EMIL BRUNNER'S CONCEPTION OF MISSIONARY THEOLOGY:

AN ANALYSIS AND A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF ITS LANGUAGE
BASED ON HIS WRITINGS


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SUMMARY:  A SYNOPSIS OF THE AIM AND METHOD OF THE THESIS


The aim of this thesis is to undertake an analysis of the expression and
the concept of 'missionary theology' based on the writings of Emil
Brunner. Through its analysis there are two main objectives: the first
is an understanding of Brunner's missionary theology.  The second
objective is a critical evaluation of it.  For more than two centuries,
the issue of apologetics has been a dominating theme in the works of
theologians and of those who have contributed to the development of the
study of Christian religion.  In fact, it is one of the perennial
questions in Christian theology whether the Christian message can be
adapted to be acceptable to modern man without losing its essential and
unique character.  In the history of Christian theology it is in
reference to argued defences, against the various charges that
Christianity  is  untenable,  and  against  the  expressions  of
misunderstanding of Christian faith, that the terms 'apology' or
'apologetics' originated. There is necessarily a defensive element in
all Christian preaching and teaching.  In consequence the term
'apologetics' implies the defence of Christian truth-claims.


Christian apologists, therefore, attempt to demonstrate that
Christianity is more reasonable than, or at least as reasonable as, any
other competing view of life.  They may argue philosophically in defence
of the greater reasonableness of belief in the existence of God;  they
may argue morally in defence of the greater moral force of incarnational
belief;  or they may argue historically in defence of the historicity of
the gospel narratives;  and some apologists attempt to argue for the
compatibility of Christianity and modern science.  Emil Brunner has also
tackled this apologetic problem in his whole theological enterprise.  He

attempts neither to return to orthodoxy nor to seek company with the liberals, but he suggests apologetic theology, or 'missionary theology' in his terms, in accordance with his theological proposal *of truth as encounter*. As a result, Brunner develops a theological epistemology which seems to be both biblical and existentialist or, precisely, dialogical-personalist and somewhat adequate to the subject matter with which theology has to deal. It seems to overcome the enslavement to the object-subject structure of knowing that dominates most of our ordinary and scientific thought. So his biblical personalism contributes to the discussion of the concept of faith.

Today, however, the apologetic problem and theology in general are faced with, in particular, the fundamental question of whether in speaking about God the man of faith is making assertions about 'what there is' and 'how things are'. This issue presents itself to the apologist as a problem concerning religious language. So many philosophers of religion wrote a great deal about whether religious utterances can be regarded as stating truths or falsehood, or whether such utterances should perhaps be thought of as expressing the speaker's feelings or directing commands and requests. To put it briefly, Ludwig Wittgenstein can remark: These are, of course, not empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *in despite of* an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.

Since I am convinced that the task of Christian apologetics in

relation to philosophy is the elucidation of the nature of biblical truth-claims by which our experience is to be interpreted as a whole, this philosophical analysis of language may provide us with a useful tool for working on the contemporary problem of theology. In this regard, theology as grammar in Wittgenstein's terms tells us how to take the language of faith. It is an aid to those who would speak and understand that language, helping them to avoid mistakes and misapprehensions so that they can get along with the language. Theology as grammar, in this context, determines what can and cannot be said of God. Thus apologetic theology, like philosophy, is an activity of elucidation, that is, the activity of clarifying and analysing the content of our talk about God and the reflection on the fundamental concepts exercised in the church's talk about God.

From the methodological point of view of linguistic analysis our provisional conclusion which will clearly emerge from our study is that although Emil Brunner affirms its significance, he seems to be reluctant to discuss the theological semantics fully. For this semantic problem does not play a significant role in his thought. As a result, Brunner's use of the term 'truth as encounter' seems to be ambiguous in asking what the real measure of appropriateness of a symbol to the experience can be. If the one fundamental task of the apologist is to understand the gospel which is an answer to the questions of men of every present age, or precisely if the aim of the process of 'missionary theology' in his terms is to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, then missionary theology is no more than an intellectual presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which starts from the *situation of the hearer* and is addressed to it. One of the reasons for the omission of semantics is that this would bring him dangerously close

to natural theology if theological semantics necessarily had this consequence. In other words, although he recognises that philosophy is both possible and necessary, Brunner does not essentially appreciate the philosophical question enough.

Consequently, faith and the meaningful character of theological discourse will not be open to the kinds of analysis to which it is often put; and then the language of theology will always remain mysterious, or as those lacking the power to be truly critical may put it, it must be invalid and nonsensical. For we might take these human words of ours in full recognition of the fact that they were in themselves quite inadequate to God's own revelation of Himself, and allow that revelation to give them a meaning of its own. However, we are convinced that the meaning of any language is to be sought in a social context where it has a genuine use. Moreover, the language of faith is also a language within the community of faith. As this community develops, it affects the language because the concepts of this language are related to the community. In this respect Christian language is the speech of the believer who is rooted in the gospel, who speaks to the present, and who waits for the end. Therefore, if Brunner claims that the missionary theology aims at interpreting the gospel in such a way that men of today can feel themselves addressed thereby in their particular conditions, then one is tempted to suggest that the problem of religious language should not be neglected completely; perhaps a necessary way of dealing with the missionary problem is to try to undertake such an activity of elucidation or a linguistic analysis of religious assertions.

To begin with, chapter I deals with Brunner's basic notion of the term 'missionary theology', and precisely sketches to indicate our aim

of investigation. Chapter II examines a theological context for Brunner's missionary theology to show the origin and development of it. His whole theological thought and work, consequently the term 'missionary theology', was largely determined by the debate and response to his contemporary theological opponents, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. Brunner's insistence that faith is 'the point of contact' for divine revelation suggests a relational and Christological understanding of man's essential being. But his conceding to the 'formal image' a legitimate role in presenting the continuity of personal identity in sin and faith leaves open the possibility of an immanent structural concept of human being as subjectivity, personality and responsibility. Whereas Barth, especially in his early period, emphatically denies that the possibility of sin (is) one of the possibilities given in human creatureliness, as is implied in Brunner's assertion of neutral spiritual capacities. In Brunner's view, Barth identifies, however, the object of faith with the Word of God.

Rudolf Bultman proposes demythologisation which revolves around two poles: interpretation, that is, the articulation of an ancient message in modern terminology, and the question about human existence, its potentiality and its meaning. Precisely demythologisation is then the interpretation of the New Testament faith in terms of the understanding of human existence. However, even though Brunner is in sympathy with Bultmann's theological proposal of demythologisation, he raises a question of whether this is not to reduce the reality of the historical revelation to simply subjective experience.

Chapter III investigates Brunner's alternative proposal of *truth as encounter*, which indicates the paradigm of his missionary theology. In

this theological programme he heavily depends upon the I-Thou philosophy of Martin Buber. His dialogical personalism gives Brunner a new insight into the unique character of the fundamental phenomenon of the biblical message, the unity of truth and fellowship. So Brunner's fundamental thesis is that the biblical understanding of truth cannot be grasped by means of the object-subject antithesis, on the contrary, it is rather falsified thereby. Therefore, he substitutes the category of *personal correspondence* or *encounter* in its place. Chapter IV analyses the truth-claims of Brunner's missionary theology, in which he is primarily concerned with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This notion involves his methodological terminology *'truth as encounter'*: revelation as an objective event in history and the reception of this revelation by man through faith. However, through our undertaking an analysis of the term 'missionary theology' the argument about the concept of truth is that it is ambiguous with respect to its use in terms 'history', 'bible', 'faith' and 'philosophy'.

Since Emil Brunner draws knowledge and fellowship into a unity, that is, to know God means to be one with him, chapter V discusses these theological epistemological concepts derived from the experience of actual faith, of faith as a living reality and sees how they function in a missionary context. For him, the reality of God is a fundamental presupposition of the Christian faith and the church. To some extent Brunner's theological thought has always been concerned with the question of what the truth is. Furthermore, since faith for him is understood in such a personal way, certain conclusions necessarily follow for the concept of the church. He is convinced that the ecclesia of the New Testament, the community of Jesus Christ, is a pure community of persons and has nothing in it of the character of an institution. So

he challenges the institutional church to the much vaunted rediscovery of the church and its missionary task.

Chapter VI discusses the basic issues of a missionary theology which is to be discovered in the underlying conceptions and principles of Brunner's theological enterprise. Here, at vital points, is rooted the necessity of the missionary task of Christian faith as historic revelation and in the nature of man. In this regard, although we recognize the importance, for practice, of Brunner's account of the term 'ecclesia', it is necessary also to discuss the language used within those forms of life which are found within the church. Further, it is desirable to consider expressions which we used within churchly forms of life but which can also come to be understood by those outside, even from differing cultures. This would add content to the notion of a 'point of contact'. With these related issues of the communication of the Christian message, I want to bring the language of encounter with some of the issues which are beset with difficulties in testing symbols. Thus I shall invoke Wittgenstein's notion of 'forms of life' and 'language-games' in my attempt to tackle our doing missionary theology. Finally, Chapter VII deals with a critical evaluation of Brunner's theological proposal of truth as encounter.

**Abbreviations**

In this work I have used the following abbreviations:

CaOG        The Church and the Oxford Group, trans. David Cairns, London:
            Hodder and Stroughton, 1937.

CCC         Communism, Capitalism and Christianity, trans. Norman P.
            Goldhawk, London: Lutterworth Press, 1949.

ChaCiI      Christianity and Civilization: Foundations, vol. I, London:
            Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1948.

ChaCiII     Christianity and Civilization: Specific Problems, vol. II,
            London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1949.

CNSO        The Church in the New Social Order, London: SCM Press Ltd.,
            1952.

DI          The Christian Doctrine of God, Dogmatics: vol. I, trans. Olive
            Wyon, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946.

DII         The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, Dogmatics:
            vol. II, trans. Olive Wyon, Philadelphia: The Westminster
            Press, 1952.

DIII        The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and the
            Consummation, Dogmatics, vol. III, trans. David Cairns,
            Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962.

DiIm        The Divine Imperative, trans. Olive Wyon, Philadelphia: The
            Westminster Press, 1937.

EEuG        Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube, Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B.
            Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1923.

EtHo        Eternal Hope, trans. Harold Knight, London: Lutterworth Press,
            1954.

GoaMa       God and Man, trans. with intro. David Cairns, London: SCM
            Press Ltd., 1936.

IbLG        I believe in the Living God, trans. John Holden, Philadelphia:
            The Westminster Press, 1961.

JuaSO       Justice and the Social Order, trans. Mary Hottinger, London:
            Lutterworth Press, 1945.

LtoRom      The Letter to the Romans, trans. H.A. Kennedy, London:
            Lutterworth Press, 1959.

MaiRe       Man in Revolt, trans. Olive Wyon, Philadelphia: The
            Westminster Press, 1939.

Med         The Mediator, trans. Olive Wyon, London: The Lutterworth
            Press, 1937.

MiCh        The Misunderstanding of the Church, trans. Harold Knight,
            London: Lutterworth Press, 1952.

MyuWo       Die Mystik und das Wort, Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr
            (Paul Siebeck), 1924.

NaTh        Natural Theology, trans. Peter Fraenkel, London: Geoffrey
            Bles: The Centenary Press, 1946.

OuFa        Our Faith, trans. John W. Rilling, New York: Charles
            Scribner's Sons, 1954.

PhoRe       The Philosophy of Religion, trans. A.J.D. Farrer and Bertram
            Lee Woolf, London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1958.

PhuOff      Philosophie und Offenbarung, Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr
            (Paul Siebeck), 1925.

ProfCh      The Predicament of the Church, (ed) Emil Brunner et.al.,
            London: Lutterworth Press, 1944.

RaR         Revelation and Reason, trans. Olive Wyon, London: SCM Press
            Ltd., 1947.

ScoCh       The Scandal of Christianity, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1978.

SirE        Das Symbolische in der religiösen Erkenntnis, Tübingen: Verlag
            von J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1914.

TasE        Truth as Encounter, trans. Amandus W. Loos and David Cairns,
            London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964.

ThoCr       The Theology of Crisis, New York & London: Charles Scribner's
            Sons, 1930.

ThoEB       The Theology of Emil Brunner, (ed) Charles W. Kegley, New
            York: The Macmillan Company, 1962.

UEK         Um die Erneuerung der Kirche, Bern und Leipzig: Gotthelf-
            Verlag, 1934.

WaW         The Word and the World, London: SCM Press, 1931.

WDHG        Von Werk Des Heiligen Geistes, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul
            Siebeck), 1935.

# I  INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the term 'missionary theology'
based on the writings of Emil Brunner.  Through this investigation I
want, firstly, to attain an understanding of Brunner's missionary
theology and then attempt to show a critical evaluation of it.  His
entire theology has an missionary character.[1]  This is expressed even in
the peculiar thrust of his thinking and speaking.  His theology always
tends to dialogue , encounter, criticism, dynamic decision and
missionary outreach.  Throughout his life Brunner has tackled the
problem of missionary theology, or apologetics.  However, he attempts
neither to return to orthodoxy nor to seek company with the liberals,
but to develop a missionary theology in a way of his own theological
proposal, *truth as encounter*.  Brunner is convinced that this proposal
reveals errors, misunderstandings, and hiding places in which the modern
man usually entrenches himself against faith.  It is in its whole
tendency and aim a continuous encounter with the way in which the modern
man thinks and understands himself.  Thus it affects man in his
reasoning, his responsibility, his personality.  For him, this
missionary encounter with disbelief is a goal of evangelical theology
which is directly and necessarily connected with the preaching of the
word.

In Brunner's view, it is not just enough to prove and to
substantiate Christian faith by means of logical argument, a defence of
Christianity against its modern enemies and despisers, an apology for
faith before the forum of human reason, or an annexation of faith to a
scientific system of thinking by harmonizing oppositions and rational
contradictions.  Rather, Brunner attempts to define the meaning and the

task of a missionary theology in a new way. Missionary theology or

apologetics, according to him, is eristics. The word 'eristics' derives

from the Greek word $\dot{\epsilon}\rho\iota\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$ meaning to dispute; or $\dot{\epsilon}\rho\iota\sigma\tau\eta\kappa\grave{\eta}\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\eta$

meaning the art of disputation. Or it means Auseinandersetzung,

argument.[2] The reason for this is that the word 'apologetics' is too

heavily burdened with onerous connotations; it calls to mind a faith

that weakly and fearfully seeks to defend itself before the tribunal of

reason. The history of theology through the centuries has shown that

this picture corresponds to reality. Furthermore, the term

'apologetics' connotes a theology in which the church seeks to defend

Christianity before a world that has lost confidence in the church. He

puts it as follows:

> Apologetic, or (as I have proposed owing to the unfortunate
> suggestions attached to this word) "eristic" theology, is
> the intellectual discussion of the Christian Faith in the
> light of the ideologies of the present day which are opposed
> to the Christian Message. The name "apologetic" is hampered
> by the suggestion of a *defence* of Christian at the bar of
> Reason, even if it does not go so far as to claim rational
> *proof*. Actually, however, what matters is not "defence" but
> "attack" - the *attack*, namely, of the Church on the opposing
> positions of unbelief, superstition, or misleading
> ideologies. It is true that part of this attack consists in
> proving that the hostile attacks - not on empirical
> Christianity, for these are as a rule only too fully
> justified, but - on the Biblical Message, as being contrary
> to reason, opposed to culture, scientifically untenable,
> etc., are based upon errors, due either to the confusion of
> rationalism with reason, of positivism with science, of a
> critical with a sceptical attitude, or out of ignorance of
> the real truth which the Bible contains.[3]

Thus Brunner prefers to substitute for it the term 'eristics'

although he retains the term 'apologetics' for traditional reasons.

This, he believes, is more appropriate to the proper task of missionary

theology because it indicates emphasis on the dialogical rather than the

mere defensive attitude in his service of the church. For real

apologetics means the attack of faith on the strongholds of disbelief;

the attack on human reason insofar as reason obstructs faith; and this latter involves an attack on the idols of modern thinking as these are expressed in contemporary '-isms'. For the opposition to faith does not stem from reason as such, but from the abuse of reason, from the authoritarianism of the reason which regards itself and its creations as absolute.[4] Moreover, he regards the task of missionary theology as one contained in the gospel and necessarily connected with it. In Brunner's opinion, revelation is divine self-disclosure, the coming of God to man. Thus it becomes human and seeks out man where he is. The word of the church is an instrument of the divine message and thus it has to subject itself to God's coming to man where he hides from God. This, therefore, is the passion of the divine agape itself that forces us to missionary concern.

In this regard, every attempt at preaching and theology which is not concerned with this missionary task, which does not take man seriously, is wrong from the very beginning. For Brunner, the proper task of missionary theology is, therefore, inseparable from what he calls 'Biblical theology' that reflects upon the Word of God, in as much as the Bible is the foremost witness of the revelation of God, and in every age the Scriptures must be exegeted anew.[5] For this reflection does not occur in an empty, but in a historically filled space. The Word of God encounters men who have already taken a position prior to the confrontation, and have sought to explain the meaning of their existence in one way or other. Consequently, the proclamation of the Word is a call to rethink; it is a call to repentance $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu o\iota\alpha$ . Indeed it is polemical. However, eristics does more than just show the unbeliever that he is wrong. If that were all, it would be merely negative. Rather, it has assignment to show that man can understand

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himself rightly only in faith;  that alone through the Word can man become what he natively seeks;  that solely in the Christian faith can he attain his true goal which he now seeks in a false way.[6]

Thus it becomes apparent that the problem with which missionary theology deals, is that of the relationship of the Christian faith to the thought of the unbeliever, with the hope of winning him to the Christ.  How can the natural man be reached with the gospel?  Can the natural man be prepared to accept faith?  Missionary theology would elicit the confession of untruth from the unbeliever, but does this mean that he who turns believer must make a complete renunciation of his previous life and thought?  If every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, must every thought also be purged of its rational content in order to give the proper primacy to Christ?  What is the relationship between rational philosophy and revealed truth, or between general and special revelation?  If a theologian ignores the questions of the man of today, then he is ignoring the living man himself and failing to capture his attention.

In fact, Brunner is convinced that the mere act of bearing witness remains sterile unless it can be integrated with the truth which the listener already possesses.  To deny this is to deny an obvious fact; it really means shutting one's eyes to the truth for the sake of a mistaken theory.[7]  The one fundamental task of the theologian is so to understand the gospel that it answers the questions of men of every 'present age'.  Indeed he cannot ignore the questions of the modern man who is formed by the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the times.  So a true theology must be a struggle by that *Zeitgeist*.  In this regard, eristic theology is really missionary theology.  "The aim of this process (of

eristics) is to bring 'every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ' - that is the programme of what we may call 'missionary theology'".[8]  For Brunner, this theology is, then, no more than *an intellectual presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ*, which starts from the spiritual situation of the hearer, and is addressed to it.[9]  He puts it as follows:

> It is the task of "missionary theology" to accomplish in the sphere of intellectual reflection what every missionary does, as it were, by instinct.  In so doing something is achieved which the dogmatic theologian, as such, ought not to do, and cannot do.  His task is strictly confined to the subject with which he is dealing;  the person who is listening to what he has to say does not directly concern him.  *He has enough to do to make clear the content of the message in its own proper context.*  The spiritual situation of the non-Christian hearer does not come directly within his line of vision.  This spiritual situation, however, is also a concrete problem.  The non-believing hearer - above all the presumptive hearer - is already affected by a definite "spirit of the age";  that is to say, *his views of life and its problems, and of his own nature, are all coloured by a definite outlook which claims to rival the Christian view of life.*[10]

It is not enough, however, simply to define Christian faith or to show what does, or what does not, make sense within it.  If Brunner suggests that missionary theology is the intellectual discussion of the Christian faith in the light of the ideologies of the present day which are opposed to the Christian message, then the second main question arises: does Brunner's missionary theology make sense in that its basic concepts and process of its thought are intelligible to man of the Zeitgeist?  In other words, he is also concerned with the question of how the gospel can be communicated in any way.  With this question I shall try to deal a perspective of personal encounter informed by Brunner's work in order to confront the problems by taking a proper form of a conversation between a Christian believer and an unbeliever.  The main difficulty of the dialogue between them, Brunner assumes, lies in the question of whether the communication of the gospel is to employ two

dichotomies which are between the personal I-Thou relation and the objective I-It relation to meet those who reject the gospel on the ground of reason. Instead I will suggest that the difficulty lies in the character of the language of faith which is today a matter of debate and controversy among philosophers and theologians. Thus I am convinced, in accordance with my Wittgensteinian views, that linguistic analysis may provide us with a useful tool for working on this sort of problem of missionary theology.

I begin, in chapter 1, with Emil Brunner's basic notion of the term 'missionary theology' to undertake an analysis in this study. Then I examine, in chapter II, a theological context to show the origin and development of his missionary theology. Brunner's whole theological thought and work, consequently the term, was in the main determined by the debate and response to his contemporary theological opponents, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. The former identifies the *objectum fidei* (the object of faith) with the term 'the word of God' whereas the latter proposes demythologisation in which he attempts to interpret this faith in Christ as the self-understanding.

I will investigate, in chapter III, Emil Brunner's theological proposal of *truth as encounter*. In this theological programme he heavily depends upon the I-Thou philosophy of Martin Buber and develops his methodological discussions. Then I try, in chapter IV, to analyse the truth-claims of Brunner's missionary theology, in which he is primarily concerned with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This notion revolves about his methodological terminology *truth as encounter*: revelation as an objective event in history and the reception of this revelation by the man through faith. This will be thus treated in terms

'history', 'bible', 'faith' and 'philosophy'. For him, as the revelation in Christ is made possible by the fact of an original divine self-communication, so also it is given meaning because it has a reference to that ultimate goal of history, which exists beyond history. This eschatological revelation is, as it were, the nail on which everything hangs.[11]

Since Emil Brunner draws knowledge and fellowship into a unity, namely that to know God means to be one with him, we will examine, in chapter V, these theological epistemological concepts derived from the experience of actual faith, of faith as a living reality, and see how they function in a Christian life. For Brunner, the reality of God is a fundamental presupposition of the Christian faith and the church. Moreover, since faith for Brunner is understood in such a *personal* way, certain conclusions necessarily follow for the concept of the church. He is convinced that the ecclesia of the New Testament, the community of Jesus Christ, is a pure community of persons and has nothing in it of the character of an institution. So he challenges the institutional church to the much-vaunted *rediscovery of the church and its missionary task*. In Chapter VI, I want to bring the language of encounter with some of the issues which are beset with difficulties in testing symbols. With regard to the problem of language I shall invoke Wittgenstein's notion of 'forms of life' and 'language-games' in my attempt to tackle our doing missionary theology. Finally, in Chapter VII, I shall try to enter critically into the problem as to whether Brunner has successfully achieved his missionary task in the theological proposal of truth as encounter.

# Notes

1. Cf. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.17: "Toward a Missionary Theology", in The Christian Century, vol. 46, 1949, p.817.  Cf. also Hugh Vernon White, "Brunner's Missionary Theology", in ThoEB, pp.55f;  Peter Vogelsanger, "Brunner as Apologist", in ThoEB, p.289.
2. Brunner, "Die andere Aufgabe der Theologie", in Zwischen den Zeiten, vol. 7, 1929, p.260.
3. Brunner, DI, pp.98f.
4. Peter Vogelsanger, op.cit., p.292.
5. Brunner, DI, pp.95f.
6. Brunner, "Die andere Aufgabe der Theologie", pp. 255, 260f.
7. Brunner, DI, pp.101f.
8. Brunner, DI, p.101.
9. Brunner, DI, p.102.
10. Brunner, Ibid (Italic is mine).
11. Brunner, RaR, pp.198, 202;  WDHG, pp.60f; Cf. also Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1954) p.2.

## II  A THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT FOR BRUNNER'S MISSIONARY THEOLOGY

## 1  The debate about natural theology with Karl Barth

### 1.1 The new task of theology: the Word of God

The great turning point in the Protestant theology of the twentieth century has often been noted in relation to the age of crisis and catastrophe because of two World Wars and their consequences.[1]  It seemed that the German theological establishment, liberal and conservative alike, was committed to the war effort with all that this entailed.  For many, the 'manifesto of the intellectuals' represented the simultaneous collapse and discrediting of the bourgeois idealism of the nineteenth century and the theological programme it had engendered.[2] Since then theology could no longer go on speaking of God as it had done in the past.  The attempt had to be made to do so in a new and different way, if what theology said about God was to remain, or was once again to become, responsible and worthy of acceptance.  The question in fact arose whether and to what extent it was still permissible at all for theologians to speak of God.  So confronted with this question Barth and his colleagues such as Emil Brunner,  Friedrich Gogarten, Rudolf Bultmann and Edward Thurneysen were convinced that nineteenth-century anthropological, immanentist, optimistic theology had shown itself to be dangerously unhealthy.[3]

Although there was no unanimity among them, there were large common themes with which these theologians have been preoccupied:[4] (1) There is the emphasis upon the word of God, the interpretation of the Christian faith in the sense of what God says to man rather than on what from his own 'religious resources' man finds himself able to say to himself about

God. This emphasis has brought about a theology of revelation, that is, an interest in the knowledge of God, which is guided by the acknowledgement of God's disclosure of himself in Christ and not by a preoccupation with the epistemological resources of the human mind - all this is in radical opposition to the line of thought of modern Protestant theology since Schleiermacher. (2) In contrast to the traditionalist and the modernist view of the Bible, a 'new' biblicism was emphasised. It is a view of the Bible which is different from that which can be obtained by the use of the historical method for the interpretation of historical text and documents, because it takes the books of the Bible as the bearers of a kerygma, a message of salvation that must be believed. On the other hand, it has nothing in common with the view of the fundamentalists, who stress the literal inerrancy of the Bible as if this were the foremost article of the Christian faith. The new biblicism is oriented to the message of the Bible, the gospel of Christ, insofar as it is to be conveyed to the men of today. (3) The research into the Reformation was revived, under the sway of Luther and Calvin. But the remarkably influential revival of the teaching of the Reformers has been brought about chiefly not by their denominational followers, that is, those who would cultivate a study of their thought because of denominational loyalties and interests, but by a historical-scientific investigation and interpretation of the teachings of the Reformers undertaken in connection with work on the critical edition of their writings.

The result appeared firstly in Karl Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans* which was published in 1919. In this work Barth was primarily concerned with what Paul veritably speaks to all men of every age though he, as a child of his age, addressed his contemporaries. Accordingly,

he seeks to know 'the Word in the words'. He desires to advance his understanding to the point where the enigma of the historical documents virtually disappears, and only the enigma of the theological matter remains: "My whole energy of interpreting has been expended in an endeavour to see through and beyond history into the spirit of the Bible, which is the Eternal Spirit."[5] As a result, what he knows in this investigation is the fact that 'Paul knows of God what most of us do not know; and his Epistles enable us to know what he knew', or more precisely 'God is God'[6] And the Word which God speaks to us through Paul can be appropriated by us as judgement upon ourselves, culture and religion. Thus we must take it seriously as the self-disclosure of God in Jesus Christ.

In this investigation he does not however disregard the historical-critical method of biblical study that has its legitimacy so far as it is concerned with the preparation of the intelligence, because there is a human element in Scripture like any other book.[7] So what he wants to say in it is that the Bible is the Word of God in that God addresses His own Word of judgement, promise and grace, so there is no way from man to God, but, God has come to man and has spoken his word simply because He is 'God': "If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the 'infinite qualitative distinction' between time and eternity, and to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance: 'God is in heaven, and thou art on earth.' The relation between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy. Philosophers name this CRISIS of human perception - the Prime Cause: the Bible beholds at the same cross-roads - the figure of Jesus Christ".[8]

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Soon after Barth finished writing his *The Epistle to the Romans*, Emil Brunner strongly supported Barth's main thesis of it and felt some affinity to this emphasis on the Word of God as the subject-matter of Christian theology: "I hailed his Römerbrief (*The Epistle to the Romans*) as a forceful confirmation of my own thoughts. If I am not mistaken, I was the first one, who in reviewing this book, emphatically pointed to its epoch-making character."[9] Brunner joined the group of the dialectical theologians who had closer links with the periodical *Zwischen den Zeiten*[10], and then he became one of the most eminent representatives of the 'new theology', especially to the English-speaking world.[11] Since he analysed critically the theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher in his *Die Mystik und das Wort*,[12] Brunner attempted to contribute by approaching first the doctrine of Christ in terms of the dialectical theology in his *Der Mittler* which was published in 1927.[13] In the latter he claims that Christian revelation differs from what the philosophy of religion, religious speculation, or mysticism claims. For it is historical and personal revelation of Jesus Christ: "It is based wholly upon something which has actually happened, within this world of time and space, and indeed, to put it still more plainly, it is based upon something which has taken place once for all."[14] Also Christian revelation differs from 'popular' religion such as historical and social religion because it is not based upon a series of events, but upon one single event and its uniqueness (Einmaligkeit).[15]

So the Christian revelation, namely the Word of God comes, according to Brunner, to us from beyond the borderline which separates God and man; and it is God's own Word about Himself based on the fact that He alone is God. Thus, the Word of God as revelation means the

issuing forth of this hidden One from His concealment through God's incomprehensible self-communication.[16]  This Word which comes to us from the realm which lies beyond all human and historical possibilities, is here as a person;  Jesus Christ is the Word from the other side;  He Himself is the One who has come 'down to us from above';  and this Incarnation of the Word is in its very essence a unique event.[17]  Like Barth, Brunner was also concerned with the Word of God as the subject-matter of Christian theology;[18]  and at the same time he was led to his dialectical method.  For Brunner, this method aims at both defending the paradoxical character of the Christian revelation which belongs to faith-knowledge from the non-paradoxical speculation of reason, and seeks to declare the Word of the Bible to the world.[19]

## 1.2  The point of contact

In the year of 1929 Emil Brunner wrote two important articles, "On the Orders of God"[20] and "The Other Task of Theology".[21]  In the former he grounded Christian ethics in the orders of creation, i.e. the natural orders, and then presented the problem of natural theology along with the general consciousness of man;  and in the latter he argued further that the first task of theology is surely to make the message of the Word known.  However, since the Word of God is not preached in a vacuum; rather, it is preached to the self-conscious human being, it demands, "an entrance of house which is already occupied".[22]   For the proclamation of the Word is a call to repentance $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$  and it is a call to rethink and to be polemical.[23]  So Brunner claims that the other task of theology is the 'eristic one' which has the assignment to show that man can understand himself rightly only in faith, and that he receives it only through the Word of God that he seeks inwardly.[24]

Once again Brunner dealt with the question of the relation of the Word of God to the mind of natural man in his article in 1932, "Die Frage nach dem 'Anknupfungspunkt' als Problem der Theologie".[25] He argues that theological anthropology, as it is necessary for a complete understanding of man, does not exclude man's natural knowledge of himself in a philosophical anthropology;  and similarly, the special revelation that descends into the consciousness of man, with his language and culture, finds a point of contact (Anknupfungspunkt).[26] For the Word of God is, Brunner argues, given to us in no other way than through human witness.  For instance, this is often presented in the popular Greek *koiné*.  The New Testament, like effective preaching, speaks the most easily understood language;  and its content is a true compendium not only of the natural experience of life and of the world, but also the ethical and religious understanding of the self, of the world, and of God.  The apostle did not create the vocabulary of the New Testament, but used everyday words and presupposed a knowledge of their content.[27]  Accordingly, there must be the relation of the Gospel to man.

However, if it is the case that the Word and man must be related, one may raise a question of how it is possible.  The answer to this question may be given, according to Brunner, by distinguishing between the formal *imago dei* and the material *imago dei*.[28]  In Brunner's opinion, in the Old Testament the term '*imago dei*' is always used to describe man as he now is, and never a mode of being lost through the fall.  This sense of the term is, however, not confined to the Old Testament;  it is also found in the New Testament.  But there are some passages of decisive significance which give to the concept of the image an entirely new meaning.  There it is brought into relation to the

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characteristic New Testament ideas of sonship of God, and likeness to Him, and particularly into relationship with the doctrine of Christ as express image of God. Thus it is a necessary presupposition that the formal *imago dei* is the capacity for perception and the point of contact. In other words, there is some content to the knowledge of God before the revelation of God in Christ although this knowledge of God is that of a God of wrath.[29]

In this claim, Barth perceived however the anthropological underpinning of theology alongside the word of God, and then he argued in his two articles, "Schicksal und Idee in der Theologie" and "Die Theologie und die Mission in der Gegenwart", that all polarity between philosophy and theology must be rejected; all such contact is a dialectical tension between giveness and non-giveness; thus any attempt of the modern missionary to find a point of contact for the proclamation of the Word of God should be abrogated.[30] Instead, he confined theology to be one task because the revelation itself will be its own proof, otherwise it is permissible to speak of the 'point of contact' for the saving action of God.[31] So, he charged in his article of "Die erste Gebot als theologisches Axiom" in 1933 that Brunner had lapsed into Thomistic natural theology and neo-protestantism.[32]

In his essay, "Natur und Gnade: zum Gesprach mit Karl Barth",[33] Emil Brunner defended himself in arguing that God does speak to us through nature but, through man's sin, the Word of God is not heard in the orders of creation. He developed his conception of the point of contact in that man is responsible to the Word of God. He was convinced that in every man there is a will and a knowledge at the side of which the proclaimer can place himself, where he can find his 'point of

contact'.[34]  In this counter-thesis what Brunner claims first of all is that the formal image of God in man, which not even the sinner has lost, signifies his humanity and his special relation to God.[35]  So the formal image of God in man is, according to Brunner, his humanity by which man is not only distinguished from the other creatures but also as rational creature he has an immeasurable advantage over them.  And this humanity is based on his special relation to God, for God has created him for a special purpose - to bear his image;  he is not only man in virtue of the claim made on him by God but also by the fact that man is one with whom God can speak.[36]  In consequence, man retains capacity for words (Wörtmachtigkeit) which is limited to his receptivity to be reached by the revelation and to hear the Word when it is uttered.[37]  At the same time he is responsible to the Word of God as well as to his fellow man since man has existence as man through the Word of God which addresses him and calls him into existence.[38]

Accordingly, since man is, in his view, humanity with a capacity for words and responsibility, Brunner claims that the formal image of God in man is the 'point of contact' for the divine grace of redemption;[39]  and yet it means only the 'receptivity of the Word of God':  "But this 'receptivity' must not be understood in the material sense.  This receptivity says nothing as to his acceptance or rejection of God.  It is the purely formal possibility of his being addressed."[40] At the same time the formal image of God in man is, for Brunner, identical with responsibility because the possibility of man's being addressed is also the presupposition of man's responsibility.[41]  Without knowlede of God there can be no sin:  sin is always 'in the sight of God'.  In sin there can be no knowledge of God, for the true knowledge is the abolition of sin.  This dialectic must be insisted upon.  For

only in this dialectic does the responsibility of faith become clear. He who does not believe is himself guilty. He who believes knows that it is pure grace.[42]

In contrast to the formal image of God, the material image of God in man, in Brunner's view, is the concrete self that we have built upon through the use of our freedom.[43] It would reflect its Creator only if man had used his freedom as he was meant to use it, and this use is really made only when one can say with the apostle, 'not I, but Christ who liveth in me'. And he puts it as follows:

> Materially the *imago* is completely lost, man is a sinner through and through and there is nothing in him which is not defiled by sin. To formulate it differently: as before, man is a person, i.e. he is in a derived sense that which God is originally. Yet he is not a personal person but an anti-personal person; for the truly personal is experience in love, the submission of the self to the will of God and therefore an entering into communion with one's fellow-creature because one enjoys communion with God. This *quid* of personality is negatived through sin, whereas the *quod* of personality constitutes the *humanum* of every man, also that of the sinner.[44]

Here man remains a responsible person, in spite of the fact that through sin the true personality, the state of freedom in dependence, has been destroyed, so that his freedom has become alienation and his connexion bondage. He cannot help his wickedness, but he is none the less responsible, guilty, and condemned because of it.[45]

As P.G. Schrotenboer points out, whether one looks at the image as a material something or as merely formal, in either case it is *relational*. Man is a responsible being, a relation, not a substance. It is difficult for us to unify structure and relation, but it is a peculiarity of humanity that its structure is precisely a relation.[46] The Bible knows no other man than the one who stands before God; even

he who turns his back on God is still before God. Also the one who misuses his freedom and denies his responsibility is nevertheless responsible. The loss of the image in the material sense presupposes the image in the formal sense. The difference between the two does not lie in the fact that the one does not and the other does involve knowledge of God, but it lies rather in the *kind* of knowledge. Since man is an echo of God, it is one and the same thing to know Him as the holy loving God and to understand my true creaturely essence.[47]

In short, Brunner's claim about the term 'the point of contact' is that the capacity of man for understanding discourse is a necessary presupposition for his belief in the Word of God, but it is not at all a capacity for revelation, or for the Word, and no contribution is made by man to his own salvation. It is a gift of God still left, even in sin, from the gifts of creation with which God endowed man, and it is the presupposition of his moral responsibility and his guilt before God.[48] So he claims as follows:

> It is impossible to deny this point of contact of divine grace, i.e. it is possible to do so only by a misunderstanding. The misunderstanding always arises out of the lack of a distinction between the formal and the material definitions. We said above that materially there is no more *imago Dei*, whereas formally it is intact. Similarly we must say that materially there is no point of contact, whereas formally it is a necessary presupposition. The Word of God does not have to create man's capacity for words. He has never lost it, it is the presupposition of his ability to hear the Word of God. But the Word of God itself creates man's ability to believe the Word of God, i.e. the ability to hear it in *such a way* as is only possible in faith. It is evident that the doctrine of *sola gratia* is not in the least endangered by such a doctrine of the point of contact.[49]

1.3 Natural theology

Emil Brunner follows the Bible and the Reformers in teaching a revelation of God in nature through creation, which precedes his

revelation in Jesus Christ through atonement. As in every creation the spirit of its creator is 'in some way' recognisable, so also in the creation of God: "Wherever God does anything, he leaves the imprint of his nature upon what he does." Consequently, the creation of the world is at the same time his revelation. Brunner explicitly affirms that this proposition is not pagan but fundamentally Christian.[50] Though man immediately proceeds to distort God's revelation in creation into idols of his own, he could not do this if God had not in some way revealed himself in his creation. But precisely because God has revealed himself, and enabled man to know about him, man's disobedience is without excuse. Brunner puts it as follows:

> The term "nature" can be applied to such permanent capacity
> for revelation as God has bestowed upon his works, to the
> traces of his own nature which he has expressed and shown in
> them.
>     But the term "nature" can also be applied to what sinful
> man makes of this in his ignorant knowledge, just as it can
> be applied to that which God has implanted in human nature
> as an image of himself, indestructible, yet always obscured
> by sin.[51]

Furthermore, Emil Brunner attempts to distinguish between the objective and the subjective sense of a term 'natural theology'. By the former he means such a knowledge of God in his creation as can come only to those who are already enlightened by the Christian revelation of him; whereas by the latter he means such a knowledge of God as might be supposed to be accessible to the heathen or to independent rational argumentation.[52] God reveals himself in an objective manner in the order of creation, but "sin darkens the sight of man in such a manner that in the place of God he knows and fancies gods".[53] Thus the revelation in creation is not sufficient for the sinful man in order to know God in such a way that the revelation in Jesus Christ brings salvation. Man as a sinner is unable to know God, who in Jesus Christ

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reveals Himself to man anew according to His true nature, which even in creation is partially hidden.[54] But only in faith, that is, taking our stand upon the revelation in Jesus Christ, such a knowledge of God in His creation can be recognised in all its magnitude by those whose eyes have been opened by Christ.[55]

The problem of natural theology Brunner sees as fundamental for all theology. One's position on natural theology determines the character of one's ethics, and it is significant just as well for one's dogmatics. Further, this matter is important from a methodological point of view.[56] He has in mind the Church's teaching mission, particularly the dialogue with non-believers, with intellectuals and with modern youth. If this is to be pursued intelligibly, there is need of a natural theology. In this regard, Brunner appeals to the natural theology of the Reformers, especially that of Calvin on his side by the same pattern of distinction between the *objective* and the *subjective sense of the word naturalis or natura.*[57] In the objective sense Calvin uses, according to Brunner, the term, 'nature' to designate the original creation in so far as it is still recognizable as such, i.e. the God-given form of all created being; and thus he understands that nature presents no contrast to spirit or culture, but rather to what is not in accordance with creation:

> Therefore nature is for Calvin both a concept of being and a concept of a norm, and over and over again we meet with the expression: *natura docet, natura dictat,* which for him means almost the same as: God teaches - i.e. the will of God, which has been implanted in the world, teaches. It is therefore quite natural for Calvin to use the concept of the *lex naturae* and also that of the order of creation in the same sense. Both are used very frequently, but if I am not mistaken *lex naturae* is used more frequently. The will of God, imprinted upon all existence, implanted in it from creation, can therefore be recognised as such[58]

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On the other hand, Calvin understands, in Brunner's view, that the divine order of nature is affected by sin not only subjectively but also objectively. But it is not affected so much as to render the will of God, the 'rule' of nature invisible. On the contrary, where Calvin speaks of nature in the objective sense, he says but little of a disturbance by sin. In this view, God can be thus known even though the knowledge of God to be gained from nature is only partial. And this is not a confused knowledge, which can hardly be of interest for the Christian, who knows the Word of God. Rather, it is something highly important and necessary for the Christian as well. For God demands of us that we should know and honour him in his works.[59]

In contrast to Brunner's claim about natural theology, Karl Barth denounced it with his emphatic 'No'. With regard to 'natural theology' Barth claims that he is 'ultimately uninterested.' In his view, it is not an independent theme and problem at all, but merely the great danger to the evangelical Church and her theology which must emerge from the present suffering and strife purer, more united and more determined than when she entered it. And he says: "My opinion concerning the task of our theological generation has been this: we must learn again to understand revelation as *grace and grace as revelation* and therefore turn away from all 'true' or 'false' *theologia naturalis* by ever making new decisions and being ever controverted anew. When... Brunner suddenly began to proclaim openly 'the other task of theology', the 'point of contact', etc., I made it known that whatever might happen I could and would not agree with this".[60]

In Barth's opinion, what Brunner claims about natural theology should be completely rejected, because the image of God in man is

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totally destroyed by sin. There is for Barth neither any grace of creation and of preservation, nor recognizable ordinances of preservation; and therefore there is no point of contact for the redeeming action of God.[61] Moreover, if natural theology would be done, it can be only becoming to the theology and Church of Antichrist. Therefore, except in His Word, God is never for us in the world, i.e. in our space and time. For the early Barth, there is no road from science to faith because God is and must remain the unknowable 'wholly other'. So Barth argues that 'natural theology' does not exist as an entity capable of becoming a separate subject within what he considers to be real theology, because it cannot properly deal with the subject matter of the real theology which concerns the revelation in Jesus Christ:[62] "By 'natural theology' I mean every (positive or negative) *formulation of a system* which claims to be theological, i.e. to interpret divine revelation, whose *subject*, however, differs fundamentally from the revelation in Jesus Christ and whose *method* therefore differs equally from the exposition of Holy Scripture".[63]

In Barth's view, only through His revelation in Jesus Christ we may come to know God; and enter into relationship and even communion with God; and therefore Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is the revelation, because in His existence He is the reconciliation. Only as he beholds the reconciliation that has taken place between God and man, can man know God.[64] Thus if Brunner accepts unconditionally the Reformer's principle of *sola scriptura* and *sola gratia* by saying that "we are concerned with the message of the sovereign, freely electing grace of God," then he has been, Barth argues, unable to adhere to the Reformer's principle. For Brunner claims that man's undestroyed formal *imago Dei* is the objective possibility of the revelation of God.[65] That is to

say, if a point of contact is for the divine grace, the formal sense of the original image of God in man, so Barth argues, is then controvertible to *sola fide-sola gratia*; and it must be denied, therefore, to recognize any attempt of natural theology by which Brunner attempts to hold such a 'capacity for revelation', or 'capacity for words' or 'receptivity for word', or 'possibility of being addressed' as man possesses even apart from revelation.[66]

Furthermore, what Brunner argues about natural theology in his counter-theses, in Barth's view, lies not only in contradiction to the principle of Reformers, but also in his misunderstanding of Calvin's doctrine of the knowledge of God. According to Barth, Brunner attempts to prove his own doctrine of the formal side of the *imago dei* with the teaching of Calvin; so he thinks that it adheres to the teaching of the Reformation and that it is quite near Calvin's doctrine. However, Brunner distorts what Calvin comprehends in it.[67] Barth argues that Calvin speaks of a *Duplex cognitio Domini* from creation and in Christ and he also says about a natural knowledge of God through creation, which is said in Romans (1 : 19f, 2 : 14f) and Acts (14 : 15f, 17 : 24f). But he does not regard it as a capacity which man has retained and which has to be reconstituted by faith, as a point of contact for revelation and for the new life in Christ.[68] So, if there is any possibility of a real knowledge of the true God as derived from creation by natural man, it is the possibility, according to Calvin, to know and worship the gods of his own heart. For what Calvin says is that the knowledge of God which now remains to man is nothing other than the terrible source of all idolatry and superstition.[69]

Therefore, Barth concludes that the knowledge of God in Christ

includes, according to Calvin, a real knowledge of the true God in creation; thus in order to understand Calvin's contention the word 'includes' must be emphasized, because it does not, as Brunner seems to think, bring forth a second relatively independent kind of knowledge.[70] Calvin does not mean that room should be made after all for a Christian philosophy of nature and history, or a Christian anthropology and psychology, and he says: "*Christ* is the *imago* in which God makes manifest to us not only his heart but also his hands and his feet. ...As soon as we depart from Christ there is no matter great or small in which we would not give way to our own imaginations." In Barth's view, what Calvin says about God in nature and history is meant to be anything but (materially) the proclamation of Christ and (formally) exegesis of Scripture.[71]

However, Emil Brunner is not willing to limit our knowledge of God to special revelation. The cleavage between Brunner and Barth goes even deeper: as Dale Moody points out, where Barth rejects the idea of the image as a formal potentially for God, Brunner retains it; where Barth speaks of special revelation alone, Brunner affirms a general revelation in nature and man; Barth knows of saving grace, but Brunner finds sustaining grace (Erhaltungsgnade) also; Brunner finds natural ordinances while Barth does not; Barth believes in faith alone, but Brunner finds a point of contact between faith and reason; with Brunner the new creation is a consummation of the old, but with Barth the new creation is a miracle.[72]

In fact, this controversy over natural theology between Brunner and Barth leads us to the early stage of the new movement of the dialectical theology against the liberal theology when it attempted to restore 'the

subject-matter of Christian theology' as the Word of God. In contrast
to the immanence of God in liberal theology, they emphasized the
'otherness of God' in a Kierkegaardian term 'infinite qualitative
distinction'.[73] At the same time they needed to face the relation of
the Word of God to man in a dialectical way. For theology involves
necessarily the correlation of the two factors: God and man.[74] But it
can be thrown off its balance by the exaggeration of either to the
depreciation of the other. Thus through the controversy Barth is
primarily concerned with the subject-matter of theology, namely the Word
of God and he expresses as follows:

> There exists no difference between Brunner and myself in
> that in our activity, both as a whole and in detail, we are
> constantly faced with the double question: *what* has to be
> done? and: *how* is it to be done? It is the question
> concerning content and that concerning language, the
> question concerning revelation and the question what I and
> my audience and readers ought to "make of it." But we are
> not at one as soon as Brunner maintains that the two
> questions are one level; that they are therefore
> comparable; that they can therefore be raised and answered
> while confortably separated; and when he wishes to treat
> the question of method, of language, of form, separately.[75]

Here Barth claims that he rejects natural theology upon which Brunner
attempts to presuppose any possibility of a point of contact between the
Word of God and the natural man.


On the other hand, Emil Brunner sees a dilemma between his
acceptance of Barth's presupposition and his suggestion of the 'another
task of theology' by saying: "I agree with Barth in teaching that the
original image of God in man has been destroyed, that the *justitia
originalis* has been lost and with it the possibility of doing or even of
willing to do that which is good in the sight of God, and that therefore
the free will has been lost".[76] Nevertheless, he is convinced that
Barth himself does not deny that even sinful and unredeemed man is
capable of doing and thinking what is reasonable, and that inspite of

their questionable nature humanity and culture are not simply to be dismissed as of no value from the point of view of revelation.[77] Therefore, there is, in Brunner's view, another task of theology which is at the same time a missionary task for providing the Christian message to natural man and heathen religion. For Brunner theology cannot ignore the fact that they are besides us:

> The knowledge of this fact is of decisive importance for this missionary to the heathen who has set the standard for all ages; and it ought to be of decisive importance, now as then, for all who proclaim the Gospel. · It concerns the responsibility, which has a double grounding in the revelation in creation, of the man who is to be reached by the Gospel. This knowledge becomes practically effective in the 'contact', indispensable for every missionary, between his proclamation of Christ and the revelation of God (which leaves men inexcusable) in the works of creation and in the law written in the heart.[78]

As Reinhold Niebuhr points out, in this debate Brunner seems to him to be right and Barth wrong; but Barth seems to be insistent in the debate because Brunner accepts too many of Barth's presuppositions in his fundamental premises to be able to present his own position with plausibility and consistency.[79] Brunner's controversy with Barth may perhaps be not unfairly extended to Brunner's thought as a whole. John Macquarrie, in respect to the language of theology, suggests that when we are confronted with such questions, we are nowadays likely to react in a different way from that in which men reacted when the questions were first debated. We are more likely to wonder whether there are any correct answers at all, and our first step today would be to take a harder look at the questions themselves.[80] So, we note that for Barth the primary datum for all theological discourse is the Word of God. To this alone, he tells us, the theologian is responsible. This seems to imply that any genuine discourse about God must come from the side of God himself. Thus, there is no 'natural theology', no path that leads

from our everyday knowledge of things and persons in the world to the knowledge of God.[81]

However, there is also, according to Macquarrie, another question - how does our human language ever come to express a truth about God? Barth's answer to this question is quite simple, and cuts straight through the knot. God graciously confers upon our human language the capacity to speak about himself. Just as God has condescended to become flesh in Jesus Christ, so he permits his divine speech to be expressed in human speech. This analogy is an *analogia gratiae*; and it depends not on the characteristics of our human language but rather on what God does with that language.[82] In Barth's view, God *makes* our language about him veridical. However, we are still inquiring about what meaning can be given to such sentences as 'God gives us his revelation' or 'God makes this language veridical, although the very expressions which trouble us are of the type 'God gives....' and 'God makes....' It may indeed be true that God is ontologically prior to everything else, that everything gets its meaning from him, that language too is his creation. According to Macquarrie, these points are not to be ignored, but they do not answer the kind of question that has been engaging our attention. Barth's proffered solution of the problem of how we talk about God has been described by Frederick Ferre as the 'logic of obedience',[83] and perhaps it is the only solution open to Barth, once his presuppositions have been accepted. But Barth's solution is only one of several that are offered by contemporary theologians.[84]

## 2    The critical response to Rudolf Bultmann's demythologisation

### 2.1 The theological proposal of demythologisation

Perhaps no work which appeared in the field of the New Testament during the years of the War has caused so much lively discussion as Bultmann's book, *Neues Testament und Mythologie*;[85]  and since then his theological programme of 'demythologisation' has been problematic among the exponents of both New Testament exgesis and systematic (or dogmatic) theology.    Schubert M. Ogden who is one of the post-Bultmannians expressively says:   "The 'demythologising debate's' most striking characteristic is the substantial agreement among its various participants that Bultmann's proposal is intrinsically problematic".[86] What Ogden himself concludes about Bultmann's demythologisation and existential interpretation is that his solution is inherently inadequate.   The claim has come from responsible voices on practically every side that Bultmann's theology is structurally inconsistent and therefore open to the most serious criticism.[87]

In this 'demythologising debate' Emil Brunner (who belongs to the same generation as Bultmann) shares Bultmann's suggestion  that "in the New Testament there are present conceptions which are determined not by the *kerygma* of Jesus Christ but by the world-picture of antiquity and which on account of their mythical character are no longer intelligible to men of the twentieth century".  Also he recognises Bultmann's theological proposal as 'the counter-attack on Barth's objectivism'. However, on his own part Brunner criticises Bultmann's proposal as "subjectivism which dissolved the work and Person of Jesus into a *kerygma* about Christ and a subjective faith", if his 'demythologisation' and 'existential interpretation' is that which seeks to explain

statements of faith as being primarily expression of man's self-understanding.[88]

As Brunner's own expression, 'theology beyond Barth and Bultmann', has shown to us, he does not try to identify himself 'with one or the other of these extreme systems';[89] and this is precisely because the use of the objective-subjective antithesis in understanding the truth of faith and furthermore in the Church is, so Brunner argues, "a *disastrous misunderstanding* which affects the entire content of Christian doctrine and also operates fatally in the practice of the Church, most severely impairing the proclamation of the Word and faith among the fellowship".[90] Brunner then develops his own way (see chapter III) and he stands in the middle between them, which makes it appear that his theology is an attempt at mediation.[91] In this regard, he confronts what Bultmann suggests in his proposal of demythologisation for his counterpart of the theological dialogue and so we must take the question of what Bultmann claims in his theology.

(a) Modern man and the mythological world-picture. What Bultmann means by demythologisation of the New Testament message is the interpretation of the New Testament in terms that contemporary man can comprehend. And precisely the term, 'demythologisation', indicates a method of interpreting the mythological understanding of man held by the New Testament so that it becomes understandable to its contemporary hearer and compels him to make a decision for himself with regard to it.[92] According to Bultmann, the New Testament is, in more than one respect, of a mythological character; and so this mythical character must be removed if the New Testament proclamation is to be made intelligible for modern man.

In particular this is true of the New Testament view of the world and of the history of redemption. This mythological view of the world includes not only everything that the New Testament presupposes as consisting of three levels of world view: heaven, earth and hell, but also that the earth is the work-place of supernatural powers: God and his angels, satan and his demons. All this is mythical language which modern man cannot employ and cannot speak, since science has given him another world picture. So, the basic problem of the understanding of the New Testament for Bultmann is that modern man can no longer accept the mythological world-picture in which the New Testament message is clothed. Thus it is not a question of faith but of a legitimately acquired insight, and to require of the faithful that such be abandoned would demand that the believer sacrifice his intellect.[93]

According to Ogden's analysis of Bultmann's proposal of demythologisation, as Paul van Buren sums up: "'A mythological world-picture' is one in which (1) the nonobjective reality that man experiences as the ground and limit of himself and his world is 'objectified' and thus presented as but another part of the objective world; (2) the origin and goal of the world as a whole, as well as certain happenings within it, are referred to nonnatural, yet 'objective' causes; (3) the resulting complex of ideas comprising the picture takes the form of a double history".[94] The New Testament pictures the world as having three storeys. This three-storied world-picture is in fact only a bit of primitive science. What makes this primitive science mythological in the New Testament is the belief that the upper and lower realms are transcendent. So, Bultmann intends, according to Ogden, to project the idea of objectification of 'the non-

objective reality that man experiences as the ground and limits of himself and his world'.[95]  For Bultmann this is true because he sees that the biblical myths did not arise in order to paint a certain picture of the world, but to express "how man understands himself in his world".  Behind the mythology lay an understanding of man.  Myth is therefore not simply to be eliminated;  it must be interpreted as an expression of man's existential self-understanding.[96]  Thus, he is convinced that the New Testament not only allows but demands this interpretation.

Bultmann stands against both 'literalism' and 'liberalism'.  In response to the former he contends that the proclamation of the New Testament does not involve the proclamation of the New Testament's world-view;  and thus faith must not be confused with a 'Weltanschauung' that is, for Bultmann "a theory about the world and life, and about the unity of the world, its origin, purpose or worth - or again, its worthlessness - about the meaning of it all - or again, about its meaninglessness."[97]  To make faith understandable the mythical world-view of the New Testament in which angels, demons, miracles, and so forth play such a significant role in the mythical world-view of the New Testament, must not be interpreted in a fundamentalist way that maintains the Bible, being from God, cannot be wrong;  it cannot be in error and cannot lead into error;  and so its understanding cannot be established by the means and methods of historical (or empirical) science.[98]  The myth of the New Testament must not be interpreted in a way of liberalism that seeks to eliminate the mythology, thereby throwing out the *kerygma* itself;  and of liberalism he complains:

> The liberal theologians of the last century were working on
> the wrong lines.  They threw away not only the mythology but
> also the kerygma itself.  ....The last twenty years have
> witnessed a movement away from criticism and a return to a

naive acceptance of the kerygma. The danger both for theological scholarship and for the Church is that this uncritical resuscitation of the New Testament mythology may make the Gospel message unintelligible to the modern world. We cannot dismiss the critical labours of earlier generations without further ado. We must take them up and put them to constructive use. Failure to do so will mean that the old battles between orthodoxy and liberalism will have to be fought out all over again, that is assuming that there will be any Church or any 'theologians to fight them at all.' Perhaps we may put it schematically like this: whereas the older liberals used criticism to *eliminate* the mythology of the New Testament, our task today is to use criticism to *interpret* it.[99]

Finally, what Bultmann argues in his proposal of demythologisation is that the New Testament itself invites this kind of criticism; not only are there rough edges in its mythology, but some of its features are actually contradictory. Then the principal demand for the criticism of mythology comes from a curious contradiction which runs right through the New Testament; and attempts at demythologisation are sometimes made even within the New Testament itself.[100] So, the New Testament for Bultmann not only allows but demands this interpretation. He believes there are basically two kinds of statements: those which give information, and those which demand a decision of the listener or reader. Those of the proclamation of the New Testament belongs to the second type; and so they demand that the reader decide how he shall understand himself.[101] For Bultmann the very nature of the New Testament witness and of faith, therefore, demand an existential interpretation.

(b) The demythologisation process. According to Edwin M. Good, what demythologisation involves is that it revolves around two poles: interpretation, that is the articulation of an ancient message in modern terminology, and the question about human existence, its potentiality and its meaning.[102] Demythologisation is the interpretation of the New

Testament faith in terms of the understanding of human existence. It rests on exegesis, and therefore on the principles of hermeneutics that drive Bultmann to the existential interpretation. For Bultmann the gospels of the New Testament are fundamentally the message, "*Tua res agitur*" (this concerns you). So, precisely he approaches the New Testament myths 'existentially', that is, not as objective reports of extraordinary phenomena, but as vehicles of a world that speaks out of existence and to existence, and then a tenable solution to the theological problem begins to appear.[103] At this point demythologisation for Bultmann is a "demand of faith itself on the historical foundation enshrined within the mythological imagery it uses",[104] because it requires to be freed from every world-picture sketched by objectifying thinking, whether it be that of myth or that of science. The conflict between science and myth indicates that faith has not yet found its really adequate form of expression.

For Bultmann, in the New Testament as it has been interpreted through the centuries, mythology has been used as if it were descriptive; and so it has ceased to be existential; and then has become dogma; and its originally fresh articulation of human existence has degenerated into statements of it. Thus the Church has tended to lose sight of the mythological dynamics of the New Testament and has treated it as the source book of theological systematization. So, the mythical thought objectifies the divine activity and projects it on to the plane of worldly happenings.[105] But that is trouble; and then the miracle demands a rational explanation, for it must conform to history in the positivistic sense; and he states:

> "Mythological thought regards the divine activity, whether
> in nature or in history, as an interference with the course
> of nature, history, or the life of the soul, a tearing of it

asunder - a miracle, in fact. Thus it objectifies the
divine activity and projects it on to the plane of worldly
happenings. A miracle - i.e. an act of God - is not visible
or ascertainable like worldly events. The only way to
preserve the unworldly, transcendental character of the
divine activity is to regard it not as an interference in
worldly happenings, but something accomplished in them in
such a way that the closed weft of history as it presents
itself to objective observation is left undisturbed. To
every other eye than the eye of faith the action of God is
hidden. Only the "natural" happening is generally visible
and ascertainable. In it is accomplished the hidden act of
God.[106]

So, according to Bultmann, if we are to avoid the mistakes of

liberal theology and yet as the same time deal with the problem

presented by the New Testament world-picture, we must, as Schubert M.

Ogden points out, devote ourselves to interpreting the biblical myths

critically in terms of the *estistentiell* understanding of existence they

basically seek to express.[107] Therefore, what Bultmann projects (to

take away the 'myth' in the New Testament) is the demythologisation of

the existential interpretation, in which Christ is present to our

existence, for example, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal.

2:20).[108] Here the 'eschatological' event of God's saving act in Christ

has become actualized in one's own life;[109] and he is in the 'new age'.

The Christ event has been taken out of the purely historic realm, where

it can never be more than the tragic death of a great man; and at the

same time it has been taken out of the mythological realm, where we must

imagine a cosmic transaction between God and Christ or between God and

satan. It has become the encounter of the self with God himself, in

which one's own past and security give place to the past of the Christ

event and to faith. And this bring us to Bultmann's existential

understanding of God and of faith.

2.2 The Christ-event and self-understanding

On the way of realising the demythologisation, or rather the existential

interpretation of the New Testament, Bultmannn does not take his starting-point from the Christ-event, describing it as an objectively verifiable part of the story of redemption, and going on to draw from it specific consequences for the destiny of man and of the world. Instead, he takes as his point of departure the understanding of existence in the New Testament. Since the Bible is an historical document, he approaches it, as he would any historical text, with the question of how man's existence is understood in the Bible. And to this question the New Testament requires, according to Bultmann, two modes of human existence, that is, unbelieving (or unredeemed) existence, and believing (or redeemed) existence.[110] Both modes of existence are determined by the fact that man is focussed upon the future, and that he seeks to attain to what he really is.

(a) The understanding of existence in the New Testament. The unbelieving man whose life is 'apart from faith' is based on what is immediately at hand, visible and tangible. He seeks to attain to the future and to his essentiality by his own means and therefore having it under his own control. He is not prepared to understand himself as God's creation; so he would like to secure his life himself, either by acquisition of this world's goods or through great moral achievements. But this brings him into a fatal error. For in truth man is not secure. He clings to what is transitory, and so his life is subject to transitoriness and to death. It is, therefore, this attempt at self-sufficiency on the part of man which the Bible calls sin. In this regard, Bultmann follows St. Paul in characterising it as the 'glorying' of him; and it is man seeking to assert himself as man, and thereby making himself God.[111]

But the believing man whose life is that of faith (or authentic life) abandons all security created by himself, and bases his life on what is 'unseen and intangible'. He understands himself as God's creature, and receives his life as a gift in this "radical self-commitment to God, which looks for everything from God, and nothing from oneself," man is set free from himself. An authentic (or genuine) life in freedom only becomes possible through faith in God's grace, that is, by trusting that what is invisible, unknown and intangible will encounter man as love and open up to him a future which is not one of death, but of life. Thus to exist means for Bultmann 'eschatological existence', and it means being 'a new creature'. By 'eschatology' Bultmann intends not the catastrophic destruction of the world at the end of time, but the end of the world which in faith is an event taking place even now:

> This (the life of faith) is eschatological existence; it means being a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). The eschatology of Jewish apocalyptic and of Gnosticism has been emancipated from its accompanying mythology, in so far as the age of salvation has already dawned for the believer and the life of the future has become a present reality. The fourth gospel carries this process to a logical conclusion by completely eliminating every trace of apocalyptic eschatology. The last judgement is no longer an imminent cosmic event, for it is already taking place in the coming of Jesus and in his summons to believe (John 3:19; 9:39; 12:31). The believer has life here and now, and has passed already from death into life (5:24,etc.). Outwardly everything remains as before, but inwardly his relation to the world has been radically changed. The world has no further claim on him, for faith is the victory which overcometh the world (1 John 5:4).[112]

The believer stands, therefore, back from the world and looks at it critically. Having committed himself to God, he is free and liberated from all that is tangible in the world.

But the question is that of how the transition, from one kind of existence to the other, takes place. The message of the New Testament

states, for Bultmann, that faith in God's grace is faith in Christ, and that the new understanding of existence is only possible as the consequence of a particular event in history, the Christ-event.[113] Indeed Bultmann recognizes that both theology and philosophy are concerned with the true 'nature' of man, that is, that man neither can nor ought ever to be anything but what he already is.[114] In this regard even Christian faith is not a 'mysterious supernatural quality' but 'the disposition of genuine humanity', and Christian love is not a 'mysterious supernatural power', but 'the natural disposition of man'.[115] However, both theology and philosophy reply differently to the question of how this natural and authentic existence of man is to be realised. The latter believes that no divine revelation, but only human reflection, is necessary to bring to light the 'natural' attitude of man; and it holds the view that the awareness of his own essentiality is sufficient to bring it into man's power, on the principle "You can, therefore you ought". The former asserts, however, that man's true nature is no longer at his own disposal, even if he is aware of it. Every movement on the part of man is a movement made within his fallen condition, because it is determined by his attempt at self-sufficiency.[116]

(b) The Christ-event as the saving act of God. Thus the understanding of the true situation of man leads directly to the question how man can be set free from himself. The message of the New Testament says that there is no other practicable way for him to come to true life. Such a liberation cannot take place through man's own power, but only from outside himself. Only the love of God is able to free man from himself and to bring him to a life in faith and love. But the love of God must not be a human product of his own wishful thinking. Instead

it must be revealed as an act of God in Jesus Christ:

> The event of Jesus Christ is therefore the revelation of the
> love of God.  It makes a man free from himself and free to
> be himself, free to live a life of self-commitment in faith
> and love.  But faith in this sense of the word is possible
> only where it takes the form of faith in the love of God.
> Yet such a faith is still a subtle form of self-assertion so
> long as the love of God is merely a piece of wishful
> thinking.  It is only an abstract idea so long as God has
> not revealed his love.  That is why faith for the Christian
> means faith in Christ, for it is faith in the love of God
> revealed in Christ.  Only those who are loved are capable of
> loving.[117]

The saving event of God in Jesus Christ is, according to Bultmann,
wholly and completely concentrated upon the cross and resurrection of
Christ.[118]  The cross of Christ is a past historical event which can be
dated like any other.  But even this past historical event which took
place at a particular date 'acquires cosmic dimensions'[119] through the
use of mythological language, and so its significance as a saving event
is revealed.  It becomes an 'eschatological' event, which brings the old
world to an end, and transforms its destiny once for all.  But as an
eschatological event it is no longer a past historical event, but is
constantly present for us.  Bultmann puts it as follows:

> To believe in the cross of Christ does not mean to concern
> ourselves with a mythical process wrought outside of us and
> our world, with an objective event turned by God to our
> advantage, but rather to make the cross of Christ our own,
> to undergo crucifixion with him.  The cross in its
> redemptive aspect is not an isolated incident which befell a
> mythical personage, but an event whose meaning has "cosmic"
> importance.  Its decisive, revolutionary significance is
> brought out by the eschatological framework in which it is
> set.  In other words, the cross is not just an event of the
> past which can be contemplated, but is (understood in its
> significance, that is for faith) an ever-present reality.[120]

In this regard, the resurrection of Christ for Bultmann is
inextricably bound up with the cross.  What the New Testament says about
the resurrection of Christ is simply "an attempt to convey the meaning

of the cross".[121] It signifies that the death of Jesus on the cross is to be regarded as "not just an ordinary human death", but as "the judgement and salvation of the world", through which he has brought the world salvation and created the possibility of true life. But Bultmann readily grants that the resurrection is not a historical event which, like the crucifixion, is to be understood in its existential significance.[122] Therefore, what does seem to him to be so is that the New Testament's statements about the resurrection are its attempt to express the decisive meaning of the cross for human existence. Then, the cross and the resurrection form a unity, and are the origin and object of the same faith:

> Cross and resurrection form a single, indivisible cosmic event which brings judgement to the world and opens up for men the possibility of authentic life. But if that be so, the resurrection cannot be a miraculous proof capable of demonstration and sufficient to convince the sceptic that the cross really has the cosmic and eschatological significance ascribed to it. ...The resurrection is not a mythological event adduced in order to prove the saving efficacy of the cross, but an article of faith just as much as the meaning of the cross itself. Indeed, *faith in the resurrection is really the same thing as faith in the saving efficacy of the cross*, faith in the cross as the cross of Christ.[123]

But Bultmann clearly distinguishes, as Schubert M. Ogden points out, between (1) the reality of the resurrection itself, which still is (while not an objective event at all) independently real as the gracious action of God whereby we are presented with the factual possibility of authentic existence, and (2) the first occurrence of faith in the resurrection, which is an objective event open to the historian's scrutiny.[124] Thus he can allow for the affirmation by faith of the independent reality of the resurrection as the ground of the Easter message and also maintain that what the historian can see is simply that this message in fact arose within the circle of Jesus' disciples and

that the occasion (or occasions) for its arising probably took the form of some kind of visionary experience in which Jesus was apprehended as the exalted Messiah.[125]

However, a question still remains of how one comes to apprehend the 'significance' of the Christ-event, in other words, how it is 'made present'. To that question Bultmann's constantly repeated answer is that Christ crucified and risen encounters us 'in the word of proclamation and nowhere else'. "There is only one answer. This is the way in which the cross is proclaimed. It is always proclaimed together with the resurrection. Christ meets us in the preaching as one crucified and risen. He meets us in the word of preaching and nowhere else. The faith of Easter is just this - faith in the word of preaching". When the word of preaching confronts us as the word of God, it is not for us to question its credential, but it is we who are questioned whether we will believe the word or reject it. "But in answering this question, in accepting the word of preaching as the word of God and the death and resurrection of Christ as the eschatological event, we are given an opportunity of understanding ourselves".[126]

(c) Kerygma and self-understanding. Bultmann considers therefore Christ to be risen in the faith and preaching of his disciples, that is in the Kerygma; and further he argues that Jesus is really present in the Kerygma, that it is 'his' word which comes to the hearer in the Kerygma. He is not exhausted to continuously say: "In the word of preaching and there alone we meet the risen Lord. So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom.10:17)."[127] In this regard the concept, 'kerygma', becomes for Bultmann the essence of his theological thought.[128] The word, 'kerygma', means 'the cry of a

herald', 'the message', 'proclamation', 'testimony', 'preaching' - the word expresses the idea that through the preaching taking place today the New Testament proclamation becomes a personal word of God addressed to me. Consequently, the content and the carrying out of the kerygma are identical, for the content of the Kerygma is the Christ-event, and it is this Christ-event which takes place here and now in preaching.[129]

Therefore, revelation for Bultmann occurs in an 'encounter' with the Word of preaching; and then preaching, by mediating an encounter in which God addresses man and man answers God, is itself revelation. "The preaching is itself revelation and does not merely speak about it, so that it mediates a content that one can understand or to which he can relate himself through knowledge and thereby 'have' the revelation. If preaching communicates a content, it at the same time addresses us; it speaks to our consciences, and whoever refuses to let himself be addressed likewise does not understand what is communicated".[130] This interpretation in terms of an encounter with the Word of preaching, i.e. the kerygma, explains the precise meaning that Bultmann attaches to his constantly repeated view that revelation, so far from being a system of dogma, is 'an act'. But it is not 'any' kind of act; rather it is specifically God acting here and now in addressing to man his decisive eschatological Word of salvation.[131]

However, Bultmann claims that God's act of self-disclosure in the proclamation of the gospel would not be complete, or could not indeed occur, unless it met with self-understanding in the hearer. "Revelation encounters man in the word - in the word that sounds forth in his present; and it thereby actually happens to him whether he understands that it does or not. Faithful and unfaithful alike are qualified by the

revelatory occurrence; for them the decision has been made, either to live or to die."[132] If a man is to receive and then to obey God's Word, he must see it in relation to his own existence. Thus revelation does not unveil the speaker only; it also unveils the hearer by showing what he is and what he can become. So Bultmann states as follows:

> What, then, has been revealed? Nothing at all, so far as the question concerning revelation asks for doctrines - doctrines, say, that no man could have discovered for himself - or for mysteries that become known once and for all as soon as they are communicated. On the other hand, however, *everything has been revealed, insofar as man's eyes are opened concerning his own existence and he is once again able to understand himself.* ...Man learns to understand himself in the light of the revelation of redemption not a bit differently than he always already should understand himself in face of the revelation in creation and the law- namely, as God's creature who is limited by God and stands under God's claim, which opens up to him the way to death or to life. If revelation in Jesus means salvation as an understanding of oneself in him, then the revelation in creation meant nothing over than this understanding of oneself in God in the knowledge of one's own creatureliness.[133]

Here the concept of 'self-understanding' forms a parallel in Bultmann to the concept of the 'kerygma'.[134] God's act of revelation which we encounter in the kerygma bestows upon us a new understanding of ourselves. "If it is also not permitted to understand God's act as a phenomenon in the world that can be perceived apart from an *existentiell* encounter with it, then his act can be spoken of only if at the same time I myself as the one who is encountered by it am also spoken of. *To speak of God's act means to speak at the same time of my own existence.* Since human life is a life in space and time, man's encounter with God must be an event that takes place concretely here and now. Accordingly, what is meant by speaking of God's act is this event of being addressed, questioned, judged, and blessed here and now by God."[135] For Bultmann this does not mean that preaching effects a marginal transformation of

our life, or that our relationship to God is added on to our existence in other spheres of life, as an extension. It means that preaching as such opens our eyes to ourselves, and that we understand ourselves anew in the concrete existential circumstances of our lives, in the light of the divine act of revelation. Therefore Bultmann speaks of faith as a new 'understanding of existence' or 'understanding of oneself'.[136]

## 2.3 Some criticism of demythologisation

(a) The problem of 'demythologisation'. Bultmann's position that is his proposal of 'demythologisation' and 'existential interpretation' maintains, Brunner argues, 'the confusion of the world-view with the question of myth' in saying that "the presentation of God's saving act corresponds to the mythical world-view"; and therefore "all the related ideas of God's saving act such as the sending of the Son of God in the fullness of time, the pre-existence of the Son of God, His atoning death on the Cross, the despoiling of the 'powers', the exaltation of Jesus, the coming Judgment, the Holy Spirit who works in the hearts of the faithful and guarantee their resurrection, etc., are reckoned as part of the mythical world-view".[137] He criticizes that Bultmann eliminated the myth from which "the Christian *kerygma* cannot be separated" and which "is related to the historicity of the divine revelation and to the history of salvation".[138] For Brunner the two terms, 'the world-view' and 'myth' signifies two different spheres: the former is "the question of natural science", and the latter is that of "the interpretation of history, the idea of the nature and the action of God."[139]

As the previous discussion has shown to us, what Bultmann intends to eliminate is the fact that "myth talks about the unworldly as worldly, the gods as human", [140] and he claims as follows:

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> What is expressed in myth is the faith that the familiar and
> disposable world in which we live does not have its ground
> and aim in itself but that its ground and limit lie beyond
> all that is familiar and disposable and that this is all
> constantly threatened and controlled by the uncanny powers
> that are its ground and limit.  In unity with this myth also
> gives expression to the knowledge that we are not lords of
> ourselves, that we are not only dependent within the
> familiar world but that we are especially dependent on the
> powers that hold sway beyond all that is familiar, and that
> it is precisely in dependence on them that we can become
> free from the familiar powers.[141]

Here the term, 'myth', for Bultmann deals with the life of man sub
*specie Dei*;   and understands man's existence in terms of his
relationship with the divine, and presents the divine power in action
within the human sphere.   It is, therefore, a mode of expression for
man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives.   The
problem is to penetrate the myth in order to discover the understanding
of human existence enshrined there, and then to discover the
contemporary terms in which that understanding may be interpreted.   And
thus myth must not be critically eliminated (as the liberal theology
does), but interpreted existentially.   However, Bultmann's use of the
term 'myth' is ambiguous when he says "there certainly are for those who
regard all language about an act of God or of a decisive, eschatological
event as mythological.   But this is not mythology in the traditional
sense, not the kind of mythology which has become antiquated with the
decay of the mythical world-view".[142]   That is to say, Bultmann does
not, as Heinz Zahrnt points out, seek to eliminate the mythological
conception of the New Testament out of hand, in order to retain a
'Christian residue'.   Instead, he seeks in those conceptions the
understanding of existence which is expressed within them.[143]


(b)   The charge of subjectivism.   Bultmann's identification of
kerygma with the self-understanding of man raises another problem.
According to Brunner, it is noticeable that Bultmann's two postulates,

'demythologisation' and 'existential interpretation', often pass over the one into the other, and that they are identified with each other. The former is then made repeatedly to serve the purpose of confronting the self-understanding of 'modern' man, for which Bultmann projects demythologisation by the existential philosophy of Martin Heidegger.[144] In Bultmann's view, what the philosophy of Heidegger does is to provide him with the conceptual framework that is necessary to understand *kerygma.* When we seek to understand anything, no matter what it may be, there is a general rule that we can only approach it on the assumption that we already have some understanding of what it is about. "In order to understand anything, we must already have some pre-understanding (Vorverständnis) of the subject matter".[145] In this regard, we have the concept of pre-understanding which is fundamental to Bultmann's theology: "Basically pre-understanding is the understanding of one's own existence which can be clarified conceptually through philosophy. To this end, I use the concept of authentic and inauthentic existence and of history and historicity developed by Heidegger in his *Being* and *Time*".[146] This explains why Bultmann has committed himself to the existentialist philosophy.

Bultmann is anxious to insist that this in no way determines the content of *kerygma.* "The philosophical analysis of existence has for me only propaedeutic significance, and prejudges nothing concerning the existential life of the individual. Philosophy for Bultmann only provides us with the concepts of authentic and inauthentic existence, only furnishes the formal scheme into which *kerygma* must be introduced if its specific character is to be understood. Philosophy "offers the possibility of speaking of Christian existence in a language which is comprehensible today".[147] Hence even theology cannot put forth any

statement it pleases, but must show that their truth would be meaningful. But it cannot do this like the natural sciences, by subjecting its truth to objective experiment, but only by demonstrating their relevance to reality and their significance for external life. So, theology must show, for Bultmann, how far man in reality obtains through faith a new understanding of his own self in the world.

But this has important consequences for theological language. The object of theology is God. So, we cannot speak 'directly' of God, that is, in general propositions and verities, which do not take into account the concrete existential situation of the speaker or the person addressed. We can only speak of God 'indirectly', that is, in propositions and verities which have a relevance to the concrete existential situation of the person addressed. In this regard, Bultmann argues that all theological propositions are true and valid only as existential statement and all pronouncements concerning God and his revelation require to be 'expressed in terms of existential life' when he says as follows:

> If the action of God is not to be conceived as a worldly phenomenon capable of being apprehended apart from its existential reference, it can only be spoken of by speaking simultaneously of myself as the person who is existentially concerned. *To speak of the act of God means to speak at the same time of my existence.* Since human life is lived out in time and space, man's encounter with God can only be a specific event here and now. This event, our being addressed by God here and now, our being questioned, judged, and blessed by him, is what we mean when we speak of an act of God.[148]

Consequently, Bultmann is never exhausted to emphasise that we can only speak of God and his action if we speak at the same time of man and his existential life. He is ready to accept the assertion of a critics that he is transforming theology into anthropology; and indeed his

proposal of demythologisation is, as Anders Nygren points out, an analysis of existence that "intended to provide the anthropological pre-understanding which is supposed to open the way for the gospel to modern man".[149] Bultmann heartily agrees: "I *am* trying to substitute anthropology for theology, for I am interpreting theological affirmations as assertions about human life. What I mean is that the God of the Christian revelation is the answer to the vital questions, the existential questions".[150]

So at this point a question arises whether this is not to deprive the action of God of all objective reality and reduce it to subjective experience, or God and faith in him are not made simply an inward experience, a psychological process.[151] This is the usual theological objection raised against Bultmann's existential interpretation. Helmut Thielicke expresses the view thus: "the event in the process of revelation is not an objective reality, it is simply a change in the subjective consciousness of man. ...The historical narratives of the New Testament are, to put it bluntly, not events in their own right, but only the prelude to an event. The real event is the change which takes place in human self-consciousness."[152] Or Anders Nygren criticises that Bultmann's existential interpretation of the last resort "replaces the religious message of kerygma. Anthropology takes the place of theology".[153] Therefore, this threat that the kerygma may be made completely unhistorical leads to a further conseqence. Because all the historical and concrete, living and bodily, visible and tangible elements are taken away from the Christ-event in Bultmann's theology, there is a danger of its losing its character as a gift and as gospel. All that remains is, as Heniz Zahrnt points out, "a single and naked saving act, characterised only by its mere existence as a fact. It is

the empty paradox, that God acted in this man Jesus. What he actually did, and how he did it, is not stated."[154]

In this regard, even though Brunner shares partly Bultmann's 'theological' proposal of 'demythologisation', he believes that Bultmann's 'subjectivism' fails to do justice to the reality of the historical revelation, as the Jesus of history disappears behind the believer's witness to Christ and the Old Testament sacred history has no longer any part to play. The reason for this is that Bultmann "rejects the question whether a historical event, a personality called Jesus, stands behind the Christian witness of the believing community, and whether the picture of this Jesus drawn by the gospels corresponds to historical reality as irrelevant and theologically unjustified".[155] But the kerygma itself permits an inquiry concerning the historical Jesus. Indeed, not only does it permit such a inquiry, it demands it as an obligation. The kerygma explicitly states that its criterion is Jesus himself, and speaks of this criterion as of an historical phenomenon. This requires that the name of Jesus of which the kerygma speaks should not remain a mere word, a fortuitous and meaningless symbol, but should appear as that of *an historical person*.[156] Therefore, instead of the term 'demythologisation', Brunner suggests the term 'truth as encounter' that points to the God who speaks to us in the Bible, above all, *in the history of Jesus Christ*.[157] For him, this alternative proposal may indicate an appropriate meaning of the term 'missionary theology'. This we will discuss in the next chapter.

1. Emil Brunner points out that with the world catastroph of 1914 an historical epoch came to an end, and with it also a theological one - the epoch of the optimistic belief in progress that was an outcome of the Enlightenment. See Brunner, "Continental European Theology", in The Church Through Half a Century, edit. Henry P. van Dusen, et. al. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936) pp.142f.

2. Alister E McGrath, The Making of Modern German Christology (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.94.

3. Jürgen Moltmann (ed) Anfänge der dialetischen Theologie, vol.I (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963), p.xif.

4. Wilhelm Pauck, "The Church-Historical Setting of Brunner's Theology", in ThoEB, pp.34-37. Cf. also E. Brunner "Continental European Theology", in Henry P van Dusen et.al., op.cit., pp.139-144.

5. K. Barth, Der Römerbrief, its first edition published by G.A. Bäschlin in 1919 and then revised with many successive editions. English translation from its sixth edition by Edwin C. Hoskyns has its title, The Epistle to the Romans (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p.1.

6. K. Barth, Ibid, p.11.

7. K. Barth, Ibid, p.1.

8. K. Barth, Ibid, p.10.

9. E. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.8. Cf. also Brunner's review: "Der Römerbrief von Karl Barth - Eine Zeitgemäß - unmoderne Paraphrase", in Anfänge der dialetischen Theologie, ed. Jürgen Moltmann, pp.78-87. The article was originally contributed to Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz 34 Jg. Nr.8, 22nd February 1919, pp.29-32.

10. E. Brunner, "A Spiritual Autobiography", in Japan Christian Quarterly, 1955, vol. 21, p.241.

11. Cf. Wilhelm Pauck, "The Church-Historical Setting of Brunner's Theology", in ThoEB, p.9.

12. Die Mystik und das Wort was published in 1924 by Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) in Tübingen under the subtitle: The apposition between the modern concepts of religion and the Christian faith in the position of the theology of Schleiermacher; and after publication he was appointed to the Chair of Systematic and Practical Theology at the University of Zurich in 1924.

13. In year 1927 Emil Brunner published two works which reflect his understanding of the theological task by both the nature and scope of their substance: Der Mittler and its prolegomena, Religionsphilosophie evangelisher Theologie. See Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.9.

14. E. Brunner, Med. p.24.

15. On this point 'Einmaligkeit' means occupying a *unique* moment in *time*. 'Unrepeatableness' is the real meaning. See E. Brunner, Ibid, pp.23, 25 translator's note 1.

16. E. Brunner, Ibid. p.238.

17. E. Brunner, Ibid, pp.240-241.

18. Brunner names the subtitle of Der Mittler as "A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith".

19. E. Brunner, WaW, pp.6-7.

20. E. Brunner, "Von den Ordnungen Gottes", Vortrag im Berner Münster, (Bern: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1929).

21. E. Brunner, "Die andere Aufgabe der Theologie", in Zwischen den

Zeiten, vol. 7, 1929, pp.255ff.

22.  E. Brunner, Ibid, pp.255 "... es begehrt Einlaß in einem Haus, das schon besetzt ist."

23.  E. Brunner, Ibid, pp.255f.

24.  E. Brunner, Ibid, pp.260f.

25.  E. Brunner, "Die Frage nach dem 'Anknupfungspunkt' als Problem der Theologie", Zwischen den Zeiten, 1932, pp.505-532.

26.  Cf. Dale Moody, "Introduction to Emil Brunner", in The Review and Expositor, vol. 44, 1947, p.319.

27. E. Brunner, "Die Frage nach dem 'Anknüpfungspunkt' als Problem der Theologie",   pp.506-507.

28.  E. Brunner, Ibid, p.519.

29.  E. Brunner, Ibid, p.511. Cf. also  Dale Moody, op.cit., p.320; Malcolm Boyd, "Point of Contact", in Anglican Theological Review, vol. 39, pp.71f.

30.  K. Barth, "Schicksal und Idee in der Theologie", in Zwischen den Zeiten, 1929, pp.309ff.  Cf. also "Die Theologie und die Mission in der Gegenwart", in Zwischen den Zeiten, 1932, pp.189f.

31.  Malcolm Boyd, "Point of Contact", p.71.

32.  K. Barth, "Die  erste Gebot als theologisches Axiom", in Zwischen den Zeiten, 1933, pp.311ff.

33.  E. Brunner, Natur und Gnade: zum Gesprach mit Karl Barth (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1934). Translated by Peter Fraenkel and an Introduction by John Baille, Natural Theology, London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1946.

34.  Eberhard Müller, "The Church in Action", in ThoEB, p.44.

35.  E. Brunner, NaTh, p.23.

36.  E. Brunner, Ibid, p.23, Cf. also DiIm, p.66.

37.  E. Brunner, NaTh, p.9.

38.  E. Brunner, GoaMa, p.115.

39.  E. Brunner, NaTh, p.31.

40.  E. Brunner, Ibid.

41.  E. Brunner, Ibid.

42.  E. Brunner, Ibid, p.32.

43.  Brand Blanshard, Reason and Belief (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1974), p.252.

44.  Brunner, NaTh, p.24.

45.  Brand Blanshard, op.cit., p.254.

46.  P.G. Schrotenboer, A New Apologetics (Kampen: J.H. Kok N.V., 1955), p.68. Cf. also Brunner, DII, p.69: "we see how necessary it is to interpret the *Imago Dei as relation* and not as *substance*, as something which is part of man's nature".

47.  Brunner, DII, p.64.

48.  Cf. David Cairns, The Image of God in Man (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1950), pp.162f.

49.  E. Brunner, NaTh., p.32.

50.  Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.25.

51.  Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.27.

52.     Brunner, Ibid, pp.27f.  See especially John Baillie's "Introduction", p.9; Cf. also  Dale Moody, "An Introduction to Emil Brunner", in The Review and Expositor, vol. 44, 1947, p.321.

53.  Brunner, NaTh, p.26.

54.  Brunner, Ibid, p.26.

55.  Brunner, Ibid, pp.27-29.

56.  Brunner, Ibid, pp.51 53;  Cf. Brunner, DI, p.132;  Cf. also Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God (London: Colloins, 1969), p.62.

57.  E. Brunner, NaTh, p.36.

58. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.37.
59. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.38.
60. E. Brunner and K. Barth, NaTh, p.71.
61. E. Brunner and K. Barth, Ibid, p.74.
62. The later Barth recognises that his early limitations are surely changed for the better interpretation. Cf. K. Barth, How I changed my Mind, pp.50ff; cf. also E. Brunner, "The New Barth" in Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. IV, 1951. Cf. also Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God, 85ff; also Brand Blanshard, Reason and Belief, pp.290f.
63. E. Brunner and K. Barth, NaTh, pp.74f.
64. John Baillie and Hugh Martin (ed), Revelation (New York: Macmillan, 1937), pp.45f.
65. E. Brunner and K. Barth, NaTh, p.80.
66. E. Brunner and K. Barth, Ibid, pp.78f.
67. E. Brunner and K. Barth, Ibid, p.98f.
68. E. Brunner and K. Barth, Ibid, p.105.
69. E. Brunner and K. Barth, Ibid, p.107.
70. E. Brunner and K. Barth, Ibid, pp.108f.
71. Emil Brunner and karl Barth, Ibid, p.109.
72. Dale Moody, "An Introduction to Emil Brunner", pp.321f.
73. K. Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p.10. Cf. also E. Brunner, ThoCr, pp.27f. 37. Brunner said: .... "Can I know God?" Two answers seems to be possible. One affirms that we can know Him on the ground of divine immanence; the other asserts it on the ground of divine transcendence. .... But let me assure you that an outsider's question can never be answered unless he ceases to be an outsider. If God speaks to me, I can hear him only by letting him speak to me."
74. Cf. K. Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p.10: "The relation between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of Bible and the essence of philosophy."
75. E. Brunner and K. Barth, NaTh, p.122.
76. E. Brunner and K. Barth, Ibid, p.22.
77. E. Brunner and K. Barth, Ibid.
78. E. Brunner and K. Barth, Ibid, p.11.
79. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, vol. II, p.66, n.2.
80. John Macquarrie, God-Talk (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), p.13.
81. John Macquarrie, Ibid, p.43.
82. John Macquarrie, Ibid, p.48.
83. On this point Frederick Ferre said: Only in the obedience of faith, this tradition insists, can man's language convey meaning and truth about God. This approach to justifying language in its theological application we shall call, therefore, the logic of obedience; it is held to be a higher rationality than any known to philosophy. Language, Logic and God (London: Eyre & Spottishwoode Ltd., 1962) p.78.
84. John Macquarrie, God-Talk, p.49.
85. Hans W Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol. I, A Theological Debate, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: SPCK, 1957), p.vii.
86. Schubert M. Ogden, Christ without Myth (London: Collins, 1962) p.112.
87. According to Schubert M. Ogden, three types of position have been represented in the so-called 'demythologising debate': "There is, first of all, the 'centre' position of Bultmann himself and others who have most significance voices are those of Bultmann's long-time

friend, Friedrich Gogarten, the brilliant team of Christian Hartlich and Walter Sachs, and Hans Werner Bartsch, the editor of the now five-volume series, *Kerygma und Mythos*. Second, there is what we may describe as the position of the 'right' which counts among its representatives not only the Continental Roman Catholic contributors to the discussion, but also the conservative theologians of the German Evangelical Church and Karl Barth and those who share his general point of view. Finally, there is a third and decidedly minority point of view somewhere to the 'left' of the hypothetical Bultmannian 'centre'. The most articulate spokesman for this position has been the Basel systematic theologian Fritz Buri." See Christ without Myth, pp.112-115.

88. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.214.
89.  Emil Brunner, "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism", in ThoEB, p.328.
90. Emil Brunner, TasE, p.69 (Italics is Brunner's).
91.  Emil Brunner, "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism" in ThoEB p.328.
92. Edwin M. Good, "The Meaning of Demythologization", in The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann, edit. Charles W. Kegley (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966) p.22.
93.  Ridderbos, Bultmann (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), p.17.
94.  Paul van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1966), p.58. Cf. also Schubert M. Ogden, Chrrist without Myth, p.30.
95.  As Ogden points out, the defining characteristic of myth, or of mythological thinking, is that it 'objectifies' and thus speaks in 'objective' statements about a reality that is not an 'object'. This non-objective reality, variously referred to as 'the unworldly', 'the divine' and 'the transcendent', is given in man's self-experience as the ground and end of his own existence and of his own existence and of his immediately disposable world. See Schubert M. Ogden, Ibid, p.28.
96. Paul van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel, p.59
97.  Rudolf Bultmann, Essays, Philosophical and Theological, trans. James C.G. Greig (London: SCM Press, 1955), p.8.
98.  On Bultmann's strictures against Barth on the *sacrificium intellectus*, see "The Problem of Hermeneutics", in Essays, pp.259-261; Cf. also James Barr's account of the term 'inspiration'. The term is associated with fundamentalists and is particularly linked with their understanding of the Bible. The Bible in the Modern World (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1973), pp.13-18.
99. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol. I, p.12.
100. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, pp.11-12.
101. Paul van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel, p.59.
102. Edwin M. Good, "The Meaning of Demythologisation", In The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann, p.29.
103. Schubert M. Ogden, Christ Without Myth, p.49.
104. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol. II, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: SPCK, 1962), p.211.
105. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol. I, p.197.
106. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid.
107. In Heidegger's philosophy we often come across the four temrs, 'existential' and 'existentiell', 'ontological' (ontologisch) and 'ontic' (ontisch). When he says such a term, 'existential interpretation' or 'existential analysis', it is an analysis of the meaning of being in general, or being of existence (Dasein). An

'existentiell' interpretation is, however' implied by every intelligent decision made by a man in the choice of one possibility rather than another, for every such decision implies some implicit understanding or his own nature and place in the world. So, an existential analysis must be distinguished from an 'existentielle' understanding of interpretation. Cf. David Cairns, A Gospel Without Myth? (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1960), pp.38-39; Cf. Also John Macquarrie, An Existentialist Theology (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1955), pp.30-31.

108. According to Edwin M. Good, Bultmann uses another term, 'eschatological', instead of the term, 'existential'. For Bultmann the Christ event is the eschatological event, inaugurating the new age. When, therefore, one participates in the event in faith, he is taken up into the new age - the *eschaton* - and his existence is now eschatological existence. See "The Meaning of Demythologisation", in The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann, pp. 30f. n.29.

109. See Luther's words in the Treatise on *Christian Liberty*: "It is not enough, nor is it Christian, to preach the works, life, and words of Christ as historical facts, as if the knowledge of these would suffice for the conduct of life. ... Rather ought Christ be preached to the end that he may not only be Christ but be Christ for thee and for me, and that what is said of Him and what His name denotes may be effectual in us." Quoted in Edwin M. Good, Ibid, p.31, n.30.

110. Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God (London: Collins, 1969), pp.229-230.

111. Hans W. Bartsch (ed.) Kerygma and Myth , vol.I, pp.17, 18.: "St. Paul sees that the life of man is weighed down by anxiety ( $\mu\epsilon\rho\iota\mu\nu\hat{a}\nu$ 1 Cor.7:32ff). Every man focuses his anxiety upon some particular object. the natural man focuses it upon security, and in proportion to his opportunities and his success in the visible sphere he places his 'confidence' in the 'flesh' (Phil. 3:3f), and the consciousness of security finds its expression in 'glorying' ( $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\hat{a}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ )."

112. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, p.20.
113. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, p.22.
114. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, p.28.
115. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, p.26.
116. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, pp.27f.
117. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, p.32.
118. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, pp.34-35.
119. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, p.36.
120. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid.
121. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, p.38.
122. Schubert M. Ogden, Christ without Myth, p.97.
123. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol. I, pp.39, 41 (Italics are Bultmann's).
124. Schubert M. Ogden, op.cit., p.102.
125. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), op.cit., p.42.
126. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol. I, p.41.
127. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Ibid, p.43.
128. Heinz Zahrnt, op. cit., p.235.
129. Rudolf Bultmann, "Revelation in the New Testament", in Existence and Faith, pp.90-91.

130. Rudolf Bultmann, "The Concept of Revelation in the New Testament",

in Existence and Faith, p.78.

131. H.P. Owen, "Revelation", in The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann, p.43.
132. Rudolf Bultmann, "The Concept of Revelation in the New Testament", in Existence and Faith, p.79.
133. Rudolf Bultmann, Ibid, pp.85f. (Italics are Bultmann's).
134. Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God, p.236.
135. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol.I, pp.196-199. Quoted in Schubert M. Ogden, Christ without Myth, pp.106f.
136. Heinz Zahrnt, op.cit., p.236.
137. Emil Brunner, DII, p.265.
138. Emil Brunner, Ibid, pp.268, 269.
139. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.265. See the more detailed explanation of the concept 'myth', in The Mediator, especially Appendix The 'Mythology' of Christianity, pp.377ff.
140. Rudolf Bultmann, New Testament and Mythology, p.10.
141. Rudolf Bultmann, Ibid.
142. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol. I, p.43.
143. Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God, p.220.
144. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.215.
145. John Macquarrie, "Philosophy and Theology in Bultmann's thought", in The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann, p.139; Cf. also Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Hermeneutics", in Essays, Philosophical and Theological, pp.234ff.
146. Rudolf Bultmann, "Reply", in The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann, p.274.
147. Rudolf Bultmann, Ibid.
148. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol. I, pp.196-197 (Italics are mine).
149. Anders Nygren, Meaning and Method (London: Epworth Press, 1972), p.200.
150. Hans W. Bartsch (ed), Kerygma and Myth, vol. I, pp.107f.
151. Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God, pp.237.
152. Helmut Thielicke, "The Restatement of the New Testament Mythology", in Kerygma and Myth, vol. I, p.147.
153. Anders Nygren, op.cit., p.312.
154. Heinz Zahrnt, op.cit., p.250.
155. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.214.
156. Heinz Zahrnt, op.cit. p.256.
157. Brunner, TasE, p.49.

# III THE PARADIGM OF MISSIONARY THEOLOGY

## 1. An alternative proposal

### 1.1 The question about truth

Throughout his literary career, Emil Brunner is concerned with an interest in the problem of truth.[1] He believes that the possibility of a knowledge of truth lies in the juxtaposition of revelation and reason, and then he proposes as a solution to the problem the conception of 'truth as encounter' (Wahrheit als Begegnung) that points to one of the most basic concepts in his theology. So, a consideration of the meaning of this important term is imperative if we want to acquire a clear understanding of his missionary theology. It should be pointed out, however, that this precise expression does not appear until a relatively late period of Brunner's theological development (see III.3.1)[2] The term 'truth as encounter' is a basic category in his investigating the problem of truth.[3] especially pronounced in the following works: *Truth as Encounter, Revelation and Reason* and three volumes of his *Dogmatics*.[4]

As Paul Tillich points out, Brunner develops a theological theory of knowledge which he describes as adequate to the subject matter with which theology has to deal: "In perhaps his most suggestive book, *The Divine-Human Encounter*, Brunner develops a theological epistemology which seems to be both Biblical and existentialist and, most important, adequate to the subject matter with which theology has to deal. The concept of 'encounter' is highly useful in a situation where the word 'experience' has lost any definite meaning. It helps greatly to overcome the enslavement to the subject - object structure of knowing that dominates most of our ordinary and scientific thought. In a

genuine encounter, subject and object are taken into something third in which they cease to be mere subject or mere object."[5]   In addition, Tillich criticises, however, that this epistemology is, however, deficient in certain respects, particularly with regard to a semantic problem, the concern of natural theology, and the proper view of non-Christian religions.[6]

In his reply to the question of Tillich Emil Brunner claims that he does not categorically develop any epistemology in the sense of philosophy,[7] considering that it is a problem for Christian philosophy and not one for theology.[8]   With that assertion he moves on to the fact that there is a fundamental difference between his understanding of truth and that which is based on objective knowledge;   and he goes on as follows:

> My thinking is oriented differently from that of Tillich.   I
> do not ask philosophically if in this concept, "Encounter",
> there are still other relationships contained than the I -
> Thou, but I content myself with selecting this one as the
> only one meant in the Biblical witness.   In contrast to
> Tillich, I understand encounter only as the truth which
> comes to us in faith in the self-communication of God.   This
> truth creates a knowledge which rises above the subject -
> object distinction.   We cannot make it an object of
> epistemological discussion, except by referring it back to
> its own source, God's self-communication.[9]

Here Brunner claims that a theologian may in no case incorporate faith into (or subordinate it to) a philosophical epistemology since the latter stems from an it-world and not as does faith, from a Thou-world.[10]

This leads to the problem of what Brunner understands in the terms of 'the truth of revelation' and 'the truth of reason', for what each of them claims on its own basis *is* truth:   "Revelation and reason possess one common element:   they both claim truth.   The genuine scientist

wills, not that his opinion should prevail, but that *truth* should prevail; unbelievers have frequently surpassed Christians in their love of truth, and in their willingness to sacrifice their own interests to the truth they have put many a Christian to shame. But the Christian faith also is concerned with truth. It is the will of God that we should 'worship Him in spirit and *in truth*'; even the Apostle who proclaims most decisively the message of the Cross proclaims: 'We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth': He who says of Himself that He is the Life says also, 'I am the Truth'. Faith can only will the truth that saves, and not an illusion that gives a passing happiness. 'The truth shall make you free'".[11]

So there appear to be two fundamentally opposing views of truth. On the one hand, modern scientific minded man is preoccupied with the things of this world and with an 'immanental' philosophy.[12] For him whatever cannot be fitted into the categories of scientific objectivity is, for that reason, suspect and whatever cannot be proved scientifically is either not quite true or not quite certain. All that lies beyond the perception of the senses and the conclusions of logic, all that cannot be proved and verified experimentally, is 'subjective', 'hypothetical', or improbable and incredible.[13] There persists an unyielding demand for scientific proof; then, science plays a far greater part in human thought than it has ever done before. On the other hand, Christian theology and the church presume to speak of a revelation which *is* truth. Here is a claim to absolute truth, but one which "can be neither proved by the intellect nor verified by experience".[14] For modern man, moreover, this Christian claim to truth seems to have been seriously damaged by two negative facts. In the first place, some of what the church has long proclaimed as 'revealed

truth' has been conclusively demonstrated to have been in error by the process of scientific knowledge. In second place, under the support of the state for some fifteen hundred years the church forbade all counter opinions as heresy and attempted to keep its authority with severe penalties.[15] But the claims of the church could not be supported in this way.

So, just as important as this external stimulus is that which is the result of history and of the inner situation within the church. The question of the *nature* of revelation arose late within the church and theology. And such discussion as was given to this subject usually centered in the relation between 'natural' and 'revealed' theology until post-Reformation thought[16] But when attention was focused upon the meaning of revelation, it usually led to ecclesiastical theories of inspiration. For Brunner this leads almost inevitably to the notion that divine revelation is the equivalent of a revealed *doctrine* or a book of divinely revealed doctrine: "Theological reflection, once it had got entangled, in the early centuries of its history, with this fatal equation of revelation with the inspiration of the Scriptures, was never able to shake itself free. The result was that reflection on revelation simply meant a theory of verbal inspiration as the basis of the divine authority of the Bible; in principle this meant that it did not matter how much or how little emphasis was laid on a 'general' or 'natural' revelation. The ecclesiastical doctrine of revelation was and remained identical with her doctrine of the Scriptures".[17]

Accordingly, what Brunner contends against this view of revelation is that the revelation is rather "God Himself in His self-manifestation within history";[18] in other words, it means the whole of the divine

activity for the salvation of the world.[19]  This fundamental biblical

view for Brunner was briefly rediscovered during the period of the

Reformation, but was soon lost in an inordinate desire to establish an

authoritative safeguard for the renewed understanding of faith.  An

infallible Scripture was substituted for an infallible church.  He

argues as follows:

> So they returned to the Catholic idea of revelation,
> according to which the revelation guaranteed the infallible
> doctrine contained in Scripture, and the Scripture
> guaranteed the divine revelation, which is therefore the
> infallible source of this doctrine;  they did not notice
> that in so doing they had destroyed the real gains of the
> new discovery of the Reformation.  Now the way led, not to
> the freedom of the Church, but to the "paper-Pope."  Once
> the concept of revelation had thus been falsified, the
> concept of faith, even though to some extent preserved by
> the teaching of the Reformers, followed suit.  A "believer"
> is now a person who accepts the doctrine revealed in the
> Bible.  The absolute authority of the Church had been
> replaced by the absolute authority of the Book.[20]

The subsequent breakdown of the notion of infallible Scripture under the

impact of modern scientific and historical knowledge led, however, to a

collapse of the imposing structure of orthodox doctrine and to the

enthronment of the 'truth of reason',  namely in the place of the

biblical revelation was the truth of reason.[21]


1.2  The imprisonment of theological thought

Reflecting upon these developments, Brunner undertakes to reassess the

whole concept of truth in the light of the presuppositions of reason and

of the biblical message.  His investigations leads him to the conclusion

that the intellectualist misunderstanding of revelation and of faith

began very early, as early as the first centuries of the primitive

Church.  The cause of this was the intrusion of Greek philosophical

thought into the Church.[22]  Under its influence Christian theology

applied the general rationalist concept of truth to biblical revelation,

and consequently moved it into 'the object - subject antithesis' that prevails in the whole of Western philosophy and science.[23] But the real calamity, in Brunner's views, was not the attempt to approach understanding of revelation either objectively or subjectively, but to force it into a category of thought which is alien to it.

> *The Biblical understanding of truth cannot be grasped through the object-subject antithesis: on the contrary, it is falsified through it.* This does not mean, to be sure, that we should avoid using this conception, since it is indispensable for natural-rational knowing, or that we can do without it in every respect; indeed we should have to stop thinking altogether if we entirely gave up using it. This thesis does not mean, however, that where the heart of faith is concerned - the relation between God's Word and faith, between Christ and faith - the objective - subjective correlation must be replaced by one of an entirely different kind.[24]

According to Brunner, the Bible describes the history of the revelation of God entirely in verbs of movement: "Divine revelation is not a book or doctrine; the Revelation is God Himself in His self-manifestation within history. Revelation is something that *happens*, the living history of God in His dealings with the human race: the history of revelation is the history of salvation, and the history of salvation is the history of revelation. Both are the same, seen from two angles. This is the understanding of revelation which the Bible itself gives us".[25] But theology now was full of speculation about the Trinity and about the person of Christ purely in categories of being and nature. Thus divine revelation became the supernatural imparting of doctrinal truths inaccessible to limited human reason, and faith accordingly became the unquestioning acceptance of these supernaturally revealed doctrinal truths as such.[26]

Faith was then turned into 'a matter of believing' with no distinction between dogma or the Bible as the object of belief. In this

regard, "Bible-orthodoxy is precisely the same as dogma-orthodoxy, involving the application of the general concept of truth to revelation, instead of surmounting this understanding of truth by means of revelation";[27] and thus in both cases there is a 'revealed truth' that *must* be believed. This obligation for Brunner destroys, however, the *nature* of faith (or the genuine meaning of faith) at its very root. The reason for this is that it turns faith into a duty which man has to perform, and on the performance of which his eternal salvation depends; and thus instead of the 'genuine faith' of the New Testament, 'orthodoxy' becomes the standard by which every Christian attitude is measured: "If only your support of doctrine is clear and unequivocal, you are a Christian."[28]

In consequence, that 'faith' means to live for Christ as you trust Christ, so Brunner argues, is forgotten: "one now allows himself to relativize in such a measure the attainment of the new life in Christ that even the dead 'letter-faith' is considered valid as faith".[29] For Brunner, this misunderstanding of faith lies in 'the objective-subjective antithesis' in the history of the church: "the use of the object-subject antithesis in understanding the truth of faith and furthermore in the church generally is by no means self-evident; on the contrary, it is a disastrous misunderstanding which affects the entire content of Christian doctrine and also operates fatally in the practice of the church, most severely imparing the proclamation of the Word and faith among the fellowship".[30] Because of the intrusion of the object-subject antithesis into theology and the church the misunderstanding of faith is for Brunner noticeable, and he claims thus:

> This misunderstanding of faith is noticeable in the fact
> that what in the Bible is meant as expression and
> description of the nature of faith has come to be understood

as the object of faith. The Bible means that he who stands in faith is a new creature;  the misunderstanding is, that we must believe that one becomes a new creature through faith.  The Scriptures say that he who stands in genuine faith *has* the Holy Spirit and experiences the Spirit's living, renewing action;  the misunderstanding is that one must *believe* that through faith he receives the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit is an animating, renewing power.  The apostles speak of the ecclesia as the community and fellowship of believers, a community that can be experienced and that realizes itself in the exchange of gifts;  the misunderstanding considers the church as the object of faith and even emphasizes that the *communio sanctorum* is not a fact of experience.  The Bible speaks about faith being the same as being in reality allied to Christ;  the misunderstanding replaces the real alliance by the alliance with Christ as *object* faith, as a truth to be believed. This confusion, this replacing of personal understanding of faith by the intellectual,  is probably the most fatal occurrence within the entire history of the church.[31]

Here Brunner seeks, therefore, to overcome this imprisonment of theological thought in the object-subject dichotomy.  The biblical revelation for Brunner cannot be understood either from the point of view of the object as merely an outward event, or from the point of view of the subject as merely an inner process.  Rather, it lies 'beyond objectivism and subjectivism.'[32]  For this reason Brunner never ceases to claim an argument about 'the extreme objectivism' of Barth's theological proposal and 'the extreme subjectivism' of Bultmann's theological proposal.[33]  Instead, Brunner finds numerous parallels in modern thought to the overcoming of the traditional object-subject dichotomy, both in philosophy and in natural science.  Examples in philosophy are provided by Dilthey, Husserl, Kierkegaard and Heidegger, who all have in common that they no longer make a sharp distinction between the subject which knows and the object which is known;[34]  the outstanding example in natural science in Einstein's theory of relativity, which makes the point of view of the perceiving subject part of the description of the world of objects.[35]

## 1.3 A theological epistemology[36]

By suggesting his position in relation to the attempts at 'truth as encounter' undertaken in the overcoming of subject-object dichotomy in thought, Emil Brunner sees the problem of truth as primarily theological rather than philosophical and he claims as follows:

> Whenever an individual, a people, or an epoch ceases to take existence merely for granted, two questions at once arise: "What is truth?" and "How can we become possessed of the truth which thus is?" The problem-how thinking or knowing is related to being - which more than any other has engaged Western philosophy from its first beginnings down to the present time, is not based upon a misunderstanding as has recently been maintained; it springs necessarily from our very existence. The familiar experience that there may be conflicting opinions concerning the same matter of fact is enough to force upon us the distinction between an objective being and a subjective knowing of that being. Especially in the sphere of science, though by no means only there, the striving for "objectivity", for the greatest possible correspondence between "thinking" and "being", is rightly regarded as the one true ideal of the search after knowledge.
>
> *We are not concerned here with this general philosophical problem, but only with the relation between the "objective" and the "subjective" in Christian faith. The question is theological rather than philosophical,* not only in regard to its subject matter but also, and equally, with reference to its presuppositions. We ask not as those who are primarily interested to know if and in what sense there is truth in the Christian faith, but rather as those who, being believing members of the church, have knowledge of divine truth through the revelation in Jesus Christ. Our question arises, as we are accustomed to say to-day, from within the church, not from without, and is intended as a backward-looking inquiry on the part of believers into the source, the foundation, and the norm, of their faith - which can be no other than the Word of God become flesh in Jesus Christ.[37]

With this assertion he begins with the premiss that the Bible is the source and norm of all Christian theology and comes to the conclusion that there is a fundamental disparity between its understanding of truth and that which is determined by the object-subject antithesis. "The source and norm of all Christian theology is the Bible. Its subject matter is the secret and, at the same time,

manifest meaning of the Bible:  the God who inclines himself toward man

and makes himself present to man:  Jesus Christ and his Kingdom.  This

is the presupposition (never to be lost from sight) for my attempt to

work out the opposition between the Biblical understanding of truth and

the general rational understanding of truth as determined by the object-

subject antithesis.  This understanding of truth is nowhere explained in

the Bible".[38]  However, in the object-subject antithesis the more

precise and formal a concept becomes, the more fully is it apprehended

and possessed;  and hence in the history of Christianity there has been,

Brunner contends, an inordinate disposition to objectify all aspect of

the faith, including the understanding of truth.


The Bible contains, according to him, no formal doctrine of God, or

of the Word of God, or of man in the sense of that which is determined

by the object-subject antithesis;  and thus the more formal a

theological concept becomes in its structure, then the less can it be

directly discovered in, or validated by the Bible.  Therefore, what

Brunner argues is that the Bible does not speak of God as he is in

himself nor of man as he is in himself, but rather it speaks always of

the two in relation one to the other;  it speaks of the God who comes to

man and of man who has his being from God.  He claims thus:

> The Biblical revelation in the Old and New Testaments deals
> with the relation of God to men and of men to God.  It
> contains no doctrine of God as he is in himself (Gott-an-
> sich), none of man as he is in himself (Menschen-an-sich).
> It always speaks of God as the God who approaches man (Gott-
> zum-Menschen-hin) and of man as the man who comes from God
> (Menschen-von-Gott-her).  That God - even in his "I-am-ness"
> (An-sich-sein) - wishes from the first to be understood as
> the God who approaches man is precisely the meaning of the
> doctrine of the Truine God;  that man, even in his natural
> being, is always the man who comes from God is the meaning
> of the doctrine of the image of God and of original sin.
> And both are known in their fullness only in Jesus Christ,
> in whom as the incarnate Son of God both the God who
> approaches man and the man who comes from God are

revealed.[39]

So, what the Bible indicates here is the fact that the truth contained in it is not set forth in 'abstract doctrinal form'; rather because that it *is* the relation of event (or of happening), it can therefore be expressed (or described) in 'narrative form': that in the Bible this two-sided relation between God and man is not developed as *doctrine* but, rather, is set forth as happening in a story. The relation between God and man and between man and God is not of such a kind that doctrine can adequately expressed it in *abstract formulas*,

...It is not a timeless or static relation, arising from the world of ideas - and only for such is doctrine an adequate form. Rather, the relation is an event, and hence *narration* is the proper form to describe it. The decisive word form in the language of the Bible is not the substantive, as in Greek, but the verb, the word of action. The thought of the Bible is not substantival, neuter and abstract, but verbal, historical and personal.[40]

Consequently, this leads us to a question of how Brunner defines the place of dogmatics (or doctrinal form) in the sphere of 'theological' enterprise. His answer to this question is that dogmatics is 'the re-thinking of the faith' that has been given with the Word of God; and hence this engagement of the intellect "presupposes the Christian Faith and the Christian Church not only as a fact but as the possibility of its own existence".[41] Stating these presuppositions, Brunner proceeds to the further explication that "Dogmatics...is the Science of Christian teaching or doctrine. But the subject always exists before the 'science' of the subject can be studied...Dogmatics is a function of the teaching Church".[42] Thus he sums up as follows:

Dogmatics is not the Word of God. God can make His Word prevail in the world without theology. But at a time when human thought is so often confused and perverted by fantastic ideas and theories, spun out of men's own minds, it is evident that it is almost impossible to preserve the Divine Word without the most passionate intellectual effort to *re-think* its meaning and its content. The simple Christian may, it is true, understand and preserve God's Word without theology: but for those Christians who are involved in the thinking of their own day, and who, as children of their own day, are deeply influenced by these currents of thought, an all-inclusive and thorough effort to *re-think* what has been "given" to faith is absolutely indispensable. This is particularly true for those whose calling it is to proclaim this faith to others.[43]

This indicates to us the fact that Brunner does not deny that dogmatics (in a sense of 'doctrinal form') has its proper place and function in the sphere of theological enterprise; rather, what he argues about the 'truth' of the Bible primarily is that it *is* not a doctrine which is the object of faith as Orthodoxy believes, but Jesus Christ Himself in whom God reveals his nature and his will and in whom the preceding revelation gains its meaning and its fulfilment;[44] hence the doctrine is only a means which serves to lead us to Him: "Doctrine is only a pointer, though it may be clear and useful pointer. Therefore, faith is not directed to it, but it skims past it, as it were, like a ball from the barrel of a gun, toward a goal".[45] So, the truth contained in the Bible is, for Brunner, the fact that God is known in his relation to man, and likewise man comes to know himself in his relation with God. As a matter of fact, it is precisely in God's giving himself to be known and in this knowledge of God that the essence of the relation between God and man lies.[46]

Thus the event of revelation as God's self-communication that corresponds to the theological character of knowledge is what Brunner calls 'truth as encounter.' As truth of revelation it stands, for

Brunner, basically in opposition to man's autonomy as the self-justified truth of reason. Accordingly, 'truth as encounter' does not mean that there is the steadfast truth that man objectifies, but it means that it itself happens and disposes of man. The event that is the relation between God and man is always an act of revelation: likewise, the event that is the relation between man and God is always a relation based on knowing.[47] "Here revelation is 'truth as encounter', and faith is knowledge as encounter."[48] In this regard, as J. Edward Humphrey points out, he brings together in one succinct expression 'truth as encounter' the two centres of his theology, namely, the self-communication of God, and responsive man whom God has posited in freedom over against himself.[49] God who comes as the sovereign Lord gives himself in love to man, and man responds in trustful obedience.

Consequently, the relationship which exists between God and man is, for Brunner, understood in two terms, 'lordship' and 'fellowship'[50] that is to say, the former means that God wills to be known and acknowledged by man or that he is known and acknowledged by man as the One to whom man unconditionally belongs; and the latter means that God wills to express unconditionally his self-communication to man in love.[51] Therefore, the decisive elements in the relation between God and man are 'self-revelation' and 'knowing': God is never other than the God of man, and man is never other than the man of God.[52] This means both revelation and faith are for Brunner inseparable. What Brunner says about revelation in turn determines, as Reidar Hauge points out, his understanding of faith and vice-versa.[53] Thus, Brunner makes use of the notion of *truth as encounter* to refer to these two basic concepts of revelation and of faith. Now we will try to investigate the meaning of 'truth as encounter' which Brunner implies in his understanding of

biblical (or theological) truth.  Before we begin to do this, we need some information about the I-Thou philosophy of Martin Buber which provides a conceptual device for Brunner's term, 'truth as encounter.'

## 2.    The conceptual device and Buber's I-Thou philosophy

### 2.1  Two primary words 'I-Thou' and 'I-It'

Emil Brunner expresses his indebtedness to the dialogical personalism of Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber that influences his own interpretation of Christian faith:[54]  "Here I saw the rationalistic thought-scheme of object and subject overcome by understanding the human person as basically related to the divine Thou and by the distinction between the I-Thou world and the I-It world.  Through this I came to see what was the heart of the biblical concept of man".[55]  This dialogical personalism provides for him the central category of his theological project in that it seems not only to overcome the object-subject dichotomy but also to illuminate such themes as creation, redemption, revelation, faith and sin;  and thus it is of a seminal significance in the development of Brunner's later theological thought.[56]

Soon after his dialectical period[57] Brunner is confronted with the concept of dialogical personalism which both Ebner and Buber attempt to develop for a critique of contemporary idealism, and particularly the concept of the isolation of the self, in terms of the analysis of all human existential life in dialogical terms.[58]  He then realizes the fact that this insight provides for him *a via media* by which the church could be preserved from rigid doctrinal formulations, and also a way to preserve the results of biblical criticism for the church.  Thus he acknowledges that the I-Thou concept of the philosophy is decisive in

placing him between the theological camps of Karl Barth and of Rudolf Bultmann. The theology of Barth, Brunner contendes, deals with "true doctrine" and then the "object of faith"; whereas Bultmann's theology is concerned with the "act of faith itself" (or faith's understanding of its own nature) and in consequence the "fundamental questions of interpretation" (and self-understanding) as such. In preference to either of these options Brunner adopts the concept of dialogical personalism that gives him "a new insight into the unique character of the fundamental phenomenon of the Biblical message, the unity of truth and fellowship".[59] In this regard, we shall investigate mainly one of Buber's major works, *Ich und Du*,[60] in which he expounds on his philosophy of dialogue or I-Thou relation.

The first part of the book, *I and Thou*, consists of an extended definition of man's two primary attitudes and relations, 'I-Thou' and 'I-It.' According to Martin Buber, the two primary words 'I-Thou' and 'I-It' do not signify things, but 'relations' which he calls: "Primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations. Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence".[61] Each of these expresses one aspect of man's twofold attitude to the world. In accordance with this twofold attitude, the world is a twofold world to him. When we say these two primary words, they cannot be said in separation. If 'Thou' is said the 'I' is said along with it; the ordinary sense this would mean that we cannot think of others as persons without being aware of being persons ourselves. Likewise, if we say 'It' we must also say 'I'. We cannot think of the world or of things without being conscious of ourselves in contrast to them;[62] thus Buber says: "There is no I taken in itself, but only the I of the primary word I-Thou and the I of the

primary word I-It."[63]


What Buber claims about man's attitude to his world is to recognize

two relations with all that they involve, namely, those of I-Thou and I-

It, set alongside each other.  The word 'I-Thou' means the attitude of

'real living' or of 'meeting ' an 'other' personally;  whereas the word

'I-It' means the attitude of 'knowing'.  And he puts it as follows:

> To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold
> attitude.
>
> The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the
> twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks.
>
> The primary words are not isolated words, but combined
> words.
>
> The one primary word is the combination *I-Thou*.
>
> The other primary word is the combination *I-It*;  wherein,
> without a change in the primary word, one of the words He
> and *She* can replace It.
>
> Hence the I of man is also twofold.
>
> For the I of the primary word *I-Thou* is a different I from
> that of the primary word *I-It*.[64]

Here, as Maurice S. Friedman points out, the I of man comes into being

in the act of speaking one or the other of these primary words;  but the

two I's are not the same:  "The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken

with the whole being.  The primary word I-It can never be spoken with

the whole being".[65]  So, the real determinant of the primary word in

which a man takes his stand is not the object which is over against him

but the way in which he relates himself to that object.  Hence the word

'I-Thou' comes before the word 'I-It'.[66]


Accordingly, it is necessary, according to James Brown, to

recognize *two* relations, with all that they involve, those namely of I-

It and I-Thou, set alongside each other;  the former essentially an

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epistemological relation, the latter an existential relation, and the latter the more basic, primary, inclusive, expressive of the fullness of being adequate to real life. In Buber's opinion, man's attitude alternates between the fully existential and the merely epistemological with regard to the same elements in his world. Here a man takes his stand in relation. So the term 'relation' that is a key word in Buber's terminology is not an epistemological generality but bears a characteristic and specific sense in his use of it. 'Relation', it turns out, is properly applicable only in the case of the primary word 'I-Thou'. I-It is the relation of subject-object in the realm of knowledge, and not properly relation in the full sense.[67] In the primary word 'I-Thou' Buber sees the genuine relation as follows.

> In the beginning is the relation. Consider the language of "primitive" peoples, meaning those who have remained poor in objects and whose life develops in a small sphere of acts that have a strong presence. The nuclei of this language, their sentence - words - primal pre-grammatical forms that eventually split into the multiplicity of different kinds of words - generally designate the wholeness of a relation. We say, "far away"; the Zulu has a sentence-word instead that means: "Where one cries, 'mother, I am lost'." And the Fuegian surpasses our analytical wisdom with a sentence - word of seven syllables that literally means: "they look at each other, each waiting for the other to offer to do that which both desire but neither wishes to do". In this wholeness persons are still embedded like reliefs without achieving the fully rounded independence of nouns or pronouns. What counts is not these products of analysis and reflection but the genuine original unity, the lived relationship.[68]

For Buber, the I-It relation defines the world of experience, which may be regarded as the interaction of subject and object. The I-Thou relation, however, establishes the world of encounter, which must be regarded as the mutual interaction of two subjects. Thus I-Thou and I-It cut across the lines of our ordinary distinctions to focus our attention not upon individual objects and their causal connections but

upon the relations between things, the *dazwischen* (literally, 'there in-between'). In this regard, what at one moment was the Thou of an I-Thou relation can become the next moment an It and indeed must continually do so. The It may again become a Thou, but it will not be able to remain one, and it need not become a Thou at all. Likewise man can live continuously and securely in the world of It. If he only lives in this world, however, he is not truly a man, for 'all real living is meeting.[69] Thus Buber says as follows:

> The human being who was even now single and unconditioned, not something lying to hand, only present, not able to be experienced, only able to be fulfilled, has now become again a *He or a She*, a sum of qualities, a given quality with a certain shape. Now I may take out from him again the colour of his hair or of his speech or of his goodness. But so long as I can do this he is no more my Thou and cannot yet be my Thou again.
>     Every Thou in the world is by its nature fated to become a thing, or continually to re-enter into the condition of things. In objective speech it would be said that everything in the world, either before or after becoming a thing, is able to appear to an *I* as its Thou. But objective speech snatches only at a fringe of real life.[70]

Here Buber indicates that in this mutual relation one is no longer an object among objects, a nature which can be experienced and described, or a specific point of space and time, when one faces a human being as one's Thou. In the meeting with the Thou, man is no longer subject to causality and fate, for both of these are instruments of the ordered world of continuity and take their meaning from it. It does not even matter if the person to whom the Thou is said is the It for other I's or is himself unaware of the relation. So the I-Thou relation interpenetrates the world of It without being determined by it. This I-Thou for Buber exists during the moment of meeting as direct and directly present, even though it continually becomes I-It. It exists only in so far as meeting and relation exist.[71]

Thus, the two primary words 'I-Thou' and I-It' that Buber uses here

mean that they have their own spheres of 'relation' that the two terms

indicate. According to Maurice S. Friedman, in the silent or spoken

dialogue between the I and the Thou both personality and knowledge come

into being. Unlike the subject-object knowledge of the I-It relation,

the knowing of the I-Thou relation for Buber takes place neither in the

'subjective' nor the 'objective' the emotional nor the rational, but in

the 'between'-the reciprocal relationship of whole and active beings.

Likewise, personality is neither simply an individual matter nor simply

a social product, but a function of relationship. Hence though we are

born 'individuals' in the sense of being different from others, we are

not born persons. Rather our personalities are called into being by

those who enter into 'relation with us'. But this does not mean either

that a person is merely a cell in a social-organism. To become a person

means, for Buber, to become someone who responds to what happens from a

centre of inwardness; that is to say, to be fully real the I-Thou

relation must be mutual; otherwise, such a relation is really I-It.[72]


2.2 The objective I-It relation

In the second part of *I and Thou*, it is suggested that the basic

relation of man to the world of It may be illustrated in terms of the

two primary words 'I-Thou' and 'I-It'. As Maurice S. Friedman points

out, Buber claims that the proper alternation between I-It and I-Thou is

disturbed by a progressive augmentation of the world of It in the

history of both the individual and the human race.[73] Each culture takes

over its predecessors or contemporaries; and then it enlarges its world

of It not merely through its own experience, but also through the

absorption of foreign experience. So, the primary relation of man to

the world of It for Buber is comprised in *experiencing* which continually

reconstitutes the world, and *using*, which leads the world to its manifold aim, the sustaining, relieving, and equipping of human life. As a result, there is a progressive development from generation to generation of the individual's ability to use and experience. For the most part this development, however, is an obstacle to life lived in the spirit, for it comes about in the main through the decrease of man's power to enter into relation.[74]

Spirit, that is a response of man to his Thou, is not in the I but between I and Thou. To respond to the Thou, man must enter into the relation with his whole being: "Man lives in the spirit, if he is able to respond to his Thou. He is able to, if he enters into relation with his whole being. Only in virtue of his power to enter into relation is he able to live in the spirit".[75] But man's greatness lies in the response which binds Thou into the world of It, for it is through this response that knowledge, work, image, and symbol are produced. All of these Thous which have been changed into Its have it in their nature to change back again into presentness. But this fulfilment of their nature is thwarted by the man who has come to terms with the world of It. Instead of freeing, he suppresses it; instead of looking, he observes it; and instead of accepting, he turns it to account.[76] Appearance of these obstacles prevails, so Buber claims, in the realms of knowledge, art, and action: in knowledge the thing which is seen is exclusively present and exists in itself; in art, form is disclosed to the artist as he looks at what is over against him but he banishes it to be a "structure"; and in action with arbitrary self-will, man may decline the meeting and instead pin the life down with information as an It, an object among objects.[77]

Furthermore, Buber claims that this abdication before the world of It makes impossible a life in the spirit since spirit is a response of man to his Thou. The evil which results takes the form of individual life in which institutions and feelings are separate provinces and of community life in which the state and economy are cut off from the spirit, the will to enter relation. Here "the development of the function of experiencing and using comes about mostly through decrease of man's power to enter into relation."[78] According to Buber, the man who has come to terms with It has divided his life into two separated provinces: one is 'institution' that knows only the specimen; and the other is feelings that know, only the object.[79] The former is outside, where all sorts of aims are pursued; and the latter is 'within', where life is lived and man recovers from institutions.[80] However, neither institutions nor feelings know man or have access to real life. For institutions know only the specimen; feelings know only the 'object'. The solution to this lack of real public and personal life is not freedom of feeling; but true community for Buber arises through people taking their stand in living mutual relation with "a living Centre" and only then through being in living mutual relation with each other. Hence community cannot be set up as a goal and directly attained, but can only result from a group of people being united around a common goal, that is, their relation to the Eternal Thou.[81]

> The true community does not arise through peoples having feelings for one another (though indeed not without it), but through, first, their taking their stand in living mutual relation with a living Centre, and, second, their being in living mutual relation with one another. The second has its source in the first, but is not given when the first alone is given. Living mutual relation includes feelings, but does not originate with them. The community is built up out of living mutual relationship, but the builder is the living effective Centre. .....
> True public and true personal life are two forms of connexion. In that they come into being and endure, feelings (the changing content) and institutions (the

constant form) are necessary;  but put together they do not create human life:  this is done by the third, the central presence of the Thou, or rather, more truly stated, by the central Thou that has been received in the present.[82]

Therefore, what really matters is not that the organization of the state be freer and economics more equitable, though these things are desirable, but that the spirit which says Thou remain in life and reality.[83]  To parcel out community life into separate realms one of which is spiritual life "would mean to give up once and for all to tyranny the provinces that are sunk in the world of It, and to rob the spirit completely of reality.  For the spirit is never independently effective in life in itself alone, but in relation to the world".[84]  So, Buber claims the true communal life must be fulfilled by being capable of decision of man who can continually leave the world of It for the world of relation, or whose life swings between Thou and It.  For the reason is that it is in relation that true decision take place.  Thus man's very freedom to do evil enables him to redeem evil.  What is more, it enables him to serve the good not as a cog in a machine but as a free and creative being.  Man's creativity is the energy which is given to him to form and direct, and thus the real product of this creativity is not a novel or a work of art, but a life lived in relation, a life in which It is increasingly interpenetrated by Thou.

Therefore, the freeman who wills without arbitrary self-will knows he must go out to meet his destiny with his whole being, and he sacrifices his unfree will that is controlled by things and instincts. "Then he intervenes no more, but at the same time he does not let things merely happen.  He listens to what is emerging from himself, to the course of being in the world;  not in order to be supported by it, but in order to bring it to reality as it desires, in its need of him, to be

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brought-with human spirit and deed, human life and death".[85]   But the

self-willed man, according to Buber, neither believes nor meets.   He

does not know the solidarity of connection but only the outside world

and his desire to use it.   He has no destiny, for he is defined by

things and instincts which he fulfils with arbitrary self-will.

Incapable of sacrifice, he continually intervenes to 'let things happen'

His life never attains to a meaning, for it is composed of means which

are without significance in themselves.[86]   Only I-Thou gives meaning to

the world of It, for I-Thou is an end which is not reached in time but

is there from the start, originating and carrying-through.   The

freeman's will and the attainment of his goal need not be united by a

means, for in I-Thou the means and the end are one.


In this regard, Buber claims 'individuality', that is, the I of I-

It, becomes conscious of itself as the subject of experiencing and

using.   It makes its appearance through being differentiated from other

individualities and is conscious of itself as a particular kind of

being.   It is concerned with its My-my kind, my race, my creation, my

genius.   It has no reality because it has no sharing and because it

appropriates unto itself.   'Person', on the other hand, the I of I-Thou,

makes its appearance by entering into relation with other persons.

Through relation the person shares in a reality which neither belongs to

him nor merely lies outside him, a reality which cannot be appropriated

but only shared.[87]   The more direct his contact with the Thou, the

fuller his sharing;  the fuller his sharing, the more real his I.[88]  But

the I that steps out of the relational event into consciousness of

separation retains reality as a seed within it.

> This is the province of subjectivity in which the I is aware
> with a single awareness of its solidarity of connexion and
> of its separation.   Genuine subjectivity can only be

dynamically understood, as the swinging of the I in its
lonely truth. Here, too, is the place where the desire is
formed and heightened for ever higher, more unconditioned
relation, for the full sharing in being. in subjectivity
the spiritual substance of the person matures.[89]


So, there are not two kinds of man, but two poles of humanity; for

no man is pure 'person' and no man pure 'individuality'. But some men

are so defined by person that they may be called persons, and some are

so defined by individuality that they may be called individuals.

However, true personality for Buber is neither simply individual matter

nor simply social product, but a function of relationship. If man has

surrendered to the world of outer and inner division, then he directs

the best part of his spirituality to averting or at least to veiling his

thoughts, for thinking would only lead him to a realization of his own

inner emptiness. Through losing the subjective self in the objective

whole or through absorbing the objective whole into the subjective self,

he tries to escape the confrontation with the Thou.

> Thus confrontation of what is over against him takes place
> within himself, and this cannot be relation, or presence, or
> streaming interaction, but only self-contradiction. The man
> may seek to explain it as a relation, perhaps as a religious
> relation, in order to wrench himself from the horror of the
> inner double-ganger; but he is bound to discover again and
> again the deception in the explanation. Here is the verge
> of life, flight of an unfulfilled life to the senseless
> semblance of fulfilment, and its groping in a maze and
> losing itself ever more profoundly.[90]

Here man hopes to make the world so ordered and comprehensible that

there is no longer a possibility of the dread meeting which he wishes to

avoid. However, he must go to confront the eternal Thou through the way

at last that he builds for himself a cataclysmic reversal, or a way of

dread and despair.


2.3 The personal I-Thou relation

Buber attempts to analyze 'the eternal Thou' in terms of I-Thou

relation.  According to him, the inborn Thou is expressed and realized in each relation, but it is consummated only in the direct relation with the eternal Thou:  "Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou:  by means of every particular Thou the primary word addresses the eternal Thou.  .....The inborn Thou is realised in each relation and consummated in none.  It is consummated only in the direct relation with the Thou that by its nature cannot become It."[91]  And this Thou is met by every man who addresses God by whatever name and even by that man who does not believe in God yet addresses 'the Thou of his life, as a Thou that cannot be limited by another'.[92]

So, our speaking to God, or our meeting Him, in Buber's view, is not mere waiting and openness for the advent of grace from God;  rather man must go forth to the meeting with God, for here too the relation means being chosen and choosing, suffering and action in one.  Hence we must be concerned not about God's side-grace-but about our side-will. To go out to the meeting with the eternal Thou, a man must have become a whole being, one who does not intervene in the world and one in whom no separate and partial action stirs.  For the eternal Thou for Buber does not become It when the others do - not because it is some universal essence of Thou, but because it is the present reality, the ever-renewed presentness of meeting, eternally Thou.[93]

> Men do not find God if they stay in the world.  They do not find Him if they leave the world.  He who goes out with his whole being to meet his *Thou*  and carries to it all being that is in the world, find Him who cannot be sought.
> Of course God is the "wholly Other";  but He is also the wholly Same, the wholly Present.  Of course He is the *Mysterium Tremendum* that appears and overthrows;  but He is also the mystery of the self-evident, hearer to me than my I.
> If you explore the life of things and of conditioned being you come to the unfathomable, if you deny the life of things and of conditioned being you stand before nothingness, if you hallow this life you meet the living

God.[94]

The meeting with God is a finding; a discovery of what is the primal and the origin. The finding 'is not the end, but only the eternal middle, of the way'.[95] If someone attempts to make the relation To God into a feeling, then what he attempts is to relativize and psychologize it. True relation to God, however, is a *coincidentia oppositorum*, an absolute which gathers up the poles of feeling into itself.[96] Though one has at times felt oneself simply dependent on God, one has also in this dependence felt oneself really free. It is in one's freedom that one acts not only as a creature but as co-creator with God, one able to alter the fate of the world through one's actions and life. So, if God did not need man, or if man were simply dependent and nothing else, there would be no meaning to man's life or to the world.[97] So, the world for Buber is not simply 'divine sport', it is 'divine destiny':

> You know always in your heart that you need God more than eveything; but do you not know too that God needs you - in the fulness of His eternity needs you? How would man be, how would you be, if God did not need him, did not need you? You need God, in order to be - and God needs you, for the very meaning of your life.[98]

Therefore, in contrast to Kierkegaard, there is for Buber no such thing as an I-Thou relationship with God which comes when man turns away from his fellowmen and the world. Buber describes God in deliberate paradox as the absolute Person, i.e. the Person who cannot be limited. What is more, it is not some personal manifestation of the Absolute but the Absolute itself that we encounter-as Thou, and the 'personhood' of this Absolute is not its 'nature' about which we know nothing, but the act of meeting itself; so, it is as the absolute Person that God enters into direct relation with us. This Person for Buber is 'the person' as

the sharing of I-Thou relationship; but it is not a person in any finite, person-alongside-other-persons sense of the term. It is because of this paradox that the relationship with the eternal Thou is at once exclusive and inclusive.[99]

It is therefore the unbroken world of Thou which assures us that relation can never fall apart into complete duality, that evil can never become radically real and absolute. For Buber, without this limit to the reality of evil we would have no assurance that I-It can become I-Thou, that men and cultures can turn back to God in the fundamental act of 'reversal' (Umkehr), the *teshuvah*. Without this limit the world of It would be evil in itself and incapable of being redeemed.[100] And Buber puts it as follows:

> The world of It is set in the context of space and time. The world of Thou is not set in the context of either of these.
> Its context is in the Centre, where the extended lines of relations meet - in the eternal Thou.
> In the great privilege of pure relation the privileges of the world of It are abolished. By virtue of this privilege there exists the unbroken world of Thou: the isolated moments of relations are bound up in a life of world solidarity. By virtue of this privilege formative power belongs to the world of Thou: spirit can penetrate and transform the world of It. By virtue of this privilege we are not given up to alienation from the world and the loss of reality by the I - to domination by the ghostly. Reversal is the recognition of the Centre and the act of turning again to it. In this act of the being and buried relational power of man rises again, the wave that carries all the spheres of relation swells in living strams to give new life to our world.[101]

According to Buber, there are three spheres in which the world of relation is built: First, our life with nature: the relation is said to cling to the threshold of speech. Second, our life with men: our relation takes on the form of speech. Here we can give and accept the Thou. Thirdly, our life with spiritual beings, where the relation, is

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without speech, yet begets it.[102]  Like the life of the creative artist,

a man is faced by a form which claims to be made through him into a work

of art.[103]  Each of these spheres leads into the presence of the Word,

but when the full meeting takes place they are united in one gateway of

real life.  Of the three spheres, our life with man 'is the main portal

into whose opening the two side-gates lead, and in which they are

included'.  It is here alone that the moments of relation are bound

together by speech, and here alone 'as reality that cannot be lost are

'knowing and be known, loving and being loved.'  Hence the relation with

man is thus 'the real simile of the relation with God, for in it true

address receives true response.  But in God's response all the universe

is made manifest as language:

> Of the three spheres, one, our life with men, is marked out.
> Here language is consummated as a sequence, in speech and
> counter-speech.  Here alone does the word that is formed in
> language meet its response.  Only here does the primary word
> go backwards and forwards in the same form, the word of
> address and the word of response live in the one language, I
> and Thou take their stand not merely in relation, but also
> in the solid give-and-take of talk. .....
>     The relation with man is the real simile of the relation
> with God;  in it true address receives true response;
> except that in God's response everything, the universe, is
> made manifest as language.[104]

Here as Maurice F. Friedman points out, the 'eternal Thou' for

Buber is not just another up-to-date way of reintroducing the God of the

philosophers and theologians - the God whose existence could be proved

and whose nature and attributes could be described as he is in himself

apart from our relation to him.  In this regard, it is the reality of

the "between",  of the meeting itself, and there and nowhere else does

Buber find the unconditional which no fathoming of the self or soaring

into metaphysical heights could reveal.[105]  Hence the fundamental

beliefs of Buber's I-Thou philosophy are the reality of the I-Thou

relation into which no deception can penetrate, the reality of the

meeting between God and man which transforms man's being, and the reality of the turning which puts a limit to man's movement away from God. On the basis of these beliefs Buber has defined evil as the predominance of the world of It to the exclusion of relation, and he has conceived of the redemption of evil as taking place in the primal movement of the turning which brings man back to God and back to solidarity of revelation with man and the world.

As Alister E. McGrath points out, Buber's main argument of I - Thou philosophy may be found in Brunner's 1938 work on truth as 'encounter', *Die Wahrheit als Begegnung*, and he goes on to sum it up: For Buber, the I-It relationship defines the world of experience (Erfahrung), which may be regarded as the interaction of a subject and object. The I-You relationship, however, establishes the world of encounter (Begegnung), which must be regarded as the mutual interaction of two subjects. Whereas in the world of experience the subject is active and the object passive, the world of encounter opens up the possibility of both activity and passivity on the part of the subject as he engages in a dynamic relationship with another subject. It is this concept of the mutual interaction of two subjects which Buber attempts to encapsulate in the untranslatable formula *Ich-wirkend-Du und Du-wirkend-Ich*.[106] Buber thus emphasizes the importance of the relationship (das Zwischen) between the 'I' and the 'You', which prevents the improper reification or hypostatization of either. 'Actuality' (Wirklichkeit) cannot be objectified. While Buber locates the world of encounter primarily in human relationships, he is clearly aware of its potential application of the relationship between God and man.[107]

The development of Buber's dialogical critique of the subject-

object dichotomy was a major theme of the theology of the second quarter of the twentieth century. Buber uses the term, 'Begegnung', a German word which means 'encounter' or 'meeting' as such, and the term 'encounter' is significantly applied to Brunner's theological projection. Brunner uses the term 'encounter,' with conscious indebtedness to Buber, as a means of pointing out Christian themes which form the personal or relational perspective. Brunner, however, does not take the I-Thou philosophy in its precise formulation over into Christian thought, but rather uses the concept of the personal I-Thou relation by which to amplify Christian teaching.[108] And Brunner says as follows:

> Here....our concern is not to try to combine the "I-Thou" philosophy with Christian theology, but to emphasize the importance of this truth, which is wholly derived from the Bible, for Christian thought.[109]

So, within the dialogical framework Brunner develops many different views which make up Christian teaching. Further he claims the 'truth as encounter' must permeate the Christian themes of creation and redemption, sin and salvation, the doctrine of God and Christology.

In his I-Thou philosophy Buber employs the I-Thou concept to break the objectivization of the 'other', where the 'other' is merely an 'It', not a 'Thou'. Similarly, Brunner uses it to break down an object-subject antithesis of faith; and then he insists that truth must be personalized - truth must 'happen' in an encounter with a person. For Brunner, this person is Jesus of history; and at this *very* point Buber contends, as Maurice S. Friedman points out, that Jesus the man, Jesus the Jew, who stood in unique and unmediated relationship with God, was not identical with the Christ of Christian faith whom men worshipped as the Savior.[110] Again, Buber is concerned with the person-to-person encounter in an existential setting that the primary word I-It and I-

Thou may be used with respect to our life with nature, with other persons, or with intelligible forms, and in that the world of relations arises. Brunner is treating Christian "truth", however, within an existential context in that he equates I-It with man's sinful nature and I-Thou with the grace and divine love which are in Christ, and then he emphasizes the limitations that man's sinfulness places upon his ability to enter this relationship.[111] Nevertheless, the I-Thou philosophy of Buber represents the final significant qualification in the development of Brunner's eristic theology from his early Kierkegaardian dialectical theology.

## 3.   *Truth as encounter*

### 3.1   A transitional period

We have already noted that a transition from Brunner's early 'dialectical' period to his later 'historical-dialogical' period involves a  shift in his theological proposal.[112]  As Alister E. McGrath points out, when Brunner says 'God encounters man' the term 'encounter' for the later Brunner does not take place in a vacuum (as he appears to suggest in *Der Mittler*), but in history itself, the sphere in which man is active;  and this means for him that the term 'encounter' presupposes that man possesses a capability to respond to the historical and personal revelation of God in Christ.[113]  So, Brunner envisages a direct correlation between the man who responds to the word of God and the appearance of the word of God in Christ:  "Only the meeting between the divine 'Thou' and the human 'I' is personal, the meeting where the Word of revelation is spoken, and is met by the answer of faith".[114]  And then he insists upon the mutual activity of God and man within the sphere of history,  in order that  the  insights  of  'dialogical

personalism' may be exploited theologically.

Thus, in his methodological work *Truth as Encounter*, Brunner claims that faith is primarily a 'personal encounter' with the God who meets us personally in Jesus Christ. And this claim reflects his conviction that the early church misunderstood revelation as the divine impartation of doctrinal truth *about God*, rather than the *self-revelation of God*. For Brunner, the biblical revelation lies 'beyond objectivism and subjectivism', in that revelation is understood to be an event in history (see III.3.2). This should not be interpreted to mean that history reveals God, but that God reveals himself within the historical process, and supremely in the work and person of Jesus Christ.[115] For revelation in Jesus Christ, in Brunner's view, is not merely the apex of potential human knowledge, but the personal self-communication of God. By this identification of revelation with a *person*, the idea of communication becomes categorically precise.[116]

3.2  *Beyond objectivism and subjectivism.*[117]
Emil Brunner's fundamental thesis in *Wahrheit als Begegnung* is:  "The Biblical understanding of truth cannot be grasped through the object-subject antithesis;  on the contrary, it is falsified through it."[118] Therefore, one must rise above the object-subject correlation in order to grasp such truth.  And then Brunner substitutes the category of *personal correspondence or encounter* in its place.  Thus his objection to intellectualism, as Reidar Hauge points out, is essentially following two points:[119]  (1) Revelation is not *doctrine* but *act*; so, it consists of the act of God for our salvation and above all His act in Jesus Christ.  And especially this same emphasis comes to expression in later writings when he speaks to understand the significance of Christ, not

first of all in his *nature* (or person) but in his *work*, in God's *act* in him. So, Brunner repeatedly calls attention to the fact that the characteristic form of speech used in the New Testament *witness* to Christ is not the substantive, but the verb. Brunner's purpose here is to show that when revelation is understood as doctrine it cannot also be a historical event. "Where doctrine is emphasized at the expense of the Biblical narrative, there the intellectualistic misunderstanding of orthodoxy has already begun".[120]

(2) Brunner's reason for breaking with intellectualism is rooted in his conception of revelation as an encounter. According to Brunner, revelation is a '*personal encounter*' between God and man; and he states as follows:

> The distinction between world-knowledge and God-Knowledge – leaving to scientific investigation the world of facts and reserving for divine revelation the disclosure of the mystery of God's being, will and purpose – is not the only revolution which the Christian faith produces within the realm of the concept of truth. There is a second, just as important. What kind of a truth is it, then, which is revealed to faith? It is not truth in the sense of knowing something, but in the sense of a divine-human, *personal encounter*. God does not reveal this and that: He does not reveal a number of truths. He reveals Himself by communicating Himself. it is the secret of His person which He reveals, and the secret of His person is just this, that He is self-communicating will; that God is Love.[121]

Man, then, no longer has a monologue existence, for he is now confronted by another who says, "I am the Lord, thy God." He is addressed personally, and he gives a personal answer in the form of confession and prayer. In this personal exchange, the Word of God is not a mere formula to be believed, but it is directed address. Likewise, the response of faith is not a formulated credo, but it takes the form: "My Lord and my God." Here the object-subject antithesis for Brunner can be replaced by *personal encounter*; and thus he claims as follows: "Here

... the third person is replaced by the second person. 'I am the Lord, thy God' bespeaks the answer, 'Yes, I am thy obedient servant and thy child.' The true form of faith is hence not the so-called declaration of faith, the formulated Credo that has been learned, but prayer, even as the Word of God is not a formula to be believed but challenging, freely given address. The antithesis between object and subject, between 'something true' and 'knowledge of this truth' has disappeared and has been replaced by the purely personal meeting between the God who speaks and the man who answers."[122]

The opposite of this Word of God - faith encounter is what Brunner calls Credo-credo (Belief-belief) faith, which is belief in a formal confessional statement or creed. There is here no Thou-form of occurrence, but only an It-form of reflection, a belief in Belief: "It is only *reflection* about faith that explains this personal occurrence in the second person as an impersonal twofold set of facts in the third person: A Belief signifying something to be believed, and belief signifying assent to this thing which is to be believed."[123] This Belief-belief faith may indeed be present, however without any resemblance to *agape*. Therefore, there is for Brunner an 'abysmal' difference between this nonpersonal relation (or in Buber's term 'I-It' relation) and that which is central in the biblical category of personal correspondence (or in Buber's term 'I-Thou' relation).[124] Yet, in giving himself (rather than doctrine) to us, God also says something to us, so that in some sense doctrine is contained even in the Word of God. His address in its direct and simplest form, "I am the Lord, thy God", is not comprehended apart from conceptualization. Likewise, the response of faith in prayer is expressive of a form of knowledge. In its most direct, simple and personal form "Our Father who art in

heaven", there is a conceptual content.[125]


Consequently, this means for Brunner that the personal encounter which is truth is also firmly linked with truth as doctrine: "We can never separate the abstract framework from the personal Presence contained in it, although certainly we must differentiate them. We know that we can never have one without the other, and we know at the same time that the whole point is to have the personal contained within the abstract framework. Doctrine is certainly related *instrumentally* to the Word of God as *token and framework* serving in relation to the reality – actual personal fellowship with God; but doctrine is indissolubly connected with the reality it represents".[126] The more doctrine enables one to hear the address of God, however, the more does it actually point away from itself (i.e. from 'something') to God himself. A principle of proximity[127] is, therefore, operative which enables one to distinguish in some measure true doctrine from that which is heretical and at the same time to avoid a legalistic understanding of doctrine. At this point Brunner draws two principles connected with the primary concern of the Holy Scriptures.[128] and the Holy Spirit when he says: "How did this 'understanding' arise? The Apostles themselves give us the answer: the Spirit of God testified *in their hearts* that Jesus is the Christ".[129] The presence of the Holy Spirit lends personal directness to doctrinal indirectness. However, the connection between 'truth as encounter' and 'truth as doctrine' must be clarified in order to avoid deviating toward either a false objectivism or a false subjectivism.[130]


3.3 *The contrast between rationalism and personalism.*

In accordance with this content of the term 'encounter', Emil Brunner develops the category of personalism as a contrast to rationalism. In

this context personalism for Brunner is defined as the other-than-I, which I can know only in so far as it reveals itself to me. In other words, it is I and Thou relationship in the sense of Buber's primary word, 'I-Thou' dimensional relation (see III.2.2). Brunner's remark on 'personality' is as follows:

> What is personality as distinguished from anything else? A person is a being of such a kind that we cannot ourselves think it, but it reveals itself to us in an act of revelation. What I myself think is the object of my thought. Even when I think God as a personal being this God is the object of my thought and therefore not truly personal. He can be something different from an object of thought only if it is not myself who think him, but himself who reveals himself by an act of self-disclosure. Everything which I think myself, or the reality which is disclosed by my own mental activity, is therefore not a person. A person is that unique being which discloses itself and therefore enters into my thought-world, so to say, as a stranger, affirming itself as an I in its own right. In my own thought-world I am the unchallenged centre, I am the subject of all objects of my thought, and by that, so to say, the master of them all. When, however, a person encounters me, a rival world-centre faces me, a kind of being which refuses to be a part of my thought system.[131]

As Paul King Jewett points out, Emil Brunner makes much of the difference between the way in which we know an object and the way in which we know a person.[132] Our knowlede of objects involves only our own cognitive processes. But our knowledge of a subject, a person, is wholly contingent upon an act of self-disclosure on the part of the person known. A subject which I think is not truly a subject. What I can discover by virtue of my own thought processes is, to the degree that that is posssible, not a person, but an object. A personal subject, a real 'thou', is all one with that mystery which only the subject himself can disclose. Not only is my knowledge of a subject dependent on the latter's self-disclosure, but it is not knowledge in the ordinary sense of the word at all. It is, for Brunner, *encounter*. We rationally, then, analyse things; but we meet persons:

> We can ourselves find the clue to *things*; they are
> objects, which confront us not in their own self-activity-
> making themselves known - but as entities which, by
> processes of research and thought, we can learn to
> understand. But *persons* are not enigmas of this kind; a
> *person* is a mystery which can be disclosed only through
> self-manifestation. In this self-disclosure alone do we
> meet this person as person; previously he or she is an
> "object", a "something".[133]

Therefore, this contrast between the way of personalism and that of rationalism involves several antithesis by which Brunner seeks to characterize the term 'encounter'. According to Brunner, rationalism is not only autonomous, but possesive; whereas personalism is exposed to a direct challenge to my self-sufficiency: "All that I *think* ... can, as something that I think, only confirm my autonomy. I am the master of my thoughts. So long as I am alone with my thoughts I am unchallenged and undisturbed in my autonomy. In the same measure I am out of touch with reality. Reality begins where I am 'disturbed' in my thinking and dreaming solitude by what is outside of me, what is not me, where my thoughts encounter resistance. But nature, which is impersonal, cannot disturb this solitude, for I cannot include it in my thought and become its master through thought. On the contrary, it is what lies beyond me as the source of independent speech and will - the Thou, which really 'disturbs' me and thus calls in question my autonomy."[134]

The self-autonomy of rationalism belongs, according to Brunner, to the sphere of proof; whereas personalism belongs to that of decision. "You cannot *prove* personal truth, you can only believe it; and similarly you cannot believe impersonal truth, you can only prove it."[135] Proof excludes decision. For where the proof rules there is nothing to decide. Hence rationalism lies with my initiative and intellect; whereas personalism sets me in a secondary position of

response:

> The God of philosophy is, by definition, an idea acquired by
> man's own thinking. This does not mean to say that the idea
> does not claim objective reality. All philosophers would
> endeavour to show that their idea of God, which imposes
> itself by necessity, has objective reality. But it is also
> clear that this God is not a living God in the sense of the
> biblical testimony, that is, in the sense of a personal
> reality intervening in the course of human history. It is
> not a Thou addressing man: 'I am the Lord Thy God'. It is
> the movement of man's own thought, which, so to say, in its
> end reaches God. The initiative, the movement leading
> towards knowledge, lies entirely on the side of the human
> mind, not on the side of God. It is a God whom to reach
> lies within the possibilities of human thinking. it is not
> a God who, from outside human capacities, enters by his own
> movement and by his own initiative into the thought-world of
> men and, so to say, bursts open the closed globe of human
> thought.[136]

Thus the knowledge of rationalism is for Brunner essentially

solitary and ahistorical; whereas that of personalism is responsible

and historical: "It is no accident that in the Bible, the witness to

this truth, God is always spoken of in the I-Thou or Thou-I form. In

this a double antithesis to abstraction is manifest, the antithesis to

the ahistorical abstractness of the idea, which has neither beginning

nor end, and the antithesis to impersonal knowledge of things, to the

truths of thought that require no communication to a Thou, but are the

product of the solitary self. The thinking of reason in the traditional

sense is ahistorical. It deals with substantives and not with verbs.

In philosophy the substantive dominates, but in the verb, the word

expressing activity. The word of God is always word and deed, history.

Conversely, in philosophy, history is an alien and an embarrassment."[137]

Therefore, in so far as rational truth is concerned, rationalism for

Brunner leaves man isolated in principle; and then even God here is

part of one's rational world, in which he is the centre of it; so, God

is the mere object of man's thinking so that He is introduced into the

world of his thought; as a result, "nothing happens that breaks through the circle of my self-isolation. I am alone with my truth, even with my idea of God. The God whom I think, is not the one who really confronts me."[138]

In making the contrast between rationalism and personalism Brunner may regard a contrast between a subject-object antithesis and a subject-subject framework in the understanding of man's relation with respect to God; then, he suggests that a subject-subject framework can more adequately express the Biblical truth than any alternatives.[139] So, what he argues is that the conflict between objectivism and subjectivism can never be resolved simply by finding the proper balance between these two elements but only by abandoning this whole scheme and replacing it with an entirely different concept of truth centering in the 'personal correspondence' between God and man. In the Bible God and man for Brunner are never spoken of in terms of an object set over against a receiving subject but always in terms of a reciprocally free, personal relationship between them. God is the Subject who seeks man. Man is the creature made for God. So, God who *is* the sovereign Creator-Lord, calls man into being a personal counterpart with whom He wills to have fellowship and by whom He wills to be freely acknowledged as Lord. This relationship is consummated, Brunner believes, in an event in which God and man personally meet each other. This Divine-human encounter is based on the self-communication of God through his Word, Jesus Christ.[140]

3.4 *Personal correspondence*

The later Brunner claims that revelation is precisely the *act* of God in Christ or *personal correspondence*; and this *personal* revelation is also

the truth. Therefore, the biblical truth is not *rationalistic* truth if rationalism regards it as a mere doctrinal system (or a set of propositions).[141] The reason for this is that the truth which is spoken of in the Bible is not static and timeless truth, for it "came into being". Therefore it cannot be the object of doctrine because it occurs in history and because it is a *person*. So, Brunner argues that the biblical truth deals with the relation of God to persons and of persons to God. There is no doctrine of God as isolated from the *personal* revelation of God. The Bible, so Brunner claims, speaks of a 'two-side relation' in which God approaches us and we meet God. This relation defies precise doctrinal formulation.[142]

When Brunner explicates the Christian understanding of truth, he aims, as Ronald W. Hepburn points out, to return to 'Reformation principles' by rejecting both what he calls 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' standpoints with regard to our knowledge of God. Knowing God for Brunner is not receiving revealed information about him (the objective view): but it is no truer to say that God is known through the devout feelings of worshippers (the subjective view).[143] In the case of objectivism the truth of God becomes a 'thing', something within our grasp which we can manipulate and therefore it is no longer possible to speak of personal correspondence;[144] whereas in the case of subjectivism the truth comes from within man, and hence it is to be identified with the human subject. And in it one also cannot really speak of the *encounter* of God with man.[145]

Therefore, denying both alternatives, Brunner says God is known only through encountering him in *faith*. The knowledge of God is not the communicating of information, but an 'event', or an 'act'. Faith thus

is no simple 'believing *that*', but is the single 'answering' acceptance

of the Word of God:

> Here *truth happens*, here we are in the truth, which is not
> in us but comes to us, which makes us free by restoring to
> us our true being, our being in the Thou, and our being for
> the Thou.  In this *truth as encounter*, in which we
> understand our personal being as being in the love of the
> Creator and Redeemer - and not only *understand* it but *have*
> it as a new bestowal of our original being - to have and to
> be are one.[146]

Here Brunner attempts to show that biblical truth must be understood in

personal terms.  To take his primary example, he interprets

justification by faith as the transformation of a personal encounter in

which God and man become reconciled and not simply a legal, forensic

transaction which takes place objectively and which is intellectually

accepted by the believer.  In this regard, Paul Tillich points out .that

the personalistic categories are conspicicuously predominant in all

Brunner's writings and can be partly explained in terms of his

nominalistic - Reformed tradition.[147]


When Brunner claims truth as *encounter*, it is necessary, then, that

God not only address man but also that man *answer*.  This implies first

of all that the relationship between revelation and faith is very close.

It is a false antithesis, however, when revelation is considered

objective and faith its subjective counter-part.  Revelation always

means for Brunner that something is revealed *to me*.  It is thus 'a

transitive event'.[148]  In a similar way the Word of God, Brunner states,

is not only a past but also a present reality:  "The Word in Scripture,

Christ, becomes the same as the Word in the heart, the Holy Spirit".[149]

Not only is the truth revealed to man, but also man is obligated to

respond in a responsible and active manner.  In fact Brunner lays, as

Raidar Hauge rightly points out, great emphasis on man's

responsibility.[150]  For the later Brunner, it is then evidential that

the chief concern of the concluding volume of his Dogmatics is to vindicate the biblical concept of *faith* with discussion of the *ecclesia* (see V.1.1). Since the ecclesia and the life of faith are for him inseparable, the witness of the *ecclesia* in Word and life is seen as the presupposition of faith, while faith is spoken of as personal existence in fellowship. Accordingly Brunner argues men come to faith only through the *ecclesia*; yet it is just as true to say that men come to the *ecclesia* only through faith.[151]

Obviously, Brunner does not deny that there is any relation of faith (person-truth) to reason (it-truth) when he asserts that man's being is essentially responsible being: "Man is, and remains, responsible, whatever his personal attitude to his Creator may be. He may deny his responsibility, and he may misuse his freedom, but he cannot get rid of his responsibility. Responsibility is part of the unchangeable structure of man's being. That is: the actual existence of man - of every man, not only the man who believes in Christ - consists in the positive fact that he has been *made* to respond to God".[152] At this point as Paul K. Jewett points out, it must be said that Brunner is never the uncritical irrationalist. He knows that a rejection of the axioms of reason would lead to religious relativism. There can be no bridging of the gap between A and non-A. We cannot think unless we employ such universals as truth, goodness, and beauty. In fact, the very proposition "All is relative" is either true or false. if true, then all is not relative, and therewith the proposition defeats itself. Reason, then, is the law of thought which God has implanted with us, (and in this sense he recognizes there is a revelation *in creation*; and it is indeed the Creator's highest and most glorious gift).[153]

For this reason, Brunner regards a theologian as 'a wanderer between two worlds'. As a believer, he transcends the object-subject antithesis; as a thinker, he remains between the tongs (so to say) of the object-subject antithesis, even though his "'theme *sui generis* (and that with which he deals when he speaks *about* the Word of God and faith is precisely not thinking but a discerning of truth of an entirely singular nature) lies thus beyond what can be comprehended by means of the object-subject correlation".[154] Yet the theologian is essentially a thinker, for it is not faith, but thought, which distinguishes him as a theologian. "The great theologian does not differ from the rest of the members of the Church by his greater faith, but by his greater powers of thought in the service of faith."[155] Thus we should expect that the object-antithesis will play a major role in the work of the theologian.

Therefore, there are for Brunner certain fields where both reason and faith can legitimately claim a competence. So we cannot just draw a clear line of demarcation. Only a proportional proposition will do justice to the facts. This proposition is the "law of closeness of relation".[156] And Brunner puts it as follows:

> The nearer anything lies to that center of existence where
> we are concerned with the whole, that is, with man's
> relation to God and the being of the person, the greater is
> the disturbance of rational knowledge by sin; the farther
> away anything lies from this center, the less is the
> disturbance felt, and the less difference is there between
> knowing as believer or as an unbeliever. This disturbance
> reaches its maximum in theology and its minimum in the exact
> science, and zero in the sphere of the formal. Hence it is
> meaningless to speak of "Christian mathematics"; on the
> other hand, it is significant and necessary to distinguish
> the Christian conceptions of freedom, the good, community,
> and still more the Christian idea of God, from all other
> conceptions.[157]

Here not reason, then, but rationalism is what Brunner decries - that

proud, autonomous reason which will not curb its tendency to system, which seeks to discover God at the end of a syllogism, and which thus reduces Him to a mere theory or a sets of propositions.

So, what Brunner has said about the biblical understanding of truth should indicate that the biblical truth is not a mere *formal* concept. Brunner emphasizes that in the New Testament is an expression of rich content. Truth and grace, truth and life belong together. He will make no simple distinction between a 'formal' and a 'material' principle: "The 'formal principle', the Word of God, and the 'material principle', redemption through Jesus Christ or justification by faith alone, are two, but one and same principle seen in two aspects".[158] When theology makes the formal principle the object of special investigation, it has the task of making clear "how this structural 'form' is determined by the 'matter' and the 'matter' by the 'form', in so far as it has "primarily no interest in being called a 'science' and its primary tendency is certainly not in the direction of intellectual research, but in the direction of the fellowship of faith and the preaching of the Church".[159] Thus when the biblical truth is understood as truth as *encounter*, it is not mere something formal; rather, it is the *personal relationship between God and man in faith with Jesus Christ*, and its only purpose is to realize God's lordship and his fellowship with Him.

The term 'truth as encounter' for Brunner, therefore, heralds the overcoming of the object-subject dichotomy in thought; and it reproduces adequately the two decisive elements which are contained in the biblical understanding of truth: that it is *historical* and that it is *personal*.[160] According to Brunner, the biblical truth is not, as we have seen in the previous discussion, something which is inherently

present in man or the world, and which man needs only to become aware of, but the divine truth *comes* to men from outside the world and *happens* among men in space and time. As a characteristic expression of this biblical understanding of truth, Brunner often quotes a verse from the prologue to the Gospel of John: "Grace and truth became ( $\overset{\prime}{\epsilon}\gamma\overset{\prime}{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau o$ ) through Jesus Christ" (1:17). That truth 'became', that it is not eternal and timeless, and that it is involved in history and subject to historical change, is a self-contradiction to Greek ears. Yet for the Bible the whole question of truth hinges upon the fact that it is not something timeless, but something which comes into being, the act of God in space and time.[161]

As the revelation in Christ is made possible by the fact of an original divine disclosure, so also it is given meaning because it has a reference to that ultimate goal of history, which is beyond history, when the tabernacle of God will be with men.[162] This eschatological revelation is, as it were, the point on which everything hangs: "All that is meaningful is teleological, that is, directed toward an end. Everything that is to have sense depends on a *Telos*; evry meaning is determined as a partial-meaning, by the ultimate meaning..... If the end is nothing, then everything leading up to it is meaning-less; if the total sense is nonsense, then every partial sense is likewise nonsense. If everything ends up in the oblivion of nothingness, then existence is without meaning."[163] In fact, Brunner's references to this eschatological revelation occur primarily in conjunction with his rejection of the liberal idea of human progress of which, he claims, there is not a word in the New Testament, and which constitutes one of the most fatal errors in the history of theology.

So, God's revelation of his truth in an historical event in space and time does not signify that he originates an idea which is then taken up by human thought, or that he creates a series of facts which man has to take into account. Rather, as Heinz Zahrnt points out, it means for Brunner the fact that he himself, his *person*, is the content of this event, the act of God in space and time.[164] The revelation of God is thus 'the imparting of himself', what he speaks is 'addressed' to someone, and his word is 'a communicating word'. "In his Word, God does not deliver to me a course of lectures in dogmatic theology, he does not submit to me or interpret for me the content of a confession of faith, but he makes himself accessible to me. ... he does not communicate 'something' to me, but 'himself'."[165] Consequently the act of revelation and its content are identical. The fact *that* God has revealed himself to man includes *what* he has revealed: that he loves man and desires fellowship with him. Thus in the Bible the truth of God is always identical with the love of God.[166] In the biblical understanding of truth the fact that truth is *historical* and the fact that it is *personal* are linked; together they define the nature of revelation as the self-imparting of God to man.[167]

As the revelation in creation, though man has fallen from this original revelation, the knowledge of God, Brunner claims, is not wholly obliterated; and hence there is a point of contact for the revelation in Christ. This indicates Brunner's argument about the point that the distinction between the revelation of creation and that of salvation was made, according to him, not only by the Reformers but also by Augustine and all other teachers of the Church, including Paul (Romans 1:3).[168] So Brunner claims as follows:

> It is impossible to believe in a Christian way in the unique
> revelation, in the Mediator, without believing also in a

universal revelation of God in creation, in history, and especially in the human conscience.  But, on the other hand, a believer in the universal  revelation who is a Christian and believes in the Mediator, can no longer be an idealist or a mystic.  This twofold point of view is based on the fact that the Christian believer regards "general" revelation as an indirect (*gebrochen*) revelation and think that in it they have an authentic knowledge of God they are not in the truth.  The recognition of the indirect general revelation is the presupposition of the Christian religion of revelation, with its unique character.[169]

However, as Wolfhart Pannenberg points out, this sort of claim, that there is a multiplicity of revelation, implies a discrediting of any particular revelation.  The form of the divine manifestation is no longer the singularly adequate expression of the revealer.  We can classify, according to him, the possibility of revelation into two following cases:  (1) the direct transparence of divine power through a medium that is distinct from God;  and (2) the indirect self-authentication of God on the basis of his activity.  What Brunner makes between revelation in creation and revelation of salvation (on the basis of the economy of salvation) can be classified into both cases in which he attempts to make the two in practice amounting to the same thing.  Although his claim about God frequently moves between them, Brunner stands on the opinion that the revelation of God is primarily the direct engagement of a person to a Thou.[170]  Here every activity and act of God can indirectly express something about God.  If this is so, then it can be said, Pannenberg argues, that God is the one who does this or that:  "The event in question does not have the same aspect as it would if one merely stood under the impact of its content.  Not only is the content perceived for its own value;  it is also seen that the event defined in this way has God as its originator.  Here lies the change of perspective. .... As acts of God, these acts cast light back on God himself, communicating something indirectly about God himself.  That

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does not of course mean that they reveal God or that God reveals himself in them as their originator, for every individual event which is taken to be God's activity illuminates the being of God only in a partial way."[171]

Thus, Brunner is aware of this problem, and he claims that as the original and final forms of divine revelation may be important, the crux of the problem of revelation is the incarnation; that revelation of God in the middle, between the beginning and the end, around which all else revolves and from the perspective of which 'beginning' and end must be interpreted:

> It has pleased God to reveal Himself in a different way in each of the following forms: in His work in the Creation; in the Prophets and Seers; in the One in whom all is fulfilled; again, His revelation in the earlier stages differs from that in which He has promised to reveal Himself at the end of all things. But when we admit this we do not question either the unity of the Revealer or the unity of that which has been revealed. It is only in the *characteristic variety of the divine methods of revelation* that the genuine characteristically Biblical unity of that which has been revealed, and the true nature of the Revealer Himself, can be understood. For the Biblical revelation it is essential to begin with the *central* revelation and from that standpoint to look back to the primal revelation and forward to the revelation of the last days. If this variety of revelation is either ignored or explained away in the interest of a theological monism, the main point has been missed. None of these different forms of revelation resembles the others; none can be mistaken for another; none makes the rest superflous; each has its own place, and its own special significance; and only in their combination in the knowledge of faith which both looks back to the beginning and forward to the end can we understand what the Bible means by revelation and faith.[172]

Here Brunner underlines the personal nature of the biblical revelation as event, the act of God in space and time, and the impossibility of expressing its full meaning in an abstract definition independently of its manifold and concrete forms.

Yet revelation and knowledge of faith for Brunner belong "in

essence", as we are shown in the previous discussion, to the relation

between God and man: "God as Lord lays claim to the obedience of man;

and by giving himself to be known as the loving God, he gives this love

of his to man, that man may love him in return. He does both through

his Word."[173] So, what is true of revelation from God's side is also

true of its acceptance on man's part. Revelation as the sovereign self-

imparting of God finds its counterpart in faith as the free self-giving

of man. Thus, faith is seen to be not an object of knowledge, but an

act of trust: man is now ready to receive his life from the hand of God

and to exercise his responsibility in such a way that he responds to the

word of God. Thus Brunner describes the personal being of man as 'a

responding actuality.'[174] That is to say, the truth of God is not an

object, which lies before me and which I grasp, so that I then *possess*

it, but that it is a *movement*, which comes to me, and by which I am

possessed, so that I then *am* in it.


In brief, what we can say about God is the fact that the

relationship which prevails between God and man is that of *a personal*

*correspondence* - this concept sums up everything which Brunner has to

say about *truth as encounter*, and indeed is a most pregnant

representation of his fundamental missionary concern. So Brunner sees

in it the 'fundamental category', the 'basic ordinance', the 'original

formal relationship', etc within which everything that the Bible says

about God and man must be understood. The relationship of personal

*correspondence* is a 'twofold but unambiguous relationship'. It is

twofold, because it is concerned primarily with the relationship of God

to man, and secondarily with the relationship of man to God. In this

regard, Brunner's claim about the God of revelation may be labelled as

'the God of dialogical personalism'. Thus Christian revelation for

Brunner is never an abstract system, and yet it is also a communication of truth in and through the personal self-communication of God in the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Both levels are legitimate and necessary, for God's revelation to man is given on both levels. Each conception is true at its proper epistemological level. Consequently, an adequate explanation for Brunner must consider both levels in their proper order of importance and in their relation to one another. We shall discuss the question of what the truth-claims of Brunner's missionary theology are in the next chapter.

# Notes

1. Emil Brunner began his study with the epistemological works of Kant and the phenomenology of Husserl in his doctoral thesis, Das Symbolische in der Religiosen Erkenntnis which was published in 1914. Cf. Emil Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.5. Cf. also Heinrich Leipold, Missionarische Theologie (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973) pp.22f.
2. The term, 'truth as encounter', was first employed as the title for a series of lectures given in Uppsala in 1937. These lectures were published the following year, the original title being Wahrheit als Begegnung. The English translation appeared in 1943. And the second edition in 1963 of Warheit als Begegnung, enlarged with a new 'Part One', and this edition was translated into English by Amandus W. Loos and David Cairns with a new English title, Truth as Encounter.
3. Roman Roessler, Person und Glaube, (Munchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag. 1965), pp.55-56.
4. Emil Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB. p.12.
5. Paul Tillich, "Some Questions on Brunner's Epistemology", in ThoEB, p.99.
6. Paul Tillich, Ibid., pp. 103-105.
7. On this point Tillich refers to his conviction that it seems to be impossible to avoid the semantic problem in systematic theology in our time - or in any time. And further he points out that the semantic problem is a task required of both analytical philosophers and systematic theologians. Ibid., pp.103-104.
8. Emil Brunner, "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism", in ThoEB, p.333.
9. Emil Brunner, Ibid., p.334.
10. Emil Brunner, Ibid.
11. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.362.
12. The term Brunner uses here is from Dilthey's *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit der Renaissance*, Ges. Schr., Bd. II, and Troeltsch, Aufsatze zur Geistesgeschichte und Religionssoziologie, Ges. Schr., Bd IV, pp. 261-428. Ibid., p.5, note 8.
13. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.5.
14. Emil Brunner, Ibid., p.6.
15. Emil Brunner, Ibid.
16. Emil Brunner, Ibid., p.7. Cf. also J. Edward Humphrey, Emil Brunner (Waco : Word Books 1976), p.36.
17. Emil Brunner, Ibid.
18. Emil Brunner, Ibid., p.8.
19. Emil Brunner, Ibid.
20. Emil Brunner, Ibid, pp.10f.
21. Emil Brunner, Ibid., p.11.
22. Cf. Emil Brunner, TasE, pp.7-17, chapter 1 "Idealism and Naturalism"; also see RaR, pp.3-17, chapter 1 "Revelation as the Subject of a Christian Theory of Knowledge".
23. Emil Brunner, TasE, p.7.
24. Emil Brunner, Ibid., pp.69f. (Italic is Brunner's)
25. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.8.
26. Cf. Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God (London: Collins, 1969) p.73.
27. Emil Brunner, TasE, p.164.
28. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.167.
29. Emil Brunner, Ibid.
30. Brunner, TasE, p.69.

31. Brunner, Ibid, pp.164f.
32. Cf. Brunner, TasE, pp.41-50, "Theology Beyond Barth and Bultmann".
33. Brunner, Ibid, p.46.
34. Brunner, Ibid, p.16: "It is a different matter with the philosophy that stems directly from the intention of transcending the subject-object antithesis, and so apprehending man as a whole, the 'philosophy of existence'. Its main thesis is that man is neither merely the (knowing) subject, nor merely the (known) object. This is the common element in every kind of existentialism."
35. Brunner, TasE, p.15. "A new Copernican revolution has come in sight, whose results are as yet unpredictable. One thing, however, is certain: the world picture of naturalistic positivism, the infinity of space, the infinity of time, the unconditional validity of the causal principle, are no longer accepted without question but are in process of dissolution."
36. On this point the term, 'A theological epistemology', is selected with two references: (1) Paul Tillich's "Some Questions on Brunner's Epistemology" in ThoEB, pp.99-107: and (2) A. J. Rasker, "Brunners Theologie als theologische Kenleer", in Vox Theologica, 3, 1931, pp. 5-12: "Brunner's theology is largely a theological epistemology." quoted in P.G. Schrotenboer, A New Apologetics, (Kampen: J. H. Kok. N. V., 1955), p.45.
37. Brunner, TasE, pp.65f.
38. Brunner, Ibid, p.86.
39. Brunner, Ibid, p.87.
40. Brunner, TasE, pp.87f. (Italic is mine.)
41. Brunner, DI, p.3.
42. Brunner, Ibid, p.4.
43. Brunner, DI, p.v. (Italic is mine.)
44. Brunner, RaR, p.8.
45. Brunner, Ibid, p.156.
46. Brunner, TasE, pp.89f.
47. Brunner, Ibid, p.91.
48. Brunner, RaR, p.9. Cf. also Roman Roessler, Person und Glaube, p.83.
49. Cf. J. Edward Humphrey, Emil Brunner, p.39.
50. Brunner, TasE, p.94: "The relation between God and man, with which the Bible is always concerned and which in fact is the single theme in the entire Biblical proclamation, can be stated in two words: Lordship and fellowship. The pivotal point in the Bible is the concept 'Kingdom of God', a dual notion holding within itself the ideas of God's being and becoming Lord over men and his fellowship with them; from beginning to end, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation, this is the pivotal point around which all turns."
51. Brunner, Ibid, pp.94,97.
52. Brunner, Ibid, p.101.
53. Reidar Hauge, "Truth as Encounter", in ThoEB, p.134.
54. On this point, it is apparent that Brunner was influenced by both Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber. The former developed his I-Thou philosophy in his book, Das Wort und die geistigen Realitaten appeared in 1921; but he died as early as 1931, and was not able to fully embody and defend his fundamental insight. And the latter published his major work, Ich und Du, in 1922, and since then he developed this theme of his philosophy throughout his long philosopher's career. However, Brunner was mainly dependent on the I-Thou philosophy of Buber, especially the term, 'dialogical personalism'. Cf. Brunner, TasE, p.60; DiIm, p.74, note 12.; and especially DIII, pp.159-162, "Martin Buber's Teaching on the

Apostles' Misunderstanding of Faith."
55. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.11.
56. Leon O. Hynson, "Theological Encounter: Brunner and Buber", in Journal of Ecumenical Studies, vol.12, No.1, 1975. p.349.
57. Cf. Yrjö Salakka, Person und Offenbarung in der Theologie Emil Brunners, Helsinki, 1960, especially Chapter II, Dialektishe Periode 1921-1928; and also Cf. Stefan Scheld, Die Christologie Emil Brunners, Wiesbaden: Franzsteiner Verlag GMBH, 1981, Chapter 3, 4.
58. Alister E. McGrath, The Making of Modern German Christology (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.101.
59. Brunner, DIII, pp.ix-x.   And also Cf. Leon O. Hynson, op. cit., p.351.
60. Martin Buber, Ich und Du, Leipzig, 1923; reprinted in Werke (3 vols: Munich/Heidelberg, 1962-4).   It's first English translation by Ronald Gregor Smith appeared in 1937 by T & T.   Clark in Edinburgh and A new English translation with a Prologue "I and You" and Notes by Walter Kaufmann was published by the same publisher in 1970. Subsequent page references to the English translation by Ronald G. Smith are to the edition by T & T Clark.
61. Martin Buber, Ibid, p.3.
62. H. D. Lewis, The Elusive Mind (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1969), p.261.
63. Martin Buber, I and Thou, p.4.
64. Martin Buber, Ibid, p.3.
65. Martin Buber, Ibid.
66. Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber, (London:   Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955) p.57; and the writer has an indebtedness to Professor Friedman who is one of the leading scholars on the study of Buber's thought, especially his Martin Buber's Life and Work and The Life of Dialogue.
67. James Brown, Subject and Object in Modern Theology (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1955), pp. 113, 115.
68. Martin Buber, I and Thou (trans. by Kaufmann) pp.69f.
69. Maurice S. Friedmann, op. cit., pp.57f.
70. Martin Buber, I and Thou, p.17.
71. Maurice S. Friedmann, Martin Buber, p.58.
72. Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber, pp.60f.
73. Maurice S. Friedman, Ibid, p.62.
74. Martin Buber, I and Thou, pp.37f.
75. Martin Buber, Ibid, p.39.
76. Martin Buber, Ibid, p.40.
77. Martin Buber, Ibid, pp.40f.
78. Martin Buber, Ibid, p.43.
79. Maurice S. Friedman, op. cit. p.63.
80. Martin Buber, I and Thou, p.43: "Institutions are 'outside', where all sorts of aims are pursued. where a man works, negotiates, bears influences, undertakes, concurs, organises, conducts business, officiates, preaches.   They are the tolerably well-ordered and to some extent harmonious structure, in which, with the manifold help of men's brains and hands, the process of affairs is fulfilled. Feelings are 'within', where life is lived and man recovers from institutions.   Here the spectrum of the emotions dances before the interested glance.   Here a man's liking and hate and pleasure are indulged, and his pain if it is not too severe.   Here he is at home, and stretches himself out in his rocking-chair."
81. Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber, p.64.
82. Martin Buber, I and Thou, pp.45-46.
83. Maurice S. Friedman, op. cit., p.64.

84.  Martin Buber, I and Thou, p.50.
85.  Martin Buber, Ibid, pp.59f.
86.  Martin Buber, Ibid, p.60.
87.  Martin Buber, Ibid, pp.63f.
88.  Martin Buber, Ibid, p.63.
89.  Martin Buber, Ibid.
90.  Martin Buber, Ibid p.70.
91.  Martin Buber, Ibid, p.75.
92.  Martin Buber, Ibid, p.76.
93.  Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, (London: Search Press, 1982), p.354. 94. Martin Buber, I and Thou, p.79. 95. Martin Buber, Ibid., p.80. 96. Martin Buber, Ibid, pp.81f: "If the soul is the starting point of our consideration, complete relation can be understood only in a bipolar way, only as the *coincidentia oppositorum*, as the coincidence of opposition of feeling."
97.  Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1955), p.71.
98.  Martin Buber, I and Thou, p.82.
99.  Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, pp.355f.
100. Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber, p.73.
101. Martin Buber, I and Thou, p.100.
102. Martin Buber, Ibid, p.101.
103. H. J. Paton, The Modern Predicament (London: George Alen and Unwin Ltd., 1962). p.165.
104. Martin Buber, I and Thou, pp.102, 103.
105. Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, p.356.
106. According to Walter Kaufmann, Buber's persistent association of *Wirklichkeit with wirken* can be carried over into English to some extent by using 'actuality' for the former (saving 'reality' for the rare instances when he uses *Realität*) and 'act', in a variety of ways, for the verb.  And when he says that in prayer we can, incredible as it may seem, *wirken* on God, although of course we cannot *erwirken* anything from him, but we can act on God-not exact anything from him.  See Walter Kaufman's introduction, in Martin Buber, I and Thou (trans. W. Kaufman), pp.45f.
107. Alister E. McGrath, The Making of Modern German Christology, p.102.
108. Leon O. Hynson, "Theological Encounter: Brunner and Buber", p.352.
109. Brunner, DII, p.v.
110. Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, p.360.
111. Cf. Leon O. Hynson, op. cit., pp.362f, and also Cf. Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber, p.272.
112. On the transition of Brunner's theological thought, see Yrjö Salakk, Person und Offenbarung in der Theologie Emil Brunner's (Helsinki, 1960); Stefan Scheld, Die Christologie Emil Brunner's: Beitrag zur Überwindung liberaler Jesuologie und dialektish - doketischer Christologie in Zuge geschichtlich-diologischen Denken (Wiesbaden, 1981); Roman Roessler, Person und Glaube: Der Personalimus der Gottesbeziehung bei Emil Brunner (München, 1965); and Alister E McGrath, The Making of Modern German Christology: From the Enlightenment to Pannenberg, pp. 94-126.
113. Alister E. McGrath, Ibid. pp.103f.
114. Brunner, GoaMa, p.67.
115. Alister E. McGrath, op. cit., p.102.
116. Reider Hauge, "Truth As Encounter", in ThoEB, p.135.
117. This kind of opposite phrase, 'objectivism and subjectivism' indicates his intention of the meaning of the term 'encounter' with the frequent expression in his later writings: for instance, 'objectivism and subjectivism in the history of Christendom',

'Idealism and Naturalism', or similarly, 'theology beyond Barth and Bultmann'.

118. Brunner, TasE, p.69.
119. Reider Huge, "Truth as Encounter", in ThoEB, p.136.
120. Brunner, DI, pp.35f.
121. Brunner, ChaCi I, p.37. (Italic is mine.)
122. Brunner, TasE, pp.117f.
123. Brunner, TasE, p.118.
124. Brunner, Ibid, pp.118, 119: "But this (*the agape of God*) does not happen when faith has the form of Credo-credo, that is to say, where the Thou-form of the occurrence has been translated into the It-form of reflection; it happens only when faith is a personal prayer in response to the personal Word of God. This faith proves itself at once and necessarily in *agape*, while the other (as we theologians know particularly well) can be present very well with a complete want of agape."
125. Brunner, Ibid, p.133.
126. Brunner, Ibid. (Italic is mine.)
127. According to Brunner, there is a degree among doctrines in the sense of more or less understanding of what is central: "Perhaps one would need to say that this selection could not be the same for every age, since the question is not one of working out a timeless system of "central truths of faith", but of fighting a war in which the areas of combat (so to say) are especially appointed for every age. The discussion of this question, however, would carry us too far afield. In any event it must be clear on what basis the selection is made and why it is legitimate: it has to do with *the closeness of connection* to God's immediate address in Jesus Christ himself". See Emil Brunner, TasE, p.136.
128. Cf. Brunner, Ibid, pp.134-140; Cf. also DI, pp.35-42.
129. Brunner, DI p.29; Cf. also TasE, pp.138-140.
130. J. Edward Humphrey, Emil Brunner, p.41.
131. Brunner, ScoCh, p.41.
132. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's concept of Revelation, p.71.
133. Brunner, RaR, p.24.
134. Brunner, DIII, p.143.
135. Brunner, WaW, pp.27f.
136. Brunner, ScoCh, p.35.
137. Brunner, TasE, pp.24f.
138. Brunner, RaR, p.366.
139. Alister E McGrath, The Making of Modern German christology, p.105.
140. Kenneth Cauthen, "Biblical Truths and Rational Knowledge", in Review and Expositor, vol.53, 1956. p.468.
141. Brunner, TasE, p.77. And also Cf. Vincent Brümmer, Theology and Philosophical Inquiry (London: Macmillan, 1981), p.183.
142. Leon O. Hynson, "Theological Encounter: Brunner and Buber", in Journal of Ecumenical Studies, vol 12, p.355.
143. Ronald W. Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox (London: Watts, 1958), p.28.
144. Emil Brunner, TasE, p.71: "By 'objectivism' I understand here a tendency of man's spirit and will to get something into his power - to manipulate it like an object in definite ways and within definite limits - something which by its very nature is not under human control."
145. Emil Brunner, TasE, p.73: "Subjectivism rooted as deeply in the being of man and just as devastating in its effect on the church. The striving for what is fixed, secure, authoritative, and disposable certainly does not hold an uncontested sovereignty;

rivaling it is a drive at least as elemental and possibly even more primitive - the urge for freedom and spontaneity."

146. Emil Brunner, TasE p.21. (Italic is mine).
147. Paul Tillich, "Some Questions on Brunner's Epistemology", in ThoEB, p.100. And on this point Paul Tillich raises the question of the relation between the symbols of Biblical personalism and philosophical inquiry for ultimate reality. Cf. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, vol II, pp.10-16; Cf. also Kenneth Cauthen, "Biblical Truths and Rational Knowledge", p.469.
148. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.33. "Revelation is a transitive event which proceeds from God and ends in man, a light ray with these two poles. There is therefore no point in setting the objective fact of revelation over against the subjective act of receiving the revelation, because the revelation actually consists in the meeting of two subjects, the divine and the human, the self-communication of God to man."
149. Emil Brunner, PhoRe, p.28.
150. Reidar Hauge, "Truth As Encounter," in ThoEB p.143.
151. Cf. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.x; and also Cf. J. Edward Humphrey, Emil Brunner, p.122.
152. Emil Brunner, DII, pp.56f.
153. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner. An Introduction to the Man and His Thought (Chicago : Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), p.28
154. Emil Brunner, TasE, p.113
155. Emil Brunner, DI, p.73.
156. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.383. Cf. also David Cairns, "Brunner's Conception of Man as responsive, Responsible Being", in ThoEB pp.76f.
157. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.383.
158. Reidar Hauge, op.cit., p.144.
159. Emil Brunner, DI, p.60.
160. Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God (London: Collins, 1969), p.74.
161. Heinz Zahrnt, Ibid.
162. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation, p.2
163. Emil Brunner, WDHG, pp.60f. Quoted in Paul K. Jewett, op.cit.
164. Heinz Zahrnt, op.cit., p.75.
165. Emil Brunner, TasE, p.114.
166. Cf. George Newlands, Theology of the Love of God (London: Collins, 1980), pp.17-21.
167. Cf. Heinz Zahrnt, op.cit., p.75.
168. On this point Brunner began consciously to depart from Barth. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.2.
169. Emil Brunner, Med, p.32.
170. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Revelation As History, trans. David Granskou (London: The Macmillan Co., 1968), pp.6f,12.
171. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Ibid., pp.15f.
172. Emil Brunner, RaR, pp.58f. (Italic is mine).
173. Emil Brunner, TasE, p.102.
174. Emil Brunner, Ibid., pp.19, 53: "It is indeed man alone who knows this, and in whose being, so long prepared, the leap into humanity was first made, whose center is 'responsive actuality', responsible freedom. The 'answerability', the 'responsibility' corresponds to the Creator's Word of summons."

IV   THE TRUTH-CLAIMS OF MISSIONARY THEOLOGY


1.   Historical truth


1.1  The truth of revelation[1]

The great theme of Christian thought is, according to Emil Brunner, the

defining and establishing of the Christian truth of revelation.[2]   The

Church knows that she lives on the divine revelation, that is, the Truth

which she has received.  For him, the divine revelation is then both the

ground and norm of the proclamation of the Church and theology as well

as the content of the message of the Church.  If theology is reflection

upon the message, which has been given and entrusted to the Church, then

its most urgent task is to reflect upon revelation;  and it is the duty

of the Church, both to herself and to the world, to make a clear

theological statement about the fundamental truth on which the life of

the Church depends.[3]


       But the biblical understanding of revelation is, Brunner argues,

deformed by both the liberal theology and the orthodox theology of

Protestantism and Catholicism in that the former compromises the

uniqueness and transcendence of revelation with mysticism and immanence

and the latter transforms revelation from an encounter with the living

Christ into an object, either the Bible or a deposit of propositional

truths.[4]   Against the first deformation Brunner insists that the

biblical understanding of revelation is unique and differs from that of

non-biblical religions; against the second, he underlines the 'personal'

revelation as event and the impossibility of expressing its full meaning

in an abstract definition of its manifold and concrete forms.[5]

Then, revelation for Brunner is not merely an objective event without depending on the subjective reception of it by man for whom it is intended;  but revelation in its full and proper sense includes a subjective illumination which makes possible a personal reception of the objective communication.  Brunner puts it as follows:

> Revelation is indeed that which becomes manifest to us through a definite action of God;  it means that we, whose eyes were formerly closed, have now opened them to a certain light;  that upon us, who were in darkness, the light has shone.  Thus revelation only reaches its goal in the subject, man.  Revelation is not a fact in itself, but it is this fact, plus an illumination, a disclosure, which makes the 'fact' known.  The fact of illumination is therefore an integral part of the process of revelation;  without this an event is no more a revelation than light is light without the seeing, illuminated, eye.  Revelation is a transitive event which proceeds from God and ends in man, a light ray with these two poles.  There is therefore no point in setting the objective fact of revelation over against the subjective act of receiving the revelation, because the revelation actually consists in the meeting of two subjects, the divine and the human, the self-communication of God to man.[6]

Therefore, to understand what the revelation in Jesus Christ is means also to understand what faith is.  In this regard, we shall be concerned with Brunner's analysis of the revelation of God in Christ.  This analysis revolves about two main problems:  revelation as an objective event in history and the reception of this revelation by the individual through faith.


1.2  Revelation and history

Christianity rests on, according to Brunner, a *historical* revelation. became flesh'.  This indicates revelation as the historical event, that is the unity of revelation as promise in the Old Testament and revelation as fulfilment in Jesus Christ.[7]  So Brunner claims this revelation is the 'absolute event';  it has always the character of a sudden event;  and it stands out from all ordinary happenings from the

normal course of development. Hence it is a kind of 'incursion from an other dimension'. This sudden event, however, is understood in the Bible alone as the absolute and unique event that can never be repeated in the sense of the Incarnation. It is the Jesus event in history. Here it takes place that which 'happens once-for-all, and is therefore unconditioned'.[8] From this perspective is to be understood the polemic which runs through the entire corpus of Brunner's writings against what he calls general religion.

(a) Immanence. Brunner's understanding of the historical revelation differs from that of historicism (in both the idealism of Hegel and historical positivism). Hegel attempts, according to Brunner, to preserve the absolute character of Christianity by making it the highest stage in the evolutionary development of the religious consciousness of the race; and his system of philosophy of history aims at being the intellectual presentation of the historical process, in which the absolute Spirit is manifested in the finite.[9] So the idea expressed in history is, for Hegel, really everything, and the element of concrete realization was mere matter of fact[10]; hence the defect of Hegelianism lies in its immanence that regards man and God as metaphysically, epistemologically and ethically continuous, so that man may arrive at the true knowledge of God within the framework of his own innate possibilities.[11] According to Hegel, history itself is the self-manifestation of God, that is to say, it is revelation. In history, or rather, through history, through the historical process as such, very gradually there takes place the overcoming of the relative opposition between existence and the divine; and therefore history is itself the Mediator.[12]

Brunner claims that Schleiermacher takes the place of Hegel as the great teacher of immanence; and that he tries to combine a historical element with his subjectivism by representing that the form supplied by the mere fact become a content which determines the religious consciousness. In consequence Christian religion for Schleiermacher is, according to Brunner, not only a concrete historical phenomenon, like every other living thing, but also a conscious reference to a historical factor (in this case the factor is its historical origin in the historical personality of Jesus), is essential to it; and this reference to a historical factor ends by being regarded as the essential characteristic of Christian piety; but both conceptions of religion are incompatible.[13]

> That religion consists in a *feeling* of union with the Infinite that is void of any idea, and that Christian religion is a conscious relation to the historical personality of Jesus of Nazareth, and accordingly it is *knowledge* of him, including the knowledge that he is the originator of the Christian religion. These two lines of thought are held together, but only seemingly so, by a third conception - that this significance belongs to Jesus, because in him the religious consciousness (understood in the sense of the first definition) finds expression in exemplary perfection, and hence he can redeem other men by arousing in them that same consciousness.[14]

(b) Transcendence. Against the immanence of Hegelianism, Brunner agrees with Kierkegaard who passionately stresses the absolute qualitative difference between the finite and the infinite, the man and the Divine[15]; and criticizes Hegel's 'the absolute whole' which contains everything; and in consequence destroys individuality.[16] At first Barth seizes upon Kierkegaard's disjunction between time and eternity as the way out of the either-or of liberalism and Orthodoxy; and Barth himself says: "If I have a 'system', it consists in this, that I always keep in mind with the utmost rigour what Kierkegaard has called the 'infinite qualitative difference' between time and eternity,

and that in both its positive and negative implications 'God is in heaven and thou upon earth".[17]  Brunner also shares with Kierkegaard and Barth an unshakable conviction in the absolute otherness of God, that is, the infinite qualitative difference between the Creator and the creature.  He asserts that God stands on the ground of divine transcendence;  and therefore our knowledge of God rests on 'a self-manifestation of God, penetrating and contradicting the world and human experience'.[18]

Accordingly, Emil Brunner distinguishes between the transcendent God of the Bible and the God-idea of the religion of immanence epistemologically.[19]  He claims that by the latter man finds 'God' in nature or in his soul;  hence the name 'God' is for man merely another name for the essence of existence or the substance of the empirical world; and he says:

> Man finds God in existing things.  He is merely another name for the essence of existence.  A religion based on such a conception of God is monistic and optimistic.  It asserts an unbroken unity and continuity of God and the natural existence of man.  God and world-experience are not contradictory;  nor are the experience of the world and the Ego different from God.  There is a way of passing from one to the other.  The world in its being is divine and the essence of the Ego is God-like.[20]

So he radically reacted against the doctrine of immanence; for if God is really identical with the world or the soul, then He is neither the sovereign of the world nor of man;  and such a God is not really the personal God who 'meets us in revelation as Absolute Lord'.[21]  So, the God of immanence 'whom I shall have to know through an interpretation of world or of myself', as Brunner claims, 'is less than I am because I give utterance to him who himself is dumb, as it were'.[22] Therefore this religion of immanence is not really based upon faith, that is, 'an answer to a call, or a response to a challenge'; and an immanent God

neither calls me nor demand my decision.  Rather such a God excludes

decision because the Divine (in this case of immanence) is supposed to

be identical with 'the deepest self of man';  and therefore man himself

is already in God and God in him; he is already on the safe side before

he makes a decision to a call from God of the otherness, whom man knows

only through His revelation of Jesus Christ.[23]


(c)  The uniqueness of revelation in history.   Since Brunner

rejects immanence, that is, the Hegelian idealistic negation of history

as we have seen in the previous discussion.   Instead, he conceives of

transcendence, that is, in Kierkegaardian terms, 'the absolute otherness

of God' or 'the infinite qualitative difference between the Creator and

the creature'.   But one may raises a question of how it is possible to

build the knowledge of God, or to express the relation of God to the

world.   Brunner's answer to this question is that the genuine

theological expression must be dialectical.[24]   Even though they are

antithetical in themselves, yet they are tangent at the point of divine

revelation, a point where Eternity becomes time[25];   the Absolute,

finite;  the Divine, human;  God, man.  Because the Christian negation

of history is, according to Brunner, at the same time its affirmation,

because the Word became flesh, we would expect him to have a Christian

understanding of history.[26]


It is also important for us to note that as time went on, Brunner

began to feel the need for a more balanced emphasis from

'transcendence', and then took controversy with Karl Barth (see I.1.2);

so the fundamental structure of Brunner's thinking more profoundly was

an awakened appreciation for the dimension of the personal, as mediated

to him especially by Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber.[27]   Brunner,

working out the implications of the Ebner and Buberian axiom, 'no I
without a thou', as it bears on the question of God's self-disclosure to
man, has tended to counterpoise the otherness of God, with the idea of
man's likeness to God in that God has created man in His own image and
all men in a sense know God.[28]   So we must keep constantly before us
Brunner's concern to solve the problem of revelation and history without
falling into 'historical positivism' on the one hand, and   'non-
historical idealism' on the other;   therefore Brunner conceives of the
biblical (or Christian) revelation in such a way that it is neither idea
nor historical facts (in a sense of historical science);   rather, it is
'unique event' in history.   By this event he seeks to understand history
from the perspective of revelation, rather than to subordinate
revelation under the general category of history[29];   and on this Brunner
remarks:

> It is of the very essence of the Christian faith that its
> relation to history should be entirely different from that
> of any other religion or philosophy.  In the ordinary sense
> of the word it is not concerned with history at all.   It is
> what it is through its relation to that unique event, which,
> although it is a fact of history, does not gain its unique
> character from its historical connection.  It is this which
> determines the peculiar relation of the Christian faith to
> history in general.  To the Christian faith revelation does
> not mean a reverent process of tracing the ways of God in
> history.   Indeed, history as such is not a divine
> revelation;   it merely represents humanity as a whole in its
> need of redemption.  But precisely because something super-
> historical, unique, absolutely decisive has entered into
> human history, to faith history means something entirely
> different from its meaning for all other forms of thought.
> Our relation to history is determined by our relation to
> Jesus Christ, not vice versa.[30]

Therefore, no religion knows the concept of revelation as
Christianity holds it;   and no religion ever dared to affirm seriously
that God became man.[31]   So the one word of Christian confession of
faith-crucified under Pontius Pilate   -   together   with the apostles'

( $\dot{\epsilon}\phi\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\xi$ ), 'once for all' - fixes the fundamental difference between Christianity's claim of revelation and the claims made by other religions. Hence the revelation of the Christian faith, Brunner claims, differs wholly from revelation and its meaning of other religions by reason of its 'uniqueness' (Einmaligkeit).[32] In this regard, Christianity takes the word, 'revelation', with absolute seriousness: and this very concept of uniqueness, however, is unknown outside Christianity because uniqueness in a genuine sense can only mean one fact that there can be only one individual example:[33]

> The peculiar fact about Christianity - and one which gives great offence - is this: it is absolutely concerned with an external historical fact. It is not the external fact itself with which it is concerned so deeply, but with the fact of the actuality of that upon which it depends; this too is intended in the absolutely literal sense of the word - in the sense of a fact which has actually taken place. All depends upon the fact that the Word did become flesh, and this means that the Eternal has entered into the sphere of external historical fact. To be 'made flesh' means among other things an actual state of presence, sensible, external, non-spiritualized. Incarnation means entering into the realm of visible fact,... It is a state in which an individual can be touched, handled, or photographed; it is an isolated fact within time and space, the filling of a certain point within time and space which apart from this fact would have remained empty, and which can be filled in this fact alone: all this belongs to the actuality of the Incarnation of the Word.[34]

Accordingly, history for Brunner is not mere causal sequence, nor the unfolding of the Absolute; rather it is 'the field of personal decision on the basis of a divine act of revelation'[35]; in other words, history is decisive as the Jesus-event in history is unique in that its meaning is grasped by the act of faith. Brunner does not mean, however, the term 'history' by the expression 'uniqueness', when applied to the incarnation, simply as the idea of singleness of kind. It is precisely the fact that the Incarnation of the Word of God is an absolutely decisive event that constitutes its uniqueness, in contrast to all other

events in history which have only relative significance.[36]  He puts it as follows:

> Revelation is absolutely unique, therefore it is absolutely decisive.  This is so true that we could reverse the statement and say:  the one absolutely unique and decisive fact is revelation.  It is only since Christ came and through Him, that both uniqueness and absolute decision have been in existence....  The key to the understanding of this very significant fact lies in the conception of uniqueness, which is identical with that of absolute decision.[37]

There is, of course, time for plants and animals only in the sense of the natural time of physics, or a series of moments in ordered sequence, but nothing really decisive happens, for the organic life which has the character of a cycle which loses significance by turning in on itself;  and therefore there is history, properly speaking, only in the realm of human activity.  History as such has only a tendency to uniqueness.  It is distinguished from nature by this tendency, and yet, as nature has its historical side, so history has its natural side. In this regard history, understood in the usual sense, is 'characterized by a relative uniqueness';  and within the sphere of empirical happenings there are, according to Brunner, no final decisions.  So what are usually called 'historical decisions' are relatively irreversible, relatively unique, relatively decisive events.[38]

However, the Christian faith alone, as Brunner claims, "can speak of one decision, namely, the reversal of the world order in Jesus Christ, in whom not only earthly history but also all that happens, from its beginning derived from eternity and its end in eternity, eternally receives its centre, and in this centre its qualification - the event which the witnesses in the New Testament expressly testify has taken place 'once for all'."[39]  Hence temporal events with the quality of a 'time of decision' only exist where eternity itself has entered into

time[40];   and therefore the Jesus event is, for Brunner, the end of history, in the sense that it is that toward which all history because of its tendency to the uniqueness, strives;   that is to say, it is history *par excellence*, 'the truly historical'.   The goal of history is not 'nothing' (das Nichts), but the fellowship of the faithful, the Kingdom of God.   The Kingdom has broken into history in the person of Jesus, who is 'the Eternal in time'[41];   and yet it is wholly eschatological.   With the coming of Christ history has become eschatological history.[42]

## 1.3   The Jesus-event

Here we discuss Brunner's concept of revelation on the object side, and what Brunner speaks thus about revelation is an event in history, i.e. the Jesus-event in which 'the Eternal had to meet historical humanity'.[43]   This does not mean that history itself reveals God. Rather, God reveals Himself in definite moments of history and above all in Jesus Christ - in His person, life, death, and resurrection. Therefore, even if the revelation-event in Jesus Christ touches history, so Brunner lays great stress on its factuality (Aktualität), but history itself never become the 'object of faith';   rather, it is the locus of revelation.   Brunner sees that the problem of revelation and history finds its sharpest focus in the person of Jesus.

So, this problem raises the question of how the Jesus-event is to be conceived so that the historical person of Jesus may be secured from what Biblical criticism has done to the Gospel tradition because Jesus for Brunner is not simply a religious symbol.[44]   Brunner's answer to this question is intelligible only on the background of his Kierkegaardian structure of revelation as the point of tangent between

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time and eternity;  hence he understands that the Jesus event is the category of the incognito to history (of science) because it is the incarnation of the son of God, His historical personality;  in other words, 'the historical, tangible side' of revelation.[45] In this regard, Brunner claims that the eternal in history, the revelation as the absolutely unique, cannot be perceived in terms of historical extension. Revelation is not the actual fact that which is made known through history:  the life of Jesus and the historical personality of Jesus - but the invisible secret of the Person of Jesus, hidden behind the veils of history and of human life, not the Christ after the flesh but the Christ after the Spirit, the 'Word made flesh'.[46]  Thus God is really in Christ, but only for the eye of faith, not yet for sight.

Therefore, dependence of revelation on scientific history means uncertainty because the eternal as an event in history has as such 'no historical extension'.  That is to say, the unique event in history, revelation, achieved in history in such a way that it constitutes a complete breaking through of all historical continuity.  In this regard, it is not the extended fact in history;  rather, it is 'an isolated fact within time and space'.[47]  Thus it is not perceptible to the eye of scientific historian because the historian mainly aims at two things: first, the aim of history is to create, as far as possible, a complete 'film picture of the past' and secondly, it is to interpret the pictures of reality which have thus been completely recaptured in the light of previous happenings, and of that which is intelligible to humanity as a whole.[48]

Here Brunner recognizes with historical criticism the distinction between the two terms, 'the Christ in flesh' and 'the Christ after the

flesh'. But distinction between the two terms is only intelligible from the standpoint of the Christian faith; and outside it such an idea could not even be entertained. The reason for this is that this distinction is only another way of expressing the unique fact in history, the Jesus event, while it is really and truly historical, yet transcends all historical barriers. It is precisely because of this that the historical actuality of the eternal, the Jesus event in history, is in Brunner's view the way (or form) in which the eternal divine Word, as the Eternal Son, touches the historical world.[49]

> Hence the possibility of making the distinction between the 'Christ in flesh' and the 'Christ after the flesh'. The 'Christ in the flesh' offers a common point of interest both to the chronicler and to the believer. The believer believes in Christ of whom the Chronicler also must have something to report. But the Christ who is set forth by the Chronicler, by the author of a report, or by the historian who is most profoundly prepared by all his previous training to understand the great and truly human in history, or by the man who in all reverence watches and listens for the voice of God within history, is the 'Christ after the flesh'. The believer alone sees more than the 'Christ after the flesh' in the 'Christ in the flesh'.[50]

Accordingly, the picture of Jesus given in all four of the Gospels is, for Brunner, is not an historical one but one already permeated with kerygma.[51] The gospel of John, for instance, was never intended to be history; it will not report what happened as such, but rather instruct us as to who Jesus was and what His life meant. We have testimony to Christ on the part of the believing community which shows us the truly historical Jesus; and the nexus between the preaching of Jesus and the preaching of the Christian community about Him is the event of the resurrection.[52] The disciples were witnesses of the resurrected Christ and it is their witness which we have recorded in the Gospels. Therefore, they were not concerned, as is the historical critic, to reconstruct an historical picture of Jesus; but rather "they testify

with more or less historical fidelity the Jesus Christ, whom they first came to know aright after Easter; and then they relate the story of the Christ-in-the flesh, from which the historian abstracts the history of Jesus, the history of the Christ-after-the-flesh".[53]

Therefore, the question whether we need historical revelation or not is, for Brunner, "a question which is decided by faith alone; a question, then, which is not decided by intellectual pros and cons, but only in that ultimate decision which claims the totality of man, namely, whether our honour and justification lies in ourselves, or whether we have to receive them from outside ourselves".[54] The apostles had actually experienced the resurrection of Jesus and the whole living reality of Jesus. No instance of this kind has ever been known; indeed, the truth of faith make it possible. It is of the very essence of revelation and of faith that we should become Christians not through the historical picture of Jesus, but through the picture traced by the Gospels in the light of resurrection faith which has grown out of the testimony of the apostles, and has become the witness to Christ of the Christian church; and thus faith justifies this attitude by pointing out that the revelation of Christ does not cease with the process which the historian can verify - even when he has every possible kind of material at his disposal. Therefore the adequate basis of the Christian faith for Brunner is the witness of the Scriptures to Christ.[55]

## 2.   Biblical truth

### 2.1 Revelation and the word of God[56]
As we have seen in previous discussion, revelation for Brunner is the Jesus-event, that is to say, God's breaking into history in the *person*

of Jesus Christ. Therefore the revelation is, he claims, Jesus Christ himself, not a doctrine *about* Jesus Christ: "The doctrine of the Church is always the *Confession*, the expression, but not the object of faith. The Object of faith is the revelation, Jesus Christ Himself, not the *Credo* of the Church. But if this Creed of the Church is wrongly equated with absolute Truth, then it is almost impossible to avoid setting it up as the actual *object* of faith. Faith becomes faith in dogma, belief in an authoritative human doctrine, it then ceases to be what it is according to the teaching of the Bible: faith in the truth of revelation, which can never be equated with any human doctrine at all. The revelation is Jesus Christ Himself, not a doctrine *about* Jesus Christ".[57]

However, if it is the case that revelation is Jesus Christ Himself, Brunner is, then, faced with the problem posed by Biblical criticism,[58] how does one get from the Word, which is Christ, to words about Him and how are these words related to the Word; or precisely how does one conceive of any discrepancy between the Jesus of history and the Jesus which the early Church preached that constitutes the very nature of the situation of crisis - a major challenge to Christian faith.[59] Brunner's solution to this problem is, as Paul K. Jewett points out, that it was the task of Jesus to be the Christ, while it was left to the apostles to preach Him.[60] Thus, he presumes, we can adequately account for the difference between the way in which Jesus himself speaks and the way in which the disciples speak about him. Brunner is not concerned in the main, however, with the solution of critical questions *in concreto*; rather, his interest lies in another direction. He is concerned with a tracing of the course of the process as such, and then he claims that every genuine testimony about Christ must be grounded in and stem from

such personal encounter of Him.    The primal form of all witness to Christ is the faith-confession of the thou-answer to the addressing thou-word of God.[61]


Since Emil Brunner objects to orthodox Protestantism's simple identification of the word of Scripture with the Word of God on the one hand and to liberal theologian's compromise of the uniqueness and transcendence of revelation on the other, he suggests a different view of the argument for the problem of the apparent difference between the 'Jesus of history' and the 'Christ of faith';   and Brunner's argument for this is as follows:

> If ... we go back to the origin of both, to the point at which 'it pleased God to reveal His Son in me';   that is, where the revelation becomes the Word of God,  then we perceive that an important change has taken place between this point and the *witness*.    Peter, who was the first to confess Jesus as the *Christ*, because this 'was not revealed unto him by flesh and blood, but by the Father in heaven', does not tell the story of Jesus, nor does he teach about *Christ*.   His confession, the primitive form of his witness, is still accomplished in the *dimension of personal encounter*: 'Truly Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God!'   *The original form of all genuine witness is the confession of faith in the form of the answering 'Thou', evoked by the 'Thou' - word of God addressed to the soul.* This is true not only of the confession of the Apostle, but also of the confession of every true believer, of that 'Abba, Father', which the Holy Spirit utters, evoking the response of faith in the same inspired words.   The act of faith is a confession in the form of prayer, in the dimension 'Thou-I';   it is not a doctrinal statement in the third person: 'He-you'.
>     Thus the first step in the development of the doctrinal testimony is to move away from the 'Thou-relation' to God; this signifies *a change of front*:   from God towards the world.   In doctrine man speaks no longer in the 'Thou'-form to God - as in the original confession of faith - but he now speaks *about* God as 'He'.   Doctrine is no longer a spontaneous, personal response,  in the form of prayer, to the Word of God, but already, even in its simplest form, it is reflective speech *about* God.   *The process of leaving the sphere of personal encounter in order to enter into the impersonal sphere of reflection is the presupposition of all doctrine.*[62]

Here Brunner claims that we must be primarily concerned with the thou-form word in the dimension of personal encounter. He suggests two reasons for this: (1) the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is not itself a doctrine but a person with his story[63]; and (2) the development of doctrine from the thou-form word is, according to him, to move away from the thou-relation to God.[64] This means for Brunner that we have to recognize primarily the revelation in Christ as a Person: "It is therefore he, this Person, who is really the Word. He himself is the communication, the self-communication of God; it is he himself in whom God proclaims and realises his will to Lordship and his will to fellowship".[65] Therefore the apostles' witness is not revelation in the genuine sense of the word; rather it is a compliment of the 'mute' act-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. And yet it is also true, according to him, that God's act-word in Christ must be interpreted to us in the witness of the believing apostles.[66] "The word of Jesus, in point of fact, has a share in the absolute authority of the Son of God. But this implies that it is not itself the Word of God as a whole. He, Himself, His person and His work, is not an object, but, as it were, the silent presupposition for a right understanding of His teaching; this underlying truth only becomes explicit in the words of His Apolstes".[67]

The question, therefore, naturally arises, what is the relation between doctrine and personal revelation in the revelation in Jesus Christ? Brunner expresses this relationship in a way of 'encounter'[68]: (1) The Incarnation of the Word, the entrance of God *into the sphere of our life*, the self-manifestation of God in his Son - this is the real revelation, the establishment of Lordship and creation of fellowship. Words, therefore, are not of ultimate consequence, not even divine words, but the Word, which he himself, Jesus Christ is. Thus because he

himself is the Word of God, all words have only an instrumental value. Neither the spoken words nor their conceptual content are the Word itself, but only its 'frame', the means of conveying it. As God in his Word wills to direct not only our thinking but 'ourselves', so in his Word he wills to give 'himself' - that is, Jesus Christ.[69]

(2) We cannot possess Jesus Christ, the content, the thing itself, the personal revelation except in this 'container'. The frame is necessarily bound up with its content. Without the doctrine, the thing itself is not present for us. "God indubitably says 'something' to us in order to be present as Lord and as Father in the Son through the Spirit."[70] Even the most personal encounter with the personal revelation, Jesus Christ, which Peter experienced at the Sea of Galilee, involved doctrine which had to be grasped conceptually: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God'. Though it is true that God does not hold a dogma class with us, nor propose to us a confession of faith, still 'he tells us authentically who he is and what he wills for us and from us'. So Brunner concludes that we can never separate the conceptual framework from the personal presence contained in it. "We know that we can never have the one without the other, and we know at the same time that the whole point is to have the personal contained within the abstract framework. Doctrine is certainly related instrumentally to the Word of God as token and framework, serving in relation to the reality - actual personal fellowship with God; but doctrine is indissoluably connected with the reality it represents".[71]

This leads us to re-emphasize for Brunner the truth of the word of God in human language: "The word of the Apostles itself forms part of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ. The act of the historical

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divine revelation is completed only where, in the spoken word of the Apostle, it becomes the knowledge of faith, the confession of faith, and the witness which creates faith".[72]  The Bible is then the fixation of this faith-confessing, faith-creating, and interpretative testimony of the apostles.  This *viva vox* of the apostles stands in much closer relationship to the Word of God than the Bible, but the Scriptural fixation of this living testimony (and that was necessary to preserve it from being completely altered and thereby lost in the moving stream of historical tradition) participates in the authority of that revelation.[73]  It is, therefore, the border of that particular revelational event of which it bears record:  "In principle, therefore, an Apostle is one to whom the primary knowledge of Christ is entrusted, not mediated by the intrusion of any other human being, apart from which Jesus Christ would not have been the revelation to humanity.  As the Apostle belongs to the unique event of revelation, so all knowledge mediated through the Apostolic word stands on this side of the unique historical events.  This 'frontier' is the basis of the idea of the canon, the basis of the fact of the Bible".[74]

2.2  The witness of the apostles to the revelation in Christ.

Emil Brunner also suggests that we, who are not the contemporaries of Jesus Christ, reach to the Jesus-event in history, and we can only have access to this particular and personal revelation of God *through the witness of the apostles*.  We only possess him in their witness to him.  This should not be surprising for Brunner because the revelation in Christ is a *historical* revelation.  It is of the very nature of an historical revelation that it can only reach later generations through the testimony of eyewitnesses.  So Brunner calls the apostle as the original witness on the two respects:  the first is the fact that he is

an *eyewitness*, and the second is that he possesses a fund of detailed, original knowledge of Christ, which is of particular importance.[75] As Brunner points out, it is the 'share in the uniqueness of the event of revelation' as historical event that gives the written documents superiority over the subsequent (or later) oral tradition and grounds the idea of a canon, in which it had to be fixed in writing in order to preserve the original witness of the apostles in all its purity.

Consequently, the Scripture alone, Brunner claims, could preserve the original witnesses of the apostles from distortion and contamination in the living stream of historical tradition. Hence all later oral tradition and witness of the church must have its source and norm in this written-original tradition of the New Testament canon precisely in order to preserve the genuineness of the tradition itself.[76] The Scripture, however, is not the absolute norm, nor are they to be simply identified with the Word of God. Insofar as we are concerned with its truth of the Christ, the normative authority of Scripture is, in Brunner's view, conditional and relative. The reason is that its real norm and authority is the revelation itself, that is, Jesus Christ himself, who reveals himself to us by means of and in the witness of Scripture. In this regard, we are unconditionally bound to Scripture as the medium of revelation for us. So Brunner claims as follows:

> Actually, this is the point at issue: that the real norm is
> the revelation, Jesus Christ Himself, who Himself witnesses
> to us through the Holy Spirit, who, however, in addition to
> this His self-revelation makes use of the witness of the
> Apostles. While we are bound in an absolute sense to the
> medium, to the menas of revelation of the Apostolic witness,
> we are only bound in a relative sense to the *authority* of
> this witness. The absolute authority in Jesus Christ
> Himself, whom we only possess through the record and the
> teaching of the Apostles; but He, whom we only have *through*
> them, stands above them. Their witness is valid, absolutely
> binding, insofar as it really witnesses to Him Himself.[77]

Here Brunner affirms that the apostolic witness to Christ in the Scripture does possess a divine foundation in inspiration, 'but it nowhere claims, *eo ipso*, to be inspired, either because it *is* apostolic testimony, or in the whole range and detail of its formulated doctrine'.[78] All the varied witnesses of the apostles are repeated attempts to express ever more adequately that which can never be fully expressed in human words: the revelation which God has given in the *person* of Jesus Christ. All their witnesses stand in a circle about Christ and point to him. Like a 'funnel' every point on whose surface is oriented toward the centre; and this centre for Brunner indicates *Christ*. So the closer a statement of the Bible is to this centre, the closer it is to him who is the real meaning of the Bible, and therefore the more important it is for the personal encounter in faith.[79] At this point what Brunner argues about the view of the Bible is that the Scriptures therefore are not to be identified directly with the Word of God, for they are at the same time a human word; and therefore they are afflicted with all the infirmity and imperfection of all that is human. In this regard, Brunner does not hesitate to accept many conclusions of higher criticism (with which orthodoxy has never made its peace) involving the admission of error in the Bible-error, that is, which is not due to transmission of the text but which is lodged in the original writings.[80]

Thus Emil Brunner claims with Luther's saying of 'the crib in which Christ (the Word of God) lies' that although the connection between the testimony of Christ and Jesus Christ himself is very close, they are not identical.[81] This does not mean, however, that Brunner's view of the Bible that the Scripture is the witness of the apostle to the revelation in Christ is that the Scriptures are mere records of a revelation that

has taken place.  They themselves are, so Brunner argues, a particular

form of revelation.  For in them God Himself, through the illumination

of the apostles by His Spirit, provides us with the meaning of His

unique and historical revelation in the life, suffering, death and

resurrection of his Son.  He puts it as follows:

> The Bible is the word of God because in it, so far as He
> chooses, God makes known the mystery of His will, of His
> saving purpose in Jesus Christ.  The Bible is a special form
> of the divine revelation;  it is not merely a document which
> records a historical revelation, because in it God Himself
> reveals to us the meaning of that which He wills to say to
> us, and to give us in the historical revelation, especially
> in the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God.  The
> mission of the Son is one thing;  the illumination of the
> Apostles to perceive the meaning of the mystery of the Son
> is another thing.  God has finally revealed Himself in the
> Son;  but this revelation would not reach us apart from the
> sending and illumination of the Apostles who bear witness to
> Him.  Without the witness of the Apostles we should not know
> Jesus as the Christ.[82]

Furthermore, Brunner insists that the Bible only becomes the word

of God *for me* through the present action of the Holy Spirit;  and yet it

is the word of the Bible which becomes God's word *for me*, and it can

only do that because it already is God's word in some sense;  and then

what he argues is as follows:

> It is here that revelation in the ultimate, fullest sense
> can only be an act, God speaking to me here and now.  But
> that is only one side of the biblical concept of revelation.
> The other side is its very opposite.  It is the fact that
> God speaks to me here and now because he *has* spoken.  Above
> all, that he speaks to me through the Holy Spirit because he
> has spoken in Jesus Christ.  The *"has"* is maintained in the
> concept of the Canon.  The Bible is the 'fact of the
> revelation' of God.  It is true that the Scriptures become
> the Word of God for me only through the Holy Spirit.  But
> *they* become the Word of God for me and they become it
> because they already *are* it.  They become it through *that,*
> *which* is written, the solid body of words, sentences and
> books, something objective and available for every one.[83]

Here Brunner seems to be closer than Barth to the 'traditional'

reformation conviction according to which the forms and means in which

and through which God chose to reveal himself, and to which he freely but expressly bound the revelation, retain their character as revelation, even when they are not recognized as such.[84]

However, it must be noted that the later Brunner has again placed the emphasis on God's Word as a present event for the believer in a manner similar to Barth[85] when he says: "Only God's self-communication to me is God's Word.... God does not inform us *about* this and that. He opens His heart to me and in so doing He also opens my own heart. That is the meaning of 'God's Word' as it encounters me in the Bible. It is an 'I-Thou' word; it cannot be generalized, materialized or objectified. God's word is not a 'something', an objective thing in itself, rather is it a transitive transaction, an assurance and claim".[86] And by this claim Emil Brunner has to contend with, in fact, the orthodoxy's belief in a verbally inspired (or infallible) Bible which equates the word of God with the words of Scripture; and thereby it believes everything in the Bible because it is in the Bible. He would prefer therefore to insist more on the other aspect of his doctrine: that the scripture does not become the Word of God *for me* in the full sense, except when God himself by the Holy Spirit makes me certain of his immediate presence and permits me to hear his 'Thou-word', so that it meets me here and now in a personal relationship of God's Word and faith.[87]

2.3 The witness of the preaching church to the revelation in Christ.
The revelation in Christ and the Scriptures is, according to Emil Brunner, transmitted to men of all ages through the living witness of the Church. For this reason, Jesus Christ is 'a living and present event, which takes place in and through the Church'.[88] The preaching of

the church in its essence is making the word of the Bible to be a
present reality: "The Church is the bridge which carries the message of
the Bible over the stream of the centuries into the present. The word,
the preaching of the Church, consists essentially in making the word of
the Bible present and available".[89]   Through this preaching of the
church Jesus Christ is not imprisoned within the pages of the Bible;
and He is the living, present Lord of the Church;  hence His revelation
is a living and present event.  For Brunner, preaching is then 'a form
of revelation';  and it is itself an element in the coming of God to us:
"Thus the message of the Church - which is in living union with Christ -
is also a form of revelation.  The teaching of the Church about
revelation is itself the bearer of the revelation".[90]  In other words,
the proclamation of the revelation in Christ by the community of the
faithful living in union with Christ through the Spirit (Brunner's term
'the ecclesia', that we discuss later) is itself a form of the
revelation.  This preaching of the Church becomes living revelation
whenever God wills to vitalize it with his Spirit.[91]

So the mutual relation between the Church and the Word is
indispensable: "The Church is founded upon the witness of the Apostles
and Prophets, as a house is built upon its foundation.  Without the
Apostles' 'word' there would be no Church.  That is the first thing we
have to say about the mutual relation between the Church and the Word.
But we must immediately add a second point:  there is no Apostolic word,
and no Holy Scripture, without the Church".[92]  In this regard, Brunner
claims that even the first disciples were not individuals because the
moment at which they recognized Jesus as the Christ was also the moment
at which the ecclesia was founded.  So they proclaimed the deeds and
words of the Lord as the common ( $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\delta o\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ) (tradition);  and they

undertake their missionary journeys under the commission that has been

entrusted in the name of the Christian community. At the same time the

Christian community is founded through the preaching of missionaries;

and it is maintained, strengthened, and nourished through the preaching

at public worship of the Church.[93] Therefore, what Brunner argues here

is that without the Church there would be no Bible and vice versa.[94]


If Brunner's argument about the mutual relation between the Word

and the Church is true, then we have to recognize with Brunner the fact

that it is the essential function of the ecclesia to bear witness to the

revelation in Christ in which God manifested his own nature to be

communicating love. The Church exists for the sake of this witness;

and it is primarily nothing else than the organ and bearer of the Word

by its preaching or proclamation: "Everything that serves this

proclamation is the Church, and it is this function and nothing else

which makes the Church the Church: a 'proclaiming existence' as the

historical continuum of the revelation".[95] Thus Brunner's use of the

word 'preaching' (Verkündigung) does not restrict its meaning to verbal

preaching. It is for this reason that he employed the term 'proclaiming

existence' or 'preaching existence'[96] (see V.1.1). There is a question

here not merely of proclaiming words, but of carrying to future ages the

life in which God communicated himself. For this reason, the Church is

'every form of historical life which has its origin in Jesus Christ and

in which God's self-communication is continuously active'.[97]


Consequently, the Church bears witness to Christ in two ways:

through its word and through its life. It is only in the unity of

witness by its word and witness by its life that the Church can

perfectly fulfil its function of historically mediating God's revelation

in Christ to men. Genuine tradition, as the *continuum* that binds the

unique, historical revelation in Christ with the present, is the

preaching existence of the brotherhood of the faithful which mirrors the

preaching of the apostles and the life of the primitive communities as

recorded in the biblical canon. Thus this preaching existence of the

Church makes known the revelation that occurred in Christ; and it

announces the revelation to come in glory; and it, while doing so,

becomes itself faith creating revelation.[98] In this regard, even

though we recognize the fact that the individual passes on his witness

to another, or he receives it from another living Christian witness is

possible only within a community, in the fellowship of a community. For

there is no community of this sort apart from the Bible. The individual

witness perhaps would be possible wihout taking the form of the

exposition of the Bible or even without the opening of a Bible at all,

but it cannot take place apart, Brunner claims, from the fact that "the

one who gives his testimony lives in the Bible, and in a Christian

community, which is spiritually nourished by the whole expository

tradition of the Church".[99]


For Brunner, preaching is then a more primary thou-form word than

doctrine or theology. The original word of apostolic witness was a word

of preaching. It was, according to Brunner, the influence of Greek

intellectualism with its tendency to reduce 'thou-truth' to 'it-truth',

with its lack of appreciation for the dimension of the personal, which

caused the Church to forget this fact and to understand 'preaching from

the perspective of doctrine, instead of doctrine from the perspective of

preaching'. So Brunner claims as follows;

> Unfortunately, the Greek intellectualism which so early
> dominated the ecclesiastical view of revelation obscured
> this truth almost from the very outset. The Church regarded
> preaching from the point of view of doctrine, instead of

vice versa. Hence the proclamation of the Gospel - as was
the case also with the revelation - was regarded as the
communication of doctrine, and thus as 'applied doctrine',
in which the personal address and the 'Thou-form' were
merely a matter of form. Thus the Church did not understand
the personal character of the revelation; hence it did not
understand that the transition from the 'Thou-form' to the
'It-form', from personal address to doctrine, was the
transition from one dimension to another, namely, the
transition from the 'truth as encounter to that of the
'truth as idea'.[100]

Thus preaching for Bunner stands between the original apostolic

witness as fixed in Scripture, and the doctrine of the Church as

expressed in dogma, catechism, and theology.[101] This does not mean,

however, that Brunner denies the necessity of 'the scientific character

of dogmatics' (in his own terms) that he finds in three factors: (1)

the requirements of the Church in its struggle against false doctrine;

(2) the demands of exegesis; and (3) the need for making the bridge

between 'secular and natural knowledge and the knowledge of faith

(extended Baptismal instruction)'.[102] What he then argues is that the

preaching expresses "the personal character of revealed truth; the fact

that the truth of God is one which demands obedience, and creates

fellowship. Its form and attitude are that of address and, indeed, when

it takes place with authority, it is an address on behalf of Christ: 'We

are ambassadors, therefore, on behalf of Christ, as though God were

intreating by us: We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled

to God' (II Cor. 5:20)".[103] In this regard, preaching for Brunner has

to point away from itself to Christ and to move toward man.[104]

Thus the Scriptures themselves are not, Brunner argues, the ground

of Christian faith but its means. It is, in a strict sense, a record of

the apostolic witness to the Word, which participates in the authority

of that witness. Jesus Christ is thus Himself the Word of God: "Not

because I believe in the Scriptures do I believe in Christ, but because I believe in Christ I believe in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are indeed the first of the means which God uses, but they are not the first object of faith, nor are they the ground of my faith. The ground, the authority, which moves me to faith is no other than Jesus Christ Himself, as He speaks to me from the pages of the Scriptures through the Holy Spirit, as my Lord and my Redeemer".[105] The Bible for Brunner bears witness to Jesus Christ; it points to Him. And if so, how does one know, then, that Christ to whom the Scripture or the preaching of the Church testifies is ineed the Word of God? Brunner's answer is that there is no revelation in itself. Revelation for him is incomplete apart from its subject side.[106] Therefore revelation is, he claims, address and response, i.e. *personal correspondence*. I believe in Christ for the same reason Peter did, whose eyes were opened to the truth by a special act of God's Spirit.[107] This testimony of the Spirit is only by means of the apostolic witness as preserved in Scripture. Thus the only sufficient ground of faith is the authority of God Himself as He addresses me in His Word; and that ground of authority, however, needs its completion in the encounter of faith with the Christ of the Scripture.


## 3. Personal truth


### 3.1 Revelation and faith

What Brunner claims in the term 'truth as encounter' is that the revelation in Christ is not complete with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and therefore it attains at the same time its goal only in that a man recognizes Jesus as Christ. For revelation is not a mere objective entity in itself, but it is a transitive event in

that God reveals Himself to someone.  So he claims as follows:

> Revelation is indeed that which becomes manifest to us
> through a definite action of God; it means that we, whose
> eyes were formerly closed, have now opened them to a certain
> light; that upon us, who were in darkness, the light has
> shone.  Thus revelation only reaches its goal in the
> subject, man.  Revelation is not a fact in itself, but *it is
> this, fact plus an illumination, a disclosure, which makes
> the "fact" known.  The fact of the illumination is therefore
> an integral part of the process of revelation; without this
> an event is no more a revelation than light is light without
> the seeing, illuminated, eye.  Revelation is a transitive
> event which proceeds from God and ends in man, a light ray
> with these two poles.*  There is therefore no point in
> setting the objective fact of revelation over against the
> subjective act of receiving the revelation, because the
> revelation actually consists in the meeting of two subjects,
> the divine and the human, the self-communication of god to
> man.[108]

So Brunner argues that the revelational act of God is a double

condescension to man: *a historically objective one* in the incarnation of

the Son, and *an inwardly subjective one* in the testimony of the Son

through the Spirit in the heart of man.  There is therefore no point in

setting the objective fact of revelation over against the subjective act

of receiving the revelation, because the revelation actually consists

for Brunner in the meeting of two subjects, the divine and the human,

the self-communication of God to man.[109]  In this regard, Jesus Christ,

Brunner claims, "Is not 'revelation' when He is not recognized by anyone

as the Christ, just as He is not the Redeemer if He does not redeem

anyone.  The Biblical doctrine of revelation means this transition from

the divine to the human subject."[110]  It is the Bible, according to

Brunner, that draws a definite subjective process into the sphere of

revelation, and describes it simply as 'revelation'.  Faith is, then,

the act in which the revelation or self-communication of God is received

and in which this is realized in the subject, man; and therefore it is

the 'reception of revelation'; and in this sense it is the aim of

revelation.[111]

## 3.2 Decision

We turn now to an analysis of the concept of faith itself by which that revelation is appropriated on the part of the subject, man. At this point it is instructive to note that the early Brunner heavily depends on the existential philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard that provides him the conceptual framework of faith.[112] As Zuidema points out, Kierkegaard's view of man and of the divine revelation in Christ are brought together in his view of the real nature of the faith of a Christian. For in faith in the sense of 'our believing' neither human existence nor divine revelation can be absent. Man cannot believe without human existence, nor can he believe without divine revelation. Both are necessary for faith. Thus, both basic ideas are united in Kierkegaard's theory of faith: they need each other, are based upon each other, and serve each other.

These ideas lead him to the question of how one can become a Christian. The question for Kierkegaard contains two basic themes[113]: (1) The concept of personal existence is presupposed in the idea of self-conscious personal possession. (2) The concept of the absolute paradox, Kierkegaard's idea of revelation, is presupposed in the idea of salvation given in Christ. The believer is as a believer reconciled to himself and to God. He is made right with himself through his self-consciousness of his own personal possession of salvation. He is made right with God through his acceptance of God's salvation in Christ. So Kierkegaard describes the faith as that which "by relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself, the self is grounded transparently in the Power (that is, in God) which constituted it..."[114] This means that he considers faith to be closely related to being one's self, i.e., human existence. It is equally obvious that he cannot speak of this

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faith unless he directs our attention to the work of God, namely, the salvation in Christ. Thus human existence and absolute paradox are both implicit in this conception of faith.

For Kierkegaard, the truth of man is not truth *about* man; rather it is the true-being of man. Truth consists of passionately being one's self. So what can be discursively distinguished in man, the eternal and the objective, is not the authentic man. It is not what is truly human. But man is a mystery and a hiddeness; he is innerness. In this regard, there are three essential characteristics of subjective knowledge:[115] (1) It cannot be passed on from one person to the next, nor added to by different researchers. (2) What is known subjectively always has the nature of a paradox. Therefore subjective knowledge is identical with faith. For faith alone, and not reason, can induce us to accept paradox. So Kierkegaard says: "Christianity wishes to intensify passion to the highest pitch; but passion is subjectivity, and does not exist objectively".[116] (3) Subjective knowledge is concrete, not abstract. This is because it must necessarily be related to the actual concrete existence of a living individual. And this subjective truth, in contrast to that of a philosophical system which may be indifferently contemplated, is truth that changes my existence.

So it is to be understood that the early Brunner has effectually employed many of the concepts, and in fact many of the actual phrases that Kierkegaard uses in his philosophical formulation. And Brunner enriches his concept of faith as decision. Of more immediate concern for our purposes is his employment of the Kierkegaardian concept of the individual. The renunciation of speculation involves a basic alteration in the attitude of life, the change from spectator to participant. The

man who sees himself as a participant, one who takes life with earnestness, one who stands 'before God' is the individual. As an individual man is absolutely responsible.[117] As a spectator man, however, withdraws himself from the stage of life where decisions are rendered, into the realm of observation, theory, enjoyment and contemplation, into that realm of theoretical thought, which does not involve me in the crisis of personal decision, as I am confronted with the revealing address of God. Whether a spectatorship be that of the metaphysician, attempting to construct an integrated system of reality, or that of a scientist probing the facts of nature, it ever moves Brunner claims "in a cool atmosphere of objectivity and serenity. Man, in both instances, is a spectator who views the world from afar. Truth, therefore, to metaphysician is an aesthetic object, a *Weltanschauung*".[118] The spectator who ambles along through life has an opinion, but not he who wrestles with life.

In Kierkegaard's opinion man is a synthesis of soul, body, and spirit; and a synthesis of the eternal and the temporal. As a synthesis of the eternal and the temporal, the existential man exists in an inner relation to the moment. For the moment does not belong to the temporal anymore than it belongs to the eternal. The moment thus synthesizes the temporal and eternal in man. It constitutes the point in which time and eternity meet each other. Through the meeting of time and eternity arises the moment of temporalization or of real temporality. Time breaks into eternity and penetrates into time. The finite and the infinite selves of man are synthesized in the moment. They meet each other in it in an ever new present. Human existence is based upon this meeting of time and eternity in man.[119]

Similarly, when the eternal in the form of the divine Word in the person of Jesus Christ confronts man, that historical moment is thereby raised, so Brunner claims, to the moment of decision. The man knows then he must decide in that moment. The instant in which man, confronted with the word of God, decides, is the moment *(Augenblick)*, 'an atom of eternity in time' or in Brunner's own words: "The moment is the place where the bolt from eternity pierces time."[120] However, Brunner is convinced that in that moment of decision, man has not simply made an affirmative choice; rather he hears of crisis, that is, he learns that his whole existence stands under the judgement of God. Man before God is existence-in-crisis. Hence the crisis is no mere illusion of which man's mind is to be disabused as in the optimism of classic liberalism; and indeed, it is not only the threat to Christian theology which sets in with the liberal dissolution of the truth of faith, but also that collapse of the life of the Western world, which Oswald Spengler envisioned in his book *The Decline of the West*, a threat which Brunner diagnoses as stemming ultimately from the contemporary religious situation.[121]

The subjective aspect of crisis of human existence is dread (Angst), or the feeling of not being at home in the universe.[122] As Paul K. Jewett points out, this dread for Brunner stems from the revolt against God which conditions all human existence and in its more personal forms goes beyond anxiety to doubt. When doubt becomes intensely personal and seizes the individual in the very core of his being, when the great question mark in the depth of the soul is potentiated into a sense of desperation, we have despair, whose strength and sting is an evil conscience.[123] Thus at the very heart of our existence the sense of homelessness crystalizes into a sense of guilt,

or, in Brunner's own term, 'the negative point of contact' that is a consciousness of guilt.[124] Actually man is too much a sinner to go this far, to recognize himself a sinner and confess the same: "Man can only genuinely despair about himself when he no longer needs to despair, because a different ground has been placed under his feet, because there has already been offered to him a new healthful possibility of life, which is the antidote to despair". This is, Brunner calls, 'the dialectic of repentance and faith, faith and repentance': "that faith comes only when we stretch out in despair for the only help available; and yet that we are only properly despairing in our search for help when it is already in sight; that is, when we already dare to admit our desperate situation".[125] Hence Brunner can say that the knowledge of sin is the crisis, the turning point, where immanental knowledge and faith are tangent. The true perception of our need and saving faith are mutually conditions.[126]

So if the term 'faith' is the description of a right relationship between man and God, and if it is a way of life or a manner of existence, then man, Brunner claims, 'exists *either* in faith or in unbelief'.[127] For man's present existence is an existence-in-decision. Each moment places us before an 'either-or'. "The life of the Christian is never a possession but remains, as it begins, a decision. One never *is* a Christian. To be Christian upon earth means to know that we are called through Christ, i.e., that God has accepted us".[128] By defining faith as decision, Brunner insists that we see how different it is from that knowledge accessible to all men by reason or experience. The truth of sense perception is directly communicated to the mind. Most people do not debate the existence of the material objects; so it is with the truths of reason. I do not need to make a decision about the steps in a

mathematical demonstration. When the mind grasps the truth, there is nothing to decide. However, revelation for Brunner is truth that is *indirectly* communicated, and therefore it can be grasped only by faith as an act of decision. When God became a Man. He not only veiled himself from sight, but He also broke through the limits of reason.

## 3.3 Indirect communication

The early Brunner frequently employs the Kierkegaardian distinction between objective and subjective truth in unfolding the meaning of faith. For Kierkegaard object truth is abstract-rational truth that can be directly communicated to the human mind, and subject truth, however, can only be indirectly communicated: "When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focused upon the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of the truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship: if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth, even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not truth".[129] In this regard Hegel's failure is for Kierkegaard its avoidance of the subjective viewpoint, or the existence of the individual, for his way of objective reflection makes the subject accidental, and thereby transforms existence into something indifferent, that is individual existence is reducible to a system of 'Absolute Knowledge'.[130]

For Kierkegaard, the term 'the individual' is however a category

that is his method of thought. As Michael Wyschogrod points out, the individual for Kierkegaard maintains his own self identity and makes his decisions out of himself. His view of the world is truly his because he is not ready to transform his inwardness into objectivity, which to him would mean giving himself up as an individual, and yet it is essential, for a proper understanding of Kierkegaard's category of the individual, to distinguish it from a generally egocentric orientation. Kierkegaard's 'individual' makes no sense if he is conceived of as being alone. The individual who is alone can establish a relation of ownership towards the world. For such an individual there is no real possibility of tension because nothing and nobody can have any claim on him and his world. However, only by placing the individual before God is the typically Kierkegaardian concept of the individual reached. Or to put it more precisely, it is not an individual who first establishes himself as an individual and then enters into a relationship with God, but it is the relationship with God that makes one an individual.[131]

From such an understanding of human existence his method of communication proceeds as indirect communication. Inherent in this understanding was the assumption that though individuality is achieved not by egocentricity but by being 'and individual before God', it is nevertheless only before God that such a fruitful relationship can be established, not before anyone else. It is, therefore, necessary for the communicator to withdraw himself from the situation and make sure that the relationship that is established is not between the listener and himself but between the listener and God. This involves a means of communication that is not direct because direct communication establishes an essential relationship with the one who communicates the knowledge. The nature of the communication must be such as to call for

some action on the part of the listener. For it is essential for communication to be of such a nature as to make it necessary for the listener to relate himself to it in some way. The best way to accomplish this is to make the communication a 'sign of contradiction' which inevitably arouses such a reaction.[132] So Kierkegaard says:

> A communication which is the unity of jest and earnest is such a sign of contradiction. It is not by any means a direct communication, it is impossible for him who receives it to tell *directly* which is which, because the communication does not *directly* communicate either jest or earnest. The earnestness of such communication lies in another place, or is a second instance, in the intent of making the receiver independently active - which, dialectically understood, is the highest earnestness in the case of communication.[133]

Here the indirect communication has, therefore, a role in Kierkegaard's thought only because there is need for the existing individual to relate himself to something that is itself not existential but gives to time the tension that makes it existence.

Turning to Brunner's account of the distinction between degrees of direct and indirect communication, he insists that faith is possible only when the truth is indirectly communicated. That is why God revealed Himself in the *incognito* of a human personality. If the 'unveiling' were not at the same time a 'veiling', if God had overwhelmed man with the display of His power and great glory, as He will in the last day, there could be no exercise of decision, for we would have the direct communication of sense perception: "The indirectness of the divine self-communication means that God does not force Himself upon man, that He does not overwhelm him with His creative power, but that He summons him to make his own decision. This is why God comes in the Word, and, it is true, in the completion of the Word, in the Personal Word. The Word is always an indirect communication, a

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communication which demands our own activity as well.   Direct

communication would mean the passive transference from the one to the

other, like the relation between two pipes which communicate with each

other.   All sensible communication is of this kind".[134]


According to Brunner, faith knows then nothing of the assurance of

sense perception.   Faith does not rest upon the foundation of

mathematical proof and logical consistency.   Rather, faith embraces the

paradox that the infinite God became a finite man, that is a thinkable

self-disclosure of God in a historic personality, is incomprehensible to

reason.   And hence there is reasoned solution to our dilemma.[135] If we

may speak of the evidence of faith, then we do only figuratively, for we

could just as well say that faith is the opposition of such an evidence.

So Brunner argues as follows:

> According to the testimony of the apostles, what took place
> in Christ took place once for all.   There was no historical
> continuity of revelation but only a paradoxical unity
> between that unique event and the present time, the
> contemporaneity of faith with revelation which is immediate
> and independent of intermediary criteria.   *Between Christ as
> the mediator and the believer there is no intermediation,
> because this could come about only by means of a continually
> renewed incarnation of the logos, thus contradicting the
> apostolic dictum "once for all"*.   Only God, as the Holy
> Spirit, can speak again the word which was spoken at that
> time once for all, and speak it in the heart of the believer
> at any later moment in history.   God as identical with
> Himself in His historically unique revelation, and in the
> "subjective" knowledge that appropriates it, God as the
> ground, object, and subject of knowledge, the truine God, is
> the content of Christian faith, a content incomprehensible
> to reason.[136]

For Brunner, faith is therefore the subjective event conceivable; and it

is existential, not theoretical or rational thinking.   Faith is then

subjective truth that changes my existence, in contrast to that of a

philosophical system that may be indifferently contemplated.   "Faith

is", so Brunner claims, "*the personal decision of myself for God*, in

which all objectivation or proof is excluded.   It is the answer of the

Ego to the call of the divine 'Thou'. In faith there is no truth separable from myself; it is the act in which I myself come into truth - I myself, not my thought, not my world-view".[137] And yet faith is the objective attitude, since it has as its object the Word of God, Jesus Christ: "Faith, however, declares: truth is in God's own word alone; and what is in me is not truth. And this is why faith is transcendental; that is, in faith the Ego is independent of its own conditions and rests solely in that which is not here, but there - in God's Word".[138]

Accordingly, the revelational significance of the Jesus-event is especially evident in its consummation which is the Cross, since it is at the Cross that for the first time it becomes unmistakably evident what lies between us and God, what the real issue is, so far as sin is concerned. Also at the Cross is first revealed to us what the love of God means. God loves me with the kind of love that I see in Christ who died for me. For Brunner, faith is then the very opposite of mysticism for it rests on a historical event that occurred nearly two thousand years ago, the knowledge of which is conveyed to us in a historical document, the Bible.[139] If so, how does the objective fact of revelation, then, bind with its subjective realization in the crisis experience of the individual? Brunner's answer is that he who recognizes the revelation of God in the Jesus-event with the eye of faith is 'contemporary with that event'.[140] That is to say, the passage from the object form of the revelation to the complete revelation in and for the subject is effected by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. By means of this illumination of the Spirit, the historical distance and exteriority of the revelation in Christ, Scripture and the Church are overcome.

So the revelation is no longer *outside of me*, but now speaks interiorly *to me* through the Spirit: "Only God, as the Holy Spirit, can speak again the word which was spoken at that time once for all, and speak it in the heart of the believer at any later moment in history."[141]   In this regard, the idea of contemporaneity with Christ merges in Brunner's thinking with the word of Scripture becoming the word of God to me, because the knowledge of the historical event of the incarnation is secured to me only in the once-for-all written word of the Bible, which, like the event itself is outside of me, non - I, belonging to a past, separated from me by centuries.   Hence Brunner frequently speaks of the work of the Spirit in our hearts whereby we are convinced of the truth of the Holy Scripture as the *Testimonium Spiritus sancti internum*.   This testimony of the Spirit is analogous to what the older theologians called effectual calling, that illumination of the mind in the knowledge of the Lord through which we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ.

## 3.4   The dimension of the personal

We have already noted that the later Brunner develops his theological proposal of truth as *encounter* in Buber's *dialogical* terms (see III, 3.1).   He attempts to complement the dialogical  personalism of Martin Buber (and of Ferdinand Ebner) to his early implication of the Kierkegaardian existentialism.   The reason for this is that Brunner has never considered his increased concern with the dimension of the personal as opposing to the Kierkegaardian formulation of his early thought in the *time and eternity dialectic terms*.[142]   There is, however, a significant contrariety between the stress of Kierkegaard on the term 'the individual' and Buberian emphasis on the category of the communal-fellowship (Gemeinschaft).   Perhaps it is certainly true that

Kierkegaard was passionately concerned with the individual in his concrete here-and-now existence. For the existentialist, the objective thinker has the whole world, but loses himself. The truly existential thinker, therefore, does not forget along with his other thoughts to think of himself as one who exists.[143] This individual is, however, anything but an epistemologically autonomous and metaphysically independent.[144] The individual, who stands at the crossroad of time and eternity, is addressed by God in the moment.

At this point Brunner attempts to formulate this Kierkegaardian *individual* with Buberian *person* that confronts with the divine Thou. According to him, man's existence is not a mere individual; rather it is a responsible being, for an 'I' can only be developed in the relation with a 'Thou'. But the 'Thou' is not a simple fact any more than the 'I'; and the other must be given to me in a definite way in order that I may recognize him as this 'Thou' to whom I owe my being. So I must listen to the claim that proceeds from him to me and that makes me a responsible being.[145] "The isolated individual is an abstraction, conceived by the reason which has been severed from the World of God. 'The other' is not added to my nature after my nature, after I myself, as this particular individual, have been finished. But the other, the others, are interwoven with my nature. I am not man at all apart from others. I am not 'I' apart from the 'Thou'. As I cannot be a human being without a relation to God, without the divine 'Thou', so also I cannot be man without the human 'Thou'".[146] Therefore we must be so made for one another (and the 'Thou' must be given to me in such a way) that in him I perceive both these facts: firstly, Brunner claims, that I am responsible to him; secondly, that my life consists in the fact that the power which alone can make the 'I' responsible to the 'Thou' is God.

This means that being responsible to the 'Thou' is being bound up in the bundle of life with the 'Thou' by God Himself. This responsibility, then, constitutes the human life itself.[147]

Now Brunner stresses the point that a person cannot be thought, rather he can only be encountered. The biblical concept of truth, Brunner then argues, is *truth as encounter*, that is encounter between God and man as such, (see III, 3.4). Thus faith is not a matter of 'it-truth', truth about objects in the world (science) or ideas in mind (philosophy). In science and philosophy, I who think and the object or idea that is thought exhaust the knowledge situation. For Brunner there is the evidence of personal encounter, if faith is to actually occur. "Where personal truth is concerned, proof is neither possible nor fitting. For this truth is both trust and decision: we must decide either for proof or for trust, either for rational evidence or for the evidence of personal encounter, which is accomplished in God's gracious condescension and in the trustful obedience of man. The fact that this inner movement arises in the heart of man, a movement which is the very opposite of the sinful striving for autonomy or independence: this is the work of the Holy Spirit".[148] So just to the degree that there is no objective certitude, to the same degree the encounter between God and man gives subjective certitude. The experience itself is its own best and only proof; and it is credible in itself even though it is not capable of rational analysis.

Our knowledge of objects involves, according to Brunner, only our cognitive process. However, our knowledge of a subject, a person, is wholly contingent upon an act of self-disclosure on the part of the person known. A subject which I think as such is not truly a subject.

The reason for this is that what I can discover by virtue of my own

thought process is, to the degree that is possible, not a person, but an

object. A personal subject or a real 'thou' is, however, all one with

that mystery which only the subject himself can disclose. That is to

say, my knowledge of a subject is not only dependent on the latter's

self-disclosure, but it is not knowledge in the ordinary sense of the

word at all:

> We can ourselves find the clue to *things*; they are objects,
> which confront us not in their own self-activity-making
> themselves known - but as entities which, by process of
> research and thought, we can learn to understand. But
> persons are not enigmas of this kind; a person is a mystery
> which can be disclosed only through self-manifestation. In
> this self-disclosure alone do we meet this person as person;
> previously he or she is an "object", a "something". But God
> is not a Person, but Person, absolutely; not a Subject but
> absolute subject, "I Yahweh, and none else". He can be
> known as absolute Subject only through the fact that He
> Himself makes Himself known through His own action: He is
> not at our disposal as an object of knowledge.[149]

Here what Brunner argues is that God's revelation and man's

response to it are essentially personal in nature and therefore God is

not discovered by human reason alone. Indeed, we do not and cannot

'discover' God at all, for human thinking is inadequate to this end.

Brunner is aware, however, that human beings are not only persons, but

also objects in the physical world. Hence we can acquire much useful

knowledge about man through the science of physiology and phychology.

But God is not an object of the world in any sense. All of our thinking

is, according to him, in bondage to what he calls 'the categories of the

objective-subjective antithesis. So our relation to God is best

understood *as personal encounter*. In revelation God does not give

information about himself. Rather He gives himself to the believer:

> God is Person: He is not an "It"; He is our primary "Thou".
> That which we can think and know by our own efforts is
> always an object of thought and knowledge, some *thing* which

has been thought, some *thing* which has been known, therefore it is never "person". Even the human person is never truly "person" to us so long as we merely "think" it; the human being only becomes "person" to us when he speaks to us himself, when he manifests the mystery of this being as a "thou", in the very act of addressing us.
The "Thou" is something other than the "Not-I"; the "Not-I" is the world, the sum-total of objects. But the "Thou" is that "Not-I" which is an "I" (or a Self) as I am myself, of which I only become aware when it is not thought by my own efforts, or perceived as an object, but when it makes itself known to me as self-active, self-speaking, as "I-over-against me".[150]

We can know, therefore, nothing of God except as He communicates to us the secret of His person in a free act of self-disclosure.[151] God reveals himself personally to the man, who in faith receives then this revelation. The truth of revelation, unlike 'it-truth', does not merely *inform* me; rather it *changes* me. For this reason Brunner emphasizes the fact that God is no God-in-Himself (Gott-an-sich), but a God-who-approaches-man (Gott-zum-Menschen-hin).[152] In other words, he is convinced that the history of revelation is the history of salvation and vice-versa. "Since God gives Himself to be known, He gives communion with Himself; and since He gives communion with Himself He gives us a share in His own eternal Life. Revelation is not concerned with "something", but with me myself, and with God Himself, namely, with my salvation and with His dominion over me and His communion with me. God Himself in His love gives Himself to me, and in so doing He does away with the darkness, the godlessness and lovelessness, the bondage and misery, which constitute the 'lost state' of mankind without God".[153] And then faith for Brunner is not to be regarded as intellectual assent to propositions about God; rather it is a personal decision, a turning toward one who is personally present. In short, the man of faith does not believe something but someone.

Thus what Brunner argues here is that if the personal self-communication of God is itself a person and more precisely if Jesus Christ, in His person, reveals the name, the personal mystery of God fully and finally, then revelation is not *mere* it-truth, information about something, nor it is a matter of the increase of one's knowledge, but rather 'a life-giving and a life-renewing communion'.[154] God's self-disclosure is his claim of Lordship over me; and thereby He wills to have fellowship with me.[155] One cannot contemplate God Almighty, as he does the ideas, He can only obey or disobey Him. So Brunner always maintains, like Barth, that revelation is reconciliation. However, while Barth drives this thought to the extreme that there is no revelation outside of Christ and thus the reception of revelation is an essential ingredient of revelation, Brunner makes however the point very clear that although there is revelation in the creation, this does not lead to a natural or a rational theology, for this revelation is according to him rejected and corrupted by the natural man.[156]

Hence Brunner insists *both* that there is a *revelation in Christ* that leads to reconciliation and that there is a *revelation in creation*, which apart from Christ is never correctly interpreted and received by the natural man. Thus revelation is an offence to man, for it denies that there is a continuity between divine truth and human thought.[157] This, says Brunner, is why the Bible represents the final revelation of God as a personal meeting, a "seeing face to face".[158] According to Brunner, autonomous reason does not therefore perceive the wisdom of the foolishness that God sets Himself as subject. Being estranged from the living God by the fall, man goes about constructing by his reason an *idea* of the transcendental, the Absolute, which moves ever in the dimension of the abstract, the impersonal. So Brunner contends that

reason operates with a self-constructed God-idea, and then it is imprisoned within itself.[159]   This matter of man's self-confidence of autonomous reason to the address of God brings us to the question of the truth of reason since Brunner is convinced that the aim of missionary theology is to bring 'every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ'.[160]


## 4.    Philosophical truth


### 4.1  Revelation and reason

In seeking to complete the picture of how Brunner develops his missionary theology, we must investigate the concept of human reason and its relation to revelation.    This question is for Brunner most important to both theologians and the church:   "it is of paramount importance for the theologian, above all others, to be clear in his own mind on this question of the relation between revelation and reason, and to be able to make it clear to the Church;   for every statement, if it is a genuinely theological statement, interlocks with every other such statement, and thus forms a unity in the sense intended by the theological statement",[161] In Brunner's view those whose business is theology should not allow themselves in principle to ignore the reason which in practice they use to so great an extent.    Also one who is of the opinion that theology is a necessary function of the believing community cannot deny (without falling into the most absurd self-contradiction) that there are not merely negative, but also positive, relations between revelation and reason.[162]   However, if there is any relation between revelation and reason, the question is then how these two forms of knowledge are related.   Brunner's answer to this question is that each has its own sphere, and so long as it keeps in that sphere,

it is consistent with the other and supplement it, but unfortunately

each has sought to invade the sphere of the other. He puts it as

follows:

> "Revealed knowledge is poles apart from rational knowledge.
> These two forms of knowledge are as far from each other as
> heaven is from earth. And yet, in the very act of
> expressing this sentence, writing it down, and printing it,
> we have already put in use the whole apparatus of the human
> reason and of human culture. Whoever forms sentences, even
> if they are sentences full of heavenly wisdom, does so, not
> only and not primarily, but still in the strength which
> comes from the fact that he possesses reason; for apart
> from reason there is only 'speaking with tongues' - and
> perhaps not even this. *Jesus Christ is not the enemy of
> reason, but only of the irrational arrogance of those who
> pride themselves on their intellect, and of the irrational
> self-sufficiency of reason*".[163]

For Brunner, human reason is primarily a matter of law; and in

consequence rational knowledge is necessary knowledge according to law:

"With the law as the norm of the will the heart of reason has been laid

bare. Our rational thought is necessarily legalistic. Its legalistic

character is its strictness, that which distinguishes thought from mere

imagination and fantasy. Only that which has been thought in

accordance with law, with a norm, has been actually thought. Behind

the moral law of reason there stands logic. Without a logical law

there is also no moral reason. Even theological thought is logical

thought, or it would not be thought but mere babble. Indeed, even

prayer comes under this rule of law. It too is rational speech with

God, just as faith is a rational answer to the Word of God".[164] In

this regard, Brunner claims that reason extends as far as the law

extends. Where the law ceases there also rational knowledge ceases, in

the sphere of the moral as well as in that of the knowledge of the

world.[165] As the law represents the natural self-knowledge of man, so

reason also is that knowledge that man can have from himself, without

the need of revelation of faith. So law and reason for Brunner are co-

extensive.

The province of reason, then, is the world, or in Brunner's term 'the realm of the non-personal', or 'the realm of objects'. It is the truth which has to do with things: "there is nothing wrong in the insistence on autonomy in the sphere of knowledge; indeed, this should be recognized as the proper goal of knowledge. In everything which concerns this world, it is part of our destiny and our duty to seek, as far as possible, to reach our 'own' knowledge by the use of our reason. It is our duty to strive, as far as possible, to arrive at the evidence gained by rational knowledge, to see all we can for ourselves".[166] That is to say, as distinguished from God, it is the domain of the world, that reason without any help is able to know adequately. Within this realm reason is autonomous, or at least should strive for autonomy. This power to rationally know the world has been given to man by God according to His command. "Have dominion over the earth". God thus made this world, and fashioned human beings with the ability by rational knowledge to understand the World.

Since the creator gives man such a capacity, by the will of God there is, so Brunner argues, "a natural knowlege, which really knows, that is, finds the real truth, even if this truth is never the final and complete truth, but one which is ever being discovered afresh, and the knowlege thus gained is never final and complete, but is always growing, and ever purifying itself with its own criticism, and transforming it".[167] So all truth, even that not directly revealed by God, is grounded in God and comes from Him. In this regard, the autonomy of reason is then only a relative autonomy.[168] The self-understood task of rational thought for Brunner is to remove contradiction. It is the

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force of coherence that gives thought its power.    For without such

coherence thought become mere fancy.[169]  Brunner defines reason as that

which is "abstract and solid thinking which is concerned with argument,

in so far as it refers to idea, law, value and norm";  in other words,

reason means for Brunner what Kant called 'das Vermögen der Idee', 'the

power to grasp ideas and to express them'.[170]   The ideas of goodness,

truth, and right belong to every man and are immanent in the human

spirit;  this does not mean that they are inborn, but that they belong

to man's humanity.   As man's spirit develops these ideas function as

the driving force of man's thinking and willing;  so thereby man is able

to create culture and civilization;   this is his *humanitas*.[171]

However, these ideas are not independent of God;   rather they come to

man through general revelation.[172]


Furthermore, since Brunner recognizes that reason is required for

the possibility of faith and as a primary instrument for theology, he

acknowledges that reason is the organ of man whereby man receives the

word:     "The understanding of the Word - in so far as it is the

grammatical and logical understanding of something that has been said;

also in so far as it is the grammatical and logical understanding of the

preaching of the Gospel - is an act of mental and rational self-activity

on the part of man.    Without this rational self-activity or

appropriation no faith arises.    We do not say that *faith* is this

rational self-activity of man, but that it is the logical grammatical

understanding of that which is said, even if said by an Apostle or a

Prophet;  without this mental, rational self-activity the Word of God

cannot be understood;  without it no faith arises.    *Reason is the*

*conditio sine qua non of faith*.    So long as we are talking about

language in general terms the matter is simple, and no one will

contradict us.   Here we are only dealing with the formal element, with

the mere fact of capacity for speech, with the mere fact that the reason

is present as the organ of reception".[173]   In this respect reason is

Vernehmen können, and therefore it is not a thing in itself, but a

relation.   "Reason comes from perception.   The core of reason is, in

philosophical terms, transcendental;   in Biblical terms, the relation

with God.   The Christian understanding of reason is the perception of

the Word of God".[174]   If the word which reason is said to receive is

personal, then reason as reception of the word is for Brunner much the

same as faith.   Reason is then not only the organ to receive the word as

the bare faculty of man, but also the *function* of the organ in the sense

of the actual reception of the word.


Accordingly true reason, which is determined by the Word of God, is

nothing else than faith.[175]   When Brunner suggests that reason is

compatible to revelation as such, he frequently uses the term 'formal

reason' or the  $\nu o \hat{v} s$   that indicates the organ which receives the

divine word.[176]   "Revelation itself, however, tells us that God has

already revealed Himself *always*, and to *all* men, and, therefore, that

*there is a revelation in the creation that is independent of, and*

*precedes, the historical, revelation*;   hence the peculiar quality of man

as man and the rational nature of man, in particular, are both derived

from this revelation.   Man would be unable to know the world as it is

had he not been created in the image of God, did he not possess in his

reason a reflection of the divine light of the Logos.   Man, so the

Scriptures tell us, has been created not only in order that he may know

the world, but also that he may know God Himself, as He reveals Himself

to him in the works of the Creation, and as He gives Himself to the

$\nu o \hat{v} s$   to be known".[177]   Reason is then the law of thought or

Kant's term 'the power of the idea' which God has implanted with man; and it is the Creator's highest gift.[178]

However, this is not the case that Brunner calls 'the autonomous reason'. According to him since man is fallen and corrupt, the autonomous reason of man will not curb its tendency to system, which seeks to discover God at the end of a syllogism, and which thus reduces Him to a mere theory.[179] The human reason that is emancipated from its Creator and Lord strives to bridge the gap between himself and God by an activity of his own mind.[180] But such a philosophic 'Absolute', such an 'Unmoved Mover', is not God. It is but an idea, not a person. It is not the Creator of my reason, but rather its creation. I cannot commune with an Absolute, I can only contemplate it. So Brunner claims as follows:

> The question is only whether we wish to understand God from
> the point of view of the reason, or the reason from the
> point of view of God. But as this question has already
> been answered, this means that it is our task to keep the
> reason within its own bounds, yet to give it its full rights
> within these bounds. It is not the reason as such which is
> in opposition to faith, but only the self-sufficient reason;
> and this means, the reason which sets itself up in the place
> of God, the reason which wills to understand God in itself
> instead of itself in God, the arrogant self-willed reason.
> There is war to the knife between faith and rationalism, but
> there is no war between faith and reason; by 'rationalism'
> we mean, not merely the superficial 'rationalism' of the
> eighteenth century, which usually bears this time, but also
> that titanic system of rational thought which is known as
> German Idealism, and that rationalism which we have
> inherited from Greek philosophy. The reason is right
> wherever it listens to the Word of God, and does not think
> that it is able to proclaim the divine truth to itself.[181]

This refusal of fallen autonomous reason is especially apparent in the dimension of the ethical.[182] Philosophy's task is to find the law of all laws, that final, ultimate Reason behind all reasons. In this regard, Kant's fundamental interest was, according to Brunner, a

religious one;   namely, man in his relation to the Transcendent.[183] And yet Kant was too sober a thinker, having escaped the Scylla of Realism, to allow his ship of thought to be dashed against the Charybdis of speculative Idealism.   That is to say, Kant has respect for the critical postulate of experience.[184]   So he not only realized that sense perception without concepts is blind, but also that concepts without sense perception are empty.[185]   He did not allow himself to be deceived into supposing that in this knowledge of the limit of knowledge he had arrived at final truth, 'the knowledge of the Absolute':   "It is no accident that Kant held fast to the thing-in-itself, inspite of the dubiousness of the concept.   This concept denoted for him the insuperable barrier between us and the truth itself.   If this dualism is set aside by the evolution of thought, we are forced, without realizing it, into Hegelian Monism".[186]   However, Brunner argues that man by reason alone can never overcome this epistemological dualism. There is no theoretical, objective solution to the idealistic-realistic antinomy:

> The time-honoured opposition between idealism and realism is
> insoluble on the ground of reason or philosophy.   For
> idealism, while it has the claim to superior truth because
> starting from the possibility of Knowledge as such, always
> comes to grief on the concrete character of what is actually
> given, because this last can never be resolved into
> concepts, i.e. into universal ideas.   Realism on the other
> hand, which constantly derives from this fact its power to
> withstand its superior opponent, also constantly comes to
> grief over the impossible task of finding a self-subsistent
> entity out of connection with the unity of thought, when
> such "finding" always means adoption into the unity of
> consciousness.   The realist is not aware how much of
> "idealism" lurks in the mere search for knowledge.
> Critical idealism can indeed ultimately point out this
> dualism in knowledge, but not overcome it".[187]

These limits of reason for Brunner are imposed by creation and it is the refusal on the part of fallen autonomous reason to recognise

these limits, not limits themselves, that is blameworthy.    The fall

expresses itself in the sinful way in which man uses his rational

powers.    He refuses to recognise that he is a creature with a finite,

not an absolute reason.  Hence, he attempts to reduce all reality to his

system, including God Almighty and, above all, rationalizes away his

sin;  and indeed he is the 'master of his fate and the captain of his

soul'.[188]   This pride of reason, which is for Brunner the heart of sin,

is its claim to be the last court of appeal, the supreme judge of truth.

By this claim man asserts his will to be like God and he refuses to

acknowledge the majesty and sovereignty of God.[189]   So, the autonomous

reason is the denial of the relation to God, which Hamann called the

"misunderstanding of reason with itself".    It is not the gift of

reason, but the misuse of reason that causes the conflict.[190]   Since it

is by reason that man is able to rule and investigate the world, it is

by reason also that he detaches the world from God.   "Through reason

the modern man is God to himself, for every law of truth and good he

possesses in himself, that is in his reason.    Autonomy is self-

deification".[191]   In this regard, what Brunner suggests occasionally to

label is 'the material reason'[192] or 'rationality' with which man

expresses his revolt against God on the intellectual side by denying

that there is any truth which cannot be reduced to a rational system in

which the continuity of thought is unbroken.[193]


4.2  Paradox

Brunner's therapy for this disease, this 'fall  of reason into sin', is

revelation.[194]    However, this revelation is, according to him the

absolute manifestation of something that had been concealed.   Hence it

is a way of acquiring knowledge that is essentially opposite to the

usual human method of acquiring knowledge, by means of observation,

research, and thought.    In Brunner's view, revelation is then "a supernatural kind of knowledge - given in a marvellous way - of something that man, of himself, could never know.    Thus    revelation issues from a region which, as such is not accessible to man.    The absolutely Mysterious is not only partially hidden from the natural knowledge of man;  it is wholly inaccessible to man's natural faculties for research and discovery".[195]    Here it is truth that breaks the fundamental categories of our rational thought;  and it is adequately expressed only in paradoxes, which are inadequate to reason, however. It is because in theology, preaching, even in the Bible itself, we have the Word in the words of man, subject to the grammatical rules and logical categories of all human speech, it is because this revelation in the garb of human speech illumines the mind only through a human act of understanding and will, that "genuine theology must be dialectical".[196] So the object of faith is something which is absurd to reason, i.e. paradox;  the hall-mark of logical inconsistency clings to all genuine pronouncements of faith.[197]

As Paul K. Jewett points out, the paradox is for Brunner expressed in the sense of both intensive and extensive.[198]    The 'intensive' paradox consists in a real contradiction, not just an apparent one. The paradoxes of faith are not accidental, but Brunner claims "necessary contradictions in themselves and therefore also contradictions against the fundamental law of all knowledge, the law of contradiction, then, not knowledge".[199]    The necessity of the paradoxes of faith is grounded, as we have already indicated, in the ontological basis as such.[200]    In revelation eternity really becomes time;  God becomes man; and the Infinite becomes finite.    It is the chief paradox of true faith and the central message of the whole Bible that "the Omnipresent and

Almighty comes".[201]    In this regard, Brunner's argument of term 'paradox', especially in his early dialectical period, is a resemblance to Kierkegaard's term 'paradox'.    Kierkagaard locates the Absolute Paradox in Jesus Christ as a single man who happens to be God-incarnate. This is bringing together the polar opposites and therefore constitutes the maximum stunning of the intellect.[202]    He writes:    "that God has existed in human form, has been born, grown up, and so forth, is surely the paradox *sensu strictissimo*, the absolute paradox".[203]

For Kierkegaard, God's revelation in Christ is a 'fact' that refutes itself and it is a fact that cannot be a fact, and as an impossible fact, it is yet a fact.    This fundamental datum of the Christian faith is constituted by the fact that God became man and becomes man, that the man Jesus is the Son of God, and is God himself. It is mainly the absurd fact that God becomes man, that the eternal became temporal, the infinite became finite, the absolute became relative, the transcendent became immanent, being-in-itself became history.[204]    These paradoxes are, in Kierkegaard's view, unresolvable by reason and they are absolute paradoxes.    So one can choose *either* one or the other, but not have the best of *both*.    These choices are beyond the scope of reason, for the mediating powers of reason have no use in an absolute paradox.    Choice is here not guided by rational principle but by a leap of faith.    Reason plays the part of disclosing these choices for us and showing us that they are uncompromisingly opposed;    in other words, reason shows us that we have a choice, but not what to choose.[205]

Thus this paradox does not permit of any mediation;    we cannot penetrate it intrinsically in any manner whatsoever.    We can only

declare and make comprehensible that we cannot understand, that it is incomprehensible. And yet what is peculiar is that we can say something about this absurdity because it is a 'fact', that is, 1800 years ago it happened, when God's son became man, and it is still happening in him today. Faith, then, grasps the inner act of realizing one possibility out of the many infinite possibilities; and it penetrates existentially deeper than objective reason. For faith is, in his view, not concerned with what has become, with what has happened, but with what is becoming.[206] Similarly, Brunner believes that faith answers that the recognition of this contradiction is the condition *sine qua* non for knowing the true and living God. The only way we can comprehend the truth is then in the incomprehensible of a moving and coming Deity.[207]

The term 'paradox' is also 'extensive' to theological expressions. According to Brunner, the Bible is full of paradoxes. It tells about unity in plurality (the trinity), foolish wisdom (the cross), the freedom of divine servitude, determinism and responsibility, the holiness and the love of God. When the Bible would speak to us of the renewal of our existence, it uses the figure of a new birth, denoting utter passivity, on the one hand and that of conversion, which bespeaks the highest activity on the other.[208] So when reasosn attempts to grasp these paradoxes, the teaching of Scripture is lost in a system. This is the trouble with orthodoxy because it seeks to reduce the truths of revelation to the criterion of rational coherence: "where the rational element alone is at work, there arises a rational, speculative theology, which leads away from the truth of revelation".[209] But faith is not offended in these paradoxes which transcend reason; rather, it grasps the truth through and beyond them.

Brunner, therefore, will have nothing to do with theistic proofs of God's existence. He readily admits that the doctrines of Nicea on the Trinity, those of Chalcedon on the two natures of Christ, and other "holy of holies of Christian faith" are logical contradictions.[210] As for the language of paradox, Brunner also appeals to the Reformation, especially with Luther, although he is occasionally concerned with the logic of Zwinggli and Calvin; and he claims that the Reformation came along with the paradox of faith. "In the case of the Reformers, faith was the paradoxical unity of authority and freedom, submission to something given while at the same time it was self-evident knowledge. It could and must be so defined, because revelation and faith were understood concretely as phenomena of human life."[211] For this same reason, Christian doctrine for Brunner adequately expressed only in paradoxes.[212]

However, we find that Brunner's use of the term 'paradox' is the slippery ambiguity in that he attempts to designate with the term two sorts of objects, i.e. language about God and God Himself. As a result, Brunner believes, as shown in the previous discussion, that the 'paradox' represents the inevitable clash of reason with faith so that the 'paradox' is that which offends rationality. In this confusion, Tillich concedes that 'paradoxical language should be used discriminatingly. The mystery of reality is not a licence to engage in mystification and flagrant contradiction. Paradox then, is not synonymous with irrationality and the absurd. Rather, paradox means that God transcends human expectations. "Paradoxical means 'against the opinion' namely, the opinion of finite reason. Paradox points to the fact that in God's acting finite reason is superseded but not annihiliated; it expresses this fact in terms which are not logically

contradictory but which are supposed to point beyond the realm in which finite reason is applicable..... (therefore) The acceptance of this paradox is not the acceptance of the absurd, but it is the state of being grasped by the power of that which breaks into our experience from above it. Paradox in religion and theology does not conflict with the principle of logical rationality. Paradox has its logical place."[213]

Perhaps more critically Ronald W Hepburn, in this respect to the language of paradox, shows the "vital analogy ... is that between meeting people and meeting God". If it were not for this analogy, it is clear, there would be no linguistic ground for affirming the 'personality' of the God encountered or for using term like 'Father', or 'Son' with reference to him. But, Hepburn asks, "have the theologians established this analogy firmly enough to bear the weighty superstructure that they have reared upon it?"[214] As Frederick Ferré sums up, Hepburn's answer to this question must be in the negative. If the language of paradox or precisely the logic of encounter wishes to claim that *all* that Christians mean by 'God' can be exhausted by reference to certain human experience, if statements about 'God' thus would be equivalent to statements about human experience, then it would be, Hepburn argues, nonsense (by definition) to speak about 'God's experience' prior to the existence of human beings possessing such experiences. The definition of 'God' may well be held essentially to include reference to human experiences, but traditional theism will always insist on more than this in any complete definition. And yet the moment that a 'more' is required, we are confronted with a metaphysical issue concerning a being who is the independent cause or source of the so-called 'encounter-experience'. In this way the logic of encounter subtly slips from an overt attempt at explicating the *meaning* of

theological terms to a covert argument to the *existence* of God from religious experience.[215]


## 4.3 Contiguity

Since Brunner found Buber's dialogical critique of the subject-object dichotomy, he substituted the category of personal correspondence in its place (see III.3.4). In this, he is denying that anything true for revelation can be false for reason, and vice versa. Rather, he begins with points of identity between the two realms: reason ruling in its terrestrial empire, faith operative in the celestial realm; reason analysing objects, faith embracing the self-disclosure of the divine Thou.[216] It is precisely for this reason that the two can converse with each other, be mutually relevant, and disagree. Since Brunner recognizes that there is only one truth, even though it may be apprehended and conveyed in radically different ways, the relationship between rationally attested truth and revealed truth is especially acute. If there is only *one truth* and if both reason and faith are at least relatively independent modes of apprehending truth, the possibility that they may conflict is by no means precluded.

So we may ask, since the realms of faith and reason overlap and since there is interpenetration, how do we define the limits of reason in those areas of mutual concern? To this question Brunner replies that an exact solution is not possible. We can have only a *proportional* one; it is *the principle of contiguity (das Prinzip der Beziehungnähe)*: "The nearer anything lies to that center of existence where we are concerned with the whole, that is, with man's relation to God and the being of the person, the greater is the disturbance of rational knowledge by sin; the farther away anything lies from this center, the less is the

disturbance felt, and the less difference is there between knowing as a believer or as an believer".[217]  Thus no one will maintain that there is a Christian logic, mathematics, or physics, but the irrelevance of Christian belief to psychology can be maintained only by restricting the latter discipline to a study of elementary processes and sensations.  We cannot speak of a Christian science of law as we can of Christian theology, but there is an important, though indirect, relevance of Christian belief to our doctrine of law, since our view of justice will be influenced by our view of divine justice.[218]

4.4  The criterion of truth

Emil Brunner, however, is not a philosopher, but a theologian.  He does not, therefore, give much consideration to the problem of philosophy. "As theologian I have recognized it as my duty to look at the standpoint of philosophy from the standpoint of faith.  Thereby it proves unavoidable that the theologian himself philosophizes, that is, that he thinks as much as possible without presuppositions.  That he still remains dilettante in this, however, is just as clear to me as that the same applies to the philosopher who writes about faith.  Epistemology, perhaps also metaphysics, is secondary from the perspective of faith, no matter how primary they may appear to the philosopher.  It may well be that in an uncritical way I have up to now drawn the limits too narrowly around philosophy.  But there is one point I now would make emphatically: the God grasped by faith is not the same as the one who can be grasped by man with his reason."[219]  So, when reflecting on these matters, Brunner generally speaks of the *disturbance* of rational knowledge by sin and the *corrective* of faith.  Since man is fallen, he uses his reason in a sinful way, by which Brunner means, as we have seen, he refuses to recognize any sphere in which reason is not wholly

competent. Hence 'sinful' reason will not recognize its incompetency in the dimension of the personal and then reduces the personal to the abstract.[220]

In this regard, even the theologians of the church, according to Brunner, have not escaped this fatal tendency to depersonalize the truth of faith and thus obscured the fact that God, in His revelation, does not give us *something*, but *Himself*. So what Brunner argues is that the Greek philosophical tendency of the object-subject antithesis attempts to identify reality with the most abstract and impersonal. The fact that the New Testament is written in Greek tempts us to Hellenize its content, as did Fichte, who tried to transform 'the Son of God' into an eternal idea, for example.[221] He concedes that theology cannot operate without certain finished Christian concepts of a basic sort, and yet it must always recognize that they *are not really such*.

> We have already made it clear that any Confession which becomes a 'doctrine' is the fruit of a transition from the dimension of the "person" into that of a "thing", and indeed that it consists in this change. God, instead of being addressed, is spoken about; He is the object of doctrine. The further this process of refraction of immediacy goes the more impersonal does the truth become, the more does the knowledge of faith approximate to other forms of "secular" knowledge, the more impersonally objective and remote does it become. A further sign of theological reflection points in the same direction: the more that theological ideas become intellectual concepts, the more abstract do they become, the less do they resemble the vital concreteness of the Biblical way of teaching, especially that of Jesus Himself.[222]

Hence Emil Brunner has no sympathy with orthodoxy's attempt to discover a 'system' of truth in the Bible. The unity of revelation is not that of the timeless uniformity of abstract truth, but that of the self-disclosure of God to man in the event of personal encounter. "The reason is that we must recognise the God who is active in history, who

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makes Himself known, not in a doctrine, but in historical action; the God who 'makes' history with His People, the God who strides forward, the One who 'comes'. As the whole message of the New Testament has *an eschatological reference*, since it looks forward to the final goal of all history, so also it is a 'recapitulation'; it represents the whole of saving history as a unity, not of doctrine, but of the mighty act of God."[223]  So it is hardly controvertible that in the New Testament, faith for Brunner is, then, not *belief in a doctrine or truth about God,* but faith *is in God Himself* as He makes known His will to us in Jesus Christ and offers us true communion. Faith, therefore, must never be understood as *primarily belief in doctrine* but *trust* in Jesus Christ, in whom a new way of salvation apart from law is opened up. But as Christ is always proclaimed as the Lord, so faith is always at the same time obedience.[224]

In his argument against a doctrinal objectivism, Brunner attempts to replace its concept of truth with an entirely different one. The truth which is witnessed to in the New Testament is not 'truth-in-itself', but 'truth as encounter'. It is no 'It-truth' but a 'Thou-truth' and is not therefore a truth which can be affirmed through doctrinal belief but obedience and trust. Nevertheless, one cannot refrain from a question, whether belief in doctrines is not also an aspect of faith. As Frederick Ferré argues, if only in this view of faith can man's language convey meaning and truth about God, he suspects its account as in any way a justification for theological language, despite the intensity of conviction and the most striking affirmation that *Jesus Christ is the Word of God*, between the logical character of human theological discourse and the 'meaning' and 'truth' which is allegedly breathed into it miraculously and independent of its nature.

Thus what Ferré charges is that "the value of the human is minimized, denied and deplored ostensibly to glorify the miraculous inspiration of the divine; but such a policy can never lead to a genuine theory of incarnation, only to a violation of the debased human by the divine which, instead of 'inspiring' the human, assaults and replaces it. In making the logical structure of theological language thus irrelevant to the content it supposedly bears, obedience not only has violated its own governing Christocentric analogy but also has called into question the nature of theological meaning and truth".[225] This charge is not unfair if we recognize the fact that what Ferré calls 'the logic of obedience' cannot be compatible to the philosophical reason as does Barth who claims as this: "Theology guides the language of the Church, so far as it concretely reminds her that in all circumstances it is fallible human work, which in the matter of relevance or irrelevance lies in the balance, and *must be obedience to grace*, if it is to be well done. (Thus) the criterion of Christian language, in past and future as well as at the present time, is thus the essence of the Church, which is Jesus Christ, God in His gracious approach to man in revelation and reconciliation."[226]

However, even though both Brunner and Barth maintain that revelation is reconciliation[227], Brunner recognizes, unlike Barth, the fact that there is a revelation in the creation as well as there is a revelation in Christ. That is to say, what is true of revelation from God's side is also true of its acceptance on man's part. Brunner's faith and knowledge are also a personal event throughout. Revelation as the sovereign self-communication of God finds its counterpart in faith as the free self-giving of man. He puts it as follows:

If revelation is really counter, then we cannot understand it without knowing something of him to whom it is made. If revelation is God's self-communication to man, then it is of decisive importance to know the man to whom God communicates Himself. Were man only an object to whom God "does" something, a receptacle into which He pours something, then it would be possible to speak of His revelation without knowing the man who is exposed to this divine action. Since, however, this revelation is a *personal encounter*, it is necessary to learn to know *both the person* whom God meets in His revelation *and the way* in which this person experiences this divine encounter. This confronts us with the problem of *reason* and *revelation*. To anticipate only one of the particularly important aspects of revelation: The fact that God reveals Himself through His Word presupposes that man is a being who has been created for this kind of communication, for communication through speech.[228]

Thus the relationship which prevails between God and man is that of a *personal correspondence*; and this concept sums up everything which Brunner has to say about truth *as encounter*; indeed it is a most pregnant representation of his primary missionary concern. He sees, therefore, in it 'the fundamental category' or 'the original formal relationship', within which everything that the Bible says about God and man must be understood.[229] False doctrine, then, rises from a pressing of any point of doctrine in a one-sided way to its abstract logical conclusion. Christian theology can be achieved only by a constant suspension of the tangential tendencies of logic through securely holding to the revelational centre, which is, as we have seen, the *person* of Jesus Christ.[230] To be sure, Brunner insists upon the necessity of doctrine, in fact, of correct doctrine. Though *Jesus* is more than all words about Him, and yet He is not present to us, other than through definite concepts of thought. "Only when a person is taught rightly about God is his heart rightly turned toward Him; incorrect doctrine points man in the wrong direction, where we cannot find Him and He cannot find us. The correctness of 'Christian doctrine'

has both its norm and the basis of its possibility in the fact that *the incarnation of Christ is fulfilled by being 'incarnate' in the Apostolic testimony.*"[231]

Accordingly, when all is said and done, this doctrine is not revelation. It too, according to Emil Brunner, only *points* to revelation. It might seem as though this were sufficient, since we have in doctrine, at least, an *objective pointer* to the truth. Thus the truth of faith for Brunner is then Christ: "We must say quite clearly: *Christ is the Truth*. He is the content; He is the 'point' of all the preaching of the Church, but He is also really its content. The human word must point definitely to Him, and to Him alone. *The doctrine is not concerned with itself; nor is the divine revelation concerned with itself; but it is the indispensable means through which the human heart must be turned toward Him Himself*. Jesus Christ, the Truth, is not a doctrine; but it is only through teaching that we can witness to Him, and it is only as we are taught that we can believe in Him".[232] Here the theological language, or 'the human word' does two things: "it points away from itself to Christ, and it moves toward man".[233]

Thus the notion of truth for Brunner may be stated precisely as *personal truth*. This notion indicates to the communication of the incommunicable (or simply indirect communication). The personal stands in contradistinction to the idea. Revelation is not the communication of this or that. The revelation of God is truly *His* self-communication. We know nothing about Him, except what He Himself has revealed to us. All that we can know is the world. God is not the world. Therefore He is exalted above all our knowledge. He is Mystery. The biblical revelation is the absolute manifestation of something that had been

absolutely concealed.  Hence it is a way of acquiring knowledge that is absolutely and essentially opposite to the usual human method of acquiring knowledge by means of observation and thought.  Revelation means a *supernatural kind of knowledge* of something that man of himself could never know.[234]  In the Bible, however, God and revelation are so intimately connected that there is no other revelation than that which comes to us from God, and there is no other knowledge of God than that which is given to us through revelation.  God does not cease in His revelation to be the mysterious one.[235]  This is not to say that revelation is not a communication of truth;  on the contrary revelation communicates *the truth* which is personal truth.  God alone is true person and absolute subject in the unconditional and unlimited sense; whereas man is person only as an image of God and he is a subject which is also an object.[236] So personal faith and knowledge of a personal God who is Lord of the world can be gained only when God reveals Himself personally.

For Emil Brunner, revelation comes to its fullest expression in the person of Jesus Christ.  Christ is the principle of all revelation and of all knowledge of revelation, and He is the 'Mediator' because of His relation to revelation.  If there is a real revelation of God, it is that the self-presence of God with us.  Only in a human person can God be perfectly revealed, for only man is made after the image of God.  In this light we must view the *Incarnation*.  The revelation of the person of God in the God-man is at the same time the revelation of the original, the truly personal man.[237]  It is in the Christ that the thought of the hiddenness of revelation comes to its clearest expression, for there God becomes man.  In fact, Brunner attempts to always maintain two distinctive terms 'revelation' and 'reconciliation'

within his theological framework of *personal correspondence*, or *truth as encounter*. Therefore the term 'personal correspondence' is a twofold but unambiguous relationship: it is twofold, because it is concerned *primarily* with the relationship of God to man, and *secondarily* with the relationship of man to God; and it is, according to him unambiguous, because whether it is that of God to man or of man to God, its meaning is always identical - it is that of the love with which God first loved man and with which man, as it were echoing this love, loves God in return.[238] Therefore Brunner draws knowledge and fellowship into a unity: to know God means to be one with him. If when faith is understood in such a personal way as in Brunner, then certain conclusions necessarily follow for the concept of the Church. Brunner is quite ready to draw these conclusions. Thus he insists that the Church and the life of faith are inseparable. To speak of one is to speak of the other. The witness of the Church in Word and life is seen as the presupposition of faith, while faith is spoken of as *personal existence in fellowship*. Men come to faith only through the Church; yet it is just as true to say that men come to the Church only through faith.[239] For Brunner, concern for the missionary and pastoral tasks of the church is, therefore, a necessity of his missionary theology.

# Notes

1. Revelation is a partner-theme with faith in Brunner's first two works against the liberal theology of the nineteenth century: *Erlebnis, Erkentnis und Glaube*, 1921, and *Die Mystik und das Wort*, 1924. Since then *Philosophie und Offenbarung* in 1925 and *Der Mittler* in 1927 deals with revelation to show that the Person of Christ is the unique revelation. And *Religionsphilosophie, evangelischer Theologie* in 1927 is a confrontation of the Christian concept of revelation with rationalism, subjectivism, historicism, and orthodoxy. The works, *'Gesetz und Offenbarung'* in *Theologische Blätter* 4 (1925), *'Die andere Aufgabe der Theologie'* in *Zwischen den Zeiten* 7 (1929). *Gott und Mensch* in 1930, *'Die Frage nach dem "Anknupf-ungspunkt" als Problem der Theologie'* in *Zwischen den Zeiten* 10 (1932), and *Der Mensch im Widerspruch* in 1937, are all, in whole or in part, attempts to expose and develop a Christian anthropology, and thus be able to define the relationship between the natural man and the revelation in the Word of God. And also *Natur und Gnade* in 1934 is a clarification of Brunner's view on a general revelation in creation, and *Von Werk des heiligen Geistes* in 1935 indicates how the 'once-and-for-all' historical revelation in Jesus Christ is made present to all generations. *Warheit als Begegnung* in 1938 is Brunner's important work that attempts to illustrate, in the personalistic categories of Ebner and Buber, the significance for Christian Theology of the 'biblical' truth as the event that occurs when man in faith meets God in His revelation; and then *Offenbarung und Vernunft* in 1941 develops the biblical concept of revelation. Finally his three volumes of the *Dogmatik* in 1946, 1950, 1960 expands and applies his view of the 'biblical' revelation. Cf Emil Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB pp.3-20. Cf. also Joseph J. Smith, "Emil Brunner's Theology of Revelation" in the Heythrop Journal. vol. VI, No.1, Jan 1965. p.5.
2. Emil Brunner, PhuOff, p.15.
3. Emil Brunner, RaR, pp.3f.
4. Joseph J. Smith, op.cit. p.5.
5. Brunner maintains that the biblical understanding of revelation cannot be adequately expressed in an abstract definition. It can only be comprehended by studying its concrete forms. Accordingly we can fully know the nature and unity of revelation only by viewing the characteristic diversity of these many forms in their relation to one another: "We have therefore to bear in mind both the variety of ways in which the revelation is given, and the unity of its content". RaR, p.58.
6. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.33.
7. Emil Brunner, Ibid., p.81: ScoCh, p.15.
8. Emil Brunner, Ibid., pp.30-32.
9. E. Brunner, Ibid., p.43. Hegel attempts to reconcile Spirit with the history of the world: "Philosophy concerns itself only with the glory of the Idea mirroring itself in the History of the World.... That the History of the World, with all the changing scenes which its annals present, is this process of development and the realization of Spirit - this is the true *Theodicae*, the justification of God in History. Only *this* insight can reconcile Spirit with the History of the World - viz., that what has happened, and is happening every day, is not only not "without God", but is essentially His Work. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, trans.by J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

1956), p.457.

10.    Brunner, PhoRe, p.45.

11.    Paul K. Jewett, Brunner's Concept of Revelation, p.12.

12.    Brunner, Med, p.116.  And further this idea implies two things: "First, the relative character of each individual moment in history, and second, that history as a whole is made absolute. Both statements give each other mutual support.  Historical relativisim is not possible without reference to the Absolute, nor is it possible to make the whole absolute without rendering the individual factors relative.  But both are only possible for a third reason, that is, by the knowledge of the absolute Idea, by the absolute divine truth as *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of the whole moment.  Again this comes out most clearly in Hegel.  His philosophy of history is not the whole of his philosophy, but his system of Absolute "Idealism into which history itself is absorbed."  Brunner, see Med, p.117.

13.    Brunner, PhoRe, p.45.

14.    Brunner, Ibid., p.46.

15.    Brunner affirms that Kierkegaard alone, among the great thinkers of modern times, clearly saw that every system, no matter what its content, is *gua* system, pantheistic like a immanence of Hegelianism and therefore irreconcilable with the Christian concept of God: and admires him as 'a truly great Christian thinker'.  Cf. Gott und Mensch (Tübingen, 1930), p.3. Cf. also RaR, p.377.

16.    Robert Bretall (ed), A. Kierkegaard Anthology, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946 1st ed. 1973), p.190.

17.    K. Barth, The Epistle to the Romans (Oxford:  Oxford University Press, 1933).  p.14.

18.    Brunner, ThoCr, p.28.

19.    In his earlier book, "The Theology of Crisis" (1928), Brunner emphasizes that point:  "It is important to note that we are teaching an epistemological but not a cosmological transcendence. We hold, i.e. that God cannot be known by his active presence in the world.  His presence in nature and history is not denied, but it is regarded as hidden, so that what God is, is not revealed. See ThoCr, p.28.

20.    Brunner, Ibid, p.29.

21.    Brunner, DI, p.141.

22.    Brunner, ThoCr, p.30.

23.    Brunner, Ibid, p.32.

24.    Brunner, Ibid., pp.15f.  "In revelation the unconditioned and the conditioned subjects, the Absolute, the Infinite, and the creaturely spirit, meet.  Therefore revelation always passes through a process of understanding by man.  Even if revelation creates a new understanding, it does not create this without laying claim upon the natural understanding.  Indeed, does not this revelation use human speech, human words, grammar, the images of man's life and of man's world?  It comes as a divine illumination of the mind only through the human mental acts of understanding and will.  That is the reason why genuine theology must be dialectical. It is always a conversation between God and man, in which the human partner in the conversation is not ignored, but, even though he is entirely receptive, he is apprehended with his whole nature."

25.    Brunner, EtHo, p.54:  "To speak of eternity means to speak of God. God alone has eternity, God who is the Lord of time, the Lord of the world."

26.    Brunner affirms that there is no such thing as Christian philosophy of history.  He chooses to call it a Christian 'undersanding' of

history. Cf. MaiRe, p.452.

27. Brunner's own sketchy survey on this point, see TasE, p.60. note 41. Cf. also Paul K. Jewett, Brunner's Concept of Revelation, p.17: Leon O. Hynson, "Theological Encounter: Brunner and Buber," in Journal of Ecumenical Studies, vol. 12, No 1, winter 1975, pp.349-365.

28. On Brunner's controversy on the natural theology with Karl Barth see II.2. Cf. also Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.17.

29. On this point Karl Barth also takes the primacy of revelation that "revelation is not a predicate of history, but history is a predicate of revelation". Church Dogmatics I/2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), p.58.

30. Brunner, Med, p.153.

31. Brunner, ThoCr, p.39.

32. Einmaligkeit (literally onceness) is the word used by Brunner to express the exclusiveness of the Christian faith as special revelation. "Uniqueness" is the nearest word in English, but it does not fully express his meaning. "Eigmaligkeit" means occupying *a unique* moment in *time*. "Unrepeatableness" is the real meaning. Cf. Emil Brunner, Med, p.25, note 1.

33. Brunner, ThoCr, p.39

34. Brunner, Med, pp.153f.

35. Brunner, MaiRe, p.442, Cf. also RaR, pp.32-33.

36. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.20.

37. Brunner, Med, p.303.

38. Brunner, MaiRe, p.442.

39. Brunner, Ibid.

40. Brunner, DI, p.305

41. Brunner, RaR, pp.403f.

42. Brunner, Ibid, p.405. Cf. also DIII, vol.3, p.438. : "God's coming to us is an event which above all concerns man and his history. As such it is called eternal life and the Kingdom of God. What is at stake is God's self-communication and glorification in that creature which answers Him in faith. What is at stake is the realization of the sonship which in Jesus Christ is already a certainty for faith, but which still awaits its consummation".

43. Brunner RaR, p.407.

44. Cf. Van A. Harvey (ed), A Hand book of Theological terms (New York: Macmillan Co. 1971) pp.42-44.

45. The primary source is Kierkegaard's *Einubüng im Christentum*. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.27.

46. Brunner, Med, p.305

47. Brunner, Ibid, p.154.

48. Brunner, Ibid, pp.160f.

49. Brunner, Ibid, pp.156f.

50. Brunner, Ibid, p.157.

51. Brunner, Ibid, p.159.

52. Brunner, DII, pp.290-292.

53. Brunner, Med, pp.390f.

54. Brunner, ScoCh, p.28.

55. Brunner, Med, p.159.

56. Brunner expresses that he aims to be a biblical theologian. And his understanding of revelation cannot be understood properly apart from his point of view of the Bible. Cf. DI, pp.95f.; Cf. also Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation, p.117.

57. Brunner, DI, p.53. (Italic is Brunner's).

58. On matters of biblical criticism the early Brunner aligns himself with a rather liberal school of thought; however, the later

Brunner is considerably more conservative in the sense that he accepts fewer critical hypotheses of the biblical criticism of the liberal school. See PhoRe, pp.150-151; ThoCr, pp.23-44; DI, pp.107-113; and also DIII, pp.244-250, 401-407.

59. For an excellent historical survey of this problem, see Thomas Sheehan, The First Coming (Wellingborough: Crucible. 1988), pp.5-27.
60. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.120.
61. Brunner, DI, pp.37f.
62. Brunner, Ibid, p.38. (Italic is mine).
63. Brunner, Ibid, p.35.
64. Brunner, Ibid, p.38.
65. Brunner, TasE, p.132.
66. On this point Emil Brunner appeals to Reformers: "The Reformers constantly maintained that the mere "story" of Jesus was of no use to faith; up to a point, of course, they were right, for in actual fact the *mere* story is as powerless to awaken faith as *mere* doctrine. It is essential to the witness to the Incarnate Son of God that the story of Jesus and the teaching about Jesus should be indissoluably united". Cf. DI, p.36.
67. Brunner, RaR, p.121.
68. Brunner, DI, p.26 : "Revelation and faith now mean *a personal encounter, personal communion.* He has come, in order that He may be with us, and that we may be with Him; He has given Himself for us, that we may have a share in Him." (Italic is mine).
69. Brunner, TasE, p.132.
70. Brunner, TasE, pp.132f.
71. Brunner, Ibid, p.133.
72. Brunner, RaR, p.122.
73. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.123.
74. Brunner, RaR, p.123.
75. On this point Emil Brunner attempts to give a more vague definition to the term 'apostle' when he says as this: "The Apostles are first of all eyewitnesses - not merely eyewitnesses in the simple historical sense, but eyewitnesses of the Risen Christ. This fact of their position as eyewitnesses gives them, in contrast to all who followed them, a share in the uniqueness of the event of revelation. They are the witnesses of His resurrection, and thus they are also witnesses of the glory of Christ. It is true that the New Testament, or more correctly the Church, which defined the cannon of the New Testament, did not understand this idea of the status of eyewitness in the narrowest and most literal sense." Cf. RaR, p.124.
76. Brunner, DIII, p.51.
77. Brunner, DI, p.47.
78. Brunner, Ibid, p.31.
79. Brunner, TasE, pp.136f.
80. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner (Chicago : Inter-Varsity press, 1961). p.33.
81. Brunner, DI, p.28
82. Brunner, RaR, p.135.
83. Brunner, NaTh, p.49.
84. W. Van de Pol, Das reformatorische Christentum in phänomenologischer Betrachtung (Einsiedeln, 1956). p.165; See Joseph J. Smith, op. cit., p.16.
85. Barth expresses the term 'the Word of God'. The term indicates a threefold form. The primary form of the Word of God is Jesus Christ himself, the revealed Word. The secondary form is the

written scripture, the written Word; and the third form was the word of the church's proclamation, the preached Word. All of these are linked. The Word in the primary sense, Jesus Christ, speaks only as he is witnessed to by the scripture and proclaimed in faith by the church. See Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics vol.I, part I, chap.1, δ 4. The Word of God in its Threefold Form, pp.98-140.; Cf. also James Barr, The Bible in the Modern World (London: SCM press Ltd., 1973). p.19.

86. Brunner, DIII, pp.246f.
87. Brunner, Ibid, p.247.
88. Brunner, RaR, p.137.
89. Brunner, Ibid, p.141.
90. Brunner, DI, p.19.
91. Joseph J. Smith, op.cit., p.17.
92. Brunner, RaR, p.139.
93. Brunner, Ibid, p.141.
94. Brunner, Ibid, p.140.
95. Brunner, DIII, p.4.
96. Brunner tends to give Verkündigung the broad connotation of proclamation. It includes not only the official word of preaching (das Predigtwort), but the sacraments, radio addresses, pastoral care, charities, even the novels of Gotthelf and Dostoevski; in short, "everything which serves the end of subduing the hearts of men to the obedience of Christ and placing men in fellowship with Him and with each other". Cf. Emil Brunner, "Der Zweck der Verkündigung", Sinn und Wesen der Verkündigung (Zurich, 1941), p.52. Quoted in Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation, p.124.
97. Brunner, DIII, p.5.
98. Joseph J. Smith, Brunner's Concept of Revelation (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1954), p.18.
99. Brunner, RaR, p.143.
100. Brunner, Ibid, p.149.
101. Brunner, Ibid, p.150.
102. Brunner, DI, p.64.
103. Brunner, RaR, p.150.
104. Brunner, Ibid.
105. Brunner, Ibid, p.170.
106. Brunner, PhoRe, p.32. : "There is no such thing as revelation-in-itself, because revelation consists always of the fact that something is revealed to me. Revelation is not a thing, but act of God, an event involving two parties; it is a personal address. Hence the word of Scripture is not in itself the word of God but of man, just as the historical appearance of the God-man is in itself that of man."
107. Brunner, RaR, p.170.
108. Brunner, Ibid, p.33. (Italic is mine).
109. Brunner, Ibid.
110. Brunner, Ibid.
111. Brunner, Ibid, p.34.
112. Cf. Emil Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.11; "A Spiritual Autobiography", in Japan Christian Quarterly, July.1955 p.240; Cf. also "Continental European Theology", in The church Through Half a Century, ed. Van Dusen et. al., p.141.
113. Zuidema, Kierkegaard, (Nutley: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. 1977), p.11.
114. Søren Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p.216, Quoted in

Robert Bretall edit, A. Kierkegaard Anthology, p.341.

115. Mary Warnock, Existentialism (Oxford University Press, 1970), pp.9f.
116. Kierkegaard, op.cit., p.117.
117. Brunner, Med, p.144.
118. Brunner, ThoCr, pp.24f.
119. Zuidema, Kierkegaard, pp.23.
120. Brunner, Med, p.290.   Cf.  also Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.50.
121. Cf. Brunner's early lectures in 1928, a year before the Wall Street crash, introduced to the English-speaking world the theology of crisis, ThoCr, p.1.
122. Robert L. Reymond, Brunner's Dialectical Encounter (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967), p.19.
123. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.52.
124. Brunner, PhoRe, p.20.
125. Brunner, RaR, p.424.
126. Brunner, PhuOff, p.22.  "Die Erkenntnis der Sünde ist die Krisis, die Wende, wo immanentes Erkennen und Glauben sich berühren.  Das ist der tiefe, fundamentale Gegensatz der christlichen und humanistisch-idealistisch-mystischen Religion : daß diese Berührung nur in diesem Negativen, in der gänzlichen Selbstpreisgabe stattfindet".
127. Brunner, DIII, p.140.
128. Brunner, ThoCr, p.64.
129. Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript pp.68f, Quoted in Robert Bretall, op.cit., pp.210f.
130. Robert C. Solomon. From Rationalism to Existentialism. (New York: Humanities Press, 1970). pp.78f.
131. Michael Wyschogrod, Kierkegaard and Heidegger, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954) pp.90f.
132. Michael Wyschogrod, Ibid, p.93.
133. Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege and Oxford University Press, 1946) p.125.
134. Brunner, Med, pp.334f.
135. Brunner, PhoRe, p.28.   "This paradoxical, unthinkable unity constitutes the Reformers' doctrine of Scripture.  It is paradoxical in its content:  the eternal logos as personal life in time, personal righteousness as a free gift, the revelation of God's glory in the darkest place of history.  It is also paradoxical in form:  what is most inward is outward, eternal truth is nothing else than a given and actual word to be accepted on authority, a letter, "brute fact", to use Hegel's terminology. Moreover, these two contradictory pronouncements must not only hold good side by side, but be recognized as one and the same in faith. This cannot be brought to pass in the forms of human thought."
136. Brunner, Ibid, p.23.
137. Brunner, WaW, p.75.
138. Brunner, Ibid, pp.75f.
139. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation, p.61.
140. Brunner, PhoRe, p.148.
141. Brunner, Ibid, p.23.
142. On this point Brunner regards fundamentally the philosophy of Martin Buber (and Ferdinand Ebner) as that whose most important insight is owed to the Bible and the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard, see Emil Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.11.
143. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.69.
144. On this point, as Michael Wyschogrod points out, Kierkegaard's basic existential interest does not permit him to assume an

objective interest in ontological problems. And yet it is possible to discern a very marked ontological basis from which his existential thinking proceeds. This ontological basis is rarely made the chief object of analysis. Kierkegaard's interest is always existentially Christian and everything other than that can have only secondary interest. There is, however, a definite ontological contribution. See Kierkegaard and Heidegger, p.24.

145. Brunner, DiIm, p.295.
146. Brunner, MaiRe, p.140.
147. Brunner, DiIm, p.295.
148. Brunner RaR, p.179.
149. Brunner, Ibid, p.24.
150. Brunner, DI, pp.121f.
151. Cf. Emil Brunner, Ibid, pp.117-119.
152. Brunner, TasE, p.87.
153. Brunner, RaR, p.28.
154. Brunner, DI, p.20.
155. Brunner, TasE, p.95.
156. Cf. P.G. Schrotenboer, A New Apologetics, p.39.
157. Emil Brunner, Med, p.108 : "Thus the stumbling-block of revelation is this: it denies that divine truth is a continuation of human thought, in line with existence as we can conceive it, and as it seems real to us. But our whole culture is built up upon this continuity, upon it is based our confidence in science, and - this is the root of the whole matter - upon it is based the *confidence of man in himself*." (Italic is Brunner's).
158. Brunner, RaR, p.191.
159. Emil Brunner, DI, p.122 : "Therefore I cannot myself unconditionally think of God as this unconditioned "Thou", but I can only know Him in so far as He Himself, by His own action, makes Himself known to me. It is, of course, true that man can think out a God for himself - the history of philosophy makes this quite plain. In extreme cases a man can "think" a personal God: theistic philosophy is a genuine, even if an extreme possibility. But this personal God who has been conceived by man remains some - *thing* which has been thought, the object of our thought-world."
160. E. Brunner, DI, p.101.
161. Brunner, RaR, p.17.
162. Brunner, Ibid, p.16.
163. Brunner, Ibid, pp.16f. (Italic is mine).
164. Brunner, MaiRe, p.246.
165. Brunner, RaR, p.325.
166. Brunner, Ibid, p.177.
167. Brunner, DII, pp.30f.
168. Emil Brunner contends that the idealistic philosophy of religion conceives at its starting-point the idea of autonomy as the centre of moral idealism. "Thus the ideal will is the real will; this ideal will, the autonomous will of reason, is the centre of our personality, the deepest ground of the self. This ideal will, however, is identical with the divine willing and being. The intelligible ego, the subject of the ideal will, is the divine ego; only for this reason is it legislative, this alone is why we are autonomous." See Emil Brunner, Med, p.112.
169. Emil Brunner, PhuOff, p.34. "Es ist ja die Notwendigkeit, welche dem Denken Kraft gibt. Ohne diese Notwendigkeit wird das Denken Zur bloßen Phantasietätigkeit."
170. Emil Brunner, MaiRe, pp.42. 244; Cf. also P.G. Schrotenboer. A New Apologetics, p.56.

171. Brunner, MaiRe, p.42
172. Brunner, RaR, p.314.  "In and through these ideas God works in every human being.  This forms part of the universal revelation, which at the same time determines the essential structure of human existence.  Without these ideas man is not man, and these ideas come from God."
173. Brunner, Ibid, p.418.
174. Brunner, Ibid, p.56.
175. Emil Brunner, "Die Frage nach dem,, Anknüpfungs-punkt" als Problem der Theologie", Zwischen den Zeiten, 1932, p.527;  Cf. also MaiRe, p.247.  "Faith is the reason which is opened to that which lies beyond reason."
176. Emil Brunner, MaiRe, pp.240,245.  He also uses the term 'the logos of reason'.  See RaR, p.315.
177. Brunner, RaR, p.382.
178. Brunner, MaiRe, p.244.
179. Emil Brunner, RaR, pp.212, 213:  "The autonomous reason believes that this impossibility shows the untruth of the claim of revelation;  faith, however, sees in every such demand for proof the consequence of an original perversion in the actual process of knowing, of the claim of our human reason to a false autonomy."
180. Emil Brunner, MaiRe, p.242;  Cf. also PhoRe, pp.92, 97.  "Reason which was created to be a mirror of God is spoilt and split."
181. Brunner, MaiRe, p.244.
182. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner, (Chicago:  Inter-Varsity press, 1961), p.29.
183. Emil Brunner, Das Grund problem der Philosophie, p.33. Cf. also Emil L. Fackenheim, "Immanuel Kant", in Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West, vol. I, edit by Ninian Smart et.al. pp.17, 18.  According to Fackenheim, Kant wrote extensively on the subject of religion.  His three *Critiques* all end with religious questions, and in a celebrated passage in the *Critique* of *Pure Reasons* Kant writes:  "All the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the following three questions:  I. What can I know? 2. What ought I to do? 3. What may I hope?  The third question is answered by religion.
184. On this point, as Ninian Smart points out, Kant had been brought up in the rationalist tradition.  All knowledge, he held, could become (or already was) 'scientific', i.e. complete, systematic, *a priori* and certain - and thus the capacity of the understanding to apprehend the nature of things as they really are, whether or not they could be experienced, was not questioned.  This philosophical position was dogmatic (as opposed to Kant's later 'critical' philosophy) in the sense that it involved speculation without a previous inquiry into the scope and limits of knowledge.  Kant, on his own testimony, was roused from his 'dogmatic slumber' by Hume. The latter's empiricism offered a serious challenge to the *a priori* approach of the rationalist, but at the same time his analysis of causation appeared to cut away the basis of science.  Another reason for Kant's rejection of dogmatic metaphysics was his discovery of the Antinomies-namely, that certain pairs of contradictory propositions (e.g. 'The world has, as to space and time, a beginning or limit' and 'The world is, as to space and time, 'infinite' - see *Prolegomena*, б 50, 52) can equally rigorously be proved true, on the supposition that our intellectual concepts genuinely apply to reality.  See Ninian Smart edit., Historical Selections in the Philosophy of Religion, chapter 14. Kant, especially his philosophical note, pp.248-250.

185. Brunner, PhoRe, p.62.

186. Brunner, Das Grundproblem der Philosophie, p.36, Quoted in Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation. (London: James Clark & Co. Ltd., 1954), p.91.

187. Brunner, PhoRe, pp.79f.

188. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.93.

189. Brunner, ThoCr, p.43.

190. Brunner, RaR, p.56.

191. Emil Brunner, "Secularism as a Problem for the Church", in The International Review of Missions, vol.XIX, No. 76, Oct., p.498.

192. Cf. Roman Roessler, Person und Glaube, (München : Chr. Kaiser Verlag 1965), pp.53f.

193. Emil Brunner, MaiRe, p.241. "Rational thought necessarily produces an abstract idea of God, but for that very reason it never reaches the living personal God. For this thought remains confined within itself; it is a monologue".

194. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner, p.30.

195. Brunner, RaR, p.23.

196. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.15. And in this context, dialectic and paradox are interchangeable terms. Brunner tends to use the word 'dialectic' when stressing that two antithetical statements are both true and the word 'paradox' when reflecting on the offence of such a procedure to reason. There is no rigidity of usage, especially for the early Brunner. Cf. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation (London: James Clark & Co. Ltd., 1954), p.105, note 83.

197. Brunner, PhoRe, p.55.

198. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.106.

199. Brunner, PhuOff, p.34.

200. Cf. Michael Wyschogrod, Kierkegaard and Heidegger, chapter II, pp.24ff.

201. Brunner, Med, p.286.

202. Bernard Ramm, A Handbook of Contemporary Theology (Grand Rapids : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1977), p.95.

203. Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p.194.

204. Zuidema, Kierkegaard, p.34.

205. Robert C. Solomon. From Rationalism to Existentialism, pp.91, 92. "For Hegel, as for Aristotle, man is essentially rational; for Kierkegaard, man is essentially the chooser of his own values. For Hegel, everything lies in being rational, objective, and reflectively understanding; for Kierkegaard, everything lies in the act of choosing, in being subjective (passionate and committed). This freedom of choice is itself the most basic of values, what makes a man a *human being* or an *existent individual*, and the recognition and use of this freedom is far more important than the object of choice."

206. Zuidema, op.cit., p.35.

207. Cf. Emil Brunner, Med, pp.285f, 290.

208. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation, pp.106f.

209. Brunner, DI, p.76.

210. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner, p.31.

211. Brunner, PhoRe, pp.31f.

212. For this reason Brunner's theology is sometimes called a "theology of paradox" or a "dialectical theology". Cf. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's concept of Revelation, p.105.

213. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, vol.I., p.57, Cf. also Paul Avis, The Methods of Modern Theology (Hant: Marshall Pickering, 1986), pp.190f. See also a similar account of the term 'paradox'

by D.M. Baillie, God was in Christ (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1948), pp.106-132, especially chapter V. The Paradox of the Incarnation.

214. Ronald W. Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox (London: Watts, 1958), p.30.
215. Frederick Ferre, Language, Logic and God, (London: Eyre and Spottishwoode Ltd., 1962), pp.102f.; Cf. also Ronald W. Hepburn, op.cit., pp.29-39.
216. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation, p.98.
217. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.383. According to Brunner, this idea is used for the first time in his book on ethic, Das Gebot und die Ordnungen, in order to solve the problem of the relation between the invisible and the visible Church; since then it has become his guiding principle for all problems that concern the relation between the Christian and the world.
218. David Cairns, "Brunner's Conception of Man as Responsive, Responsible Being", in ThoEB, pp.76f.
219. Emil Brunner, "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism", in ThoEB, p.337.
220. Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.101.
221. Emil Brunner, "The Significance of the Old Testament for our Faith", in the Lutheran Church Quarterly, 1934, p.334.
222. Brunner, DI, p.62.
223. Brunner, RaR, p.196.
224. Brunner, DIII, p.41.
225. Frederick Ferré, op.cit., pp.82, 89f.
226. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/1, pp.2, 3.
227. Brunner, PhuOff, p.22.
228. Brunner, RaR, p.48.
229. Two expressions of Brunner's term 'personal correspondence and truth as encounter' are used without any shifting of accent. by the former ('personale Korrespondenz' and occasionally personhafte Korrespondenz'), Brunner seeks to indicate the formal relationship between God and man and more particularly the correlation between the Word of God and Faith. Cf. Reidar Hauge, "Truth as Encounter", in ThoEB, p.136, note 9.
230. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.148. Cf. also Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.104.
231. Brunner, RaR, p.152.
232. Brunner, Ibid, p.151.
233. Brunner, Ibid, p.150.
234. Brunner, Ibid, p.23.
235. Brunner, Ibid, p.47.
236. Brunner, DI, p.140.
237. Brunner, MaiRe, p.416.
238. Emil Brunner, TasE, pp.89f, 94, 97. Cf. also Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God, (London: Collins, 1969), p.76.
239. Emil Brunner, WaW, p.106. "There is no such thing as Christian faith without the Christian church." Cf. also DIII, pp.134f.

V   THE CHURCH IN MISSIONARY THEOLOGY


1.   Faith and the ecclesia


1.1  Togetherness of faith and the ecclesia

To some extent Emil Brunner's theological thought has always been, as

shown in the previous discussion, concerned with the question of what

the church is.  According to him, if faith is first and foremost a

relationship to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as God's saving

act in history, and if this saving event is transmitted to men of all

ages through the proclamation of the church, then the church is not only

the bearer of the Word of Christ, but also the bearer of His Spirit and

life and indeed His self-representation:  "The Church is in the first

place merely the instrument, the bearer, of the proclamation.

Everything that serves this proclamation is Church, and it is this

function and nothing else which makes the Church the Church:   a

'proclaiming existence' as the historical continuum of the revelation.

We must indeed bear in mind that this proclamation cannot be confined to

words.  This was why we said 'proclaiming existence'.  It is not a mere

matter of uttering words, but of passing on the life in which God has

communicated Himself."[1]


      So Brunner's argument about the existence of the Church is that

since the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is God's self-communication

to mankind, and since in this revelation God has made known His own

nature as self-bestowing love (agape), the Church exists to bear witness

to this love.  Therefore the witness of the love of God is the basis of

the life of the Church.  "Christ has communicated Himself in such a way

that He did not give the Ecclesia the Word alone, but His life also, and

made it His Body through His Spirit. This life of His cannot but manifest itself as life-creating power. The Spirit who is at work in the Ecclesia expresses Himself in active love and in the creation of fellowship. Christ has not only revealed the love of God; He has at the same time bestowed it."[2] Because of his love, God wills to give himself, to impart himself in communion and fellowship. God's love is the motivation for his will to create the ecclesia. Then the ecclesia owes its life to the election of God. God was the one who called his people out of the world into the ecclesia, and therefore fellowship with himself. As God's creation, the ecclesia shares God's holiness and love. Hence the ecclesia not only *knows* that God is love but also it lives *from* and *in* the love of God, even though it lives only in an imperfect way.[3]

Accordingly, the word 'Christ' for Brunner is only really effective and credible when it is accompanied by the witness of the ecclesia through its life. The existence of the ecclesia is then the presupposition of faith. The ecclesia is, therefore, both the *mater fidelium* (mother of faith) and the *communio* (fellowship):

> But it is possible to look at this same Church from the front instead of from behind, not as the community of those who have been reborn through faith, but as the body which has produced faith, and which receives into its ranks those who believe. It is not only *communio*, but also *mater fidelium*. The word of God is not only given to the community of believers as gift; it is also a commission. Christians are not only called to be disciples, but to *make* disciples. They have not only to preserve the Word of God among themselves, but they have also to hand on the Word of God to others; they have to share a gift with others, and to offer it to the whole world. Thus the Church is not only a community of the "saved", but it is at the same time a divine means, a divine institution, by means of which the same salvation is given to others. *Thus God reveals Himself not only in and to the Church, but through the Church. The Christian community to which the Word of God has been entrusted becomes itself the bearer of the word, for "God is in the midst of her";* Christ the Head of the Church is indeed the Living Lord.[4]

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Thus the ecclesia has to bear a double witness to Christ, through the Word that tells of what He has bestowed upon it, and through the witness of its life, through its being, which points to Him as its vital source. According to Brunner, these two testimonies of the ecclesia through Word and life corroborate each other, and neither is fully effective without the other.[5] The Word of God is truly apprehensible and demonstrable only where it is accompanied by the life-witness of the ecclesia. The life-witness of the ecclesia is possible only where Christ's word dwells actively in it. In practical terms, if we ask, "how can a man come to belive?", then the answer must be, so Brunner claims, through the proclamation of the Word of the love of God in Jesus Christ; and yet this Word can awaken true faith only when it is proclaimed by the ecclesia, the brotherhood, in which alone it is vitally present. Then only through the Word of Christ which the ecclesia has received, can faith come into being: "The gospel of Christ is a Word 'from faith to faith' - more precisely, a Word from the fellowship of faith leading to the fellowship of faith, and for this reason it is credible only where it is accompanied by the life witness of the Ecclesia. Without this it is unintelligible, unworthy of belief. When it is not backed by the love of those who speak it, it is a self-contradiction. Only that word of the love of God in Christ, which has as a commentary the love, the fellowship, the brotherliness of the Church that proclaims it, can have the power of a real witness. The Word of the witness presupposes his trustworthiness".[6]

So in his using the term 'proclaiming existence' (verkündigende Existenz), Emil Brunner attempts to indicate the Church as 'every form of historical life which has its origin in Jesus Christ and acknowledges in Him its foundation and supreme norm'.[7] It is this proclaiming

existence of the Church which makes known the revelation that occurred in Christ, that announces the revelation to come in glory, and that, while doing so, becomes itself faith creating revelation (see IV.2.3); and at the same time it implies that the primary commission of the Church is not mere doctrine but proclamation that, Brunner claims, 'must always have a doctrinal content, but it is itself something other than doctrine; it is faith-awakening, faith-furthering, faith-wooing address'. Genuine proclamation, in Brunner's view, means then an event entirely personal in the nature of personal meeting, which is far different from the catechetical homiletical traffic in dogma that is determined by the Greek concept of truth.[8]

> The notion that the completest catechetical instruction, be it for adults or youth, is the best way to faith is the product of an undue stress upon logic - even though supernatural - which has very little to do with what the Bible itself calls "proclaiming the Word of God". It is much rather a consequence of that confusion between the two concepts of truth of which we have been speaking. The practice of the ancient church as well as that of modern foreign missions and of evangelization seems to us to point another way: that the actual function of doctrine - the doctrine sermon as well as instruction - normally belongs where there is already a confessional congregation, where the concern is no longer with establishing a believing congregation, but rather with strengthening faith and deepening knowledge of faith. *But the proclamation that seeks to initiate faith is a form of the Word in human speech that is vastly different from the doctrinal presentation.* This the church must learn from those who have achieved results worthy of emulation in the missionary and evangelistic fields. But the church will first be able to learn it when it has discerned as error the false identification of doctrine and Word of God. This is one consequence of our theological reflection, perhaps the weightiest and most practical.[9]

There exists, then, for Brunner another task of theology. In addition to 'dogmatic theology' or 'kerygmatic theology',[10] there is another one which is turned toward the world and which Brunner calls as 'missionary theology'. He insists that theology should be in a constant state of communication with the actual present world, with its thoughts,

its needs, and its temptations. A theology degenerates if it retreats

to the area of 'right' interpretation and conceptualization. Hence

there is a demand for a missionary theology.[11] Brunner is convinced

that in every man there is a will and a knowledge at the side of which

the proclaimer can place himself, where he can find his 'point of

contact'. If, indeed, man has not yet heard the Word of God, and if in

him there is no knowledge about it, then of course discussion with him

would be useless; and perhaps there is no point in discussing anything

with him. Brunner maintains, however, that the church should enter into

a genuine discussion with man. It should take seriously the fact that

every man already has something which may contribute to true insight,

that he is capable of responding to the address of God so that the

continuing discussion may lead to increasing insight.

> Thus the structure of the being of man is always
> presupposed, which indeed, as we now know, is an actual, not
> a substantial responsible being, being in decision. In the
> Bible this structure is never regard as lost - indeed how
> could this be so, since even the sinner is still a human
> being? - rather even in the act of faith it is presupposed
> as operative, and as such it is shown parabolically
> ('coming', 'selling', 'drawing'), as well as in purely
> logical conceptions. This personal structure as actual
> being is that which is always proper to man, and this, in
> the general sense, is the 'point of contact'. To put it
> more exactly, that which makes this personal structure
> personal is responsibility - that which in the passage above
> quoted from Luther is called 'conscience' - the point of
> contact in the narrower sense of the word, and therefore the
> act of 'making contact' of the preacher or pastor consists
> in seeking for the point at which the hearer is to be 'met'
> in the sense of responsibility, or in accordance with his
> conscience.[12]

To return to the term 'proclaiming existence' or the 'proclaiming

church', what Brunner argues is that the misunderstanding of the church

as an ecclesiastical or sacred institution corresponds to the mis-

understanding of faith through which faith was regarded as a mere

affirmation of doctrinal system. This doctrinal system, according to

him, became the object of faith, and through this displacement the unity

of faith and love was dispersed. At the same time as the priestly

sacramental institution there came into being 'orthodoxy', the belief in

true, and the guarantee of this belief by Church cred or dogma.[13] So in

this manner the apostolic aspects of the ecclesia raise the problems of

succession and tradition. For instance, the process of

institutionalization began even in the New Testament times. It is seen

in the Pastoral Epistles, where frequent reference is made to regular

ministry and sound doctrine. Thereafter came the Catholicizing process,

the development of new doctrines about the sacraments, and, worst of

all, the patronizing adoption of the church by the Roman Empire under

Constantine and Theodosius and so on.[14] What Brunner sees in the

problems of the development of the church is that the misunderstanding

does not consist in the establishment by the church of a creed, a norm

of doctrine and faith, but in the replacement of witness by this

regulated doctrine and assent thereto, which is described by the same

word 'faith', and which takes the place of trusting obedience to the

Christ who meets us and is present in the Word that bears witness to

Him.[15]


Accordingly, Brunner sees the New Testament ecclesia as a free

fellowship of faithful persons, united in common life and worship by

their faith in Jesus Christ and lead in their service and witness by the

Holy Spirit. In this respect of the ecclesia one who receives the Word

of witness through faith is at the same time united with the ecclesia

and incorporated into it. So Brunner claims as follows:

> Since both the Word that bears witness to Christ and the
> love created by it have the same source, the second way,
> which leads through fellowship, through reception of the
> Spirit of love, to Christ as the source of this Spirit, is
> just as much to be reckoned with as a possibility, although

true faith comes into being only through the unity of Word and Spirit, of truth and fellowship, of knowledge of Christ and the heart-felt experience of love. The "unclassical" way from the brotherhood in Christ to Christ as its originator is indicated in the story of Pentecost. It was not only the Word of Peter which led the bystanders to penitence and to faith; they were made ready to hear it by their astonishment at the astounding existence of the disciple band. In the accounts given in Acts it seems always to be the Word of the Apostle that creates faith. But in the letters of the Apostle himself we learn how it was only in conjunction with his loving presence that his Word opened men's hearts.[16]

So, Brunner can speak of the ecclesia as something which 'happens' of necessity wherever the Word of Christ is received in trust and obedience: "The witness to Christ in the Word creates the faith that binds the individual to the ecclesia as the fellowship of believers. The Word of Christ takes the isolated man out of his solitariness and binds him, when he becomes a believer, to the congregation of believers, *ek pisteos eis pistin*, from faith to faith. It is therefore in fact impossible to speak of faith without at the same time speaking of the Ekklesia from which alone faith comes and in which alone it finds its realization. For only *that* faith accounts which shows itself effectual in love. The isolation of the believer, Christian individualism, is a contradiction in terms."[17] Here the ecclesia for Brunner is understood as a life in which the call to Christ is shared; and it is the implicit consequence of faith in Christ and as such the necessary consequence of his concept of faith and his conception of Christ.[18]

Significantly, faith is then related directly to being in the ecclesia. True faith means, in his view, 'to become a new creature; in other words, to be taken up, incorporated into the life of Christ'.[19] And therefore Brunner freely admits that both propositions are true: " 'Only through the Ekklesia do men come to faith', and 'Only through

faith do men come to the Ekklesia'.  If we say the first, then the Word
of Christ is already implicit in the Ekklesia-fellowship, for it was
created by the Word and is sustained by it.  If we say the second, then
the Ekklesia is already implicit in the Word of witness which creates
faith, since it is indeed the Word of the love of God."[20]  In this
regard, he claims that in the ecclesia the self-communication of God in
Jesus Christ has become reality, inasmuch as it is received in faith.[21]


## 1.2  The life of new humanity in Christ

Since the revelation in Christ and faith are, according to Brunner, so
inseparably bound together as to be given the same dignity, faith is
often spoken of as the one condition upon which the work of Christ may
come to fulfillment.  The trust of faith which corresponds to the *eu
angelion* (good news) contains in itself new security and new humanity.
For it consists precisely in thinking not oneself but God's self-
communication in Jesus Christ alone.  It is nothing other than the
knowledge that God thinks us men to be of the utmost importance.  This
'humanism' is implied in God's incarnation in Jesus Christ, and to
reject this humanism would be nothing less than to reject Christ.[22]  So
the one may not be realized apart from the other.  Indeed the word
'faith' may be inseparably bound together with the word 'Christ'.
Brunner puts it as follows:

> While Paul... is speaking of the new revelation or of the
> new way of salvation, which God has opened up in Christ.  He
> speaks just as often of faith as of Christ. *There is indeed
> no Christ outside of faith - since only for faith is Jesus
> the Christ, and only in faith does the work of Christ come
> to fulfilment.*  Therefore Paul alternates between speaking
> of 'justification by faith alone' and 'through Christ
> alone'.  One might actually say, *faith and Christ* are
> synonymous, at any rate in the sense that 'to have Christ'
> and 'to believe' are one and the same thing.[23]

Here Brunner sees the coming of Christ and the coming of faith as two
different modes of speaking of the same event.

So when one hears the message of Christ, one believes.  One can hear this message only through the witnessing Word of the witnesses, however.  Thus the Word  which creates faith is at the same time, according to Brunner, God's Word and man's word, i.e.  Word of the Spirit and *paradosis* (tradition).  This double character refers back to the *Incarnation of the Word*; that is to say, only the Jesus of history can be, so Brunner claims, the *Christ* in that faith grasps the double character of the Word about Christ as a unity[24]: "the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is a *historical* event, and faith is therefore in the first place a relationship to this event which happened at that place and time.  It is dependent on this perfect tense, the *reconciliation* of the world in the Cross of Jesus Christ is the content of faith in Christ".[25]  If so, one can however raise a question of how the revelation of that time can become revelation for *us* today.  The answer to this question is that this event comes to us, in Brunner's view, through the *historical* mediation of the Church and at the same time the *intra-personal character* of faith in Christ through the witness of the Holy Spirit.[26]  Indeed the Church and faith for Brunner are inseparable, since he believes that one comes to faith only through the Church or the *ecclesia* in Brunner's terminology; and yet it is just as true to say that one comes to the *ecclesia* only through faith (see V.1.1).  That is to say, faith was related directly to being in the ecclesia.[27]

Consequently, Emil Brunner is convinced that the term *'ecclesia'*, or the fellowship with Christ, may be properly understood with relation to the term faith':  "The *fellowship* is not something which comes subsequently as a goal to which the *religious experience* leads, it is rather given immediately with faith, something indeed which, rightly understood, is identical with faith.  To believe and to become a member

of the body of Christ are one and the same thing".[28]   Thus Brunner

claims that as the *nature* of faith is only fully to be understood in its

relation to term *'justification'* that is expressed as God's verdict

which faith hears and accepts, so the *nature and the reality of the*

*ecclesia* is to be understood only in the same context.   For only the

ecclesia which as the work of the Holy Spirit is the *Body of Christ* is

the "we" that corresponds to justifying faith.[29]   So he claims as

follows:

> It is quite impossible to speak of the Ecclesia without at
> the same time speaking of faith.   The Ecclesia is the
> communion of the faithful (*Communio fidelium*).   It is the
> brotherhood of those who experience their new life as at the
> same time a life with their brothers in Christ.   It may
> indeed be said that justifying faith is the origin of the
> Ecclesia, although this concept was first created by Paul.
> The thing was there before the concept.   The grace of God in
> Jesus Christ, the inconceivable self-bestowing love of God,
> which can be apprehended only in faith and which reaches its
> goal in man, is the same event through which man, the
> autonomous, the self-sufficient, the self-supported, man in
> his self-created solitude, becomes a member of the
> fellowship - of that fellowship which acknowledges in Christ
> the source of its life and has its reality in the Holy
> Spirit.[30]

Here the term 'justification' with which Brunner appeals to Paul

and Reformers, does not indicate in the first instance doctrine at all,

but rather the assurance of a forgiving, reconciling Word addressed

directly to the convicted sinner by a gracious God. In this experience,

according to him, the objective element in revelation i.e. the personal

self-communication of God and the subjective, existential character of

faith meets, and here happens what Calvin speaks of in the first

paragraph of the first chapter of the *Institutes*, namely the perfect co-

ordination of knowledge of God, and knowledge of self, and therefore

also the unity of God's act of revelation and human self-understanding

in existential experience.[31]   In other words, only by identifying myself

with the crucified Christ can I understand what the word 'justification'

means.  Therefore, what Brunner suggests is that two essential elements

of justification must be considered:  First, judgement concerning one's

own sin is spoken from the cross.  Here only, is one reduced to

nothing in himself as he encounters God in the one truly righteous man

who is crucified.  But the sinful man who knows himself thus judged and

who lets himself be identified with the cursed one dying on that cross

hears yet another Word.[32]

Accordingly, when a man as a sinner identifies himself with the man

who was crucified as a blasphemer against God, there also take place an

identification with the crucified Christ in that God bestows upon man

righteousness.  This is a Word through which the condemned sinner is

also identified with the righteous one who is acceptable to God.  So the

meaning of justification is then, in Brunner's words, the authentic

message of the Cross in that God declares the sinner righteous; and thus

once more this man finds his original, authentic being in the Word of

the Creator.[33]

> Here, in what happened on the Cross, the charater of the
> whole Biblical revelation finds its perfect expression: that
> God reveals Himself and deals with us in history, that He
> communicates Himself in actions that speak and words that
> are acts.  The self-communication of God as revelation, as
> the possibility of knowing Him is one thing: His self-
> communications  as self-*surrender and gift of participation*
> in Himself, the *reconciliation*, is the other.  But both are
> one in the death on the Cross, as it is proclaimed to us as
> an imminent event through the Word of Jesus, and as an
> accomplished fact through the Word of the Apostles.  The God
> who speaks to us and deals with us not only proclaims in
> Jesus' obedience unto death that He loves us, but He Himself
> also removes out of the way the barrier that lies between
> Him and us, our sin, and gives us Himself, His love.[34]

In addition to the term 'justification' that has its expression in

a strictly Pauline figure taken from the context of jurisprudence,

Brunner uses another New Testament term 'regeneration' which is employed

to describe the same experience. So his treatment of the term is not as an independent theme, but as a second aspect and a second linguistic expression to deal with 'the new birth'. When rightly understood as a figure and not a natural process,[35] the term 'regeneration' contributes to a richer understanding of the meaning of justifying in Christ as *life*:

> Because in the New Testament the expression "regeneration" means the same fact, the creation of the person through God's historical self-communication, it stands in strict relation to the historical fact in Jesus Christ. But if the figure of birth of begetting is understood in the sense of a natural process - and this danger lies near at hand - then both the historical character of God's self-communication in Jesus Christ and faith are lost. The thing that it emphasizes (if rightly understood) in a specially impressive way in the *totality* of the new creation of the person. This cannot indeed be more trenchantly expressed than by the figure of birth or begetting. One other thing could be said in favour of this expression as over against that of justifying faith, namely that it gives stronger expression to the character of the new being of the person as *life*. Jesus Christ is not only "the Word" but also "the Life", and conjunction with Him is not merely a self-understanding, but life in His love.[36]

Here Brunner uses the term 'regeneration' to indicate the reality and effectiveness of the Creator-Spirit of God through both Word and faith.[37] "Man cannot himself extricate himself from this revolt. For everything that he undertakes is infected with it. Only the Creator can overcome the revolt. He does it in the fact of reconciliation in Christ, when he cancels the revolt through His assurance which is accepted in faith. The self is restored to soundness through justification by faith. The revolt is removed by the forgiveness of sin, and man's original, integrated, undivided self is bestowed upon him once more, when he is declared to be the child of God, the son of God, and this declaration becomes an inner reality as a result of the identification of the self with the self of Christ".[38] Thus a new self-

identity takes place, so that one may say with Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). And assurance of this fact is wrought through the inner testimony of the Spirit who himself "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). In consequence the term 'regeneration' is best understood as a version of 'justification' in the sense of the death of the old man and the formation of Christ in the new man of faith, which means in effect the integration of personality at its very core.[39]

However, the term 'regeneration' most of all means for Brunner the incorperation and inclusion into the life of the ecclesia. It is indeed the indication of the agent who creates the fellowship on the part of those who are thus renewed through the Word of Christ. Thus the miserable solitude of sinful separation from one's fellowman is thereby overcome through incorporation in a new humanity. In this regard, one cannot isolate the new humanity, the ecclesia, which is created in the Word of God. So Brunner claims as follows:

> This integration which ends the disintegration does not happen without at the same time necessarily taking the form, not merely of an integration of the person, but of an integration into the fellowship, or an integration of fellowship. *Through the Word of Christ which is proclaimed to him - in whatever way this may happen - the solitary man, who is most profoundly isolated by sin from his fellow man, is incorporated into the fellowship of faith of the Ecclesia and thus becomes a member of the new humanity.* This also happens in a corresponding personal event, in a two-sided act. In the New Testament this act is Baptism, and just for this reason it is so intimately bound up in the New Testament witness with rebirth. In early Christian times, when a man was apprehended by the witness to Christ, when Christ apprehended him and made him turn towards Himself in faith, he became a member of the Ecclesia through Baptism, through the double act of entry and incorporation. The act of submitting to Baptism and causing oneself to be baptized, of being submerged and of sub-merging oneself, is the appropriate symbol of admission to the Ecclesia, since in fact it occurs through the death, the annihilation and the repentance of the old man. *Through Baptism the spiritual and personal event becomes at the same time a spiritual and social event.*[40]

Accordingly, what Brunner argues here is that the new creation of the person is at the same time creation and icorporation into the true fellowship, the ecclesia. For 'sin' as personal self-isolation from God is, according to him, at the same time self-isolation from one's fellow man. So when through faith in Christ sin is moved, and thus man's heart is opened to God, then it is also opened to his responsibility to the neighbour in that he is really concerned with 'life for one another' the will to fellowship and the capacity for it'. Thus regeneration for Brunner means two things: that we become our 'real' selves, and that we become capable of 'real' fellowship in Christ: "the faith through which we are born again includes the knowledge that the creation of a true self is identical with the creation of a true capacity for fellowship.[41]

At this point, however, Brunner suggests further that our new life in Christ does not mean merely an integration into the fellowship, but it must involve active participation in the winning of the world to Christ. He attempts to maintain this view in his treatment of the term 'conversion' as expressed in the Hebrew word *shub* and the Greek word *metanoia*.[42] It represents a call to a change of heart, a change of mind; but more than that, it is a *total act* in the genuine sense of 'the correspondence on the personal plane which is completed in God's self-communication and in the faith of man'.[43] The life thus reorinented is further attributed to all of those who 'walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Rom. 8:4). Such is descriptive of the truth of our being as created by God.

Hence 'conversion' marks the end of autonomy and the acknowledgement of one's Creator and Lord. In the experience of conversion the Word of God becomes an inner Word in which the Holy

Spirit renders the Christ event truth in a twofold sense: 'truth about God and truth about myself. When that happens God becomes present in me and I become present in God'.[44] So if conversion is really to be repentance as Jesus Christ understood it, then it must prove, according to Brunner, its authenticity by taking the whole of humanity within its concern, as well as by converting men from introversion to extraversion. So he claims as follows:

> We do not refer here merely to the missionary interest. A Christian without such an interest is a contradiction in terms. We refer also to active participation; enlistment in the band of those who wish to win the world for Christ is the consummation of the "change" in which conversion consists. This alone makes it clear to us how falsely negative and falsely individualistic is the traditional interpretation of the words "Repent and be converted". The Christ who calls us to be His disciples call us to this way, which will probably always be a way of the Cross. "Zeal for thine house hath eaten me up" (Psalm 69:9) - this is a word that must always be kept in mind when we think of repentance and conversion.[45]

In addition to the discussion of the term 'justification by faith', Emil Brunner now turns his attention to a treatment of another term 'sanctification' which is descriptive of the work of the Holy Spirit in effecting the new life in Christ. As a work of the holy God, it is the act of setting apart for his own purpose that which otherwise stands in opposition to his will. Like each of the terms treated above he sees it as at once a work of God and a response of man.[46] In the case of sanctification as the work of God, too, it may be described in two different ways, depending upon the particular emphasis intended. So the term may be used to indicate the divine action in that each of the other terms 'justification', regeneration', and 'conversion' is included. In this respect the members of the ecclesia, the body of Christ, are called, according to Brunner, simply 'the elect saints', where Paul uses the concept 'sanctification' as equivalent for justification.[47]

From this point of view, it marks the act by which Christ through the Holy Spirit takes possession of the whole of one's existence, rendering him a saint in the New Testament meaning of that term. Hence though one is still far from perfect, he is nevertheless the peculiar possession of Christ. The Christian existence as such is the work of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies and thus is sanctification.[48]

The term 'sanctification' is also used, in contrast to justification, in a sense of a gradual growth or process under the progressive influence of the Holy Spirit, however. This view of the matter is especially compatible, according to Brunner, with the New Testament understanding of the living God as present and active in the world. He claims as follows:

> Sanctification stands alongside of justification as a second thing, which is not identical with justification. And this is the specific difference, that sanctification, in contrast to justification, is not thought of as a unique event which as such brings into being the new creature, but refers to the manner in which gradually, step by step, by those processes of growth characteristic of all things, a sinful, unsanctified man grows into a sanctified man. Sanctification then corresponds to the gradual growth of the new man as it proceeds under the progressive influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus the action of the divine Spirit within the temporal process in its human, temporal aspect is what is meant, in contrast with justification which declares man righteous as a totality and at one moment.[49]

However, there is an apparent tension in that the Christian is the man who is apprehended by Christ and apprehends Him in justifying faith, who all at once and once for all is united with the Holy Spirit and reconciled on the one hand; and he has yet to become what he already is through the acquittal of justifying grace on the other. Indeed, taken together, these two views of the term indicate a paradoxical tension in the character of the Spirit's activity in human life. The first declares that by God's justifying act one is already that which

according to the second meaning he shall in fact become. But in this double sense, sanctification is a restoration of that which God originally created and pronounced good. So these two meanings of sanctification, in Brunner's view, are not essentially different in effect, for both have to do with bringing to God's disposal that which is otherwise estranged from him.[50]

As already indicated, the term 'sanctification' also indicates the human response to the act of God. If from the divine side it means initially the justifying act of God, from the human side it consists primarily in conversion from an existence in estrangement to a new life in Christ. In the bestowal of grace, God also lays upon us the summons to obedience, which points to the ethical side of sanctification.[51] Thus Brunner finds that there is a divine and a human side to the one happening, a mutuality of grace and obedience: "Man's transformation through the Holy Spirit does not happen without the presence and co-operation of man himself. Sanctification is indeed God's work, for no one can sanctify but He who is Himself the Holy One. Nevertheless His work of sanctification, as the transformation of the self from self-dependence to dependence upon God, cannot bypass the self but must happen through the self, by laying claim to the self. Thus sanctification is in fact also the task of man"[52]

However, he rejects the two extreme positions: on the one hand is a tendency toward *legalistic moralism*, which is unable to free itself from the regulation of binding rules. Such an attitude not only deprives a believer of his rightful liberty in Christ, but also robs him of genuine spontaneity of love in human relations. On the other hand is an equally serious misunderstanding which takes the form of *quietism* in its almost

exclusive emphasis upon gift of grace.[53] Therefore, Emil Brunner

attempts to maintain the position that in Christ there is at once the

supreme gift of grace and the unequivocal summons to obedience.  One is

indeed called first of all to a new being in Christ;  but the new being

manifests itself continually in action which is also new and

transforming.[54]  Sanctification, though never complete in this world,

points nevertheless to that true humanity where one is rightly related

both to God and to his fellows.


In the discussion of the life of new humanity in this section we

have been concerned with Brunner's notion of the work of Christ through

the Holy Spirit.  As George S. Hendry points out, Brunner sees the work

of the Holy Spirit primarily in the representation of the historical

revelation of God in Christ, which faith thus apprehends in a relation

of mediated immediacy.[55]  Brunner himself puts it as follows:

> Belief in the Holy Spirit means:  this *historical* revelation
> of God is the source   of the *inward* personal presence of
> God, through which we, as individual believers, and as a
> community, participate in the life-renewing power of God,
> and indeed only in this way does the historical revelation
> become truth for us.  The New Testament testimony to the
> Holy Spirit is therefore plainly directed toward Christ.
> The Holy Spirit teaches us to understand Him, His truth and
> His work;  through Him the Love of Christ becomes our
> portion and our possession.  Indeed, through the Holy Spirit
> Christ Himself, as "Christ-for-us", becomes "Christ-in-us."
> *The self communication of God is not only accomplished in
> the Historical and the Objective;  He seeks us, our very
> self, our heart.  The self-communication of God wills our
> sanctification, the self-communication of the God who is
> love sets us within His love, and pours His love into our
> hearts.*  Sanctification and communion in love - this is the
> work of the Holy Spirit, the self-communication of God,
> whose nature is Holiness and Love.  The Spirit who dwells
> within us is indeed the Spirit of God, and what He effects
> can therefore be nothing less than the manifestation of the
> life which is His own.  To have the Holy Spirit does not
> mean possessing "something", but "Himself", and in Him we
> have eternal life.[56]

For Emil Brunner, the early Christians were conscious of possessing the *pneuma*, the Holy Spirit, and with this went powers of a non-rational nature. The spirit seizes not merely the understanding, but also the heart, and through the heart penetrates into the deep unconscious level of the soul, and indeed even into the body.[57] Theology, which as its name implies is directed towards what is 'logical', is not an appropriate instrument with which to understand this activity of the Holy Spirit outside logic. Consequently the Holy Spirit has always been more or less the 'stepchild of theology' and his gift of inspiration a 'bugbear' for many theologians.[58] However, the Holy Spirit in the New Testament sense is, so Brunner argues, 'the presence of God which bears witness to, and makes effectual, the historical Christ as a living personal presence. The operation of the Holy Spirit is necessary for the Word about Christ to become the Word of Christ for us, and for the Word of Christ to become the Word of God.'[59] So we *must* speak of the Holy Spirit when we talk of the new life based on faith and of the ecclesia. Brunner claims as follows:

> All the entities of faith are at the same time eschatological entities. The character of "not yet" belongs to the essence of faith, and therefore also to the essence of the Ecclesia. We are redeemed, we "are delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son" (Col.1: 13), but "we wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom.8: 23). We hope for what we do not see, for "we live by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor.5:7). But He who thus makes the past present for us and directs us towards the future is the Holy Spirit. He is the element in which the Ecclesia lives its life, which makes the Christ of the past its present Lord, and which makes the Ecclesia the fellowship of those that wait for Him.[60]

Here again, Brunner utters a protest against the one-sided intellectualism of theology: from fear of a possible imbalance it despises the warning of the apostle Paul and 'quenches the Spirit'. In this way it becomes a 'hindrance' and even 'stifles' the Holy Spirit, at

least with regard to the fullness of its dynamic and enthusiastic manifestation.[61] And indeed to talk of the Holy Spirit for Brunner is thus not a residuum of ancient mythical conceptions of an animistic or dynamistic kind, but an expression of the experience of faith itself, and the necessary consequence in theological reflection of the knowledge of sin and the bestowal of grace.[62] So Brunner discusses, to a greater or lesser extent, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, especially, in the respect of the notion of the ecclesia because he believes that the ecclesia is primarily not a mere institutional organisation: rather it is 'a reality composed of personal relationships and thus it is the new life which originates through the Spirit of Jesus Christ among men - a life which can only be hinted at by such words as faith, love, hope, justification, regeneration, and communion in Christ, but which can never be expressed exhaustively.' This ecclesia, in short, is the fellowship of men who have been renewed through Christ and are united with their Lord. In it they find a unity involving two principles which are entirely separated from each other: truth and fellowship.[63]

Accordingly, as the body of Christ, the ecclesia is neither organization nor institution, but persons who are members one of another under the headship of its living Lord. Only in the presence of Christ dwelling within it through his Word and his Spirit does the ecclesia have its being. For this reason, truth and fellowship are here experienced as inseparable. Brunner sees them in this context as 'one and the same thing.'[64] Furthermore, it is a visible fellowship which binds men not only to Christ, but also to one another. It is that new humanity which is described in the New Testament as the life of reconciliation.[65] Hence even as the purely personal fellowship that it is it possesses offices and uses sacraments. According to Brunner's

claim, the ecclesia in the New Testament *possesses* institutions, but *is* not an institution; it *has* order, but *is* not order. The order within it forms 'something wholly spontaneous', without a determining quality of its own, and is always merely 'provisional', produced by the necessity of the moment and disappearing with it. It is the messianic and spiritual element which prevents what is spontaneous from hardening into institutions and thus leading to rise of a fixed Church law.[66]

However, the transformation of the ecclesia into a Church very soon began. To the extent to which the messianic and spiritual elements disappeared, and the attempt was made to protect and replace what was disappearing, the New Testament ecclesia became, in Brunner's view, an institution and therefore a Church.[67] As a result, none of the existing Churches and sects is identical with the ecclesia of the New Testament, but on the other hand none of the existing Churches and sects is without some essential element of the New Testament ecclesia. So what can be expected of the present institutional Churches is, according to Brunner, only that they assist the coming into being of the ecclesia, or at least do not hinder it. In other words, the institutional Churches have to serve as instruments of the Holy Spirit in order that through the preaching of the Word of God men may come to believe in Jesus Christ and in this way the ecclesia, in the sense of a purely personal fellowship, would come into being. But the present institutional Churches place great obstacles in the way of the achievement of this aim. Therefore, what Brunner suggests in order to the mission of the church is that the much-vaunted rediscovery of the Church must be taken place instead of a dangerous tendency of present-day ecclesiasticism. At the same time let the Church be the Church in order to overcome the false objectivism in the Church[68] and then the reciprocal personal response in the

relationship between God and man has to be restored.[69]  Such a proposal

for Brunner necessarily raises a question of the true nature of the

church.  Before its investigation we shall also discuss the picture of

the New Testament ecclesia in which there is something else associated

with his emphasis on the *personal* element.


**2.    The missionary community of faith**


2.1   The Pauline conception of the ecclesia and its embodiment

(a)    The concept of the Pauline ecclesia.    Paul's concept of the

ecclesia is, according to Brunner, very closely linked with his teaching

about the work of Christ and about faith.[70]  Faith for Paul means faith

in Christ in whom God reveals Himself and descends to humanity as His

free grace for man.  The primitive Christian community confessed Jesus

as the Christ, the *Kyrios* or the Son of God.  The proclamation of Jesus

as the *Kyrios-Christos* was developed especially by the Apostle Paul into

the full kerygma of Christ and was of such a kind that this witness was

approved by the other original Apostles, whose thinking was entirely

determined by the Old Testament and contemporary Judaism.[71]  If they did

not agree with him in everything, it was not his proclamation of *Kyrios*

*Christos* that roused their opposition, but his teaching about the law.[72]

Then the proclamation of *Kyrios Christos* that Jesus was the decisive

saving act of God was their common confession of faith.


Thus it was in this faith that they understood what God had done in

Jesus Christ.    In Him God's revelation, reconciliation, salvation,

forgiveness of sin, promise of eternal life, fulfilment of all things in

His own life had been accomplished.    Jesus Christ was for them God's

deed, God's word, God's revelation, God's approach, God's covenant with

them. It was only by the grace of God that they had been called as the children of God in Jesus Christ who is not only God's righteousness but also their righteousness.[73] Their faith was therefore directed not to a doctrine but to Jesus Himself, as in this proclamation He had taken possession of them as the truth and the reality of God, and as He was Himself present to them in faith, and bore witness to Himself as the living Lord.[74] Faith is now above all the hearing and obedient, trustful acceptance of the assurance of God who thereby admits men to His own children and only thereby makes them really His own. Paul characterizes faith as the 'organ' by which man grasps divine grace.[75]

Brunner thus claims that Paul's concept of the ecclesia is the implicit consequence of both the conception of faith and the conception of Christ: "Ecclesiology is Christology and Christology Ecclesiology".[76] The ecclesia for Paul is the 'Body of Christ'. Paul describes the relationship of the ecclesia to Christ as body, bride, building, in Christ, with Christ.[77] The decisive advance on the concept of the ecclesia was taken by Paul with his view of the ecclesia as Body of Christ. His originality of experience as Body of Christ is contestable and his deeper penetration into the idea of the ecclesia is evident.[78] As F. F. Bruce points out, the relation between Paul's conception of the ecclesia as the Body of Christ and individual believers as members of that body may go back to the implication of the risen Lord's complaint: "Why do you persecute me?" (Act. 9:4).[79]

The ecclesia as the Body of Christ has its members whose cohesive unity is Christ, the Lord Himself. However, the ecclesia is more than the sum of believers; she is a mysterious unity, as is expressed in the metaphor of the body which is also not a total but an organic unity of

its individual parts. The ecclesia is thus a unity because she is in Christ. This unity would be the authentic organism or body, because we can see how something invisible makes the visible part into a unity, and how it is possible to say, "the whole has precedence over the parts".[80] The risen Christ brings about this unity through His Spirit who operates with overwhelming, revolutionary, and transforming result. The revelation of the Spirit was the mysterious power which made the fellowship, consisting of many separate individuals, into a unity, a single body. This body has essentially the differentiation of individual organs because there is no body without members. However, the body at the same time belongs to its membership.

This authentic organism thus has a living structure capable of functioning. As in the organism there was in the ecclesia a regulation of the functions assigned by the Holy Spirit to the various individual members who were thus equipped to perform their special services with a gift of the Spirit.[81] The metaphor of the organism illuminates one aspect of the reality, that is, the dependence of all kinds of ministration on the one Lord while at the same time maintaining the co-functioning of all. The Head of a body is something different from the ruler of a people. Both sides of the reality are expressed and must obviously be expressed, in order to do justice at one and the same time to the vertical and the horizontal relationship - to bring out the mysterious vital fellowship on the one hand and to show that it is the one Spirit who effects the differentiation of functions on the other. With the expression of the ecclesia as 'Body of Christ' Paul thus knows, according to Brunner, nothing of other kind of the ecclesia such as an institution, a constitution and a constitutional order.[82]

Thus it is Christ, the Kyrios, the living and present Lord who binds believers together. He does this through His Spirit. The possession of the Spirit proves to believers that they are already removed out of the 'natural' state of existence and transferred into the 'supernatural'.[83] For they are in the Spirit, that is to say, they are no longer in the 'flesh'. For being in the Spirit is only a form of manifestation of the being-in-Christ.[84] "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new".(2 Cor.5:17). Thus Christian existence in Christ means an existence in which social, racial and other barriers within the human family are done away with. The Holy Spirit who arms him for prayer and service is the same one who binds him in heart with the other Christians, and so he is longing for personal fellowship with others in faith in Christ. The same Spirit creates faith. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1Cor.12:3). Conversely the other position is also true that as a consequence of justifying faith "the Spirit is poured into our hearts" (Rom.5:5). Thus, Spirit and faith form in any case an indissoluble unity.[85] Faith comes, however, into being through the witness about Jesus Christ, through the Word of reconciliation, and through the Word of the Cross, in whom a new way of salvation 'apart from the law' (Rom. 3:21) is opened up.

Through faith in Christ we receive the love of God as our new life.[86] We ourselves become loving. In faith we know that God loves us from eternity and for eternity. It is through faith in Christ that we know that we are saved without our effort, out of this evil world and age, out of the depravity of sin and death. It is God's grace alone. His mercy, His boundless love, His election alone is the basis of our salvation by God.[87] This love of God is the Cross of Christ in which

God's self-communication causes the man who receives it to communicate himself, to open his heart to other men, and to give himself to them.[88] The Holy Spirit then binds them not only merely to God but also to each other. Thus the fellowship of love, brotherhood in Christ, is also the spiritual character of new life.

Paul finds the ecclesia in existence as something which results from the *kerygma* and from the reception of the Holy Spirit, and he recognizes agape as the necessary 'fruit of the Spirit',[89] for the fellowship of Jesus lives under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. that is the secret of its life, of its communion and of its power. In this regard, Paul's ecclesiology for Brunner is also pneumatology.[90] Like faith the ecclesia at the same time comes into being as a result of proclamation of the gospel. The gospel for Paul is power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, for in it God's way of righteousness is revealed through faith for faith, as it is written 'He who through faith is righteous shall live'.[91] Paul has thus claimed that men and women are justified in God's sight by faith in Christ, not by keeping the law, and that this justification is bestowed on them by God as a gift of grace, not as a reward of merit.[92]

This gospel is for Paul the universal need for mankind who is affirmed to be morally bankrupt in God's sight. In this respect Gentiles and Jews for all the differences between them stand on one level. If there is to be any salvation for either Jews or Gentiles, then it must be based not on ethical achievement but on the grace of God. For this need God has made provision in Christ.[93] Christ is set before them in the gospel as the one who by his self-sacrifice and death

has made full reparation for their sins. The benefits of the atonement thus procured may be appropriated by faith and only by faith in Christ, the grace of God. So if the ecclesia comes into being as the proclamation of the gospel, then it is the community of faith in Christ established and given by God.[94] The ecclesia is therefore the true Israel, the chosen people of God, which is formed, grows and continues to exist through the call to salvation, wherever the call is accepted in obedience of faith.

The life-principle of the community is thus the risen Lord who presents through His Spirit. It is through the fellowship of the Spirit that the ecclesia is moulded as the brotherhood in Christ, the community of love. The Spirit is also the present gift of salvation and the earnest of that which is to come.[95] Thus the ecclesia is at the same time the Messianic community[96] in the twofold sense that she waits the coming of Christ and His glory and that as the Body of this Head she belongs already to Christ and His new world.[97] The ecclesia is, indeed, the fellowship of saints in hope which is the communion of those called out of this world by God and set apart and renewed by the Holy Spirit and of the people united with one another. As the communion rejoicing in the here-and-now presence of Saviour, the ecclesia at the same time yearns for the future consummation with tense expectancy. Here the ecclesia is for Paul the eschatological community.[98]

According to Brunner both faith and the ecclesia come, however, into being not only as a result of the proclamation of the gospel but also as a result of repentance and obedience.[99] Thus Baptism as the outward sign of repentance is an integral part of the rise of the ecclesia. Where the Word of salvation in Christ is received in trust

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and obedience, the ecclesia happens and takes shapes by necessity. With this fact Baptism as an act in contrast to this inner event has no 'independent significance'.[100] For it merely marks on the serious character and reality of this inner event which demands to be made public to be confessed on the one hand and it manifests the acknowledgement of its authenticity on the part of the already existing community or on the part of the man who has proclaimed Christ on the other.

Here Brunner understands with the Pauline concept of the ecclesia that Baptism is the 'sign' (common to all the Christian churches) of membership of the ecclesia.[101] Therefore, the full sense of Baptism can only be realized where it is understood as a dying with Christ and therefore where Christ' death as having taken place for our salvation is believed in.[102] Baptism is then the event which points to the grace and the prevenience of Him who is the foundation of the ecclesia.[103] It is a seal which to both the part of the believer and that of the preacher is imprinted as witness of the inner event. Beyond this there can be no any independent significance to the act of Baptism.[104] However, there is at the same time the link between the spiritual sense and the social sense of the ecclesia. For in the act of Baptism happens visibly what already has happened invisibly through the Word and faith. The inner membership of the Body of Christ becomes then visible in this sign.

Therefore there is, according to Brunner, no question of Paul's thought that this sign itself effects something which had not previously been effected by the Word. Baptism is not itself a factor in salvation except that it makes visible an invisible event that is the visible reception and entry into the community. It belongs to this inner event

and constitutes its consummation. Thus on this opinion any sacramental interpretation of Baptism becomes impossible because it is not thought of as an agent of independent significance. However, Baptism with the idea of sacraments which is developed and associated with the saving events in Christ by the later church, forms the institutional development of the church and then the primitive Christian community becomes a 'church' that Brunner indicates first and foremost a sacramental Church.[105] However, this does not deny that the visibility of the ecclesia is one of its essential marks. If we belong to Christ, then we belong to the ecclesia just as necessarily as the reality of faith depends on its expressing itself effectually in love. In this regard, entering into the ecclesia means belonging to Christ. Reception into the ecclesia is therefore the necessary final act of proclamation which proves its effectiveness. Thus Word, Spirit, faith, love, Baptism and ecclesia form, so Brunner claims, and indivisible unity.[106]

(b)    The embodiment of the Pauline ecclesia. From the understanding of Paul's teaching about the ecclesia Emil Brunner claims that the ecclesia as 'Body of Christ' is at once something which can be apprehended by faith and something which is visible even to the unbeliever as a social fact.[107] The ecclesia lives in the new life which she has in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, keeps alive the message about Him and spreads it through the whole world. For Brunner, the ecclesia is then the fellowship of believers in Christ; and it is not merely a fellowship that is believed in but also it is that which is experienced in manifold ways. It ought to be and is experienced in the mutual exchange of spiritual gifts, in mutual exhortation, in the common participation in divine worship and the Lord's Supper, and in the active love of the brethren among themselves. In consequence it is also

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experienced from community to community by visitation and letter through greetings and mutual aid. This fellowship not only grows out of and exists by faith but also in its effect is similarly seen and perceived with joy and gratitude as faith, hope and love.[108] Indeed it is shown to us in the New Testament not only as an object of faith,[109] but as an experienced reality working itself out visibly in practice.[110] For the ecclesia is an objective reality corresponding to its subjective faith in Jesus Christ, and thus to the sphere of actual and realized fellowship with Christ. Therefore, the ecclesia is constituted by the fellowship in Christ of those who are united with each other through Christ and it is as real as is their zealous and brotherly love of each other as are the sacrifices which they make to each other in money and property, time and strength, security and life.[111]

However, the social aspect of the ecclesia, so Brunner argues, is not of itself an 'institutional church' rather it is determined by its spiritual character as a fellowship of love in Christ. The life of the ecclesia is the life in the agape of God.[112] For the ecclesia as (the fellowship in Christ) abides in love, agape, which is the self-giving of God. The love of God does not inquire into the character of the recipient but it asks what he needs. Therefore it is basically independent of the conduct of the other person. It is not conditional but absolute. So love is the real God-likeness of man for which he has been created. In so far as love is in man he really resembles God and shows himself to be the child of God. This love is really human and that which is really human is thus the divine as something that is simply received. Through love true fellowship is realized; in love man is only really free and creative; and thus love is the life itself.[113] This love is, according to Brunner, life from God, with God, for God,

and life with and for other men.  It is, therefore, the most precious of all the gifts of the Spirit because it is itself the life of the Spirit.[114]

This central significance of love in Paul's teaching of the new life in Christ can be shown in various ways.  Just as faith can be called the mode of existence of the new life, so also can love.  The faith which saves is for Paul the 'faith that works through love' (Gal.5:6).[115]  Love is thus mentioned together with faith and hope as the real heart and content of the Christian life.  Love is the first fruit of the Spirit.  Love therefore explains what it means to be in Christ, to be in the Spirit, to be in the faith.[116]  In love is realized the freedom from sin, to which believers have been called in Christ, in it the demand of the law is fulfilled, which has become possible by the Spirit; it is the content of the law of Christ.  The law of love is thus the law of Christ.[117]  Here this love constitutes for Paul the vital element of the Christian community.[118]  For it is in love that the ecclesia as 'the Body' of which Christ is the Head is built up and that its members together are rooted and grounded.  For this reason love can be called the 'bond of perfection' and indeed in its own way it forms the unity of the ecclesia and enters into the service of the building up of the ecclesia.

So if the ecclesia is to be a 'brotherhood' and to live out of the consciousness of being a unique fellowship, then it must go together with love.  Since love just as faith and hope is the mode of existence of the Christian community, it must reveal itself in this bond to the brethren in placing itself at the service of the upbuilding of the ecclesia.  It is in this love that the ecclesia for Brunner is

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characterised as brotherhood in Christ.  At the same time through this love and fellowship in Christ the ecclesia is visible as a social reality even to the unbeliever.  This social reality is however something different in its character.  Every social reality has a definite form and then has a definite order.  For this reason the ecclesia as a social entity has also its order.  However, this order is, so Brunner claims, not legal one, rather it is primarily spiritual one:

> Every "social reality" has a definite form and therefore
> also a definite order.  The remarkable and unique thing
> about the order of the ecclesia according to Pauline
> doctrine and in the Pauline communities, is that this order
> is a spiritual and therefore not legal one.  Paul expressly
> says that the one Spirit gives to each member *his* position
> and *his* function.  Since Christ the Lord rules, there are
> no rulers.[119]

In this regard, Maurice Goguel points out that the Christians of the first generation felt themselves brothers but brothers 'in Christ', that is to say, their brotherhood did not depend on some humanitarian conception but the love of God in Christ.[120]


Emil Brunner does not deny that there are persons to whom an official duty has been allocated i.e. the *episcopoi* (who are mentioned only on one single occasion by Paul).[121]  However, this differentiation of the gifts of grace (*charismata*) does not create any differences in the sense of jurisdiction' or 'rank'.  Paul knows nothing of Presbyterian or Episcopal Order.  It was, according to Brunner, an error to translate the word 'diakoniai' by 'offices'.[122]  For the Spirit does not creat offices but ministries.  The Spirit pours the love of God into the hearts of believers and brings them increasingly into conformity with the character of Christ.  In this respect F.F. Bruce points out that the central principle of the 'law of the Spirit' for Paul is the love of God in Christ, which is first descending vertically and implanted in the heart by the Spirit and then flowing out into the lives

of others.[123]   Therefore, not only the believers voluntarily 'bear one another's burdens',[124] but also they have their responsibility of life in Christ to others.   Here the spiritual order of the ecclesia then comes from the power of love and the working of the Holy Spirit who is given by Christ and has taken possession of Christians in their wills and their being.[125]

Accordingly, the ecclesia does not originate through order nor live by right order, but solely in the Spirit of Christ.[126]  She lives by the word, the Spirit and the love of God; and from this, as Paul claims, it derives and determines its order.   Thus Brunner argues that Paul's conception of the ecclesia is different from that of the primitive Jerusalem community which had taken over its Presbyterian order from the synagogue as such.   Its difference lies in the fact that it corresponds to the fellowship with Christ, and thus is not merely an object of faith but an object which, although in the last resort it can be understood only by faith, can be perceived by everyone.   Thus faith in Christ gives rise to a fellow-ship in which men share their life in love, that is what Brunner calls the 'ecclesia'.[127]

Following to Paul's basic concept of the ecclesia, Brunner thus claims with Hans Von Campenhausen that the Spirit is regarded as 'the organic principle of the Christian community'.[128]  There is no need then for any determined church order with its regulations, its demands and prohibitions.   As a matter of principle there is for Paul no ruling class in the ecclesia, and even the spiritual men are not regarded as a spiritual 'aristocracy'.[129]  The community for Paul is not regarded as a hierarchical and stratified organization, but as a homogeneous and living cosmos of free spiritual gifts which serve and supplement each

other.  Thus its members can never exalt themselves over against each other or harden themselves against each other.  For the Spirit and love are sovereign, the ecclesia is already perfect in Christ and in need of absolutely no further organization.  Even though particular concrete arrangements and ministries may arise within the life of the congregation, they do not as such establish any new system, any sacred law.[130]  Here the most striking picture of Paul's Christian community is the complete lack of any legal system and the exclusion on principle of all formal authority within the community.[131]

Thus a question can be raised immediately.  Is the ecclesia which Paul teaches possible?  The answer to the question is for Brunner affirmative.  Brunner claims that the ecclesia that Paul depicts is both an ideal and a reality.  It is what is true and real 'in Jesus Christ' and thus 'in faith'.[132]  For it is the real fellowship of real men which Paul ever and again saw coming into being as a result of this kerygma about Christ.  According to him, Paul recognizes that the local Christian community such as the Corinthian or Philippian is the 'Body of Christ' as a work of the Holy Spirit.  That is to say, it is a fellowship of the Spirit whose ordering is determined only by the Holy Spirit in as much as the Spirit allots to each his special gift and, corresponding to it his special service: "There is not in addition a further 'organization', for the Body of Christ organizes itself.  It is just for this reason that it is called the *Body* of Christ".[133]  The ecclesia as Body of Christ has, therefore, no legal regulations which are the essence of law.[134]  Rather it is the fellowship through the Holy Spirit(κοινωνία πνεύματος)in which its members are knit together in an organization which includes both equality and difference.[135]  For the fellowship of Christ lives under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

which is the secret of its life, of its communion and of its power.[136]

So what we can say is that it is the mystery of the ecclesia as the fellowship of the Spirit that has an spiritual living order without being legally organized.[137] And the order, that is intrinsic to the fellowship springing from the Holy Spirit was *diakonia* or service as flowed from the true faith revealed itself in a new relationship to one's brother.[138] However the organized hierarchy presupposing the office had, so Brunner claims, neither the character of brotherly communion nor had it a unity wherein equality was consistent with differentiation - a unity characterized by reciprocal subordination. Therefore, the only valid rule is: "Whatever you do, do it in the way it demands, neither perfunctorily nor flippantly but with a holy seriousness. Even the overseers are not simply 'officials', but like all the rest, they are those whom a special gift of the Spirit enables to lead in a particular service-whether a specific kind of appointment was then added to it or not. Thus there is specially urged upon them not an authoritative, ponderous behaviour but a serving disposition."[139]

This charismatic order, according to Brunner, works in the ecclesia as the Body of Christ which is a mystical unity of visible earthly persons with an unseen, heavenly, and yet present Person who is their head and the eternal ever-present Christ.[140] Thus Brunner believes that this is precisely the 'miracle' of the ecclesia which Paul and other Christian themselves regarded with ever renewed astonishment.[141] Even in the worldwide range of the ecclesia this miracle did happen and thus there is neither need of legal order nor hierachic organization.[142] For instance, the community of Colosse knew itself as the same Body of Christ as it recognized in those other distant communities of Macedonia

and Achaea in the One Lord, Jesus Christ, who binds them up as 'one Body' through His Spirit, a spirit of fellowship. According to Brunner, Paul knows therefore nothing of the idea of the Church as an 'institution'.[143] Rather it is the fellowship of Christ, the brotherhood, whose cohensive unity is Christ, the Lord Himself, who binds up not only its individual members but also each community of Jesus Christ through His Spirit. So Emil Brunner put it as follows:

> Although the brotherhood is composed of quite ordinary men, it is not ordered by the will and the law of men, but simply and solely by the Spirit (pneuma), His gifts of grace (Charismata) and His ministries (diakoniai).[144]

Here Emil Brunner claims that the spiritual brotherhood of the Pauline Christian community has to be acknowledged as the necessary outcome of Paul's understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and therefore as the necessary norm for all time of the believing fellowship of Christians, who are conscious that they have their foundation in Jesus Christ alone.[145] However, the opinion of the Pauline community that was more concerned with the fellowship of Christ in faith through the Holy Spirit was not only misunderstood but also forgotten by the later church which rose out of the ecclesia as early as the second century.[146] For instance, the church of Matthew which leaned towards Judaism developed an idea of the church which is no longer totally based on Paul's pneumatological thought but is expressed largely in terms of church law even though it still keeps partly the Pauline formulation of the ecclesia.[147] Furthermore the church of Pastoral Epistles whose pseudonymous letters ascribed to Paul hardly mentioned, according to Brunner, the work of the Holy Spirit in the sense of the reality of the ecclesia which is the central concept of Pauline ecclesiology. Instead in its place the office of the bishop is portrayed and eulogized in a manner unthinkable in a genuinely Pauline community.[148] At the same

time the formation of the canon of the New Testament has a cumulative effect to the fact.[149]

As a result, there is a disagreement between a Catholic doctrine basing itself upon the Jewish Christian and post-Pauline sources and a Reformed doctrine which appeals to the genuine Paul, for example.[150] Here he attempts to distinguish two terms the 'ecclesia' and the 'Church'. On Brunner's view the church has turned from the ecclesia into a governing institution which is an obstacle to the Christian community. He regards therefore the unresolved problem of the nature of the church comes from the fact that the connection between what the New Testament terms 'ecclesia' and what we call the 'church' is not clear. The church is no longer primarily a communion of persons, but rather an institution as such.[151] In this regard, Brunner argues that the course of the 'Great Church' has been paralled by the history of 'spiritualism', which has fought against all institutionalising and legalising, and sometimes against every concrete historical form of the church, appealing against all mediations and sacraments, offices, ordinances and institutions to the direct and personal activity of the Holy Spirit. This spiritualism has usually supported its polemic against the institutional church by painting an idealised picture of the primitive Christian community in order to call the former back to the purity of its origins. Although it may be hopeless and in fact impossible to seek for the New Testament concept of the ecclesia, however there can be, so Brunner claims, something clear at once when we see the theological consequences from this historical discussion of the relationship between the ecclesia and the church.[152]

So he frequently refers to Rudolf Sohm's thesis that the nature of

the ecclesia is incompatible with the nature of law in terms of the Pauline understanding of the ecclesia which arises from his understanding of Christ and faith in Christ.[153] Thus Brunner puts it as follows:

> It is proved, by our knowledge that the Pauline understanding of the Ekklesia arises from his understanding of Christ and faith in Christ, and radically excludes the possibility that any element of law should be regarded as essential to the Ekklesia. The Ekklesia of Paul is both visible and invisible, but even as visible it is shaped by faith in the invisible Lord and, what is more, as a brotherhood, as a spiritual organism free from the law, which excludes every legal element.[154]

Therefore, Brunner claims that the essence of the New Testament ecclesia is precisely the freedom and spirituality of its structure in contrast to all legalism.[155] On the basis of this argument he develops his concept of the ecclesia from Paul's teaching of the ecclesia and his community, which is the spiritual brotherhood in faith in Christ and which is something unique in terms of its spiritual freedom in Christ against all kinds of the legal institution that threatens the real nature of the ecclesia. However, it is for Brunner an undesirable starting point that through the ecclesiastical development of the community of Jesus Christ whose change takes place in tiny but continuous stages, 'the ecclesia of the New Testament', especially that of Paul, that is the spiritual brotherhood in faith in Christ through the Holy Spirit, was replaced by the legal institution which in actual fact - as Catholic theories assert - 'develop' from obscure origins which are already partly latent in the new Testament ecclesia.[156]

## 2.2 The basic conceptions of the church

Brunner is convinced that the ecclesia of the New Testament is not a mere ideal but the reality in which as apostles of Jesus Christ they live, the reality apart from which their apostolic office and their witness to Jesus Christ would cease to be effective. Indeed it is the objective reality corresponding to their subjective faith in Jesus Christ. "The ecclesia is the sphere of actual and realized fellowship with the Christ - a fellowship which is as real as their faith and love and hope are real. It is constituted by the fellowship in Christ of those who are united with each other through Christ and it is as real as is their zealous and brotherly love of each other, as are the sacrifices which they make to each other in money and property, time and strength, security and life".[157] So the ecclesia is a life of sharing.[158] 'Sharing' means here the same as *diakonia* that the New Testament depicts as every form and manner of giving oneself and giving from one's own. It may mean also material sacrifice for the ecclesia. The *koinonia* of the ecclesia for Brunner is expressed through the *diakonia* of the ecclesia.[159]

So what Brunner argues is that the false objectivism in the church has to be overcome, and the mutual personal response in the relationship between God and man has to be restored. The New Testament provided, according to Brunner, principles for congregations to examine themselves with respect to their being genuine churches: whether they held fast to the Word, whether they were in obedience, whether their faith was alive, for example. It has also shown to us that the ecclesia is not soley a disordered mass impelled by the Spirit. Even as the purely personal fellowship that it is it possesses offices and uses sacraments. However, the present institutional church that turned so much toward

doctrine, so little toward discipleship, is a chief reason for its weakness. A church that detaches itself from the world only in speaking, even if it were speaking in the purest biblical doctrine, but not in action and love, becomes unworthy of belief to the world.[160]

In Brunner's view the false objectivism has always been the real ecclesiastical danger within the church since its beginning. It attempts to define the church as 'establishment' or 'institution'. Hence the one-sided objective concept of the church is especially to blame for the church's no longer understanding itself as a missionary church, for instance. On the other hand, the false subjectivism attempts to maintain the church with dissolving tendency, which more seriously jeopardized the welfare of the revelation, even though as reaction it has often had a certain beneficial effect and even though it was often in the form under which biblical truth would blossom out against torpidity. For Brunner, objectivism leads to torpidity whereas subjectivism leads to dissolution. What is torpid can be awakened again to life; but what is dissolved is no longer in existence.[161]

Instead Brunner attempts to intimately relate the concept of the church to his term 'personal correspondence'. Hence the ecclesia of the New Testament is primarily nothing other than a fellowship of persons sharing in Christ and the Holy Spirit. As the body of Christ, it is neither organization nor institution, but persons who are members one of another under the headship of its living Lord. At the same time it is a visible fellowship which binds men not only to Christ, but also to one another. In this regard, Brunner finds that there have been three classical definitions of the Church. They are the company of the elect, the body of Christ, and the communion of saints *(coetus electorum,*

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*corpus Christi, communio sanctorum)*. Each of them contains a different standpoint, and expresses something essential concerning the church's basis and nature, but no one of them is complete in itself.

(a) The company of the elect *(coetus electorum)*. According to Brunner, the basis of the ecclesia lies in the eternal election. The creation of the world is connected with the decree of election by the fact that mediator of both is the Son, whom God 'loved before the foundation of the world'.[162] He is the Son-Logos, who, as the Incarnate One, gives us both the knowledge of election and the knowledge that the world has been created *through* the son, *in* the Son and *unto* the Son. Thus the origin, meaning, and purpose of the world are only to be perceived where faith in the historical revelation of the love of God, in the calling to Divine sonship through the Crucified, becomes the assurance of eternal election.[163] The truth which concerns the creation is - both in point of time and of fact - subordinate to the truth which concerns election. In this regard, Brunner claims that man was created in love.

> From the very outset, the Biblical idea of creation
> includes the special relation of God to man, namely, that
> God reveals Himself to man in His Word as the Lord. The God
> who reveals himself is always the God whose face is turned
> toward man; the *theanthropos theos*.[164]

God's plan for the world and humanity is revealed in Christ. Here there is a fellowship of Christians in Christ exists. For God has willed from eternity that it should be so, and He did not create men as isolated individuals intelligible in themselves and living in their own strength, but as beings to whom He wills to give His own life, binding them to one another by this gift.[165] In Christ this is God's decree in creation and at the same time His decree of salvation. He plans to

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create men for fellowship with Him in Christ.  But men have come into
conflict with the divine destiny as their unity with the Creator. In
consequence also their bond with one another has been destroyed.  In
fact, men do not live in love.  They always live in contradiction not
only to the will of God, but also to his own creaturely nature, in
contradiction with himself.[166]  In order to cancel out this corruption
and to save men from the miserable destiny, God has sent us the Saviour.
"God's plan of Creation has", Brunner says "become the plan of
Redemption".[167]  In Christ we know God's love which wants to communicate
itself to man who has become a sinner.  By this love God wills to be our
Lord in spite of sinners.  The separation between God and man can only
come only from man.  For this reason God sends us His Son.  God's will
revealed in Christ is a creative will.

So what Brunner claims here is that in Christ not only is something
given us to know but also a new fact is created, a new humanity
established.  This new humanity is the ecclesia of Jesus Christ as God's
people, 'the elect people.'  They are the company of the election for
fellowship with God in His Love.  For this reason the fellowship of the
ecclesia with Christ and the fellowship of Christians with one another
has, for Brunner, its basis in the eternal loving will of God.[168]  In
this respect, the word 'election' has the same meaning of the ecclesia:

> The word (in Greek) is *eclectos*.  And the word eclectos has
> the same meaning as ecclesia.  The chosen ones, the elected
> ones, the ecletoi, are forming the ecclesia.  No, that's the
> wrong expression, they don't *form* the ecclesia, they are
> *formed into* the ecclesia, into the people of God, by the
> election of God.[169]

So Brunner claims that the church (in the sense of the term
'ecclesia') is primarily seen in contrast to any notion of a
sociological institution.[170]  And he puts it as follows:

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In no other way can it - as the brotherhood of Christians - understand its existence and nature, especially since (as the world must see it) it is by no means yet this new humanity, but only a little flock in the midst of a world in which the love of God counts for nothing. Its claim to be the new, the redeemed humanity, must therefore appear to the world as a grotesque piece of self-conceit. The Ekklesia must indeed concede the point, not only on account of its smallness but also on account of its own imperfection, that this claim to be the new humanity sounds incredible. And yet it knows tht such it *is*. It knows because it understands itself, not in terms of its visible appearance, but in terms of its (invisible) eternal ground.[171]

Here the church for Brunner is the little flock of Christ's redeemed as a chosen people of God and the vanguard of the kingdom of God, of the new humanity united with God and in God. In this respect, the church is not a sociological entity. It is a spiritual entity[172]

(b) The Body of Christ *(corpus Christi)*. Brunner claims that the origin of the ecclesia is known by the fellowship through the *historical Christ, Jesus*.[173] The eternal will of God is known only in the history of Jesus Christ. For this reason it cannot be recognized in neither mystical vision nor speculative way. Actually Jesus Himself came to the fishers by the Galilean lake and called them out *(ek-klesia)* for fellowship with Him. Only He chose them to be His disciples and apostles to follow Him. He gathered around Himself a body of His own to whom "it is given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God in contrast to them that are without".[174] Therefore it was not they that united themselves to form a people of Christ, but this same Lord who united them. Thus, in Brunner's opinion, the beginning of the ecclesia started when Jesus called them to follow Him. And on the last evening He established them as the new Israel under the 'New Covenant'.[175] This covenant confirmed by His broken body and His blood to be shed for them. Therefore their membership rooted in Him was historically established in the making of this Covenant: "His 'Follow me' was the beginning of

their corporate existence over against the world, first as a band of disciples, and later as a community bearing witness to Christ, the Risen One."[176]

After His death on the Cross and after His resurrection it was the experience of the Holy Spirit which caused the disciple-fellowship to think of itself as 'the body of Christ'. For, as during His earthly life He was its Lord and Head, so was He now also invisibly but really 'the Head and we the members.[177] The Holy Spirit creates the living organism for Himself and rules them by assigning to each member his spiritual gift *charisma* and thereby his service. In fact this is a living experience and reality for every one in ecclesia. According to Brunner, when Paul says in I Corinthians 12 of the living organism, he does not teach the fact that the Christian should believe it, but rather he expresses it as an experience of the faith of all.[178] They thus know that they are the one body whose Head is Christ, and whose members they all are through this living experience. Therefore, they experienced as an indubitable reality this togetherness which bound them together in one ecclesia where the place of the visible Lord had been taken by the invisible Lord present in His representative, the Paraclete. This is an experience of faith only for those who through faith are in Christ.

Thus Brunner argues that what one has to believe in the ecclesia was an idea that never would have entered their heads. There is not even a single word to indicate this in the New Testament. "So we, being many , *are* one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:5). So where Christ is, there is the church. And the church is wherever Jesus Christ is, for it is the fact of His Presence among men which creates community in faith and love.[179] At the same time they

acknowledge the same reality in other congregations *ekklesiai*: the unity

of the body of Christ created by the invisible Lord. The ecclesia is

the sphere of actual and realized fellowship with the Christ. It is

constituted by the fellowship in Christ of those who are united with

each other through Christ.[180] Brunner thus concludes that the unity of

the ecclesia for them was no dogma of faith, but a living experience,

just like the nature of their own brotherhood. In their faith in Christ

and in the experience of the Holy Spirit the social character of the

ecclesia was thus implicit.[181] Therefore, they had sure knowledge about

the ground of their fellowship through their faith and about its reality

through the daily experience of their bond of union. So Brunner puts it

as follows:

> Yet this spiritual event is connected with an external word,
> and this faith again leads to an outward community. For
> this reason the Church is the only true community. It is
> real and powerful, like the blood relationship, like the
> love between mother and child, but it is not, like it,
> partial and limited. It is spiritual, like the community of
> ideas, but not, like it, abstract and impersonal. It is the
> true community, because it is absolutely personal, since it
> is based upon God's personal call and man's personal answer.
> It is therefore the only form of community between one
> person and another - the community of love. At the same
> time it is completely universal, knowing no barriers of race
> or class or culture.[182]

(c)   The communion of saints *(communio sanctorum)*. According to

Brunner, the meaning of the word *'communio sanctorum'* refers to the

ground of the ecclesia in the faith of individual Christians. When the

group of disciples grew, especially after the Pentecost event, a host of

new members were 'added'. Then it became clear to them that ecclesia

has its ground in the faith of the individual members.[183] Through the

faith each member of the group acknowledges their eternal election as

its ultimate and highest origin. The Holy Spirit, who apprehends and

creates anew the individual when the Word of Christ is heard, makes the

eternal decree of God a present experience.[184] Brunner thus claims that
the living Christ builds His body for Himself by taking possession of
the hearts of men and 'adds them' as saints called *kletoi hagioi* to the
community of disciples.  In this respect the ecclesia is the community
of the saints, of those who have been called out of the world and into
the service of Christ.

So if fellowship with Christ who has bound each one to Himself
through the word of reconciliation means binding the members to each
other in Him, then faith in itself is really synonymous with
fellowship.[185]  We become capable of fellowship and willing for the
fellowship of the companionable, because faith is the reception of the
love of God.  For Brunner, since God is the self-communication of God,
He himself creates through His Spirit men who wish to communicate and
should communicate the thing that they have received.  In this regard,
he claims that sin consists of the self that is closed to God and man
whereas faith signifies the one who becomes open for God and for his
brother.  "Faith is", so Brunner claims, "communicating existence.
Therefore it is leads of necessity through communicatio to communio".[186]

Here Brunner points out that just as faith leads to fellowship, so
also it always received his life in Christ through faith from a
Christian community that was there before him.  Every believer has been
added in solidarity not in solitary.  Thus Brunner is convinced that the
ecclesia is always prior to the individual believers who has received
his faith through the communication of others.[187]  He is therefore
already in a fellowship when he becomes a believer.  And he puts it as
follows:

> Community is both the *cause* and the *effect* of this
> occurrence.  It is the *cause*: for no one becomes a believer

save through the influence of others, who, in the very act of confessing their faith, pass on to him the message which made them believers. No one comes to the point at which he begins to believe in Jesus Christ apart from a message communicated to him by others, apart from that impressive chain of witness called "the Christian tradition" which extends from the earliest days of Christianity down to the present day.

The human word is never the ground of faith, but it is always the cause of faith.... Similarly, faith itself is the effective cause of community, since it is faith which urges one human being towards another; above all it is faith which impels him to join the company of those who have believed before him, and who are now believers.[188]

Therefore, each of these classical definitions indicates the church from a different perspective and expresses something essential concerning the church's ground and nature but no one of them is enough to conceptualize it. For instance, defined as the 'company of the elect', the transcendent aspect of the ground of the church is preserved. But when this definition is permitted to stand alone, it leads to what Brunner calls 'an abstract spiritual intellectualism' which interprets the idea of predestination in terms of rigidly fixed numbers. Defined as the 'body of Christ', the historical objective aspect of the ground of the church is preserved. But when this definition stands alone, it leads to what Brunner calls 'a sacramental hierarchism' as has been amply demonstrated in Christian history. Finally, where the church is defined as the communion of saints, the 'spiritual-subjective' aspect of its ground is preserved. But when this definition stands alone, it leads to an 'emotional and pietistic individualism'. In this respect, Brunner claims that it is only in unity that these three definitions can express the reality of the church as ecclesia.[189]

## 2.3 The two aspects of the church

The foregoing definitions, together with their bases, indicate the spiritual and theological aspect of the church. According to Brunner's argument, this aspect of the church is visible only to the eye of faith but invisible to the natural eye. This has always been clear to the teachers of the Church and there have been no differences in their conception. But differences began only when men reflected on the fact that the church is always at the same time a visible and empirical reality.[190] In this respect what Brunner claims is that most of them became the victims of a misunderstanding of the nature of the ecclesia. They misunderstood in the first place the word 'church'. Since the New Testament term 'ἐκκλησία' (Greek) had been translated into ecclesia (Latin) for almost fifteen hundred years, thus they understood the church as having developed in the West.[191] They believed that the visible form of the church is something similar to what has existed as the church. It seems to them a structure of a social kind with a type of order or system of church law. Also its chief characteristic and function is to be a serviceable instrument for the proclamation of the Word of God and the administration of the Sacraments.

They understood it as the social structure and then it was for example, an organization serving a purpose as an external support of faith (*externum subsidium fidei*) from Calvin,[192] and an institution which is to be constituted and regulated by laws. For this reason an attempt was made by Augustine to close the gap between this church and the ecclesia of the New Testament. He made it available to use the distinction between two terms 'ecclesia invisibilis' that indicates the church of faith and the 'ecclesia visibilis', by which Augustine understood the Catholic universal world church of his day. This

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conception perhaps came, in Brunner's view, from Augustine's study of Paul on the one hand and from his perception of the privileged and national church of Roman Empire since Constantine and Theodosius on the other.[193] But Brunner regards this double concept of the church as a 'desperate expedient' which has served more to confuse than to clarify the issue. It is wholly foreign to the New Testament. For him, there is only one ecclesia which is both spiritual and corporeal. Thus it was impossible for the disciples to distinguish between the visible and the invisible ecclesia. And he says as follows:

> There is in it only the one Ekklesia, which is at the same spiritual and invisible (intelligible to faith alone) and corporeal (recognizable and visible to all). No Apostle would ever have agreed that this visible entity, the Ekklesia, was only a support of faith, let alone an external support. For the disciples it was wholly impossible to distinguish between visible and invisible Ekklesia.[194]

Thus Brunner argues that the ecclesia of the New Testament was not able to lie in the perception of the institutional church which has been identified with a structure of a social type of order to be an external support of faith. For the ecclesia, in Brunner's view, was neither a support of faith nor an external support but the personal fellowship with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

However, he is also convinced that the church which belongs to Christ through faith was at the same time the church which everyone could see. This social form of the church is a necessary consequence of their faith but it is not an institutional purpose to support the faith.[195] It is a kind of significance of the fellowship of God and that of each other in Christ. For since God has communicated Himself to them in Christ, it follows that they must communicate themselves to each other. It is a communion of celebration from the knowledge of reconciliation between God and them, and among themselves. "The agape,

the love of God which was communicated to them through Christ, was now living and present in them and united them to one another".[196] The social character of the church is, then, the result from its spiritual character as an community of men through the love of Christ. This spiritual character itself was the structural law of this social entity.

And yet there is, in Brunner's view a difference between the structural law of the ecclesia, the spiritual brotherhood, and that of the institutional church for the administration of supernatural Sacraments and the promulgation of revealed doctrine.[197] According to him, the fundamental difference between these two entities could be perceived by a sociologist at the first glance, even though he does not more exactly know or understand the deeper foundation of this spiritual togetherness. Sociologically Toennies studies the distinction between two terms 'community' (Gemeinschaft) and 'association' (Gesellschaft).[198] According to this opinion, the theory of community starts from the assumption of perfect unity of human wills as an original or natural condition which is preserved in spite of actual seperation, and of which the common root is the coherence of vegetative life through birth and the fact that the human wills remain linked to each other by parental descent and by sex, or by necessity. On the other hand the theory of the association deals with the artificial construction of an aggregate of human beings by inventing a common personality and value accepted by another one, even though they are by themselves and isolated, and there exists a condition of tension against all others. In this regard, the peculiar character of the ecclesia as a fellowship can be possibly understood in term 'community' or 'authentic fellowship'.

According to Brunner, it is also true however that the ecclesia cannot be wholly defined in this sociological terms. For even if it can have laws and institutions, the spiritual brotherhood can never regard these as its essence. The nature of the Christian brotherhood is basically different from the nature of an institution, which is called the 'church', and is incompatible with it. That is to say, the social character of the ecclesia is determined by its spiritual character and its faith in Christ in the sense of pistis.[199] This non-institutional character is much more evident still in the ecclesia of the New Testament, the people of God, whose life-element is the Holy Spirit. Thus if it can be defined in any sociological terms, then the ecclesia would have to be defined as a fellowship in the most authentic sense and in distinction from an association but the social character of the ecclesia can be understood only in the light of Christ in the last resort.

In fact, Brunner recognizes that the unity of these two mutually exclusive character, that is the spiritual on the one hand and the social on the other, is the paradox of the ecclesia. For this reason there is also a misunderstanding of the ecclesia, which can be seen as either the spiritual brotherhood or the social reality. For instance, the jurist Rudolf Sohm pays too little attention to the social character of the ecclesia, but only draws attention to the incompativility of the legal element with the ecclesia even though he tries to describe the ecclesia as a spiritual and social reality, ruled by the Word of Christ and the Holy Spirit, which has not yet developed an institutional church as such.[200] In contrast to Sohm, Ernst Troeltsch[201] has but little insight into the spiritual nature of the ecclesia and then simply reconed the New Testament ecclesia as belonging to the 'sect-type of the

church' in a way of the sociological approach.

Brunner also claims that there is another misunderstanding of the ecclesia of the New Testament in the more recent discussion about the church, especially in the New Testament studies. It is made from the interpretation of the term 'ecclesia' in the light of the Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew word Kahal ( קָהָל ) which is understood as the 'assembly' of people of God for purposes of worship or in the light of the secular Greek meaning of the word 'ecclesia' as a popular assembly. But in both cases the New Testament gives no grounds for this conclusion to us. It has filled both the Old Testament concept and the secular Greek concept of ecclesia with entirely new Christological content. It is not the assembly that the Apostles mean, especially that of Paul, but the '*klesis*', the election and the call of God in Christ.[202]

Accordingly, Brunner claims that the ecclesia is made visible to us not by a 'cult-fellowship' but by a brotherhood proclaiming Christ and living in mutual love even though the divine worship has its place in the life of the ecclesia. In this regard, the sociological description of the ecclesia as 'authentic fellowship' is the right one, because fellowship differs from association precisely in that it has its goal in itself and is not there to serve a further end. It is not a means but an end in itself, willed by God, even though this is only absolutely true of the ecclesia in its consummation, in the kingdom of God.[203] Therefore the ecclesia is, according to Brunner, a throughly uncultic, spiritual brotherhood which lives in trusting obedience to its Lord Christ and in the love to the brethren which He bestows; and it knows itself as the body of Christ through the Holy Spirit which dwells in it. The whole life of the ecclesia is thus a service of God and this service

of God is at the same time brotherly service to one's fellowmen. For Brunner, this transfer of attention, whereby the assembly plays only a subordinate role, brings into focus the ministry and mission of the ecclesia in the world.

So Brunner is convinced that it is only in the light of this approach that the sociological character of the ecclesia may be seen in true correspondence with its genuinely theological nature. In this regard, he once again appeals to apostle Paul who made clear to his congregations the nature of their fellowship, the nature of ecclesia, with the metaphor of the body. His concept of the body is filled with a new content, because this body which suffers and simultaneously rejoices along with its members is at the same time the body of Christ. Christ is the life of the church. Apart from Christ there would be no church. The church for Paul is never pictured as existing apart from Christ; it is always His body, drawing its nourishment and sustenance from him; it has no independent existence.[204] For this reason the collections which Paul took for 'the poor in Jerusalem' were, for example, not only a concern of charity, but also a concern filled with the deepest knowledge of Christ and genuine faith in Him.

Thus for Paul this act of love is at the same time an act of faith in the sense that in it the grace of Christ is repeated and come alive in His body. The fellowship of Jesus Christ is the work and product of His word and Spirit. It is rooted in the historical unrepeatable fact of revelation, in the Word made flesh. So in the ecclesia, in its social reality, the self-communication of God is recognizable as the principle of its life. Because this love is *agape*, the ecclesia is for Brunner 'a sociological paradox.'[205] For this reason the social

character of the ecclesia lies in the fellowship of persons with God in Christ and at the same time signifies the world-embracing new humanity.[206] The ecclesia as the Christian congregation is not limited by national or political boundaries but universal. In order to help the Greeks to understand this, Paul speaks of the 'ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ' when he describes the whole Christian people.[207] In this respect, it had no local limits even though if forms a community locally. The Brethren in Corinth or Thessalonica thus participate obviously with the greatest interest in the lot of the brethren in Jerusalem or Asia. Here Brunner recognizes that the ecclesia is an ecumenical family, that is, a family spread over the whole around world.

Accordingly, the social character of the ecclesia is world-embracing and genuine brotherhood. For the same Jesus Christ who is present in living power in all represents in His person the new humanity and recapitulates the whole history of humanity in His act of salvation. The ecclesia of faith is, therefore, not only bound by His love, but also can only be understood through Christ and in Him. In this regard, ecclesiology for Brunner is christology. But at the same time this ecclesia is actualized by the Holy Spirit. He is the element in which the ecclesia lives its life, which makes the Christ of the past its present Lord, and which makes the ecclesia the fellowship of those that wait for Him.[208] Brunner thus concludes that the ecclesia of the New Testament is not only a project of faith implicit in faith in Christ, but also this ecclesia about which Paul gives us christological and pneumatological teaching is at the same time a social reality which is the concrete visible brotherhood. The social reality of the eccleisa was therefore characterized by this spirit of love, which ever and again drew Jews and pagans to the ecclesia and which distinguished the

ecclesia from all thiasoi or cultic unions, and by this same love which was proclaimed in the apostolic preaching as the great gift of God in Jesus Christ.[209]

## 2.4 The church in mission

Since Emil Brunner is convinced that the church is the community of Jesus Christ as a purely personal fellowship, he challenges the 'eighteen-hundred-year old misunderstanding of the church' which consists of understanding the church as an institution and then simply identifying this institution with the ecclesia, the community in Christ of the New Testament. At the same time he claims that it is the first duty of the church to enter into action. In fact, Brunner regards the existing churches for the time being as indispensable from the point of view of the continuity of preaching and doctrine (and indeed far superior to every other type of organization), but "it is equally clear that as regards winning souls and creating live cells of Christian fellowship they (the churches) stand far behind other (organizations) and more recent formations and in the future will probably be cast into the shade by the latter. They have long since lost the monopoly of preaching Christ and still more that of creating Christian fellowship".[210] So he regards the decisive purpose of the ecclesiastical transformations demanded by our age as the liquidation of the fatal inheritance from Constantine, and the replacing of the people's church of Constantine by the pre-Constantine church of those making confession. If the church again is a community of those who confess Christ, personal correspondence, despoiled by objectivism, is again restored. The meaning of the church as living in fellowship, confessing the Lord, can again become distinct.[211]

In Brunner's view, the church has not responded to the complexity of modern culture and civilization. It has failed because it has not attempted to explain what it means to be a Christian in the face of these new conditions. For him, it is not enough to merely manifest that the Christian believe in Jesus Christ as their only saviour, although that is essential, but to bring their daily lives under the control of Christ. For these frequent retreats and spiritual sharing and fellowship are the best means. Moreover, Christian believers must work out their lives in their families and professions in the context of the larger social problems of the time.[212] So Brunner feels that it is impossible for a theologian to do his work well without having participated intensively in the life of those who are to be the final consumers of his theology, that is, Christian community, or even the communities of people who are distant from Christianity.[213] Perhaps he has seen more clearly than other theologians what the significance for theology is of the various attempts of the church to understand the place of the temptations and decisions of men in their everyday life.

So this theological position links Brunner with his church activism. This activism is particularly important to us in the fact that he has consistently exhibited a lively and responsible concern about the practical problems of our day that the church faces. For him, church-in-action is precisely that church which goes into all the social political, scientific, and cultural situations of the modern world, which goes wherever man is concerned, where his responsibility is awakened or is being silenced, where humanity is being protested, where attempts are being made to bring about a better human existence. For it is in all these places, in the structure of modern society where modern man is concerned with man in the best sense of the word, that God

somehow has already spoken to man before we appear as the proclaimers of the gospel. In this respect, if a theology remains in splendid isolation, not concerning itself with its possible points of contacts with the conditions of this world, then it can become itself one of the great dangers of the church. Thus, in the process of wrestling with the many problems of the church Brunner is convinced that the main difficulties lie within the church itself and not outside of it and then longs for the much-vaunted rediscovering of the church.

(a) The search for the *renewal* of the church. In the early 1930s Emil Brunner actively participated in the Oxford group movement. What he was interested in it was that the movement showed to him a hopeful sign of the renewal of the church today which fails to satisfy the hunger and thirst of people for the gospel.[214] For him it seemed to be one of the functions of the church. For it aims at being obedient to the missionary command of the Lord of the church - "Go and make disciples of all the nations, teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). So the church of Christ exists if and only if His command is carried out - whether it be done in the form of a 'church' or of a 'movement'.[215] At missionary stage, the 'beginning' church like a 'pioneer' has a character of 'movement' whereas the 'stable' church arises necessarily as a result of the development and consolidation of the already founded community of Christ; and this historical character of the church shows to us the 'double rhythm', that is to say, expanding missionary work with the mobile adaption to new situations and the solid institution with the steadfast tradition and organization.[216] This missionary church resembles the Oxford group movement that marks a return to the oldest form of Christian mission. The New Testament shows to us, in Brunner's view, a community active in

missionary and pastoral work and the growth of the community comes not only through the apostles' witness but also through the spontaneous activity of the individual Christians. So every Christian in the community is a disciple (with some reserve to the specially founded office of the apostles) and a missionary.[217]

In this regard, the Oxford group movement indicates, according to Brunner, a new significance of the renewal of the institutional church that fails to face the demand of the man of today.[218] It must be admitted that the occasion for this new mobilisation of the world of laymen was given by a particular staggering conviction, namely the fact that the church today has only the slightest grasp on the world through its officially ordained preachers. The greater part of mankind today, and especially among the younger generation, is no longer in contact with the preaching of the Word on Sunday by men ordained to the pastoral office. So the church has the duty to search and try if there are other ways to bring the gospel to those who no longer find their way within the walls of the church. And Brunner puts it as follows:

> For the missionary command does not run "Invite everyone to your Sunday services by the ringing of Church bells", but "Go forth into all the world and preach the Gospel to *every creature*". The true shepherd of whom Ezekiel speaks does not wait until the sheep find their way back to him, but he goes after them into every chasm and byway. We preachers of the Church have no right to say "If they do not wish to hear our sermon on Sunday morning, that is their affair, we have done all that was possible". For it is nowhere written that this type of proclamation of the Gospel, which has become traditional, is the normal or the only warranted one, when it is a matter of experience that the majority of men no longer seek for it.[219]

Then one may raise a question of how the church today can carry on its task properly. It is only possible if the church today for Brunner must first of all become that the church in which the Word of God

becomes understandable and powerful among men who know responsibility

for the spread of the gospel. For this task the new theological

consideration (die theologische Neubesinnung) about the Word of God in

the Bible and about the nature and mission of the church is indeed one

of the primary presupposition of the renewal of the church because

without it there is no renewal of the church.[220] However, it is also

true, according to Brunner, that the new theological consideration alone

cannot produce the renewal of the church. For it is quite clear that at

the beginning of the church, teaching (or doctrine) and life (Lehre und

Leben), and sermon and ecclesiastical practice (Predigt und kirchliche

Praxis) were actually correlated. For instance, in the New Testament

the doctrinal teaching and the practical instruction are inseparably

woven into each other as well as preaching and ministership, sacrament

and life of community. So the church in the New Testament cannot be

properly understood without the togetherness of knowing and doing.[221]

In this regard, the renewal of the church can be necessarily considered

with the missionary task of the church, that is to say, to discover the

right point of contact.

Accordingly, the Oxford group movement indicates for Brunner, the

church of Jesus Christ in the New Testament that has both the character

of a 'church' and that of a 'movement'. Like a group movement it is, so

he claims, "in the intensity of its fellowship in its spiritual life, in

the activity of all the members of the fellowship in worship, in its

pastoral and missionary work, in the spontaneity and freedom of the rule

of the Spirit, in the emphasis laid upon spiritual growth and the

proving of faith by acts of love, in the dynamic of its expansion in the

world and its penetration of the individual life".[222] At the same time

like the 'church' it lies in its order, its offices and sacraments, its

traditions, and the watch kept over doctrine.

However, the Oxford group movement itself cannot be, in this respect, identified with either the 'church' or the 'religious society' (or sect), but it is a kind of group activity throughout all the churches and the religious societies in building up the true church of Jesus Christ by proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ and by obeying Christ's command; so it has worked for the strengthening of the church and has remained as a movement in which the early Christian enthusiasm has again come to life. Brunner puts it as follows:

> In the Group Movement, there has been set before our eyes once again the primitive Christian experience, that the Christians can be actually a salt of the earth and a light of the world, when they take their Christianity seriously. Renewal of the bond of marriage, renewal of family relations, of the relation of master and servant, even a renewal of whole communities, has been set before our eyes as an accomplished fact.[223]

Here the Oxford group movement for Brunner is important in the fact that it reminds us of these criteria of the true Christian life, exactly as the New Testament constantly reminds us of them. The New Testament teaches that the Christian does not only believe that he is renewed in Jesus Christ but also experiences this renewal and purification as a progressive reality in such a way that others can bear witness to this new life as a recognisable fact. For it is true that whosoever is in Christ is a new creature, and must prove himself to be such by his fruits, the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is for Brunner the deepest message of the Group movement once again to impress this truth upon the Christian community in the full joy and the full seriousness with which the New Testament says it.[224] In this regard, the Oxford group movement indicates the necessity of renewal of the 'institutional church' that fails to face the missionary situation. For this reason the

church for Brunner is a 'reforming embodiment', that is, being responsible for the missionary command of Christ, the Lord of the church. However, when the movement changed into Moral Re-Armament and actually lost its distinctly Christian character and origin, Brunner was so deeply disappointed that he left the movement.[225]

(b) The search for *dialogue* among churches. The ecumencial movement[226] has been implicit in the community of Christians that included both Jews and Gentiles at its beginning and in the community of which members professed to be one people. For they experienced the inner unity by a fellowship of love, a fellowship of faith, and a worship in their Lord of Jesus Christ. The community began, at the same time, to think and speak of itself as the 'ecclesia' that the name came to be adopted by the process - its relation to earlier Greek usage, to Aramaic equivalents, to Hebrew words and the rendering of them in the Septuagint. And with the term 'ecclesia' there is a large element of theological thought and interpretation about the community of Christians.[227]

In the New Testament the term 'ecclesia' is, however, evident in a twofold use, that is, the term is used in the singular to indicate *the whole fellowship of Christ's people* in all its scattered parts, and at the same time *a Christian group* in one local area and correspondingly it is also used in the plural to indicate a number of Christian groups considered each in its separate existence . (But the sequence in usage of the terms, i.e. which came first, the whole or the part, is difficult for our judgment. For it is typical of the paradox of the life of the church in its double character as the divinely constituted 'body of Christ', and at the same time a human assemblage of very imperfect men

and women.)[228]  So, the term 'ecclesia' is set by a double meaning that contains both unity and division, and in consequence there is a tension between them.

During the centuries of its existence, the Christian church has never been quite free from the peril that like persecution of Christians by pagans, the inner conflicts among Christians themselves varied greatly in intensity and severity.  But the church has survived and grown and it has developed certain principles and methods by which its own inner unity might be maintained although its diversity has been recognised.[229]  In the history-making age of Reformation the unity of the Christian church kept all the Reformers proclaiming their desire only for a sincere and thoroughgoing renewal (or inward reformation) of the church but the 'hierarchic-clerical' church of Roman Catholic responded to this new movement of Reformers by its outward unity and the combined weight of church and state.  Then the crush between them was destructive of the unity of the Christian church.  But the movement of the unity in the ecclesia that names the 'ecumenical movement' was never entirely lost even though the separation of the Church became deepened and the outer situation of the church was changed.

But between two world wars the ecumencial movement took a different stage of development in its history when it brought about the ecumenical organization that is the World Council of Churches.[230]  It aimed to fulfil and serve certain basic Christian needs:[231]  (1) it demonstrates that the gospel in the name of which world wide mission was and is being undertaken is one, even in a divided Christianity; (2) it seeks to bring about a fellowship of the churches through mutual recognition and to cause them to break their tendency of the exclusivistic isolationism and

of the denominational particularism in the unity of the Christian church; (3) it lets Christians themselves everywhere act as agents of reconciliation in a divided world and give evidence of repentance for the fact that the churches had proved themselves unable to prevent two world wars on the soil of so-called Christian civilization; and (4) it organizes worldwide services of mutual assistance, interchurch aid and relief of suffering.

Accordingly, the ecumenical enterprise that is both the ecumenical movement and its organization, the World Council of Churches, represents the most important event in the history of Christianity since the beginning of this century and it is captured in the work of leading Christian men and theologians.[232] Hence the work of Emil Brunner, fully reflects this important event. So he has given his theological work a character and form appropriate to the spirit of ecumencity just as he himself has been active in the different phases of the ecumenical movement.[233] And Brunner puts it as follows:

> Owing to my long co-operation with the Ecumenical Movement, I am fully aware both of the needs and the hopes of the World Church. Hence I have been very careful to keep as closely as possible to the external form of dogmatics - to the theological tradition common to the Church as a whole. In the main, therefore, I have tried to follow the order of the *Loci theologici* which, from the days of Peter Lombard onwards, has formed the framework of Christian Dogmatics, and was also in all essentials adopted by that master of Reformed theology, Calvin. Over and over again I have proved that this procedure is fundamentally sound.*234*

Thus what mainly concerned Brunner with the ecumencial movement and its organization, the World Council of Churches, was to maintain the opportunity for an exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences in the ecumencial movement rather than an interest in the organizational unity of the movement.[235] The reason for this is that the ecumenical movement

as a movement of the unity of the church cannot be identified with the structural (or institutional) unity of the church, nor with the uniformity of service and sacrament order.[236]   In this regard, Brunner had some doubts about the organizational structure of the World Council of Churches.   Rather, there would be, in his view, the true ecumenism, "where Catholics and Protestants were ready to confess that not the sacramental institution of the priestly church and not the theological preaching of Protestantism, but Jesus Christ alone and His Ekklesia, the fellowship of the children of God destined for the freedom of faith and love, is the truth that is identical with grace".[237]

Thus the ecumenical movement is not the unity of the church in a 'natural' dimension, that is, an external manifestation of unity such as church language, canon law, administration, etc. but it is primarily, as Hans Küng points out, the unity of the church in a 'spiritual' dimension or a true inner unity of faith and charity, namely a unity in a unifying Holy Spirit at work in the unanimity of the free decision of all.[238]  So if the ecumenical movement of the divided Christian churches and confessions seeks the visible unity of the church of Christ then it can be understood as the 'ecumenical' church which maintains dialogue among churches in order to be obedient to the missionary command of the Lord of the church.   In fact the organization of the ecumenical movement, namely the World Council of Churches has contained the confluence of three historical streams: (1) the 'Missionary movement' of which aim has been made for the church to be a worldwide community; (2) the 'Life and Work movement' which has brought the churches together in their attempts to make Christianity more effective in its relation to society; and (3) the 'Faith and Order movement' which has explored the differences in basic Christian conviction that must be reconciled if the unity of  the

church as one visible body of Christ is to be attained.[239]  As Paul Hessert points out, this historical fact shows to us that the modern ecumenical movement began with attempts to co-ordinate missionary activities and student work.  The concern for mission in the broad sense of the word has brought churches together, and communications among them have made it both possible and necessary for people of different traditions to function together.[240]

So the ecumenical church is the spiritual unity of the church for its mission in one Lord, Christ.[241]  And yet it indicates the existence of different church bodies and correspondingly Christian diversity.[242] In this regard, the ecumenical church seeks necessarily dialogue among churches to get its unity and it has, according to Brunner, 'roots of awordly and pragmatic kind'[243], in other words, the ecumenical movement and in consequence the World Council of Churches as its organization essentially belongs to the function of the church.  Accordingly, the ecumenical church for Brunner is possible if it is under the presupposition that the ecclesia must be understood as a spiritual brotherhood, not an institution.  "If theological reflection and, above all, renewed serious study of the New Testament witness to Christ have once made this clear, then the way is open to a common understanding of our unity-namely our unity in Christ, without our having recourse to the concept of the *ecclesia invisibilis* (the invisible church) and then it can work properly with ecumenical conversations and even for ecumenical co-operation among churches to "have preserved for men through two thousand years of history the apostolic message of salvation in Jesus Christ."[244]

In this regard, the ecumenical church must share the subject of

conversation and communal thinking - a thinking that includes both a sharing and a readiness to bestow and to accept criticism and therefore leads to rethinking with Christians everywhere and with all sorts and conditions of men. For this reason Emil Brunner stood continuously on battle against rationalism, idealism, and mysticism because of his assertion that all such is a monologue, namely man talking to himself.[245] Thus he warned against 'imperialism' even within the ecumenical movement since it attempted institutional centralization of the World Council of Churches.

(c) The search for the *missionary* church. In the last stage of his life as a theologian Emil Brunner participated actively in missionary affairs. He also attempted to realize his missionary concern that had always been central in his theology. Since his missionary concern had already developed during his controversy over the 'point of contact' with Karl Barth in his early days (see II. 1.2), Brunner's later missionary concern and work found its most concrete expression and took place in three stages:[246] firstly, he developed a theoretical missionary problem that is to apply some of the basic Christian teachings to some of the problems of civilization and culture when he was invited to deliver the Gifford Lectures in Scotland for 1947 and 1948;[247] secondly, he opened the training centre of laymen, the Reformierte Heimstätte, to provide an opportunity to find new ways of confronting the world with the gospel; and finally, he accepted an invitation to participate in the worldwide work of the YMCA as a theological adviser and worked as a missionary in Japan.

In his Gifford Lectures Brunner sought to formulate a preparatory exposition of the missionary theology[248] that present a panoramic view

of the relation of Christianity to civilisation, for it is an urgent

problem not only to everyday Christian life but also to a Christian

missionary to apply some basic Christian doctrines to some problems of

civilization and he puts it as follows:

> While it is necessary that Christian men and women
> particularly competent in one of these fields should speak
> and write about the relation of the Christian faith to that
> particular matter, it seems to me legitimate, and even
> necessary, that alongside these monographs of specialists
> someone should at least try to give a synoptic view of the
> whole (even if he has no expert knowledge of a majority of
> these subjects), provided that he has given to all of them
> prolonged thought as a Christian.[249]

Here Brunner directed his attention not only to the problems of the

relation between Christianity and civilization (thus his dealing with

some basic principles which underline all civilization and the more

concrete problems of the different areas of civilized life) but also to

the question of the proper understanding of the church in order to show

how a true Christian life and a true Christian church must and can be

realized.


However, he has also raised a warning against the threat of

totalitarianism of any form, especially Russian communism that hangs

over Western civilization because it is, for him, essentially an anti-

religion without God.[250]  In this respect he rejects any identification

of culture with Christian faith.  So he claims that any form of

civilization or culture and the eternal kingdom of God can not be

identified:

> The Christian, then, and the fellowship of the Christians,
> are ultimately independent of all the changes - for good or
> evil - within the sphere of civilization.  They stand on a
> rock which no historical changes can move. ...The Chrisitian
> church knows that no progress in the sphere of civilization
> and culture can reach that goal of history beyond history,
> and that no setbacks, not even the complete destruction of
> civilized life, can deflect history from that ultimate goal
> which is beyond itself.  In this sense then the Christian
> faith is indeed "other-worldly" and the Church should not be

ashamed of saying so.[251]

In his second stage of missionary work Emil Brunner participated intensively in development of the Reformierte Heimstätte in Boldern.[252] He attempted to provide a forum for a conversation between the church and the world, which is one of the most important prerequisites for the mission of the church in a secular world. This missionary work for Brunner provided to the church an opportunity to find new ways of confronting the world with the Christian message. In fact it is the 'place of encounter' that various kind of participants meet each other and have a chance to speak relevantly to the thinking and feeling of modern man, the experiment in the field of human relations with people from intellectual and social groups, and to replace the monologue performance of lecturing theologian with the teamwork of theologians and laymen: "In such a way it is possible to overcome the usual monologue typical of our continental churches by conversation which is more appropriate to the essential nature of the Gospel as encounter. Boldern is one of the enduring fruits of my theological efforts and is especially close to my heart."[253]

Finally, Emil Brunner accepted an invitation to participate in the worldwide Work of the YMCA from John Mott.[254] Since he was appointed as theological adviser of the YMCA in 1946, he regularly contributed letters in *World Communique* on religious questions of concern to youth and he provided a constant source of inspiration to them.[255] Brunner also journeys to many Asian countries. He captivated youth, as Tracy Strong points out, by his honest facing of difficulties, his intellectual integrity, his simple but profound interpretation of the Christian faith, and the evidences in his own person of the fruits of

the Spirit.[256]


When he returned from his journey, Emil Brunner met with the Plenary at Nyborg Strand in 1950; and he emphasized to them that "we are now living in the age of the lay Christian, of those who preach the Gospel, not because they are appointed to do it, but because they feel an inner urge to share the best they have and they know with those who do not yet know or have it", and he continues to say that "the word of the laymen, who is not distinguished and marked off as an official representative of religion, carried much more weight than that of the professional theologian and clergymen". Furthermore, he especially mentioned to them the necessity of having a Christian nucleus in every Association. In this regard, his statement made a lasting impression on those who heard it; and it has been frequently reproduced and quoted in the YMCA publications.[257]


Brunner also took a missionary work to help in building up the new International Christian University in Tokyo, which had been founded after the War and also to assist in the Christian training of young Japanese laymen in various fields. In these latter years not only he experienced an important challenge to his missionary work itself, but he enjoyed his career as a missionary theologian and churchman because in this strictly missionary situation where he had to teach students who had no knowledge of Christian faith, it became, for Brunner, of primary importance to find 'the point of contact' that proved to be that thing which decided success or failure of Christian teaching.[258] Through this missionary field work Emil Brunner recognized that the presentation of the impact which Christianity had made upon the basic problems of life and civilization proved to be a good approach to the gospel as far as

teaching was concerned with witness to Christ. Thus he came to realize the importance of the term 'the point of contact' in facing the missionary situation of the church.

When he acquainted with the civilization of the East and encountered with various kinds of people who never met the Christian message, Brunner recognized that there is a new different missionary problems. Hence he claimed that we have to develop a new type of approach to the gospel for those who are not in contact with the Christian message under the different political and cultural conditions. Furthermore, he was convinced that even for European Christians it is needed to recognize the missionary situation that is both the widespread decrease of participation in Christian life - especially, during the last two decades in many 'Christian' countries the functions of the church have been either destroyed or greatly compromised through socio-political revolution; and the decline of the active membership of the church that is the 'Sunday church attendance' has only barely maintained itself, for instance in both urban and rural community the number of people attending church is, according to Brunner, often only small percentage of the population.[259]

In regard to the church in Europe Brunner claims that the church today has never been promised that, wherever it had opportunity to exercise its influence over a long period of time, it would generally embrace the entire people; but the statechurch membership has been already falling off in the vital life of the church; and he claims as follows:

> The Constantinian - Theodosian identification of State
> Church and Church people which dominated the entire Middle
> Ages, the Reformation and post - Reformation period and
> which began to totter only after the Enlightenment and the

French Revolution, was possible only as a result of a terrific secularization of the Church, a lowering of demands upon the individual to certain external forms compatible with what could be accomplished through State compulsion.[260]

Therefore, in the process of wrestling with the many problems of the church side by side with Asian, American, and European Christians under completely different conditions, Brunner gains a considerably clear view of the obstacles standing in the way of the missionary church.

In Brunner's opinion the church has some reasons to make its decline as follows: (1) In recent centuries the church has lost increasingly the consciousness of what the church is and what the church is for, and in consequence the gospel is either presented, in a lifeless manner that bore no witness, or handed forth as the wisdom of men, idealism, moralism etc. instead of the Word of God; (2) the Church has not become aware of the change in its situation and task because of its stable organization; and (3) the church has digested no better the tremendous social change by technical commercial revolution and complex modern civilization and consequently the life of the people who constantly confront new situations and new problems; and the church has taken small notice of the increase and change in population and thereby sermon, pastorship and leadership of minister are so complicated that they are not enough to cover the community.[261] Therefore, the church today must be renewed as 'the missionary church' to maintain its missionary task in the face of the missionary situation.

Since Emil Brunner is convinced that the word 'Christ' is really effective and credible when it is accompanied by the witness of the church through its life, the existence of the church is the presupposition of faith (see V.1.1). Thus the church should seek to create true community, a living fellowship of persons. In such a

fellowship, everyone should feel he is valued as a person and there is

true meeting between persons.[262]    In his own experience Brunner has

found the true character of the church or the ecclesia in his own term

more often in voluntary associations of Christians than in the

institutional churches as such.    Thus he gave much attention to the

Group movement as well as the movement for laymen's institutes.

Significantly when he reached Japan he found an indigenous expression of

Christianity, the *Mukyokai*, or Non-Church Movement, which embodied his

own theories about the New Testament ecclesia.[263]


Perhaps during his stay in Japan Brunner was aware of the existence

of the Mukyokai Groups.    Even though the members of the Group did not

take any kind of institutional organization in terms of the Church, they

gathered to study the Bible and believed in Jesus Christ as their

Saviour.    They have an important role in the spreading of the Gospel in

a particular Japanese religious and social situation.    For this reason

Brunner might be able to claim that we must be open for the possibility

that Christ uses many means, outside the churches, for His purpose.    In

this regard, he attempts to define the term 'ecclesia' with reference to

evangelism as follows:

> *Where real evangelism is being done - whether by the church*
> *or by Mukyokai evangelist or in whatever way - there is*
> *Ecclesia.    And where real Ecclesia is, there is evangelism.*
> This is one, even the main, criterion to judge whether a
> church or any other group  is *Ecclesia*.  Why is evangelism
> this criterion?   Because of the fundamental importance of
> sharing.   God Himself has shared His own life with us in the
> Cross of Jesus Christ.   Sharing is the very centre of the
> Gospel, the essence of Christianity.   If we are in the Body
> of Christ, we also in our part, must share our life with our
> fellow men.   Whether the Church is going out into the world
> sharing with those outside what it has inside - this is the
> criterion of the live church, the *Ecclesia*.  No sharing - no
> membership in the Body of Christ.[264]


One of his reasons for criticizing the institutional churches is

their lack of missionary zeal. Brunner is convinced that the mission of the gospel would be better served if the true ecclesia were more evident: " it is this real spiritual fellowship which is, in itself, evangelistic or missionary. It is the lack of it that makes our evangelistic campaigns and preaching ineffective to a large degree. The early Church was spread in the world so quickly probably more by the contagion of this *fellowship-life* than by missionary preaching. At least this is what struck the pagan outsiders. 'Look how they love each other' is the word of a pagan author who was otherwise known as a cynic. It is by real fellowship that outsiders are attracted to the Church, even though not yet understanding Christ, the source of this fellowship".[265] Moreover, the most important way that a person in the church can lead another person to Christ is, according to Brunner, 'the transparency of Christ's spirit in the character, in the life, and in the face of the one who presents the Christian doctrine'.[266]

Hence Christian theology is a product of constant and faithful encounter with a reality which must be apprehended anew in every age. God himself does not change, nor does the content of the gospel, but the situation in which man has his existence does change: "The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the same in all ages. But the task of the Church, given by His Gospel and constituted by it, is not the same but different in every epoch. Every age had to rediscover Christ anew - no Christ dogma can give what this discovery is intended to give. The Christ dogma is mere intellectual substitute for the continuity of the living Church through the living Lord".[267] The theologian, therefore, must be in living touch with both the changing and the unchanging and equally discerning of both. Brunner regards *dogmatics* as something which takes place primarily in and for the believing community. And yet he is

convinced that there is *eristics* that is concerned with the evangelical

and missionary character of the faith. This means that *theology* must

play a servant role in the church and in the world. Moreover, it means

for Brunner that a viable theology must be in living relation to all

that God is doing in the world. For him, the missionary task of the

church is not an after-thought or a peripheral interest for the

theologian but a primary responsibility: "Mission work does not arise

from any arrogance in the Christian Church; mission is its cause and its

life. The church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning.

Where there is no mission, there is no Church; and where there is

neither Church nor mission, there is no faith".[268]

In this regard, Emil Brunner essentially sees that theology is not

just a discussion within the church but also a declaration to the world

of its need of salvation and a setting forth of the way in the common

language of mankind. In his opinion, missionary theology takes the form

of a conversation between a Christian believer and an unbeliever. The

Christian believer enters into the questions raised by the unbeliever

and he gives full weight to all the truth and insight the unbeliever

already possesses. But he shows also how his knowledge, and therefore

also his questions, ignore the very thing which brings light and true

knowledge. The task of missionary theology may be then described as the

fact that it removes the hindrances which lie between the gospel and the

hearer, that is, those hindrances which are accessible to intellectual

reflection. The gospel must be preached, and yet no calculation should

or can properly be made as to its 'success'. That all lies in the

wisdom and power of God. Accordingly, eristic theology for Brunner has

no intention of making the work of the Holy Spirit superfluous. There

is no human art that can create faith; that can be done by the Holy

Spirit alone. But the Holy Spirit works, Brunner claims, not by some mystic power but by speaking. Faith arises only when one is convicted of the truth of the Word.[269] Missionary theology cannot produce faith, but it can and must produce the conditions which are needed for faith. Hence this still leaves open the question of communication which may be simply stated thus: Is it possible and how is it possible to communicate the gospel to men generally? Or how can the Word of God be spoken to and heard by the natural man? Finally, this sort of question with which Brunner is mainly concerned in the term 'missionary theology' will be critically discussed in the next chapter.

# Notes

1.   Emil Brunner, DIII, p.4.
2.   Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.134.
3.   Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.135.
4.   Emil Brunner, RaR, p.138 (Italic is mine).
5.   Emil Brunner, DIII, p.134.
6.   Brunner, Ibid, p.135.
7.   Brunner, Ibid, p.6.
8.   Brunner, TasE, pp. 178, 179.
9.   Brunner, Ibid, pp.180f (Italic is mine)
10.  Cf. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp 6, 7.
11.  Cf. Eberhard Müller, "The Church in Action", in ThoEB, p.43.
12.  Brunner, MaiRe, p.539.
13.  Brunner, DIII, p.135.
14.  Cf. Brunner, ProfCh, pp.82-84.
15.  Brunner, DIII, p.135.
16.  Brunner, DIII, p.136.
17.  Brunner, Ibid, p.138.
18.  Brunner, Ibid, p.40.  Cf. also GoaMa, pp.106f.
19.  Brunner, "Until Chirst Be Formed in You", in Theology Today, vol.12 (1955-1956), p.435.
20.  Brunner, DIII, p.137.
21.  Brunner, Ibid,
22.  Brunner,  Ibid, p.174.
23.  Brunner, Ibid, pp.173f.
24.  Brunner, Ibid, pp.174f.
25.  Brunner, Ibid, p.7.
26.  Brunner, Ibid, pp.6f.
27.  Brunner, GoaMa, pp.106f "Faith and Church are as inseparable as fire and light, so that one can indeed say that faith must show whether it is genuine by its attitude to the Church. ... It becomes evident how urgently necessary it is to understand clearly the real meaning of the concept of the Church, and grasp its true connection with faith in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ."
28.  Brunner, Ibid, p.110.
29.  Brunner, DIII, p.207.
30.  Brunner, Ibid, p.207.
31.  Brunner, Ibid, pp.191, 192.
32.  Brunner, Ibid, pp.195f.
33.  Brunner, Ibid, pp. 196, 200.
34.  Brunner, Ibid, p.199.
35.  On this point, Brunner is concerned with the Roman Catholic doctrine of baptism and the Lutheran infant baptism, see DIII, p.270.
36.  Brunner, Ibid, p.269.
37.  Brunner, Ibid, p.270.
38.  Brunner, Ibid, p.272.
39.  Brunner, Ibid, pp.273f.
40.  Brunner, Ibid, p.274.
41.  Brunner, Ibid, p.275.
42.  Brunner, Ibid, p.278.
43.  Brunner, Ibid, p.287.
44.  Brunner, Ibid, p.283.
45.  Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.288.
46.  Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.290.
47.  Brunner, Ibid.

48. Brunner, Ibid.
49. Brunner, Ibid, p.291.
50. Brunner, Ibid, p.292.
51. Brunner, Ibid, p.297.
52. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.298
53. Brunner, Ibid.
54. On this point Paul Ramsey rightly points out that Brunner has consistently set forth a 'dualistic' understanding of the relation between biblical 'righteousness' and the natural law or between love and justice. Yet he actually makes use of the idea of love transforming natural justice. Cf. Nine Modern Moralists (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p.196.
55. George S. Hendry, "An Appraisal of Brunner's Theology", in Theology Today, vol. XIX, 1963, p.523.
56. Brunner, DI, pp.215f.
57. Brunner, DIII, p.15.
58. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.295. "For it took into account the secret operation of the Holy Spirit which necessarily escapes all formulation in theological concepts". Cf. also Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God, p.77.
59. Brunner, DIII, p.12.
60. Brunner, Ibid, p.18.
61. Brunner, Ibid, pp.9, 11. Cf. also MiCh, pp.52f. Cf. also Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God, p.77.
62. Brunner, DIII, p.11.
63. Brunner, "One Holy Catholic Church", in Theology Today, vol. 4, 1947, p.320.
64. Brunner, MiCh, p.13.
65. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.21.
66. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.22. Cf. also, MiCh, pp.51f. Cf. also Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God, p.78.
67. Brunner, MiCh, pp.87-90.
68. On this point Emil Brunner considers especially three such forms: objectivism in doctrine, objectivism in office, and objectivism in the sacrament. See TasE, p.176.
69. Emil Brunner, MiCh, pp.115, 118. Cf. also TasE, Chapter VI, pp. 196-199. passim.
70. Brunner, DIII, p.40.
71. Brunner, Ibid, p.170.
72. On this point of his relation to the Jerusalem tradition Paul was evidently aware of a sense in which he had not received the gospel by tradition, and a sense in which he had. The gospel as revelation was what accomplished his conversion. Others had confessed Jesus as the risen Lord before Paul did, but their testimony moved him rather to oppose them because it seemed like blasphemy in his ears. It was the Damascus road revelation that convinced Paul to confess that Jesus was indeed the risen Lord who appeared to him in person and introduced himself as Jesus. In his presentation of the gospel Paul, however, uses many formal expressions which may have derived from the paradosis ( קַבָּלָה ) of the primitive community. For the risen Christ can for Paul be identified with Jesus of Nazareth whom the primitive community confessed as the Kyrios-Christos. On this point there is no difference between them. F.F. Bruce, Paul (Exeter: The Parternoster Press, 1980), p.87. See also H.J. Schoeps, Paul, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), p.60.
73. On this point Brunner insists that we must understand Jesus Christ from the point of view of God's action, as God's act of salvation.

LtoRom, p.148.

74. Brunner, DIII, p.171.
75. Hans Lietzmann, The Beginnings of the Christian Church, p.155.
76. Brunner, DIII, p.40.
77. Ernest Best, One Body in Christ (London: S.P.C.K., 1955), p.186.
78. Rudolf Schhackenburg points out that the idea of the Body of Christ must be considered a creative achievement of, and theological concept proper to St. Paul, for in this form it is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. The Church in the New Testament, pp.77, 84.
79. F.F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit (Exeter, 1977) p.87.
80. Brunner, DIII, p.41.
81. Brunner, MiCh, p.50.
82. Emil Brunner, LtoRom, p.150.
83. Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle (London: A & C Black Ltd., 1931), p.167.
84. On this point that all Christians have received the Spirit is a postulate of the whole doctrine of redemption in the Pauline Epistles, R. Newton Flew, Jesus and His Church, p.152.
85. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.41.
86. Brunner, Ibid, p.41.
87. Brunner, OuFa, p.30.
88. Brunner, DIII, p.41.
89. Brunner, Ibid.
90. Brunner, Ibid, p.47.
91. Rom 1:16f.
92. F.F. Bruce, Paul, p.326.
93. F.F. Bruce, Ibid, p.327.
94. Karl Barth, Die Theologie und die Kirche, trans. Louise P. Smith, with Introduction T.F. Torrance, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), p.297.
95. Brunner, MiCh, p.24.
96. Thus the community of faith is for Brunner the community of hope. Faith and hope are inseparably one in the Christian faith. See EtHo, p.28.
97. Emil Brunner, MiCh, p.24.
98. J. Christian Beker insists on the constituents of Paul's ecclesiology in this way: "Although the Church has a central place in Paul's thought, that interest is determined by the two foci that define the Church. Eschatology and Christology are the constituents of Paul's ecclesiology, and the nature of their interrelation determines the character and function of the Church." Paul the Apostle, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1980), p.303.
99. Brunner, DIII, p.42.
100. Brunner, Ibid.
101. Brunner, Ibid, p.53.
102. Brunner, MiCh, p.66.
103. Brunner, DIII, p.57.
104. On this point Brunner understands that Baptism is not in the first instance a cognitive but a causative act. MiCh, p.65.
105. Emil Brunner, Ibid, pp.71, 73.
106. Brunner, DIII, p.43.
107. Brunner, Ibid.
108. Brunner, LtoRom, p.153. Cf. also Brunner, Faith, Hope and Love, p.13.
109. On this point Paul expressly confirms that he sees the membership in Christ of the individual and the communities as an object of his perception of faith. Cf. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.153.

110. Emil Brunner, CaOG, p.51.
111. Brunner, MiCh, p.84.
112. Brunner, EtHo, p.84.
113. Emil Brunner, LtoRom, p.155. On this point Newton Flew also understands love as both a heavenly and an earthly reality: "Love is not only a heavenly reality, a future; it is essentially expressed in act and in present world, in the humblest services rendered by members of the community to one another." See Jesus and His Church (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), p.180.
114. Emil Brunner, LtoRom, pp.155f.
115. F.F. Bruce, Paul, p.458.
116. Herman Ridderbos, Paul, trans. John Richard De Witt, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p.293.
117. Cf. F.F. Bruce points out that following the precent of Jesus, Paul sums up all the commandments of the law in the words: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). See Paul, pp.458ff.
118. Herman Ridderbos, op.cit., p.294.
119. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.43 (Italic is Brunner's).
120. Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity, p.14.
121. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.43.
122. Emil Brunner, Ibid.
123. F.F. Bruce, Paul, p.142.
124. Gal. 6:2.
125. In this sense the community is not view or understood as a social entity in terms of the framework of a particular church order or constitution. Rather it is the Spirit that governs it. And it is love which is the true organizing and unifying force within the Church, and which creates in her a paradoxical form of order diametrically opposed to all natural systems of organization. Cf. Hans von Campenhausen, Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of The First Three Centuries, trans. J.A. Baker, London: Adam & Charles Balck, 1969), p.58.
126. Hans von Campenhausen, Tradition and life in the Church - Essays and Lectures in Church History, trans. A.V. Littledale, (London: Collins, 1968) p.124.
127. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.43.
128. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.44 Cf. Hans von Campenhausen, Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries, p.58.
129. Hans von Campenhausen, Ibid, p.63.
130. Hans von Campenhausen, Ibid, p.69.
131. Hans von Campenhausen, Ibid, p.70.
132. Brunner, DIII, p.45.
133. Emil Brunner, Ibid.
134. Brunner, Ibid.
135. Brunner, MiCh, p.53., Cf. Christian Beker, Paul the Apostle, p.311: "Christian freedom is indeed 'slavery to the other in love' (Gal. 5:13)."
136. Brunner, MiCh, p.47.
137. Brunner, Ibid, p.51.
138. Brunner, Ibid, p.54.
139. Brunner, LtoRom, p.105.
140. Brunner, MiCh, p.55 Cf. also Ernest Best, One Body in Christ, p.185. "The Christ who is related to the Church is an inclusive personality. It is not only the individual members but the community as a whole which is related to Christ."

141. Brunner, DIII, p.45.
142. Brunner, Ibid.
143. Brunner, LtoRom, p.150.
144. Brunner, DIII, p.45.
145. Brunner, Ibid, p.46.
146. Brunner, Ibid.
147. Brunner, Ibid, p.47.
148. Brunner, Ibid.
149. Oscar Cullmann, The Johannie Circle, pp.61-62.
150. Brunner, DIII, p.47.
151. Brunner, MiCh, p.74.  Cf. also Heinz, The Question of God, p.79.
152. Cf. Brunner, DIII, p.47.
153. In the sense that every form of ecclesiastical polity is in
     flagrant conflict with the essence of the Church, Sohm started from
     the Church as an absolutely spiritual reality, the invisible body
     of Christ, the Church whose citizenship is in heaven, which is held
     together only by common faith and pneumatic charismata, which has
     an external organization therefore neither locally nor otherwise,
     but is present as the Church wherever only two or three are
     present in  Christ's name.  Brunner proved in a manner similar to
     that of this canonist before him, that often the Church has turned
     from  a vessel of Ecclesia into an obstacle to Christian community,
     in fact into a governing institution.  Cf. Brunner, MiCh, p.107.
     Herman Ridderbos, Paul, pp.438-440. Werner Kägi, "Emil Brunner's
     Contribution to Legal and Political Thought in a Threatened Age" in
     ThoEB, p.284.
154. Brunner, DIII, p.47.
155. Brunner, EtHo, pp.75-76. Cf. also Albert Schweitzer indicates the
     incompatibility of the nature of the law and that of the Ecclesia
     in terms of law and eschatology in Paul: The incompatibility of Law
     and eschatology become evident in the fact that the Law is
     constantly threatened by eschatology, and that in a two-fold
     fashion: by the intrinsic impulse of eschatology towards an
     immediate and absolute ethic;  and by the supramundane character of
     the Messianic mode of being, to which the Law, established for the
     natural world, is not appropriate.  The Mysticism of Paul the
     Apostle, p.189.
156. Brunner, MiCh, p.74.
157. Brunner, Ibid, p.84.
158. Brunner, "Ecclesia and Evangelism", in Japan Christian Quarterly,
     vol.21, 1955, p.156.
159. Dale Moody, "The Church in Theology", in ThoEB, p.234.
160. Brunner, TasE, p.198.
161. Brunner, Ibid, pp.174f.
162. John 17:24.
163. Brunner, DI, pp.308f.
164. Brunner et. al, The Christian Understanding of Man, Church,
     Community and State, Vol. II (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.,
     1938)  p.154.
165. Brunner, DIII, p.23.
166. Brunner, "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism", in ThoEB, p.332.
167. Brunner, DIII, p.23.
168. Brunner, Ibid.
169. Brunner, "The Church as a Gift and a Task" in The Japan Christian
     Quarterly, vol. 20, 1954, p.187.
170. Cf. J. Edward Humphrey, Emil Brunner, p.115.
171. Brunner, DIII, p.24.
172. Brunner, "The Church as a Gift", inThe Japan Christian Quarterly,

Vol. 20, 1954, p.189.

173. Brunner, Ibid

174. Mark 4:11.

175. On this point Brunner explains as this: "Israel is the convenant-people of the covenant-God - that, however, is precisely what the Ecclesia of the New Testament apprehends itself to be.  It would seem, therefore, that according to the purpose of God the Ecclesia was to be identified with the elected people of the Old covenant.  And yet the fellowship founded by Jesus realized that it was something wholly new, namely, the fellowship of those who through Jesus Christ share in the new covenant and the new aeon."  See Brunner, MiCh, p.20.

176. Brunner, DIII, p.24

177. Brunner, Ibid.

178. Brunner, Ibid, p.25.

179. Brunner, DiIm, p.526.

180. "As a community it is called to be a perfect and harmonious community, its members living together in unity as a Body of Christ."  See Ernest Best, One Body in Christ (London: S.P.C.K. 1955), p.188.

181. Brunner, DIII, p.25

182. Brunner, DiIm, p.526.

183. Brunner, DIII, pp.25f.

184. So Brunner insists that we shall never rightly understand the essential being of the New Testament ecclesia if we do not take fully into account these paralogical revelations of the Spirit.  See Brunner, MiCh, p.49.

185. Brunner, DIII, p.26.

186. Brunner, Ibid.

187. Brunner, Ibid, pp.26f.

188. Brunner, DiIm, p.525.

189. Brunner, DIII, p.27.  Cf. J. Edward Humphrey, Emil Brunner pp.115.

190. Emil Brunner, DIII, p.27.  In this sense Brunner understands that the Ecclesia of the New Testament, the fellowship of Christian believers, is precisely not that which every 'Church' is at least in part - an institution, a something.  The Body of Christ is something other than a fellowship of persons.  It is "the fellowship of Jesus" (I Cor. 1:19) of 'Fellowship of the Holy Ghost' (2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 2:1), where fellowship or
signifies a common participation, a togetherness, a community life.  The faithful are bound to each other through their common sharing in Christ and in the Holy Ghost, but that which they have in common is precisely no 'thing', no 'it', but a 'he', Christ and His Holy Spirit.  See Brunner, MiCh, pp.10f.

191. Brunner, DIII, p.28.

192. On this point Brunner understands that Calvin is concerned with the return to the New Testament Ecclesia not only from the standpoint of the individual's faith, but likewise from the standpoint of Church order.  Here Calvin recognizes the existence of a sacred church policy and he stands nearer than Luther to early Catholicism.  See Brunner, MiCh, p.97.

193. Brunner, DIII, p.28.

194. Brunner, Ibid, p.29.

195. Brunner's claim to this may be given us more precisely in the following passage: "But the question whether the word of Christ or faith comes first admits no discussion, for faith is the response to the word of Christ.  This word is entrusted to the keeping of the Christian fellowship, not, however, as an abstraction, but as

the Word of the living Christ, who abides in the fellowship through the Spirit. Therefore the felolowship of Jesus preceeds the individual believer as the mater omnium piorum. See Brunner, MiCh, p.11.

196. Brunner, DIII, p.29.

197. Brunner, Ibid.

198. Ferdinand Toennies produced a small volume, Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft in 1887. This book was destined to wield great influence upon sociological thinking. Its central idea is his theory of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft as two different modes of mentality and behaviour, and as two different types of society. Cf. Professor Pitirim A. Sorokin's Foreword and Translator's Introduction. Toennies, Community and Association, trans Charles P. Loomis (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955) pp. v. 42-44, 74-77.

199. Brunner, DIII, p.30.

200. Brunner, Ibid, see also footnote 2.

201. After he was trained in the school of Ritschl, he attempted to research the double task of both the ecclesiastical dogmatic tradition of Protestantism in its own historical sense and the intellectual and practical situation of the present day in way of sociological approach. See Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, I.II trans. Olive Wyon (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd: New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), pp.19f.

202. Brunner, DIII, p.3.

203. Brunner, Ibid, p.32.

204. Cf. Ernest Best, One Body in Christ, pp.115-138,Chapter VII, The Body of Christ: The Colossian Epistle.

205. Brunner, DIII, p.34.

206. Brunner, Ibid.

207. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Sanctorum Communio (London: Collins, 1963), p.98.

208. Brunner, DIII, p.18

209. Brunner, Ibid, p.36.

210. Brunner, MiCh, p.111.

211. Brunner, TasE, p.188.

212. Brunner, "Ecclesia and Evangelism", in Japan Christian Quarterly, vol. 21, 1955, p.158.

213. Eberhard Müller, "The Church in Action, in ThoEB, p.41.

214. E. Brunner, UEK, pp.49f.

215. E. Brunner, CaOG, pp.9f.

216. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.10.

217. Brunner, Ibid, p.20.

218. Brunner, UEK, pp34f.

219. Brunner, CaOG, p.22.

220. Brunner, UEK, p.27.

221. Cf. Emil Brunner, Ibid, pp.27f.; Cf. also CaOG, pp.26f.: "The Bible at any rate assigns a central place to quite different criteria of true faith than the affirmation of a formulated confession of faith. the confusion of two points of view, of that which is decisive for the Church as a whole with that which is decisive for the individual, is one of the erroneous developments of the Old Church which was not fully corrected even in the time of the Reformation. It resulted in a calamitous intellectualisation of faith, and consequently of the whole Christian life, the formation of a schism between the intellectual dogmatic element and the practical ethical element which are one in the New Testament".

222. E. Brunner, CaOG, p.100.

223. Brunner, Ibid, p.106.
224. Brunner, Ibid, p.107.
225. Cf. J. Robert Nelson, "Emil Brunner", in Dean G. Peerman and E. Marty (ed), A Handbook of Christian Theologians, P.425.
226. Cf. a good brief history of the ecumenical movement: "Introduction: Division and the Search for Unity prior to the Reformation" by Stephen Charles Neil, in A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948, vol. I (London: SPCK 1967) pp.1-24; Cf. also "The General Ecumenical Development since 1948" by W.A. Visser'T Hooft, in The Ecumenical Advance, A History of the Ecumenical Movement, vol. 2 (London: SPCK, 1970), pp.3-26.
227. Stephen Charles Neil, Ibid, p.3.
228. Stephen Charles Neil, Ibid, p.5.
229. Cf. for instance, the means by which the Church in the Roman Empire sought to recover its own lost unity was the Ecumenical Council: Nicaea in 325, Constantinople in 381, Ephesus in 431, and Chalcedon in 451. See Stephen Charles Neil, Ibid, Note 1, p.11.
230. Henri D'Espine points out that it should be emphasized that the ecumenical movement must not be regarded as identical with the World Council of Churches, nor has the latter ever claimed to be its only expression. Nevertheless, it is universally recognized that the World Council of Churches occupies in it a place of special responsibility, being at present the most strongly organized inter-church body for promoting the aims of the movement. Cf. "Introduction" of the Ecumenical Advance (LondoN: SPCK, 1970) p.xv.
231. Wilhelm Pauck, "The Church-History Setting of Brunner's Theology", in ThoEB, p.32.
232. Cf. W.A. Visser't Hooft, The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982.
233. E. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.10, From 1930 on, I worked intensibly with a number of study groups in the framework of the Ecumenical Movement as a number of the study commissions on "Life and Work" and "Faith and Order". Cf. also Wilhelm Pauck, op.cit., p.32.
234. E. Brunner, DI, p.vi.
235. E. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.10.
236. E. Brunner, Karl Barth and Erich Studer, Die ökumenische Aufgabe in den reformieren Kirchen der Schweiz, Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A.G. Zollikon, 1949, p.52.
237. E. Brunner, DIII, pp.104f.
238. Hans Küng, Structures of the Church (New York: Crossroad, 1982), p.28.
239. W.A. Visser't Hooft (ed) The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1949) p.12.
240. Paul Hessert, Christian Life (London: Lutterworth Press, 1968), p.121.
241. Cf. J. Moltman, The Open Church (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1978) p.82: "The ecumenical movement toward the unity of the church is especially a amovement coming from the Cross of its one Lord."
242. E. Brunner, DIII, p.129.
243. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.127.
244. E. Brunner, Ibid, (vol. III), pp.129, 87.
245. Hugh Vernon White, "Brunner's Missionary Theology",in ThoEB, pp.60f.
246. E. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.17.
247. His lectures were published under the title, Christianity and civilization, vol. I: Foundations, vol.II: Specific Problems by

Nisbet & Co. Ltd. in London, 1948, 1949.

248. Cf. E. Brunner "Toward a Missionary Theology", in The Christian Century, vol. 46, 1949, p.817.
249. E. Brunner, ChaCi II, pp.v-vi.
250. E. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, pp.14f.
251. E. Brunner, op.cit., pp.140f.
252. Hans Rüdi Weber pointed out that Boldern House was represented as a kind of church-model which Brunner attempted to depict. The writer was informed about this from Professor Weber in the World Council of Churches on 30 May 1986 and greatly appreciates his kind advice.
253. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.18.
254. Brunner, Ibid.
255. Clarence Prouty Shedd and others, History of the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations (London: SPCK 1955), p.539.
256. Clarence Prouty Shedd and others, Ibid.
257. Quoted in Forward Together, Report of Nyborg Strand Plenary, 1950, pp.87ff.; Also Clarence prouty Shedd and others, Ibid, pp.539, 646.
258. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB p.19.
259. Brunner, ProfCh, pp.82-83.
260. Brunner, Ibid, p.84.
261. Brunner, Ibid, pp.87-92.
262. Brunner, CCC, p.17.
263. Brunner, "A Unique Christian Mission: The Mukyo-kai ('Non-Church) Movement in Japan", in Religion and Culture, edit. Walter Leibrecht (London: SCM Press, 1958), pp.287-290. Cf. also J. Robert Nelson, "Emil Brunner", in A handbook of Christian Theologians, edit. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1965), p.425. Cf. also Charles H. Germany, Protestant Theologies in Modern Japan (Tokyo: IISR Press, 1965) pp.32-40.
264. E. Brunner, "Ecclesia and Evangelism", in Japan Christian Quarterly, vol. 21, 1955, p.155. (Italic is Brunner's).
265. Brunner, "Ecclesia and Evangelism", in Japan Christian Quarterly, vol. 21, 1955, p.156.
266. Brunner, "Intellelctual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.19.
267. Brunner, CNSO, p.28.
268. Brunner, WaW, p.108.
269. Emil Brunner, DI, p.103.

# VI  MISSIONARY THEOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

## 1.  Communicating the Christian Message

### 1.1  The man of the *Zeitgeist*

In the foregoing chapters we undertook an analysis of various aspects of

the term 'missionary theology' based on the writings of Emil Brunner.

Since he is convinced that first among new understandings in his

thinking is that of the *missionary situation* of the church, it is of

importance to note that he attempts to present the Christian Gospel

vigorously to enable a real encounter between the church and modern man:

"More and more I come to the view that the church nowadays speaks not

chiefly to Christians, as it did in the Middle Ages and at the time of

the Reformation and even a hundred years ago;  it must speak primarily

to 'heathen'.  Therefore, in combating the secularism which this 20th

century takes for granted, it must start out theologically from the

Christian understanding of the nature of man".[1]


So Brunner claims that theology may not ignore anthropology, for

inasmuch as the former would assist the preaching of the Gospel in

effecting encounter with the sinner, it must maintain its missionary

character.  Unless the church comes with a living message which will

confront man directly in his situation, it will actually pass by living

man himself.  A theology that does not share this existential interest

is not worthy of our attention.  For the Gospel must 'strike' man where

he is, and then man must be persuaded of his need for the Gospel.  The

fact is that man's true need cannot be recognised until it has been

fulfilled through the Gospel.  Thus, there is for Brunner 'another task

of theology' which is not really another task at all.  He puts it as

follows:

> We are not trying to save man's "face" or his honor; here
> our concern is with the question of the preaching of the
> Gospel, religious instruction and the "cure of soul". For
> the preacher - and for the Church as a whole - to have a
> deep concern for the person to whom the preaching of the
> Church is addressed is certainly not a "secondary" matter;
> it is not a "merely educational affair", and therefore "non-
> theological", and thus a merely subordinate question, or
> even, possibly, of no interest at all. On the contrary,
> *this concern for man is an integral part of the message
> itself. For the whole revelation is God's concern for man.
> For man's sake God became man; out of pity for His lost
> creature God stooped to the level of man.*[2]

Accordingly, Brunner argues that a missionary theology is then the struggle of Christian faith with the *Zeitgeist*.[3] It must not, from the very beginning, put the opponent to the wall so that he cannot but be defeated. It must not try to improve its chances of gaining a tactical success by merely pretending to deal with the objections of the different ideological point of view. Rather, it has to affect the listener, to appeal to him in his very abode, and to take him seriously. It has to start from the spiritual situation of the opponent and to attack that situation at the same time. It must start from the distress and the danger of modern man, and show him at the same time that the gospel gives the rescuing answer to this question. So, although it needs severe dogmatics and exegesis, what really matters is the *living and renewed understanding* of the Word of God. Hence in this missionary theology there will be a genuinely polemical vein of discussion. As men of today we can only apprehend, according to Brunner, the divine Word through conflict with the thought of our time. We can only sustain the conflict if we understand the Word of God in its proper content. So Brunner claims that we need this missionary theology in order that the Word of God may be proclaimed *a new message*.[4]

Since Brunner is convinced that missionary theology is the struggle of faith with the *Zeitgeist*, his notion of missionary theology precisely comes about as the following point. The conflict between faith and scientific criticism, or between theology and the rest of the faculties proves to be a pretext which has been brought about either by the unjustified dogmatising of traditional opinions on the part of the church or by sceptical distortions of the critical sciences. But real faith and real scientific thinking, in Brunner's view, cannot come into conflict. It is, therefore, the task of missionary theology to show by critical investigation of scientific statements what is genuine science in it, and what may be a hidden dogmatic presupposition which such science employs and by which its statements are dimmed, and so turned around until they become an obstacle to faith.[5] In this regard, Brunner uses the term 'missionary theology' to refer to a defence against the attacks on the biblical truth of revelation or against the attacks that originate from the sinful 'self-misunderstanding of reason'. The defence takes place dialetically in such a way that it shakes this self-understanding of 'autonomous' reason and at the same time claims man's reason. So missionary theology proves that those objections do not originate at all from reason itself but from a reason which is formed by a particular *Zeitgeist*, from an understanding of life and of oneself in rivalry with the gospel.

Thus, what Brunner claims is that missionary theology uses reason by examining critically the fact that this contradiction of reason does not concern faith at all but rather a misunderstanding of faith. It shows, then, that the true intentions of a critically purified reason have to end in faith. Therefore, it is necessary to show what is true and what is false in human self-understanding. It is the aim of

missionary theology to complete this separation and to explain the true meaning of the Christian message by completing it.[6] Since his criticism against liberal theology that conforms to the *Zeitgeist* produced in the last century by rationalism and German idealism, Brunner regards the wider orientation of philosophical perspective as a progressive emancipation of man from all external limitation and authority. For him, this is an uncritical assumption of modern thought, in other words, man is totally independent and complete in himself by virtue of his powers of reason. Such is Brunner's conviction about the general predicament of modern man. The source of this predicament is the pride of reason which will not be humbled by admitting the existence of any authority above itself. Reason claims for itself unbridled autonomy. And this autonomy is equivalent to sin.[7]

In short, modern philosophy's uncritical confidence in reason is but a variation of the fundamental and original sin of man, his usurpation of divine authority, or his confusion of himself with his Creator. Hence Brunner requires a subordination of reason because reason as the power of ideation spells autonomy for man. Such autonomy is not wrong in itself, but becomes sin only when it oversteps its bounds. By his reason man is to master the world in response to his Creator's command. Reason is, then, the means of mastery whereas faith is the act of submission. By ascribing the primacy to faith instead of to reason, Brunner subordinates the mastery to the act of submission; as a result, he claims that reason as the power of ideation cannot be a legitimate mastering of the world unless it is seen in its ethical-religious significance. Man must master the world in *obedience* to God.[8]

It is true that the term '*humanum*' indicates for Brunner *a relation*

*to God*, a relation that is established by the address to God to each man (see II.I.2). So, whatever man's organic origins may be, the emergence of the human *person* is his individual response to God. The general response of men, however, is one of self-assertion, and of denial and disobedience toward God, despite the fact that the nature of His address is love. This means that the nature of man is that of a sinner, a person whose actual existence is autonomic opposition to his Creator. It also means that while actual relation of man to God is that of 'contradiction', it is still his nature to be related to God; this is his *imago dei*. There is no such thing as a man apart from God, and without some form of consciousness of God. Therefore, Brunner claims that all men have a knowledge of God even though it be a consciousness of judgement of wrath, and of separation.

The sin of man is really a personal alienation from and enmity against God. The attainment of spiritual enlightenment or of moral perfection or of inner peace cannot effect salvation because these ends are subjective states of the individual, whereas man's real problem is his relation to God. Salvation is found in reconciliation. But man cannot reconcile himself with God against whom he has rebelled. So God himself must act both to make man aware of his true conditions and to deliver him from the perversion of his nature and the futility of his efforts toward self-salvation. God acts to this end in Christ who is the Mediator, 'the Word made flesh'. The possibility of salvation lies in the fact that man can, through hearing the gospel, recognise and receive this Word as the real Word by which God originally addressed the creature and called him into existence as man, a human person. Here the two parties involved in the act of redemption are both fully involved in their proper and characteristic roles, that is, God the party of the

first acts in grace and forgiveness, and man the party of the second part acts in faith and obedience. Thus, the necessity of the Mediator, the historical and personal appearance of Jesus Christ, and the witness to this saving act of God by those who have been reconciled must be claimed.

This claim lead us to the fundamental predicament from which man needs to be saved. At the same time it must contain the Christian missionary activity to awaken men to their sin and the realisation of their personal alienation from God. Strangely enough, almost the last thing that man can know is himself, and particularly his relation of personal responsibility to God. Men are always aware of their ignorance, their weaknesses, and their moral defects; so in religion they seek help from their gods to overcome these evils. However, according to Brunner, the basic personal relationship, in which responsibility to the holy and loving God constitutes the very nature of man's existence, comes to light only in the self-revelation of God through the prophets and His incarnation in Christ. The first knowledge of this relationship came through the law but the first effect of the law was to produce a consciousness of sin. The law made men aware of their responsibility to God but it also condemned them for their disobedience. This in the life of Israel prepared the way for salvation in Christ. But no such revelation of the personal relationship appeared in any other religious tradition. It is the direct manifestation of God in His personal presence and acts in Jesus Christ in whom men are both called to repentance and freely forgiven. However, this is not an achievement of man but the act of God. He was known as the Son of God by faith; this is revelation.[9]

Accordingly, the saving knowledge of God which the missionary seeks to communicate requires both the Old Testament and the New. The work accomplished in Israel through its own history must be patiently done by the missionary to prepare the way for a full acceptance of the revelation in Christ, a revelation that itself is received by faith as indeed it was by the first disciples and by all subsequent believers. In Brunner's opinion, faith is the *act* in which the revelation or self-communication of God is received and in which this is realised in the subject, man. "Faith is therefore first of all an *act of knowledge*; it is the 'light of the knowledge of the glory of God', it is awareness of the God who reveals Himself. ... To become aware of the revelation is itself revelation, and this awareness is the act of faith."[10]

From this perspective of revelation Brunner is convinced that reason could be subservient to faith; that is to say, he would define place and function of reason from the perspective of faith. So he is concerned to establish the right of revelation (or faith) and reason. To make the two co-equal would involve us in an impossible dualism. To exclude reason in the interests of faith would involve us in irrationalism. Yet to make faith subject to the dictates of reason would involve us rationalism. Therefore, Brunner argues that reason has its right as an endowment of the Creator, yet also its limits. The truth of revelation is not in opposition to any truth of reason, nor to any fact that has been discovered by the use of reason. Genuine truths of faith are never in conflict with logic or with the sciences; they conflict only with the rationalistic or positivistic metaphysics. Hence the protest of 'intellectual honesty', which the *autonomous* reason always makes, is always suspicious. The question is not one of 'intellectual honesty' at all, but of positivistic arrogance and self-

will.[11]

The only solution Brunner has for this problem is thus a kind of balancing feat between the biblical revelation and reason, or 'faith' and 'rational thought', in which rational discussion goes far beyond the affirmations of 'faith' though it must always be prepared to be held in check by these. Underlying these ideas, however, there is always the thought that the rather inexact, pictorial conceptions of faith can and should be given more adequate expression of theology.[12] For Brunner, to study theology scientifically means to place the reason at the service of the Word of God; this implies the usefulness of the reason for this service. And this at least suggests that there may be a positive relation between reason and revelation.[13] In this regard, the difference between Christian philosophy and Christian theology is therefore not one of principle; rather it is a mutual transition: "Every 'systematic theologian' ... is *philosopher and theologian* in the one person. He is a theologian insofar as he is occupied with the problems that are raised directly by the message of the Bible; he is a philosopher insofar as he is occupied with the problems that are in the background of the Biblical revelation."[14]

Now, since Emil Brunner is convinced that missionary theology is an *intellectual presentation* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which starts from the *spiritual situation* of the hearer, and is addressed to it, his argument is that missionary theology is, first of all, wholly concerned with the man of the Zeitgeist, such as hearer's need, his helplessness, his scepticism and his concrete problem. The non-believing hearer or the presumptive hearer, is already affected by a definite 'spirit of the age'; that is to say, his views of life and its problems, and of his

own nature, are all coloured by a definite outlook which claims to rival the Christian view of life.[15] This kind of theology takes the form of a conversation between a Christian believer and an unbeliever. Full weight must be given to the truth and insights already possessed by the unbeliever, but at the same time must show the lack in his knowledge. It aims to remove the *hindrances* which lie between the gospel and the hearer - namely, those hindrances which are accessible to intellectual reflection.

Thus, as Brunner argues, we need this theology in order that the Word of God may be proclaimed *anew*. It is only at the cost of the most intensive theological labour that the Church can again discover the Word which alone justifies her existence, the Word which she owes to the world, the Word which saves the world. In this regard, there is no other task for theology but this, which is now the chief task of the Church. But this one task has different aspects, which take on a varying importance according to the given historical situation.[16] In a modern secular world which has virtually lost all knowledge of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, theology has a different task from that incumbent on her in quieter times of assured 'churchliness'. In her theological work the Church must seek for the point where modern man can be got at.

In Brunner's opinion, the task must be, therefore, accompanied with the fact that the Church owes it to the world to formulate its beliefs in a way that will not conflict with scientific knowledge. It should no longer mix up its belief in creation out of nothing, in the Fall, in the reconciling act of God in Christ, with elements of an antiquated view of the world which have reached us from biblical and ecclesiastical

tradition.  The mixing up of the Christian message with obsolete metaphysics, cosmology and chronology has long been responsible for their loss of trust in the Church, and for bringing them into grave conflicts which the Church could and should have spared them. Accordingly, the task of remodelling the form of its doctrine and preaching for the man of today, whose life frankly is no longer sustained by church tradition and practice, shall not be estranged from the outset, or revolted because he can make nothing of the *old forms of language*.[17]  From the point of view that the gospel remains the same, but our understanding of the gospel must ever be won anew, Brunner's claim about the importance of missionary theology is a valuable suggestion.  However, it must be seriously questioned whether Brunner can really remodel the *communication* of the gospel to the man of the Zeitgeist.  We must turn now to this question and others with some critical examinations.

## 1.2  The act of communication

Since we are interested in Brunner's term 'missionary theology' or 'eristics', we must consider whether he is effectively able to challenge the unbeliever to abandon his anti-Christian position and to accept the Christian faith.  In approaching this task, Brunner's fundamental thesis is the following two points:[18]

1.  The biblical understanding of truth cannot be grasped by means of the antithesis between the 'objective' and the 'subjective' dominant in philosophy, but is rather falsified thereby.

2.  To grasp such truth one must rise above the subject-object correlation.  Thus, as we have seen, Brunner substitutes in its place the category of truth as *encounter* (Wahrheit als *Begegnung* or

often called Person*begegnung)*.

The first of these two points is, however, a mistaken assumption insofar as the *Zeitgeist* is employed in theological discourse, or at least the counterpart of missionary theology. Perhaps Brunner's antiphilosophical tendency may be found in the main sources from some philosophical question of Kant and Kierkegaard. Brunner has generally employed the critical philosophy of Kant in the sense of the latter's attempt to avoid the rational speculation of idealism on the one hand and the empirical limitation of realism on the other.[19] As a result, he basically acknowledges Kant's critical method by which the latter seeks to incorporate the best of both positions, and thereby check the rational by the empirical and the empirical by the rational because percepts without concepts are blind and concepts without percept are empty.[20] This method may provide a reliable epistemological basis for even a theologian. Kant himself states in the Preface to the second Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that he was doing away with knowledge in order to make room for faith.[21]

However, what Brunner objects to is not that Kant employs reason in his formulation, but that, in spite of his critical method, he does not employ it critically enough. In Brunner's view, Kant maintains a procedure up to the point of his reaffirmation of the notion of autonomy in the concept of the intelligible self. If moral autonomy is a fact, the law is our own law, and therefore our deepest self is at one with the law; it is itself the lawgiver, the intelligible self. On the other hand, if autonomy is a fact, then where there is want of conformity with the law, the responsibility lies in the deepest self, the rational self, and it alone. For reason alone is capable of

responsible action. So in both cases the concept of the intelligible self is then the legislator of the good, and becomes a 'God'.[22] Therefore such a criticism, so Brunner argues, cannot arrive at the truth of revelation. If it is truly critical, it can raise the question as to the possibility of some avenue of truth outside the immanental possibilities of human reason. Thus, Brunner's rejection of philosophy involves a rejection of the possibility of a knowledge of God by means of reason.

Of course there can be no reasonable doubt that this Kantian epistemological dualism is at the bottom of Brunner's approach to the problem of religious truth.[23] And he puts it as follows:

> The objects of religion are at the same time the objects of science; faith and knowledge are identical... It was precisely this axiom ... which Kant so powerfully shook and that in a two-fold way. First, negatively, in that he proved the impossibility of a positive metaphysic of the understanding; secondly, in a positive way, in that he posited the knowledge of the practical reason, knowledge which is independent of and superior to theoretical knowledge. That is, he cleaves knowledge from faith. In method and content their pronouncements differ. Science and religion belong to two different spheres of consciousness.[24]

Since Brunner is convinced that man by reason can not overcome this epistemological dualism, there is no theoretical, objective solution to the idealistic-realistic antinomy. It is the merit of philosophical criticism to show us this, but it cannot overcome antinomy. Reason has, then, its proper sphere of competence, but as criticism has shown, it also has its limits. Thus, this critical review of the Kantian distinction between the theoretical and the practical reason may lead Brunner to his antiphilosophical tendency.

Furthermore, this tendency is sharpened with Kierkegaard's claim that philosophy cannot apprehend the truth of existence. Kierkegaard

argues that the proper use of the mind in the quest for truth is within the bounds of Christian faith. Reason, as it attempts to operate apart from the commitment of faith, is doomed to become fantastic and to issue in despair. Whereas faith begins with existence and reasons from it, reason transforms existence into possibility. In this opinion, the way of faith is the way and the only way of *truth*; the way of knowledge is the way of *possibility*. Faith and knowledge, then, move in different and opposite directions. For him to apprehend truth means to live in the truth, to exist in one's thought. But this is possible only through the commitment of faith. Therefore, philosophy cannot apprehend the truth of the self, of the world, or of God, but can only construct various possible views of them. In this regard, many of Brunner's theological concepts resemble Kierkegaardian terms. For instance, his Christology attempts to avoid liberal rejection of the real historical nature of the incarnation and orthodoxy's identification of the historical aspect with the incarnation itself in his use of Kierkegaard's concept of indirect communication (see IV.3.3).

However, in spite of his great indebtedness to Kierkegaard, Brunner fully appreciates the importance of the function of reason. For him, faith not only recognises the function of philosophy, but presupposes it. There can be no 'double truth' as a truth of reason and a truth of faith, but two spheres of human knowledge and experience. For dual truth amounts to no truth at all.[25] "Revelation and reason possess one common element: they both claim truth. The genuine scientist wills, not that his opinion should prevail, but that *truth* should prevail; unbelievers have frequently surpassed Christians in their love of truth, and in their willingness to sacrifice their own interests to the truth they have put many a Christian to shame. But the Christian faith also

is concerned with truth."[26]  It is precisely for this reason that the two can converse with each other, be mutually relevant, and disagree. Since Brunner recognises that there is only one truth, even though it may be apprehended and conveyed in radically different ways, the relationship between rationally attested truth and revealed truth is especially acute.  If there is only *one truth* and if both reason and faith are at least relatively independent modes of apprehending truth, the possibility that they may conflict is by no means precluded.

According to Brunner's argument, since philosophy is however both possible and necessary, otherwise as Christian one neither can nor should cease to think, it is not reason but *rationalism* that makes Christian philosophy appear impossible.[27]  It is, of course, to *Christian* philosophy that he is referring here.  But, in this context, the word 'Christian' does not appear to be necessary.  It is "possible and necessary" for the *Christian* to engage in philosophy and, we might add, on Brunner's analysis perfectly legitimate for him to do so.  To leave philosophy aside means to surrender one's intellect.  There is nothing in the Christian faith that militates against the free use of the mind either in science or philosophy.  So Brunner argues that *Christian* philosophy is the reflection of a believing Christian about being and about existing realities as these are disclosed in experience of the world.  It is reflection concerning the principles of being and of thought about being.  But it is a *thinking* that is freed from the illusory prejudice of autonomy, because it knows of its own origin in the Spirit and will of the Creator, and in this thought, which stems not from man's own resources but from God's self-communication, it recognises and exercises its freedom as given, and therefore as a power with limitations.[28]

Thus, Brunner not only acknowledges the legitimacy of philosophy but also conceives of the possibility of a *Christian philosophy*. According to him, Christian philosophy is *possible* because faith does not ignore or coerce the thinking reason, but leads it back to its original purpose, and sets it free. From this point of view, faith consists simply in this, that the illusion of the autonomous reason, which is the basis of all philosophical dogmatism, has been dissolved, and the thinking self has once more been set where it belongs, at the place where it is no longer that which comprehends everything, but where it is the subject which is itself comprehended, where therefore the desire to set up the absolute system has come to an end; its place is taken by the rightful endeavour to perceive the connection between all that exists for the sake of the creation. In this respect 'knowledge about world' provides to faith and regaining of a truly critical, and therefore realistic, way of thought. In Brunner's opinion, since the Christian philosopher alone is in a position to see man as a creature, as finite, not absolute reason, and as a fallen, only he can therefore think truly critical, and truly realistically, and only the critical philosopher can be a Christian.[29]

However, it is important to consider in what sense Brunner regards the word 'philosophy' as in any sense *Christian*. It seems to be clear that he does not look upon philosophy as nothing but the expression of *Christian theology.* For he claims that neither is philosophy 'the handmaid of theology' as Thomas Aquinas believed, nor is theology dependent on 'propositions borrowed from philosophy' as Schleiermacher conceived. Rather, both have the *same origin*, but each has its different task of thought. Each is called to its special service. They both theology and philosophy stand under Christ, the one in an inner,

and the other in an outer, circle; the one with the task of understanding the message of Jesus Christ in its inmost depths of meaning, and thus of purifying the proclamation of the Gospel and ever anew basing it upon the Word of revelation; the other with the task of making clear the truth of faith in order to throw light on the problems of Christians living in the world, and to help them to deal with these problems in a creative way.[30]

Now, human *reason* has, in Brunner's view, its proper autonomy and engages in the quest for knowledge in at least relative independence of the disclosures of faith. To understand the Bible ever so well, even 'through the eyes of faith', is by no means to qualify as a competent philosopher. Philosophy is not and cannot be *Christian* in the sense that it is merely theology. *Philosophical knowledge* can be achieved only through the vigorous exercise of the intellect as it works with the materials of experience. So far as the *form* and *content* of philosophical truth is concerned, the Christian engaging in philosophy has absolutely no advantage over the non-Christian. He cannot, in the first instance, come by his truths by deriving them from revelation and, in the second place, he cannot defend them by appeal to faith. As philosopher he must justify his knowledge claims before the court of reason alone. Thus, there is no special *Christian Philosophy* in the sense that any special set of philosophical doctrines may be regarded as distinctly Christian.[31] However, this is not the case that Brunner accepts as such. For him, what is recognised as valid in philosophy or science cannot be untrue for faith. That which *seems* to be a *double* truth, that is, the equal truth of contradictory statements, always proves to be either the result of drawing an inadequate distinction between various aspects of a question or of exceeding on one side or the

other the rightful limits of the subject in question.

Thus, there is a very important question as to the compatibility of any given *philosophical* system with Christian revelation. Quite clearly, Christian theology for Brunner is not compatible with, for example, a kind of rationalism which challenges the Christian to prove that revelation and faith have a *rational foundation*. In a certain sense the assertion of faith for Brunner is not without foundation; indeed it rests upon a real foundation, and upon one that is very cogent. No one indeed should maintain, in the Christian sense of the word 'faith', that he believes, if he does not feel that he *must* believe, if there is no *evidence* for that which he believes. But this evidence does not belong to the sphere of rational knowledge, but to the knowledge of faith. It is the evidence of the fact of *revelation* itself. Insofar as the Christian faith understands it, revelation is, by its very nature, something that lies beyond all rational arguments; the argument which it certainly claims in its support does not lie in the sphere of rational knowledge, but in the sphere of that divine truth which can be attained only through divine *self-communication* and not through human research of any kind.[32]

So, in his explication of the Christian concept of revelation Brunner observes first of all that revelation must be understood as the act of communication. This, he claims, is fundamental to the New Testament understanding of revelation. In the New Testament, revelation is a necessary and real *communication*, not merely an accidental or causal manifestation of a truth which could be apprehended apart from this manifestation. It is a communication in the deepest sense of the word: "What that means only becomes really clear when we invert the

sentence and say 'revelation alone is absolute communication'. Everything else which comes to me through communication is, so to speak, accidentally communication. ... But in the case of revelation the fact of communication is not accidental but necessary, because I cannot of myself know who God is, what God wills of me and for me. That he must tell me himself. Apart from this telling it to me himself God is to me the unknown, the hidden".[33] Therefore, in my knowledge about that which has been communicated to me in revelation I remain wholly bound to the event of the communication and to the particularity of the revelation and its bearer. In the sense of revelation the act of communication is absolutely decisive for my knowledge about Him.

The view of revelation has, so Brunner argues, a specifically Christian character in the sense that in all religions revelation signifies, in a broad sense, something which was previously hidden and is now disclosed, but in the New Testament the idea of communication is radically transformed. For I read about an absolute mystery and an absolute communication. This is true since God is the one who is revealed. Everything else, everything that in some way or another belongs to the world, is in principle already known, whereas God is the absolutely unknown. "Through God alone can God be known."[34] I know about Him only when He makes Himself known. I must let Him say to me. This dependence upon a historical event and a historical person belongs to the essence of revelation. So the God of the *Bible* has nothing to do with the *philosophical* concept of God, because he is not thought as *idea*, but apprehended in his historical revelation of himself. The God whom I can think for myself is for that very reason an idol.[35]

When Brunner speaks thus about absolute communication, he attempts

to point out that revelation is an *event* in history. This does not mean that history itself reveals God as the formula of idealistic philosophy of history does (see IV.1.2). Rather, God reveals Himself in definite moments of history and above all in Jesus Christ - in His person, life, death, and resurrection. True communication is realised in and cannot be separated from the historical person of Jesus Christ. Brunner lays great stress on this once-for-allness of revelation. The revelation to which the New Testament bears witness is neither general nor repeatable but is absolutely unique. It is not an illustration of a truth which has always been known or which apart from this revelation can be known. The historical and personal, therefore, does not act as a symbol. "Symbol *says* nothing to me, but *suggests* to me what I ought of *myself* to think when I perceive it. ... Symbol *awakens*, but *does not create* my own knowledge. Symbol draws my attention to something which in principle I can say to myself. Therefore, there are many symbols for the one thing, and for knowledge of the thing it is a matter of indifference through which symbol I learn the thing indicated. Therefore the thing indicated is at all times detachable from the symbol, i.e. from that particular which drew my attention to it. The thing itself, the idea, is as fundamentally independent of the symbol as of the person who communicates it."[36]

So Brunner claims that in the Bible, God and man are never spoken of in terms of an object set over against a receiving subject but always in terms of a reciprocally free, personal relationship between them. As a matter of fact, it is precisely in God's giving himself to be known and in this knowledge of God that the essence of the relation between God and man lies. Accordingly the revelation of God to men is the decisive element in what God does for them. For God is the God who

*approaches* man just because and insofar as he knows God on the basis of his revelation. God is always the One who destines man for, and calls man to, Himself; and man is always the one so destined and called by God. Hence the *event* that is the relation between God and man hence is always an act of communication: likewise, the event that is the relation between man and God is always a relation based on knowing. This relationship is consummated in an event in which God and man personally meet each other. Here Brunner uses the term 'encounter' to name this relationship between God and man. This Divine-human *encounter* is based on the self-communication of God through his Word, Jesus Christ.[37]

Since revelation is divine self-communication, the coming of God to man, it becomes human and seeks out man where he is. This concern for man is an essential part of the message itself. For the whole revelation is God's concern for man. The message of the church is an instrument of the divine message; and it has to subject itself to God's coming to man where he is. This, therefore, is the passion of the divine *agape* itself that forces us to missionary theology. It is not some independent humanistically motivated concern, but it is the zeal about God Himself that necessarily becomes a zeal about man. Thus, in respect of revelation every attempt at preaching and theology which is not concerned about this missionary task, which does not take man seriously, is wrong from the very beginning. By reflecting about the initiation of the divine Word we necessarily recognise this missionary task. So Brunner puts it as follows:

> The whole business of revelation is solely and unfathomably
> concerned with God's adaptation to man; the whole purpose
> of this is to lay hold of man, and to draw him once more to
> Himself, in order to set him once again within the "Kingdom
> of the Son of His love". All the activity and the message

of the Church is set within this act of divine condescension toward man as the instrument of His Word, in order that the Church may seek man where he is, and where he is hiding from God, to lay hold of him and draw him out into the open to face reality. .. Hence our concern for man is not a secondary matter, alongside of the Gospel;  it is the whole meaning of the central concern of the Church itself.[38]

Therefore, since the truth of revelation aims at man, theological reflection on the essence and the content of the truth of revelation leads to a confrontation with anti-Christian ways of thinking. Therefore all times genuine Christian theology for Brunner always has been also missionary theology, or in his own phrase 'eristic theology'. "As a matter of fact these two tasks, apologetics and dogmatics, cannot be separated from each other.  Every dogmatic statement is at the same time an apologetic-polemic statement and vice versa".[39]  Thus, Brunner claims that revelation in Jesus Christ is the personal self-communication of God.  The absoluteness of communication is inseparable from its personal character and also from its 'personal correspondence'. He directly applies this emphasis on the personal character of revelation to what he has said about 'truth as encounter'.  What he says about revelation in turn determines his understanding of faith. Concerning the meaning of revelation and faith in the New Testament he has written: "Here revelation is 'truth as *encounter*' and faith is knowledge as *encounter*".[40]

In Brunner's opinion, the principal task of missionary theology is not to set Christian faith on the platform of some previous rational understanding of reality, still less to prove it by reference to this, but rather to reflect on faith with a view to exposing the falsity of reason's understanding of itself.  Missionary theology thus aims to defend Christian faith against the misunderstanding that originate from

man's sinful abuse of reason. For this reason, Brunner stresses the activity of God, God in action. Revelation is in essence God's act; God is in essence the Revealer. Nothing like that can be asserted about any man. God is the absolute Subject as such (see IV.3.4). This definition is, however, based on *philosophical* premises of which Brunner gives an account. As shown to us in the previous discussion (see III.2.1), the philosophy he refers to is the I-Thou philosophy of Buber (and Ebner). This absolute Subject is a subject 'for-some-end', a subject that communicates itself. "We cannot grasp or describe the nature of radium without speaking of radio-activity. Radium is the radiant element - that is its very nature. Even so the nature of God is to shine forth in His Glory, communicating activity, personal being, which wills communion."[41]

As Anders Nygren points out, in an article on Emil Brunner's Doctrine of God, Brunner is right in his view that we cannot think of God's love as an ethical attribute,[42] and has a good word for Brunner's intention to avoid regarding God as an object. Nevertheless, by his philosophical definition of God as absolute Subject, Brunner has come to make God a 'something', an 'it', or an object. A 'Christian' ontology and a doctrine of being itself which Brunner intends to build up may be an improvement on the Greek metaphysics of old. But this does not prevent speculation based on the 'I and Thou' relationship making God an object when it uses philosophical ideas to define God's existence. Then, in spite of Brunner's intention, God becomes a 'something' that can be embodied in an ontology. Thus, God as 'Subject *per se*' and 'Subject for some end' is clearly something other than the God of whom the Bible speaks. Brunner himself is also clearly aware that there is a tension between philosophical reflection and the Bible

message, the 'revelation' on which elsewhere he means to build. But he regards that tension as inevitable: "the more that reflection, exact definition, strictly logical argument, reasoned classification, method and system predominate in Christian doctrine, the more 'scientific' it becomes, and the further it moves from the original truth of faith from which it proceeds, and to which it must continually refer."[43]

Ronald Hepburn, in the respect of the rational justification of religious belief, attacks precisely Brunner's notion of the key term 'encounter'. Although this term certainly ensures that the language of prayer is given priority over the language of reflection, yet we have to ask if the strongest claims of the theology are justified: if knowledge of God as personal can be entirely self-authenticating, or whether there is room here for (and even likelihood of) error and illusion. Are there no checking procedures relevant to the encounter of person with person? Or does all 'checking' necessarily degrade persons to the status of things? With these questions he objects, in particular, to the sense of a conception of 'encounter' as follows:

> The question which of these or other possible answers he
> will give, is of the first importance; for if the original
> direct encounter was with a being known in the last-
> mentioned way - as a holy and dreadful Presence - then one
> could *not* claim to have been aware directly and immediately
> of (say) God as Father of Jesus Christ. The judgement, 'I
> encountered the God revealed uniquely in the New Testament'
> would be an indirect, not a direct judgement. It would
> depend on inferences that could not themselves claim 'self-
> authentication'. We shall also have to consider the
> objection that such certainty as the Christian claims for
> his encounters with God can be had only by 'subjective' or
> 'psychological' statements: statements *not* to the effect
> that such and such exists or is the case, but that I have
> such and such sensations and feelings, and no more. And
> from statements as cautious as those one may *not* infer any
> equally certain statements about the world, about things or
> persons other than the speaker.[44]

Therefore, such a claim that *all* that Christians mean by 'God' can

be exhausted by reference to certain human experiences is surely not secured. Statements about 'God' would then be equivalent to statements about human experience and it would be nonsense, by definition, to speak about God's existence' prior to the existence of human beings possessing such experiences. The definition of 'God' may well be held essentially to include reference to human experiences, but traditional theism will always insist on more than this in any acceptable definition. And yet the moment that a 'more' is required, we are confronted with a metaphysical issue concerning a being who is the independent cause or source of the so-called 'encounter-experiences'. In this way the logic of encounter subtly slips from an overt attempt at explicating the meaning of theological terms to a covert argument to the *existence* of God from religious experience. If encounter proves both suspiciously subjectivist and logically incomplete as a theory of theological meaningfulness, it exhibits itself equally weak as convincing evidence from the existence of a divine Encounterer.[45]

A further difficulty within the notion of 'encounter' in its theological application arises over the very notion of error in 'I-Thou' experiences. How does one discover that he was mistaken in his supposition that he had been 'encountered' by the true personality of another? Such mistakes are always discovered by observations of a sort which are out of the question for theological 'encounter'. Hearing a snore; seeing a covert act, gesture, or facial expression; feeling a stab in the back - these are the means, often painful, of distinguishing sheer-illusion from what may conceivably be veridical extra-sensory perception.[46] Perhaps we may admit with Brunner that if God belongs to no class of objects in the world but is the creator of all objects, He cannot be 'discovered' at all by theological reason. For human thinking

is inadequate to this end. However, Hepburn's argument about the problem of testing symbols against supposed 'encounters', I think, is correct, if we must ask what the real measure of 'appropriateness' of a symbol to the experience can be. For no external evidence is ultimately capable of arbitrating on this matter; even the Bible serves as authority only because its words are adjudged 'appropriate' to the experience of each generation of reader. The writers of the Bible must themselves have had to determine the 'appropriateness' of their words to the encounter-experience without an external evidence on the language of encounter; or, if they relied on some previous authority (earlier documents, oral tradition), the regression of dependence upon external criteria must end somewhere short of infinity.

## 1.3 Christ and the problem of meaning

Emil Brunner is convinced that the term 'truth as encounter' adequately reproduces the two decisive elements which are contained in the biblical understanding of truth; that it is *historical* and that it is *personal*. Accordingly, truth is not something which is inherently present in man or the world, and which man needs only to become aware of, but the divine truth *comes* to men from outside the world and *happens* among men in space and time. In his opinion, the whole question of truth hinges upon the fact that it is not something timeless, but something which comes into being, the act of God in space and time. So God's revelation of his truth in an historical event in space and time does not signify that he originates an idea which is then taken up by human thought, or that he creates a series of facts which man has to take into account. This means that he himself, his *person*, is the content of this event. The revelation of God is 'the imparting of himself', what he speaks is addressed to someone, and his word is a *communicating word*.

Consequently, the act of revelation and its content are identical. The fact *that* God has revealed himself to man includes *what* he has revealed: that he loves man and desires fellowship with him. Thus, in the Bible the truth of God is always identical with the love of God. In the biblical understanding of truth the fact that truth is historical and the fact that it is personal are linked; together they define the nature of revelation as the self-communication of God to man. So Brunner claims that revelation is essentially God's activity *in* salvation and he puts it as follows :

> In the time of the Apostles, as in that of the Old Testament Prophets, "divine revelation" always meant the whole of the divine activity for the salvation of the world, the whole story of God's saving act, of the "acts of God" which reveal God's nature and His will, above all, Him in whom the preceding revelation gains its meaning, and who therefore is its fulfillment: Jesus Christ. He Himself is the Revelation. Divine revelation is not a book or a doctrine; the Revelation is God Himself in His self-manifestation within history. Revelation is something that *happens*, the living history of God in His dealings with the human race: *the history of revelation is the history of salvation, and the history of salvation is the history of revelation.* Both are the same, seen from two angles. This is the understanding of revelation which the Bible itself gives us.[47]

So God's saving acts, in Brunner's view, are always personal acts, for revelation is the *personal encounter* of two subjects in the 'I-Thou' relation. God meets man in a truth-encounter; thus revelation is *not* one-way communication, *nor* a monologue, but dialogue: "Revelation actually consists in the meeting of two subjects, the divine and the human, the self-communication of God to man. Jesus Christ is not 'revelation' when He is not recognised by anyone as the Christ, just as He is not the Redeemer if He does not redeem anyone. The Biblical doctrine of revelation means this *transition from the divine to the human subject*".[48] Brunner emphasises, therefore, the point that a

person cannot be thought. In his view, our knowledge of a subject, a person, is wholly contingent upon an act of self-disclosure on the part of the person known. A subject which I think is not truly a subject. What I can discover by virtue of my own thought processes is, to the degree that that is possible, not a person, but an object. A personal subject, a real 'thou', is all one with that mystery which only the subject himself can disclose. Not only is my knowledge of a subject dependent on the latter's self-disclosure, but it is not knowledge in the ordinary sense of the word at all. It is *encounter*. We rationally analyse things. We meet persons. Of course human beings are not only persons, but also objects in the physical world. Hence, we can acquire much useful knowledge about individuals through the sciences of physiology and psychology. But God is not an object of the world in any sense. He is the subject *par excellence*, the 'absolute subject'.[49]

However, as George A Schrader points out, Brunner's use of the term 'subject' is unclear when he claims that a subject can never be known as an object. To regard persons as objects *merely* would be, in effect, to deny that they are subjects in and for themselves. Such an attitude is not only morally wrong but *mistaken*. The attitude has the import of misrepresenting the being toward which it is directed. But it might be equally mistaken to regard a person as in no way an object.[50] Surely every human subject has a body and expresses himself in and through his body, his actions, his words, and so forth. These are surely objective manifestations of the person and capable of being observed and described. Moreover, one of the important and difficult lessons we each have to learn is that our bodies and our actions are our own and that we are responsible for them. I am an object for others as well as for my self, and this constitutes one of the most fundamental problems

confronting me.   So, too, is the other an object for me.   There is

nothing wrong or mistaken in regarding oneself, others, or even God as

an object.   To do so is altogether unavoidable and necessary.


Therefore, the notion of a subject is surely a philosophical

concept which has been assimilated by theology even as it may have been

independently developed by theology.   We need not claim that we know God

perfectly, either on the basis of natural knowledge or revelation.   But

if we talk or think meaningfully about God at all, we must reflect on

what we mean or can mean in referring to God as a subject.   Brunner has

surely comprehended the problem involved in the relation between the

Christian revelation of God and the philosophical concept of God:

"Faith does not stand in opposition to knowledge, as little as to

ethical will.   Rather, it presupposes both".[51]   His theological proposal

of 'truth as encounter' heavily depends upon an I-thou philosophy (see

III.2.3).   Brunner clarified how he understood the union of faith and

rational thinking which is the condition for dogmatic thinking as

follows:

> Thus the act of thought in dogmatics may be compared with a
> movement which arises through the activity of two
> differently directed forces, for instance, one tangential
> and the other centripetal.   The purely rational element of
> thought, logic, has the tendency to go straight forward from
> each given point;   but faith continually prevents this
> straightforward movement by its pull towards the Centre.   So
> instead of a movement in a straight line there arises a
> circular movement around the Centre - and that is a picture
> of real theological thinking.   Theological thinking is a
> rational movement of thought, whose rational tendency at
> every point is continually being deflected, checked, or
> disturbed by faith.   Where the rational element is not
> effective there is no movement of thought, no theology;
> where rational element alone is at work, there arises a
> rational speculative theology, which leads away from the
> truth of revelation.   Only where faith and rationality are
> rightly interlocked can we have true theology, good
> dogmatics.[52]

It is the predicament of theology that it fails to deal properly with its very subject, the Christian faith, the more rationally it proceeds, and that logic and faith are played off against each other in the work of theology in such a way that they "check and disturb each other in every point". Whether or not this should be the case depends on how the task of theology is defined. If one defines it, as Brunner does, in such a way that it is not only a process of thought about that which is given in faith, it is at the same time believing *thinking*, then the above-mentioned predicament is inevitable.[53] In this regard, Brunner admits that even if there is no valid natural theology, it, in fact, exists; and there are a number of natural theologies. So it is our duty as Christians to ask what their significance is. Looking from the standpoint of faith, we find here a witness to the fact that man is created by God, and stands in a special relation to Him.

The second thing to which natural theology bears witness, in Brunner's view, is the fact of man's sin. For man gives back a perverted answer to the call of God which constitutes his humanity, and so the knowledge of God becomes perverted, idolatrous. He forms a wrong picture of the God to whom his life is now a wrong answer. Thus the relation of the special revelation to what man has made of the revelation in creation is dialectical, consisting at the same time of a 'yes' and a 'no' and the affirmation and denial are inseparably bound up together. There is, consequently, no valid natural theology, no system of truth about God, set up on the basis of revelation in creation alone. The crucial claim made by Brunner in his dialectical proposal to define the term 'revelation' is then that although the term does not denote a single entity but a complex one, or there are many forms of revelation, it indicates the historical event: Jesus Christ (see IV.4.4). He puts

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it as follows:

> The fact that "the Word became flesh" is the centre of the
> divine manifestation, towards which all the teaching and
> witness of the original witness is directed. Obviously this
> means that the "Word of God" is not that which we human
> beings mean by a "word": He Himself, Jesus Christ, is the
> "Word" of God; it is therefore impossible to equate any
> human words, any "speech about - Him" with the divine self-
> communication. Jesus Christ Himself is more than all words
> about Him; the "Word" of God, the decisive self-
> communication of God, is a person, a human being, the man in
> whom God himself meets us.[54]

Therefore, Brunner contends that biblical truth must be radically

separated from the philosophical search for ultimate reality. Such

inquiry always results in some sort of impersonal Absolute, an It, which

has nothing whatsoever to do with God revealed in Jesus Christ and

witnessed to by the Scriptures. Ontology always obscures the personal

category and destroys the biblical concept of *truth as encounter*. So

Brunner argues that the biblical categories are final for Christian

thought and that any effort to replace them with rationally motivated

philosophical categories introduces the subject-object antithesis, which

is the great falsifier. Thus God can be understood from the point of

view of his revelation and from no other. The God of the Christian is

by definition the God of revelation, and for this reason He can be known

only as He makes Himself known through His own self-disclosure. In this

respect, there is no way from man to God: the road runs only in the

opposite direction, from God to man. Human reason and historical

research cannot attain to religious truth: the only way to religious

truth is to listen in faith and obedience to God's revelation. So

theology presupposes faith: it is dogmatic proclamation and not

primarily critical philosophical work.

However, although we cannot overlook the fact that the character of

religious faith is in important respects different from that of any certain system of philosophical thought, the resemblances should not be neglected. Otherwise, as Basil Mitchell points out, it is left in the end to arbitrary human judgement to determine whether words or events which purport to be revelatory are so or not and, if it decides they are, how they are to be interpreted. That there are (if there are) phenomena which appear to demand the status of revelation is, on that view, an argument of some force for the existence of a God who might reveal Himself in such a manner, but it is an argument which cannot stand alone, but requires the support of reasons which are independent of the putative revelation.[55] In fact, the problem begins when Brunner suggests that his emphasis upon the personal character of truth is incompatible with objectivity.[56] This leads to confusion and, it would appear, self-contradiction. What he claims about the *personal* character of truth is that "there is no longer a place here for the objective-subjective antithesis. The application of this pair of concepts is entirely meaningless. The self-revelation of God is no object, but wholly the doing and self-giving of a subject - or, better expressed, a Person".[57] And yet he also regards this very antithesis as constitutive of human thinking as such. Insofar as the theologian is human and thinks, he is bound by the law of the antithesis. But this is for Brunner most unsatisfactory. Apparently, he fears that this formal law of thinking will somehow infect its object with abstract and impersonal qualities. He puts it as follows:

> At first it seems indeed to be a completely impossible undertaking to wish to withdraw oneself from between this pair of tongs (as it were) of the two concepts objective-subjective. They seem to be so necessarily linked with the process of thought as such that theological thinking too, it would seem, could not be done without them. As soon as one thinks at all, how can one help thinking "something", how help wanting to think what is objectively true? But we would thus concede that all thinking, including theological, takes place within this antithesis and is unable to proceed

outside it. The theologian too when he thinks places the truth over against the false meaning: it therefore seems quite hopeless, even meaningless, to wish to attack this fundamental law of thinking.[58]

Thus, having admitted that his thinking follows the antithesis and that what he is trying to say cannot be comprehended in its terms, it would seem to follow that neither he nor we can possibly know what he is talking about. In part the polemic against objectivity stems from a misunderstanding of some of its implication. Such a misunderstanding is apt to arise concerning the language of faith. The reason for this is that the theologian is concerned with the intimate relationship of faith. This relationship is typically expressed in worship and in personal decisions. In worship, for instance, one does not speak *about* God but with God. In this context I am not trying to inform persuade, or direct others. In other words, one is not theorizing in the moment of worship. To stop and ask, "What does the term 'blessed' mean?" would destroy the moment of worship. But the theologian is not necessarily engaged in worship when he uses highly abstract and technical language in this reflection *about* 'worship'.[59] In brief, language is not that to which it refers. When used in any theoretical context, including theology, it is necessarily abstract and objective. That which is said is an object of thought. But it should be noted that 'object' is a purely formal concept. There is no reason why an 'object' of thought may not be a 'person' or a very personal experience.

However, Brunner *argues* that there is a realm in which natural, objective knowledge is both possible and desirable. It does not, as such, conflict with the personal knowledge given in revelation. But one of the hallmarks of such objective knowledge is, in Brunner's view, that it "makes us masters of that which we know. The knowing subject is

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superior to each object, because a subject is much more than an object. The 'I' can have something in knowledge; but the 'something' cannot have the 'I'. So long as the 'I' asserts itself in knowing, so long as it is not insane or possessed, the 'I' remains master of the object of that which is known".[60] That which I know in this way is for my use at my disposal. For this reason Brunner concludes that "the objective attitude toward persons is wrong". Persons, in his view, are not objects, but subjects; they have a claim on us to be known as 'thou'.

Furthermore, he claims that any Christian who understands his faith to be a gift, resting not upon his reason but upon the faithfulness of God or 'trust', will wish to say that his faith is sure and certain. But it would be odd to interpret this as an intellectual certainty, for it is precisely *not* upon his reason or the result of his inquiries that it is founded. Hence faith is, for him 'trust' and not assent of the intellect. In faith I believe that God is faithful to do according to his promises. In fact Brunner attempts to stress that we respect the otherness of 'thou' who is not a mere object of my thought, but a unique other who confronts me. God transcends my categories and theories. If this be so, then we cannot speak of God. For to speak of God is to use words whose meanings we have learned by their application to the world around us. We may worship him, speak *with* him, but we cannot, in this case speak *of* him. For instance, if such a term as 'Father' may rightly be used of God, then he is not completely beyond comparison. For that term is understood only by comparison.

Thus, if Brunner is convinced that the personal self-communication of God is itself a person, then the term 'person' seems to be used in designating it as Christ. In his view, Jesus Christ *is* the word of God.

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He himself is the point where the divine world breaks through into our world. Jesus, in His person, reveals the name, the personal mystery of God fully and finally.[61] "The Incarnation takes place - not only but also - in order to restore the picture which has been destroyed; the Divine Incarnation - not only, but also, and necessarily - is the renewal of that which took place in the creation of man in the image of God. *Human personal being alone is a suitable means of revealing the personal Being of God.* The revelation of the Divine person in the God-Man is at the same time the revelation of the originally true, personal being of man."[62] Consequently, it cannot be the object of doctrine because it occurs in history. Truth is then Christ as person (IV.4.4). For Brunner nothing is more certain than this, namely, actuality and personal character of Christian truth. Christ is a historic personality only as a man.[63]

What is the mystery of God's person, which he discloses in Jesus Christ? In Brunner's view, it is not it-truth, information *about* something; nor it is a matter of the increase of one's knowledge. Rather, it is the 'transformation of one's existence'.[64] In thought I master objects but in revelation I receive my master. God's self-communication is his claim of *lordship* and *fellowship* with man.[65] That God is Lord of man means either that he *wills* to be known and acknowledged by man or that he *is* known and acknowledged by man as the One to whom man unconditionally belongs. Hence one cannot contemplate God Almighty, as he does the ideas. He can only obey (or disobey) God who wills to have fellowship with his human creatures:

> Since God's being as the Bible reveals it to us in no sense
> is being as such [An-sich-sein] but will to Lordship and
> will to fellowship, therefore it is essentially a related
> being - a being related to man, the creature who knows,
> acknowledges, obeys, and loves - a being related to the

Kingdom of God. Because God is necessarily first and man second, the being of the creature, especially of the human creature, is receptive and rooted in the divine acting. Because God's will is both will to Lordship and will to fellowship, he wills to have a creature face to face with himself, who in freedom gives back to him what he first gives to the creature. Therefore, the act in which man receives the being to which God has determined him is an act of revelation and knowledge.[66]

Here the matter of man's obedient response to the address of God is especially interesting in a discussion of the term 'person'. We have seen how Brunner's concept of faith revolves about the dimension of the personal (see IV.3.4). Personal correspondence is the opposite of abstract, rational truth. The latter moves within the framework of the subject-object antithesis, as Brunner calls it; that is, it is concerned with the knowing subject and the object known. Personal correspondence, on the other hand, is concerned with a relationship between two subjects, the Divine Thou and the human I, in face-to-face encounter. In this regard, man is to be understood in terms of this fellowship with God. As God is a 'God-who-approaches-man' (*Gott-zum-Menschen-hin*), so man is a 'man-who-comes-from-God' (*Menschen-von-Gott-her*).[67] Therefore, Brunner repudiates both the *rational* conception of 'person' expressed in the definition of Boethius and the *legalistic* definition of 'person' in the light of Kant's moral law. Instead he claims that to be person is to be *in relation to someone*. In the case of God it is a relationship 'to Himself'. God is the 'Triune God'. In the case of man it is a relationship to himself (or his neighbour) on the basis of his relationship to God.[68] In this regard, his claim about human destiny is clearly Christocentric (or Christological). Only faith in Christ gives meaning to human existence. I think that this is Brunner's strong point.

In this way the term 'person' for Brunner can be applied to both 'God' and 'man'; and hence it is the central category of his whole theology. One may ask, however, the concept of 'person' used by Brunner in formulating the assertions of missionary theology is sufficiently subjected to a criticism. For instance, if Brunner compares the meaning of 'person' applied to man with the meaning of 'person' applied to God, he sees the difference only in the removal of the human limitations with respect to being a person.[69] But he does not point to the qualitative transformation the concept of person undergoes if the limitations of temporal and spatial existence are removed. If this happens - and it certainly must happen - the term 'person' becomes symbolic, a consequence which cannot be prevented by the correct assertion that the full meaning of person can be known only on the basis of the person-to-person encounter between God and man. Thus if missionary theology is an intellectual presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which starts from the spiritual situation of the hearer, then it seems to be impossible to avoid the semantic problem in theology in our time or in any time.[70]

As John Hick points out, within Christian faith there is a fixed basis, or a fixed starting point, for Christian belief and worship; but proceeding from that starting point there is a still unfinished history of change as the Christian way has been followed through the centuries, meeting new human circumstances and new intellectual climates.[71] The permanent and unchanging element is to be found in the originating events from which the moving stream of Christian history has flowed. The word 'the Christ-event' has been indicated to refer to the complex of happenings constituting the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the birth of the persisting community which was created by its response

to him.  It is in this event that Christian faith sees God acting self-revealingly for the salvation of the world.  In his presence Jesus' disciples experienced the presence of the transcendent God and his claim upon human life.  For them, this faith response was focused by the traditional Jewish idea of the anointed one - in Hebrew, Messiah;  in Greek, Christos.  Others saw him instead as an unauthorised rabbi, or a false prophet, or a dangerous revolutionary.  That is to say, the understanding of Jesus and the way in which he is the criterion of the language of faith has been a subject of dispute from the first.

However, Christian faith has grown out of the small group who saw Jesus as the Messiah, or who were ready to see him retrospectively as Messiah in the light of the resurrection experience which created the early Christian community.  The Jesus event from which Christian faith in all its still unfolding diversity has flowed is a faith event, and the New Testament documents by which that event is reflected to us across the centuries are documents of faith.  For they were written by the community which had experienced Jesus raised beyond death into a life continuous with God's saving activity towards mankind.  So the constant reference of the language of faith to Jesus forces it into the dialogue of faith with the experience of the world.  Consequently, this all-embracing process of language cannot attain any definitive final resting point within history, in which the language of faith would be out of danger, uncontested and beyond dispute.  Nor can there be any standpoint outside one's own participation in this process of language from which one can decide upon or resolve the dispute as a neutral arbitrator.  Thus, the claim to truth can only be put forward here on condition that it is permanently challenged.[72]

Furthermore, since Christian faith is an ongoing movement of life and thought defined by its origin in the Christ-event and by its consciousness of that origin, it cannot be thus defined in terms of adherence to any fixed doctrines, for its doctrines are historically and culturally conditioned and have changed as the church has entered new historical and cultural situations. Accordingly, it is impossible to predict or to limit the developments that will take place in the future history of this movement. In this regard, if two elements of the process of the language of faith do not exist as independent entities, which as such can be disentangled from one another, and only afterwards related to one another as a supplementary task, then they are only what they are in their relationship with each other. If the language of faith is the dialogue of Christian faith, i.e. the response to the Christ-event with the experience of the world, then to speak of the Christ-event is to speak the language of faith. Since the language of the world as such is a confused and concealed dispute about Christian faith, it is the concern of a theological theory of language to bring to light this inner polarity in the language of faith. In this way faith, in accordance with its nature, can remain in contact with the experience of the world, and the fact that it is a dialogue can provide the standard for the critical testing and the exercise of the language of faith.[73] If this is so, then it is obviously legitimate to ask whether Brunner's term 'person' is meaningfully to direct the man of the *Zeitgeist* to Christian faith, or assist them in finding the meaning of the Gospel. We shall finally discuss the problem of the language of faith and its necessity of our doing missionary theology.

## 2.  Analysis of religious language

### 2.1  Language and 'forms of life': Wittgenstein

Theology's central problem today is not so much one within theology as around theology, enfolding it entirely and calling into question its nature and status as a whole.  This issue, at once central and all-embracing, presents itself to the philosopher or theologian as a problem concerning religious language.[74]  In this regard, many philosophers of religion wrote a great deal about whether religious utterances can be regarded as stating truths (or falsehoods), or whether such utterances should perhaps be thought of as expressing emotion, articulating optional ways of regarding the world or of affirming and commending attitutdes.  Only utterances which are checkable (verifiable or falsifiable) against experience were supposed to be *factually* significant, and as it is unclear how what religious people say is empirically checkable, so it is inviting to attach to it a non-fact-stating significance.[75]  For instance, the logical positivists judged all religious statements to be meaningless because they could not meet the verification principle of that philosophy: they held that, apart from the assertions of logic and mathematics, only statements which can be verified or falsified empirically are meaningful. On the other hand there were those philosophers who have actually abandoned or radically modified the scope of the verification principle.

In order to understand what linguistic philosophy has to say about religious language, Frederick Ferré suggests that it is essential that the movement of the linguistic philosophy as a whole be brought into focus.  He sums up the following points:[76]

(1)  *Philosophy qua philosophy is empirically uninformative.*

(2)  *Linguistic significance is the primary subject matter of philosophy.*

(3)  *The proper locus of meaning is the proposition or statement.*

(4)  *The function of philosophy is to engage in analysis of the meaning of language.*

To put it more characteristically, the early analyses of Russell, Moore, and others showed clearly, according to Ferré, that great scope existed for philosophy under this new understanding of its function. Ordinary language is a subtle and sometimes misleading instrument; meanings are elusive, often hidden or confused by the language which seems to express logically acceptable propositions. Many systematically misleading expressions haunt the avenues of daily speech. Grammatically perfect sentences may conceal logical incoherence. However much linguistic philosophers may otherwise disagree, they are one in the conviction that there is likely to be something about unanalysed language which raises problems which proper analysis can remove.

If analytical philosophers should be challenged as to why they consider such work to be worthwhile, some might reply that the clarification of understanding needs no further justification, that it is intrinsically worthwhile. Others would appeal to the fact that clarification of language must be of immense aid to the working scientist who is impatient at being trapped in avoidable linguistic pitfalls. Still other philosophers might answer that their work was at least cleansing philosophical wheat from the chaff of ages and finally was establishing philosophy as an important branch of learning with a determinate job to do and a clear method of judging its success or failure. There are indeed many things that cannot be said but which men have tried to say. In trying, they have become enmeshed in logical puzzles and metaphysical and theological ambiguities and vacuities. It

is the main business of philosophy to point out what can and cannot be said; all philosophy is 'critique of language'. This means that 'the object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations'.[77]

As Paul M. van Buren points out, the interest of philosophy is in the function of language, and its method lies in the logical analysis of how words and statements function, both in normal and in abnormal use.[78] Unlike logical positivists,[79] linguistic analysts are not opposed in principle to the use of religious language. They claim that there are a variety of 'language games', activities with their appropriate languages, so that different kinds of language are appropriate to different situations. For example, the language of love is not that of biology, nor is it the language of politics. There is no reason why one should look for the same sort of evidence for a biologist's statement concerning a certain experiment and a statement concerning love made by a lover. Thus, this way of doing philosophy challenges the Christian to think clearly, to speak simply, and to say what he means without using words in unusual ways unless he makes quite clear what he is doing. Since this philosophical interest in language seems to hold considerable benefits for Christians' talk of God, we will discuss its implication for the theological discourse.

Even though it is difficult to make it clear whether there is any continuity between the early and the later philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein,[80] one of the possible solutions proposed by linguistic analysts may be represented by his later philosophical remark on language: 'These are, of course, not empirical problems; they are

solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *in spite of* an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language'.[81] These remarks about language that some commentators take as embodying the whole of Wittgenstein's later philosophy[82] seemed to provide an alternative theory of meaning, and one which was more tolerant of religious language than that of the logical positivists. Wittgenstein argued that we must make a radical break with the idea that language always functions in one way, always serves the same purpose: to convey thoughts - which may be about houses, pains, good and evil, or anything you please.[83] In this regard, he maintained that 'for a *large* class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language'.[84]

In the early sections of his *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein often mentions the great multiplicity of the types of words and sentences which go to make up a natural language, and he says that human beings are prone to assimilate all those different types to one model. We human beings tend to think that language consists of words each of which is correlated with something in the world outside language. We further suppose that the correlated objects give words their meaning. So the red things in the world give meaning to the word 'red', for instance. But this view of language is radically mistaken.[85] Words and sentences are like tools in a tool box, they have different uses of words, for example, giving or obeying orders, reporting events, making up stores, guessing riddles, reporting dreams, translating,

asking, thanking, cursing, greeting and praying.[86]     He calls these 'language-games'[87] and says that this term 'is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life'.   The concept of a 'form of life' shows that one of the points which Wittgenstein is making is that language always occurs in a certain human context: 'Only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning'.[88]

Some followers of Wittgenstein have applied the concepts of 'language-game' or 'form of life' to religion.   Norman Malcolm applied this concept to religion in his *Memoir* of Wittgenstein[89] and especially in his article on St. Anselm's Ontological Arguments.   In the latter he said that he suspected that the argument could be thoroughly understood only by someone who had a view from the inside of that 'form of life' which gives rise to the idea of an infinitely great being and who therefore had some inclination to partake in that religious form of life:   "In those complex systems of thought, those 'languages-games', God has the status of a necessary being.   Who can doubt about that?   Here we must say with Wittgenstein, 'This language-game is played!'"[90] Malcolm points out elsewhere that we can engage in the activities of calculating, verifying, reasoning, questioning, only if we accept many things without question.[91]   For example, we are taught the names of objects, and we are taught how to add and multiply.   We accept what we are taught.   To doubt at this level would mean that we were *not learning* to calculate, or to look for and fetch objects, or to carry out orders: "Something must be taught us as a foundation".[92]   A foundation must underlie every use of language: "Every language-game is based on words and objects being recognized again.   We learn with the same inexorability that this is a chair as that 2 x 2 = 4".[93]

Similarly, D.Z. Phillips criticises many philosophers of religion who have protested against the philosophical assertion that religious beliefs must be recognized as distinctive language-games. Those who search for the ground of religious belief claim to understand what a purely theological belief in the existence of God would be. But their accounts about what religious believers seem to be saying, in his view, are often at variance with what many believers say, at least when they are not philosophizing.[94] For instance, a philosopher may say that there is no God, but a believer may reply, 'You are creating and then attacking a fiction. The god whose existence you deny is not the God I believe in.' Or another philosopher may say that religion is meaningless, but another believer may reply, 'You say that when applied to God, words such as 'exists', 'love', 'will' etc., do not mean what they signify in certain non-religious contexts.[95] Thus, against the philosophical assumption behind the ignoring of religious testimony as begging the question, and the search for external reasons for believing in God, Phillips argues that philosophy can claim justifiably to show what is meaningful in religion only if it is prepared to examine religious concepts in the contexts from which they derive their meaning:[96]

> A failure to take account of the above context has led some
> philosophers to ask religious language to satisfy criteria
> of meaningfulness alien to it. They say that religion must
> be rational if it is to be intelligible. Certainly, the
> distinction between the rational and the irrational must be
> central in any account one gives of meaning. But this is
> not to say that there is a paradigm of rationality to which
> all modes of discourse conform. A necessary prolegomenon to
> the philosophy of religion, then, is to show the diversity
> of criteria of rationality; to show that the distinction
> between the real and the unreal does not come to the same
> thing in every context. If this were observed, one would no
> longer wish to construe God's reality as being that of an
> existent among existents, an object among objects.[97]

Accordingly, to say that a god is not the same as one's own God involves, so Phillips claims, saying that those who believe in him are in a radically different religious tradition from one's own. The criteria of what can sensibly be said of God are to be found *within* the religious tradition. Therefore, the criteria of meaningfulness cannot be found *outside* religion, since they are given by religious discourse itself. Theology then can claim justifiably to show what is meaningful in religion only when it has an internal relation to religious discourse. On the other hand, Philosophy can make the same claim only if it is prepared to examine religious concepts in the contexts from which they derive their meaning. So unlike those who believe that theology is external to religion and seeks a rational justification of religious truth,[98] what Phillips claims is therefore to be the internal role of theology in religion. Coming to see that there is a God is not like coming to see that an additional being exists. Coming to see that there is a God involves seeing a new meaning in one's life, and being given a new understanding. One cannot have religion without religious discourse. In each case theology decides what it makes sense to say to God and about God. In short, theology is the grammar of religious discourse.[99]

However, John Hick points out that we must be clear about the implications of what is proposed. For when we are concerned with the language of judaic-christian faith in its natural sense, as we find it in the scriptures, in liturgies, in creeds and confessions, in sermons and in works of theology, we cannot doubt that this religious language has always been meant by its users to operate as cognitive discourse.[100] We cannot doubt, for instance, that the great prophets of the Old Testament, or Jesus of Nazareth himself, or St. Paul, or Augustine,

Aquinas or Luther, when they spoke about God, believed that they were referring to a real being who exists independently of ourselves and with whom, in the activities of worship, we may enter into personal relationship. Thus, from the point of view of one whose faith forms part of a history going back through the generations of the church's life to the faith of the New Testament, and behind that to the insights of the great Hebrew prophets, the Wittgensteinian non-cognitivist is not offering an objective analysis of the language of faith as living speech but is instead recommending a quite new use for it. For this Wittgensteinian non-cognitivist theory is not descriptive but radically revisionary.[101]

Consequently, the principal loss of the non-cognitivist view would be, so Hick argues, the irreversible retreat of religious discourse within the borders of its own autonomous language-game, where it must renounce all claim to bear witness to the nature of the universe and must cease to interact with other departments of human knowledge. Religious language would become a protected discourse, no longer under obligation to show its compatibility with established conclusions in other spheres, because it would be regarded as making no claims which could either agree or conflict with scientific knowledge or philosophical reflection.[102] On this view, whilst these considerations might have the psychological effect of bringing someone to abandon religious belief, they have no bearing upon its logical propriety. For religion is simply an established form of human life and language. Like eating and drinking, it cannot properly be characterised as either true or false. It is just a fact that, in the words of Wittgenstein, this language game is played. Religion stands on its own feet as a form of human life, and anyone is free to participate in it or not. It would be

perhaps a great relief to the religious apologist not to be expected to defend his faith against attack.[103]

However, this particular form of life, to use Wittgenstein's phrase again, consists in living in the world as God's world and in relation to other people as God's children. It has political, economic and moral consequences which constitute the Christian ethic. It also involves activities of worship and dispositions of mind, both intellectual and emotional, which directly refer to the supreme Being about whom the Christian message speaks. If there is no such Being, these activities are misdirected and non-functional:

> If one who participates in the theistic form of life is not convinced of the reality of a supreme Being, he is behaving irrationally. He is irrational in sort of way in which someone who talked and tried to behave as though he had inherited a million pounds, when he knows that in fact he has not, would be irrational. For to be rational is to live in terms of reality as one responsibly believes it to be. And the religious form of life can only count as reasonable if it is based upon a sincere conviction, or at least an effective working presupposition, that the God whom we worship and seek to serve does indeed exist. There is, therefore, something deeply irrational about the non-cognitivist proposals to use the traditional language of religion, and to participate in the form of life of which it is the linguistic expression, after consciously rejecting the premiss upon which these depend for their appropriateness.[104]

Accordingly, the final point of distinction between religion, on the one hand, and aesthetics and ethics, on the other, is the *ontological* claim that God exists as a real Being.[105] The problem which Hick often calls the 'cognitive - non-cognitive issue' is one which centres upon the 'metaphysical surplus', namely, the reference to God. He acknowledges the possibility of forming a coherent understanding of the universe without reference to God, i.e. the sheer givenness of the universe is accepted as the 'ultimate fact'.[106] At this point Hick has

applied Wittgenstein's remarks on 'seeing as'[107] to religious belief, suggesting that belief in many religious doctrines may be construed as seeing the world or interpreting our experience in a certain way. According to him, the core of the concept of verification is 'the removal of ignorance or uncertainty concerning the truth of a proposition'. If anything is described as factual, where it be a 'religious' fact or a 'more proximate' kind of fact, it must make an experienceable difference whether or not such facts exist. Hick claims that there is, in fact, a fundamental element of Christian belief which meets the demand for an experienceable difference and also for the removal of uncertainty about its truth, namely, the *eschatological* element. For him, this notion is indispensable for any conception of the universe which claims to be Christian. His concept of 'eschatological verification' is, of course, intended to establish the cognitive *meaningfulness* and not the truth of religious belief.[108] Nevertheless, I think that it is noticeable to see that Hick has both modified and gone beyond Wittgenstein's ideas. The latter employed the examples of the duck-rabbit and the puzzle-picture in order to draw a parallel between 'seeing an aspect' and 'experiencing the meaning of a word'. Whereas Hick contends that all experiencing is 'experiencing as' in covering such diverse cases; but he has raised many serious problems.[109]

Thus, in this disputation it seems to me that both Hick and the Wittgensteinians have at least sought to understand the language of religious discourse exhaustively in terms of functions which language may serve outside the strictly theological context; but they have different opinions about the question of justification. As Patrick Sherry points out, it is quite clear that Malcolm and Phillips are not

merely repeating the familiar apologetical point that religion is a way of life and not just a body of doctrines. For they have also applied the notion of a 'language-game' to religion, attempting to establish the following two points:[110]

> (1) Religion is 'given' or basic, so that it need not be justified, and indeed cannot be.

> (2) Its concepts are in order as they are, for *this language-game is played*.

The first of these points follows from Wittgenstein's assertion that forms of life and language-games are simply there: 'What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - *forms of life*'.[111] For instance, Wittgenstein says that he would like to regard having a 'comfortable certainty' as a form of life: "But that means I want to conceive it as something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal".[112]


As Patrick Sherry points out, Wittgenstein maintains that language-games like forms of life cannot and need not be justified. He argues, for instance, that the primitive language-game which speaks of material objects must simply be accepted. "What we have rather to do is to accept the everyday language-game, and to note *false* accounts of the matter as false. The primitive language-game which children are taught needs no justification; attempts at justification need to be rejected."[113] Such language-games are simply 'given': "You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there - like our life."[114] There comes a point when we must stop looking for justification and instead simply accept certain basic human reactions and modes of behaviour: "If I have

exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do." ... Could I now say: "I read off my having then meant to do such-and-such, as if from a map, although there is no map?" But that means nothing but: *I am now inclined to say* "I read the intention of acting thus in certain states of mind which I remember." Our mistake is to look for an explanation where we ought to look at what happens as a 'proto-phenomenon'. That is, where we ought to have said: *this language-game is played'*. The applications of this line of thought are varied. [115]

Despite the difficulty of saying exactly what Wittgenstein meant by a 'form of life' because of its few examples, it is possible that the term denotes something on a smaller scale like measuring, hoping or pitying. If this interpretation is correct, then it is incorrect to label religion as a form of life; rather, it includes several forms of life, for example, worshipping, hoping and forgiving. This suggestion is, so Sherry claims, an important point, because it affects some of Malcolm's and Phillips' arguments about the illegitimacy of trying to justify religious beliefs:

> Of course, they would still be right in maintaining the absurdity of asking for a justification of something like hoping in general. But it is perfectly sensible to ask for a justification of *particular* hopes, for instance the Christian's hope for forgiveness of sins and future resurrection. Furthermore, even a specifically religious practice like 'worship' is not immune to demands for justification: we can rightly ask whether the object of worship actually exists and is indeed worthy of worship. In any case, even if religion as a whole can be described as a 'form of life', it is incorrect to suppose that anyone ever does want to justify it. Apologists and missionaries are always concerned to justify their own particular religions, rather than 'religion' in general. The latter is merely as abstraction.[116]

In particular, the view that criteria of intelligibility and

rationality are to be found only within the language-game does seem to be in accordance with some of the things, which Wittgenstein says.[117] We have already seen that he thinks that one can only justify statements *within* language-games, but not the language-games themselves. The relationship between them is somewhat like that between a system of measurement and the measurements themselves; and only the latter can be described as 'correct' or 'incorrect'. What counts as a reason or as evidence, therefore, depends on the context: all testing occurs within a system, so that it is idle to look for any *general* account of what constitute good grounds.[118] Hence, Wittgenstein himself is much more concerned with the conditions of assertability for concepts like 'pain' or 'material object' than with any general theory of truth. In this regard, Phillips' claim seems to be harmless insofar as he says that what Wittgenstein is saying is that if the philosopher wants to give an account of religion, he must pay attention to what religious believers do and say.[119] But he goes on to say that Wittgenstein's remarks also mean that philosophers can only describe religious language and must not try to justify it; it is nonsensical to talk of religion requiring a foundation or justification, if we can only justify particular religious assertions, using criteria of meaning and truth found *within* religion.[120] Thus, the task of philosophy is not 'to settle the question of whether a man is talking to God or not, but to ask what it means to affirm or deny that a man is talking to God, in other words, not to justify but to understand.

With respect to Phillips' accounts of the term 'language-game' Sherry argues, however, that it is surely doubtful whether they follow from the remarks of Wittgenstein which he attempts to approve.[121] Wittgenstein's view here should be seen, partly at least, as an attack

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on the search for an ideal language: he asks whether the language of every day is 'somehow too coarse and material for what we want to say? *Then how is another one to be constructed?'* But he is also discussing the scope of philosophy and the source of its problems: part of our failure to understand 'is that we do not *command a clear view* of the use of our words - our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity'. Philosophical problems arise from the lack of understanding which would enable us to see connections, and the role of philosophy is simply to put everything before us and to 'assemble reminders for a particular purpose'.[122] Needless to say, Wittgenstein's thesis is about meaning and concepts, whereas Phillips goes on to talk about 'criteria of truth or falsity'.[123]

In this regard, what Sherry argues is that Phillips' autonomistic position raises the most serious objection that are concerned with religious truth.[124] For instance, how can we be sure that the standards of truth or validity which are accepted by our religious community are the right ones? Obviously Phillips will reject such an objection as missing the point, since the relevant criteria can only be found *within* the religious tradition and there is no independent standard by which we can grade different religions.[125] Each one regards its own scriptures, traditions, etc. as the touchstone of truth. But if we define religious truth in terms of a particular tradition, we preclude ourselves from asking whether this tradition really embodies the truth. Such a criticism is not merely captious or academic, because religious communities do change their beliefs over the centuries and different communities often hold mutually contradictory views. Indeed in the case of doctrinal disputes Phillips' strategy is unsatisfactory if there seems to be no common standard to which the different parties can

appeal, as Catholics and Protestants can appeal to scripture.[126] So, as regards the question of religious truth, Sherry seems, I think, to be correct in saying that the issue is resolved into the ontological, epistemological and linguistic problems, and indeed it cannot exclude study of the traditional theistic arguments; of the question of the cognitive value of religious experience and mysticism; of the relation between religious and scientific beliefs; of the apparently competing truth-claims of different religions; of naturalistic theories of the nature of religion; of the problem of evil considered as a challenge to theistic faith; of the alleged incoherences in the concept of God and so on.[127]

However, Sherry also fails to recognise the Wittgensteinian view that it sees religious language as *expressive* in character and one which offers people possibilities of meaning for their lives. The language gives expression to religious 'pictures' which form the whole framework for the believer's life. The 'pictures' are not substitutes for anything more substantial than themselves.[128] As Jaakko Hintikka points out, insofar as one especially instructive way of looking at Wittgenstein's development beyond the *Tractatus* is to emphasise the role of his insight into the need of analysing those very representational relationships between language and reality which were left unattended to both in the *Tractatus* and in logical semantics, the representational relationships between language and reality have as it were their mode of existence in certain rule-governed human activities. These activities are just what Wittgenstein calls 'language-games'. They are what, according to Wittgenstein, creates and sustains the representative relationships between language and reality.[129] If this interpretation is correct, then language is not something which is simply *added* to

social life to facilitate communication;  it is *itself* the embodiment of these possibilities.  Life and language may change in such a way that older ways of living and expression are put under pressure and may lose their hold altogether: "... new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten."[130]

In similar manner, what Wittgenstein has in mind about the role of language-games is that certain phenomena only 'exist', as it were, because our *language* contains their possibility.  There are language-games played which allow us to speak of certain phenomena[131]  "We feel as if we had to *penetrate* phenomena:  our investigation, however, is directed not towards phenomena but, as one might say, towards the *possibilities* of phenomena.  We remind ourselves, that is to say, of the *kind of statement* that we make about phenomena."[132]  So it depends wholly on the grammar of one or another language-game what will be called possible and what not;  it depends on what that grammar permits. He writes:

> If a proposition too is conceived as a picture of a possible
> state of affairs and is said to shew the possibility of the
> state of affairs, still the most that the proposition can do
> is what a painting or relief or film does:  and so it can at
> any rate not set forth what is not the case.  So does it
> depend wholly on our grammar what will be called (logically)
> possible and what not, - i.e. what the grammar permits?  -
> But surely that is arbitrary! - Is it arbitrary? - It is not
> every sentence - like formation that we know how to do
> something with, not every technique has an application in
> our life;  and when we are tempted in philosophy to count
> some quite useless thing as a proposition, that is often
> because we have not considered its application
> sufficiently.[133]

The lesson here is that all language-games consist of a plurality of beliefs and certainties which are independent and lend one another mutual support.  In any natural ordinary language, then, most utterances

must be 'true' (grounded) in terms of other *accepted* 'facts of nature', theories, propositions, assumptions, and the like. Perhaps the most far-reaching possibilities are those which constitute radically different ways of looking at phenomena or, as Wittgenstein puts it, create the possibilities of phenomena. As Derek L. Phillips point out, we may consider three types of situations about the possibilities of phenomena. First, an element (proposition, theory, or whatever) is in no way a candidate for acceptance into the language-game because that which it calls into question is too firmly anchored within the language-game (that is, the 'new' element constitutes a virtual impossibility). In the second case, new elements may be introduced and older elements revised or replaced, either because they are not firmly entrenched within the language-game or because the revision (the new possibility) can be incorporated into the language-game as presently played. Finally, we have the situation where a whole new system (possibility) is created.[134] It is true because our language-games serve to define the linguistic symbols involved in them and thereby guarantee them a role in our interactions with reality.[135]

If this is so, then what happens to religious forms of expression in a period of rapid change? Changes are not necessarily inimical of religion, but there are strong reasons for thinking that today religion is becoming less and less of a *possibility* for people. Not only may people find that religion now provides only a very alien way of being human, but contemporary forms of language make it difficult for people who are religious to give expression to this in their own lives. In this regard, the fate of religion is unavoidably determined by what happens to it in the complex relations of influences and counter-influences. Certain prevailing conceptions of philosophy of religion

can give no account of these complexities. This is the case with *externalism*, the view that religious belief is answerable to universal criteria of intelligibility; and with *internalism*, the view that whatever is called religious is self-authenicating. But the facts and possibilities of cultural change must be taken seriously. When this happens, certain comforting religious pictures have to be abandoned. So believers cannot take comfort in the view that no matter what happens around them, the believer's heart is a secret place which cannot be affected by these events. They cannot assume that, no matter what cultural changes occur, religion can always accommodate them without loss of meaning or character.[136]

Therefore, a theologian must not be reluctant to recognise the fact that language must always be understood, with the later Wittgenstein, in its context and it cannot be torn out of the human life and activities in which it is taught and used. Our ability to use our language is, in part, a social capacity. It depends on our interactions with others in community of varying interests, capacities and expertise.[137] In this regard, *theology as grammar* in Wittgenstein's terms tells us how to take the language of faith. It discloses its sense. It is an aid to those who would speak and understand that language, helping them to avoid mistakes and misapprehensions so that they can get along with the language. Theology as grammar determines what can and cannot be said of God, and it is especially helpful where the requirements of faithful speech put some strain on ordinary grammar, as in Luther's remark that "Divinity is nothing but a grammar of the language of the Holy Ghost", or where apparent similarities to other sorts of language may mislead the hearer, or where a new context or a new challenge calls for new developments in the language. The 'grammar' of belief has to do with

the totality of the religious life. It is not a theologian, for example, who decides we need a *new theology*, or in Wittgensteinian terms, a *reformed grammar*. Where there is a genuine demand for a new theology, it does not emerge in a vacuum from the theoretical and arbitrary insistence of a new theologians. A genuine demand arises from the totality of the religious life in its desire to say something fresh to God and about God.[138]

2.2  The relation of revelation to reason and language

In the previous discussion the significance of Wittgenstein's later philosophy and its implications for religious language, if these views were acceptable, would remove many of the difficulties of the theological dilemma and puzzlement. In the respect of language analysis, even though Brunner himself did not make language a special problem in his chief works, he insists upon the inseparable character of the relation of reason and language.[139] According to him, so long as the linguistic philosopher confines himself to the empirical description of the actual situation of language study or the growth of language, neither philosophical nor theological problems will arise. But insofar as he regards language as the problem of man or of his relation to God, then he is confronted by questions that cannot be met by purely scientific means; the questions are mostly those in which the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian understanding of man comes out plainly. For example, the same applies to the realm of law and political science. Not in juridical technique, but certainly in the fundamental questions of the nature and obligations of law and the state, we must face fundamental points of view which affect our whole philosophy of life. The 'law of closeness of relation' or the law of contiguity (see IV.4.3) works itself out; the understanding of man as

person, and of the human community as a community of persons, comes in sight.[140]

Accordingly, while Brunner insists that critical reason cannot attain to the knowledge of revelation, yet he also frankly concedes that there can be no revelation apart from reason.  There is nothing, he claims (in his natural theology debate with Barth, see I.1.3), to be feared in the thesis that man's capacity to perceive the word of revelation would be impossible apart from reason.[141]  Just how the reason functions in the receiving of the word is a mystery, but one thing is sure that "faith does not ignore or coerce the thinking reason".[142]  Reason is the condition *sine qua non* of faith, the organ of revelation.[143]  So it cannot be fenced in.  Without reason we can neither preach nor pray.  Even the word of revelation must be received by us as that which is thought.  The understanding of the Bible presupposes rational activity, a knowledge of the law of grammar and logic: "... when man answer's God's Word of revelation, he also accomplishes an act of thinking.  Where there is speech, where there is an answer, there also is thought.  That confession of Peter: 'Verily Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God', is a thought which expresses itself as a meaningful, grammatical, logical sentence.  Even faith is accomplished in ideas, and in connexion with ideas: God is the Lord, or - in the primary form - 'Thou, O God, art my Lord'"[144]

We cannot, therefore, and we ought not to dispense with rational categories.  Brunner claims that his emphasis upon the complete difference between the Biblical and the rational concepts of truth in no way impinges upon their positive relationship.[145]  He argues that we have distinction between the personal and the impersonal without

separation. The *Logos* of revelational truth is also the *Logos* of rational truth. The unity is given to us in the idea that just as the world is based upon the Creator - Logos, so also our natural knowledge, in all its activities, ultimately presupposes the Creator - Logos.[146] Even natural knowledge, which is acquired through the senses and the intellect, is not simply something 'profane', insofar as it wills and grasps Truth, it is something sacred. In his opinion, the idea of Truth and the obligation to be genuine and sincere, which is fundamental in all serious pursuit of knowledge, points to an ultimate ground of Truth. The human reason, by means of which we distinguish true and false in the sphere of natural or scientific knowledge, is no more based upon itself than the world which it knows is based upon itself. Further, the reason and the knowledge which it acquires finds its ground and its purpose in the Son. The capacity of man to *know* is one aspect of that quality of 'being made in the Image of God' which constitutes the nature of man. The God who has revealed Himself in Christ is the same God who created the world. Hence the question for Brunner can never be *whether*, but *to what extent* and *in what sense*, reason and revelation, faith and rational thinking can be combined with one another.[147]

In Brunner's view, even though its meaning is various and complex, the Greek classic term *'logos'* presents itself very differently, according as we translate it by 'meaning' or by 'reason'.[148] In a formal sense, the *logos* includes all that has unity of thought of any kind, whether it be the Word of God or the word of man, whether it be diabolical or holy, whether it be something very ordinary or something extremely significant. But the term 'logos' contains not only this formal element of unity of meaning but also the normative one, namely, the relation to the truth, the truly meaningful, that which is good,

just, valid. The λόγος and the λόγον διδόναι - to give

meaning, to give an account of something - demands a relation of the

single significant thing to the whole thing.  At this point alone does

that which was formerly only a formal problem in logic - whether

something in itself represents a unity of meaning - now become a

theological problem, that is, how this particular unity of meaning

agrees with the ultimate divine meaning.


Brunner is, incidentally, concerned with a rule laid down by Bacon:

we must be on our guard against the deceptions which lie in words.[149]

According to him when we assert, "The Word of God is 'true', God reveals

Himself as 'the Good'", this seems to mean that we can define God, and

His acting or speaking, by means of criteria that are already at our

disposal.  Thus, by definite norms that are known to us of the true and

the good, God's action and His speech are measured, and then sanction is

given to that which is found in agreement with these norms.  This state

of affairs, which from the very outset looks highly suspicious, proves

on closer examination to be a deception produced by language.  For what

we usually call 'our' standard, 'our' norm, is in reality the truth of

God and the norm of God.  The ideas of truth and justice are, in

reality, a reflection of His own Being;  the idea of truth is simply the

way in which God Himself, in all our mental acts, makes Himself felt as

their hidden norm.  Thus when we speak of God as 'just', 'good', 'true',

we are not placing Him under a law outside Himself, but we are referring

to the law of His own nature, which is the source of our ideas of truth

and of the good.


Therefore, we may say, according to Brunner, that these ideas are

'immanent in the human mind'.[150]  This does not mean that they are

inborn, but it does mean that 'being human' implies that as the mind of man develops, these ideas become effective as motive forces for his thinking and willing, and as the criteria which determine his judgements. In and through these ideas God works in every human being. This forms part of the universal revelation, which at the same time determines the essential structure of human existence. Without these ideas man is not man, and these ideas come from God. They are, however, purely formal ones. Even though for this very reason they are of great significance for our thought and will, such ideas are not the thoughts of God. The ideas are 'only a final dim recollection of that which we ought to have known originally of God, and His living and personal Word'.[151] Thus, Brunner makes distinction between two statements which sound exactly the same, and yet lie as far apart from one another as the world of the Platonic theory of ideas and the world of Biblical revelation. They are these: God is (the same as) *the truth*; and *God is the Truth*. In the former, the concept of God is filled out with the content: truth. Thus, when we think 'God' we think no more than when we think 'truth'. Whereas in the latter we say that that which we call 'truth' in abstract terms is in reality of God, the God when we know from revelation. For Brunner, this abstract truth is only a *reflection* of the Truth which is God, the Creator.

Accordingly, Brunner claims that the idea of truth, which is formal, can be filled with meaning only by the idea of God of the Christian revelation. That is to say, the logos of reason, which we can know through self-reflection on the nature of the mind and thus can know rationally, is only a 'representation' of the genuine divine Logos whom we know in Jesus Christ. This rational logos *points* toward Him, but it is not He Himself:

The idea of truth which we as philosophers perceive when we take into account the nature of the mind characterizes the place at which, for the knowledge of faith, there stands the eternal Son of God, who in Jesus Christ became man. We must not even say that the *philosophical, rational, Logos, idea* is the idea of the divine Logos of which faith speaks is always the idea of a *Person*, the idea of the Son, in whom, through whom, and unto whom the world was created, in whom God loves the world from everlasting to everlasting, and who in Jesus Christ became flesh. Apart from this, His revelation, we do not know the Logos of God; the *philosophical Logos* idea is only its abstract substitute in abstract thinking.[152]

In Brunner's view, rational knowledge belongs, therefore, neither to the action of redemption nor to that working of God in nature which takes place without human knowledge. The eternal Logos of God is the principle of the rational knowledge of truth; from Him comes the idea of truth, as of all true ideas. But for that very reason, because through these ideas, in spite of the fact that they have their ground in Him, we cannot know Him *Himself*, they ought not to be connected with the name of Christ. Wherever anything true is perceived, the eternal Logos is at work; but Jesus Christ is at work where, upon the basis of His historical revelation, man believes in Him. He is the Head of the Church; He is where two or three are gathered together in His name. He works as the redeeming Revealer, and all that is redeeming revelation is ascribed to Him. But the truth-idea of philosophy does not belong here, important as it may be for our rational thinking. For it is merely a pointer to it, as it is a reflection from it. Just as a map does not give us a real picture of a country, but rather a symbolical, 'token' representation of the country, so the truth-idea of reason is a 'token' representation of that Logos which in Christ became man.

So in respect of faith God, when He became man, came down to man's level in order that man might be able to meet Him. He has adapted His

revelation to man, in that He clothed it in the human word of the Apostles.[153] He chose this form of revelation because communication through speech is the proper way in which human communication is carried on. Man uses words, wherever he awakens to humanity; as *humanus* he uses language, that is, he can speak and he can understand the speech of others. The capacity was given to him as his own in the creation. So wherever the Gospel is proclaimed this capacity is presupposed (see II.2.2). Capacity for speech is not given to us by the message of Christ, but it is claimed and used for the message of Christ. In Brunner's view, this capacity really belongs to the *lumen naturale*; it is the primary token by which we perceive the presence and the operation of the natural light, or the light of reason. And yet this *lumen naturale* is not without an original relation to the divine Word, which in Jesus Christ became flesh. "It is not the same, but it comes from the same source, from the Logos of God. When God created man as a rational being, as a λογικός , one who can understand and use words, He created him for the reception of His Word of revelation".[154] As the personal being of man is a reflection of the divine personal Being, *imago Dei*, so the human word is *imago verbi divini*. Man's capacity for speech is intended by the Creator as receptivity for His Word; that is its most original and direct meaning.[155]

To be sure, since the Word of God comes to us as a human word - as the word of an Isaiah, a Paul, or a John and it makes use of a definite human language that is already in existence with its vocabulary and its grammar, Brunner insists upon the necessity of doctrine, in fact, of correct doctrine. Though Jesus Christ is more than all words about Him, yet He is not present to us, other than through definite concepts of

thought. "Only when a person is taught rightly about God is his heart rightly turned toward Him, incorrect doctrine points man in the wrong direction, where we cannot find Him and He cannot find us."[156] For only the correct doctrine can point clearly to Him who is the revelation of God, and only in this clarity of statement can it itself become revelation, the Word of God. But when all is said and done, this doctrine is not revelation. It too, according to him, only *points* to revelation. Therefore, correct doctrine is, of course, doctrine that points to Christ. But how does one know that a given doctrine points to Christ?

Perhaps a possible answer to this question lies in a very interesting situation which we must elaborate. The fact that the doctrine of the Church is not the revelation itself comes out, as we have seen, in the New Testament witness to Christ Himself in the variety of the New Testament or apostolic doctrines.[157] John speaks a different language from Paul; Paul uses different terms from Matthew. In other words, this means that the 'content' is one, but in each case the 'setting' is different. Yet even in these writers we can already perceive that these varieties of 'setting' are due to their intellectual and historical environment. We might think that this fact - namely, that the doctrine is conditioned by the recipient or hearer - should refer only to one who does not yet believe; for instance, to the way in which Paul the missionary says of himself that "to the Jews he is a Jew" and to "them that are without law" (that is, the heathen) "as without law", in order that he "might save some".[158]

Furthermore, this problem could be more deeply understood in the sense of the hearer's receptivity only when we remember that faith is a

definite experience of self-knowledge; that is, we learn to understand ourselves in the light of God and His revelation. For Brunner, even when confronted by the Word of God, man is not simply *'tabula rasa'*, not an empty page upon which God now writes His Word. Here, too, understanding is involved, which makes use of the 'apperceptions' of the human mind. What matters is not to understand 'something, but oneself. Only where the Word of God or revelation leads to a new understanding of oneself, does it become 'one's own', in the act of believing understanding it is 'appropriated'. Thus the very act of faith itself is placed within a 'setting' in which the ideas with which man understands anything at all, and with which above all he understands himself, are not eliminated but are utilized and remoulded. So, since these ideas vary at different times and change, Brunner claims that language changes.[159] The most profound change takes place where we are dealing with man's understanding of Himself. The knowledge of faith is always involved in this 'setting' or missionary situation, which conditions our ideas, and in man's contemporary view of himself. Even Christian believers now use, therefore, different language from the believers of other days.

In similar manner, Paul Tillich points out that the 'situation' theology must consider is the creative interpretation of existence, an interpretation which is carried on in every period of history under all kinds of psychological and sociological conditions. The 'situation' certainly is not independent of these factors. However, theology deals with the cultural expression they have found in practice as well as in theology and not with these conditioning factors as such. The 'situation' to which theology must respond is the totality of man's creative self-interpretation in a special period.[160] According to him,

every spiritual phenomenon of a period expresses its eternal content and one of the most important characteristics of a time has been defined when we have discovered which of the various aspects of culture is most expressive of its real meaning. Hence every period of time is self-sufficient in its forms, in its existential content, in its vital tendencies; yet it is not possible for any time to be self-sufficient. Because it is time, there is something within it which drives it beyond itself at every moment, not toward the future, which would be only a new time with the same impossibility of being self-sufficient, but toward something which is no longer time.[161]

For this reason, Tillich claims that the most profound revelations of existence testify to something that is not an existence. Whenever a period speaks most effectively and clearly of itself it speaks no longer of itself but of something else, of a reality which lies beneath all time and above all existential forms. The real 'miracle' of time and of every present is not only that it can transcend itself but that as a result of unpredictable catastrophes it must transcend itself ever and again. On the other hand, we may say that time lives within itself and its forms and because the eternal is taken up into the forms of time it becomes an existential form, or contemporary one. The eternal becomes an individual event, a present in time. That which is not time becomes time; that which is not an existential form becomes an existing form. So these two aspects of the religious situation are dynamically related each other like "a movement to and fro between self-transcendence and self-sufficiency, between the desire to be a mere vessel and to the desire to be the content".[162]

Obviously, the notion of situation is applied to his theological

method when he tells us at the outset that a theological system must serve two quite different needs, "the statement of the truth of Christian message, and an interpretation of this truth for every generation".[163] Thus he is convinced that it is the unavoidable duty of the theologian to relate the Christian message to the cultural situation of his day. Since language is the basic and all-pervasive expression of every situation, theology cannot escape the problem of the 'situation'.[164] He forces himself to treat symbolism and demands that theologians develop symbols appropriate to the contemporary scene and intelligible to modern man.[165] He analyses painstakingly the symbolic and metaphorical nature of all the traditional concepts which Christian theologians have traditionally employed in their attempts to describe the God of Jesus as the Christ. Every one of these - Father, Creator, omnipotent, and so forth, must be taken not literally but symbolically, as pointing beyond their ineradicably anthropomorphic meanings to the mysterious Unconditioned who is God himself. They are all human 'projections'. But they are projections *on* something, namely, the 'realm of ultimate concern', that is, the Deity himself.[166] Thus, when bearing relevant witness to that which is of ultimate concern to himself the Christian has to consider how the Christian message should be interpreted with reference to this religious symbols or language.

There are, then, some striking similarities between Brunner's approach and that of Tillich in which they are concerned with the relationship between biblical truth, or revelation, and rational knowledge, namely, their apologetic concern. Both attempt to analyse the biblical truth of revelation in 'personal' terms, but they deal with the same problem in different context. Brunner's argument is that this conflict between the biblical truth of revelation and rational knowledge

can never be resolved simply by finding the proper balance between them but only by abandoning this whole scheme and replacing it with an entirely different concept of truth centering in the *personal correspondence* between God and man as such (see III.3.4). In Brunner's view, the biblical truth of revelation arises in the personal knowing of a Subject by a subject, not in the subjective, rational knowing of an it. An event in which Person meets person cannot be interpreted in terms of a relationship between an object and a subject. However, this does not mean that there is no place for doctrine or that the subject-object antithesis can be completely discarded. On the contrary, while the content of the Word is a Person, nevertheless, God's Word always says 'something'. The personal reality cannot be encountered or known entirely apart from the doctrines. Doctrine forms the necessary framework in which and the indispensable token by which God is personally known, but doctrine alone is never the reality. Doctrine is secondary and purely instrumental.

On the contrary, Tillich raises the question of the relationship between the symbols of biblical personalism and the philosophical inquiry for ultimate reality. He admits that on the basis of a surface analysis there seems to be a deep and irreconcilable conflict between the purely personal categories of the Bible and the impersonal categories employed in ontology. For example, the biblical concept of a personal God who is a being among other beings seems to be completely opposed to the ontological concept of being-itself. The biblical doctrine of the Logos as a particular, concrete Person, Jesus Christ, seems to be in direct opposition to the philosophical idea of the universal Logos which is present in all being.[167] The main antiontological bias of biblical religion is, then, "its personalism.

According to every word of the Bible, God reveals himself as personal. The encounter with him and the concepts describing this encounter are thoroughly personal."[168]   In this regard, there seems to be an unbridgeable chasm between biblical symbols and ontological concepts. He contends, however, that there is at the deepest level not only an essential unity between them but that actually each demands and depends upon the other.   The use of biblical symbols involves the making of philosophical, or ontological, assertions and thus raises the question of being with which philosophy deals.   Whereas philosophy asks the question of the meaning of ultimate reality or the question of the meaning of being with which religion deals: "Philosophy necessarily asks the question of reality as a whole, the question of the structure of being.   Theology necessarily asks the same question, for that which concerns us ultimately must belong to reality as a whole;   it must belong to being.   Otherwise we could not encounter it, and it could not concern us."[169]

So Tillich claims that it is possible to unite what at first seemed to be irreconcilable.   The biblical analysis of theological problems calls for and is supplemented by ontological concepts.   "The God who is *a* being is transcended by the God who is Being itself, the ground and abyss of every being.   And the God who is *a* person is transcended by the God who is the Personal - Itself, the ground and abyss of every person. In statements like these, religion and ontology meet."[170]   The categories of biblical religion can, then, and must be united to the philosophical search for ultimate reality.   Biblical symbols involve ontological assertions, and for this reason theology is inevitably driven to ask the question of the structure of being.   Therefore, his argument here is that if biblical symbols are taken literally, God

becomes *a* person, *a* being among other beings who is subject to being - itself and who therefore cannot become an object of ultimate concern, since he is not ultimate reality. What is needed, therefore, is an ontology which makes God really 'ultimate' by interpreting him as being -itself.

Thus, Tillich is convinced that theology cannot escape metaphysics. The theologian cannot speak without using terms which have philosophical meaning and significance. Even if the theologian restricts himself to biblical language - which is practically impossible, he does not escape the fact that even the biblical writers used words which have a cultural origin and which involve basic metaphysical doctrines. Every situation in which revelation is received and expressed is shaped by the personal and cultural backgrounds of the persons to whom the revelation comes, whether in biblical times or now. Thus, if the theologian cannot restrict himself to the biblical terminology or to the language of classical theology and, therefore, cannot avoid philosophical concepts, then I think his argument about the relational character between theology and philosophy, or between biblical religion and ontology in Tillich's terms, is correct in saying that "the ontological question of being creates not a conflict but a necessary basis for any theoretical dealing with the biblical concept of the personal God. If one starts to think about the meaning of biblical symbols, one is already in the midst of ontological problems."[171] So he reminds us of the fact that theology 'must use the conceptual tools of its period.'[172]

Nevertheless, he fails to make the content of the Christian revelation ultimate for ontology. His position makes too radical a separation between the existential and the cognitive approaches to

reality. Revelation is robbed of its objective content and reduced to symbols and formals which grasp reality only fragmentarily.[173] Biblical symbols are largely thought of as meanings and forms which give structure to the content provided by history and experience, but they are not thought to be literally true. It seems to me that in the Christian message, 'God' means 'a being', not 'being-itself'. He is, of course, not a being 'alongside' others, but He *is* a being 'above others'. Therefore, 'existence' can be predicated of Him, though not the contingent finite existence of His creatures. He is a concrete individual, though an individual without the limits of finite individuals. He is not merely 'the ground of everything personal'; he *is* personal Himself. If this is the Christian view, then he does not take seriously enough the personal category as an ultimate ontological principle. The ontological significance of biblical religion is simply that reality as a whole supports the personal and, therefore, religious experience is validated. However, actually God as a personal being is swallowed or absorbed in being-itself, which is at best transpersonal if not impersonal. This does not sound like the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, above all, the God of Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus, it must be said that the Christian message has an objective content in the sense that it implies that certain things are really true about God and his relationship to the world and to men. This content is essential to its very nature. The Christian message cannot be reduced to mere formal meanings which have no objective truth. In this regard, Brunner's thesis regarding the nature of biblical truth seems to be essentially correct in the sense that the fundamental reality of the faith consists not in truths about God, however important they may be in a secondary sense, but in the personal encounter with him in the

revelatory experience. The Christian revelation must be understood from within itself. Ontology must be based not on objective philosophical principles which always end by making God an impersonal Absolute or an abstract It, but on the personal categories derived from the personal encounter with God and which appear in the Bible. Doctrines are, then, instrumental in that they provide the necessary framework in which this encounter takes place. However, Brunner's argument does not seem to be enough to give more room for a positive correlation between theology and philosophy with his belief in a general revelation in the creation. For he uses the categories of the personal and person, but he never brings these concepts into organic relation with a contemporary world view. He contends that God can be thought of in no other way than the way he reveals himself, and that is as the Sovereign Person, the Absolute Subject.

If this is so, then Brunner's polemic against objectivity stems from a misunderstanding of some of its implications. In general we may say that Brunner has confused language with that to which it refers. Since he wishes to refer to very personal experiences, Brunner claims that theoretical and abstract language is out of place. However, one possible way of tackling these problems might be to follow up Wittgenstein's reference to theology: "Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is (Theology as grammar)"[174] by considering the different kinds of concepts used in doctrines and the ways in which they have been formed. Wittgenstein's remarks on reference to theology comes in the following context:

> One ought to ask, not what images are or what happens when
> one imagines anything, but how the word "imagination" is
> used. But that does not mean that I want to talk only about
> words. For the question as to the nature of the imagination
> is as much about the word "imagination" as my question is.

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And I am only saying that this question is not to be decided
- neither for the person who does the imagining, nor for
anyone else - by pointing; nor yet by a description of any
process. The first question also asks for a word to be
explained; but it makes us expect a wrong kind of answer.
*Essence* is expressed by grammar.[175]

As shown to us in the previous discussion (see VI.2.1), the later

Wittgenstein claims that the question of what the religious life is is

not to be settled by ostensive definition, or by description of any

interior goings-on, neither for the subject nor for the observer.[176]

The answer lies in attending to the kind of things that we are permitted

to say about these matters, by the rules of the conversation. The kind

of object that a thing is comes out in the kind of things that is

appropriate to say about it. This evidently goes for 'God' as much as

for 'imagination'. To explain what the word 'God' means we have to

listen to what it is permissible to say about the subject: "The great

difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there were

something one *couldn't* do. As if there really were an object, from

which I derive its description, but I were unable to show it to anyone.

- And the best that I can propose is that we should yield to the

temptation to use this picture, but then investigate how the *application*

of the picture goes."[177]

It is then easy enough to say that we no longer explain these words

in the substantive terms that turn the referents into mysterious

objects. It is more instructive, Wittgenstein implies, to give in to

the paradigm of designating material objects and see what confusion it

creates for us. It stills seems that, if I have a conception of God,

for example, I have to have something facing me from which I derive

descriptions. But there is nothing here that we are incapable of doing.

It is an illusion to think that we either could or could not get a

picture of the object:   there is no such object.   So Wittgenstein
reminds us that we have no alternative to attending to the signs, the
repertoire of gestures and so on that interweave our existence.  We have
no access to our own minds, non-linguistically.  We have no access to
the divine, independently of our life and language.  It goes against the
grain, so captivated are we by the metaphysical tradition, but
Wittgenstein keeps reminding us of the obvious fact:   we have nothing
else to turn to but the whole complex system of signs which is our human
world.  There are these forms of human life and thought and, since these
forms have no independent basis outside themselves, a request for their
justification can be met only by a careful description of the language
in which they find expression, and of its place in our lives: "the
*speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life."[178]
Thus Wittgenstein's main point of using such expressions is, then, to
draw attention to social contexts or Wittgenstein's use of term 'forms
of life' which give language its intelligibility.


2.3  God, person and the community of the language of faith

In the previous discussion I have attempted to show how Brunner
inescapably extends his notion of the relationship between revelation
and reason to language which is related to the demand for
'contemporaneousness' in theology.   In his view, language is the
'setting' of the intellectual and historical environment. For this
reason, he uses the categories of the personal and person in order to
communicate the message of Christ to the man of the *Zeitgeist*.  However,
even though his argument about the personal encounter with God in the
revelatory experience, namely, the Christ-event, seems to be essentially
correct, it cannot be enough to make room for bringing his categorical
term 'person' to reasonable minds as Brunner actually indicates.   For

him the thought of revelation may be stated simply as a *personal* revelation. Basic to his concept of the personal is the notion of the communication of the incommunicable (see IV.3.3). He stresses this point, that a person cannot be thought.[179] Revelation is, then, the communication of God and His will, but through the thought there is never a personal connection. A personal revelation is a revelation of God who is absolute mystery.

Accordingly, to say that revelation is personal is to say that it is simultaneously revelation and concealment. Biblical revelation is the *unconditionally* making known of the *unconditionally* hidden. The real biblical truth of revelation is not some*thing* but God,[180] and God does not cease in His revelation to be the mysterious one. This is not to say that revelation is not a communication of truth; on the contrary revelation communicates the truth which is personal truth. The highest that we know is not the 'thing' but the 'person'. God alone is true person; man is person only as an image of God: he is a person by likeness. "A personal God and a personal truth are not possible when our knowledge of God is the result of an interpretation of the world and the Ego. Personal faith and knowledge of a personal God who is Lord of the world can be gained only when God reveals himself personally."[181] But Brunner immediately adds that revelation is not only personal in its conveyance of the message and in the thing that is revealed, the person; but it is also given to persons, to men.

The essence of revelation, then, in keeping with Brunner's personalistic premises (see III.3.4), is divine self-communication, in which the recipient necessarily becomes related to a thou. God does not communicate something in revelation, but Himself. Since God is person

*par excellence*, it is a matter of 'absolute communication'.[182] Therefore, in my knowledge about that which has been communicated to me in revelation I remain wholly bound to the event of the communication, to the particularity of the revelation and its bearer. I must let him say it to me. This dependence upon a historical person belongs to the essence of revelation. Only the meeting between the divine 'Thou' and human 'I' or the meeting where the Word of revelation is spoken and is met by the answer of faith, is personal.[183] As Brunner says, "we know the person as that which makes itself known to us through speaking to us, through revealing himself in speech. Hence, since God Himself speaks to us, and in so doing manifests Himself to us, the idea of 'person' is the only one which is appropriate to describe Him".[184]

As already shown (see III.2.3), Brunner comes to the concept of God as 'person' through his application of the Buberian I-Thou relationship even though he considerably alters it. This analysis is summed up in the following two points:[185]

(1)  The I-thou relationship is something completely different from the relationship of the self to the world, from the relationship of thinking to its object.

(2)  Every 'thou' we can know only if it reveals itself. Yet there is a certain possibility of recognising a human thou ourselves.

The first of these points consists in a separation of the *thou* from the world of objects, from the mere products of thinking, from the object. The *thou* is something different from the 'non-self'. The *non-self* is the world, the totality of the objects. The *thou*, however, is the non-self which is a self like myself, of which I only become aware when it is not thought by my own efforts, or perceived as an object, but when it makes itself known to me as self-active, self-speaking, as 'I-over-

against-me'.[186]   Thus in contrast to all that can be called 'it', the

'self' (or 'I') is a subject, a personality.   The contrast between

subject and object is, therefore, fundamental for the I-thou

relationship insofar as I am only concerned with the relationship of one

subject to the other.


The second point consists in a distinction between the subject, per

se, who is God and the relative thou, the relative subject, which is

man.   The mystery of human personality is not absolute;   it is only

relative, because it is not only 'other than I' but 'the same as I'.[187]

Thus, I have two sources for recognising a human thou, the self-

revelation of the unknown *thou* and my being a subject, my being a

person:

> Man is in the Image of God, his personality derives from
> God's, yet just because it is from God his *person* is
> different from God's.  God - the God known to us in His Word
> - is the unconditioned, the underived, the eternally self-
> sustained *person*, on no side limited, and, save from
> Himself, by naught determined, absolute and, to Himself,
> absolutely transparent Spirit... He is to Himself self-
> related, one knowing and willing Himself in love, the Triune
> God.  Wherefore, only the Triune God is genuinely personal,
> for He is within Himself self-related, willing, knowing,
> loving Himself.[188]


Now, with God the case is different.  He is the Thou, the absolute

Subject.  This has certain consequences with respect to the question how

I can come to know about God.    "Therefore I cannot myself

unconditionally think God as this unconditioned Thou, but I can only

know Him insofar as He Himself, by His own action, makes Himself known

to me".[189]  Here I have only one source:  God's revelation.  The reason

why a divine revelation is necessary is that "God is *only* Subject, He is

not also Object;   He is the absolute Subject, subject in the

unconditional, unlimited sense."[190]  Whereas the world is an object, man

is a subject, but a subject which is at the same time an object.[191]   God

is subject only, never object.   This concept of God as the subject, the

unconditional subject, in Brunner's view, is not only the starting point

for theological thinking, but its very content.[192]   For him, the thought

of God as the subject is immediately connected with the thought of

revelation.   Ultimately these two are but one.   God, who essentially is

the absolute subject, is also the God of the revelation.   There is an

indissoluble unity of God's essence and revelation, not only in the

sense that God's essence is made known through the revelation, but in

the sense that it is the essence of the God of the revelation.[193]


So, if this analysis is correct, then it shows to us the fact that

Brunner may primarily use the term 'person' to indicate the revelation

of God rather than the essence of God even though he attempts to

maintain an indissoluble unity of God's essence and revelation.   It is

difficult, however, to say exactly what Brunner meant by the term

'person'. For instance, he rejects the philosophical concept of God in

its Platonic and Neoplatonic forms and the like - one which is alien to

the Bible.   On the other hand, he recognises that man can think out a

God for himself - the history of philosophy makes this quite plain.   In

extreme cases a man can *think* a *personal* God.   Theistic philosophy is

then a genuine and extreme possibility, even though this personal God

who has been conceived by man remains some*thing* which has been thought,

the object of our thought-world.[194]   In this regard, insofar as Brunner

claims that *persons* are not objects but subjects, they have a claim on

us to be known as 'thou', he is, I think, guilty of confusion.   For it

becomes evident that he is unable to maintain any *qualitative*

distinction between a *personal* God of faith, and a *personal* God of

reason.

Perhaps Brunner might claim that indeed reason cannot be excluded from the realm of faith. Even the word of revelation is *logos*, 'meaning', which must be received by us as "something which has been thought". He has not been thinking of division but of distinction. Faith is not apart from reason, yet it transcends reason. There would be no particular occasion to dispute with Brunner the fact that faith involves more than knowledge, if he simply meant to say thereby that it includes the elements of assent and trust. He argues, however, that faith not only goes *beyond* reason, but also curbs it, goes *against* it. Even though we must think *in* the act of faith as well as *about* the act of faith, our thought must ever return to the primal situation of personal encounter. There must be a constant suspension of the tangential tendencies of logic through holding fast to the revelational event (see IV.4.3). He may insist that faith has its own evidence which is superior to the categories of reason, and therefore the 'contradictory' revealed truths of the Bible are no barrier to it. Faith grasps the truths behind the paradoxes which it employs. If this is so, then, in the last analysis, not only is reason no proper criterion of revealed truth, but there is no criterion whatever.

The problem, however, is to find whether we can make any proper remarks about Brunner's use of the terms 'person', 'personal' and 'personality' and the like. His dissatisfaction with the emphasis on the false objectivism of Orthodoxy's doctrine of propositional revelation leaves him with Luther's *dictum* to the effect that the scriptures are 'the manger in which Christ is laid'. The concept of man's encounter with God necessarily implies that the *person* of God is historically and personally actualised in Jesus Christ.[195] It is through the recognition that Jesus Christ establishes the 'point of

contact' between God and man that this encounter takes place (see
I.1.2). It will, therefore, be clear that Brunner's understanding of
the terms 'person' and 'personality' consists in an application of his
early Kierkegaardian individualism and that of his later Buberian
communalism. As shown to us in the previous discussion (see IV.1.2),
the early Brunner shared Kierkegaard's concept of individual and
subjectivism together with an unshakable conviction in the absolute
otherness of God against Hegelian immanence. However, simultaneous with
the development of his increased appreciation for the experiential side
of Christian piety, but affecting the fundamental structure of Brunner's
thinking much more profoundly, was an awakened appreciation for the
dimension of Buberian personalism (see IV.3.4). His interest in man as
person is at the bottom of his concern to work out a 'Christian
missionary theology' as he calls it, and a social ethic.

This suggests to us that the later Brunner's position seems to be
precisely to oppose individualism by an emphasis on the communal nature
of human life, even though he does not make any substantial change of
Kierkegaard's formula,[196] that is, "man is an individual and as such is
at once himself and the whole race, in such wise that the whole race has
part in the individual, and the individual has part in the whole
race".[197] Accordingly, the notion of Kierkegaard's 'individual' is
reformulated with the aid of the I-Thou framework of Buber (and Ebner).
The 'individual' who is both himself and the race is represented as 'the
I-Thou' relationship; as a result, in Brunner's I-Thou framework
communalism is emphasised by definition - "I am not man at all apart
from others. I am not 'I' apart from the 'Thou'. As I cannot be a
human being without a relation to God, without the Divine 'Thou', so
also I cannot be man without the human 'Thou'."[198]

This emphasis on the essentially communal nature of human life also finds expression in Brunner's concept of personality. Personality is not a predicate of the I, but of the I-Thou. Personality is not synonymous with individuality, but rather embraces both individuality and humanity. Thus personality is not something individual, but it is real only in mutuality, in fellowship. Personality and fellowship are correlates, i.e. the one is not either thinkable or actual without the other.[199]

> God has created man not only for communion with Himself, but also communion with his fellow creatures. He has created man, from the very outset, not only as an individual, but as a member of the most comprehensive human activity. Election, as the call out of the world to Himself, is at the same time that which calls human beings together, the κλῆσις is necessarily connected with the ἐκκλεσία, its correlate.[200]

In this regard, Brunner's concept of person or personality as communion or communality again indicates that God's nature is the will to self-communication, that is to say, God wills to have fellowship with his human creatures.[201] In Brunner's view, just as the concept of the revelation is included in the concept of God as the absolute subject, so also God's love is included in the revelation. For, as the revelation is God's self-communication, so also God's love is this self-communication. Thus, he can say that "revelation as the self-communication of God, is the act of Divine Love. As the One who reveals, namely, as the One who reveals Himself, God is One who loves."[202] Here Brunner's notion of revelation can be seen as the necessity for the missionary witness of the church. As the saving revelation of God in Christ is a historic act, so knowledge of it starts from a point in time and in space. That knowledge comes through the witness of the disciples 'beginning at Jerusalem' and extending to

the whole world.  In this regard, the church is not only the bearer of

the Word of Christ, but also the bearer of His Spirit and life, and in

fact His self-representation.  So Brunner uses the term 'proclaiming

existence' which indicate the church as 'every form of historical life

which has its origin in Jesus Christ and acknowledges in Him its

foundation and supreme norm.[203]  It is this proclaiming existence of the

church which makes known the revelation that occurred in Christ, that

announces the revelation to come in glory, and that, while doing so,

becomes itself faith creating revelation.

At the same time the notion of church implies that the primary

commission of the church is not mere doctrine but proclamation.  It must

always have doctrinal content but it is itself something other than

doctrine;  it is, say, 'faith-awakening, faith-furthering and faith-

wooing address'.  For Brunner, genuine proclamation (or preaching) means

an event entirely personal.  He is therefore convinced that in every man

there is a will and a knowledge at the side of which the proclaimer can

place himself, where he can find his 'point of contact'.  If man has not

yet heard the Word of God, and if in him there is no knowledge about it,

then of course discussion with him would be useless;  and perhaps there

is no point in discussing anything with him.  However, as already shown

to us, Brunner maintains that the church should enter into a genuine

discussion with man.  It should take seriously the fact that every man

already has something which may contribute to true insight, that he is

capable of responding to the address of God so that the continuing

discussion may lead to increased insight.

On the other hand, since Brunner is convinced that the origins of

the *institutional* misunderstanding of the church are the same as those

of the intellectual misunderstanding of faith, that is, they lie in the error of objectivist thought, he attempts to make a connection between the intellectual misunderstanding of faith and the institutional misunderstanding of the church.[204] In his opinion, it is precisely this which is the 'eighteen-hundred-years-old' misunderstanding of the church. It consists of understanding the church as an institution and then simply identifying this institution with the *ecclesia*, the community in Christ of the New Testament. Unlike the institutional church, the *ecclesia* is brought into being only by men who are apprehended by the Word of God, which is Jesus Christ himself, and so are brought into a personal relationship to him. In other words, he places emphasis on the personal element in the notion of the church.

Accordingly, this relationship is vertically realized as a fellowship with God, and in the horizontal sense as a human fellowship, a brotherhood. Whereas it was later supposed that to describe what the church is, it was sufficient to apply to it the two objective criteria of 'pure doctrine' and the 'right administration of the sacraments', the New Testament contains a whole series of other characteristics by which it was possible to tell whether one belonged to the community of Christ: a lively faith, the endurance of suffering, zeal for service, true brotherly love, mutual exhortation - all characteristics which distinguish the church not as an institutional body, but as a personal fellowship. The proof of membership lies not in purity of doctrine, but in evidence of discipleship. In this picture which Brunner paints of the New Testament *ecclesia*, there is something else associated with his emphasis on the personal element, and this is a positive evaluation of the enthusiasm of the Spirit which prevailed in the earliest communities. The early Christians were conscious of possessing the

*pneuma*, the Holy Spirit, and with this went powers of a non-rational nature. The Spirit seizes not merely the understanding, but also the heart. If theology, as its name implies, is directed towards what is 'logical', then it is not an appropriate instrument with which to understand this activity of the Holy Spirit which is beyond logic.[205]

However, a question might be raised at this point, and a certain lack of clarity in Brunner's claim about the church would appear. Sometimes he talks as if we were not able to reach certain objective criteria for application of the term 'the *ecclesia*', but only a personal relationship or a kind of discipleship. It is difficult to bring this position into agreement with his claim that the ecclesia is 'the form of life in which faith itself necessarily finds expression, not a mere subsidiary help'.[206] The believer in Jesus Christ uses the words, idioms and imagery of the Bible, such as *freedom* and *world*, *saved by grace*, *Kingdom of God* and so on. They are forms of his faith, since they belong to God's unique revelation to him. Following on Wittgenstein's remarks, to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.[207] Becoming acquainted with a language is not simply mastering a vocabulary and rules of grammar. Rather, the language of faith has a meaning to the believer if the language of Christian faith is the language of a believer, one who has been 'caught' by the Gospel; and therefore the language of faith has meaning when it is taken to refer to the Christian way of life.[208] If this is so, then Brunner's claim that the term 'the *ecclesia*' is incompatible with objectivity leads to confusion and, it would appear, self-contradiction.

In spite of this, Brunner does not deny the fact that the Word of God comes to us, say as a *human* word - as the word of an Isaiah, a Paul,

or a John. It makes use of a definite human language that is already in existence, with its vocabulary and its grammar. "The Word of God makes use of these languages, and thus presupposes the understanding of these languages."[209] So what he suggests here is that the communication of the gospel assumes the rational capacity and nature of man. Reason is the prerequisite of faith. "The *humanum*, that which distinguishes man from the beasts, is necessary in order that faith may occur. The Word of God, although it distinguishes itself as God's Word from everything that man knows of himself, can only be spoken to one who has the general capacity of speech. This capacity for speech or power of using words, of speaking and being spoken to, precisely this formal personality (*Persona quod*) is the *conditio sine qua non* of faith, it is that also which is not destroyed but preserved in faith."[210] The change that takes place in the one who receives the gospel in faith requires, then, not a change in the rational meaning of words but a change in the man himself. The radical character of this change is indicated by the assertion that it involves the death of the 'old man' and the birth of the 'new man'. But in this drastic change the same man or subject persists. This is the continuity of reason in the discontinuity of faith.[211]

So the communication of the Christian faith whether in the preaching of the gospel in a 'Christian' community or in the midst of a non-Christian people has two aspects or dimensions. There is, first, the intelligible use of the common language of the moral and spiritual life and the direct address to the rational mind. Men of all faiths can understand one another to a large extent in this discourse because they are all basically the same in formal personality. But this form of communication does not of itself make converts. It can only give

theoretical knowledge about Christ. 'Accepting Christ' or becoming a Christian lies in another dimension, namely, that of personal confession of sin and acceptance of forgiveness in and through Christ. No one can question the necessity or personal response and the fact that it goes beyond the theoretical knowledge of Christ; nor that the real point of effective contact for the preacher or missionary is this inner awakening and conviction.[212] Thus Brunner suggests that the relation of revelation and reason as one of mutual involvement yet also of tension and even conflict is analogous to the fact that the Christian faith is intimately involved with culture, yet is never to be identified with it. The only solution Brunner has for this problem is, therefore, a kind of balance between the biblical revelation and rational thought, or 'faith' and 'rationality' in which rational discussion goes far beyond the affirmations of 'faith', though it must always be prepared to be held in check by these. Underlying these ideas, however, there is always the thought that the rather inexact, pictorial conceptions of faith can and should be given more adequate expression by theology.[213]

Following on Wittgenstein's remarks on 'forms of life' and 'language-games', Fergus Kerr points out that it is hard to imagine how people would awaken to the possibility of religious faith by having it proved to them that there is something more powerful than anything in the world. On the other hand, it is easy to think of people who have wanted to analyse and justify their faith by securing rational grounds for it but who then find themselves no longer able to believe in God.[214] Wittgenstein remarks on the possibility of religious faith as follows:

> Life can educate one to a belief in a God. And *experiences*
> too are what bring this about; but I don't mean visions and
> other forms of sense experience which show us the 'existence
> of this being', but e.g. sufferings of various sorts. These
> neither show us God in the way a sense impression shows us

an object, nor do they give rise to *conjectures* about him.
Experiences, thoughts, - life can force this concept on us.
So perhaps it is similar to the concept of 'object'.[215]

It is not that God is perceived or surmised as an object - the *concept*

'object' fits into the conversation quite differently from all talk

about any particular object.  It is easy to imagine people who do most

of what we do, but without having the *concept* of an object at all.  That

is to say:  talking of God *is* like talking of an object, provided that

we remember how different the concept of an object is from the concept

of a table or a star or a theorem.  But for various reasons, connected

with the metaphysical impulse and scientific curiosity, the concept of

an object has forced itself irreversibly upon our culture.  Analogously,

Wittgenstein suggests, given certain experiences, sufferings,

reflections and so on, the concept of God has forced its way into our

forms of life.


With regard to the problem of religious language, I have already

suggested that theologians are in a good position to understand

Wittgenstein who himself pioneered the way from logical positivism to a

broader and more flexible conception of language analysis (see VI.2.1).

He remakrs: "Every sign by itself seems dead.  What gives it life? - In

use it is alive.  Is life breathed into it there? - Or is the use its

life?"[216]  The point is that isolated elements of language 'come alive'

as they get used in wider contexts.  His stress on the multiplity of

language-games is a fundamental part of his attempts to get rid of the

assumption that logic is *prior to* all experience and that it constitutes

the *a priori* order to the world.  Logic is found within the various

language-games themselves.  In other words, we learn to distinguish

between sense and nonsense in different ways by actually using language

in the varied circumstances of social life.[217]  For Wittgenstein, life

and language are not two separate things.  Language is not added to social life to facilitate communication, as though language were simply a means to express something apart from itself.  When a form of life can no longer be imagined, its language can no longer be understood.

Furthermore, Wittgenstein's remarks on 'theology as grammar' may be of considerable theological interest, and it appears twice in his later literature as follows:

(a) Essence is expressed by grammar.

Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar).[218]

(b) How words are understood is not told by words alone (Theology).[219]

As Alan Keightley points out, when Wittgenstein uses the word 'essence', he refers to the conventions in social and linguistic activities, seen as a single weave, e.g. 'If you talk about essence - you are merely noting a convention'.[220]  These conventions are the bedrock, the given. Language-games rest on human conventions.  It is human beings who are responsible for the conventions by which language is used.  Language can, and in fact does, change.  Wittgenstein makes this clear in the following statement: "This multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all;  but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say,  come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten".[221]  But language is always embedded in a situation, in human customs and institutions.  It is closely interwoven with the ways we view the world and our activities within it.

Thus, language and life rest on conventions.  While they have no necessity beyond what human beings do, they are not arbitrary.  In

referring to social arrangements as conventional, we must also recognise that they are natural.  The conventions or bedrock are formed through the grammar of our language.  It is what people do and say which forms their grammar, i.e. what it makes sense to say is inextricably bound-up with what it makes sense to do.  For Wittgenstein,  grammar governs the possibilities of intelligible experience, and hence limits what the world could contain.  Grammar, he says, governs "the 'possibilities' of phenomena" by regulating "the kind of statement that we make about phenomena".[222]  What he has in mind here is that certain phenomena only 'exist', as it were, because our language contains their possibility. There are language-games played which allow us to speak of certain phenomena.  In this regard, theology gives expression to a particular way of life.  Words alone are empty of life.  They have to be nourished by their use in a community.  The language of religion has, or should have, then an active grammar.  The essences have made religion what it is.  These essences are 'expressed by grammar' - grammar tells us 'what kind of object anything is'.  It seems, then, reasonable to assume that Wittgenstein's correlation of grammar and essence implies that theology must be related to a living community which embodies the conventions and beliefs expressed by theology.  Theology, as 'grammar', articulates the standards of intelligibility implicit in the language and activities of a religious traditions.

Thus the language of faith is also a language within the community of faith.  As this community develops, it affects the language because the concepts of the language of faith are related to the factual circumstance of the community, and it may be said that a Christian cannot speak the language of faith in separation from the life of the community of faith.  As already shown to us, the term 'ecclesia' in the

New Testament is the assembly of God called by Jesus Christ, and represents in this sense a unified concept. This unity, however, exists with an emphasis on spiritual freedom and an emphasis on established office, and yet this office is never an exclusive institution of faith. The language of faith in the New Testament is, in this respect, the language of faith within a concrete community. For this reason every time the meaning of Christ is rediscovered, a new language is born out of the clash of two worlds, the gospel and the present; every time this birth takes place, the church must wait for the judgement concerning this new language. Here lies a final double meaning of the Holy Spirit for the speech of our faith. We wait for the Spirit to challenge us to creativity, and we wait for the Spirit to point toward the failure. By accepting the freedom to create in the newness of the Spirit we put ourselves under the judgement of this Spirit. The language of faith is never ultimate, either in the past or in the present. In the final adoration of history, a hymn of praise will fill the spaces of heaven; but until then the church is driven into hearing ever again and creating ever again the imagery by which it can understand, communicate, and praise the biblical miracle of God's love for man. The church must always wait for the end, ready to have its language challenged and renewed. Christian language is the speech of the believer who is rooted in the gospel, who speaks to the present, and who waits for the end.[223]

This last point shows that I am not claiming that the way of spiritual creativity in the language of faith *exhausts* the meaning of religious concepts. In preaching and theology, in life and worship, we receive through the Spirit the power, freedom and courage to seek incessantly new idioms of response and new means of verbalizing the gospel, new tools in our understanding of biblical faith, and new

language by which we can speak to the world. The newness of faith leads to the newness to speech; and the creative power in the freedom in Christ must result in the creativity of Christian language.[224] Possibilities of spiritual renewal are however expressed through religious language-games, hence this is one way of learning the 'grammar' of religious concepts. It is important to see that the problems have arisen within a certain way of life, and that the urge to answer them is a religious language, although one cannot indeed use Wittgenstein's philosophy to escape from traditional theological problems such as the questions of ontology and truth.[225]

Of course, in our thinking we are often confronted with seemingly insoluble problems. An apparently valid argument may lead us to unacceptable conclusions. Sometimes we are confronted with questions for which there are no answers, or only absurd answers. Sometimes we cannot see how something that we know to be the case, can indeed be so. In such situations, as Wittgenstein puts it, we feel like a prisoner caught in his own conceptual net. It is the task of philosophy to free us from this kind of captivity. 'What is your aim in philosophy? - To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle'.[226] Wittgenstein also compares this captivity with an illness and philosopher's task with a therapy that might cure our minds. "The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness."[227] According to Wittgenstein, the cause of the illness lies in language. The conceptual forms built into our language, cast a spell on us. The philosopher, therefore, has the task of freeing us from this enchantment: "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language."[228] The philosopher's task, then, is to examine concepts in order to ascertain within what forms of life, or 'language-games', or

categories they belong, and by this means to free us from the category mistakes which hold us captive.[229]

Similarly, if missionary theology is itself, in a certain sense, a form of conceptual inquiry, namely, an inquiry concerning the basic concepts of the Christian faith in order to communicate the message of Christ, then familiarity with conceptual inquiry is not only useful but essential for the pursuit of this theology. The Christian faith, so far as Christian theology is concerned, is not an esoteric affair, remote from ordinary life and from other human pursuits. Hence, too, most of the fundamental concepts employed in expressing the Christian faith are ordinary everyday concepts except for a few really technical terms. In this regard, a missionary theology like a philosophy, is 'an activity of elucidation', that is to say, the activity of clarifying and analysing the content of our talk about God and the reflection on the fundamental concepts exercised in the church's talk about God. However, this does not ignore or deny the fact that the language of the church is always threatened by two dangers: the danger of making the Word of the personal God subservient to the given self-understanding of man, and the danger of its becoming a secret language by disregarding this self-understanding.[230] Rather, if Brunner suggests that the notion of missionary theology is an intellectual presentation of the gospel of Christ, which starts from the spiritual situation of the hearer, and is addressed to it, then my argument is that it cannot, or should not, escape the problem of language as an essential component of our doing this theology since the only way the subject matter of theology unfolds is through the language of faith and since language is the basic and all-pervasive expression of every cultural and religious situation.

**Notes**

1.  Emil Brunner, "Toward a Missionary Theology", in The Christian Century, Vol. 46, 1949, p.817.
2.  Emil Brunner, RaR, p.413 (Italic is mine).
3.  Emil Brunner, "Secularism as a Problem for the Church", in The International Review of Missions, Vol. 19, 1930, p.507.
4.  Emil Brunner, Ibid.
5.  Peter Vogelsanger, "Brunner as Apologist", in ThoEB, p.298.
6.  Peter Vogelsanger, Ibid, pp.295f.
7.  Emil Brunner, WaW, p.71
8.  P.G. Schrotenboer, A New Apologetics, p.198.
9.  Emil Brunner, RaR, pp.220-221.
10. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.34.
11. Emil Brunner, Ibid, p.213.
12. Anders Nygren, Meaning and Method, pp.337f.
13. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.311.
14. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.390.
15. E. Brunner, DI, p.102.
16. E. Brunner, "Secularism as a Problem for the Church", in The International Review of Missions, Vol. 19, 1930, p.508.
17. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.508f.
18. E. Brunner, TasE, pp.24, 41, 49, 69.
19. Cf. E. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.5.
20. E. Brunner, PhoRe, p.62.
21. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.66.
22. E. Brunner, DiIm, p.46. Cf. also E. Brunner, Med., pp.112: "The intelligible ego, the subject of the ideal will, is the divine ego; only for this reason is it legislative, this alone is why we are autonomous."
23. Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation, p.175.
24. E. Brunner, SirE, p.2. Quoted in Paul K. Jewett, op.cit., p.175.
25. E. Brunner, RaR, pp.204f; cf. PhoRe, p.55.
26. E. Brunner, RaR, p.362.
27. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.392.
28. E. Brunner, TasE, pp.51f.
29. E. Brunner, RaR, p.393.
30. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.396; Cf. also TasE, p.52.
31. Cf. George A. Schrader, "Brunner's Conception of Philosophy", in ThoEB, p.117.
32. E. Brunner, RaR, pp.205f.
33. E. Brunner, GoaMa, p.56.
34. E. Brunner, Med., p.21.
35. E. Brunner, GoaMa, pp.54, 57.
36. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.55.
37. E. Brunner, TasE, pp.89-91.
38. E. Brunner, RaR, pp.413f.
39. E. Brunner, "Intellectual Autobiography", in ThoEB, p.16. In Brunner as in many other contemporary protestant theologians (even Barth might perhaps be included) apologetics is not a distinct discipline but rather a dimension of all theology. See Avery Dulles, A History of Apologetics (New York: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1971), p.233.
40. E. Brunner, RaR, p.9.
41. E. Brunner, DI, p.192.
42. E. Brunner, DI, pp.187f: "Revelation is gracious love and grace is revelation. Jesus Christ is the revelation; He is the Love of God

in Person. Only when we understand love as this self-communication of God do we grasp it as groundless and generous, as freely-electing, as incomprehensible love, as that which the Bible calls *Agape*. To know this love means to know His self-communication. From our end, from our natural experience of love, the nature of *Agape* is not intelligible, insofar as all natural self-giving has its deepest foundation in an attraction to the beloved. Hence the perception of this love is bound up with the event of revelation, or, as we have already said, this love does not define itself in intellectual terms, but in an Event."

43. E. Brunner, DI, p.64. Cf. Anders Nygren, "Emil Brunner's Doctrine of God", in ThoEB, pp.180, 184-185.
44. Ronald W. Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox, pp.30f.
45. Frederick Ferré, Language, Logic and God, pp.102-103.
46. Cf. Frederick Ferré, Ibid, p.104.
47. Brunner, RaR, p.8.
48. Brunner, Ibid, p.33.
49. Brunner, RaR, p.24. Cf. also Paul K. Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation, p.71.
50. George A. Schrader, "Brunner's Conception of Philosophy, in ThoEB, p.123.
51. Brunner, PhuOff, p.39: "Der Glaube steht an sich nicht im Gegensatz zum Erkennen, ebensowenig wie zum sittlichen Wollen. Im Gegenteil: er setzt beide voraus."
52. Brunner, Ibid, p.76.
53. Cf. Anders Nygren, 'Emil Brunner's Doctrine of God', in ThoEB, p.186.
54. Brunner, DI, p.15.
55. Basil Mitchell, The Justification of Religious Belief (London: Macmillan, 1973), p.144.
56. Paul Tillich points out that every existentialist epistemology faces the problem of how the knowledge by encounter and the knowledge by objectifying detachment are related to each other. See Tillich, "Some Questions on Brunner's Epistemology", in ThoEB, p.102.
57. Brunner, TasE, pp.108f.
58. Brunner, Ibid, pp.112f.
59. Fred Berthold, Jr., "Objectivity and Personal Encounter", in Journal of Religion, Vol. 45, 1965, p.41.
60. Brunner, RaR, p.26.
61. E. Brunner, DI, p.127; cf. also ThoCr, p.34: "... The word of the prophets is not in itself the Word of God; it is merely a word concerning the Word of God. It is not the perfect divine self-manifestation, because it is not itself wholly personal. God's personal word exists and is heard only when he who speaks and what he speaks are one; when the person of the speaker and the authority of his word are inseparable. It must be a word that does not need a prophet as an instrument, but that is present in a person, that is, *in persona*. A person then, in space ane time, is himself the Word. The Word of God, because it is a personal word, is present as a person. This is what the Christian calls revelation."
62. E. Brunner, MaiRe, p.416. (Italic is mine).
63. E. Brunner, DI, p.140: "...Since God himself speaks to us, and in so doing manifests Himself to us, the idea of 'person' is the only one which is appropriate to *describe* Him."
64. E. Brunner, "Theologie und Kirche", in Zwischen den Zeiten, Vol. 8, 1930, pp.399f.
65. E. Brunner, TasE, p.94.

66.  E. Brunner, TasE, p.101.

67.  E. Brunner, TasE, p.87.

68.  E. Brunner, MaiRe, pp.218f, 221.

69.  E. Brunner, Med, p.345: "It is this Man, in whose personal existence the Divine Person meets us - through faith. *The Person of this human personality does not resemble a human being; here the humanity of Christ ceases; indeed, this Person is not historically visible at all.* He can be seen by faith alone. Since the means by which this Person communicates with the world is the human spirit ... there is always the possibility that this Person who speaks to us, personally, through this spirit, through this personality which is composed historically of body and spirit, may be mistaken for a human person." (Italic is mine).

70.  Cf. P. Tillich, "Some Questions on Brunner's Epistemology", in ThoEB, pp.102-103.

71.  John Hick, God and the Universe of Faiths (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp.111-112.

72.  Cf. Gerhard Ebeling, Introduction to a Theological Theory of Language, translated by R.A. Wilson (London: Collins, 1973), p.195.

73.  Cf. G. Ebeling, Ibid, p.191.

74.  John Hick, God and The Universe of Faiths (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973), p.1.

75.  J. Houston, Is it Reasonable to Believe in God (Edinburgh: The Hansel Press, 1984), p.ix.

76.  Frederick Ferré, Language, Logic and God (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode (Publishers) Ltd., 1962), pp.2-6 passim.

77.  Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, trans. O.F. Pears & B.F. McGuiness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), δ 4.0031, 4.112.

78.  Paul M. van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1966), pp.13, 14.

79.  For an elaborate treatment of logical positivism. See A.J. Ayer, Logical Positivism (London: Glencoe, 1959); also Language, Truth and Logic (Penguin Books, 1983, 1st ed. 1936). Cf. also J.O. Urmson, Philosophical Analysis (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1956).

80.  Some philosophers points out that although there are marked differences of style and content between Wittgenstein's early and later philosophy, there are many connections between them, and many assumptions common to both. See Jaakko Hintikka, "Language-Games", in Jaakko Hintikka (ed), Essays on Wittgenstein in Honour of G.H. Von Wright (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publisher, 1976), pp.105-125; Cf. also Merrill B. Hintikka and Jaakko Hintikka, Investigating Wittgenstein (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), especially Chapters 8, 9. Cf. Anthony Kenny, Wittgenstein (Penguin Books, 1986), Chapter 12.

81.  Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), δ 109.

82.  Jenny Teichman, Philosophy and the Mind (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) p.44.

83.  Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, I. δ 304.

84.  Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ibid, I. δ 43.

85.  Jenny Teichmann, op.cit., p.44.

86.  Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, I. δ 23.

87.  Wittgenstein introduced the idea of a language-game in the Blue Book, p.17: "I shall in the future again and again draw your attention to what I shall call language games. These are ways of using signs simpler than those in which we use the signs of our highly complicated everyday language. Language games are the forms

of language with which a child begins to make us of words."

88. Patrick Sherry, Religion, Truth and Language-games (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1977), p.3. Cf. also Wittgenstein, Zetel, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981) δ 174, p.30.
89. Norman Malcolm, Ludwig Wittgenstein, a Memoir, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p.72.
90. Norman Malcolm, "Anselm's Ontological Arguments", in John Hick (ed) The Existence of God, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964), p.62. Cf. also Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 654.
91. Norman Malcolm, Thought and Knowledge, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p.195.
92. Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty, trans. Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979) δ 449.
93. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ibid, δ 455.
94. D.Z. Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p.14.
95. D.Z. Phillips, Ibid, pp.14f.
96. D.Z. Phillips, Ibid, p.17.
97. D.Z. Phillips, Ibid.
98. E.L. Mascall, for instance, says: "The primary task of rational theology is to ask what grounds can be found for asserting the existence of God." He implies that theology is external to religion and seeks a rational justification of religious truth. Existence and Analogy, (Longmans, 1949) I. See also D.Z. Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, p.5.
99. D.Z. Phillips, Ibid, pp.4, 5f.
100. On this point, John Hick calls the view of some followers of Wittgenstein as 'autonomist position', but also he employs instances of the cognitive or of the non-cognitive uses of language to make distinctively religious utterances. See Faith and Philosophers, p.237. Cf. also God and the Universe of Faiths, pp.1f, 8.
101. John Hick, Ibid, p.8.
102. John Hick, Ibid, p.9.
103. John Hick, Ibid, pp. 9, 10.
104. John Hick, Ibid, p.11.
105. John Hick, Faith and Knowledge (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp.145f.
106. John Hick, op.cit., especially chapter 2 passim, p.94.
107. John Hick, Faith and Knowledge p.142. Cf. also L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984) Part II, δ xi.
108. John Hick, Faith and Knowledge, pp.193ff; cf. also Faith and the Philosophers, p.249. CF. Alan Keightley, Wittgenstein, Grammar and God (London: Epworth Press, 1976), p.151.
109. Cf. Patrick Sherry, Religion, Truth and Language-Games (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1977), pp.100ff.
110. Patrick Sherry, Religion, Truth and Language Games, p.22. Cf. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 654.
111. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ibid.
112. Wittgenstein, On Certainty, δ 359.
113. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p.200.
114. Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty, δ 559, p.73.
115. Patrick Sherry, Religion, Truth and Language-Games, pp.24f.
116. Patrick Sherry, Ibid, p.23.
117. Patrick Sherry, Ibid, p.27.
118. Patrick Sherry, Ibid. Cf. also Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty, δ 5, 82, 105, 203; Philosophical Grammar, trans. Anthony Kenny,

(Oxford: Basil Blackwell), δ 55.

119. D.Z. Phillips, The Concept of Prayer, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p.1.

120. D.Z. Phillips, Ibid, pp. 8ff, 27. Cf. also Patrick Sherry, Religion, Truth and Language-Games, p.29.

121. Patrick Sherry, Ibid, pp.28f.

122. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 120, δ 122, δ 123, δ 126, δ 127.

123. D.Z. Phillips, The Concept of Prayer, p.27.

124. Patrick Sherry, op.cit., pp.36f.

125. D.Z. Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, pp. 4, 71: "What I am urging is that the intelligibility of the family of language-games covered by the term 'religion' is not assessed by wider criteria of meaningfulness."

126. Patrick Sherry, Religion, Truth and Language-Games, pp.37, 38.

127. John Hick, God and the Universe of Faiths, p.31.

128. Cf. Alan Keightley, Wittgenstein, Grammar and God (London: Epworth Press, 1976), pp.140f.

129. Jaakko Hintikka (ed). Essays on Wittgenstein in Honour of G.H. Von Wright, (Amsterdam: North-Holand Publishing Co. 1976), pp.110ff.

130. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 23.

131. Cf. Derek L. Phillips, Wittgenstein and Scientific Knowledge (The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979), p.170.

132. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 90.

133. L. Wittgenstein, Ibid, δ 520.

134. Derek L. Phillips, Wittgenstein and Scientific Knowledge, pp.173f.

135. Cf. Merrill B. Hintikka and Jaakko Hintikka, Investigating Wittgenstein, (Oxford: Basil Blckwell, 1986) pp.234f.

136. Cf. D.Z. Phillips, Belief, Change and Forms of Life (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1986) p.xii.

137. Michael Devitt and Kim Sterelny, Language and Reality (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p.53.

138. Cf. Alan Keightley, Wittgenstein, Grammar and God, pp.148f.

139. E. Brunner, SirE, pp.49ff. Cf. also Wilbur M. Urban, Language and Reality (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1939) p.606.

140. E. Brunner, RaR, pp.385f.

141. E. Brunner, "Die Frage nach dem Anknüpfungspunkt", in Zwischen den Zeiten, 1932, pp.530f.

142. E. Brunner, RaR, p.393.

143. E. Brunner, "Die Frage nach dem Anknüpfungspunkt", in Zwischen den Zeiten, 1932, p.518.

144. E. Brunner, DI, p.73.

145. E. Brunner, RaR, pp.119, 311.

146. E. Brunner, DII, pp.29, 30.

147. E. Brunner, RaR, p.311.

148. E. Brunner, RaR, pp.312ff.

149. E. Brunner, RaR, p.313.

150. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.314.

151. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.315.

152. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.318 (Italic is mine).

153. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.416.

154. E. Brunner, Ibid.

155. E. Brunner, RaR, p.417.

156. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.152.

157. E. Brunner, DI, pp.68f.

158. I. Corinthians 9: 20-21.

159. Cf. E. Brunner, DI, pp.69f.

160. P. Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I (Chicago: The University of

Chicago Press, 1967), p.4.

161. P. Tillich, The Religious Situation, trans. H. Richard Niebuhr (New York: Meridian Books, 1956) pp.37f.

162. P. Tillich, Ibid, p.39.

163. P. Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p.3.

164. P. Tillich, Ibid, p.7.

165. Cf. P. Tillich, "The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols", cf. also "The Religious Symbol", in Sidney Hook (ed), Religious Experience and Truth, pp.3-11, 301-321; cf. also Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), Chapter III Symbols of Faith, pp.41-54.

166. P. Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, pp.211ff.

167. P. Tillich, Biblical Religion and The Search for Ultimate Reality (London: James Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1955), p.22.

168. P. Tillich, Ibid, p.22.

169. P. Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, pp.20f.

170. P. Tillich, Biblical Religion and The Search for Ultimate Reality, pp.82f.

171. P. Tillich, Ibid, p.83.

172. P. Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p.7.

173. Cf. Kenneth Cauthen, "Biblical Truths and Rational Knowledge", pp.473f.

174. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigation, δ 373.

175. Wittgenstein, Ibid, δ 370-1.

176. Cf. Fergus Kerr, Theology after Wittgenstein (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.146.

177. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigtions, δ 370-1.

178. Wittgenstein, Ibid, δ 23.

179. E. Brunner, PhuOff, p.50.

180. E. Brunner, RaR, pp.23, 25.

181. E. Brunner, ThoCr, p.31.

182. E. Brunner, GoaMa, p.56.

183. E. Brunner, GoaMa, p.67.

184. E. Brunner, DI, p.140.

185. Cf. Anders Nygren, "Emil Brunner's Doctrine of God", in ThoEB, pp.181f.

186. E. Brunner, DI, pp.121f.

187. E. Brunner, DI, p.122.

188. E. Brunner, MaiRe, pp.218f (Italic is mine).

189. E. Brunner, DI, p.122.

190. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.140.

191. E. Brunner, Ibid.

192. E. Brunner, Ibid, p.141: "True theology, therefore, must not only begin with the knowledge of God as the absolute Subject; its one, its sole task, is to make this clear."

193. E. Brunner, DI, p.127.

194. E. Brunner, DI, pp.122, 151: "If we wish to examine the question whether the philosophical idea of God is necessarily different from that of revealed religion, hisotrically, then we must first of all note that the whole of Western philosophy, from the beginning of Christiantiy, moves within the sphere influenced by the Christian tradition. It has never yet been proved that a philosopher who sets out to formulate the philosophical idea of God can deliberately renounce all dependence on the Christian tradition, without himself being aware of the fact, it is at least possible that some of the heuristic principles which guide his thinking, may be derived from the Christian Faith, such as, for instance, the idea of a personal God."

195. Alister E. McGrath, The Making of Modern German Christology, p.103.
196. See M. Colin Grant, "The power of the unrecognized 'blik': Adam and humanity according to Søren Kierkegaard and Emil Brunner", in Studies in Religion, Vol. 7, 1978, p.50.
197. Søren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, trans. Introduction by Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p.26.
198. E. Brunner, MaiRe, p.140.
199. E. Brunner, GoaMa, p.162.
200. E. Brunner, MaiRe, p.291.
201. E. Brunner, TasE, p.97
202. E. Brunner, DI, p.191.
203. Brunner, DIII, pp.4f.
204. Brunner, TasE, p.2.
205. Brunner, MiCh, pp.48f. Cf. Heinz Zahrnt, The Question of God, p.77.
206. Brunner, DIII, p.20.
207. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 19.
208. Paul M. van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel, pp.100, 101.
209. Emil Brunner, RaR, p.417.
210. Emil Brunner, "Die Frage nach dem Anknüpfungspunkt", in Zwischen den Zeiten, 1932, p.514.
211. Emil Brunner, Ibid, pp. 510, 511. Cf. also Hugh Vernon White, "Brunner's Missionary Theology", in ThoEB, p.65.
212. Cf. Hugh Vernon White, Ibid, p.67.
213. Anders Nygren, Meaning and Method, trans. Philip S. Watson (London: Epworth Press, 1972), pp.337f.
214. Fergus Kerr, Theology after Wittgenstein, p.155.
215. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Culture and Value, trans. Peter Winch, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p.86.
216. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 432.
217. Alan Keightley, Wittgenstein, Grammar and God, pp.38f.
218. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 371, δ 373.
219. L. Wittgenstein, Zettel, δ 144.
220. L. Wittgenstein, Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, edit. G.H. von Wright, R. Rhees and G.E.M. Anscombe, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, 1978, p.23; cf. also Philosophical Investigations, δ 92: "... 'The essence is hidden from us': this is the form our problem now assumes. We ask: *What is* language?", "*What is* a proposition?" The answer to these questions is to be given once for all; and independently of any future experience." Cf. also Alan Keightley, Wittgenstein, Grammar and God, p.54.
221. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 23.
222. Wittgenstein, Ibid, δ 90.
223. Samuel Laeuchli, The Language of Faith (London: The Epworth Press, 1965), p.248.
224. Samuel Laeuchli, Ibid, p.244.
225. Patrick Sherry, Religion, Truth and Language-Games, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1977), pp. 196, 197.
226. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 309.
227. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ibid, δ 255.
228. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ibid, δ 109.
229. Vincent Brümmer, Theology and Philosophical Inquiry (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1981), pp.75-76.
230. Otto Weber, Foundations of Dogmatics, p.27.

I have suggested that in the work of Emil Brunner there is a view of the *communication* of the Christian message which could say a great deal to our modern missionary situation of the church.  The reason for saying this is not just because it is 'relevant' to our contemporary missionary situation.  Brunner's strong conviction of the necessary communication of the message for the man of the *Zeitgeist* should not be neglected in missionary-minded churches.  He remarks: 'The Church exists by mission just as a fire exists by burning'.[1]  So much theological reflection is permeated by the conception of the missionary task of theology and the church which is one essentially contained in the Christian gospel and necessarily connected with it.  However, it is questionable whether Brunner has successfully achieved its missionary task in his theological proposal of *truth as encounter*.  In this conclusion, the answer to this question should appear from the following discussion.

I want, first of all, to draw my main contention which emerges from the preceding discussion.  It may assist the reader to a clearer view of my argument that I venture to make the problem of  *language* an essential component of our doing this theology.  I say that one of the major difficulties confronting the Christian who enters into the questions raised by the unbeliever does not lie merely in the nature of religion and the confusion between religion and Christian faith.  Rather, I have argued that the difficulty lies in the character of the language of faith.  Many linguistic philosophy minded theologians claim that if the theologian is to *communicate* at all, he must establish some sort of *contact points* between his special senses of the words he uses and the ordinary senses of these words.[2]  He must convince us that the change of

meaning is not so drastic as to erode the entire sense the words originally possessed. The search for these contact points and the general inquiry into meaningfulness certainly deserve to be counted as vital part of the missionary task since missionary theology is the question of how the gospel can be *communicated*, or it takes the *form of a conversation* between a Christian believer and an unbeliever.[3]

In this regard, Brunner has concerned himself with the problems centering around the claims of philosophy and science. This ties indirectly with his missionary interest, for missionary theology has always sought to meet the criticisms of philosophy and science against the Christian faith. In the face of the problem of the relationship of theology and philosophy, he employs the Buberian I-Thou philosophy. His theology is, then, built around a framework that partitions reality into two realms, or dimensions, of existence, that is, the impersonal and the personal, it-truths and thou-truths. For Brunner, the biblical revelation cannot be properly understood either from the point of view of the object, as merely an outward event, or from the point of view of the subject as merely an inner process. Hence, Brunner seeks to overcome the imprisonment of theological thought in the object-subject dichotomy. He believes that it lies 'beyond objectivism and subjectivism'. This is the concept of *truth as encounter* or *personal correspondence* which seems to herald the overcoming of the object-subject dichotomy in thought. Perhaps it seems to become his most important contribution to theological epistemology (see III.1.3). However, even though the emphasis (provided by the language of encounter) on the importance of personal experience for theological language is helpful, the notion of 'encounter' which is at the root of this position is beset with difficulties, and the theory of testing

symbols against religious experience leads to what, for the theist, are unfortunate consequences.

In respect of the justification of religious belief, Basil Mitchell points out, for example, that the Buberian personalist protest owes much of its rhetorical force and its power as a stimulus to two dichotomies, which are neither of them as sharp as they are made to seem.[4] They are (i) between talking *to* God, and *about* Him; (ii) between the personal I-Thou relation of encounter and the object I-it relation of scientific investigation. In the former case (i) he argues that when we talk to someone we are in a position to say something *about* him, to answer questions about his situation, character and behaviour and so on. What we believe about all this will affect how we address him and what we say. If this is so, then it is true that a man cannot talk about the mysteries of religion and at all understand what he is saying without a sense of creatureliness which is akin to humility and worship; and this is the beginning of an 'encounter' with God. However, emphasis on the personal nature of his relationship must admit its cognitive side too. In the latter case (ii) Mitchell rightly warns that the dichotomy between the relation of encounter between persons and that of objective scientific investigation looks deceptively clear-cut. For what differentiates them is precisely not one distinction but many, and to identify them leads us greatly to oversimplify the activities of scientists and to draw too sharp a line between them and other rational activities. Thus he rejects the protest as it stands. I think Mitchell is in the main right here. For if illusion is present sometime in 'encounter', then without some objective check there is no ground assuring us that our experience is not *always* merely subjective emotion conjoined with personal interpretation.

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Brunner, of course, admits the power of reason in many spheres to arrive at true conclusions without the assistance of faith. In abstract subjects, like mathematics or physics, faith has nothing to say. But it is, for him, possible to talk of a conception of history or of psychology in a sense of Christian faith. The nearer that theme comes to this central point, the nature of man, and his relation to God, the greater the divergence between the interpretation given by faith and that given by reason. Therefore, problems of the interpenetration of the two spheres, that which is of the world and knowable and that which is a matter of revelation because above the world can never be absolutely, but only approximately solved.[5] There is a wide area of middle problems where both reason and faith must be active. Brunner seeks to maintain the dialogue, trusting in the help of the Holy Spirit to shed light upon both parties to it. Such is what Brunner calls 'the law of closeness of relation', or the law of contiguity (see IV.4.3), and man 'can only understand himself truly and realistically when he understands himself in the light of faith in the Creator revealed in Christ'.[6] This principle underlies his whole missionary task which he seeks to do. However, when the conflict between two spheres has come about because of confusion on the one side and arrogance on the other, in the last analysis, not only is reason no proper criterion of revealed truth, but there is no criterion whatever. I think Brunner involves, then, the whole question of religious truth in subjectivism even though he would protest, no doubt, that the inner experience of the Spirit's speaking to me has an objective point of reference, the Christ of history and, therefore, is the opposite of mysticism.

On my view, which seems to have been that of Wittgenstein in a broad sense, the problem of confusion in his use of the term 'encounter'

lies in the fact that the problem of religious language does not play a significant role in Brunner's thought. Instead, we are told that we need to distinguish from the start between the I-Thou and the I-It relationship, the one a relationship of personal encounter, the other of objective scientific investigation. Man's *relationship* with God is the I-Thou kind. Hence, it is a fundamental error to suppose that it can be described in an order of language designed to express objective matters of fact. Rather, 'encounter' refers to the experience of those moments when the self finds itself so manifestly confronted by another, independent 'Thou' that objective reference is part of the datum. So what is communicated in basic theological propositions is not information, but events and acts. Faith is not a matter of 'believing that', but of 'answering' the address of God in his Word; and therefore it rests on a decision made in response to a personal presence.

Accordingly, in facing a question of what the real measure of 'appropriateness' of a symbol to the experience can be, Brunner may reply that no external standard is ultimately capable of arbitrating on this matter; even the Bible serves as authority only because its words are adjudged 'appropriate' to the experience of each generation of readers. The language of encounter is, then, ultimately justifiable only as the occasion of religious experience. Thus, the imprecision of theological symbols is forgotten once the encounter from which it springs and to which it leads is experienced in its inexpressible immediateness. In this way the language of encounter, by ruling out any such objective check, has effectively blocked any means of distinguishing between 'genuine' encounter with God and the illusory products of supercharged emotions. However, this sort of alleged incompatibility of objective language and Christian faith, I think,

seems to be defective by excluding language which takes the *form of a conversation* between a Christian believer and an unbeliever. For I am convinced that *all* thinking and speaking is essentially objective, since it is indeed always thinking and speaking 'about something'. Thinking leads to assertions 'about something', and speech communicates these assertions in that it articulates them. As a result, even the speaking and thinking of theology is necessarily objective.[7]

Following Wittgenstein I have, therefore, argued that the question about the existence of something about which nothing can be said in any *language* turns out to be a spurious one. If someone invents a rule and tries to follow it, then he has no independent checks on whether or not he is following the rule *correctly* (and without the notions of correct and incorrect, there are no rules). So the possibility that a given symbol can convey a meaning rests upon the possibility of discriminating certain aspects of experience which are common to the public, or the society, which understands and uses the symbol. Otherwise, there would be no criterion for the correct and incorrect usage of symbol. For instance, an expression (sound, gesture, etc.) becomes a linguistic symbol only when it communicates. To communicate it must be abstract in the sense that it refers to aspects of experience common to those who understand the language. It must be, then, objective in the sense that there must be some social criterion for correct and incorrect application. Thus, my argument is that if Brunner desires in his concept of personal encounter that we respect the 'otherness of the other', that is to say, He is not a mere object of my thought, but unique other who confronts me, then, it seems to me that an attitude of objectivity may sometimes rescue us from ignoring or distorting the otherness of the other. I grant that the most precious thing in my

relation to an other is something immediately and uniquely present in the encounter. Yet it is unfortunately all too common for me to misconstrue what is given in that immediate relationship.

Furthermore, since Brunner claims that man's relationship with God is of the I-Thou kind, namely a relationship of *personal encounter*, he stresses this point, that a person cannot be thought. 'God and the medium of conceptuality are mutually exclusive. God is personal and discloses Himself only in the medium of personality, hence in a personal way, not through being thought, but through actual address, summons, command.'[8] But if we cannot think the personal, if God and the medium of conceptuality are mutually exclusive, then we can actually neither talk *to* God, nor talk *about* God. Perhaps in a usual manner Brunner makes much of the difference between the way in which we know an object and the way in which we know a person. Our knowledge of objects involves only our own cognitive processes. But our knowledge of a subject, a person, is wholly contingent upon an act of self-disclosure on the part of the person known. So he refers to the person to person *encounter* between human beings as analogous to the person to person *encounter* between God and man. In a genuine encounter, object and subject are taken into some third thing in which they cease to be more object or more subject.

However, one can speak of 'cognitive encounter' with many realities that have no personal character but which are not mere things either. Life in all its dimensions cannot be grasped without an encounter of the knowing and the known beyond the subject-object scheme. If this is so, then a question may arise whether the person to person encounter is the only valid analogy to the Divine-human encounter and

whether, therefore, in the description of the way of knowing God, the personalistic categories should be used exclusively. Insofar as Brunner compares the meaning of 'person' applied to man with the meaning of 'person' applied to God, he sees the difference only in the removal of the human limitations with respect to being a person. But in this instance the language itself is a vital part of the concrete relationship itself, and it is necessarily abstract and objective. That which is said is an object of thought. Hence the theologian uses highly abstract and technical language, even when he writes *about* worship. If he objects to the abstraction and objectivity of such language, he would do well to lay down his pen.

Nevertheless, the crucial claim made by Brunner is that what is true of revelation from God's side is also true of its acceptance on man's part. His faith and knowledge are also a personal event throughout. Revelation as the sovereign self-communication of God finds its counterpart in faith as the free self-giving of man. Thus faith is seen to be not knowledge of an object, but an act of trust: man is now ready to receive his life from the hand of God and to exercise his responsibility in such a way that he responds to the word of God. In other words, revelation for Brunner is His *lordship* over man and His *fellowship* with him. God reveals himself first as the Lord and secondly as the *One* who wills to have fellowship with man. It follows, then, that faith must be thought of in *personal* terms. Even though all theological effort is directed toward truth, it is a truth which is not theoretically discerned, but only grasped 'in faith', that is to say, in an event which transforms the individual and integrates him into a fellowship, i.e., the *ecclesia*. Therefore, Brunner draws knowledge and fellowship into a unity: to know God means to be one with him.

Probably a crucially distinguishing characteristic of the theological personalism of Brunner's missionary theology is its employment of and relation to the concept of the *ecclesia*. In Brunner's view, it is the essential function of the ecclesia to bear witness to the revelation in Christ in which God manifested his own nature to be communicating love. It exists for the sake of this witness. The ecclesia is primarily nothing else than the organ and bearer of the Gospel by its preaching and pastoral works. So the principal thesis which Brunner advances, which forms his starting point and to which he constantly returns, is that the *ecclesia*, the community in Christ of the New Testament, is a purely *personal fellowship*, with nothing in the nature of an institution and, therefore, not yet a Church. As a result, Brunner attacks the *Church* which is something impersonal, an institution, and something which exists above individual men in the same way as the state. He tends to identify the *Church*, the institutional Church, with the It-world or the impersonal sphere, while the *ecclesia* is the community of personal relations of an I-Thou kind. In this way he attempts to make a connection between the intellectual misunderstanding of faith and the institutional misunderstanding of the Church.

However, in biblical language, in becoming a Christian, the Christian becomes a member of the Church. The difficulty is that people do not speak biblical language. In ordinary use, including the use of Christians, the word 'Church' refers to something objective: we go to church; the church is at such and such an address; there are clergy and people in it and so on. As Van Buren points out, the linguistic difficulty arising from the difference between the biblical, or the theological, and ordinary uses of the word is nothing, however, compared to the theological problem of holding together biblical assertions

concerning the *ecclesia* and descriptions of the sociological unit to which the biblical statements are supposed to apply.[9] What appears sociologically to be an odd sort of group is often spoken of theologically as the 'Body of Christ'. This is not merely a description. Rather, it is a reference to the historical perspective which the members presumably have in common, and it suggests the harmony that would exist between people who shared this perspective. In this regard, a man becomes a Christian in the context of this community of believers, directly or indirectly, rather than in his own purely personal relationship. So, even though it indeed takes risks such as being depersonalised and collectivised, the faith of the community of Christ can continue and can make itself felt in the world only if it is willing to embody itself in worldly institutions. For this reason, I think the Church which is actually a sociological and theological reality has not only the inner life of its members but also its communal activities and institutions. Hence, the Church cannot remain alive without expressions of faith and the personal participation in them.

My argument about Brunner's notion of the Church is, I should emphasise on this point, that the Church is not merely the community of the *persons-encounter*; rather, it is the community of the *forms of life* in which the faith of Christ itself necessarily finds expressions. The community of Christ uses the words and speeches, such as *the Kingdom of God, God the Father, saved by grace, righteousness, apostles* and so on. They are forms of life of faith, since they belong to God's unique revelation to us. These words and speeches are translated, which means that they are given another frame of life and of thought. Otherwise, we may be involved in an abandonment of the gospel, for the gospel is about the Word made flesh. Every statement of the gospel in words is

conditioned by the culture of which these words are a part, and every style of life that claims to embody the truth of the gospel is a culturally conditioned style of life. In this regard, even though the gospel calls into question all cultures, including the one in which it was originally embodied, there can never be culture-free gospel.[10] In any event, the language of the community of Christ enters into a concrete language which has already been molded. This necessarily means that the language of the community must, therefore, remain in dialogue with the language spoken elsewhere. This is demonstrated most clearly in the specific expressions of the language of faith.

This last point shows that the Church needs theology *as grammar* and *syntax* of Christian speech. This means that to talk *about* God is to use words and speeches whose meanings we have learned by their application to the world around us. We have no access to the divine, independently of our life and language. Hence talking about God has to be reflection on how the word 'God' is used in our life and language. Since God's Word does not bring God into language in isolation, language is the manifold echo to the question of God. So the event of the Word of God is necessarily bound up with the entire life of language. For if the Word of God brings the whole of our reality into language anew, then the reality which is already in language is necessarily addressed anew. This touches the root of the vexatious linguistic problem in the Word of God. The happening of the Word of God has created a linguistic tradition of its own, to be seen not only in many forms in the Bible, but also in great variety and indeed disharmony in the history of the Church.[11] For this reason, theology, in practice, has always included a great deal of critical reflection on what people are inclined to say about God. Perhaps theology, like every other human occupation, is

subject to the limitations and errors of human understanding. But it is not only the humanness of theology which constitutes the uniqueness of its challenge in every age, but the challenge of the age itself.

Thus, in the foregoing discussion, I have wanted, at the same time, to suggest that in the face of the missionary situation a consideration of the way in which religious language attempts to understand and explain possibilities of spiritual renewal would be the most profitable way of carrying out missionary theology if Brunner claims that the missionary theology aims at interpreting the Gospel in such a way that people of today can feel themselves addressed thereby in their particular conditions. As Wittgenstein says in a somewhat different context, it is 'Not, however, as if to this end we had to hunt out new facts; it is, rather, of the essence of our investigation that we do not seek to learn anything *new* by it. We want to *understand* something that is already in plain view. For *this* is what we seem in some sense not to understand.'[12] Now the things which we are seeking to understand are the forms of the church's life in which men may find spiritual renewal. People *still* want to hear the Gospel, but it must be presented as relevant to life as it is seen to be lived.

# Notes

1. E. Brunner, WaW, p.108.
2. Cf. Ronald W. Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox, p.7.
3. E. Brunner, DI, p.103 (Italic is mine).
4. Basil Mitchell, "The Grace of God", in Basil Mitchell (ed), Faith and Logic, pp.157f.
5. Cf. E. Brunner, RaR, pp.383f.
6. E. Brunner, DII, p.72.
7. Cf. Heinrich Ott, "The Problem of Non-objecting Thinking and Speaking in Theology", in Journal For Theology and the Church, Vol. 3, 1967, pp.112-135.
8. E. Brunner, PhuOff, p.50.
9. Paul Van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel, p.184.
10. Cf. Lesslie Newbigin, Foolishness to the Greeks, The Gospel and Western Culture (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), p.4.
11. Cf. Gerhard Ebeling, The nature of Faith, pp.190f.
12. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, δ 89.

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