 322, /line 132D/.

15. Ibid., line 132B, p. 321.

16. Ibid., lines 133-135B, p. 323.

17. Brand Blanshard, The Nature of Thought, Vol. II, London, 1948, George Allen and Unwin, pp. 262-264. (I have reversed the sequence.) Cf., F.H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality, Oxford, 1930, "Truth is the object of thinking, and the aim of truth is to qualify existence ideally. Its end, that is is to give a character to reality in which it can rest." (p. 145); he also says that reality possesses the character of truth, but truth does not exist, by itself, as such, (pp. 145-147). "Hence truth shows a dissection and never an actual life. Its predicate can never be equivalent to its subject. And if it became so, and if its adjective could be at once self-consistent and re-welded to existence, it would not be truth any longer. It would have passed into another and higher reality." (p. 147). Note that here reality is equivalent to sense-data, as things-in-themselves do not appear to exist, though more than our thoughts may exist.

18. Ibid., pp. 263-264.

19. See the treatment of Plato in section II above; cf., F.H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality, Oxford, 1930, pp. 320-321; cf., H.H. Joachim, London, Oxford, 1939, (2nd ed.), p. 66.

20. Brand Blanshard, Vol., op. cit., p. 215.

21. Ibid., pp. 266-269.

22. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, J.M. Edie, ed., Evanston, 1964, Northwestern U., p. 94.
23. M. Heidegger, On the Essence of Truth, R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, trans., Existence and Being, Chicago, 1949, Henry Regnery, pp. 328-329.
24. Ibid., p. 331.
25. E.L. Allen, Existentialism From Within, London, 1953, Routledge and Paul, pp. 46-47.
26. Werner Brock, "Introduction", M. Heidegger, Existence and Being, op. cit.
27. M. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 158; p. 333.
28. E.L. Allen, op. cit., p. 47.
29. Helmut Kuhn, Encounter with Nothingness, Hinsdale, 1949, Humanist Lib. pp. 44-58.
30. Søren Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity, London, 1941, Oxford.
31. David Ferdinand Swenson, Something about Kierkegaard, Minneapolis, 1945, Augsburg, p. 124, in ref. to S. Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, D.F.S., trans., Princeton, 1941, Princeton U., p. 178.
32. Ibid.
33. R.V. Martin, Kierkegaard, The Melancholy Dane, London, 1950, Epworth, p. 49. The quotation from John is on the same page.
34. D.F. Swenson, op. cit., p. 124.
35. D.F. Swenson, op. cit., p. 42, in ref. to S. Kierkegaard, Journals, Alexander Dru, ed., 16:22.
36. H.H. Joachim, The Nature of Truth, London, 1906, Oxford U. Press, p. 36.
37. Ibid.
38. John Dewey, Essays in Experimental Logic, N.Y. 1953, Dover, p. 43.
39. Ibid., pp. 44-45.
40. Ibid., p. 63.

41. Idem, Reconstruction in Philosophy, N.Y., 1920, H. Holt, pp. 156-157; cf., W. James, Pragmatism, N.Y., 1908, Longmans, Green, p. 218.
42. William James, Pragmatism, N.Y., 1908, Longmans, Green, p. 201.
43. John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, op. cit., p. 159.
44. William James, op. cit., p. 223.
45. Ibid., p. 204.
46. Ibid., p. 218.
47. Plato, Theatetus, S.W. Dyde trans., op. cit., line 152, p. 92.
48. Ibid., line 178B, p. 127.
49. Ibid., line 152C, p. 93.
50. Ibid., line 161D-E, p. 106.
51. Ibid., lines 188-191, pp. 141-145.
52. Ibid., line 191B, p. 145.
53. Bertrand Russell, Mysticism and Logic, London, 1918, George Allen and Unwin, pp. 152-159.
54. John Stuart Mill, Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, Vol. I, N.Y., 1874, Longmans, Green, p. 17.
55. Cf., Leibnitz's system of monads.
56. A.J. Ayer, The Concept of a Person and Other Essays, London, 1963, Macmillan, pp. 166-167, cf., A.J.A., Language, Truth and Logic, N.Y., 1952, Macmillan, p. 122.
57. Ibid., 1963 ed., p. 11.
58. C.E.M. Joad, A Critique of Logical Positivism, London, 1950, Victor Gollancz, p. 91.
59. A.J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, op. cit., p. 120.
60. Ibid., pp. 142-143.
61. John Arthur Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, London, 1957, Gerald Duckworth, in ref. to Tarski, p. 403.

## APPENDIX B

## THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF KRAEMER'S POSITION

The background of Kraemer's The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, and "Continuity or Discontinuity", and (in The Authority of the Faith), is the development of the International Missionary Council, the first work being commissioned for the 1938 Conference of the Council at Tambaram, India and the second re-examining the initial position, with some replies to critics. Religion and the Christian Faith gives the biblical background of the earlier works and replies to critics of them, at least to some extent. It also goes on to establish a position in Religionswissenschaft on the basis of the earlier missiological position. The genesis and growth of the International Missionary Council, with its four main meetings, in Edinburgh in 1910, in Jerusalem in 1928, in Tambaram, in 1938, and in Whitby, Canada, in 1947, and with its eventual union with the World Council of Churches, has been described in W.R. Hogg's Ecumenical Foundations. The work of Hendrik Kraemer can be seen as a response to the mood of the 1928 Jerusalem Conference (which he attended.) Hogg maintains that this mood reflects the attitude of the Chairman of the International Missionary Council, John R. Mott, his attitude being: find the best in other religions and yet never compromise the uniqueness of Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.<sup>1</sup>

The task of the Jerusalem Conference was to study the Christian message, among other matters. There were those delegates, (e.g. the continental Europeans), who saw the gospel as unique and whose converts must renounce all past ideals from other religions. Other delegates, (e.g. the Anglo-saxons), saw values in non-Christian religions, with Christianity as the fulfillment of truths possessed by other religions.<sup>3</sup> Under William Temple's guidance, a statement was adopted at the Conference which contained the key sentence: "Our message is Jesus Christ." It was felt that secularism, rather than other religions, was the great enemy of Christianity, all religions in a sense having to band together against a common foe. Some felt that the Conference's approach to other religions was too syncretistic,<sup>4</sup> continental delegates, including Kraemer, having aired complaints at a special meeting called by J.R. Mott and held in Cairo just prior to the Jerusalem meeting. Hendrik Kraemer later said that he felt Barth's theology set the antithesis between Christianity and secularism in sharpest contrast.<sup>5</sup>

A separate development outside the sphere of the International Missionary Conference had its effect on the next Conference, at Tambaram, in the form of the report of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry published by W.E. Hocking, the chairman, under the title Re-Thinking Missions in 1932. The Inquiry was initiated by a group of laymen who met in New York City in 1930 and subsequently involved a number of denominations in a tour and study of missions with a number of publications resulting besides Hocking's book.<sup>6</sup> Re-Thinking Missions is replete with very practical

criticisms of mission policy and activity. It propounded a mission policy based on a liberal, rather than a dialectic<sup>7</sup> view of Christianity. There is reference in the work to planting the seed of Christianity and then leaving.<sup>8</sup> It spoke of such things as "promoting world unity through the spread of the universal elements of religion,"<sup>9</sup> other religions being ways to God and of all men being brothers in a common quest.<sup>10</sup> The book also maintained that modern missions must recognize, and associate with, kindred elements in other religions,<sup>11</sup> realizing that truth is universal.<sup>12</sup> The fact that Christianity appeared within Judaism was taken as a guide to the relationship with other faiths.<sup>13</sup> It was held that non-Christian religions contained elements of instruction for Christians.<sup>14</sup> Christianity was said to be prepared to see God in varied aspects.<sup>15</sup> The uniqueness of Christianity was held to lie, not so much in its doctrines, but in its selection of doctrines, in its peculiar scheme of doctrines (other religions having some of the same doctrines, but not in the same structure.)<sup>16</sup> To sum up:

"Within the piety of the common people of every land...there is this germ, the inalienable religious intuition of the human soul. The God of this intuition is the true God: to this extent universal religion has not to be established, it exists."<sup>17</sup>

For the 1938 Tambaram Conference, (also called the Madras Conference, Tambaram being fifteen miles from the city of Madras, Madras State, India.), Hendrik Kraemer was commissioned to prepare a study on evangelism with special reference to non-Christian religions. (Studies



on other topics were also arranged.) The Conference's central theme was to be the Church and the upbuilding of the younger Christian communities.<sup>18</sup> The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World which resulted opposed the position taken by Hocking. Hogg depicts Kraemer as being concerned primarily with biblical realism: "acceptance of the Bible solely as a record of God's thinking and action in reference to mankind and in no sense as a story of religious pilgrimage by part of the human race. Moreover...the world of spiritual reality apprehended by Biblical realism--the truth and grace of God as known in Christ--is utterly different from and not continuous with the world of reason, nature and history,"<sup>19</sup> Kraemer maintained that there was no point of contact between Christianity and other religions, as they result from the work of man, no revelation of God being found in them.<sup>20</sup>

"Although a number /of the delegates/ accepted the essence of Biblical realism, few could associate themselves with what Kraemer set forth as a radical discontinuity."<sup>21</sup> Due to this lack of accord, Kraemer and a committee drafted a statement to the effect that non-Christian religions contained values of deep religious experience and great moral achievement and that everywhere and at all times God has been seeking to disclose Himself to men. The statement was accepted by the Conference. Whether non-Christian religions manifested God's revelation in some sense or some degree was left undecided, the statement declaring that Christians did not agree on this point.<sup>22</sup>

Kraemer's dialectical approach to missions must be viewed in contrast with the liberal viewpoint it is defending itself from, as manifested at the Edinburgh Conference on missions in 1910 when liberalism was having a revival, at the Jerusalem Conference in 1928, where liberalism's concord was broken in part, at Cairo in 1938, and at Tambaram in 1938 where Kraemer developed an anti-liberal trend, although he was not understood by the majority.<sup>23</sup>

Liberal theology was itself intended as a defence against natural scientific faith, the scientific attack on theology, and the study of comparative religion, etc. Liberals resisted by a withdrawal from the question of truth to a definition of values, referring to the religion as the absolute value, and studying the route from religions to the religion, (taken to be Christianity, the highest development or value of religion.) Dialectical theology began where liberalism ended, that is, with revelation, understood not as the absolute of human life but as the opposite of human life in a sense. Revelation is taken to be a Christological phenomenon whereas religion is seen as purely human. In relation to religion, thus, revelation is isolated from it. In contrast to an emphasis on value, which is seen as a falsification of Christianity, there is an emphasis on truth previously abandoned by the liberals.

From the emphasis on truth in the dialectical position, the problem of comprehension and understanding developed. The key question here is knowledge.

"Revelation tends to be thought of as 'radikale Belehrung über Gott' /Barth's Church Dogmatics, I 2, p. 307--1956 ed./ and the great problem is how to communicate this teaching so as to bring about the understanding of truth."<sup>24</sup>

## NOTES TO APPENDIX B

1. W.R. Hogg, Ecumenical Foundations, Harper and Bros., N.Y., 1952, p. 242.
2. Ibid., p. 240.
3. Ibid., p. 247; W.E. Hocking reports that Kraemer at work in Indonesia sought to have converted natives retain elements of their old way of life, in order to make Christianity indigenous, but they refused to do this. (Living Religions And A World Faith, London, 1940, George Allen and Unwin, p. 47.)
4. Ibid., pp. 242-251; cf., Miss A.D. MacNeill, Tamaram And Jerusalem, unpublished B.D. Thesis, Faculty of Divinity Library, McGill University, Montreal, 1960, pp. I: 11-12.
5. Ibid., p. 252, note 25, in ref. to H. Kraemer, "Christianity and Secularism", International Review of Missions, Vol. XIX, (1930), pp. 198-199.
6. W.E. Hocking, Re-Thinking Missions, N.Y., 1932, Harper, p. ix.
7. See ref. to dialectic at the end of this Appendix.
8. Ibid., p. 24.
9. Ibid., p. 28.
10. Ibid., p. 31, see C.B. Olds of Okayama, "A Venture in Understanding", Appendix, W.E. Hocking, Living Religions and a World Faith, London, 1940, George Allen and Unwin.
11. Ibid., p. 33.
12. Ibid., p. 36.
13. Ibid., p. 37.
14. Ibid., p. 46.
15. Ibid., p. 53.
16. Ibid., p. 49.
17. Ibid., p. 37.

18. W.R. Hogg, op. cit., p. 287, note 139, where I.M.C. Minutes are cited; cf., H. Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, op. cit., p. v. Miss A.D. MacNeill, op. cit., comments that Kraemer's title for the Tambaram book is reminiscent of a phrase in the first volume of the Jerusalem Conference report--The Christian Message, whose gist was that there are spiritual values in all faiths, but the delegates believed deeply that all men need Jesus Christ and that He came to all. She wonders just how much Kraemer's book is a reaction to that. She also asks why a man as conservative as Kraemer was chosen to write the study book, making several suggestions, one of which is that Martin Schlunk had complained, after the Jerusalem Conference, that no Continental Europeans had written preliminary papers for the meeting.

19. Ibid., p. 295.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., pp. 295-296.

23. Johannes Aagaard, "Revelation and Religion", Studia Theologica, Vol. 13, (1960), Fasc. I, p. 151; note 2.

"It is Hendrik Kraemer who within the sphere of missiology more than anyone else has been the spokesman for the dialectical resolution of the problem of relationship." (pp. 149-150).

24. Ibid., p. 159.

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