assumed a tainted human nature and washed it clean, thus making it a promise and potency of the world’s redemption.

Even if we accept the programme of reconstructing theology from a single point of view, we may desire to criticize not merely Ritschl's execution of the scheme, but his selection of the ruling principle. Is it enough to extricate the spirit of Protestantism from the imperfect letter of its early creeds? One set of difficulties is raised by the progress of science. No Protestant can deny that it is a duty for Christianity to come to terms with scientific dis­coveries, and few Catholics will care to deny it. Anxious negotiations thus arise, which colour all modern schemes of theology. But with a certain school they become central and dominant. We distinguish this position from the new emphasis on Christology, whether churchly or radical. Those who find a gospel in philosophy arc ready to dictate terms to outsiders; but those who wait upon science for its verdicts supplicate terms of peace. Just as much of Christianity is to survive as science will spare. Often the theologians in question look to psychology as the permanent basis of religion; who is to deny that religion is a psychological fact, and the natural expression of something in man’s constitution? This strain may be recognized, mingled with others, in Schleiermacher; it has found interesting expression in the contributions of H. J. Holtzmann and Ernst Troeltsch to the volume dealing with Christianity in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart.* Christ is confessed as the greatest figure of the past, and as one of no small im­portance still for the present and future. But, with entire decision, Christianity is called to the bar of modem culture. From that tribunal there is to be no appeal, whether to a higher revelation or to a deeper experience. This view stands in connexion with the study of comparative religion. Out of that very Ritschl school, which began by despising all religions except those of the Bible, has developed the *religionsgeschichtlich* movement, which dissolves Christianity in the wider stream. Such a policy is at the opposite pole to Ritschl’s; he desired to interpret Christianity in the light of its own central thought. If Christians can find in their faith new resources to meet the new needs, they may hope to command the future. Theology if it is to live must be henceforth at once more Christian and more scientific than it has ever yet been.

A less threatening yet important possibility of modifica­tion arises out of the scientific study of the New Testament. Augustine, Luther, the evangelical revival, went back to St Paul; can Christianity not dig deeper by going back to Jesus? A Protestant has to view the past history of doctrine very much as a succession of de­clensions and revivals, the latter more than counter­acting the former. He does not claim to have regained the inspiration of a Paul; but he holds that Augustine was more Christian than the sub-apostolic age, and Luther more Christian than Augustine. That is the hopeful feature in the past. The task for the present, with its unequalled scientific resources, is to get nearer than ever to the heart of the Gospel. Must Pauline categories always be supreme? The Ritschl school, and others too, have made an earnest effort to incorporate Christ’s words in Dogmatic and no longer shunt them into systems of “ Christian Ethics.” They have not idolized Paulinism; but have they not idolized Luther? They seem to take for granted that the spirit—though not the letter—of that great man was a definitive statement of the Christian principle. To interpret Christianity out of itself is one thing; to interpret it out of Luther, even out of a distillate of Luther, is possibly a lower thing. The theology of the future may draw more equally from several New Testament types of doctrines. The scheme that includes most may be the successful scheme. Unity may be safeguarded in the confession of Christ, and theology indeed prove “Christocentric.”@@1 Above all, the social message of Jesus may well prove a gospel to our materially prosperous

but inwardly sorrowful age. Any school of thought which despises that hope has small right to call itself Christian.

Casting a backward glance once more over the evolution of Christian theology, we may say very roughly that at first it recognized as natural or rational truth the being of the Logos, and as special fact of revelation the Incarnation of the Word in Jesus Christ. In medieval times the basis was altered. What had been rational truth now claimed acceptance as supernatural mystery.

Modern idealists, ill at ease with this inheritance, try to show that Christ’s Incarnation no less than His eternal divine being is a natural and rational truth. But, when this programme is carried out, there is no small danger lest the relations traced out between God and men should collapse into dust, the facts of Christ transform themselves into symbols, and the idealistic theology of the right wheel to the left.

Again, Western theology, very roughly summarized, while accepting the earlier doctrinal tradition, has broken new ground for itself, in affirming as rational necessity that God must punish sin (this is at least latent in Aquinas’s doctrine of natural law), but as contingent fact of re­velation that God has in Christ combined the punishment of sin with the salvation of sinners; this is the Reformation or post­Reformation thought. Here again the desire makes itself felt to impute more to God’s nature. Is His mercy not as inherent as His justice? If so, *must* He not redeem? For, if He merely may redeem but must punish, then His greatest deeds on our behalf wear an aspect of caprice, or suggest unknown if not unknowable motives. The doctrine of penal substitution in the Atonement, as usually conceived, seems to point in the same direction as predestinarianism. Behind superficial mani­festations of grace there is a dark background, almost like the Greek Fate. The ultimate source of God’s actions is something either unintelligible or unrevealed. Christian theology cannot acquiesce in this. In our day especially it must seek to light up every doctrine with the genuine Christian belief in God’s Fatherhood. And yet here again incautious advance may seem to overleap itself. If it should come to be held that with so kind a God no redemption at all is necessary, the significance of Christ is immensely curtailed if not blotted out. Even if He should still be taken as the prophet of the divine goodwill, yet the loss of any serious estimate of sin makes good nature on God’s part a matter of course. Christianity of such a type is likely to be feeble and precarious. Perhaps we may find a third and better possibility by ceasing to aim at a scientific gnosis of God, either limited or unlimited. Perhaps what concerns the Christian is rather the assured revelation that God is acting in character, like Himself, and yet acting wonderfully by methods which we could not predict but must adore. The free life of personal beings is no more to be mastered by a formula than it is to be assigned to caprice. A God who is love will act neither from wilfulness nor from what is called rational but might more correctly be called physical necessity. He will act in and from character. Always wise, always holy, always unsearchable, the Christian’s God is that heavenly Father who has His full image and revelation in Jesus Christ.

While the greatest of all theological systems, the *Summae* of the middle ages, include everything in the one treatise, it has been the business of post-Reformation learning to effect a formal improvement by distributing theo­logical studies among a definite number of headings. The new theory lived and grew throughout the 18th- century Age of Enlightenment (*e.g.* J. S. Semler), linking Pro­testant scholasticism with modern thought, and exhibiting the continuity of science in spite of great revolutionary changes and great reactions. The beginning is ascribed to A. Hyperius (Gerhard of Yprês), a professor at Marburg, and, it seems, a conciliatory Lutheran, not, as sometimes said, a Reformed (1511-64). He published *Four Books on the Study of Theo­logy* (1556). Book iv. is said to be the first appearance of Practical Theology—Liturgies, Pastoral Theology, &c. In virtue of another work *(De Formandis Concionibus,* 1553),

@@@1 Thomasius and H. B. Smith are quoted as holding the “ Christo­centric" ideal. A. Μ. Fairbairn, mindful of the vast importance of the conception of God, amends the programme. Theology is to be formally Christocentric, materially Tneocentric (Fatherhood of God).