

# **NEO-KANTIAN AND VALUE THEOLOGY IN HUNGARY**

**BY:**

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## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Present volume, entitled '*Neo-Kantian and Value Theology in Hungary*' was written in 1966-67 and originally published (in Hungarian) in traditional book format in 1996 by Mundus Press. Szilárd Biernaczky edited it and created the bibliography. The English version of this volume was originally published in traditional book format in 1998 by the Societas Philosophia Classica, Szeged-Budapest. The translation was performed by Lóránt Benedek.

'Value Theology' is for a substantial part a Hungarian trend in theology. Unfortunately, many texts in this field are written solely in Hungarian. We are glad to have the opportunity to publish the English translation of this important book, together with the Hungarian original one.

Other works published within our theology section include:

- ❖ **NÉMETH, Pál:** THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN THINKING (Bilingual: Hungarian-English. English translation by: FÜKŐ, Dezső)
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Theologian, born in 1930 in Hajdunánás, Hungary. Completed his studies between 1949 and 1954 at the Reformed Theological Academy of Budapest. In 1956 he published an article that defended the ideas and purity of the Revolution. Because of that he was forced to leave his place of service. Later he was minister in the parishes of Hidas (1963-1983), Budapest-Szabadságtér (1983-1996), and finally in Budapest-Kálvin-tér (1996-2005). Received a Ph.D.-degree in systematic theology in 1979 from the University of Basel ('*Aspekte der Gottesfrage*'). He was a visiting lecturer in 1986 at the Princeton Theological Seminary where he wrote a book entitled '*A Study of the Concept of Transcendence*'. Between 1990 and 2002 he was bishop of the Hungarian Reformed Church. In 1993, at the foundation of the Károli Gáspár Reformed University he played an initiating and leading role. He was professor of Philosophy of Religion at this university. Author of 25 books and more than 1000 articles.

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## INTRODUCTION

In this essay we are going to discuss a period of the history of Hungarian reformed theology of which the spiritual roots, in the course of its prehistory, reached down to the ideas of liberal theology, and in which, conforming to the neo-Kantian trend of theological thought, value theology became the defining power of spiritual, church, and salvation history, and in the finishing period of which the dawn of the neo-Reformational theology of Logos (or the Word) was breaking.

Theological liberalism, uniting the spiritual heritage of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Hegel into a specific theological way of thinking, was the first theological trend to receive into itself Kantian influences that were to revive with fresh vitality in neo-Kantianism to gain fundamental significance for neo-Kantian and value theology.

In German and European thinking in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the exaggerations of the absolute idealism of Schelling and Hegel, and the pushing forward of Marxism partly rooted in the latter, started a crisis and fermentation. Among the political, economic and social problems of the period philosophy, though having lost its leading role, got again into vital motion with great shocks and turns. One system of speculation failed after another, and through the ruins a new world-view, scientific materialism, strove with full force towards its final goal. Hegel's philosophy, with the support of the Prussian government, seemed to preserve its first place among the philosophical systems, but after its leader's death it broke down just because of the ambiguity of its religious world view. On the one hand theologians and theologically interested thinkers made efforts at more clearly elaborating the Christian character of the system, and finding more and more followers they changed its internal structure under the influence, naturally, of modern science (e.g. Rosencranz, Erdmann). On the other hand, the dialectic method itself was rendered absolute by the removal of the transcendent element from the Spirit and by the transformation of the Idea to be completely immanent in a world conceived of as ever more in accordance with the scheme of science, and so the denial of the idea of a personal God and of personal immortality was attained (Feuerbach).

When Marx, noticing the regularities of economic life, showed the history forming significance of economic factors, and so called attention to social contradictions, forged his theory into the weapon of the working class. But the way leading to socialist revolution was still very long. So theoretical materialism which originated from the radical synthesis of enlightenment and Hegelianism and which professed scientific rationalism, got a clear road only theoretically for the time being (Czolbe, Vogt, Moleschott, Büchner). Their vulgar, simplifying method that disregarded dialectics elicited a counter effect in those carrying on German idealism, as well as in those who opposed speculative philosophy for scientific reasons, and a need for the renewal of Kantian critical transcendentalism was felt. It was thought that microscopes and laboratory preparations can not be used as philosophical tools until the epistemological bases are disclosed, for between fact and (natural) law there is a powerful third one: the human brain, which is the carrier of both.

This trend got its first impetus from Bruno Fischer's highly influential lecture on Kant (1860)<sup>1</sup> followed by Eduard Zeller's inaugural address in Heidelberg (1862),<sup>2</sup> and O. Liebmann's essay entitled *Kant and His Epigones* (1865).<sup>3</sup> Later on it was Helmholtz who proved that Kant's *Critiques* were congenial to strict natural science. But already before him those representatives of idealism that felt the crisis of their spiritual trend and the necessity of its renewal reached back to Kant: he had been the originator of idealistic philosophy, so perhaps a better and more faithful application of his thoughts might help to overcome the philosophical upheaval. Already Fries and Schleiermacher, as regards their proficiency in exact sciences, were close to Kantian epistemology. And in late idealism Immanuel Hermann Fichte started his philosophy again with epistemological self-interpretation. Herbart wanted *exact philosophy* in opposition to any speculation or romanticism. Beneke, joining up with Kant and starting out from experience fought against speculative philosophy: he founded his theistic philosophy on emotional experience. Schopenhauer's system referred to the critical idealistic core of Kant's philosophy: he used transcendental idealism for depriving the worlds of nature and history of their power by turning them into illusion and dream.

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<sup>1</sup> FISCHER, K.: *Immanuel Kant Entwicklungsgeschichte und System der kritischen Philosophie*, Vol. 1-6, Mannheim, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> ZELLER, E.: Über Bedeut und Aufgabe der Erkenntnistheorie, in: *Vorträge und Abhandlungen*, 1862.

<sup>3</sup> LIEBMAN, O.: *Kant und die Epigonen*. Eine kritische Abhandlung, hrsg. v. Bruno Bauch, Berlin. 1912, Reuther-Reichard, XX, p. 239.

The real world, however, presented itself with its problems and forces ever more urgently. Positivism was renewed in France (Comte) and England (Mill, Spencer, Buckle) to transgress the borders into Germany and to free psychology, biology, and sociology everywhere from the shackles of spiritual sciences. Haeckel got much applause for declaring before a scientific society that God, if he existed, must be, according to the standpoint of science, a vertebrate animal with a gaseous body.

Neo-Kantianism was also renewed: together with positivism it fought against all dogmatic metaphysics, but in the sense of strict epistemological interpretation it safeguarded the rights for a normative and creative understanding of the Spirit. It remained faithful to Kant not only in the critique of dogmatism, but also in that of empirism. Its new representatives were Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp of Marburg. On their side were Stadler, Buchenau, Kinkel, Cassirer, Vorlander, Görland and others. This further development of neo-Kantianism was first of all fruitful from the aspects of ethics and religion. Owing to its connection to the scientific method, however, it remained blind to any real transcendency, or to the historicity of living faith.

Another branch of critical philosophy was leading on from just these points. Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert set the spiritual sciences free from the spell of the method of natural science. On the other hand, by referring to Lotze's phenomenology of value and validity, they developed their philosophical interpretation of standing value which exists in the sphere of a higher spiritual reality above the changing interests of ages. Thus they created value philosophy.

Neo-Kantianism, as briefly outlined above, was a spiritual trend asserting itself not only in philosophy but also in theology. The task we have taken on is to point out the foreign roots and domestic achievements of neo-Kantian and value theology in Hungary which grew out of neo-Kantianism and was inseparable from it. Neo-Kantianism in this wider sense can be ascertained in Hungarian theology throughout three generations: these three periods represent its prehistory, history, and final period.



# PART ONE:

## THE FORERUNNERS OF VALUE THEOLOGY

### (PREHISTORY)

The first theological hints of neo-Kantianism in the life of the Hungarian Reformed Church can be traced back first of all to the works of liberal theologians. In the last days of vulgar rationalism, by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, scientific thinking became triumphant, the world view of liberal theology and its ideal of life had taken shape. This liberal theological mentality was, as we have pointed it out in the introduction, the offspring of German philosophical idealism. The spiritual trend of Kant, Schleiermacher and Hegel arrived in Hungary not directly from them, but via their schools.

Kant had completely destroyed old type dogmatism in philosophy. He demonstrated that the only source of our knowledge was experience, and empirical knowledge took shape in conformity with the *a priori* laws of the perceiving organisms of human spirit. Thus certainty was complete, for truth was not anything existing outside us, but the cosmos of our own soul was imbued with it. Furthermore, he had stressed the absolute value of the Spirit and its intelligible world, and saw the purpose of this whole created universe as the reign of Spirit over everything. This glorification of the sensible was effectuated by the moral law, the symbol of which was aesthetic value.

In contrast to customary opinion, Schleiermacher can also be considered as a carrier of Kantian features in the sphere of spiritual sciences. A Kantian feature in him was his declaration that any supranaturalism was to be rejected, and that Christianity was nothing more than a historical complex of facts. He, too, spoke of an intelligible world, the carrier of which was yet the human self. In other words, as Pfleiderer admitted: Schleiermacher, too, was an individualist. Thus according to him theology could not be anything else, but some systematic conceptualisation of the living Christ of the Church in the consciousness of an individual, or an expression of that. Schleiermacher was the founder of liberal theology and at the same time its greatest figure, by whom the completely negative quality of the theology of rationalism got annihilated, and in whose theology the heritage of pietistic devotion was united with philosophical idealism. He promoted theology into the science of religion, so in his own age he assured its independence, saving it from an anti-scientific character as well as from being incorporated into either philosophy or a general spiritual science. "Religion is knowledge, though not of the intellect but of the heart, a sense of the unity of the finite and the infinite."<sup>4</sup>

From the viewpoint of the scientific structure of his whole theological work the notion of piety was of basic significance, which "considered purely in itself is neither knowledge nor action, but determinacy of emotion or of direct consciousness".<sup>5</sup> In addition to this, by pious emotion one should understand "neither any confused nor any ineffective reality", for it was "the original expression of a direct relationship", "the direct presence of the whole of indivisible existence".<sup>6</sup> It was an endowment that was above any classification of the psychology of abilities, and gave a final sense to the whole of empirical life, both from the viewpoint of cognition and from that of will: it was to emphasise originality on the one hand and universality on the other. The "determinacy of emotion" consisted of our "knowing ourselves as being in relationship with God, and absolutely dependent on him".<sup>7</sup> Accordingly what was essential was a personal connection with God that included the world and

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<sup>4</sup> KONCZ S.: *Hit és vallás. A magyar református vallástudományi teológia kibontakozása és hanyatlása* (Faith and Religion. The Development and Decay of the Hungarian Reformed Theology of the Science of Religion), Debrecen, Csuka László könyvnyomdája, 1942. p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> See KOVÁCS, Ö.: *A vallásbölcselet kézikönyve* (A Handbook of the Philosophy of Religion) Vol 1-2, Budapest, 1877, (A magyarországi Protestáns Egylet kiadványai 10-12.) Theologiai Könyvtár, 1877, Vol. 2. pp. 214-230.

SZELÉNYI, Ö.: *Schleiermacher vallásfilozófiája* (Schleiermacher's Religious Philosophy) Békéscsaba, 1910. Corvina Nyomda, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> See op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> See KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. and SZELÉNYI, Ö.: op. cit. p. 48.

life. He placed all earthly consequences, conflicts, freedom and dependence under a final radical dependence, and it was by God that he wished to understand life in its totality.

But however important the doctrine of piety was in Schleiermacher's system, it was still not in the centre. It was merely included in an abstract and formal definition of essentiality, referring to true religion's ability to come into being only in concrete, meaningful history. Therefore the centre could only be reached by defining Christianity. "Christianity is a teleological, monotheistic way of faith, in which everything refers to redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth."<sup>8</sup> Schleiermacher wished to "trace the faith content of Christianity back to its basic fact and to internal experiences originating from this fact"<sup>9</sup>. He wished to assure the organic unity of the experiences referred to with the objective historical moment of redemption through his own specific dogmatic method. Christian articles of faith were "the opinions of the pious emotional state of the Christian mind".<sup>10</sup> That meant that their content was given in consciousness, therefore they did not need to be rationally and speculatively derived, only the concepts referring to them and their connections needed exact scientific definitions, all of which was first of all given in the personal piety of one belonging to Christ. But, since in theology one did not count as an individual, but as a member of the Church, dogmatic propositions had an ecclesiastic character: they "represent a doctrine valid for a Christian congregation for a given time".<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, though the emotional states of mind appeared in individual subjects, they were based on the determinedness of self consciousness, so at the same time their determining factors were also given: they were God and the world. That was how the possibility of objective standards came into being in the world of personal states of mind. Thereby the mutual penetration into one another of the extensive and the intensive worlds was assured. The contrast between the orientations of faith towards the world and towards internal life was changed into fruitful internal tension. At the same time however religion and Christianity came into such close relationship with the whole of spiritual life and culture that they lost their critical function, and their standing out against the world came to be blurred. Thus "the theology and piety of Schleiermacher conform with Scripture not in essence but in colouring, for in essence they are mystical and philosophical".<sup>12</sup>

Schleiermacher's religious attitude, mixed with some other elements, had a decisive influence on Hungarian Reformed Church theology quite up to the First World War. Modern theological liberalism in Hungary was, in the final analysis, born from the simultaneous critique, reconciliation, and application of Schleiermacher's and Hegel's principles. Schleiermacher, taking a stand in opposition to rationalism, had raised objections against the exclusive rights of reason in religion and laid emphasis on emotions.

Hegel by contrast taught individualisation of the divine Idea in his speculative philosophy of religion. According to him truth could only be possessed through an Idea. "*Wenn irgend etwas Wahrheit hat, so hat es durch seine Idee.*" (If something has truth at all, it has it through its idea.) Seizing the truth inherent in an idea could not be done by Schellingian meditation but by methodological thinking, by efforts of thought, by *Anstrengung des Begriffs*. The methodology of thought was strict dialectics which recognised and understood the contradictions of the given world, and at a higher standpoint it actually eliminated them, so that it made thinking move rapidly through the continually renewing threefold cycle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. At the same time it made philosophy become history, in other words it opened it for history.

That was how in Hegel's system the Absolute got from the first place to the last one. It was there, in the philosophy of the Spirit that the Absolute Spirit who was the crowning summit of all dwelled, understanding the absolute truth of all existence in art, religion and philosophy. And since the Absolute was identical with God, for a retrospective view the development of the world, whose culmination was to occur in art, religion and philosophy, was to have been God's self-realisation. The German philosopher's system of thoughts seems as a matter of fact to be a universal philosophy of religion. In a certain sense the thought of Hegel, who elaborated religion from the side of thinking and reason, and who made efforts to grasp the deepest thoughts and doctrines of revealed religion through thinking, can be regarded as a higher grade of Scholasticism. In brief, for Hegel religion was not *emotion*, but understanding the presence of the Absolute.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. and SZELÉNYI, Ö.: op. cit. p. 71.

<sup>9</sup> See KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. and SZELÉNYI, Ö.: op. cit. p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> See KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. and SZELÉNYI, Ö.: op. cit. p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> See KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. and SZELÉNYI, Ö.: op. cit. p. 61.

<sup>12</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *Hogyan tanítsunk vallást?* (How to Teach Religion?) *Az Út*, 1915. Vol. I. No. 1, pp. 12-16, No. 2, pp. 59-66, No. 3, pp. 100-105.

<sup>13</sup> See KOVÁCS, Ö.: *A vallásbölcselet kézikönyve*, (A Handbook of the Philosophy of Religion) Vol. 1-2. Budapest, 1876-1877. A magyarországi Protestáns Egyet kiadványai, 10-12 Protestáns Theológiai Könyvtár, 3/6., 4/8, Vol. 2, p. 247, ff.

For Schleiermacher, Jesus was the mediator of religious emotion, that is the manifestation of God as the universe in man's very heart. For Hegel Jesus was the most beautiful example of the *self-realisation* of the Idea revealed in the individual. For Schleiermacher Jesus was a historical action, and as such the object of man's admiration and the basis of his instinct felt for the God of the universe. For Hegel Jesus was the Idea in history, a historical *phenomenon*, the means of understanding the Absolute.<sup>14</sup>

The origin of the liberal theology of the 19th century was the critique of the Jesus doctrines of the two geniuses. Strauss's work entitled *Leben Jesu*,<sup>15</sup> in which the author, waiving Schleiermacher's intuitive and Hegel's speculative construction in their Jesus doctrines, endeavoured at creating a *concrete* image of Jesus on a historical basis. After him Baur and the school of Tübingen, beside bringing the historical method into use, adopted the great fundamental propositions of the criticised Hegelian philosophy. In this way liberal theology was being built up on the critique of Hegel so that in a certain critical spirit they selected those propositions of Hegel's that were applicable for liberalism.

Theological liberalism wished to solve the contradictions among the three preceding theological trends of orthodoxy, rationalism, and pietism, in order to create *unity on a higher level*. In opposition to the first two and in conformity with pietism it professed that religion was not a doctrine nor moral action, but an independent reality of temperament and emotion. In contrast however with pietism it strongly emphasised the necessity of examining this reality through unprejudiced, pure scientific investigation, precisely in the interest of the success of religion and the purity of its spirit. This requirement resulted in theology changing into a science of religion.

The basic endeavour of liberal theology was the liberal harmonisation of religion with the scientific world view. And in such a way that it "fearlessly and unhesitatingly submits the *traditional Biblical world view*, which had been literally accepted by orthodoxy and simply rejected by rationalism, to the judgement of scientific criticism". And in every case when a contradiction appeared between the religious world view and the scientific one, "*it always accepts the verdict of the scientific world view*, and rejects the Bible as a perishable form without hesitation in the belief that in this way it saves the emotional internal truth of religion for the current age".<sup>16</sup>

The truth of religion was the absolute dependence of the universe on God for its creation, existence, development, and final purpose alike. The personal feeling of the absoluteness of this dependence was religion. Thus the feeling that the world for its origin, being, development, and purpose depends on God who is the creating, maintaining, governing and caretaking Spirit, had to be maintained. But the explanation regarding the *how* of its coming into being, existing, and developing must be completely assigned to science.

That was how liberalism introduced scientific Bible criticism in place of the verbatim faith of orthodoxy. It also rejected the utilitarian earthly morals of rationalism, and from the philosophy of critical idealism it took over the standpoint of the autonomy of ethics and of its obligatory assertion. For liberalism world order as the subject of scientific research was God's world order, and the laws of the ethical world order were the laws of God. "There are two things that fill me with permanent admiration: the starlit canopy of heaven above me and the moral sense within me."<sup>17</sup>

In the first part of our essay we are going to remember the two most outstanding theologians of Nagyenyed College: Ödön Kovács and József Keresztes as representatives of neo-Kantian influences constituting some organic components of liberal theology. Next we shall deal in more detail with György Bartók senior, the first neo-Kantian theologian in the Hungarian Reformed Church.

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<sup>14</sup> KONCZ, S.: op. cit. p. 69.

<sup>15</sup> STRAUSS, D. F.: *Das Leben Jesu*, 3. verb. Auflage, Tübingen, Osiander, Vol. 1, 1838. XXVI + 787 + 2 p, Vol. 2. 1839, pp. VI-785.

<sup>16</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *Az erdélyi református egyházi irodalom 1850-től napjainkig* (Transylvanian Reformed Ecclesiastic Literature from 1850 to Our Days) Kolozsvár, 1925, Minerva Nyomda, 8 p.

<sup>17</sup> The epitaph of *Immanuel Kant*.

## ÖDÖN KOVÁCS (1844—1895)

He was elected professor at Nagyenyed Theological Academy as doctor of theology of Leyden University, promoted to the degree with the highest distinctions. His widespread literary activities mainly performed in the 1870's made him a leading spiritual personality of his time. In his works, written with extraordinary interpretative power and in a clear, fascinating style, the intransigent spirit of research of liberalism appeared for the first time in Hungarian theological literature. He presented the programme of that already in *his professorial inaugural speech*: "By today theology has developed into a science of religion, and similarly to the philosophical, legal and historical sciences this science also treats its own subject, which is religion with man as a religious being, from a scientific standpoint."<sup>18</sup> His activities were aimed at gaining a scientific understanding of religion and conscious, systematic possession of it through a critical search for truth.

His chief work is *A vallásbölcselet kézikönyve (A Handbook of the Philosophy of Religion)*.<sup>19</sup> In its foreword, with absolute respect for truth, he acknowledges his sources and the fact that the contents are second hand (regarding volume one), but definitely states that, regarding the historical system and the method of elaboration, his work is original. He declares that "it is a difficult task from both a scientific point of view and a formal one *to develop a systematic, coherent, apt and attractive picture* of the historical forms of religion",<sup>20</sup> but he had achieved that task in the spirit of his age with complete success.

In the second volume he endeavoured to offer "the history of religion and especially of the philosophical thought of Christian religion",<sup>21</sup> being certain that "we shall discover and set forth the essences of religion and Christianity, i.e. their psychological truth and metaphysical content".<sup>22</sup> And that is a very typical liberal theological statement: that the essence of Christianity is the compound of its psychological truth and its metaphysical content. Since the philosophy of religion developed the problems of essence and reality only later as it was gaining independence from general philosophy, our author could not yet do philosophy of religion in today's sense, but write a history of the ideas of religious philosophical thought.

Owing to the nature of the subject in the second volume, a lack of sources has resulted in gaps bigger than in the first volume, but besides some deficiencies it contains very relevant theological theses, too. By emphasising the purely and spontaneously religious character of Reformation, Kovács takes Protestantism to be the type of Christian piety which, being aware of its full dependence on God and its full freedom of the world, enjoys full certitude of salvation through faith, but owes both faith and salvation solely to God's grace. About the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures he says, "the original Protestant idea is to believe the truth and the divine nature of the words of the scriptures, because just as we know the nurturing power of the Sun from our own experience, in community with the Holy Spirit we ourselves feel, we ourselves acknowledge and we ourselves experience that what the scriptures teach about God and our relationship with Him is true."<sup>23</sup> "The same Spirit who spoke through the mouths of Jesus and the apostles bears witness to the same truth in one's own inner heart."<sup>24</sup>

With regard to the freedom of will he avows the Calvinist ideal of freedom without however its depth, "Together with the untenable concept of the freedom of will the true notion of ethical freedom is not reduced to nothing. Freedom is the name given in any field to the faculty that makes it possible for one to act by

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<sup>18</sup> KOVÁCS, O.: Professorial Inaugural Speech, cited by MAKKAI, S. Re. No. 16, 10. p.

<sup>19</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: *A vallásbölcselet kézikönyve (A Handbook of the Philosophy of Religion)* Vol. 1-2. Budapest, 1876-1877. Vol. 1, 1876. *A vallás mint tünemény, vagy a vallások története (Religion as a Phenomenon, or the History of Religions)* pp. XX-388. Vol. 2., 1877.

*A vallás lényege, vagy a vallásos eszmék bölcseleti felfogásának története (The Essence of Religion, or the History of the Philosophical Perception of the Ideas of Religion)*, 312 p.

<sup>20</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. MAKKAI S. *Az erdélyi református egyházi irodalom 1850-től napjainkig (Transylvanian Reformed Ecclesiastic Literature from 1850 to Our Days)* Kolozsvár, 1925, Minerva Nyomda, 11. p.

<sup>21</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. MAKKAI, S.: op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. MAKKAI, S.: op. cit.

<sup>23</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. MAKKAI, S.: op. cit.

oneself on one's own without any external constraint or hindrance, i.e. in accordance with one's essence."<sup>25</sup> Among his evidences of the immortality of the soul, besides commonsensical arguments that prove nothing, we come upon the following statement expressing certainty of faith, "As a prophet contemplates the future in yesterday and today, and as a moralist or a politician discovers, in what is given now, the ideal of which the viability is warranted by the actual qualities of the past and present, likewise a religious man, in the quality of his existence, sees the core of a higher reality that his essence will achieve after death. Life in God, which was revealed in its totality in Jesus and has become the public property of mankind, is an eloquent and certain evidence of immortality and eternal life."<sup>26</sup>

Both the latter declaration as well as Kovács's lecture entitled *Jézus személyének jelentősége* (*The Significance of Jesus' Personality*)<sup>27</sup> show how much Ödön Kovács represented an idealistic and exemplary Christianity unobjectionable in its attitude, but which was over-intellectualised on a metaphysical basis. As such, partly as a result of unnecessary concessions he made to science concerning Christ's personal redemptive power, it very much missed the very heart of Christianity: an actual experiencing of personal redemption from our sins. Even in this respect, however, he was a faithful representative of his age. His views concerning dogmatics and ethics can be best learned from a work that is a revision of Pfleiderer: *A csuda, jövődőlés és ihletés dogmatikai fogalmainak bírálata* (*A Critique of the Dogmatic Concepts of a Miracle, a Prophecy, and Inspiration*),<sup>28</sup> and from a review of contemporary theological literature. The latter was published with the title *A legújabb hittani rendszerek* (*The Latest Theological Systems*).<sup>29</sup> It contains a thorough critique of rationalism preceding Kant, describes the influence of Schleiermacher's and Hegel's schools on theology, and gives a review of the teachings of Schweizer, Biedermann, Lang, and Lipsius. In greatest detail it presents the system of Schweizer which he acknowledged to conform with his own views most.

It reads here that "the ideal of a religion of redemption took its perfect manifestation in Christ," and that "the significance of Christ's personality consists in his ethico-religious influence,"<sup>30</sup> the latter of which means that Kovács replaced Christ's divine nature with his religious nature. It was possible to build up a Christian and Calvinist system of religious thought on this basis, but it was impossible to gain divine life-building and life-shaping powers from it.

When reviewing his literary activities we must by all means mention that he translated Baur's great work into Hungarian with the title *A keresztyén egyház a középkorban* (*The Christian Church in the Middle Ages*),<sup>31</sup> in a style clear and enjoyable also for readers of later ages. Under the title *Mit és hogyan prédikálunk* (*What to Preach And How*) he composed an excellent study in homiletics<sup>32</sup> that, not lagging behind his age, faithfully conveys the standpoint of theological liberalism: preaching the gospel is popularising religious and moral teachings, it is a world-view and an ethical system, not constructive witnessing.

When evaluating Ödön Kovács, "we must place ourselves into the atmosphere of the time of his activities, and be able to understand that over the desiccated fields of rationalism his critical spirit acted as a May rain-shower arriving with lightning and thunder".<sup>33</sup> In the life of our Church he was a representative, with exceptional knowledge and influence, of liberal theology professing Kant's critical spirit, Schleiermacher's contribution of the personal feeling of absolute dependence, and Hegelian systematisation of a scientific

<sup>25</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. MAKKAI, S.: op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: op. cit. MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. pp. 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: *Jézus személyének jelentősége a mai keresztyén vallásos tudatban* (*The Significance of Jesus' Personality in Today's Religious Consciousness*) 1872, *Egyházi Reform* II/I, pp. 1-12.

<sup>28</sup> PFLEIDERER, O.: *Das Wesen der Religion*, ed. by Kovács, Ö. 1873, *Egyházi Reform*, III. 3/3, pp. 65-78.

<sup>29</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: *A legújabb hittani rendszerek* (*The Latest Theological Systems*, in: GY. BARTÓK, SENIOR-KERESZTES-Ö. KOVÁCS (ed.): *Tájékozódás az újabb teológia körében*, (*Information on the Sphere of Modern Theology*), Budapest, 1880, Franklin, pp. 205-268.

<sup>30</sup> KOVÁCS, O.: op. cit. and Makkai, S.: *Az erdélyi magyar református irodalom 1850-től napjainkig* (*Transylvanian Hungarian Reformed Literature from 1850 to Our Days*) Kolozsvár, 1925, Minerva Nyomda, 59 p.

<sup>31</sup> BAUR, F. CH.: *A középkori keresztyén egyház* (*The Christian church in the Middle Ages*) transl. by Ödön Kovács, 1883 (*A magyarországi Protestáns Egylet kiadványai*, 20.) (*Protestáns Theológiai Könyvtár*, 16.)

<sup>32</sup> KOVÁCS, Ö.: *Miről s hogyan prédikálunk?* (*What to Preach and How*) *Egyházi és Iskolai Szemle*, 1877, Vol. II. No. 1, pp. 4-7, No. 2, pp. 19-24, No. 3, pp. 33-35, No. 27, pp. 454-457, No. 29, pp. 485-489, No. 30, pp. 501-504, No. 31, pp. 517-520, 1878, Vol. III. No. 16, pp. 249-252, No. 17, pp. 269-273, No. 18, pp. 285-288, No. 21, pp. 341-344.

<sup>33</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. pp. 9-10.

character. He, after the long lasting agony of a blase rationalism, started a new era in the history of our theology. He showed his age a life-like ideal, even if he could not grasp life itself owing to the exaggerated self-confidence of the spirit of his age, his over-estimation of culture, and a lack of experiencing a desperate need for, and the reality of, redemption. But through him, too, the Lord of life did approach those who wanted to live.

## **JÓZSEF KERESZTES** **(1846—1888)**

Besides Ödön Kovács, József Keresztes was the most thorough theologian of the first half of the period. What is more, his erudition was deeper and more exacting than that of the leader of the trend. He, too, was as much a supporter of the scientific spirit and within that, an enthusiastic representative and user of apt and shrewd critique more than anyone else. From his style, still very enjoyable today, his fiery, persistent, objective and strictly logical scientific character radiates, as brightly as his sarcasm sparkles perilously, and as the dawning light of a new theological public-opinion forming enthusiasm radiated promisingly, and spread undefeated. "He follows the world-view and critical principles of Heinrich Lang and Ferdinand Baur"<sup>34</sup> who were his masters.

It was in their spirit that he wrote his greatest work of which the title is *A Biblia (The Bible)*. In Hungarian this was the first scientific, and at the same time popular, treatment of the Bible. "There is no other book in the world that has been interpreted by so many and in so different ways as the Bible. But this awkward situation has now come to an end. The recent thriving of historical sciences has dispelled many old mistakes and destroyed many prejudices. Astronomy has written the history of the sky, geology that of the Earth, while archaeology, comparative linguistics and the science of religion have, by today, shed light even on prehistoric times... The way leading to a real understanding of the Bible has been found, and the key to the door leading to the treasure is available. This way and this key are science."<sup>35</sup>

The orthodox faith in the letter had come to an end. The whole of the Bible was human work and had human history. A real understanding of the Book of Books required scientific investigation and research. It was in the wake of such research that the ethico-religious teachings of the gospels, as well as the truths of St. John's scriptures representing a spiritual religion above the Jewish and heathen-Christian parties, were revealed.

Mention must be made of Keresztes's excellent essays: *Minő álláspontot foglalt el Jézus nemzete vallásával szemben? (What Standpoint Did Jesus Take Towards the Religion of His Nation?)* and *Jézus vallásának főbb vonásai (The Main Features of Jesus' Religion)*.<sup>36</sup> In these, with tireless argumentation, he denied the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, and questioned that it was he himself who proclaimed his godship, in order to preach the general validity of Jesus' ethico-religious ideas, and that love and truth in their conceptual reality are fully and effectively satisfactory. Another essay of his *Az Újszövetség bevett fordításának átdolgozása (The Revision of the Received Translation of the New Testament)* was a critical review. The most lively of his works is the one entitled *A modern rombolók a történelem ítélőszéke előtt (Modern Destroyers Before the Court of Justice of History)*<sup>37</sup> in which he confessed to his whole life's programme.

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<sup>34</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> KERESZTES, J.: *A Biblia, (The Bible)* in: György Bartók, senior-József Keresztes-Ödön Kovács (ed.): *Tájékozódás az újabb teológia körében* (Information on the Sphere of Modern Theology) Budapest 1879, Franklin, pp. 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> KERESZTES, J.: *Minő álláspontot foglalt el Jézus nemzete vallásával szemben? (What Standpoint Did Jesus Take Towards the Religion of his Nation?)* *Egyházi és Iskolai Szemle* 1877, Vol. II, No. 36, pp. 597-600, No. 37, pp. 613-617, No. 39, pp. 646-650, No. 40, 661-665, No. 41, pp. 677-679, No. 42, pp. 697-701.

Jézus vallásának főbb vonásai (The Main Features of Jesus' Religion), *Egyházi és Iskolai Szemle* 1878 Vol. III, No. 8, pp. 118-122, No. 9, pp. 133-135, No. 10, pp. 149-151, No. 11, pp. 169-172, No. 12, pp. 185-189.

<sup>37</sup> KERESZTES, J.: *A modern rombolók a történelem ítélőszéke előtt. (Modern Destroyers before the Court of Justice of History)* *Egyházi és Iskolai Szemle*, 1876, Vol. I. No. 11, pp. 161-163, No. 12. pp. 181-188, No. 13, pp. 193-200, No. 14, pp. 209-218, No. 17, 262-268.

József Keresztes, as a representative of the science of religion, accomplished the job of laying scientific foundations, with his enormous knowledge and sound critical sense, just in the most decisive fields of theological disciplines, i.e. those of Biblical sciences. He was an enthusiastic and ruthless opponent of any manifestation of pseudo-science and false faith and fought against them like a Palladio "destroying because he wanted to build". No man or theologian however can undertake to build up the huge hall neither by himself nor in the possession of all human abilities. *The Lord builds his house*,<sup>38</sup> the foundation of which is Christ with the reality and Godship of his manhood, who descended from Heaven to Earth, and endures any criticism. From the distance of our new century we can give thanks to God for his servant József Keresztes, who was destroying dense ignorance and was helping to lay solid scientific theological foundations on which others were going to continue building the walls of the spiritual house rising towards Heaven, so that in the fullness of Time the dome of eternal salvation lit up by the holy light of God's glory will arch upon them.

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With regard to neo-Kantian theology, nothing more or new could be found, even in the case of dealing with these two outstanding representatives of it in more detail. For the same reason now it is not our task to discuss such liberal theologians as Sándor Berde, Zsigmond Józsa, or Domokos Makkai. But a detailed account should be given of the man who made efforts at connecting the past of the Church, the liberal world view, and the public life of the Church together, in order to render this trend public spirit in both external and internal Church life and in its spiritual and material institutions. And who reached back to Kantian philosophy much more than his contemporaries, so that he should be considered as the first Hungarian representative of neo-Kantian theology, though he was still working in the liberal spirit of his age.

## **GYÖRGY BARTÓK SENIOR (1845—1907)**

The activities of György Bartók Senior embraced 35 years. During his work, constantly done at full blast, a new generation of theologians came to take the place of the old one. His life's work was very multifarious regarding both the number of his publications and the subjects with which he dealt.

His main field of interest was philosophy, within which he was most interested in ethics, from which in the course of time his attention turned to the philosophy of religion and a philosophical view of the history of religion. A basic feature of his mentality was analysis. Stating facts, clearing concepts, comparing things and stressing differences were always masterfully done parts of his scholarly works. But he often left it to the reader to make a synthesis, i.e. to see the new relations, to connect parts distant from but essentially in relationship with each other, or to deduce a whole from one principle. He was an intellect of encyclopaedic knowledge, but not a systematic one who, without endeavouring to systematise, searched for a final principle in any branch of study, and upon finding one felt he had reached his goal. For him unity was provided not by a developed system, but by a method applied from the very beginning. He was not a dogmatic but a critical mind. He was not a systematic theologian but a historian. He did not consider Hegel or Schleiermacher but Kant and Baur to be the founders of the theology of the modern age. From Kant he took over the spirit of critical idealism and the non-compromising character of ethical idealism, from Baur the principles of historical criticism and the truth that Christianity was a formation in history, the understanding of which was only possible on the basis of critical reconstruction.

Baur had wanted about the same in history writing as Kant wanted in the theory of knowledge. Similarly to Kant raising the question of how knowledge was possible, and how much our knowledge was reliable, Baur investigated the problem of the reliability of historical knowledge and found that the whole of early Christian literature, consciously or unconsciously, had described contemporary circumstances, placing them into the picture of the past to be drawn. This early Christian conception must be discovered and pointed out in the books of the New Testament and in this way early Christianity would be understood more clearly than it ever

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Az Újszövetség bevett fordításának átdolgozása (Bírálat) (The Revision of the Received Translation of the New Testament. A critique) *Egyházi és Iskolai Szemle*, 1878, Vol. III, No. 45, pp. 557-563, No. 46, pp. 573-581, No. 47. pp. 594-599, No. 48. pp. 605-612, No. 49, pp. 621-627, No. 50, pp. 637-644, No. 51, pp. 653-662, No. 52, 671-676.

<sup>38</sup> Psalmus 127:1-2.

used to be. Then starting out backwards from this, the whole course of events must be built up in reverse, so that they could be understood, without the backward projections of early Christianity, from the remaining authentic basic facts of the Bible, as the results of historical development. This way of seeing things and this principle meant the triumph of historicity over dogmatism not merely in Bartók's view, but also for the Christianity of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. "History is truth created by God, dogma is truth made by men. Precisely because of this, it is vital for the self-understanding of Protestantism that its dogmas should be formed in accordance with history, and not history in accordance with dogmas."<sup>39</sup>

György Bartók senior however did not first learn critical mentality from his main inspirers, but from Lessing. His first scholarly essay had the title *G. E. Lessing mint teológus (G. E. Lessing the Theologian)*.<sup>40</sup> In this he says that Lessing was the second Luther after the first one who started Reformation. He was the one who completed it, defeating the hard dogmatism and supranaturalism of his age, and postulating the religion of sound reason and noble feelings. He defeated the principle of authority and protected the life principle of Protestantism, i.e. the freedom of reason. He wanted to clear the eternal source of truth by removing mud, and though together with the mud he swept off grains of truth too, these grains are still not lost. The Bible, according to Lessing, is only an elementary textbook which, once learned, allows humanity to reach for higher spiritual nutrition, which is the religion of reason, as the highest of philosophies.

After spending four semesters in Tübingen, Bartók submitted his doctoral thesis entitled *Lessings philosophische und religiöse Grundanschauung (Lessings Basic Philosophical and Religious Views)*<sup>41</sup> on the basis of which he was awarded the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Arts in August 1874. Instead of accepting the life force and real historical power radiating from Jesus, it was the influence of Lessing's distilled religion of reason that had had a decisive effect on this young dynamic personality who was aspiring, with permanent work and progress, after the objective set for him by his ethical ideals. And even if that goal was unachievable, he found the value of his life and happiness in the effort itself.

Then he became interested in Kant. As a professor of the University of Kolozsvár he delivered a series of lectures commanding great public interest under the title *Kant philosophiájának rendszere és befolyása az újabkori philosophiára (Kant's Philosophical System and Its Influence on the Philosophy of Modern Times)*.<sup>42</sup> The series covered the whole history of criticism from the beginnings of Greek philosophy. Arriving at Kant we find in it, in László Ravasz's words, "not the theologian who examines Kant the critic, ... but the critic who examines Kant the theologian."<sup>43</sup> He discussed Kant's theological, political, and cosmological views of his dogmatic period in as much detail as the truths in his work entitled *Kritik der reinen Vernunft (The Critique of Pure Reason)*.<sup>44</sup> He had to stop the series, however, when discussing *The Critique of Practical Reason* because he was invited to be the pastor of the congregation at Enyed.

He founded a periodical *Egyházi és iskolai szemle (Church and School Review)* in which he published a critical review of Ödön Kovács's philosophy of religion and a thorough critique of Strauss's latest book.<sup>45</sup> In the latter he pointed out Strauss's basic errors of confusing theology and religion, making moral judgements on false pretensions, and lacking in psychological and philosophical knowledge. In the same periodical he published an essay entitled *A vallásos oktatás gimnáziumainkban (Instructing Religion at Our Grammar Schools)*<sup>46</sup> written in the interest of teaching religious history at school. Instead of divinity and dogmas the history of religion ought to be taught, culminating in the presentation of the religion of Jesus, so that the

<sup>39</sup> Cited by László Ravasz in his essay entitled *Dr. György Bartók, the Theologian*, 1928, 26 p.

<sup>40</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *G. E. Lessing mint teológus (G. E. Lessing, the Theologian. Born January 22, 1729. died February 27. 1781) Egyházi Reform*, 1872. Vol. II/8-9, pp. 229-274, Vol. II/10, pp. 297-301.

<sup>41</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *Lessings philosophische und religiöse Grundanschauung*. Manuscript. 1874.

<sup>42</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *Kant philosophiájának rendszere és befolyása az újabkori philosophiára (Kant's Philosophical System and its Influence on the Philosophy of Modern Times.)* (A lecture - Manuscript) 1876.

<sup>43</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A Tháborhegy ormán (On the Peak of Mount Tabor)*, Kolozsvár, The author's edition, 1928, Minerva Nyomda, 308 p.

<sup>44</sup> KANT, I.: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Text der Ausgabe 1781, Hrsg. von Karl Kehrbach, Reclam, 1878 XXVI-702 p.

<sup>45</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *Strauss legutolsó műve és a vallás (Strauss's Latest Work and Religion) Egyházi és Iskolai Szemle*, 1877, Vol. II. No. 30. pp. 504-508, No. 31, pp. 520-529, No. 32, pp. 534-536, No. 33. 553-558.

*A vallásbölcselet kézikönyve (A Handbook of the Philosophy of Religion)*, *Egyházi és Iskolai Szemle*, 1877, Vol. II, No. 14, pp. 234-237, No. 15, pp. 245-249, No. 17, 285-287, No. 19, pp. 312-318, No. 22, 374-379, No. 24, pp. 404-406, No. 25, pp. 424-427.

<sup>46</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *A vallásos oktatás gimnáziumainkban (Instructing Religion at our Grammar Schools)*, *Egyházi és Iskolai Szemle* 1876 Vol. 1, No. 9, pp. 135-139, No. 10, pp. 145-150.



youth should experience the development of religion and find perfection in Jesus, verified by the course of development. "If we take away Jesus the God, let us give back the mighty figure of Jesus the Man; if we deny miracles, let us not deny the miracle-making power of the soul."<sup>47</sup>

In his study entitled *Az erkölcsi élet legfőbb kérdései (The Main Questions of Moral Life)*,<sup>48</sup> describing Reformation as *moral regeneration*, he reviewed recent philosophical trends and so arrived at the system of Kant's ethical idealism. "The features that characterise Kant's ethical doctrine are the following: ... The moral law brought about by practical reason has *absolute* validity. A moral decision of the will can be justified by only one thing, namely *respect* for the law. A moral action may have but one purpose which is man himself: human *dignity*. The foundation of moral life is inherent in a higher world, the *intelligible* world. The dominant feature of the higher world is *freedom*, in contrast with causality dominating the world of experience."<sup>49</sup> He himself, too, professed the ethical propositions of this ethical idealism, but condemned its rigorousness, and with regard to moral freedom he declared that it consisted in the fulfilment of the moral law, independently of the material world, but not independently of God as its immanent basis. Though Reformation had given us the principle of moral regeneration via promulgating justification by faith, it could not change it into life, for subsequent Protestant orthodoxy fell back into Catholicism by requiring doctrinal orthodoxy instead of merit-constituting actions. None of the following philosophic schools were able to provide a real ethical solution: empiricism, rationalism, Bentham and utilitarianism, nationalism, socialism, nor Jesuitism, for all of them were eudaimonistic and devalued ethical values. Kant, in turn, by proclaiming the absolute validity of the ethical law, overthrew eudaimonism, at the same time however one-sidedly reduced ethics to the morality of reason.

"Thus Kant paid no attention to the outstanding significance of the fact... that moral life draws its most noble nourishment, its enlivening moisture, just from the emotion of the heart, mainly from love."<sup>50</sup> Bartók continues this criticism in the last chapter by raising the problem of the freedom of the will, showing the untenability of all modern philosophic views concerning it. The Reformers did not deny the freedom of will as such, but the free will of man after the Fall. After the first great representatives of modern philosophy that denied free will, Kant was the first to defend free will again as a necessary condition of moral life. In his opinion however freedom was not indifferent arbitrariness, owing to which the acting subject should be able to choose or do good or evil alike at any moment during the action, but autonomy respecting certain laws. According to Kant freedom could not be found anywhere in the empirical world, it only existed in the suprasensible world as transcendental freedom. Human actions were no exceptions to causality: freedom was merely a moral requirement prescribed for us by the categorical imperative, but it was never attainable among earthly conditions.

Still, however much Kant's view differed from that of indeterminists, in Bartók's opinion transcendental freedom was just as untenable as indifferent freedom was. If the causality of the empirical world was merely a subjective form innate to us, but in reality only the freedom of the suprasensible world existed, in which actions had to conform to the autonomy of will, i.e. they could only be reasonable, then our actions were merely seemingly unreasonable and immoral, but in reality (as noumena) they were not. Hence, it was even impossible to speak about morally good and morally evil. So Bartók blamed Kant for placing the moral, the manifestations of the intelligible world, above causality. He rigorously insisted on recognising the principle of causality in the sphere of ethics, too, and conceived of freedom as the observance, independently of the sin-bearing temptations of the world, of the (immanent) moral law instilled into us by God. So for him moral freedom was an ideal during the actualisation of which the ethical world order was being realised. And the result of that was culture, by which one should understand the fullness of spiritual and ethico-religious goods, or, in the words of the Bible, the Kingdom of God.

During his whole life Bartók was planning to write a monumental history of religion, in the huge framework of which he intended to include all knowledge contained by theology and the philosophy of religion. Unfortunately only an outline and some valuable parts of it are extant in manuscript form.<sup>51</sup> In the history of religion he was after the history of revelation, thus its most important part was going to be the history of

<sup>47</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: op. cit. Vol. 1, No. 10, p. 147.

<sup>48</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *Az erkölcsi élet legfőbb kérdései, tekintettel az újabbkori filozófiára és a szabadelvű protestáns felfogásra* in: BARTÓK, GY.-KERESZTES, J.- KOVÁCS, O. (ed.) *Tájékoztató az újabb teológia körében* (Information on the Sphere of Modern Theology), Budapest, Franklin, 1879, pp. 269-332.

<sup>49</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: op. cit. p. 297.

<sup>50</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: op. cit. p. 299.

<sup>51</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *Vallástörténet* (The History of Religion), Manuscript, cit. by Ravasz, L: in *A Tháborhegy ormán* (On the Peak of Mount Thabor), the author's edition, Kolozsvár, Minerva Nyomda, 1928, 28 p.

Christianity. "The history of the religions of peoples is a picture drawn, with the aid of a divine hand, of the spiritual activities of humanity," he says in the introduction, "to which every age, often every generation, has contributed with their own spiritual worlds, their desires, hopes and struggles. And this picture is still not complete. It awaits the work of new millennia. This picture has an ineffable effect. The infinite power that keeps the world of spirits in eternal action gradually lifts frail and feeble man always higher and higher through a wonderful process, the great process of life, and during his slow progress man is made to achieve the aims set for him, so that progressing within the limits of finiteness he should take eternity into his possession. So religion is eternal progress, man's approaching of God. It is not a conglomerate brought about by chance, but divine education, which teaches man through an unceasing chain of revelations until he attains perfection in the Kingdom of God founded by Jesus. What a grand road this is! We can hardly look it over even though our perspective of world history is so narrow. When man entered history he already had fully developed language, ready concepts, social organisation, customs, traditions. He also had religion. But what struggle he had had to fight for these in the dark, unfathomable world of prehistoric age, for the flickering flame of the candle of history sheds light only on a lapse of seven thousand years, even though man has struggled and suffered on earth for three hundred thousand years."<sup>52</sup>

The work, promising and monumental even in its fragments, starts by discussing the religions of non-civilised peoples. Then it presents the religions of the Turanian peoples, dealing in special detail with the early religion of Hungarians. Bartók was also very much interested in the Chinese, mostly in the ethics of Taoism. That is followed by the Aryan religions of the Vedas, Zoroaster, and the Zend-Avesta. Then come the two great systems of Brahmanism and Buddhism. Towards the end of his life he completely rewrote the religion of the Greeks, but could never arrive at the Germans. He did, however, start elaborating the religions of Semitic peoples. He worked out the religions of Egyptians and Babylonians in detail, and made intensive preparations to write the history of the religion of Israel, but he did not have time to do so. Finally the culmination of the whole work was to be the historical development of the religion of Jesus as well as the philosophy of this development. The manuscripts show that he wanted to discuss the essence of Christianity through a longitudinal section of its historical progress like Harnack did in his book *Das Wesen des Christentums* (*The Essence of Christianity*).<sup>53</sup>

His works of educational character, besides the aforementioned essay on teaching the history of religion as the school subject of religion, are elementary school textbooks, in which he expounded his own theology with strict consistency on a most elementary level, but because of his endowments not in a way appreciable by children. Here belongs his *Konfirmációi Káté* (*Catechism for Confirmation*),<sup>54</sup> too, and his study entitled *Theológiai tudomány és lelképásztorképzés* (*Theological Scholarship and the Training of Ministers*),<sup>55</sup> in which he defined his ideals of theological scholarship, the work of a minister, and the relationship of these two, that developed in him during his life.

He also published a monograph in church history: a biography of bishop Samuel Bodola,<sup>56</sup> in the series *Nagy papok életrajza* (*Biographies of Great Pastors*). It is an attractive work of equally high quality in respects of the portrayal of the character, the presentation of his clerical and literary activities, and picturing the period.

During his episcopate he wrote two works, one on Church law and one on politics, in which he drew up programmes for his age. In the former entitled *A református egyházak presbiteriális szervezete* (*The Presbyterian Organisation of the Reformed Churches*)<sup>57</sup> he first described the different types and historical antecedents of Presbyterian Church organisation, then he gave a defence of the specific attributes of the constitution of Transylvanian Reformed Church.

<sup>52</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 28

<sup>53</sup> HARNACK, A.: *Das Wesen des Christentums* Vorlesungen ... an der Universität Berlin gehalten. 1901, V-189. p.

<sup>54</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR-TÁRKÁNYI GY.: *Konfirmációs Káté református növendékek számára* (*Catechism for Confirmation of Reformed Church Pupils*) Kolozsvár, Gámán Nyomda, 1909, 70 p.

<sup>55</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *Theológiai tudomány és lelképásztör képzés* (*Theological Scholarship and the Training of Ministers*) Kolozsvár, Gombos Nyomda 1907. 105 p.

<sup>56</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: Bodola Sámuel erdélyi püspök, in: *Nagy papok életrajza* (Sámuel Bodola a Transylvanian Bishop, in: *Biographies of Great Pastors*) Budapest, Magyar Protestáns Egylet, Protestáns Theológiai Könyvtár, Vol. IV/9, pp. 257-298.

<sup>57</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *A református egyházak presbiteriális szervezete* (*The Presbyterian Organization of the Reformed Churches*) Kolozsvár, Gámán Nyomda, 1904, XII+189 p.

In the other work: *Vallás és élet, egyház és állam (Religion and Life, Church and State)*<sup>58</sup> he argued on a philosophical basis for the reason of the existence of religion as a power moving the whole world. According to him religion, as the idea of *perfection*, a standard of evaluation, works non-eliminably and unconquerably in the life of human spirit. It has its foundation in the *a priori* structure of intelligence, and so its necessary character is indisputable. Religion is necessarily developing all the time. Its highest level is the religion of love realised in Christ, constituting the final basis of all morality and society. He made a sharp distinction between this religion, and the Church as an organisation. The Church is merely a society of professional significance. But its value and content, however, are given by the intimacy and liveliness of religious life. But if the Church only has significance as an instrument, like all societies do, and acquires its value from religion, then it follows from this that the state, which is nothing else than society having become dominant with the aim of implementing its ethical goals by the compulsion of law, ought to protect the rights of the Church fully by assuring the free exercise of religion. On the other hand, it extends its sovereignty over the Church inasmuch as it cannot let the Church as an institution of power serve any purposes that fall outside the interests and will of the state. The state and the Church as ethical agents are of the same value, but from the point of view of legal power the state is definitely above the Church. This power surplus means that it is the state's duty to protect and support the Church because of its inestimable ethical and cultural services.

György Bartók senior the preacher talked about himself only in one passage of his hand-written sermons: "I have been a pastor for three decades and I have always searched for the truth on the pulpit, but I have always been very careful not to discuss from the pulpit questions that belong to the university department. The pulpit is not a place for theology, but a place for religion, ... we must not preach the dogmas of the Church, but Christ, ... whose words will never pass away. On the pulpit we are neither liberals nor orthodox, but all of us are on a mission for Christ."<sup>59</sup> The essence of his preaching was that one had to grasp eternity and through one's life take it into the world as its absolute value. And that is only possible by the implementation of the ethical law of which the incarnation is Christ. The concluding words of a sermon must always be: *imitatio Christi*. But nowhere did he profess the *unio mystica cum Christo*. Hence the Christ he preached was an ideal image attracting from a distance, not the Saviour closer to us than we are to ourselves.

He gave relatively few original sermons. According to the customs of his age he would rather prepare adaptations, mainly of sermons by Schwarz, Schweizer, Révillet, Coquerel, and most of all Hausrat, with fine penmanship and intelligence, often creating a better version than the original, and thereby actually enriching Hungarian literature.

When you review the imposing life-work of György Bartók senior, it is impossible not to think of the rocky walls of the Transylvanian passes, the bare massiveness of which radiate such power that going through them you are afraid of being crushed, and while you survey their awe-inspiring size you feel lifted in wonder on the wings of your soul towards the eternal heights of heaven. How Bartók's spirit was filled with formidable critical power, relentless scientific rigour, fastness reaching down to the invisible foundations of visible being! His style was cool, devoid of empty ornaments, clear in a really puritan way. In his fervent search for *what is good in itself*, in his mortally earnest ethical commitment to following the ideal of Christ, with mighty strength he carried with him the school of those he felt were placed in his care, towards eternity. He lacked the central visual power, certainty and fervour of faith that focuses on the personality of Christ *the Saviour*, still he followed his ideal with such ethical purity and earnestness as can only have been the personal work in him of Christ, whose eternal truths and life giving powers this great critical spirit presented ever more clearly.

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The prehistory of neo-Kantian theology in Hungary after György Bartók senior lead through a transitional period of the so-called *borderline theology*<sup>60</sup> to value theology which constitutes the main phase of this

<sup>58</sup> BARTÓK, GY. SENIOR: *Vallás és élet, egyház és állam (Religion and Life, Church and State)* Kolozsvár. Ellenzéknyomda. 1904. 83 p.

<sup>59</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A Tháborhegy ormán, beszédek, cikkek, előadások (On the Peak of Mount Thabor, Speeches Articles, Lectures)*. The edition of the author, Kolozsvár, Minerva Nyomda, 1928, p. 41.

<sup>60</sup> KONCZ, S.: *Hit és vallás. A magyar református vallástudományi teológia kibontakozása és hanyatlása (Faith and Religion. The Development and Decay of the Hungarian Reformed Theology of the Science of Religion)* Debrecen, Csuka László könyvnyomdája, 1942, 103 p.

history. The chief representatives of borderline theology were Albert Molnár, a professor of theology at Kolozsvár University, and Károly Nagy, a Transylvanian bishop. They are called borderline theologians because it was characteristic of them that after consciously avowing themselves to be rooted in liberalism, they became disappointed with its world-view, and turned towards the trend of constructive theology. That is how from being the representatives of *the inherited spirit of liberalism* they became the forerunners of a *theology of constructive nature*.

## **ALBERT MOLNÁR (1849—1901)**

Albert Molnár's professorship of practical theology at the Theological Academy in Kolozsvár in the years from 1895 meant inestimable progress, because he was the first theoretician to be able, as a result of his lively and really practical activities, to overcome the basic deficiency of liberal theology, i.e. a false unity of religion and theology, according to which that trend preached theology instead of life in Christ. At the same time this excellent theologian announced the great requirement of *developing Church consciousness*. He could not contribute to his professional discipline with systematic works because he was carried away by death when he was preparing his *Homiletics*<sup>61</sup> for publishing. But his essays and articles published in *Erdélyi Protestáns Lap* (*The Transylvanian Protestant Paper*) which was founded by himself, show him to have been an open minded, spiritually modern, practical theologian with the ability of fertilising other minds. The new principles in his studies with titles like *Védekezzünk* (*Let's Defend Ourselves*), *Egyházi életünk fejlesztésének eszközei* (*Means for Building our Church Life*), *Egyháztársadalmi munka* (*Social Work in the Church*), etc.,<sup>62</sup> demanded Reformed Church consciousness, and placed the congregational principle in the focus of the work of pastors. In this spirit he urged the organising of diaspora pastorates and municipal parochial circles, and the establishing of press organs for the awakening of Church consciousness. He emphasised the importance of organising charity work in the parish, holding services for children, and the youth as well as the whole congregation taking part in Church activities.

His Christian theological attitude is especially conspicuous in his book called *Egyházi beszédek, orációk, és imák* (*Sermons, Orations and Prayers*)<sup>63</sup> published after his death by Károly Nagy in 1907. Its thirty-five speeches of different lengths are works of art by a prophetic personality who wrote and preached on the highest artistic level of his age. He was our first really original preacher, even able to make thoughts taken from others his very own. No influence coming from the outside could conquer him because he melted every influence into himself. His enormous knowledge provided material for his visionary creativity of which he made use in preaching the Gospel. He had no forerunners or masters in our literature, and he made outdated all the different trends of preaching that had prevailed up to him. He himself was to become an inspirer and a master for the new constructive preaching style that would start with László Ravasz.

The abstract idealism of theological liberalism could be dressed up into attractive forms and made alive only by his powerful preaching blessed with artistic descriptive strength. Each sermon of his offered realisation in vision, building in enjoyment, teaching in inspiration. He was not proclaiming the central truths of Christian life; the ideas of predestination, redemption, or rebirth were only alive and active in the depths of his thought. He was a herald of the world-sanctifying power of the mentality of Jesus, giving us a vision of what this world afflicted with sin, suffering, and death should be like imbued with Christ's spirit. All of those were to become a *dark background* merely, when the blessed and happy reality of the Gospel started to shine.

<sup>61</sup> MOLNÁR, A.: *Homiletika* in: MAKKAJ S.: *Az erdélyi református egyházi irodalom 1850-től napjainkig* (Homiletics, in: Makkai, S.: *Transylvanian Reformed Ecclesiastic Literature from 1850 to Our Days*) Kolozsvár, Minerva Nyomda, 1925, 59 p.

<sup>62</sup> MOLNÁR, A.: *Védekezzünk* (Let us Defend Ourselves) *Erdélyi Protestáns Lap*, 1898, Vol. I, No. 48, pp. 403-404, No. 49, pp. 411-413, No. 50, pp. 419-421, No. 51, 427-428, No. 52, pp. 437-38, No. 53, pp. 445-446, 1899, Vol. II, No. I, pp. 2-3, No. 3, pp. 19-20, No. 4, pp. 27-28, No. 5, pp. 35-36, no. 6, pp. 44-45.

*Egyházi életünk fejlesztésének eszközei*, 1900, Vol. III, No. 24, pp. 222-225, No. 25, pp. 231-234, No. 26, pp. 239-242.

*Egyháztársadalmi munka* (Social Work in the Church) 1900, Vol. III, No. 46, pp. 416-418, No. 47, pp. 422-424, No. 48, pp. 430-432, No. 51, P. 461.

<sup>63</sup> MOLNÁR, A.: *Egyházi beszédek, orációk és imák* (Sermons, Orations and Prayers) edited by K. Nagy, Budapest, Kókai Nyomda, 1907, XV-166 p.

By way of appreciating Albert Molnár, a single sentence should suffice that Károly Nagy wrote to commemorate him: "He always made us proud of our heavenly calling and thus made the fastness of our aspirations grow."<sup>64</sup>

## KÁROLY NAGY (1868—1926)

His life-work made him a representative of the transitional period which was characterised by the two theological trends pressing against each other in the life of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. One was the *evangelical* trend imported from Budapest and lead by Béla Kenessey, dean of the Theological Academy and later a bishop, the other was the trend claiming *the inherited spirit of theological liberalism*, headed by Károly Nagy, a professor of theology then a bishop, which preserved its priority over the imported trend all along.

Károly Nagy was an intellectual, critical and ethical personality, a champion of modern theism defending it with his sharp dialectics. He was a follower of the Kant-Schleiermacher-Schweizer school of religious thought as mediated to him by Ödön Kovács. His activities were also inspired by Lang. The heritage of ethical idealism and the influence of modern practicality meant to him insistence on the ethical aspect and human ideal of Christianity, while at the same time pointing out the concrete missionary tasks in the Church and the nation. His critical analysis was so powerful that when he reviewed ideas that were orthodox, pietistic, Darwinian, eudaemonistic, pessimistic, or catholic, he not only picked them to pieces, but very often reduced them to nothing as well. He was not only ready to analyse what was lifeless but also had the courage to destroy what was showing off in false splendour. He proved however that he had the ability of synthesising, whenever the truth and what was enduring had to be emphasised.

The evidence of his ability of synthesis was exhibited by his Calvin interpretations being of the most enduring value among his works. He translated the first edition of Calvin's *Institutio* into Hungarian, and wrote a book called *Kálvin theológiája (The Theology of Calvin)*.<sup>65</sup> It was in his essay with the title *Kálvin mint dogmatikus és etikus (Calvin the Dogmatist and Ethicist)*<sup>66</sup> that he rose to the highest level of theological scholarship. He was a master of characterising ages, tendencies, and people. Examples of this are his study entitled *Emlékezés Molnár Albertre (Remembering Albert Molnár)*<sup>67</sup> and his memorial speech *Losonci B. Bánffy Dezső emlékezete (Memorials of Dezső Bánffy, Baron of Losonc)*.<sup>68</sup> His salutary and formal orations like *Tudomány és élet (Scholarship and Life)*,<sup>69</sup> *A vallás és az egyház jövője (The Future of the Church and Religion)*,<sup>70</sup> etc., reveal his progress from the critical trend towards the positive constructive trend, as well as his prophetic power of seeing the secrets of history and of enabling people to see problems, catastrophes, and what ought to be done.

Károly Nagy the preacher was a master of living speech. He put down and published only very few of his speeches, of which several belong among the masterpieces of Hungarian Gospel preaching, especially his *Bartók György püspök felett tartott emlékbeszéd (Memorial Speech in Bishop György Bartók's Honour)*.<sup>71</sup> The keynote of his passionate, high-soaring sermons of sharp dialectic and convincing power was that God,

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<sup>64</sup> NAGY, K.: *Bevezetés* (Introduction) in: Molnár, A.: op. cit. pp. VII-XV.

<sup>65</sup> KÁLVIN, J.: *Institutio religionis christianae, (A keresztyén vallás alapvonalai)* Transl. Nagy, K., intr. Eröss L., Bartók, Gy., Budapest, Magyarországi Protestáns Irodalmi Társaság, 1903, XXXVI-455 p.

<sup>66</sup> NAGY, K.: *Kálvin mint dogmatikus és etikus* (Calvin, the Dogmatist and Ethicist), in: Szóts., F.: (ed.) *Emlékezés Kálvinról* (Commemoration of Calvin) Budapest, Magyar Protestáns Irodalmi Társaság Kiadványai, Hornyánszky Könyvnyomdája 1909, pp. 113-194.

<sup>67</sup> See Ref. No. 63, pp. 113-194.

<sup>68</sup> NAGY, K.: *Losonci báró Bánffy Dezső emlékezete* (Memorials of Dezső Bánffy, Baron of Losonc) *Az Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület Theológiai Fakultásának Értesítője* 1911-1912. pp. 1-18.

<sup>69</sup> NAGY, K.: *Tudomány és élet* (Scholarship and Life) In: *Az Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület Theológiai Fakultásának Értesítője*, 1908-1909, pp. 39-47.

<sup>70</sup> NAGY, K.: *A vallás és egyház jövője* (The Future of the Church and Religion) *Az Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület Theológiai Fakultásának Értesítője* 1910-1911, pp. 5-13.

<sup>71</sup> NAGY, K.: *Memorial Speech in Bishop György Bartók's Honour*, 1908.

according to the archetype revealed in Jesus Christ and especially in Jesus' character, intended to teach individuals and the nation not happiness on earth but moral perfection, and that the secret of each event and the standard of the practice of our lives were revealed in that truth. All Nagy's utterances and actions were meant to urge the Church which was built upon external supports to transform into a spiritual Church. And that is precisely why his spirit became the connecting link with the new trend.

Károly Nagy's soul was akin to fire: it was a bush burning in saint fervour in whose flames God descended to earth to give life. He was like a campfire blazing from afar that was kindled hot and bright by the blowing of soft and kind heavenly voices, but which could never be put out by even a world tempest. He was the embers glowing for ever on the consecrated altars of masterfully built systems of thought. Hegel's bold objective idealism and Calvin's clear and unified system eased him, satisfied him and heated up his demanding and knowing mind. He was lightning striking from earth to the heavens, fulfilling what was missing from Christ's sufferings by burning in Christ's sacrifice, and moving to eternity with his preaching the Gospel orchestrated to the tone of thunder.

## PART TWO:

# VALUE THEOLOGY AND ITS HUNGARIAN REPRESENTATIVES

### (HISTORY)

Value theology, rooted in neo-Kantian critical idealism, was born from the recognition that the theology built upon the pietism of personal practical Christianity was just as much one-sided as the scientific theology which was only relying on ideological foundations. The two had to be integrated in a higher unity in which personal and practical Christian life was interconnected with ideological consciousness, i.e. religion with the scientific outlook, in such a way that the validity of either was not impaired by the other.

The two opposing trends of the preceding period necessarily produced the emergence of a new trend that united them in itself, surpassing them at the same time. The trend of *evangelical Christianity* emphasised personal practical Christian life and living faith but unfortunately lacked reliable, modern, and scientific ideological foundations. The *inherited spirit of liberalism*, on the other hand, possessed ideological foundations in the forms of Kantian criticism and philosophical conceptualisation, but it undeniably lacked the intimacy and warmth of personal practical Christian life, as well as the power to build. The root of the problem was in there being negative tendencies within the positive ideals of both trends. The personal Christianity of the evangelical trend was hostile to culture and science, while the scientificity of liberalism was speculative, hence often unrealistic or alienated. A deeper and more realistic understanding of both religion and science was much needed in order to settle their relationship without any mutual compromises.

In this situation of the history of theology the new trend that was so much needed was born from the application of the principles of *Kantian-Böhmian philosophy* for the building of a new theological system, which was later extended to incorporate the results of the *Kant-Schleiermacher-Ritschl-Pfleiderer-Baumgarten-Niebergall line of the history of theology*.

Kant's most significant achievement, as we know, was his demonstrating that in understanding, the subject that understands performs much more important tasks than it was attributed to him by psychological considerations (e.g. by those of Locke). The human spirit not only receives knowledge into himself, but he moulds it as well. He moulds bare sense data into his *forms of intuition*: the masses of meaningless impressions are given meaning and sense by him. These pre-formed *suitabilities* of the understanding subject were called the *a priori* elements of understanding by Kant, who, with this doctrine, changed the basic character of philosophical research. No longer was the psychological production of knowledge the main problem. Its place was taken by the question of what the make-up the understanding spirit is, who as a matter of fact has certain definite *a priori* knowledge. Hence the discovery of these *a priori* elements became the specific aim of philosophy. Metaphysics was no longer engaged in searching for the *topos hyperouranios* with mere speculative methods, but it had become a system of positive doctrines by having found the key to those final realities which prove their being actual positive parts of our understanding by being indispensably necessary in the generation of knowledge. That is the reason why Kant said they were the powers that made understanding possible at all.

These *a priori* elements had already been described by Kant in his work treating sensory experiencing. It is the mind who weaves the nets of space and time around the data of sensory experiences, to give them form. Space and time are contributions by the subject to those images. Similarly, the net of causal relationships between the images is a contribution by the subject, too. Or the multiplicity of meanings placed around the central ideas of the essential. Also the order and beauty of the ordered world of those images are subjective contributions, introduced by the mind into its world with the three ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty.

This subjectivism was a necessary consequence of Kant's standpoint, according to which what we, humans, can claim to be our own are the subjectively created images, which the subject will also arrange into a meaningful concept of the world. In the centre of that world is the self with its creative power. So the meaning of the turn in philosophy that Kant illustrated with the metaphor about Copernicus: the Copernican turn, was this: the understanding mind creates his world in *his own* images himself. That does not mean that

there is no *external world*. Even a most exaggerating sophist could only deny the existence of the external world when he wanted *ad absurdum* to reduce to himself the false consequence of his confused antecedents. The first tree he 'caught sight of ought to have convinced him of the reality of an external object:

*S ha kételkednél, hogy mindez való,*

*Lépen bők egy rúd, feltaszít a ló:*

*(And if you doubted that all this is real,*

*A pole will jab you in the ribs, a horse will knock you over)<sup>72</sup>*

which are striking enough proofs. But the question of subjectivist theory of knowledge is not whether external objects exist or not, but whether we can know reality, and if we can, how we can know it at all. The answer was that the only way to know reality is by making images of it. These images are products by the subject, and that consideration is to make one understand that one can only take possession of an external object in the subjectively made images of it. And only one looking for something in the world *outside* of an image (i.e. one's own image) will attempt to inquire where *the external object* is. Notwithstanding his knowing as much as possible about it, it will always be an image, and he will never know more of the object than what its image includes.

## **A HUNGARIAN PHILOSOPHER: KÁROLY BÖHM (1846—1911)**

According to Károly Böhm, that was the undoubtedly true aspect of Kant's subjectivist standpoint, the elaboration of which for the theory of knowledge was to determine the direction of further research. But even Kant's thinking deviated from that basic direction just at the turning point: he did not take the last step. Kant never drew the conclusion that our world consisted of our images. He, too, left the problem of the mysterious *Ding an sich*, the thing in itself, unsolved, the unknown essence or unknowable core of a thing outside its image. Leaving things so, however, he himself opened the door for unrestricted fantasy which would push his rational creation into the background for decades. Schelling and his followers, instead of researching the positive facts of knowledge, were to build systems from empty fantasies about the *infinite perspectives* opening up out of the mysterious depths of the thing in itself. Kant's thoughts could hardly get disentangled from the magic spell of ecstatic romanticism even when, in the wake of the slogan "*get back to Kant!*", the speculative trends of shaken foundations turned for new fundamentals to the *Critiques* of more modest perspectives, but of firm foundations. Even neo-Kantian philosophers would rather try to conceal the contradictions of the Kantian system, than thoroughly re-examine its basic doctrines to be able to discover Kant's deviation, and to correct its confusing effects. That would have required the surpassing of Kant, but there was no other way of finishing and completing Kant's teachings.

That is the point where Károly Böhm's work linked up with Kant's philosophy. He picked up the thread where it had slipped out of Kant's hand, and Böhm's most important work entitled *Ember és világa (Man and his World)* was connected to that thread.

In connection with Kant's teachings the actual task of philosophy was 1./ to discover the *a priori* elements, which create our world image, in their interdependences, and in connection with that 2./ to discover to the last the principles that explain the emergence of this world image, and are subjective from the beginning to the end, in their logical (not chronological) order.

Böhm dedicated the first volume called *Dialektika (Dialectics)*<sup>73</sup> of his great work to these basic problems. It is in this book that he pointed out the factors establishing understanding, and put into the centre of explanation the thought that was the key to the understanding of man's image of the world.

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<sup>72</sup> ARANY, J.: Vojtina Ars Poétikája, (Vojtina's Ars Poetica) in: *Arany János Összes költeményei* 1964, p. 427.

<sup>73</sup> BÖHM, K.: *Az ember és világa Philosophiai kutatások I. rész, Dialektika, vagy alap philosophia* and his *World. Part I., Dialectics, or First Philosophy*) Budapest, Weismann, 1883, 282 p.



That thought Böhm identified with the idea of a permanent activity of the mind in which already Fichte had believed to find the essence of the self, but which Fichte could not turn to as good an account as it was worth because of some mistakes in his presuppositions. Böhm named that activity *projection* (or *proiectio*), the aim of which is to safeguard the essence of the self. The activity must be conceived of as the self-defence of the self against any stimulus that affects it by throwing the stimulus out, by which projection the self confronts the stimulus with itself, and so acknowledges it and becomes master of it. The non-conscious change in the nerves, which is the physiological effect of the stimulus, will be the *image*. And while this projection, i.e. image-making, takes place (of which empirical psychology is naturally only able to register the starting and finishing points), the mind is non-consciously projecting into the image all the features which give meaning and sense to the otherwise mere physiological debris, by condensing it into an integrated whole. It is during this process that the features of the image, or picture, get ordered in space and time, and the object, i.e. image, by this non-conscious but necessary projection acquires all its characteristics, which then the self will discover in it with amazement when it turns towards it consciously.

From the detection of this basic fact directly follows the proposition that creating our world and getting to know it are one and the same activity, i.e. the mind's function of creating the images is at the same time the condition of recognising those images. Hence understanding is nothing more than the conscious re-moulding of what the mind has created with non-conscious change, and understanding can only extend as far as the mind's ability to form images does, in conformity with its pre-created capabilities: that is the barrier limiting our understanding to its sensory basis, without compelling us to admit only material reality as reality. Each image formed according to the conditions of the activity of understanding *means* reality. And matter is an image just as well as spirit is: the self lives anywhere surrounded by its projections. The reason for our world being ordered and integrated is that it is an ordered creation of an integrated mind. We understand and recognise it as integrated and ordered because it is direct and specific self-experience, creation and projection of the human spirit, which is equal in each individual and identical with itself.

It must be emphasised once more that Böhm's philosophical standpoint would be completely misunderstood by anyone thinking that from the doctrines of projection and object-confrontation one could boldly (and of course illogically) conclude that Böhm was a solipsist and extreme subjectivist. Projection according to Böhm is a basic function of the mind by which the self does not at all give birth to the world out of itself, but by which it confronts it with itself, facing the image which has necessarily and unconsciously been made of the external world in itself. So the task of projection is the confrontation of the unconsciously made image. Without such confrontation no understanding whatever would be possible, because understanding precisely consists in the conscious re-moulding of the non-consciously created image. The non-consciously created image is my own, too, only it is not conscious. As soon is re-moulded by the function of the mind, it becomes conscious, and that is clearly the meaning of Böhm's statement, "The role of understanding in the life of the self is nothing else than acknowledging its own evolution."<sup>74</sup> The self as it were takes conscious possession of what it has already unconsciously had in itself as a result of the effect of the external world: "In the soul the whole world is already present," the Upanishads already said.<sup>75</sup> Involuntary creation and conscious re-moulding: these two are the indispensable phases of all understanding, but what we actually call understanding is only the conscious re-moulding of the projected image.

The character of projection and understanding so considered, it will be clear what Böhm says: "Understanding can not consist in anything else than the taking into my possession of what I myself am. Therefore understanding is the increase of my conscious power with its non-conscious content. I do not take anything from elsewhere but lift the content of my non-conscious ideality into being a motif of my conscious self, i.e. I grow *idealiter*."<sup>76</sup> So though it is true that what takes place is definitely getting consciousness to grow, because understanding is conscious evolution, still this conscious self-development, this evolution that can not be explained any further, is started in the subject by the effect of the external world, of which the mechanism of existence guarantees the independent reality of the object signalled by the image.

Not even a trace of solipsism can be found here: these thoughts are not metaphysical constructions probing into the origin or the essence of what exists, they are analyses belonging to the theory of meaning and the theory of knowledge, with the aim of explaining understanding. Böhm did not want to deduce existence, but to explain philosophical facts. And the sphere of the problems of philosophy only extends as

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<sup>74</sup> BÖHM, K.: *Az ember és világa. Philosophiai kutatások, 4. rész, A logikai érték tana.* (Man and his World, Part 4. The Doctrine of Logical Value) Kolozsvár, Stein-Kókay Nyomda, 1912, p. 195.

<sup>75</sup> BÖHM, K.: op. cit. p. 195.

<sup>76</sup> BÖHM, K.: *A megértés mint a megismerés központi mozzanata* (Understanding, as the Central Factor of Cognition) Ismeretelméleti töredék. (Székfoglaló értekezés.)

far as experience does, namely it can only be concerned with what offers itself to the mind, due to the mechanism of existence. Philosophy is not concerned with what is not demonstrable as existing. It must be self-evident to philosophy that what we can directly understand is the mind: the meanings of the mind are our world and we can not reach beyond them, and we need not, either, because everything that exists by the mind, and appears to us through the meanings of the mind. Our world is the world of mind, which surrounds understanding individuals as an infinite net of meanings.

It is claimed already in the first volume of *Az ember és világa (Man and His World)*<sup>77</sup> that meaning is the actual object of understanding, and the book sets the understanding of meaning as its objective. The fourth volume of the work<sup>78</sup> also adheres consistently to this entirely idealistic approach, when the author, — starting from the foundations laid down in the first volume, — attempts to give a thorough explanation of meaning, so that then he can move on to uncover the nature and essence of *logical self-value*. It turns out that meaning, i.e. *logos*, is the carrier of all self-value, and is true reality, which realises itself with the help of the mind. And when it realises itself, the mind is realised by it. And meaning is realised by understanding, which is the most specific activity of the self-evolving mind. The mind as *self-thesis*, the mind as self-unfolding power-centre, the mind as an infinite net of meanings — all these descriptions express the thought that the mind is unceasingly active and conscious reality.

The mind is everything in everything, we ourselves are mind, and the mind is the world, and the way to the understanding of the world leads through the understanding of the individual self. That proposition must be approached not from the point of view of metaphysics, but from that of the theory of knowledge. The mind here is not a metaphysical entity approachable by the forms of ontology, but the only reality, of which the life and existence are directly known to us. "What is there outside the mind?" That is a metaphysical question that philosophy is not obliged to answer. Neither can philosophy try to find the answer to the question "What is the world *in itself*?" We know the world through the mind, and the mind is known through the world. And that is enough for philosophy, unless it wants to vainly transgress its own limits. Each category, with the help of which we understand the world, is a function of the mind. For that reason knowledge generated with their help is not only universal and objective, but also the only possible knowledge. Only that knowledge is possible that has been generated by the categories: the functions of the mind. So the foundations of the possibility of knowledge are the categories interpreted as functions of the spirit. They have not been abstracted from experience, but experience is made possible precisely by them.

Since knowledge is the means of the mind's self-evolution, the *totality* of the mind is interested in the process of understanding: it is not only some of its functions that knowledge is due to. Knowledge is a process activating and shaking the whole of the self. It starts with coming to understand, the source of which is intuition that identifies objects by grasping and explaining meanings, and ends in the various forms of order-making, which are the results of the operation of reason.

The self-unfolding, self-realising mind is however not only the source of all knowledge, but of all values as well. Or more correctly: the self-realising mind is the only value, from which all other values arise. The mind getting fond of itself because of the infinite richness of its own content is true, good and beautiful. In other words, all three of logical value, moral value and aesthetic value are manifestations of the mind.

But not only these three types of self-value obtain their worth from the mind, the values of pleasure and utility also do so in the last analysis. The most useful pleasure is one helping the mind to sustain itself, and that which is noblest arises from the activities of the mind. The self-unfolding and realising mind is at the same time value-generating mind, too, and hence, it is certainly not the case that it is, as Bergson teaches, evolution that creates, it is the self-evolving mind. Every step of evolution takes us nearer to the final unfolding of value, and every degree of evolution is an increment in the value of the self. The meaning of self-value is observable to us when the mind understands, acts, creates, or takes delight in its creations with disinterested calmness.

For that reason 'is' and 'ought', i.e. fact and value, the real and the ideal, coincide in the mind. Only in our limited, confined world does the increase in value slowly, step by step, approach the ideal in the course of evolution. Through thinking the universal and self-valuable mind develops, the self becoming fully free will now obey only its own laws and act according to only its own essence. The more fully our conscious selves develop, the more fully we become free, that is the more exclusively we will be submitted only to the laws of the universal mind. This freedom therefore means indisputable enrichment and undeniable growth. The

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<sup>77</sup> BÖHM, K.: *Az ember és világa. Philosophiai kutatások 1. rész Dialektika, vagy alapphilosophia* (Man and his world. Philosophical Researches. Part 1. Dialectics or First Philosophy) Budapest, Weismann, 1883, XX-282 p.

<sup>78</sup> BÖHM, K.: *Az ember és világa. Philosophiai kutatások 4. rész A logikai érték tana.* (Man and his world. Philosophical Researches. Part 4. The Doctrine of Logical Value). Kolozsvár, Stein-Kókai Nyomda, 1912, XX 282 p.

freedom of consciousness means the consciousness of the mind's content. It means therefore that our selves get rid of the non-conscious, compulsory contents hiding in them, when thinking has taken conscious possession of this non-conscious content, by which it has made the consciousness of the self grow. All truth has this liberating power, although only truth has it. It is in this liberating power of truth that Böhm finds the cosmic value of truth. By truth the mind grows, and this growth at the same time means the growth of the world as well. Truth makes man and the world richer. Truth has world-value.

Károly Böhm's critical idealism and subjective system was easily applicable, in the phase of the history of theology we are discussing, to the formulation of the whole content of religious experience, which in this way could be inserted into a scientific system that covered and pervaded the whole of life. And this scientific system, not demanding any concessions from religion, ranked in that period as a truly blameless and modern scientific system deduced from experience. Its proposer rejected unreal metaphysical speculations, his thinking was based on the final empirical facts of consciousness. Böhm investigated the laws of the human mind, of the understanding and evaluating spirit itself, with the result that what religion *possesses emotionally* recurs for consciousness with scientific certainty. The final verdict of his philosophy was that the ultimate and only reality, as well as value, is the mind, the spirit, whose possessions are purity, truth, love, and freedom, — which was a response to the witnessing of the Gospel: *God is spirit, God is love, the truth will set you free!*<sup>79</sup>

Naturally Károly Böhm was not a theologian, and he could not have been the initiator of a new trend in theology. László Ravasz was the theologian to unite the modern systematic world-view of Böhm's philosophy with the reality of his own personal living faith. By assimilating and rethinking this philosophy, Ravasz showed the world the value-system of religion, which had made it and continued to make it a constructive force, a life shaping power, in the souls of the people of the age, and in all fields of contemporary culture.

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After the philosophical antecedents, let us look at the theological antecedents, too. When we briefly outline the already mentioned *Kant-Schleiermacher-Ritschl-Pfleiderer-Baumgarten-Niebergall* trend, we should not only like to describe the roots of value-theology in themselves, but also to attempt to point out their importance in the life of the new school, at least insofar as they can usually be found not only described, but evaluated, too, in the writings of László Ravasz, the leading figure of value theology. In the sections dealing separately with the works of the outstanding Hungarian theologians it will also be possible for us to have a look at their obvious influences. Thus we shall now turn to discussing the importance of the just mentioned foreign theologians from the point of view of the new school, with the help, wherever possible, of László Ravasz's writings.

In his *Homiletika (Homiletics)*<sup>80</sup> Ravasz gave a detailed appreciation of Kant and Schleiermacher from a theological point of view, and pointed out their connections in the history of ideas:

"No other occurrence is of as much importance in the history of Protestantism as *ethical idealism*, which flourished from the last decade of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th, through about two generations. Many perceive its significance in it essentially being a bridge that reached out from the Enlightenment to pietism, connecting rationalism with romanticism. Others see it only as having been a revival of the aesthetic elements of the spirit of antiquity on the basis of some evolutionary pantheism. Both views are rather superficial. Ethical idealism is, properly speaking, the expression and vindication of the essence of Protestantism in the world of modern thinking. It is the preservation of the religiousness of evangelical Protestantism in the world of thinking of modern times, by rediscovering and expressing the essence of religiousness with the help of just this modern philosophy, and by recognising its real value when it made it an indispensable part of its integrated world-view. When Kant destroyed the last resorts of old dogmatism by designating experience as the only source of knowledge, he cut the ground from under the feet of the supernatural metaphysics of old theology and wrecked supernaturalism, but at the same time he also provided brand new certainty, much firmer than the old certainty, by pointing out that the material of experience is shaped in conformity with the eternal and objective laws of the mechanism of human spirit, and therefore truth is not something outside us or something invented, but a living part of our spiritual being. In this way it was made possible for certainty to be in religious knowledge, too, which was individually as strong

<sup>79</sup> John, 4:24, I. John 4:16. John 8:32b

<sup>80</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A gyülekezeti igehirdetés elmélete. Homiletika.* (The Theory of Preaching the Gospel to the Congregation. Homiletics) Pápa, (Református Egyházi Könyvtár, 11.) pp. 141-152.

as the reformers required, and in scholarship as much justified as the truth of any other branch of science. Besides that, Kant emphasised the world-creating power of the understanding spirit, and designated it as the purpose of the universe to be ruled by the mind. And since the nature of the spirit is nobleness, the realisation of that nature is universal and unconditional good-will. The human soul, actually full of sensual and sluggish instincts, becomes glorious when it consciously bows and pays homage to the eternal laws of spirit, and devotes its life to their implementation.

"What thought is this, if not an expression of Calvin's doctrine in the language of philosophy? The freedom of the spirit, its absolute value, and the necessity of its self-realisation were proclaimed, therefore the foundations were laid for theology to be *possible*. It was however made not only possible, but *necessary* as well. For as long as we do not take this standpoint, we can only choose between two views: either we believe in a supernatural world by accepting the words of authority, or we say that man is just a transitional phenomenon and the product of formidable natural powers, and we take his destiny to be adapting his life-instincts to nature..."

"These two views either completely exclude each other, or admit of some arbitrarily enforced connection to be made between them, therefore neither adopting one of them, nor establishing some compromise between them is at all necessitated in any way. Idealism, however, conceives of nature as self-realisation of the spirit having become material, and regards man as the medium of absolute values who implements them. The foundations had therefore been laid for Schleiermacher's genius to express himself and to yield fruit, because his significance precisely consisted in his presenting theology with German idealism, and presenting German ideology with theology. He grew into the speculative world of German idealism from pietistic grounds, the congregation of brothers at Herrnhut. From pietism he absorbed all that was good in it: deep religiousness, intimate faith based on personal experiences, and those precious *imponderabilia* of the emotions that have no substitutes and which are the bases of all theology, though they can not be acquired on purpose, because "faith is a gift of God". And he was also endowed with exceptional sharpness of thinking, so that he was just as much a master of analysis as of systematisation. His intellectual honesty and logical scrupulosity never permitted him to play about with words, or to compromise on his principles because of being frightened by the consequences of his thoughts.

"Just as in philosophy Kant performed the job of analysing human reason, in theology Schleiermacher performed the job of analysing religion. The result was that dogma and religion are two different things, because the essence of religion is the feeling of dependence of finite beings on the infinite being, while dogma is a conceptualised expression of this emotional attitude. This pious emotional attitude as the essence of religion was conceived of by Schleiermacher in his first period rather as an individual experience, of which a special feature was its exaggerated anti-historical individualism. Later, however, some more intense philosophical studies led him to the conclusion that the individual is a grade in the universal evolution of spirit, and as such he can not be separated from the great whole, of which the life is described by history. Therefore the historic faith of a community, as experienced and innerly lived through by the single individual, is religion, and its conceptualised expression is theology. Thereby Schleiermacher rediscovered and precisely defined the essence of religion, made of religion itself a question of life, and thereby completely made it a question of practice, at the same time ensuring that its conceptualised expression, i.e. theology, had the status of science."<sup>81</sup>

Following the developments of the historical-theological trend that was preparing the ground for value theology, we shall now turn to discussing Albert Ritschl, whose theology, as we shall see, was at several points more closely, though not consciously, connected to Schleiermacher's basic thoughts than anyone else's in the period between Schleiermacher and himself.

According to Ritschl, what lifts Christianity above all other religions is that Christianity gives a solution to the question that remains unsolved in the other religions. Namely it gives a solution to the question of how it is possible for man to preserve and protect his inclination for God's life, and the value of his spiritual life, within the limitations of this world, of which he is part, and about which he knows by his spirituality that his vocation is to rule over it. That is exactly the meaning of Christian apology of modern times: to demonstrate the importance of Christianity in safeguarding human life ideals, to demonstrate that the Christian thought of God is the necessary and ideal link between world view, which is entirely limited by its dependence on its knowledge of nature, and necessary ethical self-judgement. And in this sense it fills the gap that is necessarily left open by philosophy.

God, the God of love, the one forgiving sin, eliminating our natural limitations, and admitting us into his eternal kingdom, can be known in the form of a judgement. This judgement is completely different from all

<sup>81</sup> RAVASZ. L.: op. cit. pp. 141-143.

judgements made in science: it appears in the form of a value-judgement. A value-judgement is a judgement by which some definite existence is assigned to the value of a definite object of human experience in respect of its importance to man. The judgement, to be sure, would not be made without respect to this practical importance. Now the object of human experience that possesses the value of godship to man, and that can without any misgivings be claimed *to be God* in a definite sense, is the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth, who is for us the only chance and possibility of getting to know the God of love.

Inasmuch as Jesus is the medium of grace and rule over the genuine world, he is the archetype of man as the subject of God's kingdom, and truly fulfilled his vocation by revealing God, who is love himself. Inasmuch as he practices his vocation with us, and inasmuch as we experience and assess his historical existence as the act of revealing God, we shall know that Jesus is God himself. It is not by commands or by direct divine authority, but as a prophet: by his morally binding words, and as a priest: by his readiness to serve, that he exercises the *mundus regium* as God, and asserts his divine sovereignty over us. He realises the purpose of his own self, which is the same as the purpose of God's own self, and at the same time the same as the purposes of our own selves.

When we recognise and declare these connections, we reach a conclusive value judgement, which is the foundation of Christian theology as such: We can not justify ourselves, we can not enter the kingdom of God, that is we can not fulfil the purpose of our lives, except through Jesus in his Church, and it is in this sense that God is ours in Christ.

Ritschl undoubtedly appeared to continue Schleiermacher's work, especially in the fight for the autonomy of religion in general, and Christianity in particular. In spite of this struggle for autonomy, both of them were in close contact with the world and with science. Ritschl followed in Schleiermacher's footsteps wherever the latter laid emphasis on the ethical characteristics of Christianity, found important points of connection with philosophical ethics, and pointed out the absolute dependence of human activities on God, or the importance of fellowship to Christian faith, or the responsibility of Christians for the world. For both of them theology was an autonomous function of the Church, and its main tasks were to explain the essence of the Church and to direct its work, on the basis of complete freedom and rigorously methodical thinking, not lagging behind any other science in these respects. The theologies of both of them have Christ in their centres, and both have their unity exposed to the polar tensions, so characteristic of Christian faith, of *objectivity and subjectivity*, obedience to the Church and personal responsibility, homage to historicity and historical criticism, placing the authority of faith on firm foundations, and constantly renewing the calling for world-mission.

In his *Homiletics* László Ravasz appreciated Ritschl as follows, "With his doctrine of religious value judgements free from any metaphysics, he laid foundations for the practical spirit of Christianity, and in this way achieved that even any negative results of theological research might not undermine faith, but should strengthen it. He again held Christianity to be a religion of redemption in the strict sense of the word, and vouched for the divine value of the role of Jesus as the Redeemer... A whole phalanx of scholars rose around him, explicating their master's fruitful thoughts, and correcting his mistakes, with the result that the present period can be characterised as a great scientific renaissance, in which the modern trend is fully victorious, while it has become definitely less radical. The whole of modern theology has one task: to acquire an understanding of the truths of the Gospel, so that they might become internal forces of our lives. The means of understanding is completely free, critical, scientific scholarship, and the means of acquiring them is personal exposure to them. And these two are no longer contrary things, but two steps in the same procession, which is the triumphal procession of Jesus in the 20th century."<sup>82</sup>

Ritschl's influence was naturally not restricted to the rise of Ritschlianism and to the work of his followers, it was also manifest in its effect on other theological trends, in attracting their attention and in challenging them. Nearest to Ritschlianism was *mediating theology* (*Vermittlungstheologie*), so near regarding its central intentions, it even lost its reason of existence in systematic theology, and merged with the new trend, proving that with its mediation it was conducting rear-guard action to escape for the main troops, and was not the attacking party of a progressing army.

Lutheran confessional theology could not return to a former state after Ritschl, it was compelled to reformulate its programme: the old truths had to be taught in new ways!<sup>83</sup>

From among the theologians of the trend of *free theology* (*freie Theologie*), Lipsius worked out a system tending towards Ritschlianism, while *Otto Pflieger*'s intention was to firmly preserve the original contents of free theology. He was active in the fields of both historical and systematic theology. Very early he was

<sup>82</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. pp. 162-163.

<sup>83</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 163.

already much influenced by Baur, and cultivated the heritage of speculative idealism by struggling against Ritschlianism. For him the idea of unity was above all: the unity of the human spirit in itself, and its unity with God on the basis of redemption. He himself was "sure that the Spirit, who talks to us from the relics of the Church in several languages, is not an alien one, but essentially the same as the one whose voice we can hear in our own hearts, and whose eternal truths are proven by and contained in the *anima naturaliter Christiana*."<sup>84</sup>

Pfleiderer was linked up with Schleiermacher and Biedermann at this point. What he took over from them, however, was not a tendency to mere speculation and system building, but rather some broadness of views, some interconnections with philosophy, and the explanation of dogmas and articles of faith by starting out from the speculative philosophy of religion. His own achievements, besides his masterful formulations, were viewing ideas in their historical settings, appreciating progress very highly, giving a positive presentation of the Hellenization of Christianity, filling the philosophy of religion with history, drawing the study of other religions into his field of research, and establishing connections between British and German theology. On the whole his work was not so much the continuation of the old *freie Theologie*, as its finale. At the same time it was also definitely pointing ahead of its time, preparing the way for the new era after Ritschlianism.

László Ravasz, looking back to and reviewing his own period of value theology in his autobiography,<sup>85</sup> mentions Pfleiderer among those who gave him inspiration, obviously referring to him when he says, "...the results of this theology fell in line with the teachings of ethical idealism," and "he finds the question of criterion in the human spirit itself, believes that consciousness rediscovers its own innermost occurrences in religious experience, and calls this subjective certainty the witnessing of the Holy Spirit in the Heart."<sup>86</sup>

The Kantian-Böhmian line of philosophy, and the Kant-Böhm-Schleiermacher-Ritschl-Pfleiderer line of theology, as we have explored them, clearly made it possible for a theologian to build a system of theology that was "scientific only if it was built with a strictly critical method, on universal philosophical bases".<sup>87</sup> In addition, however, true theology is always up-to-date, too. It was in the name of being up-to-date that value-theology admitted *the type of modern positivism professed by Baumgarten and Niebergall*. That is what László Ravasz referred to in his thesis as university professor:

"An educated person in the 20th century no longer feeds his soul with naive metaphysics, thousand year old dogmas, or pious customs. The man of modern times wants the faith of his heart to suit his brains, too. As long as religion makes the brain quarrel with the heart, it can not be a source of relief, comfort, and divine peace, but it will rather remain demoniac superstition. Thus instead of partial truths the man of our times longs for totality, for life. But he also longs for peace-giving quietness. The nightmarish whirligig, in which nervous and pushy modern man lives, pours down such ineffable quantity of new impressions on his soul, that he grows restless and Searches for certainty."<sup>88</sup>

"The age is looking for its own Christianity... the kind of Christianity that is not at odds with educated thinking, and still gives peace and comfort to the heart, strength and youthful vigour to the will. Christianity must be made personal, otherwise it shall soon become a historic relic. That is the programme of the latest practical trend of which the leader was Otto Baumgarten, a professor in Kiel, from whom however the Field-marshal's baton has been taken over by *Friedrich Niebergall*, a young professor in Heidelberg, the first philosopher since Schleiermacher who is engaged in practical theology. They have a numerous group of followers who work enthusiastically for the future. Among their chiefs of staff are Paul Drews, Johann Weiss, Bousset, Kirmss, Smend, Schian, Teichmann, etc. They are the authors of the largest periodical of practical theology, as well as of the publishing house called *Praktisch Theologische Handbibliothek*, and own the publishing-rights of a series of collections of modern sermons."<sup>89</sup>

"The whole trend is characterised by modern positivism. For though modern theology won a glorious victory after a struggle of almost a hundred years, it turned out to have been a Pyrrhic victory. Modern thinking, having become mere criticism, in the heat of destruction became forgetful of the task of building. It

<sup>84</sup> PFLEIDERER, O.: *Grundriss der Christlichen Glaubens und Sittenlehre*, Berlin, Reimer, 1880, VIII + 371 p.p. VII.

<sup>85</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Magamról* (On myself) Debrecen. Nagy Nyomda. 1944. 43 p.

<sup>86</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. pp. 31-32.

<sup>87</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A gyülekezeti igehirdetés elmélete. Homiletika*. (The Theory of Preaching the Gospel to the Congregation. Homiletics) Pápa. (Református Egyházi Könyvtár 11) 1915. p. VI.

<sup>88</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Bevezetés a gyakorlati teológiába* (An Introduction to Practical Theology) Kolozsvár, Ellenzék-nyomda, 1907, 37 p.

<sup>89</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. pp. 37-38.

obeyed only half of the truth of Jesus' words, 'I will destroy this man-made temple,' but did not observe the second part, 'in three days I will build another.' This new school... has come to claim that the critical method of modern theology is just a means to rid the fresh water of religion from the duckweed of traditions over it, so that the thirsty of this world can quench their thirst with this water. It is not the aim of modern theology to build speculative constructions, to answer doctrinaire questions, or to refute false old teachings. Its aim is to rediscover Christianity as the sanctifying life principle that gives re-birth, to verify salvation in Jesus as the heavenly value."

"Only a modern theologian can preach the Gospel to the man of our times, because he preaches faith and life experiences, while the orthodoxy preaches dogmas and doctrines. Modern theology is prophetic, old theology is legal,' says Schian. 'We are able to do what our opponents attempt in vain. We know how the matter is with the heart of modern man, because we sympathise with him, share his worries, experience his problems. A sermon is not only for those who walk on stilts of the 17th century, it is also for the man of today who is also a member of the congregation,' (Schian). 'Not proclaiming the doctrines of the Church, but helping those who want to get in personal contact with Christianity,' (Neumann). 'Not concepts of bible-education, but preaching the Christian experience of life,' (Baumgarten). 'Emphasising the Church not as an objective organisation, but as power which lives in the hearts of persons who are inspired by the Gospel, which puts the love it has to work to remedy social injustices, to sanctify life, and as the value-creating principle of our inner worlds it brings peace and ennobles us,' (Haring). Such are the ideals of the new trend."<sup>90</sup>

"Its practical theology is progressing in two directions: it aims on the one hand at establishing the good things of salvation in the forms of value-judgements, that is, discovering what the good news is. On the other hand it aims at knowing the conditions in which the good things of salvation are acquired. Indeed the first aim is nothing else than evaluating all the yields of theological disciplines from the point of view of practice, while the second is understanding the psychology of the current age, the world of ideas of modern man, the nature of the people. Thus two new disciplines have been introduced: religious folk psychology to utilise the results of the psychology of Wundt's school for the benefit of practical theology which, under the name of *church studies* (*Kirchenkunde*), has found excellent scholars in Drews and Schian, and practical dogmatics to systematise the religious value-judgements of the current period in conformity with our new culture, as in Niebergall's fine book called *Wie predigen wir dem modernen Menschen?* (*How Do We Preach to the Modern Man?*).<sup>91</sup> "It is only in this way that the great revolution of re-evaluating values will be promising."<sup>92</sup>

To sum it up, value theology borrowed the following to build them into its system: Kant's proofs of theology being possible and necessary; Schleiermacher's distinguishing between religion and dogma, as well as his demand for religion to be living and for theology to be scientific; Ritschl's spirit of practical Christianity, and his bringing to fruition the personal experiencing of the Gospel, as recognised by free, critical, scientific theology; Pfleiderer's conviction of the human spirit's unity with God's spirit by salvation; and last but not least, Baumgarten and Niebergall's principle of being true to modern life.

The creator of the system of value theology was László Ravasz. It is his relevant works that we shall consider in some detail in the following.

## **LÁSZLÓ RAVASZ** **(1882—1975)**

"László Ravasz is the most outstanding, and so far the highest ranking representative of Hungarian Reformed Church literature. The archetypal features of his personality are those of a poet and a philosopher that have merged in the aesthete on the one hand, and have joined powers in the theologian for seeing, and for making others see, on the other hand. He rebuilt theology onto the foundations of the positive, modern, *constructive* trend, fully preserving the prime interests of both the scientific approach and evangelical faith. He initiated a specific theological science by transforming practical theology into a religious *value system*, and into a science for prescribing the ways of implementing the value system. He renewed Reformed Church preaching, and started a splendid revival with his artistic sermons of enduring value, which

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<sup>90</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 38.

<sup>91</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 39.

<sup>92</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 39.

were most effective in conveying the Gospel to the Hungarian soul.... his epoch-making significance is undeniable,"<sup>93</sup> said Sándor Makkai, his best disciple and continuator of his work together with Imre Révész.

After the words of his contemporary, disciple, and colleague, characterising the value-theologian and value theology, let us turn to the most reliable source regarding the birth and growth of value theology: László Ravasz's autobiography. But before we engage in reviewing the personal confessions of that work, for a better understanding and clearer appreciation we must remark that the phases of Ravasz's activities, as neo-Kantian and value theologian, are best characterised by the periodization that can be found in a study by Béla Vasady<sup>94</sup> thus: 1./ the beginning theologian appreciating philosophy more than theology, 2./ the theologian reconciling philosophy with theology, 3./ the more and more positivistic theologian working with strict criticism on general philosophical bases, recognising and pointing out a larger and larger number of positive features.

Of the two autobiographic writings of László Ravasz's the first was published in volume two of a collection of his works under the title *Alfa és Omega (Alpha and Omega)*,<sup>95</sup> the second was a separate booklet with the title *Magamról (About Myself)*,<sup>96</sup> of which we have already had some quotations above. In *Alpha and Omega* he tells about his beginning years:

"I was interested in philosophy and systematic theology, and I found it peculiar that every lecture and every idea I heard in theses two courses became at once clear to me by themselves, and stuck in my memory. I never had any difficulties studying these two subjects, I felt as if I had already once heard all of it, but had forgotten it, and as if all came to my mind clearly again when I was reading it. Károly Böhm taught us a very difficult course in logic for fourteen weeks, and I learned the material in about seven hours so well, that at the oral examination he even expressed a bit of appreciation, but that bit was worth more than a thousand laurels to me."<sup>97</sup>

In the other writing Ravasz says that after the highly successful examination Károly Böhm ("of all my teachers he had the most impressive personality") "asked me, whether I wanted to be a pastor. I said 'yes', and he replied, 'Take care not to lose your interest!' and when he handed me my examination book, he even shook hands with me." Behold, "...impossible things became possible: a student understood Böhm, and he took notice of a student!"<sup>98</sup>

The first theological prompting he got from Károly Nagy's lecture course called theological encyclopaedia. "I got acquainted with an entirely new world. I learned that religion is a structural factor in the life of the psyche, I learned that religion is the largest, organically interrelated and diverging growth of human civilisation. I learned that faith and doubt, certainty and criticism, with their desperate combat, stretch apart and hold together the inner and outer worlds of religion. I learned that dogma is the verbal expression of religious feeling, that the Church is the fellowship of the called, and I learned what the Gospel is, and what the law is. It was demonstrated to me how Jesus' religion had become institutionalised in Catholicism, and how the soul got liberated from this institutional system by Reformation. I was struck by statements like the following: In Catholicism, one's relationship with Christ is determined by one's relationship with the Church, in the Reformational view one's relationship with Christ determines one's relationship with the Church. That was said by Schleiermacher, of whom I had not heard before, but who now began to interest me very much."<sup>99</sup> There was a growing conviction in Ravasz that "...only a free, critical, scientific mind can be a true Protestant, a true pastor."<sup>100</sup> At the end of his first year at university his bishop asked him whether he wanted to be a pastor, or a teacher, and "...that question I could answer firmly and pleased, 'Yes, I want to be a

<sup>93</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *Az erdélyi református egyházi irodalom 1850-től napjainkig* (The Transylvanian Reformed Ecclesiastic Literature from 1850 to Our Days) Kolozsvár, Minerva Nyomda, 1925, 37 p.

<sup>94</sup> VASADY, B.: *És lőn világosság*. Emlékkönyv Ravasz László hatvanadik életévé és Dunamelléki püspökségének huszadik évfordulója alkalmából (And There Was Light. A memorial volume in honour of László Ravasz, on the occasion of his sixtieth year of life, and of the twentieth anniversary of his bishophood of the Danubian Diocese. Budapest, Franklin, 1942, pp. 62-76.

<sup>95</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Alfa és Ómega*. Prédikációk, beszédek, cikkek. 1-2. kötet (Alpha and Omega. Sermons, speeches, articles. Vol. 1-2.). Budapest, Franklin, 1932, X+383, VIII+332 p.

<sup>96</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Magamról* (About Myself) Debrecen, Nagy Nyomda, 43 p.

<sup>97</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Alfa és Ómega* (Alpha and Omega) Budapest, Franklin, 1932, Vol. 2, 306 p.

<sup>98</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Magamról* (About Myself) Debrecen, Nagy Nyomda, 1944, pp. 14-15.

<sup>99</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. pp. 15-16.

<sup>100</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 16.



pastor, because I have an inner conviction and a vocation.' I wanted to be the best pastor one could ever make on the basis of Böhman subjective idealism, by the teachings of so-called modern theism. I did not think there was any contradiction between philosophy and theology. I attended the different courses at the different faculties as if I was being prepared for a single career, on the basis of one scientific world-view, at one and the same faculty."<sup>101</sup>

Though this dynamic start was going to be interrupted later by a role in public life, for the time being he would spend his long summer vacations deeply absorbed in thorough self-instruction both in theology and in philosophy. He read *Christian Dogmatics* by Lang, a *History of Dogmatics* by Baur, and *Dogmatics* by Alexander Schweizer."<sup>102</sup> He discussed the subject matter of the last book with Károly Nagy during an all-day-long examination, and "I learned more during that day than during several weeks reading on my own," he says."<sup>103</sup> He made plans for the next year to study systematic theology and philosophy: "...I decided to plunge into systematic theology, and to write my doctoral thesis in philosophy. Károly Böhm admitted me into his seminar group where I chose Spinoza's *Ethics*... I almost died of the efforts I had to take... Philosophizing was very hard work... It has become my conviction that no-one will make a good theologian without having worked one's way through one or two philosophical systems when still young, it is good for a man if in his youth he carries a yoke," says the scripture."<sup>104</sup> ... "I put Schweizer, Biedermann, Lipsius, Pfleiderer on my desk, I shall go through Spinoza," I was planning, 'and after Spinoza I shall read Kant, and then Hegel, and when the thread of dogmatics that started out from Schleiermacher has reached the threads of these three books, then I shall be a theologian!' "<sup>105</sup>

But instead of carrying out the programme of study, he had to take part in practical Church life as the secretary of bishop György Bartók. The pleasantest part of the job was preaching. Though professor Albert Molnár had warned Ravasz when he was a first year divinity student that he "would never be a good enough preacher", he tried to tell the congregation in the Farkas Street church in Kolozsvár simply and clearly about his strong convictions. And Sunday after Sunday the church was full up. The audience was always more interested in the sermons written by himself, than in sermons adapted from foreign originals (by Kirms, Schwarz, Rittelmeyer). "It took me some time to realise that I could preach on my own, too."<sup>106</sup>

He could turn to formulating his reconciliatory programme between philosophy and theology in writing when he got a scholarship to study in Berlin for a higher degree. He needed it to qualify for applying for the chair of practical theology going vacant, which Károly Nagy recommended him to do. In Berlin he attended the lectures of the theologians Pfleiderer, Harnack, Kaftan. But the aestheticians and philosophers had a more profound effect on him. "All my attention was taken by Riehl, Simmel, Dessoir the aesthetician, Wölfflin the art historian."<sup>107</sup> Then in his vacation year in Bánffyújnyad, Transylvania, he wrote his doctoral thesis with the title *Bevezetés a gyakorlati teológiába* (*An Introduction to Practical Theology*).<sup>108</sup> Then after his appointment to professorate in Sárospatak "the very unusual thing happened that an unattached assistant minister, who was still not twenty-five, was elected by the Transylvanian Reformed Church Diocese to the chair of practical theology to succeed Albert Molnár."<sup>109</sup>

At that time he was convinced that the basic principles of theology ought to be built upon Böhm's philosophy. That is the basic idea his above-mentioned doctoral thesis conveys from the beginning to the end. Already in the first chapter he took a final conclusion of Böhman philosophy as the starting point of all further discussion: "It was suspected already by Aristotle that our universe exists around two centres, that is why he divided the sciences into theoretical and practical ones. Kant was moved by the same considerations

<sup>101</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 16.

<sup>102</sup> LANG, H.: *Keresztény dogmatika*, (Christian Dogmatics), transl. Keresztúri, S. Budapest, 1876, XVI-239 p. Baur, F. Ch.: *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmengeschichte* Stuttgart, Becher, 1847, XVI + 288 p. Schweizer, A., *Die protestantischen central Dogmen in ihrer Entwicklung, innerhalb der reformirten Kirche*. 2. Hälfte, Das 17-18. Jahrhundert. Zürich, Orell-Fuesli. 1856, X 288 p.

<sup>103</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Magamról* (About Myself) Debrecen, Nagy Nyomda, 1944 p. 19.

<sup>104</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 19.

<sup>105</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 19.

<sup>106</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 22.

<sup>107</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 24.

<sup>108</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Bevezetés a gyakorlati teológiába* (*An Introduction to Practical Theology*) Kolozsvár, Ellenzék-nyomda, 1907, pp. 1-93.

<sup>109</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Magamról* (About Myself) Debrecen, Nagy Nyomda 1944, 25 p.

when he divided philosophy, which 'expresses the principles of the intellectual understanding of things in concepts', into theoretical and practical parts. Since then philosophy has conclusively determined that, conforming to the two kernels of our world-view, which are the concepts of essence and value, there are ontological sciences and axiological ones, the former investigating what there is, the latter what there ought to be. (See Károly Böhm: *Man and His World*, Volumes I-III)<sup>110</sup>

The taking over of explicitly Böhman views regarding not only the philosophical foundations and world-view, but ecclesiology, too, is also very characteristic of the essay. The following statements of Böhm's are cited: "Society is a projected orderly network of the functions of living souls — that is the truth. It has no purpose in itself, but in the individual living souls, from whom the threads of this network receive their reason of functioning. In brief, it is a psychic machinery, the organs of which are thoughts, feelings, i.e. human psychic phenomena. But the heart moving the whole is the individual living soul, the projections of whose experienced functions make up the structure of society." Immediately after the quotation Ravasz continues: "We have applied the same view to religious society, that is the Church, too."<sup>111</sup>

The essay makes repeated use of the ideas of projection and prolongation in the field of practical theology. And in the concluding part Ravasz, the idealist thinker, sums up his stance in the manner of a passionate confession: "Both our standpoint, that is subjectivism, and our main principle, that is the explication of life, are true words. The twofold truth of Protestantism and Christianity is expressed in the axiom which this essay attempts to explicate analytically, i.e. that the functions of the Church obtain their truth and reality in individual life experiences, because the fate of our whole universe, and that of ethics par excellence, depend on the principle of personality, and take place in experiences. That is not just an axiom, that is a confession of faith."<sup>112</sup>

The following sentence from his essay entitled *Dr. Bartók György mint teológus (Dr György Bartók the Theologian)*<sup>113</sup> is also a strong pronouncement of Böhman views: "In my view the final questions of religion reach back not into metaphysics, but into axiology, and the laws of axiology, like the laws of all philosophy, gain their validity from being shown by the theory of knowledge to be given *a priori* in the structure of the spirit."<sup>114</sup>

In the course of discussing György Bartók's theology Ravasz also reveals his views about the Kantian origins of Károly Böhm's philosophy. Already in the *Introduction* he says about Kant: "It can be demonstrated that wherever his heritage got into the hands of people of living faith, there theology always progressed a lot."<sup>115</sup> What is even more, he takes his stand in favour of Kantian foundations, when he states that György Bartók disapproved of Kant's certain views because of certain theological interests, which at that time could not be reconciled with the Kantian views. Ravasz emphasises that on the part of Bartók "the cause of this mistake was that he took Kant's formal rule to be a material one".<sup>116</sup>

Then he demonstrates that Bartók, "while he refutes Kant, unawares takes up Kant's position again, only he fills up Kantian formalism with theologumena".<sup>117</sup> And here Kant's defence by Ravasz takes the form of rewriting Kant in the language of theology, with the objective of reconciling theology and philosophy. Ravasz quotes the following sentence from Bartók: "The final purpose of the development of both the individual and society is to realise the intellect, that is the thing valuable in itself, and thereby to achieve and to assure moral freedom."<sup>118</sup> "This manner of solution given on a Kantian basis," continues Ravasz, "can be rewritten

<sup>110</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Bevezetés a gyakorlati teológiába* (An Introduction to Practical Theology) Kolozsvár, Ellenzék-nyomda, 1907, 8 p.

<sup>111</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. pp. 58-59. Böhm, K.: *Az ember és világa. Philosophiai kutatások 3. rész. Axiológia vagy értékstan.* (Man and His World. Philosophical Researches. Part 3. Axiology or the Doctrine of Value) Kolozsvár, Stein Nyomda, 1906, 272 p.

<sup>112</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Bevezetés a gyakorlati teológiába* (An Introduction to Practical Theology) Kolozsvár, Ellenzék-nyomda, 1907, 92 p.

<sup>113</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A Tháborhegy ormán. Beszédék, cikkek, előadások* (On the Peak of Mount Tabor. Speeches, articles, lectures.) Kolozsvár, the author's edition, Minerva Nyomda, 1928, 308 p.

<sup>114</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 34.

<sup>115</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Bevezetés a gyakorlati teológiába* (An Introduction to Practical Theology) Kolozsvár, Ellenzék-nyomda, 1907, 13 p.

<sup>116</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A Tháborhegy ormán. Beszédék, cikkek, előadások* (On the Peak of Mount Tabor. Speeches, articles, lectures.) Kolozsvár, the author's edition, Minerva Nyomda, 1928, 22 p.

<sup>117</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>118</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 23.

using theological terminology, and then 'intellect' will be replaced by 'divine power in us' or 'God's image in us', 'ideal' by 'God's kingdom', 'slow development to moral freedom' by 'road of sanctification'. So Kant has laid the most precious foundations for theological ethics, and the faithful preservation of his heritage is the working conditions of this branch of scholarship."<sup>119</sup> And the only reason that Bartók should not be blamed "for rejecting Kantian foundations in theory, is that he kept them in practice".<sup>120</sup>

But that is not yet the culmination of Ravasz's appreciation of Kantianism for theology. The end of the study is a hymnic eulogy of criticism: "It is a fatal mistake to think that criticism kills faith. Not at all. Criticism saves faith. The kind of theology that keeps criticism in contempt will degenerate into scholasticism, but he whose faith has been strengthened in the life supporting air of criticism, has built upon rock, which is beaten in vain by the storms. Criticism ensures us against doubt, it reduces doubt to silence. Without criticism an intelligent being can not obtain certainty. If God had only given us hearts, we should not need criticism very much. But he has also given us intellect as his most precious gift, so we ought not to be contemptuous of reason's divine law, which is testing. It is my conviction that only with criticism can we make the world believe. What must be proven to this unbelieving, doubting world is that Christianity is not an illusion, religion is not fantasy, the Gospel is not an obsession. Only he who has chaff in his hands is afraid of the crucible, but one with precious metal in one's hands is ready to stand by the burning crucible, 'Come and see that gold is more solid than glowing heat!' Whoever is afraid of criticism is either not a Christian yet, or not a Christian any longer. In this sacred hall, in this temple of faith, I am calling out for criticism. I am calling out for it because I want to make people certain, I am calling out for it because there is no unfounded belief without disillusionment, but whatever has withstood criticism is no longer believed on the basis of alien authority, but because the truth has grown part of the believer's spiritual organism, and is a living piece of his life which he can not deny, which he can not betray, to which he must testify to the point of crucifixion, because he can not do otherwise. Why are the greatest converts the greatest confessors? Because the struggle of conversion is desperate criticism of the new knowledge. Jeremiah fled the Lord who imposed his orders upon him, Paul fought against Christianity with bloody hands, Calvin's soul as solid as a cliff felt as if struck by lightening, Luther's restless nights were fights to the end, — and Jeremiah became the greatest prophet, Paul the greatest apostle, Calvin and Luther the greatest reformers, while those who had believed in Christ for his miracles all broke away from him under the Cross."<sup>121</sup>

This criticism, however, is applied even to Kant: "Kant was mistaken as to the individual theologoumena, and he was misled by his deductions."<sup>122</sup> At this point Kantian criticism had to be developed in the Schleiermacherian direction, discussed in our historical Introduction, so that it should become constructive criticism.<sup>123</sup> The basis for such development was provided by Ritschl's theology. In his professorial dissertation Ravasz commented on this in the following way:

"Religious life experiences as they are expressed in value judgements provide the basis for Ritschl's approach. He wants to avoid vain speculation, for him Christianity is a gushing spring of historical reality. Instead of empty Christology he sets the aim of investigating and discovering the living person of historical Jesus, instead of the Logos crowned with stars, instead of the symbolic Lamb, he wants to find out about the bleeding son of man who has tears in his eyes, and whose sweating, dust covered face radiates more power and divine truth than the majestic pontiff of dogmas with all his glory. Also, this trend prescribes it as our duty to act with vigorous determination, in a heroic manner. Instead of the submissively anti-cultural and weak teachings of Tolstoy, Thode, Wagner, or Hartmann, you are imbued with the youthfully fresh and active power of the Gospel when evaluating this new school. I am not hesitating to declare that this school will be the cradle of the rejuvenated Protestantism of the 20th century."<sup>124</sup>

From a theological point of view this rejuvenated Protestantism meant the modern positivism of Niebergall and his followers, according to whom criticism always had to be constructive criticism.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>119</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>120</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>121</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. pp. 42-43.

<sup>122</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Bevezetés a gyakorlati teológiába* (An Introduction to Practical Theology) Kolozsvár, Ellenzék-nyomda, 1907, 93 p.

<sup>123</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 13, és *A gyülekezeti igehirdetés elmélete. Homiletika* (The Theory of Preaching the Gospel to the Congregation. Homiletics) Pápa, (Református Egyházi Könyvtár, 11), 1915, pp. 141. ff

<sup>124</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 26.

<sup>125</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 38.

That is how László Ravasz matured to become a more and more positive theologian.

Within five years he wrote his theology courses, and started writing for the journal *Református Szemle* (*Reformed Church Review*), then he became the editor in chief of *Protestáns Szemle* (*Protestant Review*). In 1910 he published a collection of sermons with the title *Ez ama Jézus* (*This Is Yonder Jesus*).<sup>126</sup> To a book published in 1913 in memory of Károly Böhm, he contributed the essay *Böhm Károly értékelmélete, különös tekintettel esztétikai alapelveire* (*Károly Böhm's Theory of Value, with Special Regard to His Aesthetic Principles*).<sup>127</sup> In 1915 he finished his most ambitious work, a textbook on homiletics.<sup>128</sup>

His homiletics textbook entitled *A gyülekezeti igehirdetés elmélete* (*The Theory of Preaching the Gospel to the Congregation*) offered a new concept of theology in general, and practical theology in particular, independently of his foreign examples, whom he surpassed. The introductory part gives a general discussion of the Church and its activities, of the notion of practical theology and its subparts, and of homiletics and its subparts. The Church is a prolongation of personal Christian lives, and in accordance with the three main specific activities of Christians it has three main functions: growth in faith, self-realisation in love, reproduction in hope. Accordingly, the three main tasks of the Church are to build, to love, and to teach. The Church as a living organism builds itself, realises itself, and educates itself. These three activities are described and prescribed by the discipline called practical theology. If this conception is taken over to the planes of history and theory, it defines the viewpoints of the historical and theoretical disciplines as well, and so it becomes the scientific and practical formulation of constructive theology. That is what gave it its epoch making significance.

According to the way Ravasz branched practical theology, its basic discipline is ecclesiology, which has three branches: 1. oecodometrics, which studies how to build faith, 2. agapetics, the study of working in love, 3. paeduectics, which studies how to reproduce the Church.

Oecodometrics is further divided into liturgies, the study of the stable forms of building faith, and homiletics, the study of its changing contents. Agapetics, when applied to individuals is poemenics, when applied to a community is coenonics. Paeduectics viewed as a process in time is studied by catechetics, viewed as spatial formation gives halieutics. Homiletics as the study of the changing contents of building in faith answers two basic questions, i.e. what to preach, and how to preach. The answer to the first question is given, according to Ravasz, by the homiletic system of values, defined by the Gospel, which is the subject of each sermon. The answer to the second question is given by the theory of the art of homiletics. These two main parts of homiletics are connected by the study of the basic principles of preaching, including the person of the preacher, and the Christian congregation. And since the problems of homiletics have got crystallised in the course of the history of preaching the Gospel, the study of homiletics should begin with a discussion of its main historical trends. This beginning part of Ravasz's Homiletics was the first, and up to now the only one comprehensive Hungarian language treatment of the history of Christian preaching, in which the author "presents the whole history of Christian spirit in concise and exquisite reviews, which emphasise the essentials."<sup>129</sup> The same part also contains the first excellent outline of the history of preaching the Gospel in Hungary.

The part treating the basic principles of Gospel preaching begins with emphasising the congregational principle, then continues with defining growth in faith, and discussing the factors of growth, namely the preacher's own faith, his personality, his conception of theology, the psychology of the congregation, and the relationship of preaching with pastorship. The central theme of this section, too, is building, which unites the didactic, aesthetic, and ethical elements of preaching in order to activate intuitive understanding, which in turn can bring about qualitative growth of the soul, that is, growth in faith.

The part entitled *Gospel Preaching as a System of Values* treats the Bible as the source of homiletic value, and Church life as the determiner of homiletic value. As a "modest attempt" at "renewing practical theology", it presents the recognition that "the secret of Gospel preaching is to transmit the Word as the Will

<sup>126</sup> RAVASZ, L.: „Ez ama Jézus” Egyházi beszédek és elmélkedések („This is Yonder Jesus” Sermons and Meditations) Kolozsvár, Stein Nyomda, 1910, pp. XVI + 165.

<sup>127</sup> RAVASZ, L.: Böhm Károly értékelmélete, különös tekintettel esztétikai alapelveire, in: Kajlós (Keller), I. (szerk.) *Dr. Böhm Károly élete és munkássága*, (Károly Böhm's Theory of Value, with Special Regard to His Aesthetic Principles), in: Kajlós (Keller), I.: (ed.) *The Life and Works of Dr Károly Böhm*, Besztercebánya, a Madách Társaság kiadása, 2. köt. Besztercebánya. 1913. pp. 297-350.

<sup>128</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A gyülekezeti igehirdetés elmélete, Homiletika*. (The Theory of Preaching the Gospel to the Congregation. Homiletics) Pápa, (Református Egyházi Könyvtár 11). 1915. XX + 497 p.

<sup>129</sup> MAKKAI, S.: „Zörgessetek és megnyitják nektek” Tanulmányok, előadások, beszédek, elmélkedések. („Knock and the Door Will Be Opened You”, Essays, lectures, speeches and meditations) Kolozsvár, Az Út, 1925, 39 p.

of Salvation revealed in Christ, from the biblical world-concepts onto the axiological plane of religious practice."<sup>130</sup> The part called *A Sermon as a Work of Art*<sup>131</sup> treats the problem of how to preach from the aspect of high aesthetic criteria, and emphasises the educational character of preaching, as opposed to the purely pleasurable character of an aesthetic work of art.

The epoch making significance of the book was to be found in its being a synthesis of the trends we have discussed in the introduction, and in its surpassing preceding Hungarian theology and its historical periods. According to Sándor Makkai, this surpassing meant that "in principle completely and in practice mostly, Ravasz decided the *right of existence of theological trends* in preaching the Gospel, simultaneously transcending the dogma preaching of *orthodoxy*, the morality preaching of *rationalism*, the one-sided conversion preaching of *pietism*, and the 'religion' preaching of *liberalism*. It also meant that by transcending *all of their theological conceptions* he inaugurated the only possible theology: *evaluative, practical, constructive theology*, within which all scholarly work becomes criticism, which finds and evaluates facts in preparation for building. This criticism is always scientifically objective in itself, but subordinated to the aim of building."<sup>132</sup>

From the point of view of Logos theology that was to rise later, and at which Ravasz himself would necessarily arrive, it is obvious that this work was not built on evangelical, but on "general philosophical foundations".<sup>133</sup> And though it was with ever increasing awe that he saw and laid down the more and more numerous positive facts that he recognised and verified with the tools of scientific criticism,<sup>134</sup> in that phase of the history of theology it still did not mean that theological work and thinking were based on the conception of eternal divine revelation. It only meant that Ravasz no longer revealed himself only as a critical theologian, who reported his reconciling of philosophy and theology in the introduction of the book, or only as an experience-theologian, who at many places of the book expressed the claim that religious experiences were the basic facts for all theology, and the eternal sources of all religious and ecclesiastical works,<sup>135</sup> but also as a Reformed Church theologian in the historical sense of the expression. And *that* he did when he related confessions of faith and dogmas not only to religious experiences, but also to eternal divine revelation:

"Dogmas or systems of doctrines do not contribute any new elements to religious experience, for only revelation does so, since dogmas are not organs of revelation, but the processing of its results. Therefore whenever dogma contributes new elements to the material of preaching, we have a case of Catholicism, as the dogma is then taken to be new revelation... But even if the doctrines of the Church do not contribute anything new, the Scriptures being the criteria of them all, they still... have a decisive influence on the material of preaching by the way their formulations make them different from all other historical forms."<sup>136</sup>

The transformation of Ravasz's way of thinking was furthered by his studies of Calvin carried out in preparation for the Calvin anniversary (see his lecture entitled *Kálvin és a Kálvinizmus (Calvin and Calvinism)* from 1909).<sup>137</sup> In their wake some basic scriptural truths that newly revealed their theological importance to him, and influences by János Mott and later by the Evangelical Christian Youth Association, had significant effects on him.

Some time later Ravasz described and evaluated this period of his theological development from the standpoint of Logos theology: "The results and mistakes of this youthful period of search and discoveries are most clearly visible in my book entitled *A gyülekezeti igehirdetés elmélete (The Theory of Preaching the Gospel to the Congregation)*. According to the view expressed in it the task of theological scholarship is to gain scientific understanding of religion as an important part of the structure of human spirit. This task is accomplished on three planes. First it looks at religion as a huge assembly of historical facts. It examines the universal phenomenon of religion with the methods of comparative religious history, the result of which is that what was promise and possibilities in the history of religion, is reality and fulfilment in Christianity. It studies the history of Christianity as it appears to us in the wake of the Old Testament in the persons, events, and

<sup>130</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 294-379.

<sup>131</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. pp. 380-486.

<sup>132</sup> MAKKAI S.: op. cit. p. 40.

<sup>133</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. VI.

<sup>134</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. VI.

<sup>135</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 273.

<sup>136</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 352.

<sup>137</sup> RAVASZ, L.: Kálvin és a kálvinizmus (Calvin and Calvinism) „Az Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület Fakultásának Értesítője, 1909-1910, pp. 33-50. (in: *Látások könyve*, Kolozsvár. 1917)

teachings of the New Testament, and still develops today in the live continuity of the Christian Church. The second plane of theology is a critical exploration and summarisation of the psychological and dialectical features of religion. Here first the psychological processes of religion are examined in the psyche of the individual, as well as in that of a community. The religious functions in the structure of the human spirit are searched out and the results that follow for man and the world from the human spirit's self-thesis are established. That is the task of the philosophy of religion. When that has been done, it has been established that the most perfect historical exposition of the metaphysical structure of religion is Christianity and the task of systematising the logical expressions of Christian faith experiences can be commenced, in order to show what world-view and value system follow from them. That is nothing else than determining what existence, what values, and what destinies are in accordance with the ideals of religion. All these, however, are only preparations for, and preconditions of, the greatest and boldest undertaking, which is apprehending both the immortal soul, and that earthly community of souls, the Mother Church, with the help of the Christian world view and value system, and the activating and comforting forces rising from them, in order to build into the great structure of human culture a kingdom, which, in spite of being part of history, is essentially alien, eternal, true in itself, and the final purpose of creation. This last task is the plane of practical theology... I have developed homiletics in conformity with this basic perspective."<sup>138</sup>

"This conception of theology may be said to be based on the history of religion, or be called experience theology, or anthropological theology, or may be classified as Ritschlianism or Pfleidererianism. One thing, however, is certain: it was a synthesis of the trends and schools flourishing then, and it was suitable as a basis on which to build a scientific programme. It took the theory of knowledge into account, accepted the methodology of spiritual sciences, its results fell in line with the teachings of ethical idealism, and gave the go-ahead to the positivistic elaboration of the history of Christianity. Deep educational effects followed from it, and its followers could derive from it strong awareness of their mission in life. Today however it can be clearly seen that this theological world-view was rather anthropological, built on humanness, and could be found lacking real theology. It talked of religious man, and not of God the creator. It had the historical personality of Jesus of Nazareth in its centre, but did not say anything about substitutive atonement, pre-existence, the end of the world, the resurrection of bodies. It much emphasised personal Christianity and living faith, but did not point to conversion as the central decision, and did not emphasise the miracle of rebirth as pietism does. It did not see the reason of the life of the Church to be the call for repentance, and consented to believers and non-believers being collected together in the drag-net of the Church, leaving their separation to the end of things at the Last Judgement. It found the question of criterion in the human spirit itself, and believed that consciousness discovers the innermost occurrences of its own existence in religious experiences, calling this subjective conviction the witnessing of the Holy Spirit."<sup>139</sup>

"Wartime, bad personal sufferings, clouds coming over the serene view of life of one's youth, and personal thirst for certainty and fullness were all exposing the defects of this theological conception. My mental development processed inductively in this respect, too. I first met some moving facts of utter Christian experiences in the Students' Association inspired by János Mott's personality. Conversion, rebirth, living with prayers, were no longer objects of scientific investigation, phenomena that I could identify to my pleasure in life-disclosures of different historical testimonies from different centuries, but moving experiences, which I gained free, of my own inconstant and struggling soul. I discovered that only witnessing has missionary power, and it has much more than the brightest apology. Reading John Calvin's works, going over *The Essence of Calvinism* by Kuyper and the Confessions of Faith of the Reformed Church were ushering me in new directions."<sup>140</sup> Before describing those new directions, however, we must indicate two very significant fields of the literary activities of László Ravasz the value theologian, because though his system of value theology can be most clearly learned from the theological works of which we have quoted above, still it is in his scientific, philosophical, and aesthetic writings, as well as his sermons, that he made use of it in real life.

In the field of aesthetics, in addition to his writing on Károly Böhm quoted above, and another on Schopenhauer, we must call attention to the following essays: *A lángész mint emlékezet (The Genius as Remembrance)*, *A lángész mint képzelő erő (The Genius as Imaginative Power)*, *A lehetetlenség elve a művészetben (The Principle of Impossibility in Art)*, *Petőfi, az Alföld lelke (Petőfi, the Spirit of the Great Plain)*, *A romok szimfóniája (Symphony of Ruins)* (1923),<sup>141</sup> *Kétféle látás: Hamlet és Don Quijote (Two Kinds*

<sup>138</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Magamról* (About Myself) Debrecen, Nagy Nyomda, 1944. pp. 29-30.

<sup>139</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. pp. 31-32.

<sup>140</sup> RAVASZ, L.: op. cit. p. 32.

<sup>141</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Orgonazúgás. Beszéddek, előadások* (Pearlys of the Organ. Speeches, lectures) Budapest. Edition of the author, 1923, 192 p.

of Vision: Hamlet and Don Quijote) (1916),<sup>142</sup> *Műalkotás és műélvezet (Works of Art and Appreciation of Art)* (1924),<sup>143</sup> *Madách pesszimizmusa (The Pessimism of Madách)* (1924),<sup>144</sup> *Jókai lelke (Jókai's Soul)* (1925).<sup>145</sup>

When reading these works, in addition to experiencing full mastery and self evident handling of a complete aesthetic system, one is captivated by Ravasz's power of capturing the essence, his organic unity of content and form, mastery of visualisation, emotional expressiveness, self confessions, and witnessing to faith. One inevitably feels and sees that the theologian-aesthetician was at the same time an artist of the highest order.

We can get information of this period of László Ravasz the preacher in a most up to date light from Sándor Makkai: "Ravasz is a most exquisite artist of the written word, and his speeches are rather literary pieces delivered without writing them down. In his sermons the solid framework of profound and practical evangelical world view is built of the Böhmian categories, and is filled in with his sovereign illustrative use of the whole of modern scientific theological scholarship. The prototype of his genres, style, and composition was Albert Molnár's transparent and clear artistry, interwoven and intensified with rich, flourishing forms of other great preachers, as well as with the originality of his own artistic soul, and enveloped in radiant, dazzling plenitude created anew. He compares with Albert Molnár both in content and form as an exquisite, rich painting compares with a charcoal sketch, or a big musical piece scored for orchestra and choir with a folk-tune played on the flute. Albert Molnár's art is merely a motif in László Ravasz's, just an architectural figure blending into the new, immense — though similar — design of the whole building.

"When appreciating his sermons we must sharply differentiate the originality of his style from that of the contents. His greatness and originality are not in showing the depths of Christianity in the light of original, new, and great thoughts. Indeed his world of thought accepts, follows, and identifies with the thoughts and explanations of the great personalities of Christianity, like Calvin or Robertson. His power stems from his amazingly brilliant, fresh, and lively visualising and artistic reinvigorating of the generally accepted and confessed thoughts in the believers' common possession, which have turned uninteresting, grey and seemingly empty just because of their catholicity, and from his miraculous liberating of their building power hidden in them."<sup>146</sup>

László Ravasz's books published in this period of his life are: *Ez ama Jézus (This Is Yonder Jesus)*,<sup>147</sup> *Látások könyve (A Book of Visions)* (1917),<sup>148</sup> *Kicsoda az ember? (Who Is the Man?)* (1918),<sup>149</sup> *Gondolatok (Thoughts)* (1922),<sup>150</sup> *Orgonazúgás (Pearly of the Organ)* (1923),<sup>151</sup> *Az emberélet útjának felén (In the Middle of the Road of Our Life)* (1924).<sup>152</sup> These volumes contain meditations, sermons, prayers, and articles satisfying the highest level of expectations in world literature.

<sup>142</sup> RAVASZ, L.: Kétféle látás (Hamlet és Don Quijote) Two Kinds of Vision (Hamlet and Don Quijote) *Protestáns Szemle* 1823, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 273-279.

<sup>143</sup> RAVASZ, L.: Műalkotás és műélvezet. In: *Két beszéd. Tisza István és a magyar tragédia* (Works of Art and Appreciation of Art, in: Two speeches In: István Tisza and the Hungarian Tragedy) Inaugural lecture. Kisfaludy Társaság, Budapest, Studium, 1924, pp. 31-36.

<sup>144</sup> RAVASZ, L.: Madách „pesszimizmusa” (The “Pessimism” of Madách), *Protestáns Szemle*, 1924, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, pp. 24-30.

<sup>145</sup> RAVASZ, L.: Jókai lelke (Jókai's Soul) *Protestáns Szemle* 1925, XXXIV, No. 1-2, pp. 61-64.

<sup>146</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *Zörgessetek és megnyitják néktek* (Knock and the Door Will Be Opened to You). Kolozsvár, *Az Ut*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>147</sup> RAVASZ, L.: „Ez ama Jézus”, Egyházi beszédek és elmélkedések („This is Yonder Jesus”. Sermons and meditations) Kolozsvár, Stein Nyomda, 1910, XVI+ 165 p.

<sup>148</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Látások könyve*. Beszédek, elmélkedések (A book of Visions. Speeches, meditations) Kolozsvár, Hornyánszky Könyvnyomdája, 1917, XI + 352. p.

<sup>149</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Kicsoda az ember?* (Who is the Man?) in: *A Tháborhegy ormán* (On the Peak of Mount Thabor) Kolozsvár, 1918. pp. 44-69.

<sup>150</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Gondolatok* (Thoughts) Budapest, Bethlen Nyomda, 1922, 191 p.

<sup>151</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Orgonazúgás*. Beszédek, előadások (Pearly of the Organ. Speeches, lectures) Budapest, the edition of the author, 1923, 192 p.

<sup>152</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Az emberélet útjának felén*. Beszédek, cikkek, előadások. (In the Middle of the Road of Our Life. Speeches, articles, lectures.) Kolozsvár, *Az Ut* kiadása, Minerva Nyomda, 1924, 270 p.

It is from here that Ravasz the theologian was ushered in new directions, arriving through "modern Calvinist orthodoxy"<sup>153</sup> at Logos theology. Having arrived, he gave expression to his modern time of the most original and greatest thoughts: the thoughts of God, which are not our thoughts, and are higher than us as heaven is higher than earth. It is impossible to organise them into a closed system, nevertheless it is necessary for us to systematise them "under God's humorousness" (Karl Barth), with an unceasingly renewed decision, with which we listen to the Lord of the Word, who calls to us through us, too.

It is however not our job in this essay to discuss these new periods of theology. Let us see instead how Ravasz himself summarised the foregoing in his autobiography:

"It necessarily followed from my situation, career, and life course that in 1914 I professed a theological system that belonged to the school of religious history and was based on humanness. I professed it because I searched for the truth, and I could say at that time, too, that I spoke because I believed it. I could not be blamed that Barthian theology, which its author put to paper at the end of the 1920's, was not included in my work written in 1914. My arrival at Karl Barth's theology was a logical consequence of the necessities inherent in my previous theological views, the forces of dogmatics, and my pre-destined course. Had I not arrived at it, it would have meant that I had broken away from life, sitting down by the road of time among the beggars, while soldiers were marching along the road to new victories. It is the nature of theology that in each period it takes on a new form of expression, and if someone lives around the turn of two theological periods, he must appear in both, provided that his thinking is consistent.

"For that reason the deviation, or the bend I took during a time span of forty years, starting out from religious historical or experience theology and arriving at Logos theology, is much more a proof of the straightness of my inner course, than of the bend in my outer course. If the outer one had been straight, then the inner one would now be bent. With the change of generations, in the change of theological thinking, an always self-identical spirit expressed his 'vision of heaven', to which he was never disobedient, in earthly images, according to his most profound conviction and best knowledge. Looking back now he finds that the different turns, grades, and shades of the same Gospel were expressed in them, as life expresses itself in changes and transformations. The ripe ear of wheat shall not blame the young shoot of grass, 'You are not wheat', nor shall the century old oak the seed-leaf, 'You are not an oak!' An artist is the same person when he is clumsily trying to find his place in schools that are not to be his, as the one who looks around at the peak of his career at an elderly age, scarcely seeing his predecessors or successors.

Because we do not go, but we are carried."<sup>154</sup>

Where?

Through time to eternity.

These two aspects, that of time and that of eternity, reveal the significance of László Ravasz.

Since the time when Ravasz reviewed his life in his autobiography, visions *sub specie temporis* have been changing and multiplying, according to the understanding, the fateful events, the apocalyptic collapses, the sins and sufferings, the victories, and even the great achievements of a newer generation. From this multitude there have emerged three types of vision: the historical, the social, and the humane.

Considering the historical vision, has a complete, contradiction-free system of theology, built with successive approximations on universal philosophical bases, been able to create a new historical situation which is mature in all respects, or to help it to be born? — No, it has been unable to do so. And while spiritual men have done their work justifying their own significance, and failed in the task to be carried out, men of materialism have led the spirit of the age to victory. Indeed it is László Ravasz himself who wrote down the well known formula (in connection with Baur's work): "History is truth created by God, dogma is truth created by man."<sup>155</sup>

Socially, in László Ravasz's verdict, the half-hearted men of full evangelical truths could not find a common solution with the whole hearted men of social half truths. According to the socialism of the Gospel, "The deep and glaring social injustices of our age can only be solved in the spirit of the Gospel".<sup>156</sup> According

<sup>153</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Isten rostájában. Beszéddek, írások* (In the Sifter of God. Speeches, writings) 1-3. köt., Budapest, Franklin, 1941. Vol. 3, 470 p.

<sup>154</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Magamról* (About Myself) Debrecen, Nagy Nyomda, 1944, p. 39, ff.

<sup>155</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A gyülekezeti igehirdetés elmélete. Homiletika* (The Theory of Preaching the Gospel to the Congregation. Homiletics) Pápa, (Református Egyházi Könyvtár 11.) 1915, 162 p.

<sup>156</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A szocializmus evangéliuma és az evangélium szocializmusa* (The Gospel of Socialism and the Socialism of the Gospel), in: *Az emberélel útjának felén* (In the Middle of the Road of Our Life) Kolozsvár, 1924, pp. 51-61.



to the gospel of socialism, as the spirit of the biblical gospel was socially ineffective, only the bloody angel of revolutions could help, of whom

*Rubin szárnyát büszkén kifeszíted,  
Mint dús jövőndők bíbor zászlaját,  
S harsány harci hurrává idvezíted  
Egy intéssel a vérzők száz jaját,  
Ó, szárnyas diadal!*

*(The ruby wings thou makest proudly stretch,  
Like the purple banner of abundant futures,  
And thou turnst into loud battle cries  
With a wave of hand the hundred laments of the bleeding,  
Oh thou, winged Victory!)*<sup>157</sup>

Thus with their "truth soaked in the fire of Hell", revolutions, leaving feudalism behind them, offered the partial solution of quantitative-extensive socialist state capitalism, though finally, in the new age of socialism, they could only offer thorough failure instead of the revolution of intensive quality.

And this is how the people of this age have lived, — *etsi Deus non daretur*. The decisive question is no longer God but man! "*Wie kriege ich einen gnadigen Gott?*" (*How can I find a merciful God?*) — ask, together with Luther, the inheritors of the spirit of Reformation. "How can I find a merciful *neighbour!*" — asks the man of the atomic age during and after the social revolution, in the midst of the scientific and technical revolution. Some other man has life and death in his hands, with the button to push in his reach! The other man is hell and heaven on earth. Humanness instead of Divinity! This our age! Man is no longer querying after God, but putting questions to himself.

And among his many questions the central one is a most upsetting one, oldest and most modern at the same time, which will only pass away with us, and which is expecting answers all the time: *Who is man?* The answers are innumerable, but there is one among them which can still be heard today, and which is thought by those who keep repeating it to be one that will always be heard. It was quoted from the Scripture by László Ravasz at the end of his three-part lecture series: "A Roman *procurator*, an insignificant and weary man answered thus, pointing to the One, and so performing the most decisive gesture in world history, '*Ecce homo!* Here is the man!'"<sup>158</sup> And those who answer so have already seen the real God in the real man: "*Ecce Deus!*" They no longer start out from man to fight their battle of life, but from God to arrive before God.

*Sub specie aeternitatis*, Ravasz lived as one captivated, chosen, and sent as a messenger, by this Christ. He looked for Him in everything and saw Him in everything. He saw heaven and earth in Him, and made them to be seen in Him. He was a man of divine and human visions by Christ.

To his universal world view the full horizon of the visible world opened up, from the break of dawn to sunset, from the North Pole to the South Pole, from Homer to Lajos Áprily, from the dawn of creation to the fulfilment of the eschatological prayer, "Come, oh Lord Jesus Christ!"

His faculty of abstraction let him see essentials at first sight, and separate them from the unimportant. He expressed his truths in powerful, concise judgements disciplined by sharp logic. The chains of his arguments lead one along straight paths to the necessary conclusions and calls to action.

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<sup>157</sup> TÓTH, A.: A rubinszárnyú Cherubhoz, in: *Összes versei műfordításai, és novellái* (To the Ruby-Winged Cherub, in: Collected poems, translations and short stories), 1962, 89 p.

<sup>158</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *A Tháborhegy ormán*. Beszéddek, cikkek, előadások (On the Peak of Mount Thabor. Speeches, articles, lectures) Kolozsvár, the author's edition, Minerva Nyomda, 1928, 69. p.

There were no obstacles for the flights of his visualising fantasy on the wings of inspiration: "It can grip the forelocks of clouds, it can plough the bottoms of seas."<sup>159</sup> Creating surprising similes, discovering and highlighting new, world-wide connections, intensifying the emotions of the innermost heart till they were like thunder in visual music, lighting blazing arcs between contradictions in the creating process of unselfish work and inspired drive: those were his natural elements in which he enjoyed the satisfaction of creation even while struggling hard.

His intuitive insight into the soul decoded the meaning of the soul mirrored in the eyes, and penetrated mysterious corridors or bright archways leading into the depths of sub-consciousness, discovering secrets of the character, imprints of experiences, mysteries of destinies. So he let his character studies and life-course assessments get crystallised around invisible germs of spiritual archetypes.

And when he made such visions of his visible in his writings or speeches, the units of form and content was perfect, in his style beauty embraced truth.

The blessings of talent he received in God's creation, however, were merely tools of the power and life of Christ, who had captivated him, redeemed and imbued his life, adapted his abilities, infused his veins of sorrow and happiness with life energy, and revealed Himself and the kingdom of God in him and through him. In László Ravasz's theologies all roads lead to Jesus who said, "I and the father are one," so that in Jesus we should be able to find God, and find man in Him, find each other, and the solutions to the world's problems, which are unattainable by human efforts.

When he preached Christ, Christ spoke through him as the Saviour of the heart and the Redeemer of the cosmos. Through the registers of experience of his sermons one heard the organ of the cosmos, felt the silence of eternity in which worlds drowse in fragments of the moments of the oscillations of existence, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels sing hallelujah when there is rejoicing in heaven at the conversion of a sinner. The terrible greyness of everyday life turned to colourful glory in the simplest words and deeds. Shining and bedecked sins fled unmasked from the listeners' lives, when his words were heard. The varied subjects of the Church and the world, theology and philosophy, music, art, literature and history, practical life and the *unio mystica*. were put in the light of the Scripture when he spoke. And he spoke of miracles of great, sacred, and exceptional moments, filled with the presence of God's spirit, when heaven descends onto earth, praising God *as psalms of the universe frozen into events: Soli Deo Gloria!*

That was what László Ravasz's unique life-work proclaimed in all periods of his life, and therefore by way of ending this passage about him in a proper manner, we must quote his own words about Milton, now applying them to him: "He was a bard of eternity... He had his seat placed above the stars, his thyrsus was the Milky Way, and the sounds of his rhapsody rose above the rumble of the collapse and birth of heavens."<sup>160</sup>

## **GYÖRGY BARTÓK JUNIOR (1882—1970)**

György Bartók Junior was a lecturer in theology at Kolozsvár, later professor. He received decisive influences from two men. One was his father, bishop György Bartók Senior, from whom he inherited not only his character and his way of thinking, but also his entire spiritual legacy, especially the spirit of historical criticism. His other master was Károly Böhm, from whom he learned his manner of doing philosophy. In the course of his activities he applied Böhm's principles of explicating the world, and became Böhm's most faithful and most prominent disciple. His exceptional working capacity and his zeal let him carry out profound and voluminous literary activity. In respect of training and scholarly knowledge he was surpassed by nobody in his generation.

Some of his works are pure philosophy. In these he interprets his master's constructions of thought, and develops them further. They are: *A logikai érték tana. Bevezetésül Böhm filozófiájába.* (*The Doctrine of Logical Value. By Way of Introduction to Böhm's Philosophy.*) 1913, *Die Philosophie Karl Böhms* (Károly Böhm's Philosophy), Leipzig, 1918. The following are works in ethics: *Gróf Széchenyi István gondolkodása*

<sup>159</sup> See MAKKAI, S.: *Zörgessetek és megnyitattik nektek.* Tanulmányok, előadások, beszédek, elmélkedések. („Knock and the Door Will Be Opened to You”. Essays, lectures, speeches, meditations.) Kolozsvár, Az Út, 1925, pp. 46-48.

<sup>160</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Alfa és Ómega.* Prédikációk, beszédek, cikkek (Alpha and Omega. Sermons, speeches, articles) Vol. 2. Budapest. Franklin, 1932, 143. p.

(Count István Széchenyi's Thinking) 1910, *Az erkölcsi érték filozófiája* (The Philosophy of Ethical Value) 1911, *A szabadság mysteriuma* (The Mystery of Freedom) 1914.<sup>161</sup> The following ones are in aesthetics: *Petőfi lelke* (Petőfi's Soul) 1922, *Petőfi művészete* (Petőfi's Art) 1924.<sup>162</sup>

From the point of view of the history of theology the relevant works have three characteristics: they approach and explain the problems of religion and Christianity through cultural history, philosophy, and ethics. With consistent radicalism he always and everywhere traced religion and theology back to final foundations in the theory of knowledge, and in the spirit of Böhman critical idealism he searched for dialectical and axiological explaining principles. His standpoint to which he adhered all along was "to remain strictly within the limits of human reason (spirit)". His methodology was to approach full explanation step by step or grade by grade. He abhorred superficial presumptions and hasty generalisations, and he regarded it as his most specific inheritance and task *to get to the bottom of things*. From a theological point of view this feature of his spirit was both a strength and a weakness. His critical theology was on the one hand clear, transparent, and painstakingly accurate, on the other hand it was excessively negative where *experiences that are beyond comprehension* make intuitive and existential understanding necessary on the basis of Revelation. That is why in his fields of study he investigated the facts and development of religion and Christianity historically, putting them in the light of cultural philosophy, and assessing them ethically. In these fields he was the most authentic and successful scholar of his age.

From our point of view his most characteristic essay in which he laid down his programme was his inaugural lecture *A vallástudomány tárgya és módszere* (The Subject and the Method of the Science of Religion).<sup>163</sup> In it he fully expounded his standpoint. The subject of theology is religion which "does not float somewhere above earthly realities, and is not something that can only be approached by mystic visions. Its subject is an undeniable reality that dwells in the human heart and reveals its power in the life of humanity."<sup>164</sup> The science studying this subject is theology, of which the first main part is the general science of religion. This latter investigates the historical manifestations of religious consciousness in the life of mankind and in connection with the whole sphere of culture, then it studies the psychological, epistemological, and axiological aspects of religious consciousness, consequently it is history of religion and philosophy of religion.

The second main part is Christian religious science, which is the history (biblical history and Church history) and the philosophy of Christianity (Christian ethics and morals). The principles so obtained are made use of by practical religious science (practical theology), which is also an art. A firm basis for the Christian religious science is provided not by dogmas, but by the results of the general science of religion. All religious sciences get their methodology from the historical, philological, and philosophical sciences. The final culmination of theology is the study of faith, which does not have God and Christ as its objects; its object is the belief in them as the knowledge of God. Faith study as the science of the knowledge of God is characteristically epistemological. According to its essence together with the study of morals it constitutes the philosophy of Christianity. Accordingly, the religious sciences are the history of religion and the philosophy of religion, both from the general and the Christian aspects, where the first is the explicatory basis of the second.

This conception was the outcome of the trend inspired by Kant, got its fundament from Schleiermacher, and developed in the direction of liberal theology. In Hungary it got further foundations and justification from Böhm's critical idealism. No further development in this direction was possible. "We can safely admit that it is the crown on the Kantian-Schleiermacherian conception, and it is also the culmination of Ödön Kovács's

<sup>161</sup> BARTÓK, GY. JUN.: Gróf Széchenyi István gondolkodása. (Count István Széchenyi's Thinking) *Az erdélyi Református Egyházkerület Theológiai Fakultásának Értesítője* 1909-1910, pp 51-60.

*Az erkölcsi érték filozófiája* (The Philosophy of Ethical Value), Kolozsvár, 1911, 160 p.

A logikai érték tana. Bevezetés Böhm filozófiájába, in: Kajlós (Keller) I. (Ed.) *Dr. Böhm Károly élete és munkássága* (The Doctrine of Logical Value. By Way of Introduction to Károly Böhm's Philosophy, in: Kajlós (Keller) I. (ed.): The Life and Activities of Dr Károly Böhm), Besztercebánya, a Madách Társaság kiadása, 1913, Vol. 2. pp. 127-228.

Die Philosophie Carl Böhms, Leipzig 1918.

<sup>162</sup> BARTÓK, GY. JUN.: *Petőfi lelke* (Petőfi's Soul) Budapest, Studium, 1922, p. 70. *Petőfi művészete*, *Protestáns Szemle*, 1924, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1. pp. 31-36.

<sup>163</sup> BARTÓK, GY. JUN.: *A vallástudomány tárgya és módszere*. (The Subject and the Method of the Science of Religion) *Az erdélyi Református Egyházkerület Theológiai Fakultásának Értesítője*, 1909-1910, pp. 1-26.

<sup>164</sup> BARTÓK, GY. JUN.: op. cit. p. 8.

school and can not be further developed."<sup>165</sup> This science of religion was indeed feasible as a science, with results that were valid and comprehensible for everyone. As opposed to the theology of scholasticism, orthodoxy, rationalism, or pietism, it was a science, it was theology as the science of religion.

It fell, however, behind László Ravasz's conception of theology, because it did not reckon with transforming the scientifically examined facts of religion into a religious system of values. Thus it was unable to build into its system theology proper as the practical science of religion with fully scientific characteristics, only as one which was *also an art*. So this Bartókian discipline either followed in the steps of the principles of the religion of science, thereby losing its independence and scientific characteristics as a mere artistic technique, or it did not follow in those steps, but then it had no place in the science of religion at all. From which it follows that the religion of science as György Bartók Junior conceived of it was a possible, legitimate, necessary, and realisable science, which had its worth in itself, and as such it was the same sort of historical and philosophical explanation of religion as a similar explanation of any other phenomenon. But it was not *theology as such*.

Bartók consistently abided by his cultural-historical and philosophical standpoints in his works entitled *A Jakab levele (The Epistle of James)* 1908 and *Az újszövetség vallása (The Religion of the New Testament)* 1917, both of which are studies in exegesis, literary history, and religious history. His excellent essay in the history of the philosophy of religion entitled *A vallás problémája napjaink bölcseletében (The Problem of Religion in the Philosophy of Our Days)* 1915 is a review of the reflection of modern philosophers on religion. He faithfully implemented his theological programme in *Reneszánsz és a reformáció (Renaissance and Reformation)* 1914, *Schleiermacher olvasása közben (Upon Reading Schleiermacher)* 1915, and *A valláspszichológia legfőbb törvényei (The Principal Laws of the Psychology of Religion)* 1911.<sup>166</sup>

His essays called *Bevezetés a keresztyén erkölcsfilozófia történetébe (An Introduction to the History of the Moral Philosophy of Christianity)* 1913, and *A reformáció erkölcsi felfogása (The Moral Views of Reformation)* 1916<sup>167</sup> suggest that their author was planning a large scale history of ethics. They are in fact outstanding works in themselves and excel in conveying the ethical spirit of Christianity. Their style is clear and transparent, their manner of discussion is objective and equitable.

Bartók faithfully continued to interpret his masters also in later periods of his life. This was evidenced by the following works: *Kant* 1925, *Károly Böhm* 1928, *Kant etikája és a német idealizmus erkölcsbölcselete (Kant's Ethics and the Moral Philosophy of German Idealism)* 1930.<sup>168</sup> He prepared the fifth volume of Károly Böhm's *Man and His World* for the press under the title *Az erkölcsi érték tana (The Theory of Ethical Value)* 1928.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>165</sup> MAKKAI S.: op. cit. p. 41.

<sup>166</sup> BARTÓK, GY. JUN.: *A Jakab levele*. Tanulmány az őskeresztyén irodalom köréből. (The Epistle of James. An essay from the sphere of early Christian literature) Kolozsvár, Stief Nyomda, 1908, 96 p.

*A valláspszichológia főbb törvényei*, (The Principal Laws of the Psychology of Religion) *Magyar Társadalomtudományi Szemle*, 1911, Vol. IV, No. 9. pp. 705-720.

*Reneszánsz és reformáció*, (Renaissance and Reformation) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1914, Vol. XXVI; No. I. pp. 11-24.

*Schleiermacher olvasása közben* (Upon Reading Schleiermacher) *Protestáns Szemle* 1915, Vol. XVII, No. 2, pp. 105-113.

*A vallás problémája napjaink bölcseletében* (The Problem of Religion in the Philosophy of Our Days) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1915, Vol. I. XVII. No. 7. pp. 507-522, No. 8, pp. 599-614.

KECSKEMÉTHY, I., BARTÓK, GY. JUN.: (ed.) *A mi vallásunk*, (Our Religion) Kolozsvár, Kolozsvári Református Theológiai Fakultás, 1917, pp. 125-187.

<sup>167</sup> BARTÓK, GY. JUN.: *Bevezetés a keresztyén erkölcsfilozófia történetébe*. (An Introduction to the History of the Moral Philosophy of Christianity) *Athenaeum*, 1913. Vol. 22. No. 2, pp. 53-102.

*A reformáció erkölcsi felfogása*, Luther, Zwingli és Kálvin. (The Moral Views of Reformation, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1916, Vol. XVIII No. 5, pp. 405-420.

<sup>168</sup> <sup>168</sup> BARTÓK, GY. JUN.: *Kant* (Kant), Kolozsvár, Torda, Füßy Nyomda, 1925, 121 p. *Böhm Károly*, (Károly Böhm), Budapest, Franklin, 1928, 166 p.

*Kant etikája és a német idealizmus erkölcsbölcselete* (Kant's Ethics and the Moral Philosophy of German Idealism) Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1930, 335. p.

<sup>169</sup> BÖHM, K.: *Az emberes világa*. 5. rész. Az erkölcsi érték tana (Man and His World. Part 5. The Doctrine of Ethical Value) prepared for the press by Bartók, Gy. Jun. Budapest, (A Luther Társaság Kiadványai, Új sorozat, 6.) 1928, 278 p.

The sharp logic of György Bartók Junior cut to the heart of things like a sharp knife, penetrating into depths that are hidden from many but are still in the reach of man. A very large amount of material is accumulated in his works, and evaluated from the standpoint of critical idealism. By presenting the underlying principles of Christian ethics in a historical and critical light, he inspired motivation for the building of a fully-fledged system of ethics. In his own age his works were undoubtedly very effectively stimulating. He never showed mercy to illusions in order to highlight ideals. When his penetrating to the heart of things meant impairing truths confessed by souls of the highest order, from the humanly unattainable depths of their lives unsuspected powers of healing and renewal gushed forth. The pruning knife of the Gardener destined the true vines to yield more fruit.

## **BÉLA TANKÓ** **(1876—1946)**

Béla Tankó was Ödön Kovács's student in Kolozsvár. He attended Károly Böhm's lectures, and even after he had left university, *the Tankó legend* was often told by students of later years: "There used to be a student called Béla Tankó who won all prizes and awards in philosophy. His essays written for seminars were praised by professor Böhm, and they kept conversing with each other as if they had understood what the other said."<sup>170</sup> He became professor of Debrecen University. He was very active as a lecturer and a writer, especially in philosophy, giving also evidence of his personal Christian faith and his being a theologian always and everywhere. That is what has won a place for him in this study on the history of Hungarian theology.

The following works of his should be mentioned as ones close to our topic: *Böhm és Kant (Böhm and Kant)* 1913, *Böhm Károly filozófiájának pedagógiai jelentősége (The Educational Importance of Károly Böhm's Philosophy)* 1913, *A filozófia problémája és problémái (The Problem and the Problems of Philosophy)* 1916, *Fichte* 1914, *Leibniz* 1917.<sup>171</sup> In his philosophical works he spoke as a representative of critical idealism. But we are more interested in those works of his that are closely related, or expressly belong, to theology. In his study called *Kant vallásfilozófiája (Kant's Philosophy of Religion)* 1916 he expressed views that were in harmony with those of the value theologians: "Kant's philosophy of religion, too, is in need of being deepened by basing it on the foundations of the theory of value, because the final explanation of the behaviour of the religious mind is rooted in the idea of value. The religious world-view is one of the modes of the functioning of the evaluating mind. Whenever religion is only conceived of as a life function of the spirit... then in order to build up a systematic theory of religion, the need for providing foundations in the form of a theory of value, as a natural and (in principle) final doctrine of explanation is irresistibly felt, and the building of the philosophy of religion is felt to be unfinished, until this final — because of its religion-establishing — explanatory activity makes possible the attempt to understand religion."<sup>172</sup>

His essays *A XIX. század etikai válsága (The Ethical Crisis Of The 19th Century)* 1912,<sup>173</sup> *Protestantizmus* 1917, and his articles published in the literary periodical *Nyugat* about the problem of Protestantism to contribute to the debate started by Dezső Szabó, are all works of an outstanding author engaged in journalism.

<sup>170</sup> RAVASZ, L.: *Magamról (About Myself)* Debrecen, Nagy Nyomda, 1944, p. 14.

<sup>171</sup> TANKÓ, B.: Böhm és Kant, Adalék a transzcendentális filozófia felépítéséhez (Böhm and Kant. Glosses on Building Up Transcendental Philosophy) in: Kajlós (Kallós) I.: (ed.): *Dr. Böhm Károly élete és munkássága (The life and Works of Dr Károly Böhm, Besztercebánya, a Madách Társaság kiadása, 1913, Vol. II. pp. 33-126.*

Böhm Károly filozófiájának pedagógiai jelentősége. Adalék a neveléstudomány értékelméleti alapozásához. (The Educational Importance of Károly Böhm's Philosophy. Glosses on the Value Theoretical Foundations of the Science of Education) Kajlós (Keller) I. (ed.): op. cit. pp. 69-112. Fichte. *Protestáns Szemle*, 1914, Vol. XXVI No. 3, pp. 141-150.

A filozófia problémája és problémái (The Problem and the Problems of Philosophy) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1916, Vol. XVIII. No. 5, pp. 421-442, No. 6, pp. 542-554.

Leibniz, *Theológiai Szaklap*, 1917, Vol. XV pp. 3-11.

Protestantizmus (Protestantism) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1917, Vol. XIX. No. 6-7, pp. 555-667.

<sup>172</sup> TANKÓ, B.: *Kant vallásfilozófiája (Kant's Philosophy of Religion)* Debrecen, Csáthy Nyomda, 1916, 46. p.

<sup>173</sup> TANKÓ, B.: A XIX. század etikai válsága (The Ethical Crisis of the 19th Century) *Református Szemle*, 1912, Vol. V, No. 31, pp. 484-488, No. 32, pp. 500-505, No. 33, pp. 517-523, No. 34, pp. 531-537.

He gave a series of three lectures in the Kossuth Street Church in Debrecen, with the title *Vallás, keresztyénség, protestantizmus (Religion, Christianity, Protestantism)*.<sup>174</sup> The order of words in the title is already a confession of faith concerning his theology. The starting point is religion, which is the opportunity of life and the fullness of it for man. And if that is so, science is no threat for religion. "Therefore do not close the door of the sanctuary but open it wide, so that life giving light could shine through it, and that amazed and satisfied eyes could see that religion is not a way of life vegetating by the mercy of semi-darkness, but it is life giving power itself! Open the hearts up for the intellect, so that man could worship the Lord with his whole enlightened mind, not only with a childish faith!" — The highest form of religion is Christianity, the essence of which is not determined by the apostles Peter or Paul, nor the Vatican, nor Heidelberg, but by what Jesus preached. The standard of Christianity is how much it reflects the spirit of Jesus, the soul of the Gospel, how much it lives a life of worship in spirit and truth... "Protestantism is not a denomination, not a Church within Christianity, because it is more than those: an ideal of life, an ideal of man. We ought not to insist on protestant scholarship, art, ethics, or culture: wherever scholarship flourishes with no other intention than facing reality to understand it, wherever nothing else than truth is wanted, wherever it is acknowledged that the essence, heart, and purpose of reality are the spirit, in short wherever ethics, art, and culture enrich, serve, and exalt the spirit, there the spirit of Protestantism is alive. Tertullian said that the soul is Christian by nature. Isn't it also true that the soul is Protestant by nature? The word 'Protestant' means 'a person protesting against something': protesting against falsehood, filth, and corruption... because this is the only way of life for him: to live in the way demanded by the fact that his being is spiritual, that his soul is the lord, the rest are servants: that is to be Protestant. The soul is Protestant by nature for the same reason that it is also Christian by nature: because he is Majesty by birth, sharing in the inheritance of the Son of God. That is why being a Protestant P is such a heavenly great thing."<sup>175</sup>

Tankó gave five lectures with the title *A világnézet kérdése és a református elvek (Reformed Church Principles and the Question of World-View)* 1939<sup>176</sup> in the teacher training school of University College in Debrecen. The message they conveyed rested on very wide-ranging theological and literary basis. First he defined the nature of world-view, then after reviewing the relevant facts of the history of philosophy, he presented Kant's metaphysical reform, whereby the metaphysics of things was replaced by the metaphysics of understanding, with the result that the key to an explanation of world view has to be found on the side of the understanding subject, namely in the mode of relation by which the subject in fact forms objects of the perceivable stimuli. Then Tankó described the structure of world-view by pointing out that the development of world-view is actually determined by three basic modes of the relating of the self: "In principle the first is the practical behaviour of the self, by which it creates the entire framework and arrangement of the content of its world through unconscious projection, afterwards... it successively renders the unconscious constitutive elements of this content conscious, first as if what it recognises were a thing given independently of itself, then with the subject itself also taking part in the shaping of the recognised thing. That process is characterised by the subject's successively 'arranging the unintentional creations of the first days' (Böhm)."<sup>177</sup>

Thus reality becomes more and more reasonable for the self. And in proportion to the progress of this reasonableness does the self win "its own freedom more and more fully, and as a reward it experiences this freedom most fully in the magic occurrence of aesthetic contemplation, when it can see its whole world up to then appear *sub specie aeterni*,... it condenses the eternally same meanings of things and human lives into the spiritual reality of mere appearances, and finally by the equally ripening effects of practice and contemplation the self at last reaches the degree of freedom when it reflects on itself... when it can become aware of its own role in all of its activities, and thus of the autonomy of a given sphere."<sup>178</sup>

The question now is how these facts appear concretely in the sphere of reformed Christian principles. In other words, according to what principles does the reformed Christian world view develop? To answer those questions Tankó discussed Christianity first and Protestantism then in the next two lectures.

Regarding Christianity he quoted Böhm: "If Christianity is a new mode of evaluation, then it will yet have the prospects of unlimited progress, and the pervasive power of its rule will only become manifest in the

<sup>174</sup> TANKÓ, B.: *Vallás, keresztyénség, protestantizmus*. Három előadás (Religion, Christianity, Protestantism. Three lectures) Debrecen, Csáthy Nyomda, 1919. pp. 1-39.

<sup>175</sup> TANKÓ, B.: op. cit. p. 5, 26.

<sup>176</sup> TANKÓ, B.: *A világnézet kérdése és a református elvek*. Előadások. (The question of World-View and the Reformed Principles. Lectures) Debrecen, Református Kollégium, Tanárképző Intézet, 1939, 98. p.

<sup>177</sup> TANKÓ, B.: op. cit. p. 22, 56.

<sup>178</sup> TANKÓ, B.: op. cit. p. 56.

future."<sup>179</sup> For Jesus in his eternal experience grasped the essential identity of God and man: God is spirit and man must worship him in spirit. From this it followed that spirituality must be elevated to the role of the criterion, and first of all love must be exalted, and 'the infinite divine value of the individual', which is the exaltation of everything spiritual.

In conformity with these principles Christianity first had to work through the social establishments of peoples with the yeast of love in order to become reality (1st to 11th centuries), second it had to validate its principle and spirit over the whole make up of man, and to evaluate everything according to its real worth (11th to 18th centuries), third it had to acquire a new idealistic standard free from theology (in the period of criticism which strained to clear principles from the rubbish of old times: 18th to 20th centuries), and fourth with the new standard as the criterion it must introduce a new vision of social relations (the implementation of the new standard in the coming centuries).<sup>180</sup>

Reformation was the realisation of this religious consciousness: evangelical Christian consciousness. It restored the only right relation between man and Christ. It is the relation to Christ that determines the relation to the Church, and not *vice versa*. That is why László Ravasz was right when he said, "The Catholic Church is only strong when her members are weak, the Protestant Churches are only strong when their members are strong."<sup>181</sup>

Protestantism made the principle of freedom its own form of life, because freedom is the self-regulation of the self-unfolding spirit. It can not but let its spiritual reality unfold, if it has once been filled with the Holy Spirit, like Luther, who standing before God *could not do otherwise*: here is the new man who only serves God, and so he is free of the whole world. In this way Protestantism has restored the true meaning of *teonomia*: because it has replaced its metaphysical, ontological, and magic interpretations with the original one. It pointed up *teonomia* in psychological and ethical relations, because it is the power becoming manifest in the personal relation, and its decisive factor is faith received by grace. Protestantism came to realise that value categories could not be made transcendental if as metaphysical entities they submerged in the worst kind of ontology. The mode of existence of the spirit is different from that of ontological reality. Spirit exists by asserting itself, that is, in its own existence it expresses the existence of something else, and in this way it confers value on the other thing, like the artist's creative power confers value on the musical tones or the patches of colour through which it becomes manifest. Thus it is not in the manner of magic that Protestantism would want to perform its worship of God in truth and spirit, because in that manner one must not conceive of the reality of spirit, instead it wants to worship by shaping personalities strong in character, in whom the early Christian principle of evaluation is paramount. It is this basic principle that it claims by its concept of the Church, when it professes religious freedom and denominational tolerance.

Within Protestantism all this is best upheld by Calvinism, with its two basic thoughts of the sovereignty of God and the doctrine of predestination. The first one essentially gives expression to taking the absolutely objective existence of God uncompromisingly seriously, the second one means emphasising the valuable character of personality, the core of the religious idea of being the children of God.

In the final lecture, by way of a summary, Tankó pointed out that on the basis of the foregoing Calvinism is not a sum of doctrines, not even the cherishing of metaphysical suppositions, instead it is practical behaviour, because it is life-relationship with God. The basis of the latter is faith, which is not about what the world and life are like — those we learn by reason and not by accepting the verdicts of authorities — it is about "whether we can, really and according to the final truth, be ourselves" (Gogarten). That is the real risk that faith is about: to keep ourselves being what God intends us to be!

In a characteristic manner Tankó continued to keep faithfully to his fundamentals of theological axiology even when already the second generation of value theologians became Logos theologians after the first founding generation. He fought against the theologies of Barth and Brunner with all his might, of course in vain. At the same time he produced pieces of literature of such deep philosophical insight, intuitive visualising power, artistic conciseness, captivating honesty, and sincere Christian faith, that it placed him among the best of his time, making him always worth reading.

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<sup>179</sup> TANKÓ, B.: op. cit. p. 71. Note 19.

<sup>180</sup> TANKÓ, B.: op. cit. p. 71.

<sup>181</sup> TANKÓ, B.: op. cit. p. 78, Note 12.

## SÁNDOR MAKKAI (1890—1951)

He was both a theologian and a fiction writer, with the two activities influencing each other and together producing an outstanding personality and an outstanding life-work. The theologian was a creative, scientific spirit, destined for most profound visions of faith, and was informed within the widest possible circle. The fiction writer was the author of novels that felt and brought to life the atmospheres of different ages in a noble and captivating style. He preached the Gospel of Christ with his fiction, in his series of novels, too, by a special grace of God.

His scholarly works of his first creative period, which are the ones that interest us now, were classified by himself into four groups:

1. Philosophical-educational essays, such as *Bevezetés a személyiség pedagógiájába* (*An Introduction to the Education of Personality*) 1912, *A nagy személyiségek nevelői jelentősége* (*The Educational Importance of Great Personalities*) 1913, *A lélek élete és javai* (*The Soul's Life and Its Goods*) 1922, *Az intelligencia nevelése* (*The Education of Intelligence*) 1914.<sup>182</sup> His educational writings emphasised the decisive importance of personality for education; while the philosophical ones pointed up the development of the consciousness of the mind, including the development of religiousness, too, in an original interpretation of Böhmanian idealism.

2. Essays in practical theology, such as *A régi és az új munkások* (*The Old And the New Workers*), *Három év* (*Three Years*), *A mi fakultásunk* (*Our Faculty*), *Az élő egyház* (*The Living Church*),<sup>183</sup> in which writings he proposed and discussed programmes for the living, spiritual Church, mainly from the view-point of the training of ministers. The following studies discussed problems of catechesis and pastoral work: *Hogyan tanítsunk vallást?* (*How to Teach Religion?*), *A konfirmáció reformja* (*Reforming Confirmation*), *A kálvinista gyülekezetnevelés alapelvei* (*The Basic Principles of the Calvinist Education of a Congregation*), all in the 1915-17 year issues of the Reformed Church weekly *Az Út* (*The Way*).<sup>184</sup>

3. Essays in the philosophy of religion and systematic theology, such as *A vallás lélektana* (*The Psychology of Religion*) 1914, *A hit szeme* (*The Eyes of Faith*) 1915, *Az értelem és a hit harca* (*The Battle of Reason and Faith*) 1918, *Tudomány és vallás* (*Science and Religion*) 1915, *Vallásos világkép és életfolytatás* (*The Religious World-View and Way of Life*) 1913, *A hit problémája* (*The Problem of Faith*) 1916.<sup>185</sup> All of them were written as preliminary studies to the main work of this period of the author which

<sup>182</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *Bevezetés a személyiség pedagógiájába*. (An Introduction to the Education of Personality) Kolozsvár, Stief Nyomda, 1912, pp. VIII-107.

*A nagy személyiségek nevelői jelentősége* (Philosophiai tanulmány) (The Educational Importance of Great Personalities. A philosophical essay) Budapest. Hornyánszky Könyvnyomdája, 1913, pp. 1-27.

*A lélek élete és javai*. Philosophia propaedeutika (The Soul's Life and Its Goods. Philosophia propaedeutika) Kolozsvár, Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület, 1922, pp. 1-64.

<sup>183</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *A régi és az új munkások* (The Old and the New Workers) *Az Út* 1924, Vol. VI. No. 6, pp. 77-81.

*Három év* (Évzáró beszéd a református teológiai fakultáson) (Three Years. School-year closing speech at the reformed theological faculty) *Az Út* 1924, Vol. VI. No. 6, pp. 131-168.

*A mi fakultásunk* (Our Faculty)/fc *Út*, 1918.

*Az élő egyház* (The Living Church) .42 *Út*, 1923.

<sup>184</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *Hogyan tanítsunk vallást?* (How to Teach Religion?") *Az Út*. 1915. Vol. I. No. 1, pp. 12-16, No. 2, pp. 59-66, No. 3, pp. 100-105, 1916, Vol. II. No. 1. pp. 1 1-22, No. 2. pp. 46-53, No. 4, pp. 98-102, No. 5, 119-123.

*A konfirmáció reformja* (Reforming Confirmation). *Az Út*. 1916. Vol. 11. No. 7-8. pp. 196-199. 1917. Vol. III. No. 1. pp. 21-30.

*A kálvinista gyülekezetnevelés alapelvei* (The basic Principles of the Calvinist Education of a Congregation) *Az Út*, 1917, Vol. II. No. 5. pp. 217-223.

<sup>185</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *Vallásos világkép és életfolytatás* (The Religious World-View and Way of Life) Besztercebánya, Hungária Nyomda, 1913, pp. 1-34.

*A vallás lélektana* (The Psychology of Religion) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1914, Vol. XXVI. No. 7-8, pp. 424-443.

*A hit szeme*. (The Eyes of Faith) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1915, Vol. XXVII. No. 7-8, pp. 375-391.



was published in two parts: *A vallás az emberiség életében (Religion in the Life of Mankind)*, and *A vallás lényege és értéke (The Essence and the Value of Religion)* 1923.<sup>186</sup> This outstanding work, after putting the historical picture of religion in order from the point of view of phenomenology, discusses the problem of the reality of religion, examining it from the aspects of psychology, dialectics, and value theory in general, and its relation to culture in particular. Then in the second volume the author attempted to surpass the limits of the sphere of Böhm's conception concerning the way the features of reality and the functions of the understanding relate to the function of faith, and to shed light on the *sui generis* nature of religion.

Some other relevant essays are *A vallás a protestantizmusban (Religion in Protestantism)* 1911, *A tudatalatti (The Sub-Conscious)*, *Illúzió, suggestió, vallás (Illusion, Hypnosis, Religion)* 1925, *A szekták keletkezésének okai (The Causes of the Rising of Sects)* 1917.<sup>187</sup>

The following are essays in systematics, including the study of faith: *A lélek találkozása Istennel (The Soul Meeting God)* 1925, essays in ethics: *Az eszmények valósága (The Reality of Ideals)* 1923, *A keresztyénség az élet ítélőszéke előtt (Christianity Before the Tribunal of Life)* 1925, and Church building: *Öntudatos kálvinizmus (Self-Conscious Calvinism)* 1925.<sup>188</sup>

4. Essays in aesthetics and literature: *Magyar protestáns szépirodalom (Hungarian Protestant Literary Fiction and Poetry)* 1916, *Az erdélyi magyar irodalom kérdése (The Question of Hungarian Literature in Transylvania)* 1923, *A szépség hazája (The Country of Beauty)* 1925, *Petőfi öröksége (Petőfi's Heritage)* 1925, *A költő profétasága (The Poet's Prophethood)* 1925, *Az ifjúsági irodalom kérdése (The Question of Literature for the Youth)* 1925, and in addition literary reviews in different journals.<sup>189</sup> It is not our task now to discuss his literary activities.

We shall now present Sándor Makkai's period of value theology which he built upon the bases of the philosophy of Kant and Böhm, but not by examining his two volume essay entitled *A vallás az emberiség életében (Religion in the Life of Mankind)* and *A vallás lényege és értéke (The Essence of Religion And Its Value)* 1923,<sup>190</sup> which he himself called his chief work, and which we have already characterised in a few words.

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E. Boulroux: Tudomány és vallás a jelenkori filozófiában. E. Boulroux: Science and Religion in the Philosophy of the Present) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1915, Vol. XXVII. No. 3-4. pp. 227-237.

*A hit problémája (The Problem of Faith)* Part I. Budapest. Kókay Nyomda, 1916, pp. 1-96.

Az értelem és a hit harca (The Battle of Reason and Faith) *Akarat*, 1918. Vol. IX. No. 4-6, pp. 114-121, No. 7-8, pp. 137-143.

<sup>186</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *A vallás az emberiség életében. A vallás lényege és értéke.* (Religion in the Life of Mankind. The Essence and the Value of Religion) Torda, Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület, 1923, Vol. I, II, 172+151 p.

<sup>187</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *A vallás a protestantizmusban.* (Religion in Protestantism) *Protestáns Szemle* 1917, Vol. XXIX No. 6, pp. 524-533.

*A szekták keletkezésének okai* (The Causes of the Rising of Sects) Kolozsvár, *Az Út*, 1916, Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 68-80, No. 3, pp. 110-122.

*Illúzió, suggestió, vallás* in: *Zörgessetek és megnyitják nektek* (Illusion, Hypnosis, Religion, in: Knock and the Door Will Be Opened to You), 1925, pp. 33-41.

<sup>188</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *A keresztyénség az élet ítélőszéke előtt* (Christianity Before the Tribunal of Life), in: *Zörgessetek és megnyitják nektek* (Knock and the Door Will Be Opened to You) 1925, pp. 44-51.

*A lélek találkozása Istennel* (The Soul Meeting God) in: *Zörgessetek és megnyitják nektek* (Knock and the Door Will Be Opened to You) 1925. pp. 65-72.

*Az eszmények valósága* (The reality of Ideals), in: *„Írd meg, amiket láttál”* („Write down What You Have Seen” 1925, pp. 168-172.

*Öntudatos Kálvinizmus*, A református magyar intelligencia számára (Self-Conscious Calvinism, for the Hungarian reformed intelligentsia) Budapest, Soli De Gloia, 1925, 67. p.

<sup>189</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *Magyar protestáns szépirodalom* (Hungarian Protestant Literary Fiction and Poetry), *Protestáns Szemle*, 1916, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, pp. 50-59.

*Az erdélyi magyar irodalom kérdése* (The question of Transylvanian Hungarian Literature in: *„Írd meg, amit láttál”* 1925 pp. 173-178.

<sup>190</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *A vallás az emberiség életében. A vallás lényege és értéke* (Religion in the Life of Mankind. The Essence and the Value of Religion) Torda, Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület. Vol. I-II, 1923, 172+151 p.

Instead, we shall look at both a preliminary study of it, and a book written on its basis for building purposes. In the first we shall be able to observe Makkai's value theology *in statu nascendi*, in the second how he applied its fully-fledged ideas for building, and so we can obtain a clear picture of the whole of this theology.

At the beginning of his career in 1913 he wrote a study with the title *Vallásos világgép és életfolytatás* (*Religious World-View and Way of Life*).<sup>191</sup> Its subtitle is *Böhm Károly filozófiájának indításai egy filozófiai rendszer kiépítésére* (*Initiations in Károly Böhm's Philosophy into Building a System of Religious Philosophy*). In its introduction, in addition to pointing out his subject, he made a confession:

"I was induced to start writing what follows when, without being interested in the questions of metaphysics, I was examining *man* pure and simple, for whom religion appears as *experiences* in the life of his soul, and incidentally I got involved with Károly Böhm's philosophy, in which I found some basic motives, some indispensable starting points indeed, for working out a system of religious philosophy. What I shall expound now are as a matter of fact only the fundamentals of a whole system to be built, nevertheless they actually contain the whole in them in its germ forms, and they will also serve as starting points of all the problems to be raised later. Naturally they will not be means of discussing the *objective* truths of religion, but its psychological basis first of all, its essence, and its importance for the theory of value. Although it is probable that there is no theodicy outside of them."<sup>192</sup>

After these introductory remarks he briefly reviewed the history of the search for the essence of religion, from rationalism which first raised the problem, through Kant, Schleiermacher, and the neo-Kantians to the "latest researchers of the psychology of religion," by whom he meant Starbuck, Laube, James, Flourney, and Wundt. In conformity with Kant's view and in opposition to the moderns he quoted a statement by Böhm: "The content of religion must be determined with straightforward logical investigation and not in ecstasy."<sup>193</sup>

Starting out from the basis given in Böhm's philosophy, Makkai held that "No other things can be taken as the roots of religion than what are the roots of all starts at all, namely the eternal struggle between the relations of reality and the drives in partial life ideas to develop, and the gap or break between idea and reality, of which the emotional image is grief." The difference is only that in the emergence of religious experience "it is not the collisions of partial ideas separating according to the types of life acts that are at work, but *the collision of the total idea of life itself with reality*... Here life risen to consciousness in its own infinity makes a claim for full totality." The attempts however at "fracturing" infinity to fit short-lived relations fail, and in helpless man given himself up to death under the guidance of experience the desire for much missed infinity is born. This feeling indefinable in itself only obtains self-supporting power if it becomes an ideal, that is if it rises to consciousness and "changes into an image in man. And the collision of the total idea with the world may only become harmonised by the creation of a world-image, in which life has *idealiter* been triumphant already, that is it has grown fully-fledged unimpededly. This is *the religious world-view*."<sup>194</sup>

According to the common content of religious world-views the world is an orderly totality with God, the all-embracing consciousness, in its centre, who creates, rules, and sustains everything. Man is a conscious part of this system. "The religious world-view... is always a picture of an ideal state: The religious ideal is the kingdom of God. The quality of the picture, and the ideal way for man to live in this world, depend on the quality of the image of God. The image of God is the starter of a religious course of life. For the image of God is the self-projection of human character, a perfect copy of its own self, consequently it is a standard of life."<sup>195</sup> Thus the significance of religious experience is in its being "the construction of value-markers for the uplifting of human life."<sup>196</sup>

At this point the whole of the ontological process described so far changes its course to continue on the plane of axiology. According to Böhm in religion the most valuable is set for man as his aim and as the soother of his desire. "God is the sum total of all values."<sup>197</sup> He is the absolute life standard, containing all

<sup>191</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *Vallásos világgép és életfolytatás*. Böhm Károly filozófiájának indításai egy vallásfilozófiai rendszer kiépítésére. (Religious World-View and Way of Life. Initiations in Károly Böhm's Philosophy into Building a System of Religious Philosophy) Besztercebánya, Hungária Nyomda, 1913, pp. 1-34.

<sup>192</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. p. 3.

<sup>193</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. p. 8.

<sup>194</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. pp. 14-16.

<sup>195</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. pp. 22-23.

<sup>196</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>197</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. p. 23.

that is good, beautiful, and true for us in their fullness. That is why he attracts us irresistibly. And because of that he, who is the crowning of our self-thesis, elicits the feeling of love in us and becomes the object of our adoration as the axiological perfection. It is this axiological perfection that Böhm calls "holiness".<sup>198</sup> To grasp holiness no special sense is needed but the ability to imagine the concept of value as consummation definite in its totality. As this is possible for everyone, religion is inherent in everyone, though not as a special sense, but as "a reformed psychological process and mechanism." That is why its content can be determined by simple logical investigation and not in ecstasy. Holiness is neither some separate reality, nor an attribute of reality to which it *realiter* adheres, it is merely *the effect* that any occurrence of perfect reality produces in us, and it only takes on its special form of religion, when we imagine the completeness of totality. This imagining is only possible by intellectual work.

To avoid misunderstandings the author took special care to emphasise here that when our aim is to establish the psychological basis, the nature, and the axiological importance of religion, we are not saying anything about the reality or non-existence of the objective facts of religion. Presenting the image of God as a creation of the individual is merely considering the only knowable anthropological side, independently from and free of all metaphysics and articles of faith. Eternal reality itself can only be lived through, but not explained. So the foregoing do not apply to the actual other-worldly reality of religious experience, because all of it is just the way, the eternal process of approach by which we make religious experience our own. According to Makkai, however, this is still the most effective theodicy for religious man, because it describes the universality of religious experience, its necessary and unavoidable psychological process. But this way leading to God must not be confused with God himself!

In the second part of the essay he stated, "On the basis of the foregoing it has been made certain that it is the *quality* of religious world-views, the contents of which are always identical, that determines a religious life course. The impetus of which this world-view is the source is inherent not in its content, but in its quality, which is its *individual* side."<sup>199</sup> People of little intelligence can only attain elevated religious life courses under influences received from others, guided by prophets, evangelists, ministers. And the lives full of miracles and sacrifices of great-hearted prophets and martyrs with shining faces could ever be nourished only by magnificent religious world-views.

The aim of a religious life course is the harmony of life in the individual. Even in a religious life of grief the individual finds in God the perfection of his life, and his only stronghold and happiness. The two determining factors of such a religious life course are faith and hope: the faith in being guided by God, in the eternity and constancy, i.e. regularity, of life, and in its fulfilment in God. Until these are attained, it is hope that sustains the pre-visualisation of what faith promises, and the certainty of its future fulfilment, which is not Spinoza's *laetitia inconstans*: anxious joy; it is trust in God, projected into the future. Therefore both faith and hope are directed towards the loving God, and the common resultant force of these two going through the heart of the God of love becomes manifest in life as the essence of a religious life course: love. In connection with God, this love means giving oneself up to him completely. In connection with the world, it means sympathy. This self-up-giving and sympathetic love as such can not remain inactive. With life given up to God it wages a continuous fight for sanctifying the world, and the aim of the fight is peacefulness.

In the concluding chapter Makkai demonstrated that to create a religious world-view rooted in the individual's elementary life needs, it is necessary for one to have the intelligence to have a feel for, and to imagine, the fullness of life and the consummation of values. This can not be found in everyday people. So "*those everlasting geniuses are regarded to be the incarnations of the religious ideal* who have been the classic embodiments of religious experience, that is, *the founders of religions*." "The creator and the embodiment of the world-view and the life course which agree with the eternal essence of religious experience was Jesus."<sup>200</sup> He is the everlasting incarnation of religion. He set the most noble ideal for man: spirit, when he called God spirit. And thereby he provided the impetus that makes the perfect development of the self possible. At this point the general philosophy of religion becomes the philosophy of the Christian religion, with the inclusion into the discussion of special religious problems (sin, rebirth, predestination, grace), the conditions of whose solutions are also given here already.

In his aforementioned chief work (*Religion in the Life of Humanity* together with *The Nature of Religion and Its Value*) which was to be published ten years later, Makkai built up his philosophy of religion in detail, starting out from this study written earlier, and worked out how the features of reality and the functions of the

<sup>198</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>199</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. p. 25.

<sup>200</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. pp. 33., 34.

understanding relate to the functions of faith on a Böhman basis, which then he thought to be "the only possible" one.<sup>201</sup>

At the culmination of his value-theological period he wrote *Öntudatos kálvinizmus (Self-Conscious Calvinism)*<sup>202</sup> for the layman, to present him with a review of the phases of the history of modern theology, and of his own value-theological standpoint. He stated that despite the indifference of the public, there had been a just as great and wonderful change and a turn of direction in theology as in the life of the natural sciences. The formerly scholastic type theology, discussing transcendental, irrational, supra-empirical subjects, was transformed into the science of religion. That meant a complete turn in the history of theology. From then on not God was its subject, but the fact of religion itself, that is, the religious life of the human spirit. No longer was it important *what* religion teaches, how it *verifies* its doctrines, instead the doctrines and phenomena of religion became illustrations of an underlying reality from which they grow, and which is religion itself as historical and psychological fact. It is this experience, this fact of *humanity*, of which theology became the explanation. This concept of theology first suggested by Schleiermacher had been built into a rich system including branches of science like biblical criticism, Church history, universal comparative religious history, the psychology and the philosophy of religion, ethics, and the study of faith, which had been flourishing since.

In the author's opinion, however, at the time of writing the book this theology as the science of religion had just had another turn, and *its latest and most modern period had its rebirth*.<sup>203</sup> Namely in László Ravasz's *Homiletics* there had appeared a new conception of theology which was independent of the science of religion. According to it the science of religion is a legitimate, necessary science valuable on its own, but it is *not theology*, least theology *proper*. Theology proper must be found in the now germinating branch of scholarship László Ravasz called *practical theology*, or *Church life studies*, or *religious policy*. Theology is the *study of the living and life-giving Gospel*, it investigates the scientifically acquired facts about the Bible and the Church from a new aspect, as containers, in which a system of values is hidden that is ordained and able to powerfully transform and sanctify the life of modern man. The *scientific* tasks of theology are just the unravelling of this religious value system, its captivating presentation to us, and its branching according to its building functions as preparation for its introduction into the life activities of the Church. Theology had entered the phase of the concept of *constructive theology*. To this the science of religion can only contribute material in the form of clarified cognitive pictures of *facts*, but it does not have the key to re-evaluate the psychological realities of either the Bible or the Church. That is exactly the task of theology. Theology must provide the plans for the fight for freedom from sin, and for the kingdom of God to be built, together with the theoretical knowledge that is indispensable for this fight and this building programme. *Theology is practical dogmatics and education*.

As little as the above said is enough to establish the simplest and the most magnificent truth that can be said about Sándor Makkai, namely that his much blessed life was that of a *preacher* who started from value theology and arrived at Logos theology. After being subjected to László Ravasz's fertilising influences, the underlying principle of the style of his preaching, and also of the generation of theologians working together with him in the final period of value theology, could be recognised as *the subordination of artistic elements with the aim of liberating the forces of construction*.<sup>204</sup> It is in this spirit of spreading the Gospel and of building that he wrote his works of his new period: *A szabadság vallása (The Religion of Freedom)* 1917, *Hittem, azért szóltam (I Believed, Therefore I Spoke)* 1913, *A halál mysteriuma (The Mystery of Death)* 1918, *Írd meg, amiket láttál (Write Down What You Have Seen)* 1923, *Zörgesetek és megnyitják nektek (Knock and the Door Will Be Opened to You)* 1925.<sup>205</sup> In a small book entitled *A Biblia (The Bible)* 1915 he

<sup>201</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *A vallás az emberiség életében. A vallás lényege és értéke.* (Religion in the Life of Mankind. The Essence and the Value of Religion) Torda. Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület, Vol. II, pp. 125-133.

<sup>202</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *Öntudatos kálvinizmus. A református magyar intelligencia számára* (Self-Conscious Calvinism. For Reformed Hungarian Intelligentsia) Budapest, Soli Deo Gloria, 1925, pp. 1-67.

<sup>203</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: op. cit. p. 27.

<sup>204</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *Az erdélyi magyar református irodalom 1850-től napjainkig* (Transylvanian Hungarian Reformed Literature from 1850 to Our Days) Kolozsvár, Minerva Nyomda, 1925, p. 56.

<sup>205</sup> MAKKAJ, S.: *A szabadság vallása* (The Religion of Freedom) Kolozsvár, Stief Nyomda, 1910.

„*Hittem, azért szóltam*”. Vallásos elmélkedések (I Believed, Therefore I Spoke”. Religious meditations) Kolozsvár, Egyházi Újság Könyvtára, 1, (ed. Samu Barabás), Gombos Ferenc Lyceumnyomda, 1913, 88. p.

*A halál mysteriuma* (The Mystery of Death) Magyar Evangéliumi Keresztény Diákszövetség, 1925, 70. p.

„*Írd meg, amit láttál*”. Beszéd, elmélkedések, előadások („Write Down, What You Have Seen”. Speeches, meditations, lectures) Kolozsvár, Minerva Nyomda, 1923, 185. p.

presented information about the Scriptures for building, in another called *Kegyelemből hit által* (*By Grace through Faith*)<sup>206</sup> he summed up the groundwork, content, and apology of Reformed Christian religion.

Both he and his contemporaries "focus their attention on securing more profound thinking and practical effectiveness, with the best of them turning to the inner worlds of psychological events even for aids of demonstration, and finding material for illustration there. As a result, the art-for-art's-sake character of their preaching, especially the colourfulness and variety of demonstration, become very restrained in comparison with László Ravasz's style, and they even get rid of it; but on the other hand in respect of the profundity of thinking and of direct building power, they sometimes even surpass their master."<sup>207</sup> Their characteristic features were insisting in their sermons on ethical questions, and on ones concerning world-view, as well as on conscious life-shaping Calvinist Church membership. This necessary step meant a step forward in Hungarian Reformed Church literature in the direction which Sándor Makkai pointed out in a speech signalling the end of the period and the beginning of a new one: "The Christianity that has identified itself with the capitalist middle-class world order and discredits the Gospel is not able and does not deserve to survive it. Only if it is able to radiate the personal, spiritual empire of Jesus Christ's love as opposed to the empire of money and weapons, will it have life."<sup>208</sup>

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*Zörgessetek és megnyitatik nektek.* (Knock and the Door Will Be Opened to You) Kolozsvár *Az Út*, 1925, 332. p.

<sup>206</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *A Biblia. Útmutató a Szentírás tanulmányozásához középiskolás növendékek számára.* (The Bible. Guide for studying the Holy Scriptures, for pupils of secondary schools) Kolozsvár, *Az Út*, 1915, 69 p.

See in addition: Note 201.

<sup>207</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *Az erdélyi református egyházi irodalom 1850-től napjainkig* (The Transylvanian Reformed Church Literature from 1850 to Our Days) Kolozsvár, Minerva Nyomda, p. 56.

<sup>208</sup> BERECSKY, A.: „Az ő kegyelme nekem is elég”. („His Grace Is Enough for Me, Too.” Funeral address at the burial of Makkai, S.) 1951.

## PART THREE:

# THE CLOSING PHASE OF VALUE-THEOLOGICAL ASPIRATIONS

It can be stated that the final period of the trend of value theology already started with Sándor Makkai. In his generation the particular attention paid to liberalism could no longer be found. The evangelical trend that originated in Budapest was already past, too. The generation of new theologians, however, on the one hand regarded the scientific spirit of idealistic criticism radiating from them as *a progressive element of the recent past*, on the other they appreciated and furthered the personal power and life-shaping forces of living faith that was manifest in them. This generation was building upon László Ravasz's value theology and regarded him as their master, but they also made efforts to enrich and develop what they got from him both in scientific theology and constructive literature. Accepting Böhmian critical idealism in Ravasz's and Bartók's interpretations, they extended it to further parts of the history of religion, cultural history, psychology, and the philosophy of religion. They also applied it to fields their masters had not conquered. They extended the application of the value system that Ravasz first of all used in the theory of preaching the Gospel to education and social problems. From the point of view of style they further reduced interest in aesthetic rules to deepen special building elements.<sup>209</sup>

Within the framework of this study we can treat the works of this generation much more briefly, regarding that we can not find many original elements of value theology in their writings. Furthermore, usually only their works written at the very beginning of their careers can be classified as value-theological, however excellent works of great erudition they might have produced otherwise.

### JÓZSEF VÁSÁRHELYI (1892—1916)

He passed away very young as a theologian of great promise. Evidences of his talents were the numerous works of lasting value he produced during his short life and left behind. Even though most of them were left unfinished, their scientific and artistic values are undeniable. He was a born cultural historian and aesthetician, a superior student of languages, history, psychology, and aesthetics, who had accumulated a large amount of knowledge in each field. He had an exceptional talent for analysing facts, and he was also excellent at synthesis to provide concise overall pictures. He viewed every problem through the eyes of a universal philosopher, and expressed his message with his original visualising power.

*Vázlatok Baksay Sándor írói arcképehez (Sketches to a Writer's Portrait of Sándor Baksay)* 1915, and *Az orosz regény és az orosz jellem (The Russian Novel and the Russian Character)* 1916 were exquisite writings in aesthetics.<sup>210</sup>

As a theologian he aimed at re-interpreting the theological disciplines from the view-point of the history of religion. He started with investigating the New Testament and left to us a lecture with the title *Jézus Krisztus háborús világa (The World of Wars of Jesus Christ)* 1916,<sup>211</sup> as well as a popular series about the apostle

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<sup>209</sup> MAKKAI, S.: op. cit. pp. 51-52.

<sup>210</sup> VÁSÁRHELYI, J.: *Vázlatok Baksay Sándor írói arcképehez (Sketches to a Writer's Portrait of Sándor Baksay)* *Protestáns Szemle* 1915, Vol. XVIII, No. 7, pp. 473-489.

Az orosz regény és az orosz jellem. (The Russian Novel and the Russian Character) *Protestáns Szemle*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, pp. 60-69.

<sup>211</sup> VÁSÁRHELYI, J.: *Jézus Krisztus háborús világa (The World of Wars of Jesus Christ)* Kolozsvár, Stief Nyomda, 1916, 10. p.

Paul written in the years 1914-15.<sup>212</sup> Then he wrote two preliminary studies with the titles *Pál apostolra vonatkozó kutatások evolúciója* (*The Evolution of the Researches About the Apostle Paul*), and *Kultúrhistóriai bevezetés Pál apostol korához* (*A Cultural-Historical Introduction to the Age of the Apostle Paul*).<sup>213</sup> Finally he elaborated the subject in detail and published it shortly before his death under the title *Pál apostol* (*The Apostle Paul*) 1916.<sup>214</sup> Its parts on the cultures and religions of the age are especially outstanding. The posthumously published work entitled *A genfi 'Réveil' (The 'Réveil' in Geneva)* 1917<sup>215</sup> proved that he was excellent not only at grasping the spirit of antiquity but also at characterising the nature of modern religious developments.

## **LAJOS IMRE (1888—1974)**

In the final period of value theology he was a leading personality in practical theology, especially in the fields of religious education, pastoral work, and outreach activities. First with László Ravasz as editor-in-chief and Sándor Makkai as co-editor, later with Sándor Makkai and Sándor Tavaszy he edited the weekly paper *Az Út* (*The Way*), also publishing many valuable articles of his own in it. Their topics ranged from problems of Sunday school teaching through work among the youth, organising congregations in cities and villages and pastoring them, to the different types and unified principles of outreach work, which he discussed forcefully, with deep theological insight, opening new vistas. One of his most important works was *A gyermek vallása* (*The Religion of the Child*) 1912,<sup>216</sup> the first thorough essay in catechesis in Hungarian Protestant literature, and the first one that systematically investigated the religious psyche of childhood and youth; by vindicating the results of the psychological trends of the age and basing its criticism on them, however, the perspectives of the essay became too limited.

His works entitled *Az erkölcsi nevelés viszonya a valláshoz* (*The Relation of Moral Education to Religion*) 1913, *Vezérfonal az ifjúság gondozásához* (*A Guide to Pastoring Young People*) 1922, *A falu művelődése* (*Cultural Education in Villages*) 1922 discussed the whole sphere of contemporary problems concerning the education of the people, and national education. Further works discussing the same problematics: *A vallásitanítás problémája* (*The Problems of Teaching Religion*) 1914, *A magyar kálvinista lelkipásztor eszményképe* (*What Is an Ideal Hungarian Calvinist Pastor Like?*) 1922,<sup>217</sup> etc. According to Sándor Makkai "Lajos Imre is interested not so much in the nature and basic questions of the system of practical theology, as in the individual and social problems of Church building itself, in organising it, carrying it out, and deciding its content. In this regard he provides for and develops *the theory of organisation and the methodology* of the realisation of Ravasz's conception, disregarding the elaboration, however, of the *value systems themselves*

<sup>212</sup> VÁSÁRHELYI, J.: Pál apostol, Képsorozat (The Apostle Paul. A series of pictures) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1914, Vol. V, No. 7, pp. 137-139, No. 8, pp. 155-162, No. 9, pp. 195-197, 1915, Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 9-10, No. 2, pp. 29-31, No. 3, pp. 39-42, No. 4, pp. 58-60, No. 5, pp. 74-75, No. 6, 97-99.

<sup>213</sup> VÁSÁRHELYI J.: A Pál apostolra vonatkozó kutatások evolúciója. (The Evolution of the Researches About the Apostle Paul) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1915, Vol. XVII, No. 3-4, pp. 172-190.

Kultúrhistóriai bevezetés Pál apostol korához. (A Cultural Historical Introduction to the Age of the Apostle Paul) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1915, Vol. XVII, No. 6, pp. 392-416.

<sup>214</sup> VÁSÁRHELYI, J.: Pál apostol. Tanulmány az őskeresztény vallástörténet köréből (The Apostle Paul. A Study in Early Christian Religious History) Kolozsvár, The author's edition. 1916. 140. p.

<sup>215</sup> VÁSÁRHELYI, J.: A genfi „Réveil” (The “Réveil” in Geneva) Pozsony. A “Theológiai Szaklap” kiadása, 1917 (Wigand Grafikai Műintézet) 60 p.

<sup>216</sup> IMRE, L.: *A gyermek vallása* (The Religion of the Child) Hódmezővásárhely, Róth Nyomda, 1912, 110 p.

<sup>217</sup> IMRE, L.: *Az erkölcsi nevelés viszonya a valláshoz* (The Relation of Moral Education to Religion) Hódmezővásárhely, Nemes Nyomda, 1913, 80. p.

A vallásitanítás problémája (The Problem of Teaching Religion) *Protestáns Szemle* 1914. Vol. XXVI, No. 9-10, pp. 529-552.

Vezérfonal az ifjúság gondozásához (A Guide to Pastoring Young People) Budapest. Franklin, 1920, 151 p.

A falu művelődése. Vezérfonal a nép nevelői számára. (Cultural Education in Villages. A Guide to Educators of the People) Budapest, Studium 1922. 142 p.

of homiletics, catechesis, and pastoral work. He builds on a tacitly implied "practical dogmatics" still waiting to be written as the theory of the contents of practical theology."<sup>218</sup>

"His manner of doing theology is that of a goldsmith's at work," said about him János Marton, a professor in Sárospatak, "he patiently keeps hammering the smallest details into shape, and the pieces he has finished are masterpieces."<sup>219</sup>

## **SÁNDOR TAVASZY** **(1888—1951)**

He was a professor of theology in Kolozsvár, doing very high-quality work in the fields of general and cultural philosophy. He applied the principles of transcendental philosophy to studies of world-view and the history of philosophy. His works relevant to our essay are: *Az ismeretelmélet és a megismerés pszichológiája* (*The Psychology of Epistemology and of Cognition*) 1914, *Az emberiség életének filozófiája* (*The Philosophy of the Life of Mankind*) 1917, *Schleiermacher filozófiája* (*Schleiermacher's Philosophy*) 1918, *Históriai megismerés a teológiában* (*Historical Understanding in Theology*) 1918, *A jelenkor szellemi válsága* (*The Contemporary Spiritual Crisis*) 1923, *A nyugateurópai kultúra sorsa Spengler filozófiájának tükrében* (*The Fate of Western Culture in the Mirror of Spengler's Philosophy*) 1924, *Történelmünk új értékelése* (*The New Assessment of Our History*) 1923, *Világnézeti kérdések* (*Questions of World-View*) 1925.<sup>220</sup> His professorial inaugural lecture had the title *A keresztyén vallástudomány a lelkésznevelés szolgálatában* (*The Christian Science of Religion in the Service of the Training of Ministers*) 1921,<sup>221</sup> and in it he delineated a definite programme of Church building on a value-theological basis.

He did the same but from another aspect in articles in which he gave guidelines: *Mi a pietizmus és mi nem a pietizmus?* (*What Is Pietism and What Is Not Pietism?*) 1923, and *A nép fogalma életünkben és világnézetünkben* (*The Concept of the People in Our World-View and in Our Lives*) 1924.<sup>222</sup> He published a lot of critical reviews and articles in different Church periodicals. The profundity of his philosophical perspectives, the clearness and accuracy of his style, interpreting the historical spirit of his Church and applying it for building purposes, were the main features and characteristics of his works from this period. During later years he continued working on the basis of Logos theology.

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<sup>218</sup> MAKKAI, S.: *Az erdélyi református egyházi irodalom 1850-től napjainkig* (Transylvanian Reformed Church Literature from 1850 to Our Days) Kolozsvár, Minerva Nyomda, 1925, p. 55.

<sup>219</sup> MARTON, J.: Egykori előadásából (From a Lecture I Once Gave)

<sup>220</sup> TAVASZY, S.: *Az ismeretelmélet és a megismerés pszichológiája* (The psychology of Epistemology and of Cognition) Kolozsvár, Stief Nyomda, 1914, 128 p.

*Az emberiség életének filozófiája* (The Philosophy of the Life Mankind) *Protestáns Szemle* 1917, Vol. XXIX, No. 7, pp. 417-430.

*Históriai megismerés a teológiában* (Historical Understanding in Theology) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1918, Vol. XXIX, No. 7-10, pp. 240-260.

*Schleiermacher filozófiája*. Kolozsvár, Stief Nyomda, 1918, 110 p.

*A jelenkor szellemi válsága*. Kritikai útmutató (The Contemporary spiritual Crisis. A critical guide) Kolozsvár, Minerva Nyomda, 1923, 65 p.

*Történelmünk új értékelése*, *Az Út*, 1923, Vol. V, No. 2. pp. 92-95.

<sup>221</sup> TAVASZY, S.: *A keresztyén vallástudomány a lelkésznevelés szolgálatában* (The Christian Science of Religion in the Service of the Training of Ministers) *Református Szemle* 1921, Vol. XIV No. 19-20. pp. 206-214.

<sup>222</sup> TAVASZY, S.: *Mi a pietizmus, és mi nem pietizmus?* (What Is Pietism and What Is Not Pietism?) *Az Út*, 1923, Vol. V, No. 3, 123-127, No. 4, pp. 171-174.



## IMRE RÉVÉSZ (1889—1967)

Before he was elected Reformed Church bishop of Debrecen, he was a professor in Kolozsvár, and during his professorship he temporarily confessed value-theological views. In Makkai's words of appreciation, in his generation "he was the most delicate scholar and a very productive writer. The study of Church history was a family heritage to him also pursued by his father and his grandfather. He enriched that valuable and splendid legacy by providing philosophical basis to it, extending the subject matter remarkably, applying his artistic talents to it, and introducing into it the most up-to-date and constructive standpoints and values."<sup>223</sup>

In his work entitled *A tudományos egyháztörténetírás (The Scientific Study of Church History)* 1913<sup>224</sup> he expounded his views concerning the philosophy of history. His clear and relevant principles presented with great and thorough erudition exposed the decisive influence of critical idealism. His work entitled *Vallásunk a történelemben (Our Religion in History)* 1917<sup>225</sup> pointed up the common spirit of Christianity in the framework of an excellent historical review. In one of his best and most fascinating books called *Akikre nem volt méltó a világ (Whom the World Did Not Deserve)* 1917<sup>226</sup> he presented readers with a vivid and accurate characterisation of outstanding figures and symptomatic atmospheres of various ages. His books entitled *Dévai Bíró Mátyás tanításai (The Teachings of Mátyás Dévai Bíró)* 1915 and *Bod Péter mint történetíró (Péter Bod the Historian)* 1916<sup>227</sup> excelled as source studies.

His journalistic writings and formal speeches were arresting and fascinating because of their application of conclusions drawn from history to the current period, their public-opinion forming capacity, and the many thoughts of lasting value in them. Some examples: *A száműzött Rákóczi (Rákóczi in Exile)*, *A magyar protestantizmus problémája (The Problem of Hungarian Protestantism)*, *Bethlen Gábor a kálvinista fejedelem (Gábor Bethlen the Calvinist Ruler)*, *Nevelés az egyháztörténeti katedrán (Education from the Chair of Church History)*, *Elvek és féligazságok (Principles and Half-Truths)*, *Jelszavak revíziója (The Revision of Slogans)* 1914-18, and *A mai magyar kálvinizmus (Contemporary Hungarian Calvinism)* 1923.<sup>228</sup>

His essays in Church history were also of very high value: *Kálvin rágalmai (Slanders about Calvin)* 1914, *Vonások Cromwell önarcképéből (Lines from Cromwell's Self-Portrait)* 1915, *Húsz János és kora (John Huss and His Age)* 1916.<sup>229</sup> This extended and valuable research work was all done before the mid-course of his life, giving proof of Révész's exceptional intellectual capacities and his inspiration, and forecasting the future advocate of *spiritual Calvinism*.

<sup>223</sup> MAKKA S.: op. cit. p. 53.

<sup>224</sup> RÉVÉSZ, I.: *A tudományos egyháztörténet-írás* I. Főrészt, Elvi prolegomena és történeti áttekintés (The Scientific Study of Church History. Principled prolegomena and historical review.) Kolozsvár, Stief Nyomda, 1913, VII + 148 p.

<sup>225</sup> RÉVÉSZ, I.: *Vallásunk a történelemben*, in: Kecskeméthy, I.-Bartók, Gy., senior (ed.): *A mi vallásunk. (Our Religion in History)* A nagy reformáció négy százados évfordulójára. (On the 400th anniversary of the great reformation), Kolozsvár. Kolozsvári Református Teológiai Fakultás, 1917, pp. 191-313.

<sup>226</sup> RÉVÉSZ, I.: „*Akire nem volt méltó a világ*” („Whom the World Did Not Deserve”) Képek a keresztyénség történetéből (Pictures from the History of Christianity) Az Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület kiadása (Minerva) 1921, 144 p.

<sup>227</sup> RÉVÉSZ, I.: *Dévai Bíró Mátyás tanításai*. Tanulmány a magyar protestáns gondolkodás kezdeteiről (The Teachings of Mátyás Dévai Bíró. Study in the beginnings of Hungarian Protestant thinking) Kolozsvár, Stief Nyomda, 1915, 179 p.

*Bod Péter mint történetíró* (Péter Bod. the Historian) Kolozsvár. Stief Nyomda. 1916, 42 + 2 p.

<sup>228</sup> RÉVÉSZ, I.: *A száműzött Rákóczi (Rákóczi in Exile)*, *Protestáns Szemle*, 1914, Vol. XXVI, No. 5, pp. 301-304.

*A magyar protestantizmus problémája* (The Problem of Hungarian Protestantism), Kolozsvár (Az Erdélyi Kálvin Szövetség kiadványai 1.) 1914, 16 p.

Bethlen Gábor, a protestáns fejedelem (Gábor Bethlen the Protestant Ruler) *Protestáns Szemle* 1914, Vol. XXVI, No. 6, pp. 339-358.

*Nevelés az egyháztörténeti katedrán*. Székfoglaló értekezés (Education from the Chair of Church History. Inaugural essay) Kolozsvár, Stief Nyomda, 1915, 13 p.

*Jelszavak revíziója* (The Revision of Slogans) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1918. Vol. XXX. No. 4-6, pp. 189-201.

*A mai magyar Kálvinizmus* (Contemporary Hungarian Calvinism) Budapest, Bethlen Nyomda, 1923, 43 p.

<sup>229</sup> RÉVÉSZ, I.: *Kálvin-rágalmak (Slanders About Calvin)* *Protestáns Szemle*, 1914, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, pp. 37-60.

*Vonások a Cromwell-önarcképéből* (még egy adalék az angol szellem ismeretéhez) Lines from Cromwell's Self-Portrait, Another contribution to the Understanding of English Spirit) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1915, Vol. XXVII, No. 5. 291-301.

*Húsz János és kora* (John Huss and His Age) *Protestáns Szemle*, 1916, Vol. XVIII, No 1 pp 23-35.

## THE REAR-GUARD

The line of value-theologians ended with erudite scholars and preachers of clear understanding, who could not be taken as value theologians, if their theological standpoints or systems that they definitely held or were building in a period of their lives were taken into consideration. It is only in certain writings, usually from the beginning of their activities, or in certain features of their theological systems, that they displayed value theological characteristics, or gave definite evidences of being influenced by value theology to a significant extent.

Lajos Gönczy belonged to the group because of his work entitled *Az összehasonlító vallástörténeti módszer alkalmazásának kérdése* (*The Question of the Application of the Method of Comparative Religious History*).<sup>230</sup>

Ernő Mátyás wrote his studies *Pál apostol mystikája* (*The Mysticism of the Apostle Paul*) and *A vallásos misztika* (*Religious Mysticism*)<sup>231</sup> evidently on Böhmian foundations and in the spirit of value theology, with thorough application of the results of biblical sciences, penetrating psychological analysis, and shrewd use of the philosophy of religion.

Géza Nagy's work *A keresztyénség jövője* (*The Future of Christianity*) 1922<sup>232</sup> shed the light of sharp observations from cultural history on opposing views concerning his subject, and taking issue with philosophical solutions it looked for more spiritual and more constructive theological solutions, pointing to the plane of practical life.

Jenő Molnár took part in this scientific activity with the essay *Gourd János Jakab vallásfilozófiája* (*The Religious Philosophy of John James Gourd*) 1915, and by translating and footnoting Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*.<sup>233</sup>

Dezső Trócsányi held a doctor of philosophy title *sub auspiciis regis* of the University of Kolozsvár, became a professor of theology in Pápa, and was also active as a philosopher. Károly Böhm's influence was first of all evident in his philosophical works: *Bölcseleti bevezetés* (*Introduction to Philosophy*) 1934 and *Bölcselet történelem* (*History of Philosophy*) 1939.<sup>234</sup>

Sándor Imre, doctor of philosophy of Kolozsvár, the professor of education at the University of Szeged, received Böhmian influences during his education, and remained an ethical idealist all his life. His relevant works are: *Gyakorlati tanárképzés és református iskoláink* (*Practical Teacher Training and Our Reformed Church Schools*) 1903, *Protestáns szellem és újjáépítés* (*The Protestant Spirit and Rebuilding*) 1925, *A lelkesi hivatás nevelési szempontból* (*The Vocation to Ministry from the Educational Aspect*) 1930.<sup>235</sup>

Vince Vass was a student of theology in Pápa, doctor of philosophy of the University of Budapest, a professor of theology in Pápa, a pastor in Kecskemét. He wrote his two relevant works at the beginning of his career: *A vallási ismeretelmélet* (*Religious Epistemology*) 1915, and *Vallás és erkölcs* (*Religion and Ethics*)

<sup>230</sup> GÖNCZY, L.: *Az összehasonlító vallástörténeti módszer alkalmazásának kérdése* (*The Question of the Application of the Method of Comparative Religious History*) Gyulafehérvár 1918.

<sup>231</sup> MÁTYÁS, E.: *Pál apostol mystikája*. Újszövetségi vallástörténeti tanulmány. (The Mysticism of the Apostle Paul. An essay in the Religious History of the New Testament) Kolozsvár. Minerva Nyomda, 1921, 106 p.

*A vallásos misztika*. Vallásfilozófiai tanulmány (Religious Mysticism, An essay in religious philosophy) Kolozsvár, Minerva, 1921, 47 p.

<sup>232</sup> NAGY, G.: *A keresztyénség jövője*. (The Future of Christianity) Székelyudvarhely. Könyvnyomda Rt.. 1922. 136 p.

<sup>233</sup> MOLNÁR, J.: *Gourd János Jakab vallásfilozófiája* (The Religious Philosophy of John James Gourd). Bölcsészettörténelmi tanulmány (Essay in Philosophical History), Marosvásárhely. 1922, 96 p.

KANT, L.: *The Critique of Practical Reason*, transl. and comm. by Molnár, J.. Budapest. Franklin, 1922, 205 p.

<sup>234</sup> TRÓCSÁNYI, D.: *Bölcseleti bevezetés* (Introduction to Philosophy), Pápa. Főiskolai Nyomda. 1934, 472 p.

*Bölcselet-történelem* (History of Philosophy), Pápa, Főiskolai Nyomda, 1939, 477 p.

<sup>235</sup> IMRE, S.: *Gyakorlati tanárképzés és református iskoláink*. (Practical Teacher Training and Our Reformed Church Schools) Debrecen, Csokonai Nyomda, 1903, p. 16.

*Protestáns szellem és újjáépítés* (The Protestant Spirit and Rebuilding) Budapest, Bethlen Nyomda, 1925, 10 p.

*A lelkesi hivatás nevelési szempontból* (The Vocation to Ministry from the Educational Aspect) Budapest, Első Kecskeméti Hírlapkiadó Rt. 1930, 10 p.

1917.<sup>236</sup> "Essentially, religion itself is life: it is the full freedom of consciousness, its enrichment with its own non-conscious content, and it is the concentration of all forces from the point of view of sanctifying, divine action,"<sup>237</sup> he echoed the Böhman statement in the summary of his former work of larger dimensions.

Sándor Csiksz, a professor of the Divinity Faculty of the University of Debrecen, gave an inaugural address as dean of the faculty in June 1926, expressing his firm belief again in the science of religion as theology. The title of the address was *A vallás gyökere (The Roots of Religion)*.<sup>238</sup> He found these roots in the religious instinct, which "has to ennoble and confine within limits the instincts of both race preservation and self-preservation, and the whole of our human life together with them, so that the community of human beings should become what unites all these three instincts in wonderful harmony, i.e. the family of God as Jesus meant it."<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> VASS, V.: *A vallási ismeretelmélet* (Religious Epistemology) Komárom. Jókai Nyomda. 1915. 172.

*Vallás és erkölcs* (Religion and Ethics) Pápa, Főiskolai Nyomda. 1917, 70 p.

<sup>237</sup> VASS, V.: *A vallási ismeretelmélet* (Religious Epistemology) Komárom. Jókai Nyomda. 1915, p. 163.

<sup>238</sup> CSIKESZ, S.: *A vallás gyökere* (The Roots of Religion), in: *Csiksz Sándor emlékkönyvek* (Memorial Books of Sándor Csiksz, Vol. 5. (prepared for the press by Módos, L.), Debrecen, 1943, 1-14 p.

<sup>239</sup> CSIKESZ, S.: op. cit. p. 14.

## SUMMARY:

# FROM SEEKING CERTAINTY TO THE CERTAINTY OF THE WORD

By way of summarising the importance of neo-Kantian and value-theology, the following can be said, taking the interdependence of the viewpoints of history, spiritual history, and the history of salvation within the history of theology into consideration:

In this new period of world history, at a time when the vindication of social justice is unavoidable, but when the decline of spirituality threatens mankind with disastrous effects (as Albert Schweitzer also believes), a historical appreciation of neo-Kantian and value theology points up the struggle and unity of opposites in dialectical tension. On the one hand there was a historical need for the testimonies of the spirit, the demonstration of values, the insistence on the importance of ethicality, and the recognition of the unparalleled significance of personality in the process of depersonalisation and in the world-wide crises of mass hysteria. On the other hand all these had an alibi role when imperatively urgent historical actions ought to have been taken to remedy social injustices. That was emphasised in Mihály Bucsay's lecture on the history of Hungarian Reformed Church theology when he said about Böhman philosophy: "...it was one of the philosophical systems..., a variety of the so-called Cartesian philosophies of the mind, built up in a very consistent, up-to-date manner. When however it made its appearance in lecture halls, the feature that made it gain acceptance was rather its suitability for soothing the nerves. For at the beginning of the century before the First World War, a careful observer was warned by many signs that we were staggering on the brink of disaster..., the great world powers were arming themselves against each other..., the sufferings of millions of industrial and agrarian proletarians meant that huge masses of social explosive material were accumulating..., the adherent of neo-Kantianism was intoxicated with pride of seeing the mind as the creator and the law-giver behind everything, behind nature and society, science and politics."<sup>240</sup>

In that situation, just like today and as a matter of fact like in all times, beyond the mind or the spirit of philosophy and theology it was the divine Spirit who was needed, of whom it can be said by concretising the Gospel in John 1:14 in both a personal and social sense that "the end of all his ways is flesh"(Oetinger). Only Satanic spirit remains all the time in the realm of spirituality, the divine Spirit descends to make his dwelling among us and becomes flesh.

It is only by accepting this double-but-one, dialectic type, socio-historical viewpoint, that a spiritual-historical appreciation can be made unequivocal. That is what Sándor Koncz means by saying, "Value theology assumed great importance in the history of theology, because after the period of rational-critical theology it worked out the scientific system of constructive theology on the basis of modern religious psychology and value theory, fostered its victory, and thereby it was instrumental in clearing the sky of theology in which yet more imposing, more surprising perspectives have opened up."<sup>241</sup>

These perspectives, which are more clearly visible today, are really surprising. Now it is becoming evident that neo-Kantian theologians, who always maintained a very high, sometimes the highest possible spiritual standard, performed a single swing of the pendulum of the 20th century development of Protestant theology to the final point, from where the spiritual pendulum has started its way back to move along in the opposite direction. All of them were united in being carried to subjective idealism by their search for *certainty*. Being subjectivists, they were led to the notion of *value* by their need for *reality*. The logical structure of value necessarily drove them to *experience*, because experience is *consciousness of value*. Finally, *theological needs* led then to *Logos theology*.

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<sup>240</sup> BUCSAY, M.: Teológiai történeti áttekintés az 1870-től kezdődő fél évszázadról egyházunkban (A Review of the Theological History of Fifty Years of Our Church Beginning with 1870) *Református Egyház*, 1965, Vol. XVII, No. 9, pp. 208-211.

<sup>241</sup> KONCZ, S.: *Hit és vallás. A magyar református vallástudományi teológia kibontakozása és hanyatlása* (Faith and Religion. The Development and Decay of the Hungarian Reformed Theology of the Science of Religion. Debrecen, Csuka László könyvnyomdája. 1942, p. 106.

A review of the protestant line of 20th century theology also reveals the next single swing *back* in the opposite direction in *Logos theology* and its border-line theologians, as it moves along, starting out from the objectivity of Karl Barth, through the historicity and subjectivity of Brunner, the illusionism as it were of Bultmann, to arrive at Tillich's single question of existence.<sup>242</sup> All of them had faith, that is why they spoke of the Calvinian sum total of the Scriptures, the great *positive sign* of Christ's cross, to further the understanding of God *plus* ourselves.

That leads us over to the appreciation from the aspect of the history of salvation, which is only fully known by God, who, forgiving us our theologies and sanctifying them, uses them to his own glory.

Praising God and loving man, we must continue cherishing the truths and values advocated in the period of value theology, and at the same time we ought to surpass them in respects of both theology and socio-cultural achievements, to expose truths of the Gospel that speak more plainly to contemporary man.

*Solt Deo gloria!*

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<sup>242</sup> ZÄHRNT, 1966, Gives a good review of the theological trends of the 20th century, from Barth up to Tillich.