

from contemporary Christian writers. It has recently been published in two volumes as *The Fourth Lesson in the Daily Office* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973f).

The idea of a collection of extra-Biblical spiritual readings for daily reflection is a good one, but Campling's selection, in my opinion, suffers from being too exclusively contemporary. It lacks the historical balance and richness of the magnificent new edition of the Roman Breviary which has been prepared under the authorisation of the Second Vatican Council for the use of all Catholic clergy. Entitled *The Divine Office: The Liturgy of the Hours according to the Roman Rite* (London, Sydney & Dublin: Collins, Dwyer & Talbot, 1974, £11.50 each), its three sumptuous volumes, totalling over six thousand pages, make our efforts in liturgical revision look almost dilettante in comparison. No new Protestant reform of worship will be able to ignore it. It is full of spiritual riches; a judicious blend of Scripture, psalms, prayer, hymns, poetry, and readings from the great patristic and medieval spiritual writers of the Church, all skilfully woven into the texture of the Christian year.

Finally, I shall say something about three books which I have [p. 112](#) found very helpful in relation to particular aspects of the ministry. On the task and opportunity of Christian preaching, I know nothing better than Karl Barth's little volume *Prayer and Preaching*, with an introduction by James Stewart (S.C.M. Press, 1964). For depth of genuinely spiritual pastoral insight—as distinct from pastoral insights which are just an amalgam of perspective derived from other professions—*The Diary of a Russian Priest*, by Alexander Elchaninov (Faber, 1967) is unsurpassed. Elchaninov was a parish priest of the Russian Orthodox Church in France in the years between the two world wars; he writes with a penetrating simplicity that is the distinctive fruit of a lifetime of prayer and close observation of people. For clergy who overwork, or are in other ways prone to lose a sense of proportion in their ministry, there is a lot of shrewd as well as sanctified common sense in Charles Spurgeon's *Lectures to My Students* (1889), selections from which have recently been republished by Helmut Thielicke in his book *Encounter with Spurgeon* (James Clarke, 1964). 'A mouthful of sea air,' Spurgeon writes, 'or a stiff walk in the wind's face, would not give grace to the soul, but it would yield oxygen to the body, which is next best.'

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Johann Georg Hamann on Bible and Revelation

by HELGO LINDNER

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ANYONE who undertakes to examine thoroughly the problems of the historico-critical approach to the Bible will have to direct his attention time and again to that period in which the 'historical' and 'critical' work achieved a breakthrough at our universities. The

Ago of Enlightenment did not merely bring far-reaching changes for the general history of ideas. For the Bible-question in particular it brought the swing from the orthodoxy of traditional Protestantism to the historical approach in contemporary theology,¹ with which we are still struggling today.

I. A STATEMENT OF HAMANN'S ON THE LINGUISTIC QUALITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A short work by Hamann,² dated 1759, deserves our special attention here: It is the first of three letters ('Clover leaf of Hellenistic letters'—*Kleeblatt hellenistischer Briefe*) which Hamann published in 1762 together with other earlier works of his,³ under the title **P. 114** 'Crusades of the Philologist' (*Kreuzzuge des Philologen*).⁴ The occasion for this particular piece of writing was an academic dispute on the quality of New Testament Greek. In 1755, the Orientalist and Graecist G.D. Kypke had published a treatise (*Observationes sacrae*), in which he had subjected the New Testament to a stylistic comparison with classical Greek authors. In doing, so, he had come to the conclusion that the NT authors did not come up to the standard of Attic prose. The reply of another scholar from the University of Königsberg, about which we have no further information,⁵ must have been the direct motivation for Hamann's statement. Here is the train of Hamann's thought: A book that brings only a compilation of excerpts from profane authors does not deserve the title 'Sacred Observations', because it fails to recognise the singularity of the Bible. In order to evaluate the 'style of the New Testament', one needs not only detailed philological knowledge ('what is good Greek'), but also basic ('philosophical') insights into the nature of language, which are not as yet available. What is to be noted is this: Language cannot be judged separately from the person who is speaking (writing) and his life-situation (place, time, etc.). The style of the Gospels, for example, confirms unequivocally⁶ what we know of their authors, namely that they were in the first place Jews under Roman rule and secondly no scholars. The Greek of Matthew the tax-collector *cannot* look like that of a Xenophon. Anyway, the life and thought of the Christians presented something quite new in relation to the environment of their time (to the world as it then was), and whoever lived differently, necessarily also spoke differently. Thus 'the way of the Christians' had to receive 'a new language and a holy style in order to distinguish it (from other ways)', and

¹ G. Hornig gave his book on Job. Sal. Semler (Göttingen, 1961) the title *The beginnings of historico-critical theology*. Semler's major work on the 'free examination of the Canon' was published in 1771–1775 (4 volumes).

² Born 1730 at Königsberg. Converted 1758 in London through the reading of the Bible. Back in Königsberg he earned his living as administrator of a warehouse. He was familiar with J. Kant, the great philosopher of his home town, but was his first and most profound critic. He died in 1788 at Pempelfort near Münster.

³ Among them is the programme of the movement of 'Storm and Stress': *Aesthetica in nuce* (1762) (J.G. Herder, J.W. Goethe).

⁴ In Nadler's edition, Vol. II. The first Hellenistic Letter is to be found there on pp. 169–73. It is also printed in full in M. Seil's selection *Entkleidung und Verklärung* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 261–69. The commentary on Hamann's major works by F. Blanke and K. Grunder refers to the Letter in Vol. 3.

⁵ Cf. Fritz Blanke, *Hamann-Studien* (Zürich, 1956), p. 88.

⁶ '... is the most authentic evidence of ..' Nadler II, p. 170; Seils, p. 262.

right up to the present time the special language of the Christians⁷ is a proof of their P. 115 Hebrew origin. 'The Oriental colouring of our pulpit style leads us back to the cradle of our race and our religion.'⁸

The human characteristic of NT language—with its Hebraisms and grammatical irregularities—also confirms the Spirit of God that stands behind the books of the New Testament as their originator. The inspiration of the NT is in accordance with God's emptying himself in his Son and with his 'humility' (*Demuth*) in the work of creation. 'It belongs to the unity of the divine revelation that the Spirit of God humble, himself and empties himself of his majesty through the stylus held by the human hands of godly men driven by him, just as much as the Son humbles himself in the form of a servant, and as the whole creation is a work of deepest humility.'⁹ The 'divine style' chose 'the stupid, the insipid, the base' (cf. [I Corinthians 1:27](#)!). Accordingly, there is a need on the part of the reader of Holy Scripture for 'enthusiasm', for loving intimacy which is capable of 'recognising the rays of heavenly glory in such disguise'.¹⁰ The contestable literary form of the divine records is in accordance with the weakness and frailty of the apostle ([II Corinthians 4:7](#)). Going by the criteria of rhetoric, NT prose, together with, e.g. the newspaper and letter style, belongs to the 'lower manner of speech' (*humile genus dicendi*). In this lowliness they are like the 'colt, whereon yet never man sat, the foal of an ass', upon which the Lord rode into Jerusalem.¹¹ The inclusion of elements taken over from the Hellenistic world also fits into this context: Paul takes heathen themes 'captive to obey Christ'. Conclusion: The 'holy style' of the New Testament, the '*stylus curiae* of the Kingdom of Heaven' can only be recognised by the reader who is intimately acquainted with and enraptured by the humility of God. p. 116

II. ON THE INTERPRETATION OF HAMANN'S PUBLICATION

In his inaugural address in Zurich (1929),¹² church historian Fritz Blanke drew attention to the amazing modernity of Hamann's comparison of NT Greek with the newspaper and letter style as the 'lowest class of Greek style'. 'Hamann adds¹³ that only a little of this newspaper Greek has been preserved; but this complaint is no longer fitting today, as you know. Papyrus findings have made us acquainted with the most everyday form of the

⁷ E.g. 'language of Canaan', but not in a derogatory sense. Cf. Hamann's linguistic usage in the *Aesthetica* (Nadler II, p. 197; Seils, p. 262). The expression 'language of Canaan' comes from [Isaiah 19:18](#).

⁸ Nadler II, p. 170; Seils, p. 263. As far as the 'oriental' character of the Bible is concerned, we can note that August Hermann Franke had already founded a *collegium orientale theologiae* in Halle in 1702, and it was this *collegium* that organised the first critical edition of the Hebrew Bible (E. Beyreuther: *Der Geschichtliche Auftrag des Pietismus in der Gegenwart*, Calwer Hefte 66, 1963, p. 15).

⁹ At this point Hamann's formulation takes up [II Peter 1:21](#): 'Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke forth God' (Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, pp. 263ff.).

¹⁰ Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264.

¹¹ Cf. [Mark 11:2](#); [Luke 19:30](#); also [Matthew 21:5](#).

¹² *Gottessprache und Menschengesprache bei J.G. Hamann* (Theol. Blätter, 1930), in Blanke's *Hamann-Studien* (Zurich, 1956), pp. 83–97.

¹³ Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 265.

Greek language, and the similarity of this papyrus Greek to the New Testament provides a splendid testimony to the foresight of the master'.¹⁴

So here we have first of all Hamann's appreciation of history which, passed on by Herder, set much in motion in the period that followed. The language of the Biblical authors is the language of an epoch far removed from our own. It cannot be 'comprehended from books alone'.¹⁵ By observing the living language we can obtain a better understanding of the changes in language that occurred in the past. 'French in our time is as cosmopolitan as Greek was in its time. What else are we to expect, other than that the former must degenerate in London and Berlin, just as Greek may have been corrupted in Jewish terrain—especially in Galilee.... The migrations of living languages shed sufficient light for us on the characteristics they share with the dead languages, and indeed on the shifting pattern of all languages.'¹⁶

Is that 'mere' philology or history? Not with Hamann. The first 'Hellenistic letter' begins and ends with the desire to say something about 'the Holy' in the style of the New Testament,¹⁷ and in its centre is the sentence about the Spirit of God humbling himself through 'the human stylus of holy men, who were driven p. 117 by him'.¹⁸ The basic concern of the pamphlet must be seen as a theological one. The focal point is the mystery of the Bible.

Hamann contradicts the orthodox doctrine of Scripture, which deduced from the verbal inspiration of the Bible not only its freedom from factual mistakes, but also its linguistic perfection.¹⁹ In spite of that, he does keep to the doctrine of inspiration, and it is one that retains the text of the Biblical writings as being given by the Spirit of God. But this doctrine receives a new element through the thought of humbling or emptying. The Spirit of God 'humbled and emptied' himself in the work of the Biblical authors. This is why the Scriptures have as their style the *humile genus dicendi*—and this is indeed in strict accordance with the way of God in the humbling of his Son; this is why, in the purpose of God, we do not find in the New Testament the pure Greek of classical authors, but a language marked by Hebraisms, which causes some offence to the Graecist. The style of the New Testament is genuine, 'in a certain sense original',²⁰ not just in the sense that it

¹⁴ Blanke p. 88. 'Magus from the north' was a name given to Hamann by F.K. Moser (1723–1798) referring to [Matthew 2:2](#).

¹⁵ Nadler II, p. 170; Seils, p. 262.

¹⁶ Nadler II, p. 172; Seils, pp. 265f.

¹⁷ In the closing section of his work and with an irony directed against himself, Hamann calls his own exposition, probably in conscious contrast to the Biblical writings, 'godless scrawl' (Nadler II, p. 173; Seils, p. 267).

¹⁸ Cf. above: [p. 114](#) and note 9.

¹⁹ 'So it would be sacrilege to maintain that there were offences against the correct use of words and against syntax in any part of the holy book.' Thus Joh. Fr. König, the Lutheran dogmatist, whose writings are now easily accessible through C.H. Ratschow, *Lutherische Dogmatik zwischen Reformation and Aufklärung* (Vol. I, 1964, pp. 77 and 79).

Hamann writes in contrast (Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264): '*DEI Dialectus, Soloecismus*,' says a well-known expositor. This also applies here: *Vox populi, vox DEI*.. 'By the 'well-known expositor' he could mean John Lightfoot, the Hebraist and Talmudist, cf. J.A. Bengel's *Gnomon* on [Revelation 11:15](#). The dispute about the *soloikismos* in the NT apparently has its roots in the 3rd century A.D. in the works of Origen's pupil Dionysius Alexandrinus.

²⁰ Nadler II, p. 172; Seils, p. 265.

confirms the life-situation of its authors, but above all in its testimony to the God who stoops down to mankind.²¹

Here lies the heart and soul of all Hamann's thinking. Revelation is a unity. Christology and pneumatology, and even the doctrine of creation, are all understood from the perspective of God humbling himself: '.. just as the whole creation is an act of deepest humility'.²² Against the natural religion of the deists, who see in nature a 'higher being', but do not find the Father of Jesus p. 118 Christ there, Hamann holds up the God who in every inch of revelation speaks one and the same language.²³ Hamann's 'significance for the history of theology', as Helmuth Schreiner has put it, lies 'in the fact that he took the condescension of God seriously in the first and third articles (of the apostolic creed), as well as in the second.'²⁴

At this point in the train of thought of the first Hellenistic Letter the immediate theme (the style of the New Testament) is split up to allow a wider context to dominate (unity of revelation in the whole of reality). This will need to be evaluated as an indication that a basic concern of Hamann's comes to light here.²⁵ The sentence on the 'unity of divine revelation' not only points back to the works he wrote during his stay in London, and which testify to the great change in his life,²⁶ but equally points forward to his total 'authorship' right up to the 'last page'.²⁷ It is always the same theme: God's 'lowering himself', his 'humility', his 'humbling himself', which the author from Königsberg is never tired of tracing.

III. INSPIRATION AND HUMANNESS OF THE SCRIPTURES

Hamann introduced the thought of condescension in particular into the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, and this reveals p. 119 a form of the doctrine of Scripture which does not bring the humanness of the Biblical writings, their historical restrictedness and manifold confutability into conflict with their being the work of the Spirit. The Spirit of God 'chooses', not a classical writer such as Xenophon, but the tax-collector Matthew in order to write down the history of Jesus; and he does this on purpose, not as a

²¹ '... the *stylus curiae* of the Kingdom of heaven remains, I believe, especially in comparison with Asian courts, the most gentle and the most humble ...' (Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264).

²² Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264.

²³ 'Merely to admire the only wise God in nature is perhaps an insult similar to the affront one causes a judicious man, whose value the mob judge p. according to his coat' (Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264).

²⁴ H Schreiner, *Die Menschwerdung Gottes in der Theologie Joh. Georg Hamanns*, second edition (Tübingen, 1950), p. 52. P. 55: 'The heart that beats for us in Christ reveals to us the heart of the Creator. And this heart desires communication. And that is why it draws us to itself. And that is why God comes to us. In the concept of God lowering Himself, the whole Biblical message of God's coming is in Hamann gathered together, like the light in a lens.'

²⁵ Besides the books by Blanke and Schreiner already mentioned, I would like to draw special attention here to Martin Seils' *Wirklichkeit und Wort bei Joh. Georg Hamann* (Stuttgart, 1961).

²⁶ These are the fragments of the year 1758 (especially the *Biblische Betrachtungen*), which Nadler published in the first volume of his edition under the title (which was originally used by Hamann) *Tagebuch eines Christen*, and the *Gedanken über meinen Lebenslauf*, (Nadler II, pp. 9–54). 'Since the *Tagebuch eines Christen*, his basic convictions stand firm' (M. Seils, *Theologische Aspekte zur gegenwertigen Hamann-Deutung* (Göttingen, 1957), p. 106. The latest work on Hamann's Bible experience in London is Harry Sievers, *Joh. Georg Hamanns Bekehrung* (Zürich, 1969).

²⁷ Nadler III, p. 410; cf. M. Seils, *Theologische Aspekte*, pp. 12ff.

compromise. This is what God is like! But who can understand him? With words that are intentionally reminiscent of Paul,²⁸ Hamann formulates his proposition, that can be called ‘pneumatic’, but then in the sense of condescension: ‘So if the divine style chooses the stupid, the insipid, the base to put the strength and ingenuity²⁹ of all profane writers to shame, then it is also true of course that it takes the eyes of a friend, enlightened, enthusiastic, and armed with jealousy, the eyes of an intimate, a lover, to recognise the rays of heavenly glory in such disguise’.³⁰ But it is here, in the lowly words and letters themselves, and not past them that ‘the rays of heavenly glory’ are given to us and we can grasp them. Glory and lowliness are inseparably bound together in the Scriptures. The sovereign God wanted this Bible, and did not merely ‘allow’ it³¹—this is how we may understand Hamann. God is its actual author, its ‘writer’,³² its ‘chronicler’.³³ And this is evident in everything right down to the style, which Hamann calls ‘divine style’, ‘*stylus curiae*’ P. 120 of the Kingdom of Heaven’.³⁴ It is not surprising that his rationalist contemporaries became scorners of the Bible. To one of his friends (J.G. Lindner) he cries out: ‘Leave me my pride in the old rags. These old rags saved me from the pit, and I boast of them as Joseph boasted of his coat of many colours’.³⁵

IV. ACCOMMODATION AND CONDESCENSION

The significance (meaning) of Hamann’s doctrine of Scripture stands out if we compare its basic thought of condescension with another similar thought which at that time was also—and indeed much more often—brought into the discussion about the Bible, and

²⁸ See above: [p. 114](#).

²⁹ The loan word, which can mean ‘candour, openness’, also ‘naivete’, is difficult to interpret in this context. Logically we would expect the ‘pride’ or the ‘self-confidence’ of the profane writers to be humbled. Perhaps: ‘naive self-assessment’.

³⁰ See above: [p. 114](#). Immediately afterwards comes the sentence on solecism quoted in footnote 19.

³¹ In the sense of the Hamann interpretation given here, A. Schlatter *Das christliche Dogma*, (Stuttgart, 1911, pp. 410f) also excludes from the doctrine of Scripture the concept of God ‘allowing’ the Bible to be as it is: ‘... human weakness also serves the rule of God and His glorification. One can only speak of God “allowing” in reference to evil; if on the other hand this formula is extended to include weakness and error, then the will of grace is thereby darkened. The human (in abstract sense) is for God not just the patiently borne burden, not just the obstructing barrier which is for the time being allowed to remain; no, man is rather valued by God, intended and loved by Him, with all his weakness ...’

³² Nadler I, p. 5 (Seils, p. 24), p. 9.

³³ Nadler I, p. 91 (Seils, p. 13).

³⁴ See above: footnote 21. Behind the talk of the *Stylus curiae* is probably J.A. Bengel’s expression ‘heavenly office-style’ (E. Ludwig, *Schriftverständnis und Schriftauslegung bei J.A. Bengel* (Stuttgart, 1952), p. 30. Bengel, *Gnomon*, third edition (1773), *Praefatio* XIV, praises the Biblical style, which in an incomparable fashion combines *profunditas* (depth) and *facilitas* (simplicity), and then continues: ‘Omnes mundanas in style curiae elegantins longissime superat sermo divinus. Deus, non ut homo, sed ut Deus, verba facit, se ipso digna.’

³⁵ W. Ziesemer—A. Henkel, *Hamann-Briefwechsel*, Vol. I, p. 341 (Seils, p. 100). The comparison borrowed from [Jeremiah 38](#) continued to have its effect later on with M. Kahler and his pupils, cf. M. Seils, *Wirklichkeit und Wort*, p. 11. Already in 1758 Hamann wrote: ‘We are all lying in a boggy prison just as Jeremiah did. Old rags served as ropes with which to pull him out; it is due to them that he was saved. It was not their appearance, but the services they did for him, and the use he made of these, that saved him from the danger his life was in’ (Nadler I, p. 5: Seils, p. 24).

which prompted a mass of literary productions in the 70s and 80s of the century of Enlightenment³⁶—all the more so as the orthodox doctrine of Scripture had recently become untenable. It is the thought of ‘accommodation’, according to which the Biblical authors ‘adapted’ or ‘accommodated’ themselves to their readers’ level of understanding. The idea of accommodation has a long history³⁷ that goes right back as far as the apologists of the early Church, and beyond to Philo of Alexandria and even to Plato. Among its proponents in more modern times are, for example, Kepler and Galilei with their attempt to understand and make [P. 121](#) understandable³⁸ the discrepancies that stem from the Biblical world-view; then Spinoza,³⁹ and further the Lutheran dogmatists, who wanted to bring the unity of the Holy Spirit as author of the Scriptures into harmony with the individual style of the different human authors.⁴⁰ In the rationalism that was then becoming popular (e.g. Baumgarten, 1706–1757) the concept of accommodation was used to mediate between the Bible (figurative way of speaking’) and an enlightened worldview.⁴¹ Joh. Salomo Semler became the chief proponent of the *accommodatio*. He abandoned the doctrine of verbal inspiration,⁴² thus making the way clear to bring the Bible into harmony with the insights of reason, even to the extent of ignoring its actual wording. At the time of the apostles, Semler thinks, the people were not capable of combining the truth of a matter with the ideas appropriate to that truth. This is why Paul, for example, practised *accommodatio*; that means, according to Semler’s definition, the ‘lowering of oneself to tolerate untrue ideas held by incompetent Christians’.⁴³ This lowering of oneself becomes superfluous though with people who have a higher standard of education; one can then—and Semler is thinking of the Pauline expression in [1 Corinthians 3](#)—speak with them ‘spiritually’, and does not need to speak with them any more as ‘men of the flesh’, i.e. one can do without the ‘illustrations that appeal to the senses’ and the ‘low ideas’.⁴⁴ What Semler accomplishes under the cover of the theory of accommodation is no longer simply an explanation of the Biblical concepts of nature,⁴⁵ but is a thorough-going theological criticism of Biblical content in general. It is a ‘de-mythologisation’⁴⁶ which—long before Rudolf [P. 122](#) Bultmann—abandons hell, devil and

³⁶ See Hornig’s book on Semler, p. 211. Fritz Blanke taught us to see the difference between Hamann’s understanding of condescension and the rationalistic application of the concept of accommodation (*op cit.*, pp. 34f.).

³⁷ It has not yet been written. References to it in F. Blanke, pp. 84f; G. Hornig, pp. 211–36; W. Schmittner, *Kritik und Apologetik in der Theologie J.S. Semlers* (Munich, 1963), pp. 41–46.

³⁸ Joshua commands the sun to stand still ([Joshua 10:12](#)). According to Galilei, the Biblical authors speak like this ‘in order to adapt themselves to the level of understanding of the people’. K. Scholder, *Ursprünge und Probleme der Bibelkritik im 17. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1966), p. 73.

³⁹ Schmittner (see footnote 37), pp. 41 f.

⁴⁰ Here—for example in Quenstedt’s works—the Holy Spirit is the subject of the *accommodari*, not the man writing. Cf. Hornig, p. 214.

⁴¹ G. Hornig, p. 218.

⁴² G. Hornig, pp. 65ff; W. Schmittner, pp. 15, 27.

⁴³ Hornig, p. 224.

⁴⁴ W. Schmittner, pp. 42f.

⁴⁵ As it still is with Baumgartner, Hornig, p. 216.

⁴⁶ As Hornig writes, p. 225.

demons, reduces sin to a mere experience in the inner life of man, dismisses apocalyptic and the return of Jesus as Jewish pre-Christian elements, and, with reference to the Gospel of John, supports an eschatology of the *parousia*.⁴⁷

Hamann cannot include this kind of understanding of accommodation in his doctrine of Scripture, nor can he make use of the rationality or morality of an 'enlightened person', whoever he may be, as a foundation for a criticism of Biblical content.⁴⁸ For him, the time-bound form of Biblical utterance is not something figurative, a foreground behind which the real thing needs to be made accessible through interpretation; for him the lowliness of Scripture is not a concession to the lower standard of education of past generations, but it is rather God's own manner of speaking, and fully his intention. But intention is not the same thing as allowing something to be as it is, and this is where Hamann's understanding of *condescension* departs completely from all theories of accommodation.⁴⁹

The rationalist stumbles at the written letter's weakness and on the strength of his reason goes behind it in order to obtain 'more'. Hamann thinks in the opposite direction: God has not entrusted us with too little in the written letter, but with so much that we never cease to be amazed at its wealth. The Scriptures give us riches in the form in which we have them. Whoever says 'Yes' to the lowly form will experience the abundance it holds. p. 123

V. BETWEEN THE TWO BOOK COVERS

The Bible is for Hamann 'God's book': God reveals his very heart to man, and chooses of all things the book-form to do so, a piece of literature, with all the regulations and limitations inherent in this form of communication. Although his nearness to the old Protestant understanding of Scripture (God as *auctor principalis*!) becomes evident here, Hamann is by no means a renewer of orthodoxy, with his theological explanation for the humanness of Scripture, and with his full and enthusiastic acceptance of this humanness; he rather points forward to the more recent Biblical research that takes its cue from history. Hamann has no doctrine of the 'infallibility of Scripture', which is all the more amazing because his understanding of inspiration must be regarded entirely in the sense of verbal inspiration. Whoever wants to experience the gift of the Spirit in Scripture cannot emancipate himself from its wording. The Scriptures in the form in which we have them are for Hamann a mystery which cannot be solved rationally.⁵⁰ We have here a doctrine of verbal inspiration which is motivated, not by an asserted perfection of the

⁴⁷ At the same time Semler adheres to the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus, and is personally interested in a 'mystical' relationship with God (Hornig, pp. 225–36).

⁴⁸ We possess no detailed statement of Hamann's on any of Semler's writings. But we do know from letters (Ziesemer-Henkel III, p. 79 and IV, p. 311) that Hamann knew the treatise on the Canon and rejected it resolutely. 'One can certainly always learn from him, but I have never felt any inclination to rely upon him.' 'The only thing I have read that the honest man has written is his Canon, which made me bitter and angry against his raw and undigested book knowledge.'

⁴⁹ Within the history of their development, *accommodation* and *condescension* can be used for one and the same term, and have the same meaning, as in the works of Hilarius and Augustine—cf. Blanke, p. 85. Hamann's use of the word 'Heruhterlassung' ('lowering of oneself') is therefore understood by Blanke as giving the term a new meaning: 'This lowering is an emptying, but a real one, not just an assumed emptying.'

⁵⁰ Wherever one hermeneutically or systematically sets off the terms 'Scripture', 'Word of God', 'letters' and 'Spirit' against each other, it is justifiable to ask whether the Scriptures are then still understood theologically in the actual sense of the word.

Bible, but by praise of the sublime God who goes the very way of humility in order to extend his Kingdom and to win men to himself.

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A Critical Evaluation of Theological Education in Residential Training

by ANIL D. SOLANKY

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THIS PAPER is not dealing with new methodology or innovations in teaching. I want to give attention to something far more basic: 'What Is Learning?' You will all agree that unless learning takes place, there is no teaching.

According to the Hebrew concept, learning did not mean merely coming to know a body of facts. The Hebrew concept, *daa'th*, means knowledge which is experienced. Knowledge of God, (*daa'th Elohim*) is not merely having information about God. It implies entering into an intimate personal relationship with him. Also the verb *yada'* (to know) is used in a very personal way: Adam knew Eve. So knowledge here is to enter into relationship, into experience. Knowledge must mean experience, competence, and ability to use acquired skills.

Our traditional view of learning is content-oriented. Students are expected to master content or information and then reproduce it in examinations. This may sound like a caricature but as far as my experience is concerned, I have found this true in most of the theological colleges and their courses. Recently I met a teacher coming out of a class toward the end of the term, who exclaimed, 'My! I wish I had another month to cover all that!' So content is the problem of the teacher as well as the problem of an average student. As someone has said, enthusiastic teachers and committed students are at the mercy of a poor concept of teaching and learning. Peter Savage points out that this concept of education—that knowledge is a body of information is based on a Greek view. It is alien to the Biblical understanding of knowledge. p. 125

WEAKNESSES IN CONTENT APPROACH

1. Too much content to master

One obvious weakness of the content approach is the impossibility of mastering even an infinitesimal part of today's knowledge. The great explosion of knowledge in the second half of the 20th century makes the meaningful coverage of content impossible. So what is learning? Some define it as behavioural development or change in a student as distinct