For Idea and Reality.

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Spiritual Reality.

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[289] Revealed religion, with the Word of Life, with miracles and signs, in historical as well as super-historical facts, is the work of the spirit. To wish here to reach for the outward real and forget the spirit, the eternal inward, is as absurd as to wish to grasp the pure spirit apart from the facts in which it has revealed itself. The spirit of life and of truth must be seen in the light of reality, and reality in turn in the light of the spirit: the reality of revelation is Spiritual Reality.

As the reality is that is to be seen, so must the eye be that is to see the real. To see merely sensible things it is enough to have a sensibly sound and sharp eye; in this respect the animal may even have certain one-sided advantages over man. What especially distinguishes human sight from animal sight is what is peculiar in man's gaze, that man looks at the thing thinkingly.

The investigator of nature arms his eye — with the telescope, to see the great that would otherwise be hidden in unattainable distance; with the microscope, to see what,
[290] despite its immediate nearness, lies hidden in infinite smallness. He wants to see thoroughly what there is to see everywhere in the visible world; but he is not content with a sensible seeing; sight must serve his thought; he searches in everything visible for the invisible: he inquires after laws.

Thought is spiritual; a world of real laws is a spiritual world. We may say with full right that the investigator of nature sees the spiritual in the real, that reality stands before his gaze as a spiritual reality; but we cannot say that this spiritual reality is yet Spiritual Reality. And why not? It is not the fault of reality; no, it is the fault of the eye or, seen from another side, it is the fault of the illumination. The spiritual light in which the investigator alone can, will, and ought to see the whole real realm of nature is the light of thought, of reason, of science; but this light of thought, for all its clarity, is too general, cold, and one-sided to be the light of the spirit.

That in the fruitful regions of reality there is still something else to discover than what can be seen by the general light of thought of science, art and poetry bear witness enough. The landscape painter, for example, can never grow weary of contemplating nature, for the longer he contemplates it, the more he sees in it; it communicates itself to him, it entrusts him with its secrets: he constantly makes new discoveries. When the beholder looks at the painted landscape and finds the picture wonderfully beautiful, he is easily tempted to say to himself: this is no faithful rendering of the

real; it is nature, not as it really is, but as it ought to be in the name of the idea and of beauty be; art must re-create reality and transform nature. *[291]*

There is a peculiar mixture of true and false in such judgments. For it is quite true that the work of art cannot be a straightforward copy of material reality, the reality that anyone who likes can go and contemplate with his own eyes; but what is false is that the artist should have added something of his own, in the sense that, for the embellishment of nature, he has put in something that does not belong to the revelation of nature's essence, something not-natural, and thus something in reality unnatural. It is so far from being the case that the nature that has found its transfiguration in art should be a falsified nature at odds with reality, that on the contrary it is the innermost essence of nature, the true nature, that receives its appearance in the true work of art. The beholder must see the work of art in the light in which the artist has seen nature. If he has no eye for the idea of art, then he sees in the work of art an arbitrary piece of human handiwork, a deceptive imitation, perhaps even a fraud, and holds fast, sensibly, to the sensible reality. What good does it do to show him a Thorvaldsen's Jason! He sees a naked man with a helmet on his head and a sheepskin on his arm, and involuntarily asks: did the real Jason look like that? Did Jason really exist, and did Thorvaldsen see him? Since one cannot give him an affirmative answer to either of these questions, he declares the whole thing a play of the imagination without reality, and so without truth.

What contributes especially in such inquiries to confusing sound sense is an *[292]* unclear mixture of the two concepts: *Reality and Truth.* That the real must have its truth, and the true always in one way or another correspond to the real, is indisputable; but for that very reason it must be insisted that truth itself stands infinitely higher than the outward, palpable reality.

If everything real were without more ado truth, then there could be no real error, no real crime or real lie: the reality of error, of lie, of crime would then be merely different expressions for real truth. To be sure, one speaks of a true crime, a true lie; but who does not see that the adjective "true" in such connections precisely stamps the crime as crime, the lie as lie! Conversely, if there were no truth except in what exists in an outward palpable way, then there would be no truth either in thought or reason, either in soul or spirit. But that the inner, invisible has its reality just as well, and in reality its truth, as the outer, palpable, indeed a far more essential and deeper truth, no one can deny without denying all truth.

That the truth in the essential inner is of higher order than the truth in the real

outer is precisely what, on the level of the idea, gives poetry its significance and divine right. The strongest and boldest break of poetry with outward reality occurs in the fairy tale. H. C. Andersen's fairy tale *The Shadow*, for example, has many interesting features of real life and could almost take on the appearance of being a real story,
[293] if the highly gifted author had not — it grieves us to have to tell him so — allowed himself so highly offensive a breach of the immutable laws of nature; for a "sensible" reader says (and the same is said by every boy in an American boys' school): "Surely no one is going to make me believe that a shadow can sneak away from its master like that, creep in under the cake-woman's skirt, begin to grow fat while the master grows thin, and, what is the worst scandal and at the same time the most improbable of all, carry it so far that in the end it gets engaged, think of it — to a Princess of the Blood." We admit that the author, doubtless out of sheer ignorance, which can only in part be excused by his not being a physicist by profession, has overlooked the very important circumstance that a born shadow, even if it is the shadow of "a learned man," never, no, however much it may stretch and extend itself, never manages to become a real human being, even if it became a fat human being. If only one could forgive the poet his ignorance of physics, one could not deny him excellence through and through in psychology; for the psychical laws, the well-known natural laws of conceit, of vanity, of egoism and of humbug, are fulfilled with the unerring certainty of true genius most punctiliously in *The Shadow.*

We need not lose ourselves here in lengthy inquiries concerning the relation between science, art and poetry; for this much can be clearly seen from what has been said: 1) that the question of *reality* must always be subordinated to the question
[294] of *truth;* and 2) that the question of truth every time acquires a peculiar significance in relation to the field of vision within which the inquiry falls. Truth can in no sphere, no more in poetry than in science, give up reality; but truth stands above the outward, material reality. The most important question is not: how much reality is there in the true; but, conversely: how much truth is there in the real? When for this reason it is insisted again and again that what is truth in poetry and art is not truth in science, and conversely: then the meaning is easy to grasp. Poetry and art cannot and ought not to conceive reality in the same way as science; the scientific investigator cannot and ought not to see reality with the same eyes as the poet. If a zoologist took it into his head to introduce ducks and geese speaking, in order properly to bring out these animals' characteristic peculiarities, one would rightly say: that is an unscientific procedure; there is no seriousness in such a treatment. But because the zoologist sins

against truth when he lets the animals speak, who will therefore maintain that the fairy tale "*the Ugly Duckling*" does not have a deep poetic truth corresponding to reality? To separate the shadow from its shadow-caster and let it go its own way is impermissible in optics; but there is surely no man of cultivation and sound sense who accuses the poet of violating truth because he, by a higher plenary authority, breathes life into a shadow-being, holds a mirror before the reader's eyes and says: this is how it goes in reality!

It is not merely, as people say, permitted in art and poetry to alter something in the real and to break with what natural science understands by the laws of things; *[295]* but it is an essential requirement, an unavoidable duty for the poet as for the artist to treat the material of reality in such a way that there can be truth in poetry and art. Just as truth in all circles of the life of consciousness has and must have reality beneath it, so in all the circles of existence the laws of truth have the laws of reality beneath them. If only the laws of truth are fulfilled, then the fulfilment of the laws of reality follows as of itself; if, conversely, the laws of outward reality are set above the laws of truth, then art and poetry are only lies and deceit.

Wherever the question of truth is raised, what is asked for is a judgment upon reality, and then first of all the standard by which judgment is to be passed. As regards science, art, and poetry, the cultivated are on the whole fairly well oriented; but when the question concerns the relation between truth and reality in religion, one might be tempted to believe that we were still living in the golden age of papacy or at any rate of theology; for the barbarism is appalling. "Did Christ really walk upon the sea? Did he really raise Lazarus? Did he really ascend into heaven in such an outward, visible way that I, for example, had I been present, could have seen it just as plainly as the apostles? Give me an infallible, historical, best of all natural-historical proof that it all really happened as it is told: then I will believe it. But if no one can give me full assurance of the reality of the marvel- ous, then I should be a fool to take it for *[296]* anything but legend and myth"[1)].

Those who in our day make such demands upon the gospel history betray the same lack of cultivation in respect of religion as those who, in the name of truth, demand that the picture of Jason shall demonstrably resemble the real Jason, and the

[1)] How the outward reality can, in the sacred history, set itself up in a deterrent way against Spiritual Reality, we learn from the Gospel of Christ's walking on the sea. From the Savior's word: *Come*! Peter receives an impression of Spiritual Reality. "But when he saw the strong wind," in other words: when he received an overwhelming impression of the sensible reality of nature, "he was afraid"… Mtth. 14:29—30.

story of the Shadow be a real story, betray in respect of poetry and art. Torn loose from the idea of art, reality acquires no, absolutely no significance in art; torn loose from the spirit of revelation, reality acquires no, absolutely no significance in religion.

By this it is by no means said that the real is to be conceived and judged in religion in the same or even in a similar way as in poetry and art; far from it! here precisely the opposite is said; for here it is expressly said that reality is to be conceived and judged in another way, by a quite different standard, in religion than in whatever other of the different spheres of the life of the spirit, be it in the practical or the theoretical, be it in art and poetry or in science.

What the empirically investigating sciences establish as strict, immutable laws
[297] are laws for the outwardly given reality. Such things, such laws, and conversely: at this conception science stops; whence the things and the laws have their origin, it does not investigate. If we raise the question whether it would not be possible that there could be another order of things, another nature than this present one, then science, when it duly reflects, must answer: it is indeed possible, but then there must also be other laws. Thereby science's relation to reality is essentially characterized. Religion may very well concede the validity of this principle of science; but that it cannot enter upon presenting reality in the same illumination as science lies in the nature of the case. If religion regarded reality from the same point of view as science, it would not be religion.

The laws of truth in art and poetry are laws of beauty. Religion need not take a hostile stand toward the corresponding conception and treatment of reality; indeed one may even say that it stands in a more intimate and familiar relation to poetry than to scientific investigation of nature. Nonetheless the spirit of revelation lays quite another weight on real facts and makes quite differently strict demands of reality than the aesthetic idea[1)].

[298] That physicists and aestheticians may perhaps find the category of Spiritual Reality somewhat unclear need not surprise us; for it is natural that everyone lives himself into his own and accustoms himself to see reality with his own eye; but that those who undertake to do the big talking about the scientific grounding of religion should cast aside the expression *Spiritual Reality*, and — as if as a proof that their own spirit

[1)] The aesthetic ideal belongs solely to the imagination; it satisfies contemplation; but makes no demand upon the will; it requires no realization, it has in illusion its own unreal reality, its completion and conclusion. The religious ideal, by contrast, is in the very strictest sense an ideal of reality, for it is first and last an ideal of the will, and the ideal of the will demands its realization. Philosophy of Religion, p. 205—6.

is without reality, and their own reality without spirit — try to stamp this expression as an ambiguity, betrays unambiguously that they in their burning zeal for theology have forgotten the first article of faith, the article on creation.

Faith in creation surely presupposes, obviously, that the whole visible, sensible nature is the work of the spirit. But if the real nature is originally the work of the spirit, then it follows indisputably that revealed religion wants the reality of the whole world regarded in the light of the spirit, that, in other words, all reality must from the beginning be conceived as Spiritual Reality. To avoid ambiguity, attention has therefore also been drawn in its place[1)] expressly to the fact that the religious contemplation of nature is in principle absolutely heterogeneous with the scientific. "Without regard to the possible objections of science, and long before these came into being, revelation has spoken its word on creation, and "the religious consciousness has in the inwardness of faith found inspired words in praise of the power that upholds all, that can shake the mountains in their foundations, can roll up the heavens like a cloth, can draw back its breath, so that all that lives dies… It looks indeed almost *[299]* as if the religious view of nature were just as sensibly objective as the observation corresponding to science; it looks as if the believer saw God himself in outward nature, in the mighty sea, where he builds his lofty halls in the waters, saw the glance of his eyes in lightning, heard his voice in thunder, his rolling chariot in storm-clouds, when he rides upon the wings of the storm. Yet this is not so; the objectively natural is everywhere only occasional cause, only means and point of transition for that which is subjective in the spirit. "

The spirit of revelation has something to communicate to Adam's race, something to enlighten men about, and for this it uses reality. How it uses the outward real, in what facts, events, pictures of life and illuminations it makes visible its power and will, its decrees, promises, and laws, must therefore be judged solely and alone by the end it has set itself, the task it wants to solve in religion. In this respect there are two questions on whose answer everything depends: 1) *how does the reality of the events presented in the Bible stand to the word of Fall and Restoration in which the spirit reveals the eternal truth?* 2) *to what extent can it agree* with the *infallibility of the spirit and the credibility of the word that in the sacred history traits are cited of a view of the world that manifestly deviates from, and in some particulars even expressly conflicts with, the conception now prevailing of real natural conditions, of the order of* *[300]* *things expressed in visible facts?*

[1)] Philosophy of Religion, p. 475—76.

Before an honest and thorough reconciliation between religion and culture can be thought of, it is necessary to bring forward these questions and see to what extent, under the conditions of the times, it is possible to get them answered in a way satisfactory to both parties.

Religion stands above culture; if the race had only a choice between one of two: either to give up religion and pay homage to culture, or to hold fast to positive religion and break with culture, then the more serious among our contemporaries would surely not hesitate to choose the latter. We side with those who strictly demand that the revealed word be done justice in every respect; we place ourselves on the side of those who, if it were necessary, would rather break the staff over the whole view of the world founded on natural science than give up a jot of that word of faith which manifestly belongs to salvation and blessedness. It is from this point of view that in this connection we will make our contribution to the answering of the questions.

Thus: *how does the reality of the events told in the Bible stand to the word of revelation on Fall and Restoration?*

To begin at the beginning, we direct attention to the accounts in the first book of Moses on creation, Paradise, and the Fall. That these accounts deal with something real and in the very strictest sense concern reality, no one will be able to deny. We say: it is Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit, and understand this to mean that the believing conception has absolutely nothing to do with the outward physical reality
[301] severed from the spirit, but that the believer who in religious self-understanding wants to understand the word has first and last to do with the spirit in the word, has to regard the traits belonging to natural reality as elements, means, and conditions which the spirit uses to make visible the truth it wants to reveal.

To establish the correctness of this way of looking at things, we shall now seek to show that two men can, as regards the religious content of the narratives, believe the same, the very same, with the same strength and inwardness of conviction, and yet have a different conception of what is outwardly real in the events.

Let us begin with a simple believer. He takes everything literally; he follows the history of creation step by step from the first to the last day, and it never occurs to him that there could be any other explanation of the real coming-into-being of the world. He reads the description of the Garden of Eden as one reads a description of any other real garden, and has no scruple about the fact that doubt might perhaps arise concerning the reality of the two supernatural trees that are here planted in an otherwise natural soil. He sees Eve before the Tree of Knowledge; he hears the

serpent's tempting words; he becomes a witness to the Fall and feels in his conscience that the judgment of Jehovah is not only severe and terrible, but also holy and just; in short: the believer apprehends in these events the outward in unity with the inward, the supernatural in unity with the natural, the real in unity with the spiritual, hence the whole as Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit.

If we now place ourselves on the standpoint of cultivation, of the investigation *[302]* of nature, and of reasoning criticism, that is, on the stage of consciousness where there can be talk of a sharp, intelligent separation of the spiritual and the real, as of the supernatural and the natural: then it is absolutely necessary that from the beginning an account be given of what is decisive for religion and faith, whether it is the outward real or the inward, the spiritual; for on the determination of this point the relation between religion and culture may be said on the whole to rest.

If the testimonies about the outward real are to be set higher than the testimony of the spirit, then natural science must be made supreme judge. "It can then easily be proved that the facts cited in the history of creation can as little be brought into agreement with what has shown itself to the sharp eye of the investigators to be reality as the notion of a tree from whose fruits one should be able to eat one's way to becoming as wise as God himself can be reconciled with sound understanding. A spirit that is so unacquainted with the most elementary principles of natural science and of sound reason, so completely devoid of astronomical, geological, botanical, zoological, and anthropological preliminary knowledge, can impossibly be any real spirit, still less God's own Spirit; with this the matter is settled."

But such attacks upon religion, with however much acuteness and scientific competence they may be equipped, are without any significance, since they proceed from a thoroughly false presupposition. In revelation and faith it is by no means the outward real that stands above the spirit, but conversely it is the spirit itself that is *[303]* unconditionally lord over all reality, and therefore uses the real as a means for its own end. The fundamental question is, for what end the spirit has uttered its word on creation, Paradise, and the Fall, what it is that it wishes to teach us in this its word, and what truth there is in this teaching.

It is then, in the first place, the reality of creation that is at issue, but, mark well, conceived as Spiritual Reality. That the natural, real world is a revelation of God's almighty, creating word is the original presupposition of religion and faith, a presupposition that scientific criticism will surely leave unshaken. To make this truth comprehensible, graspable, intelligible to the simple, the various stages of creation

are referred to a creation in six days.

Like the word on creation, so also the word on Paradise has its reality; but — it is Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit. That man originally has life from God's life, spirit from God's spirit, and hence is by his ideal vocation formed to bear God's image, to know God's commandment and do his will, this is the supreme truth of anthropology, and real experience has surely shown that in the same degree as the consciousness of this is obscured, in the same degree man sinks, despite cultivation of the understanding and culture, into animal dependence upon selfish powers of nature, and loses the impression of the original nobility of his race.

And now the word on temptation and the Fall! Every man, even the hero who is
[304] the object of the admiration of millions, begins his career with a double con- ception of human life, a conception that it in reality is what it ought not to be, and a conception that it in reality ought to be what it is not; this rift between ideal and reality the individual can see in race and history only insofar as he sees it in his own inner being. The hero can now go two ways. If he believes the word of the lost Paradise, then he acknowledges himself complicit in the transgression of the race, then he believes in the reality of the image of God in the holy prototype and strains with all his powers after the conditions of restoration and liberation, to work himself and the race up out of the deep abasement, the false reality whose essence is bondage, lie, and deceit, and to win a step forward toward that reality of the spirit which satisfies the demands of life. If he despises the word of the lost Paradise, then he chooses another way. In dim, mythical self-deification he then begins by making the outward real, with all the glorification that can be attained thereby, the end of life. He does not cast contempt outright upon the ideal conceptions; far from it! The old dreams of the race, the memories of Paradise of peace and freedom, right and truth, he employs as a means of awakening for the credulous people, as exalted, unselfish motives, magic formulas with which one dazzles the mob. He goes further, he makes a critical divorce between the real and the ideal. The real is that he who has the powers uses them to his own advantage; the ideal is that the world wants to be deceived; so he smiles at the spirit of the world and says: thy will be done. Such a heroic figure must necessarily acquire
[305] two faces, an official and a private. The official, which turns outward toward the crowd, has noble features, the stamp of loftiness and majesty; it is in exalted calm, radiant with the splendor of the Ideal, a counterfeit, fabricated image of God. But inside this sits another face, the person's honest, real private face, turned inward with a satyr's grin that mocks the one turned outward. In this way the hero in history

comes to resemble the fairy Alcine in the fairy tale: so long as the enchantment works, and the lovers are blinded, she looks like a beautiful woman; but when the sorcery fades, one discovers with horror that she is an old, sallow, wrinkled hag. Yet even this mockery of the image of God and of the sacred memories of Paradise is an eloquent testimony that the word about temptation, fall and original guilt is reality, Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit.

That it is not the representations of the outwardly real, of the creation in six days, of the trees in the Garden of Eden, of the appearance of the serpent, and so on, on which the matter turns, is plainly seen from the fact that these representations are like lightly cast colored pictures, which may well support the visualization, but do not in and by themselves exercise the slightest influence on faith.

Two people can — we repeat it — have the same faith in the divine truth of the Word, and yet be of widely differing opinion concerning the outward side of the events. When the one takes everything literally, while the other grasps the outward features figuratively, a difference of opinion undeniably shows itself here; but that this difference of opinion does not concern the Word as a word of revelation, can be seen from two well-known facts.

First, he who takes everything literally is not thereby in a position to win any *[306]* new gain for the life of faith. To believe in the Creation is to believe that this world has really come into being at the bidding of Almighty power; but the representation of six days, six weeks, six million years makes, in a religious respect, neither here nor there. To believe in Paradise and the Fall is to believe in the truth of the image of God in which man was originally created, and, in the pain of self-contradiction, to recognize the original guilt by which the Ideal was darkened. But the image of the tree of knowledge and of the speaking serpent can be set up as objects of faith only through a monstrous misunderstanding. That the Fall of the innocent presupposes a temptation is a truth of faith; but whether the tempting serpent had legs and a human head, whether it sat in the tree or lay at the root of the tree, what color it had, whether it was bluish-gray, green or spotted, is a topic for poetic imagination, an object of opinion, but no object of faith.

Second, the disagreement between him who takes everything literally and him who grasps the narrative figuratively will immediately show itself as a disagreement about physics and natural history; but precisely the circumstance that the grounds of inquiry for and against must all be drawn from the outwardly real, quite as in the inquiries about the river Phrat, about bdellium and the stone onyx, is surely

a testimony that the contending parties have left the foundation of revelation and betaken themselves out onto the territory of natural science, which has no concern with faith.

But in granting the spirit the right to use reality as it wills, for the illustration of
[307] the truth of its word, we must above all not forget what spirit it is that is in question. It is not a half-conscious, obscure human spirit that here stands powerless, groping, before external nature and confuses its dream images with real facts; no, it is, by the presupposition of faith, the almighty Spirit of God, the Spirit of life and of truth, who is Lord over all reality, on earth as well as in heaven. When this Spirit in its Word brings the real under the figurative, the believer holds himself assured that this does not happen from ignorance or obscurity, but in the name of truth, for man's sake, because man, who needs knowledge of God long before he has come so far on the road of civilization that he can scientifically clear up for himself his knowledge of nature, is able to grasp the divine thought deeply and purely only in such a figurative language. Herewith it is also presupposed that the spirit, insofar as it serves the revelation of truth, can also use the real in another way, that in material reality it can set a reality of higher order, that it can, in other words, reveal itself by signs and miracles.

The question of the signs and miracles of revelation has — thanks to the theologians' scientific collusion with plain atheism — in recent times become so distorted that the cultivated person is very loath to enter upon further discussion of this topic, which is, in his opinion, as unfruitful as it is worn out. For the question contains two absolutely dissimilar questions, the one about God's almighty will, the other about
[308] the immutability of the natural laws. By putting the latter question first, appealing to natural science, but keeping silent about its well-known concession that our knowledge has an absolute limit, it is an easy matter to transform the great fundamental question, decisive for life and death, into a toothless, theological old wives' question, which nobody any longer cares to hear.

The considerations and concessions which in this respect are owed to natural science are, so far as we are able to penetrate into the matter, carefully set forth in the Philosophy of Religion[1)], and we shall not dwell longer here on this point. What we in this connection must lay stress on is that the question of signs and miracles must unconditionally be referred to the question of the divine will. Is there really an almighty, creating God, and does this almighty, creating God have a will? On the

[1)] Cf. the Author's *Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 150—174; pp. 476—477, and other passages.

answer to this simple question, with a simple Yes or No, the whole inquiry depends.

That in philosophy there are and must be a multitude of different shadings in the conception and determination of the concept of God, we shall be the last to deny; but from the standpoint of reality, on the stage of life, of existence and of moral consciousness, it stands immovably fast that whoever denies God a will denies God, for a God without will is no God.

The whole account between the faith in revelation and philosophical atheism is easily settled. "Will you, the modern Ego of the nineteenth century, shove the will out of your concept of God and live out your life from mankind's metaphysical principle, *[309]* very well! that is your own affair. Surely no one is going to make an attempt either to force you to faith or in any respect to thrust upon you biblical representations of the supernatural. But then you ought also to have so clear a consciousness of your standpoint that you do not stand there imagining, to yourself and to the world, that it is a scientific criticism of the principle of faith that has grounded your denial of God, whereas, conversely, it is your denial of God that forms the foundation of your dissolving criticism of positive religion." With this brief retort a skilled teacher of religion can dispatch the atheist without further trouble.

As regards the individual miracles in the biblical history, all who agree in acknowledging the first article of faith must also agree in acknowledging the possibility of these miracles; for the unconditional presupposition of faith is that "with God nothing shall be impossible." But from the fact that all miracles are assumed to be possible it does not yet follow that believers are bound to ascribe to them all, without distinction, the same outward reality. It is quite possible that a sign, a miraculous deed, which according to our way of representing things has the appearance of having formed itself for visualization in an inward manner, has under the influence of the spirit been conceived and presented as if it belonged to the series of outward events. The main point is that Spiritual Reality embraces the outward just as much as the inward, and that every reasoning separation of the material and the ideal falls outside the interest of faith. This can be elucidated by a single example.

Did Christ really walk on the sea? To such a question, in so far as weight is *[310]* laid exclusively on the outward historical reality, the answer must be short and definite: there is no human being on earth who knows; for of such a thing there is no historical knowledge. World-historical events, which all proceed from natural causes, science can confirm by unimpeachable testimonies; but about supernatural events no scientifically decisive certainty can possibly be given, for these events must, by

the nature of the case, look highly different, according as the eyewitnesses have seen them in the light of faith or of unbelief.

Christ's walking on the sea is no reality for science, but it is a Spiritual Reality, a reality for faith. "For," says the believer, "how such an event is to be brought into agreement with the natural laws, of that I know nothing, of that nothing can be known; but this I acknowledge in faith, that for God all things are possible, and with that all reasoning falls away. What appeals to me in this picture of life, what exclusively captivates my attention, is the spiritually exalted in Christ's being, his divine elevation above the outward barriers of nature, and then first and last the helping hand with which he seizes the sinking Peter." — This religious point of view is in principle absolutely different from the theological.

The theological interpreter is a man of science; he thinks to himself: "if only I could get sufficient certainty that it really happened as is told; if I could by the help
[311] of a little criticism, hermeneutics and exegetics get behind the spirit and lay hold of the naked reality, then I would know what I ought to believe." Will the theologian succeed? Quite excellently! In order not to be dazzled by Spiritual Reality, he really goes both behind the spirit and around the spirit; and what does he find then? A legend, a myth, a distorted reality, that is to say, a reality in which he cannot believe, so long as he stands at the lectern; for once he gets into the pulpit, why then the congregation will surely be told that he is the man to believe in the naked — and yet undistorted — reality.

What holds in general of the doctrines of faith holds also of the historical facts in which they are made visible; they are revelations of the spirit; but just for that reason these facts speak not to the sensuous in man, but to man's spirit. Sensuous reality is reality for the senses, the reality of what belongs to the understanding is reality for the understanding; but Spiritual Reality is reality for the spirit. In the sacred history the Word is a divine fact, and the fact a divine Word; the theological mania consists precisely in wanting — for the sake of scientific rigor — to separate what God has joined together. By such a separation opinions must necessarily gain the upper hand over faith, and uncertain conjectures about the outwardly real furnish the standard by which the spirit is to let itself be judged. But of this Paul's words hold: "the sensuous man does not receive the things that belong to the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot know them, for they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

[312] And now to our next main point:

2) *How can it accord with the infallibility and unconditional truthfulness of the Spirit to present events in the sacred history otherwise than as they actually* happened?

The objections which can be drawn from this against the concept set up by us, Spiritual Reality, have at first glance something particularly striking.

"When," it is said, "God in his Word really wanted to reveal to men how things originally went with the coming-into-being of the world and the beginning of human life, then it is after all quite incredible that the Spirit should have presented the matter otherwise than it in reality stands, that it should have intentionally — for from ignorance it could not be — have set down something which is notoriously incorrect, that, in other words, the Spirit of truth should not have told the full truth."

"It is, after all, a strange self-contradiction to have to let oneself be instructed by the Spirit, in so far as it speaks of the miracle of creation, but in the same breath to be wiser than the Spirit, in so far as it speaks of the creation in six days; to have to bow before the truth in the revealed Word, in so far as it imparts to us a knowledge otherwise unattainable of the original guilt of the race, but yet out of respect for geology, botany and zoology to reserve for oneself the self-satisfied opinion that in reality the history of the Garden of Eden, of the state of innocence as a real prehistoric condition, and the like, is not right. No, honesty lasts longest." When one truly wants *[313]* to be honest and to speak plainly, then here there is only a choice between One of Two: either to acknowledge the infallibility of the Spirit in One and All down to letter and tittle or to reject revelation and build on reason; for a spirit that is infallible in the one thing, but not in the other, a spirit that step by step limps between the true and the untrue, such a limping, half-erring spirit cannot at any point lay claim to unconditional faith."

There is an old, ingrown self-deception lying at the bottom of these pretended considerations of honesty; it is this self-deception, not honesty, that we want to get at.

It must stand immovably fast for every honestly believing person that the Spirit in its Word is absolutely infallible; it is precisely in order to awaken the recognition of this that we so emphatically declare ourselves against every reasoning separation between the thought and the clothing. But the clothing is, in the name of the Spirit and of truth, equally infallible, whether the garments, if we may put it so, are drawn from the lower or the higher, the sensuous or the supersensuous, the earthly or the heavenly reality, whether the clothing is woven of immaterial or of material threads.

The pious self-deception aimed at here consists in this, that man makes a main

thing of what the Spirit in its wisdom has set down as a side matter, that the believer, without himself knowing it, places the decisive element in something in which it is not to be placed, and self-willedly prescribes to the Spirit an infallibility which it will not acknowledge as its own. Those who have some acquaintance with the history
[314] of the Church and of theology have examples enough of errors and blunders in this direction[1)].

To secure the Old Testament as a perfectly reliable document of revelation, Protestant theologians in the seventeenth century proceeded from the presupposition that even the vowel points were due to inspiration. They held fast to the assertion that an infallible revelation required an infallible text; but how uncertain the text is, when one has only consonants and can arbitrarily add the vowels, is obvious of itself[2)]. The learned Buxtorfs of Basel, father and son, fought valiantly for the infallibility of the Spirit, in that they fought for the antiquity of the vowels; but linguistic-historical facts do not let themselves be reasoned away. The outcome of the dispute showed that the orthodox zealots did not have the Spirit on their side, that they on the disputed point had formed an arbitrary and false concept of infallibility.

The theological dispute about the purity and classicality that has been wished to be ascribed to the Greek language in the New Testament stands in a similar way. "It is the Spirit who in a supernatural manner has inspired the Apostles with the language; the Greek of the New Testament must therefore be classical Greek. If there is anyone who, in spite of Plato, Herodotus and Xenophon, knows the Greek language from the
[315] ground up, then it is surely the Holy Spirit." To call this assertion in question was, in the opinion of the purists, to call the infallibility of the Spirit in question. When it has nevertheless now been established by sober, thorough, many-sided linguistic research that the Greek of the New Testament is not classical, but Hellenistic with noticeable admixtures of Hebraizing idioms, what does that prove? It proves that the purists have missed the point of view for the right conception of the gift of language and sought perfection where it is not to be sought.

The same self-deception repeats itself in the judging of the historical accounts. As late as the latter half of the eighteenth century the theologian Chr. W. F. Walch[1)] expresses himself on the infallibility of the sacred writers in the following way: "they

[1)]Cf. *On "the Good Will"* as a *Power in Science.* Copenhagen 1867. pp. 40—75.

[2)]Thus from, for example, the passage in Genesis (ch. 23:4), where the meeting between Esau and Jacob is mentioned, one will get out, according as one changes the vowel signs, both that Esau kissed Jacob and that he bit him.

[1)]Krit. Nachricht v. d. Quellen der Kirchengeschichte. Leipz. 1770. p. 70.

have not only not erred, but they have" — namely on account of inspiration — "not even been able to err, and their narratives are therefore not merely as certain as any other historical truth, but even unerringly certain." If the historian here were thinking solely of the Word as word of revelation, i.e. of the truth-content in its indissoluble unity with form and clothing, thus precisely of what we call Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit, then scientific criticism, however much it might have contributed to altering opinions and conjectures about the outward and finite in the composition of the narratives, would not have been in a position to alter a tittle in the Word itself[2)]. But that is not how it stands. Instead of applying the measure of the Spirit to the *[316]* real, he proceeds backwards and applies the measure of reality, of the outward finite reality, to the Spirit. He insists on the infallibility which he himself foists upon the Spirit, and has no inkling that precisely thereby he gives up the Word to dissolving criticism[1)].

If we now turn our attention again to what has been adduced above about creation, Paradise and the Fall: then all the misunderstandings belonging to the self-deception will gather in full illumination. The simple believer, who takes everything according to the letter, because he does not form any representation that any other conception was conceivable, is not to blame for the misunderstandings. The misunderstandings, this must expressly be maintained, begin only at the turning point where the reasoning understanding seeks a foothold in the real and, by setting the natural outwardly together against the supernatural, wants to control the Spirit.

God's Spirit is then set outwardly against man's spirit; God is represented as speaking to man in the same sensuous manner as when one man speaks to another. *[317]* The Spirit dictates to the holy men what they are to write; if there are errors in the dictation, then the Spirit must of course bear the blame: it is the strongest caricature of Spiritual Reality that can well be conceived. The fundamental error is that the supernatural is treated as if it were natural.

[2)] On revelation and sacred history. Cf. Philosophy of Religion, pp. 24—28.

[1)] A couple of examples. In the Second Book of Samuel (XXIV) the following is related: "And the anger of the Lord was kindled again against Israel, and he moved David against them, saying: Go, number Israel and Judah!" The parallel passage to Second Samuel (XXIV) is, as is well known, First Chronicles (XXI), which begins thus: "Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel." Taken as narrative, the one of these accounts stands in literal contradiction to the other. But in the word of revelation itself there is no contradiction; for the moving, which according to the first account proceeds from the anger of the Lord, is referred in the second account to the evil will which precisely in the relation of wrath places itself between Jehovah and David. Thus in John 13:26—27 it is surely both Christ and Satan who move Judas to the betrayal; but who will see in this a religious-psychological contradiction.

In revelation the relation between God and man's spirit is a relation of spirit; the Spirit speaks in an inward, not in an outward manner; even when the impression is so strong that the Word sounds to the ear of faith, the outward nevertheless springs from the inward. Therefore the Spirit speaks a human language; it expounds its Word precisely in the language which the people understand to whom it speaks; therefore it spoke Hebrew to the Jews, Hellenistic Greek to the Greeks of that time, and would to this very day speak Danish to Danes in the first instance, German to Germans and French to the French.

If the relation between God's and man's spirit is conceived as a real relation of spirit, then one will also be able to understand that the Word of revelation does not merely clothe itself in human language, but in general adapts itself to man's circle of representation, makes use of his own view of the world, his natural view of heaven and earth, in order by these means of connection to make vivid the truth on which alone it depends, the truth of faith, for spiritual awakening, for peace and salvation.

From this point of view, should it not now be obvious what self-deception lies in the
[318] demand that the Spirit in its Word about creation, Paradise and the Fall should have laid at the foundation the astronomical, geological and natural-historical representations which prove to hold good in the more recent science! We ought indeed to be ashamed of so willful, so unreasonable a decision as this: either it is the Spirit that has erred, and then the Word is not credible, or the Spirit itself must be infallible also in descriptions of the physical, and then we must see to it that we instill in dear youth every possible distrust of science.

It is written: be simple as doves; but it is nowhere written: be stupid as flounders. Everyone who in our time will use his sound understanding and not, in spiritual arrogance and foolish defiance, cast aside human knowledge, will, as regards the structure of the universe, easily convince himself that the offense at the Copernican system rests on a self-conceited imagination. Let it be a thousand times true in the astronomical sense that it is the earth that goes around the sun, it is then just as true that the Spirit of revelation cannot possibly have begun by hinting at this, without making its Word wholly unintelligible to men.

Let it be well noted that enlightenment about so complicated a matter is not given by a single remark. The mere having to shift one's standpoint from the earth to the sun and to determine the heliocentric places of the stars — what an exertion it costs the beginner. There are among the so-called Cultivated thousands upon thousands who "believe in" the Copernican system, but who would fall into the most painful

embarrassment if they were to give an account of the proofs. And then the Spirit was supposed, moreover, to have proved its astronomical infallibility by making *[319]* intelligible to Abraham and Moses what has scarcely yet become intelligible to the thousandth part of those who drift with the stream of cultivation.

In its Word the Spirit is infallible; for the revelation of truth in and through the Word it unconditionally takes all reality, both the outward and the inward, into its service; therefore the eye of faith cannot possibly see the real before it in a merely natural light.

Outside revelation and faith there is no Paradise and never has been; but in the Word of revelation, for the gaze of faith, Paradise has full reality. The believer sees everything in the holy light, and everything is real: the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life and the river Gihon; he sees both the serpent and the woman. But in the light of science there is nothing here to see, nothing at all.

From a geographical vantage point one beholds the Desert of Sinai: granite mountains with wild, wondrously jagged peaks rise above water-rich, fruitful valleys; one sees Horeb, Jebel Musa, the true peak of Sinai; it is all real: here is reality enough for geography. But to this kind of reality faith is blind; in the eyes of the geographer it is like the owl, which cannot see by day. This comes from the fact that the eye of faith is differently organized and needs a different daylight from the observer of nature's. Only when the light of the Spirit shines upon Mount Sinai does faith become seeing; then it really sees the top of the mountain; it sees Jehovah and Moses: in the thundercloud is Jehovah's finger and the tablets on which he writes! But, curiously enough, now the student of nature can see nothing; now it is he who is blind as an owl.

That the Sea of Gennesaret is a blazing mirror when the sun rises and the rays *[320]* glow on Mount Tabor, is a landscape glory which has never yet been seen with the eye of faith. This by no means signifies that the believer should be shy of light or lack a sense for the beauties of nature; but it signifies that faith as faith must have its own light. When this light is kindled, it sees reality everywhere, the natural as well as the supernatural; it sees the mountain and the Transfigured One on the mountain; it sees in the dusk of night Gennesaret by the sea, and the waves and the ship and the Savior walking on the sea. It is Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit.

R. *Nielsen.*

For Idea and Reality.

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More on Spiritual Reality,

occasioned by the Contributions of Pastor V. Birkedal and Pastor C. Møller.

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[1] Anyone who, with a collected mind and an unprejudiced eye, sets out to go through the accounts in the Old and the New Testament and to make the supernatural events present to himself must surely, unless he lacks all the presuppositions of cultivation and the conditions of independent thinking, come to have strange thoughts. How different the whole real order of things looked in the days of the prophets, of Christ and of the apostles from the way it looks in ours! It is as though Holy Scripture spoke of another heaven and another earth, another world and another God, in short: of an altogether different reality, not merely inward but also outward, from the one we actually know. The present age, which spies and tests and is otherwise so sure in its observations of reality, even if it strains the powers of its reason to the utmost, is not able to bring its concept of reality and of real facts into harmony with what the Bible calls the real. To take refuge in science for help and assistance certainly has its
[2] significance, when the task is to be rid of the biblical reality; for how representations of the supernatural can be dissolved into legends and myths, of that science has excellent knowledge, and no one to whom the miraculous events are a burden shall regret having sought its guidance. But to want — in the conceit that faith is of one kind with knowledge — to plague science into standing surety for the dependability of that miracle-business which is so offensive to "all the cultivated," can of course occur only to those who still have a theological screw loose.

If the natural events in profane history and the supernatural ones in the sacred history are really to be seen in the same light and subjected to the same criticism, then Christianity is lost to civilization: the credibility of the Bible cannot be saved. To get out of the confusion in which an objective, merciless criticism in the name of science has entangled the unhappy theology, so that it knows neither out nor in, dares to be neither critical nor uncritical, neither give up the miracle nor hold on to the miracle, there is only one way out: unconditionally to acknowledge the independence of the religious principle and to declare the sacred history to be of a different kind, *absolutely* of a different kind, from the profane.

Once it is fully seen that the biblical accounts must, by the nature of the case, be of another origin, be grounded on another reality and fall under another field of view

than accounts that belong in a general world history, it follows indisputably from this that the biblical accounts must be seen in their own light and judged from their own standpoint. As reality is, criticism must be. In order then to give that higher reality *[3]* a designating name I have called it Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit, in that by the first expression I have aimed in particular at the divine origin of the facts, by the latter, on the other hand, at the consciousness that is to make sure of the truth of the facts. I shall now seek to bring the main thought thereby indicated as close to the eye as possible.

I

Spiritual Reality supplies the first necessary presupposition for the judgment of the sacred facts, when the religious consciousness has reached the stage of cultivation at which *the rational objections of science can* make an impression upon *it, so that it must not merely outwardly, but also inwardly find itself in conflict with scientific criticism.*

"Reality for the spirit," says Pastor Birkedal, "is not the first reality." Reality must "first prove itself to another capacity of reception (organ) before it can prove itself to the spirit, if Christianity really is to become our salvation, our life. Certainly it must happen through the spirit, because Christianity is a realm of spirit, in which nothing comes and is bestowed *without* the spirit, and to that extent one may call the reality of Christianity 'Spiritual Reality.' But the explanation of this expression: 'Reality for the spirit' nevertheless seems to me not to correspond to the 'real' relation, when one is to begin with it." Yes, when one is to begin with it! In this Pastor B., in my view, is perfectly right. But the point is that one has neither begun nor is to begin with it in *[4]* that way. As to the origin of the life of faith we are, as Pastor C. Møller also points out, in all essentials surely quite agreed. Here, in this context, the question is not how faith comes into a man's heart, or how a man comes to faith; but the question is how a man who believes from the heart in God's revealed Word and with this faith has lived himself into the whole circle of representations of the Bible and found comfort and joy in the assurance that the sacred, supernatural facts are not floating legends and images, but fully dependable reality, how, I say, such a man will be able to hold fast to this reality in the face of a criticism which, with weighty scientific grounds, impresses and in many turns repeats that proposition so well known from negative knowledge: *The divine cannot have happened thus; what has happened thus cannot be divine.*

It is not respect for the facts, not love for the Word of the Bible or a thorough study of Holy Scripture, that makes scriptural theology spiritless; the spiritless, that is to say: the theological, lies precisely in the unhappy misunderstanding with which one begins. Without making clear to oneself that it is a quite peculiar kind of reality one has before one here, one proceeds tacitly from the unclear presupposition that reality is reality, event event; — a materialist is after all a materialist, as the vaudeville has it. Scriptural theology sets, in other words, the reality of the supernatural, mark well: as
[5] regards the criterion of reality, on a par with the reality of the natural, and what is the consequence? The same historical proofs that are applied to defend the natural events are applied now also to defend the supernatural ones; the same calculation of probability that is brought to bear on the former is now also supposed to fit the latter. Then the biblical theologian appears with what he calls "a believing mind"; that is to say: he is willing to concede that something wonderful has happened, but wherein the wonderful really consists is to be found out only by continued scientific investigation; he is willing to accept miracles, provided they are not too absurd and improbable to him. But unfortunately for him, there is in the whole Bible not a single miracle, no, not a single one, which is not, from a scientific standpoint, closely and narrowly regarded, absurd, improbable and repellent. Scriptural-theological criticism assumes a devout mien when it is to defend the great facts of the resurrection and the ascension, whereas it wholly keeps its scientific bearing toward the miracle of the Gadarene swine; it thinks as follows: with swine and devils one need not pay compliments. But where is faith now, and where is criticism?

That the miracle of the resurrection has a quite different, pervasive significance for the religious life than the event with the possessed man at Gadara, only a madman could think of denying; but here the question is not about a miracle's greater or lesser religious significance; the question is about the reality of the miracle and the greater or lesser probability of miraculous reality. When this point of view is held
[6] fast, and it must be held fast strictly, if criticism is to mean anything at all, then not much acuteness is needed to see that all miracles are equally probable, that is, equally improbable; they resemble one another unconditionally in One thing: they are all miracles. The miracle of the resurrection does not come a hair's breadth nearer to ordinary historical probability than the miracle of the demons in the herd of swine.

The more the biblical theologian wants to light up, with the torch of knowledge, the dim ground that bears the sacred facts, the darker, the denser the mists that rise from the depths, and the more uncanny he must feel. There is in this surrounding

everywhere a Something that goes against his consciousness, an Inexplicable that presses upon his chest and weighs on his scientific conscience — if indeed he really has a scientific conscience. Hence the boundless irresolution in the face of what is most decisive; hence the endless wavering between acceptance and non-acceptance, the benumbing halving and meaningless explanation that something has certainly happened, something extraordinary; but what it is that has happened, that one does not know. So the region of revelation becomes a land of mists, its content a billowing element in which one goes to the bottom in the diving bell of science.

Theology must go. Here another starting point must be chosen; here one must begin from another ground. It must be settled once and for all that he who steps into the light-region of revelation and feels himself addressed by the supernatural phenomena has crossed the boundary of knowledge and said farewell to the compelling, universally necessary grounds of reason. In so doing the believer has by no means either given up the laws of thought or extinguished the light of reason; but One thing he has given up, the false justification, the justification in objective *[7]* knowledge. He feels and understands that religion could not possibly be religion if it did not have its own origin, its own self-valid principle; he feels and understands that facts which proceed from a supernatural principle (the holy, almighty will) must bear a corresponding supernatural stamp of reality; he feels assured that the whole self-contained circle of cognition with which his soul is familiar, and in which his better being feels at home, belongs to a reality that can no more be confirmed than undermined by science. With this foothold in the supernatural distinguishing marks of reality he is, as a believer and yet as one who knows, prepared to receive the objections of scientific criticism. These objections will be no more able to shake his faith in revelation than to weaken his respect for science. He is so far from becoming embittered in the name of religion at the attacks of objective criticism that he will much rather see that, with its presuppositions, its foundation and its measure of reality, it cannot possibly at any point appropriate the supernatural, and that in this respect it is legitimately excused. Gradually, on the whole as in particular, it will become quite evident to him how the whole web of critical difficulties is essentially due to theological weavers, who have made the beginning by weaving together two kinds of reality, physical reality and Spiritual Reality.

II

Spiritual Reality expresses the concept of reality in its whole extent and thus embraces *[8]*

both the inward and the outward real, both bodily and incorporeal reality, but always with particular emphasis on the spirit itself, the almighty will, as cause. From the standpoint of religion and faith all reality, the natural just as well as the supernatural, is in the last and highest instance to be brought under Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit.

If the sole unfailing mark of reality were the outwardly sensible, the properly tangible, then earths and stones would presumably have to be placed in the highest position in the realm of reality. We should then get a materialism of the very coarsest kind; for the materialists are otherwise wont to let everything real rest on a swarm of minute parts (atoms) that are not directly tangible. Reason and religion agree in this, that there is working not only in the corporeal but also in the incorporeal, and that as a consequence there must be an incorporeal reality just as well as a corporeal one. Those who concede that there is reason in things must then also concede that everything corporeal has its ground in something incorporeal, unless one wants to regard eternal reason itself as a body, a kind of invisible matter.

The conflict between religion and reason first comes to light when the invisible cause of reality is to be more closely determined. Physics keeps to the forces of matter and researches laws; it has to do only with the natural side of reality, thus only with natural reality, not with Spiritual Reality. Philosophy strives to present real nature,
[9] the in itself coherent natural reality, as grounded in the essence of the spirit; but in such a way that the working of the spirit in nature at no point exceeds the boundary of the conditions of nature. Religion — we speak here of revealed religion — on the other hand impresses upon us, as its very first principle, that God's free, almighty will is the original cause of all reality. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*; such, as is well known, are the first words of Holy Scripture; by this it is expressly said that the reality of the whole world is at bottom Spiritual Reality. To believe in the first article, on creation, and yet to deny that Spiritual Reality is the true, comprehensive expression for all reality is a contradiction.

The relation between nature and creation can hardly be characterized more clearly than by saying: creation in its ground and coherence is *nature*; nature in its origin from and dependence on God is creation.[1)] The confirmation that created things have their nature is to be seen in the laws; the sign that real nature was originally

[1)]What matters here, as everywhere, is to hold the points of view sharply apart from one another. To explain the natural half-and-half as supernatural and the supernatural half-and-half as natural is nonsensical; by mixing together physics and religion and mediating the mixture in dogmatic speculation one does religion and science a poor service.

created is to be seen in the miracle. The miracle is simply to be defined as the sign of omnipotence, an express declaration that God really has a free will, and that this will has all things unconditionally in its power. If real nature were not receptive to the miracle, then the realm of nature would not have been created: to deny the possibility of miracle is to deny the possibility of free creation. The real miracle, whether it *[10]* otherwise takes place in the inward or in the outward, in the incorporeal or in the corporeal, is then in the very strictest sense to be called Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit.

Holy Scripture everywhere places, as regards reality, the miracles in the spiritual on a par with the miracles in the bodily; this is a main feature that must by no means be overlooked. Some examples. Jehovah reveals himself to Abraham, first in a vision (1. Mos. ch. 15), next (ch. 18) in an outwardly real form; the first revelation thus points to the incorporeal, the last to the corporeal. Who will now, from the standpoint of faith, maintain that the first manner of revelation is less supernatural, less real and therefore less dependable than the last? That the last goes deeply into the outwardly natural is seen from the hospitality with which the patriarch entertains the three heavenly ones: "he took thick milk and sweet milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them, and himself stood before them under the tree, and they did eat." Is it now permissible to say that the first reality, the reality in the vision, is only a trifle of Spiritual Reality, a fleeting idea-reality, perhaps a waking dream, an imagining of Father Abraham, but that the last is the proper, true and solid reality, because it is a reality with calf's flesh and thick milk, and thus a reality that falls outside the spirit?

With regard to the concept of reality itself there is no difference between the Old and the New Testament. We learn it from the miracle of the resurrection. That Christ really has risen from the dead, that his revelation to his own has taken place not merely *[11]* *inwardly*, as in a vision, but also *outwardly*, indeed (John 20:27; cf. Mtth. Mr. Luc.) in a quite *tangible* way, is as strongly attested as it well can be by believing witnesses; but no one will surely deny that the body with which Christ was crucified, and with which he rose, has undergone through the resurrection such a transformation that he is now recognizable, now again unrecognizable, that he comes as a vision and yet as one who has flesh and bones and an appetite for food — they gave him a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb (Luke 24:42) — that, in other words, his bodily reality has taken up the natural into the supernatural, that it corresponds in one and all to Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit. The theological men, who cannot be satisfied with the spiritually real, but must of necessity have either "honeycomb" and "broiled

fish" or "calf's flesh" and "thick milk" thrown in, to make good the spiritual and fill out reality, will with all their theology have trouble enough in believing in Christ's real resurrection.

III.

Spiritual Reality is the categorical expression of *the unity of the form of revelation with the revealed content. It is the at once supernatural and natural unity of spirit and word that makes the word God's Word and the Word of God itself the highest reality, the real* facts' bearer and presenter. The *presenting word does not have the reality in*
[12] *question outside itself, but in itself.* If *the word is separated from its spiritually real* content, then *the linguistic, the grammatical becomes the main thing: the revealed word is transformed into a philological text, and strife arises between* spirit and *letter.*

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). — Were the task to state briefly and precisely the point of view of the word-picking, dyed-in-the-wool philological exegesis, which turns the Word of God into sentences and the doctrine of sentences into grammar, it could best be done by a suitable paraphrase of the passage cited: "In the beginning was Grammar, and Grammar was with God, and Grammar was God," and so on. From an objectively learned standpoint it will hardly occur to anyone to cast aspersions on a deep-going philological study of the original text of the O. and N. Test.; nor shall it be overlooked that the yield of such a study mediately affords guidance also to those who solely in a religious interest wish to secure an understanding of the biblical text. But in the name of religion a protest must be lodged against the minutiose-philistine importance and ever-increasing prolixity with which biblical philology in recent times has contrived to make its exegetical analyses into a scientific necessity of faith, a kind of grammatical concern of salvation. So it happens that the side issue becomes the main issue, and the main issue the side issue; so it happens that the Word of God is dissolved into sentences and letters.

The relation between the Word of God and the biblical text may be briefly elucidated in the following way. In the gospel of the resurrection the believer possesses a
[13] perfectly true and dependable presentation of a real historical event. The miracle of the resurrection is God's work; the infallible account of this miracle is itself a miracle, is likewise a work of God: the event and its apprehension, the outward and the inward reality, fuse in the Word of God into one single indivisible reality, Spiritual Reality. And yet there is a difference between the description and that which is described.

The evangelical account is a mirror that gives back the individual features of reality in a faithful image. Faith's eye looks in the mirror at the image and in the image at the reality, the real event: the gaze is to that extent turned outward. If now, in the outward sense, there were only one gospel, one account, then the outward-turned gaze would involuntarily become inward-turned, the unity and harmony between the fact and the apprehension, between the outward and the inward real, would then remain unaltered. But the divine cause has, and by virtue of the nature of revelation must of necessity have, its human side. The one gospel is divided into four gospels, the one infallible account into four accounts differing from one another and yet infallible. If one errs about this difference, there arises an outward separation between the Word in divine truth and the account in human form, a worrying divorce between the Word of God and the biblical text; there will be something for Grammar to do.

In Matthew (ch. 28) it begins with Mary Magdalene and the other Mary coming, as it dawned toward the first day of the week, to see the grave. What a sight! The angel of the Lord descends from heaven to roll the stone from the grave; his appearance is like lightning; the watch flees and the angel addresses the women. But none of the *[14]* three other Evangelists seems to know anything of a guard having been set at the grave; nor, according to their account, was any of the women an eyewitness to how the stone was rolled away; on the contrary, it had already happened before they came. Yet another discrepancy. Mark (ch. 16, v. 1) says expressly that the women, only when the Sabbath was past, bought the spices for the embalming; but Luke (ch. 23, v. 56) testifies that even before the Sabbath they had prepared spices and ointments: how could they have prepared the spices and ointments that they had not yet bought? Even if one can, by a philological treatment of the verb "*prepared*" (ἡτοίμασαν), glide somehow past this apparent contradiction, how does one get through the difficulties of the contradictory accounts of the angels? Matthew and Mark bear witness that there was only one angel at the grave, but Luke and John state expressly that there were two, and yet their testimonies do not agree outwardly either. According to Luke the angels are seen by all "the women from Galilee"; but according to John no one else gets to see them but Mary Magdalene. Still more striking is the different manner in which the angels express themselves. In Luke they deliver a detailed, instructive discourse to the women; in John the address to Mary Magdalene confines itself to the question: Woman, why weepest thou? According to Matthew and Mark, Christ commands immediately after his resurrection, both through the angel in the grave and through his own spoken word to the women, that the disciples shall meet him in

Galilee; but according to Luke he commands that they shall all remain in Jerusalem
[15] until the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. By going into particulars in this way the reader will discover one striking discrepancy after another. Lessing, in his defence of his "Unknown"[1)], has demonstrated no fewer than "ten contradictions." Ten contradictions in four short accounts! Is it not dreadful?

If what is offensive in such contradictions really had its ground in Scripture itself, then such a writing ought not to bear the name: the Holy Scripture; it would be more fitting to call it the obscure, confused, contradictory Scripture. But the fact is that the offence aroused by the contradictions has its ground not in Scripture but in the false point of departure of the interpreters of Scripture. By beginning with a philological criticism of the text one unawares tricks faith into the domain of knowledge and comes to apply a standard that stands in manifest conflict with the essence of revelation. The fundamental error is that one absolutely insists on treating the Bible like any other written document of antiquity and regards it as a settled matter that in the Holy Scripture, just as much as in profane writings, a final critical separation can and must be made between the facts presented in the Word and the outward supposed reality of these facts. But in the Holy Scripture it is precisely a self-contradiction to make this separation. The miracle and faith are inseparable; take the miracle away, and there is no faith; take faith away, and there is no miracle. It is not merely in the later
[16] writing-down that it essentially depends on the faith-witness's peculiar conception and gift of presentation; no, the fact and its conception are from the very first moment in the germ itself inseparably united: the outward reality in the event and the inward reality in the conception is one indivisible fact, one reality: it is Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit.

That the matter really stands so is seen most clearly from this, that the incidental circumstances that from a critical philological point of view should speak *against* come precisely to speak for the credibility of the Gospel. a) The elements of the outward all belong to one reality, one great, marvellous event. But the event has several members and many details; these elementary details are so dissolved in the appropriation and transformed in the presentation that what was lived through outwardly and inwardly cannot be separated in the Word. The indissoluble unity in the Word of the outward and the inward is everywhere a mark of character of revealed truth. b) The deviations in conception which, when one stares at the outward and clings to the letter, become real, offensive discrepancies, change into eloquent testimonies to a

[1)] *Eine Duplik*. 1778. Sämmtliche Schriften, 4ter Band. Berlin 1825. S. 95 flgd.

living, free, personal appropriation, when they are seen in the spirit and understood in the Word. Discrepancies in one narrative with other narratives can undeniably present hard knots, insoluble contradictions, when the narrator gives himself out to be copying an outwardly given reality; for it is literally true that one angel is not two; that what one buys before the Sabbath one does not buy after the Sabbath; that Galilee is not Jerusalem, etc. But in the spirit and the Word it is still more decisively true that, in relation to an overwhelmingly great and miraculous event, each individual witness *[17]* must be so strongly gripped, so wholly filled and inwardly moved by the event in its entirety, that the human side of the appropriation will also show itself, so that in reproducing the main parts and in a subjective painting-out of the individual features he involuntarily comes to individualizing alterations. The Evangelist is moved by the spirit and in the spirit by reality; but he is no photographer who wants merely to give us a copy of an outward object, any more than he is a scribe who mechanically writes down what the spirit mechanically dictates. The Evangelist is a witness to the truth, of course, not a witness to the truth in the dogmatic-episcopal-modern sense — to such a height of brilliance he can naturally not raise himself — but he is nevertheless really a witness to the truth; he testifies in the spirit to reality: the content of the testimony in the Word is Spiritual Reality.

IV.

Spiritual Reality is characteristic of a standpoint from which it becomes possible to *carry through the separation between the scientific and the religious conception of the sacred history so thoroughly in principle that, both about the whole and about its individual parts, there can form two kinds of criticism: criticism of knowledge and criticism of faith.*

Among the many turns of phrase, partly superficial, partly subtle, with which those who believe in knowledge have sought to ward off the strict antithesis between religion and science, belongs also this one, that a religious interpretation of the Holy Scripture must become groundless, arbitrary and vulgar, when it is torn loose from *[18]* scientific research. It is, they say, to cast a shadow upon learning and scholarship when one makes the common people believe that simple believers can understand the Gospel with the bare heart without guidance from genuine scriptural scholarship. To let everything depend on a living faith and to proceed from the simple assertion that miracles are miracles, that one must either accept them all or reject them all, is an altogether too convenient way of escaping the difficulties; in short; Theology

wants to impress the public by invoking thoroughness. We must remark here that the swaggering blasts on the trumpet of thoroughness are only signals of distress that have nothing to do with Spiritual Reality. We are so little inclined either to disparage thoroughness or to flatter self-satisfied thoughtlessness that, on the contrary, to the best of our meagre ability we are intent on getting at the puffed-up and on pursuing want of principle to the utmost, whether it springs from scriptural scholarship or from self-conceit or perhaps from both together.

It is rightly maintained that there must be a scientific interpretation of the Holy Scripture alongside the religious; but it must be repeated again and again that the two interpretations belong each to its own circle of cognition, that the one cannot ground the other, but that they may well exert a mediate, indirect influence upon
[19] each other[1)]. It is this relation that we shall elucidate by a brief characterization of the criticism corresponding to knowledge and that corresponding to faith.

a) *Criticism of knowledge* is characterized by the splitting and dividing up of the whole that is locked together in Spiritual Reality. The fact falls outside the conception; the account is one thing and the real event another: agreement is possible, but — this doubt is the spur of criticism! — disagreement is also possible. By careful comparison of the individual features of every account before us with one another and with other corresponding accounts, if such exist, the interpreter strives to come as near as possible to the unknown reality lying behind it. The distinguishing mark of criticism is that the investigator everywhere goes around the spirit and behind the Word in order to search for the fact, the outwardly real. What has really happened, then? Was Christ really tempted by the Devil? Was he really transfigured on the Mount? Did he really walk on the sea? Was he really able by his word to still the storm? etc. Now thoroughness is what counts; the more thoroughly the philological-critical interpreter proceeds, the more clearly the yield of criticism shows itself.

The yield is that reality vanishes in a mystical half-darkness; the natural features remain standing, but the supernatural are only glimpsed in "legends and myths"[1)].

The Temptation in the Wilderness has no reality, neither as regards the Devil
[20] nor as regards Christ. "As regards the Devil, the procedure in the whole difficult

[1)]It is presupposed, of course, that those readers who wish to acquaint themselves with the way of looking at things expressed here will, as time and occasion allow, make themselves familiar with the writings belonging here: *Obstacles and Conditions for the Spiritual Life*, *The Good Will as a Power in Science*, *Philosophy of Religion*, the essay on *Spiritual Reality* (10th number of the journal, October 1870).

[1)]Cf. An Interpretation of the Sacred History (journal, 4th number, April 1870).

struggle, the flatness in the ordering and introduction of the temptations seem as difficult to reconcile with the shrewdness and calculating cunning that were here supposed to reach their culmination, as, on Jesus' side, the patience in continuing these negotiations, and in letting himself be led by the evil spirit from place to place through the various stages of the trial, difficult to reconcile with the ideal of moral purity, which must at once have withdrawn from contact with the unclean." (H. N. Clausen.)

"*The Transfiguration on the Mount*" *has no true* reality; here is — despite the strong illumination — only "a picture of mist in mystical half-light." "The three eyewitnesses (Peter, James and John) were heavy with sleep, they knew not what they said, for they were sore afraid; when they fully came to themselves and looked around, they saw no man, save Jesus only." (H. N. Clausen.)

"*The Walking on the Sea*" does indeed point to a real sea and a real walking, but the relation indicated in the Gospels between sea and walking is hardly real. Philological criticism has "grounded supposition that the episode about Peter is a later addition, owing to the Greek translation or adaptation of the Gospel of Matthew, a supposition that is strengthened by the whole character of this narrative, which recalls the embellishing and intensifying tendency in the apocryphal Gospels." (H. N. Clausen.)

"*The Stilling of the Storm on the Sea of Galilee*" has in the evangelical presentation had its reality so distorted that the fact itself has been turned backwards. The Evangelists (Matt., Mark, Luke) have namely in their simplicity assumed that it was *[21]* the storm that Jesus rebuked, whereas criticism must find that it is not the storm but the disciples who get a reproof; for it is far more probable to suppose that Jesus' threatening words "were addressed to the disciples rather than to the elements, to weather and wind." (H. N. Clausen.)

It is not merely a certain limited number of individual miraculous deeds, perhaps less essential to the religious consciousness, whose reality is in this way dissolved and turned upside down, for the great facts of salvation, the fundamental miracles on which the whole revelation rests, suffer the same fate.

That a criticism that goes around the Word and behind the spirit cannot acknowledge Christ's conception by the Spirit is a matter of course. What should move it to such an acknowledgment? The "fragmentary narratives" of the Prefatory Gospel are of doubtful origin; "a mythicizing investiture," an "embellishing setting," has stepped in "filling out and shaping" to make up for "the scantiness and vacillation" of the his-

torical traditions. — With the end it goes exactly as with the beginning. The Gospels of Christ's resurrection and ascension are just as mythicizing, just as fragmentary, just as embellishing as the Gospels of his birth and childhood. "The mutual divergences with which the four evangelical accounts of the resurrection cross one another" have so disturbing an effect that "only with great uncertainty can a tolerably coherent narrative be produced by comparing them with one another." Still more distressing
[22] is the case with the ascension. That it is attested as a mental fact must be conceded; but in what this fundamental fact actually consisted, despite the thoroughness of the investigation, cannot be searched out; to say it in plain words: the Evangelists know no more, and the interpreters neither.

b) *Criticism of faith* is now recognizable by its holding the facts fast in the evangelical conception. It is indisputably shown, as Pastor Birkedal emphasizes, that the believing heart cannot be content with "shadow-deeds," but needs "real, tangible facts"; but how the highly honoured author has hit upon the thought that I possibly regard Spiritual Reality only as a kind of Idea-Reality and the revealed facts as shadow-deeds, he must himself understand, for I do not understand it. What I, according to the principle of criticism of faith, must unswervingly maintain is that the believer, with all his need for "tangible facts," may not go behind the Word and around the spirit; he must not imagine that he can look over the Evangelist's shoulder and, by peeping as out of a window for something outward, catch sight of a better, surer and more reliable conception of reality than the one that is given him in the evangelical Word.

Let us now see how this principal proposition, valid for Spiritual Reality, can be applied. Pastor B. gives the matter the following turn. "The heart says: The Lord's signs must be real. — He must really have been able to command the forces of the world and not need to let himself be bound by the laws of nature — that is necessary for my faith; for if he could not do these miracles in nature, then I cannot believe in him himself as the greatest sign, as the one who is Lord of Nature, then I could
[23] not believe either that He does the still greater miracle, in spite of my nature and its laws, which by *their* necessity must lead to death, of giving me his life and letting me pass with him over the Sea of Death, so that I do not go to the bottom in it. I have that by *feeling*: if he could not bring nature out there to obey, then neither could he bring my still more rebellious nature to submit to Him." This is, in the name of faith, both certain and true in every respect. But if Pastor B. now means that he can have, "by feeling," a sure knowledge that Christ really walked on the sea, that by

his word of omnipotence he really stilled the storm, etc., then I beg him to consider whether he has not here allowed himself a hasty conclusion. So long as he speaks in general terms of what the Saviour must have been *able* to do in order to be able to be Saviour, I grant him unconditionally that he is right; for he speaks of a possibility; it is a true logic of faith of which he gives a sketch. But when he goes into particulars and wants "by feeling" to decide which miraculous deeds the Saviour *really* has done, I cannot grant him that he is right, for from possibility to reality, from the logical to the antilogical, there is a leap.

Did Christ really walk on the sea? There is no human being, believing any more than unbelieving, who knows it, for of such things there is no knowledge. It is indeed possible that Christ did not do it, although he well could have done it. Suppose that he did not walk on the sea, but on the other hand really stilled the storm, is he then not the Saviour? It is certain that the same one who has been able to raise Lazarus in *[24]* Bethany[1)], must also have been able to raise the widow's son at Nain; suppose that Christ did not raise the widow's son, but did raise Lazarus, or the reverse: the widow's *[25]* son, but not Lazarus, is he then not the Saviour? It is a risky business, trusting in

[1)]Pastor Møller lays particular weight on the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, and presupposes with reason that this miracle, by my way of looking at things, must have "full reality." Yes, it must have full reality! Its reality is confirmed for all believers by as strong testimonies as are well conceivable. But that in this respect it should have any peculiar advantage over so many other miracles of Jesus I cannot concede. The words: "he stinketh," might easily be taken by doubters as a mere supposition of Martha's, based on Lazarus's having already "lain four days" in the grave. To this it must be added that some among those present went and gave the chief priests a report of such a nature that the council thereupon resolved that Jesus should die. But to want to threaten with death a man who, as is known to the eyes of all, even of the unbelieving spectators, has been able to call back to life a corpse already stinking, is not merely a sign of unbelief, but an unmistakable sign of an insanity qualified for the madhouse. One should consider, after all, what an impression such a deed must make if it had, mind you, become known to a whole assembly in an outward physical way; the report of it alone must surely strike the most hardened Sanhedrin with terror. By my way of looking at things — it is a point I would earnestly commend to the serious reflection of believing men — no miracle in the life of Jesus can have happened in so physically conspicuous a way and under such outwardly surveyable circumstances that no Sadducean doubter would have found a way out to a natural explanation. To perform a miracle so openly and in such a way that only eyes and ears, senses and understanding are needed, but no faith, to assure oneself of its validity as a miracle, is to abolish the religious significance of the miracle. It was precisely such an abuse of the Holy that the Devil wished to bring about when he proposed to Christ to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple — an experiment in the outwardly real, no doubt to the surprise and astonishment of a Jerusalem public.

The negative criticism has often repeated the objection that so many and so great miraculous deeds as those of which the Evangelists tell could not possibly have really happened without Herod and Pilate and the Emperor in Rome having heard of it and having had the matter judicially investigated. This objection falls to the ground when we remember what it really means that the reality of the miracle exists only for believers. — The grounds for this view of mine I have, with particular regard to the raising of Lazarus, set forth at greater length in the Postscript to "The Lectures on Obstacles and Conditions for the Spiritual Life in the Present Age."

feeling, to engage with the reasoning understanding about the reality and the real nature of the individual miracles in their particularity.

What, when we look closer, is no doubt Pastor Birkedal's meaning is this, that, trusting in the credibility of the Evangelists, one can on the basis of the impression of feeling given by the whole judge with certainty about the particular. In the walking on the sea, in the mastery over the storm, in the raising of Lazarus, in all individual miracles, scenes and pictures of life, we recognize everywhere in all the Gospels the same figure of Christ, the same helping hand, the same omnipotence of love: "it is the Saviour himself, it is like him, such a thing he has done, so he looks." The immediate feeling of the reality of the facts coincides at all points with a corresponding assurance that the Evangelists' conception of this reality is infallibly true; but when reality cannot fall outside the evangelical conception, hence not outside the spirit, then it is surely indisputable that from first to last it must be determined as Spiritual Reality.

Criticism of faith can concede changes, chronological transpositions, expansions, abbreviations, indeed outward discrepancies in the presentation of the particular;
[26] but in these paraphrases there is no trace of distortion, not in the remotest way an intimation of any misunderstanding that could cast doubt upon the validity of the conception. The criterion of truth is that each individual picture of life evidently corresponds to the whole basic picture: if the particular is false, then the whole is false; if the whole is true, then the particular is true, and that is that.

c) *Reciprocal relation of criticism of knowledge and criticism of faith.* The procedure of criticism of knowledge is correct insofar as it aims at an approximation to objective certainty in objective knowledge; but it cuts a ridiculous figure by posing as if its doubt and uncertainty could make the believer uncertain or bring about any essential change in faith. Let it only be uncertain, from the standpoint of objective knowledge, how it really went with the walking on the sea; let there be, in the name of grammar, a "grounded supposition that" "the episode about Peter is a later addition, owing to the Greek translation or adaptation of the Gospel of Matthew"; has this "grounded supposition" then the slightest influence on faith? Yes, if there were an irrefutable proof that the event is not real, or at any rate not real in the way it is presented, that would be another matter; then the believer, according to what has been said above about possibility and reality, would in this particular case alter his conception of an outwardly real thing. But could such an alteration in the slightest degree shake his confidence in the Evangelist's conception of the real Christ? Does not every feature

in the picture recall the Saviour as he is? Does not "the episode about Peter" have something so gripping in the religious sense that every believing soul must feel moved *[27]* by it? Truly, if Christ did not do what is told of him in this Gospel, then he *could* have done it, for — to speak the language of the comparison — his other deeds in the other Gospels correspond to it. Thus, in the worst case, the picture of Christ as a whole would remain unchanged. But does criticism of knowledge now have certainty that the event cannot be real? By no means. But it does have "a grounded presumption." Yes, a presumption it has got "grounded" by going around the spirit and behind the word. Should such a presumption be able to shake faith?

The debate between the two kinds of criticism will incessantly turn on the relation between spirit and reality. Criticism of knowledge strives from the account outward toward the supernatural facts and attains the opposite of what it seeks. It wants to seize the supernatural outside the spirit and ends in a piecemeal dissolution of all that is supernatural. The main edifice of the Gospels sinks into rubble, and the fragments of reality that remain behind in all naturalness are without significance for faith. This must then be a spur for criticism of faith to go the opposite way. Starting from other presuppositions, with a different psychology, a different eye for reality and a different measure of possibility, criticism of faith will set itself two tasks: 1) to appropriate the scientific information where it is in truth in its place and can count as real information, and in addition 2) to take note of and expose the points of view from which the errors of the understanding proceed, points of view which, however finely the threads may be spun in the objectively critical web, are nevertheless all recognizable by a faith half-vitiated by knowledge and a knowledge distorted in faith. *[28]* To reason in science there corresponds natural reality; but to the spirit of revelation there corresponds Spiritual Reality.

V.

Spiritual Reality is a conjunction of extremes, whose middle affords the possibility, not merely of a reconciliation between faith and knowledge, but *also of a separation of faith and opinion.*

The reality of revelation, whether we look at the fact or at the apprehension, is Spiritual Reality; but the point of view of natural reality is hereby by no means excluded. This point of view will therefore also assert its right in the sacred history. Concerning the Creation, Paradise, the Fall and the End of the World, criticism of knowledge is entitled to claim for natural reality a significance which it has not

received in the biblical presentation. Since reality stands against reality (natural reality against that presented in the word of revelation), knowledge retains its right over against faith; but the conflict thereby arising is resolved in the cognition that the dualism is posited by the spirit itself. The same almighty spirit of God that has created the world has also imparted the word of the creation of the world. That God's unconditionally free will is the cause of this world is the truth which the spirit, by its word of revelation, wishes to impress upon the human race in a manner comprehensible and intuitive to all; the infinite reciprocal action of the forces of the world, the essence of the laws and the interconnection of natural things, on the other
[29] hand, were not to be an object of revelation; the investigations belonging here are left to reason and to science. Criticism of knowledge is therefore right when it points out that creation in six days does not agree with the course of natural development which can in reality be demonstrated. But it is wrong when it seeks the ground of the discrepancy in the fact that the spirit which speaks through the history of creation has not been versed in modern physics and has therefore shown itself ignorant of the real interconnection of things. Criticism of faith is right when it proceeds from the presupposition that the spirit which expresses itself in the word of the Creation is the almighty, omniscient spirit, the power of the Father that has brought forth heaven and earth; but it is wrong when, by borrowing a little from natural science and tinkering with the revealed word, it wants the history of creation adapted to astronomy.[1)] It is the theological muddling, the imagined unity of faith and knowledge, that forms the point of departure for both errors.

At the stage of revelation the activity of the spirit by which the word in the history of creation was imparted is an act as divine as that by which the world was created. The extremes signify that the act of creation is in itself incomprehensible to man, that therefore the spirit through the word must enlighten the believers, must meet their capacity of comprehension and religious need. The God who has revealed his omnipotence in nature has also revealed his will in the word: revelation itself is the middle of the extremes.

[30] As it is with the history of creation, so it is with every section of the sacred history where the reality expressed in the physical order of the world stands in opposition to the revealed word: here is an essential opposition, but no real conflict. In the apprehension and judgment of the middle corresponding to the extremes there now opens a possibility for the separation between *faith and opinion*, a separation which

[1)] Compare, Philosophy of Religion, pp. 151—66.

hitherto, unfortunately, has been overlooked in the doctrine of religion all too much, not to say entirely.

Faith in the Word in the history of creation is and must be the same, unalterably the same, whether the believer otherwise belongs to those who know or to those who do not know. But the individual apprehension of the details of the presentation is not the same. He who does not know takes everything immediately according to the letter, without any inkling that here there either should or can be any thought of a separation between natural reality in the outward facts and Spiritual Reality in the word. He who knows, on the other hand, has made the opposition clear to himself; but he has also made it clear to himself that in the biblical presentation, simply understood, there is not a jot or tittle that in any way could weaken faith in the divinity of the word. So they both, he who knows and he who does not know, have the same faith, but it is far from the case that they have the same opinion.

The categorical difference between faith and opinion is easy to demonstrate. To take yet a couple of examples along, we choose Paradise and the Fall.

So much idle strife has now been conducted about the geographical location of Paradise, the nature of the tree of knowledge and the diabolical serpent that it might well soon be enough. The endless squabbling falls away when one reflects on the *[31]* difference between faith and opinion. To be at one in faith, that is: to be at one in the religious appropriation of the word, that is: to be completely at one in the apprehension of the co-created image of God, the ideal of innocence, the temptation, the Fall, the guilt and the punishment, an apprehension which can and must be exactly determined by the individual features and articulation of the narrative. It is the first decisive presuppositions of religious psychology that are at issue. If there is agreement on this point, then there is agreement in faith. What outward reality may be attributed to the trees, and how the serpent looked, on that opinions may be divided. The individual representations that accompany the impression of the whole are so far conditioned by the feeling, imagination and stage of cultivation of each individual that the one dare not force his opinions upon the other.

How important it is everywhere in the domain of religious views to make a thorough distinction between faith and opinion will also be evident from the many years' long polemic for and against the Grundtvigian view of the origin of the creed and its relation to the baptismal word, which runs like a red thread through our most recent church history. "The vital nerve of the Grundtvigian view" must, from my point of departure, be sought expressly in this, "that faith in the creed in principle

coincides with faith in its origin from the object of faith, that is, with faith in the Christ personally present in the words of the confession. (Philosophy of Religion, p. 72). Whatever particular representations "Grundtvigians" and "anti-Grundtvigians" may wish to set in circulation concerning the outward reality in the manner in which
[32] Christ in his "days of flesh" is supposed to have imparted or not imparted to the Apostles the wording of the creed, I must still repeat my simplicity: there is no human being on earth who knows that; for of such things there is no objective knowledge. The task then becomes to investigate what in this matter has decisive significance for faith, and what may be regarded as opinions and be either reasonable or unreasonable conjectures. That Grundtvig has not overlooked the difference between faith and opinion is seen, among other things, from the following statement: "We who call ourselves Christ's messengers, and who are to impart to the congregation all the enlightenment in faith which the spirit by Scripture or in some other way bestows on us, must well beware of making our enlightenments, whether about the creed as a whole or about its individual members and parts, into articles of faith."[1)]

Which determinations, then, can be fixed as belonging to faith? They can only be such as indisputably belong to the ground of faith and furnish the first indispensable conditions for the life of faith.

The baptismal word is a sacramental word. Faith in the sacramental word includes the presupposition that not only is baptism performed according to Christ's command, but that the act of baptism itself in the spirit through the word is an act of Christ.[2)] The words: I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, must then be apprehended as Christ's words, words "from the Lord's own mouth" to him who lets himself be baptized. But he who says: "I baptize thee".... must surely
[33] be the same as he who beforehand has set the conditions of baptism and received the promise of the fulfilment of these conditions through a sincere and voluntary answering of the questions: "Dost thou renounce....? Dost thou believe....? Dost thou believe....? Dost thou believe....? To put such words into Christ's mouth, and yet secretly to harbor the subsidiary notion that they are not really his own words, but words of another origin, words that with a certain well-meaning arbitrariness are ascribed to him, in order to give the act greater solemnity, what is that? It is to reduce the sacrament to a ceremony, it is to hollow out the basic word and to begin the life of faith with a self-contradiction in faith.

[1)] Den kristelige Børnelærdom [Christian Instruction of Children] 1868. p. 45.
[2)] Compare Philosophy of Religion, pp. 508—514.

The apprehension of the sacrament as an act of Christ in the congregation follows with irrefutable consistency from the principle of faith, and Pastor C. Møller hits exactly upon my way of looking at it when he reminds us that nothing can be fixed about faith except what can be derived from the principle.

But now the divine basic word of the creed surely also has a human side. About the sentences in the three apostolic articles, as regards manner of transmission, expressions of translation and the like, philological and historical-critical investigations can of course be undertaken, and about these again different opinions can form. To what extent these opinions are really subordinate to faith will depend on whether from all sides the aim is at the original. In the vigilant and persistent effort to secure and preserve the form of the creed in every individual member and expression, corresponding to the original word of faith, the creative word of life, "the word from the Lord's own mouth," we should then see not a one-sided zeal for a party cause, but a sincere love of truth.

To make the creed into a kind of incomplete compendium of a "Christian dogmatics" *[34]* and to take the content so generally that one can more or less at one's pleasure change members and expressions, is to go to an extreme; to want, by a brand-new revelation, to secure a literal reproduction of the linguistic form, and the outward manner in which the basic word was originally imparted, is to go to an opposite extreme. In the first extreme one goes around the word in order to grasp the spirit; in the last extreme one goes further than the spirit in order to prop up the word. The truth is the middle of the extremes, is Spiritual Reality, reality for the spirit.

VI.

Spiritual Reality, the mark of truth for the creed and Holy Scripture, makes historical credibility absolutely dependent on religious credibility and gives criticism of faith a measure for distinguishing revelation from mythology.

However great the distance between the seventeenth century's scriptural-dogmatic doctrine of revelation and the present day's Bible-critical mythology, there is nevertheless one principle that is common to both.

"Every inner alteration, conditioned by appropriation, which an outward event undergoes in the narrator's presentation, *is a falsification* of its reality"; this is the supreme premise, the logical major premise, from which orthodox apologetics and negative criticism have each formulated their conclusion. — "The sacred writers have not let the events undergo any alteration whatsoever; *ergo*: the sacred history is in *[35]*

all points and parts a history in literal agreement with itself, outwardly real." Thus orthodoxy concludes. — "The biblical authors have in every presentation of the supernatural let the event undergo a transformation, if unconsciously, yet essential; *ergo*: the whole so-called sacred history is in everything essential a falsified, unreal history." Thus negative criticism concludes. Mediating theology mediates and mediates, but without bearing, without principle.

Is it then really the case that every alteration brought about by believing appropriation, which a supernatural event can undergo, is a falsification? This fundamental question, decisive for the credibility of the Bible, must be answered with Yes or No.

If the question is answered with Yes, then the biblical word is mythical, and dissolving criticism of knowledge is in the main right. "The possibility of myth becomes probability when the wondrous in the narratives, the irresolvable contradictions between the individual Evangelists, explicable only by the most artificial harmonistics, the manifold chronological difficulties that cannot be brought into agreement with contemporary secular writers, are taken into consideration. Nor is it sufficient, as has hitherto been the practice, to settle all these contradictions by abandoning one Evangelist and favoring another, so that Matthew is sacrificed for Luke, and the latter, when required, again for John. This is merely to measure with unequal measure and weight. It moreover appears, on an impartial consideration of the different historical
[36] presentations, that all the Evangelists must be disallowed in equal degree, that the testimony of the one is worth just as much, or rather, just as little as that of the other. Here a bellum omnium contra omnes is waged, and nowhere are we able to win firm historical ground."[1)]

If the question is answered with No, then the biblical word enters anew into force as the word of revelation; the doctrine of faith has by this No freed itself from the objections and imputations of dissolution-criticism and of mythical interpretation. It lies in the nature of the matter, as shown above, that miracle and faith must be inseparable in apprehension and presentation; the transformation that the apprehension has brought about is a transformation in the spirit. The transformation is a falsification only when the spirit is false. The mythical spirit, which posits the unreal as real, is a false spirit. But the spirit of revelation is the spirit of truth, because in the deepest sense it is the spirit of reality.

That, as regards the outward and the particular, there can be mistakes which

[1)] K. Schwarz. The History of the Most Recent Theology in Brief Presentation (Den nyeste Theologies Historie i kort Fremstilling; translated from the third edition of the original, Copenhagen 1869). p. 94.

do not in the remotest degree falsify the content of faith, only a spiritless, letter-bound supranaturalism can deny. From the point of view of the faith of the Gospel a principled distinction can then also be made between legend, legendary features, and myths. How "legends could get out among the brethren," and even legends that were occasioned by an innocent misunderstanding of Jesus' words, is seen from John. 21:23. But such legends do not intermingle any element deviating from the thought of revelation and conflicting with its essence, do not falsify the principle of reality and are consequently not myths. In Matth. 27:51 it is told, that when Jesus "gave up *[37]* the spirit on the cross, the earth quaked and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that slept arose, and went out of the graves after his resurrection, and came into the holy city and appeared unto many." This can, if one really wishes, be apprehended as a legend, but it can in no way be regarded as a myth. If the resurrection of the dead of Jerusalem is a myth, then the principle of revelation is denied, and then the raising of Lazarus and the resurrection of Christ are also myths, for the one proceeds from the same principle as the other.[1)]

It is an easy matter to make the biblical narratives count as full reality when the whole thing is accomplished by taking everything without further ado according to the letter, leaning on blind authority and putting assertions in place of grounds. What is easier than to say: "It stands in the Bible, it is historical, and *therefore* we are to believe it; unless we had beforehand irrefutable proofs that Holy Scripture is more exact than any legal document, our faith would have no secure foundation; but it stands written, *it stands written, it stands literally written*! — By opening the door of contradiction and lighting the juridical assertiveness of Scripture down the stairs, criticism of knowledge, humanly speaking, has done the biblical word a true service.

There is reality enough, "full reality" in the revealed facts; the sacred history is like a richly laid table: step in, for all is ready. But what is thus made ready benefits *[38]* only those who worthily understand how to enjoy it. To declare the supernatural nourishments to be dishes for show, because one, by inhaling poison, has lost the power of digestion, is tragically frivolous, wanton. To sit down at the table and fill one's dogmatic pockets with outward matter which one intends to stuff into others, but cannot digest oneself, is a crude misuse of what is holy. The reality of revelation is reality only for those who in simplicity of heart have the need of appropriation and in the understanding of faith the gift of appropriation. Of other reality one may, as the

[1)] That the relation, however, cannot be reversed, so that Christ's resurrection became a legend, and only the resurrection of the bodies of the saints that slept a reality, is understood of itself.

case may be, soon get too little, soon again too much, unfortunately all too much; but of the reality of revelation one can in faith always be sure of getting neither too little nor too much; for appropriation is the measure, and appropriation is conditioned by need. The reality of revelation is, in the outward as in the inward, Spiritual Reality, a reality which, on the conditions of appropriation and self-understanding, has been from the very beginning, is, and in all eternity will be reality for the spirit.

R. *Nielsen.*