

THE RELATION OF THEOLOGY AND HISTORY

STUDIED IN THE CONTEXT OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL DUALISMS

by

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Title of Thesis "The Relation of Theology and History Studied in the Context of Epistemological Dualisms"

This thesis proposes to come to terms with the problem which the idea of history poses for theology, but it does so primarily through a critical analysis of the way epistemological dualisms have pre-determined the discussion. Part One engages in a critical and methodological study which is intended to show that the rise of modern philosophy, in attempting to provide an epistemological access to reality, provided the intellectual tools which ultimately led to the rise of modern historical criticism. Further, it will be seen that these epistemological dualisms (e.g., the distinction between the necessary truths of reason and the contingent truths of fact) underlie the problem which the rise of historical criticism has put to theology--how can historically-conditioned events which are empirically uncertain and inconclusive serve as the frame of reference for Christian faith with its claim to universal and absolute validity? This question which presupposes a dualistic epistemology is the fundamental and recurring issue in this thesis. For example, modern philosophy (beginning with Descartes) sought to establish a basis for the absolute truths of reason in contrast to the incertitudes of historical knowledge. This quest for absolute certainty in regard to philosophical knowledge led to such epistemological dualisms as body-mind, thought and extension, truths of reason and truths of fact. The consequence of these dualisms led to the recognition history is characterized by the categories of relativity and probability. That is, historical events are conditioned according to their historical setting, and the knowledge of these events are characterized by varying degrees of probability in sharp contrast to the absolute certainty of the necessary truths of reason. Thus, the epistemological dualisms to be considered in Part One provide the central twofold question which historical criticism has posed to theology--how can historically-conditioned events (i.e., historical relativity) serve as the point of departure for Christian faith with its claim to universal and absolute truth? That is to say, how can historical relativity be reconciled with the claim of Christian faith that a single event can be absolutely unique? And, how can the probabilities of historical knowledge be reconciled with the claim of Christian faith as a historical revelation to have absolute truth? That is, how can the certitude of faith be maintained over against the incertitude of historical knowledge?

Part Two is concerned with dualisms in religious epistemology, which correspond somewhat to the philosophical dualisms articulated in Part One. That is, even as modern philosophy sought to provide a basis for the absolute certainty of truth through such distinctions as thought and extension, truths of reason and truths of fact, even so theology has sought to provide a basis for the absolute certainty of religious knowledge through such distinctions as faith and knowledge, Historie and Geschichte, inner history and outer history, nature and history. The intent of these related dualisms in religious epistemology is to make room for the certainty of faith which is threatened by the incertitude of historical knowledge and the relativity (i.e., the causal nexus) of the historical process. Thus, these two categories of historical criticism--i.e., historical relativity and the probability of historical knowledge--presuppose the delineation of a dualistic epistemology. For example,

with the sharp distinction between the truths of reason and truths of fact, it was seen that history is characterized by (1) historical relativity (or contingency) as opposed to the necessary truths of reason and (2) more or less degrees of probability concerning historical knowledge as opposed to the absolute certainty of the truths of reason. On the other hand, religious epistemology developed into a dualism of its own in an attempt to cope with these two categories of relativity and probability with the result that the certainty of faith was made independent of the uncertainty of history.

Part Three offers a constructive proposal to integrate the twofold aspect of religious epistemology. It is argued that theology cannot tolerate a divorce between Historie and Geschichte, faith and knowledge, inner history and outer history, even as philosophy cannot endure the Kantian divorce between noumenon and phenomenon. Also, even as theology must not divorce inner history from outer history, i.e., historical meanings cannot be divorced from historical facts, even so hermeneutics cannot be divorced from historical research. Thus, it is argued that the kerygma must be based upon temporal events which can at least be theoretically verifiable. This is to acknowledge that the biblical texts intend to "report" events which really happened. Thus, Part Three is an attempt to "overcome" a dualistic epistemology. In so doing, it proposes to integrate the hermeneutical and historical aspects of the idea of revelation, as well as integrating faith and history, in terms of a theology of universal history. The term, "hermeneutical," is intended to focus attention upon: (1) the biblical texts themselves as the linguistic bearers of the interpretation of certain events which are revelatory, (2) the distance that separates the biblical texts from the modern age, (3) the resulting necessity for bridging the distance between the biblical texts and the modern age, and (4) the epistemological problem of history. The term, "historical," is intended to focus attention upon: (1) the objective, temporal quality of history as the bearer of revelatory events, and (2) the necessity for ascertaining the historical reliability of the events recorded in the biblical texts. The term, "universal history," is a more comprehensive concept which intends to bring together both the historical and the hermeneutical aspects of revelation.

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PREFACE

This thesis is concerned with the relationship of theology to the idea of history. This general theme of "faith and history" has been widely discussed in modern times with scores of books having been written on the subject. This interest however shows no signs of abating. Nor should it, since Christian faith is inextricably linked in its origin with historical events which serve as its point of departure.

This present work could be judged as another attempt to reconcile faith with the problems which the idea of history poses. However, much more than this is intended. What is believed to be of fundamental significance in this thesis is the unfolding of the epistemological dualisms which serve as the background both to the rise of the modern historical consciousness ("Der Ausgang des geschichtlichen Bewusstseins," as Dilthey termed it)¹ and to the modern view of revelation as the self-revelation of God.

I must thank my supervisor, Professor John McIntyre, for his generous assistance in the writing of this thesis--especially in the way of critical assessment and constructive suggestions. I am also indebted to Mr. D. W. D. Shaw for the helpful suggestions he made in consultations that I had with him on several occasions. Mr. J. V. Howard and Mr. I. G. Hope of the New College Library have given kind assistance in securing books and articles

¹Wilhelm Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1958), VII, 105.

both from within this country and abroad. Finally, without the untiring help of my wife (including the typing of this final copy of the manuscript) and her encouragement this thesis would not have been possible.

So far as the style and rules for writing a thesis is concerned, Kate L. Turabian's A Manual for Writers (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966) has been followed. The spelling of words is in conformity with American usage. Two final comments should perhaps be made. First, no glossary of technical words is being given at the outset of this thesis. Rather, the necessary definition of technical words will be given within the context of their usage. Second, all italics inside quotations are original with the authors cited unless otherwise indicated as "italics mine."

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SUMMARY

This thesis proposes to come to terms with the problem which the idea of history poses for theology, but it does so primarily through a critical analysis of the way epistemological dualisms have pre-determined the discussion. Part One engages in a critical and methodological study which is intended to show that the rise of modern philosophy, in attempting to provide an epistemological access to reality, provided the intellectual tools which ultimately led to the rise of modern historical criticism. Further, it will be seen that these epistemological dualisms (e.g., the distinction between the necessary truths of reason and the contingent truths of fact) underlie the problem which the rise of historical criticism has put to theology--how can historically-conditioned events which are empirically uncertain and inconclusive serve as the frame of reference for Christian faith with its claim to universal and absolute validity? This question which presupposes a dualistic epistemology is the fundamental and recurring issue in this thesis. For example, modern philosophy (beginning with Descartes) sought to establish a basis for the absolute truths of reason in contrast to the incertitudes of historical knowledge. This quest for absolute certainty in regard to philosophical knowledge led to such epistemological dualisms as body-mind, thought and extension, truths of reason and truths of fact. The consequence of these dualisms led to the recognition history is characterized by the categories of relativity and probability. That is, historical events are conditioned according to their historical setting, and the knowledge of

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INTRODUCTION

The question of history has become the central issue in contemporary theology. In contrast to the Barthian theology of revelation, history seems to have become the all-embracing category of theology. This can be seen by Carl Michalson's statement, for example, that nothing should be claimed for theology at all which is not also history.¹

The problem of history became acute for Christian theology for the first time during the middle of the seventeenth century with the application of historical criticism to Scripture. This rise of historical criticism is one of the direct results of the rise of modern philosophy with its bifurcation of reality into mind-body (Descartes), necessary truths of reason and accidental truths of history (Lessing), relation of ideas and matters of fact (Hume), the thing-in-itself and the thing-as-it-appears (Kant), and thought and being (Hegel). This is to say that this bifurcation of reality, e.g., into universal reason and contingent facts, provided the crucial question that historical criticism has posed for theology--how can historically-conditioned events which are empirically uncertain and inconclusive serve as the point of departure for Christian faith with its claim to universal and absolute validity? This is to say, how can the incertitudes of historical research guarantee the certitude of faith?

This rise of the modern historical consciousness resulted in an

¹Worldly Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), pp. 2, 217ff.

inevitable tension between revelation and history, and it thus challenged the traditional linking of revelation with the Bible. This tension between revelation and history can be seen in such distinctions as "faith and knowledge" (Kant), the "What" and the "How" (Kierkegaard), "Historie" and "Geschichte" (Kähler and Bultmann), "Deus dixit" and "Paulus dixit" (Barth), "mere facts" and "pure Word" (Ebeling), "inner and outer history" (H. R. Niebuhr), and "nature and history" (Michalson). The purpose of these terminological distinctions (which are to be dealt with in the course of this thesis) is to protect faith from the onslaughts of historical criticism, for it was believed that the relativity of history forbade Christian faith from making absolute claims for such temporal and contingent events as the Christ event.

This is seen in Ernst Troeltsch's opening statement in Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben in which he suggests that historical criticism has brought about the "conclusive dissolution" (endgültigen Zersetzung)¹ of the traditional historical picture of Jesus. He believes that historical criticism makes it impossible to speak of any temporal event as containing absolute significance for all mankind. He writes:

Christianity is not at all merely the production of Jesus, for Plato and the Stoics and immeasurably popular religious forces of the world of classical antiquity have had a part in it. So then the conclusion, which the Christian layman calls as the eternal, absolute center of salvation for the entire duration of mankind, appears to be impossible. One cannot say this with genuine certainty, but it is not probable. The age of mankind on the earth comes to several hundred thousand years or more. His future may come still to more hundreds of thousands of years. It is difficult to bring out a single point of history within this long time, and specifically to think of a direct middle point of our individual religious history as the

¹Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben
(Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1911), p. 1.

exclusive center of all mankind. This looks much too severe to absolutize our accidental individual surroundings.¹

The question which Troeltsch thus poses in the very beginning of his essay is: "Is it possible, then, to speak at all of an inner, substantial meaning of Jesus for faith?"²

It is particularly this historical relativism articulated by Troeltsch that serves as the point of departure for existentialist theology to place the locus of revelation in the moment of faith's decision. In this respect, Michalson³ and Friedrich Gogarten⁴ both suggest that theology must begin with Troeltsch's analysis of the relativism of history. Thus, the terminological distinctions such as "history" and "nature" (Michalson) serve to protect faith from the uncertainty and transience of history. This is to say, for Michalson faith is interested in historical meanings, not in historical facts.⁵

David F. Strauss envisaged the rise of historical criticism to mean that Christian faith is divested entirely of its historical foundation. As a consequence, he suggested four options for the Christian minister who takes seriously modern historical studies. (1) He can try the impossible feat of persuading the church to see the untenability of its historical claim. (2) He can appear to hold to the historical view of revelation though in reality he does not. (3) He can leave the pulpit and become a professor.

¹Ibid., p. 15. Translation mine. ²Ibid., pp. 1-2. Translation mine.

³Worldly Theology, pp. 2-3.

⁴Demythologizing and History, trans. Neville H. Smith (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1955), pp. 18-19.

⁵Michalson, The Rationality of Faith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), pp. 29, 60.

(4) He can merely ignore the historical claims of Christian faith and simply expound their spiritual significance.¹

The very one who provided the classical formulation of the J E D P theory, Julius Wellhausen, felt the full impact what historical criticism could have for Christian faith. In fact, he could only see an unbridgeable gap being created between Christian faith and historical studies. It was for this reason that he resigned from the theological faculty of Heidelberg in 1882, and then transferred to Halle as professor of Semitic languages.² He explained his resignation in a letter this way:

I became a theologian because I was interested in the scientific treatment of the Bible; it has only gradually dawned upon me that a professor of theology likewise has the practical task of preparing students for service in the Evangelical Church, and that I was not fulfilling this practical task, but rather, in spite of all reserve on my part, was incapacitating my hearers for their office.³

Thus, historical criticism with its dualistic view of reality created a skeptical climate of opinion concerning the hermeneutical validity of temporal history for Christian faith. It also by implication raised the question of meaning in history. This is to say that if historical study rules out the objective revelational character of temporal events that are so decisive for Christian faith, then history becomes a hermeneutical problem, and meaningfulness in history must have recourse to a metahistorical realm.

¹David F. Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, fourth edition, trans. George Eliot (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Company, 1906), pp. 782-784.

²Alfred Jepsen, "The Scientific Study of the Old Testament," Essays on Old Testament Interpretation, ed. Claus Westermann, trans. John Bright (London: SCM Ltd., 1963), pp. 246-247.

³"Wellhausen in Greifswald," Festschrift der Universität Greifswald, Vol. II (1956), pp. 47ff., cited by Jepsen, p. 247.

This is not to impugn the validity of historical criticism. Conversely, it is to suggest that the strength of Christian faith lies in its historical quality which is open to critical investigation. However, if this objective historical quality of Christian faith is looked upon from the perspective of an extreme dualistic view of reality (as if, for example, existential history and objective history, or Geschichte and Historie were mutually exclusive of each other), then the question of the validity of temporal history for faith seems to be a negative foregone conclusion.

Thus, this thesis proposes to come to terms with the problem which the idea of history poses for theology, but it will do so primarily through a critical analysis of the way epistemological dualisms have pre-determined the discussion. Part One engages in a critical and methodological study which is intended to show that the rise of modern philosophy, in attempting to provide an epistemological access to reality, provided the intellectual tools which ultimately led to the rise of modern historical criticism. Further, it will be seen that these epistemological dualisms (e.g., the distinction between the necessary truths of reason and the contingent truths of fact) underlie the twofold problem which the rise of historical criticism has put to theology--how can historically-conditioned events which are empirically uncertain and inconclusive serve as the frame of reference for Christian faith with its claim to universal and absolute validity? This question which thus presupposes a dualistic epistemology is the fundamental and recurring issue in this thesis. For example, modern philosophy (beginning with Descartes) sought to establish a basis for the absolute truths of reason in contrast to the incertitudes of historical knowledge. This quest for absolute certainty in regard to philosophical knowledge led to such

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PART ONE

DUALISMS IN PHILOSOPHICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

The current debate in theology over the meaning of history for Christian faith has its roots in the rise of modern science which Whitehead dates in the year 1600.¹ There took place then a decisive change in the mode of thinking about the universe. The experimental method of natural science introduced a radical change concerning the thinking process itself, which previously had consisted of the mere accumulation of knowledge. Ernst Cassirer writes: "The task of medieval thought had consisted largely in tracing the architectonics of being and in delineating its main design. In the religious system of the Middle Ages as it is crystallized in scholasticism every phase of reality is assigned its unique place; and with its place goes a complete determination of its value, which is based on the greater or lesser distance which separates it from the First Cause."²

The new method of natural science was the discovery of universal laws derived from experimentation with the particular and the concrete. This movement toward the universal and at the same time this movement toward the particular and the concrete thus influenced the rise of modern philosophy and contributed to the distinction between sensibility and

¹A. N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 5.

²The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 39.

intellect, between experience and thought.¹

This radical change in thought during the rise of modern science meant the rejection of the medieval distinction between reason and revelation insofar as natural science was concerned. Nature was seen not as mere creation, but as a part of the divine essence. This means that nature was no longer something that was moved from without, but something that moved from within according to the universal principle of natural law.

The Aristotelian theory had taught that the terrestrial bodies moved toward the center of the universe, which for the medievals was at or near the center of the earth. It was this motion of the terrestrial bodies that required an explanation, which Aristotle ascribed to the Prime Mover and the medievals, to the supernatural interference of God. With the rise of the modern law of inertia, natural science ruled out the Aristotelian theory.² Herbert Butterfield put it this way: "The modern law of inertia, the modern theory of motion, is the great factor which in the seventeenth century helped to drive the spirits out of the world and opened the way to a universe that ran like a piece of clockwork."³

This mechanistic working of nature was interpreted to mean that nature possesses its own inner principle of motion. Giordano Bruno put it this way: "God is not an external intelligence rolling around and leading around; it is more worthy for him to be the internal principle of motion, which is his own nature, his own appearance, his own soul than

¹Ibid., p. 38.

²Herbert Butterfield, The Origins of Modern Science (New York: Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 3.

³Ibid., p. 7.

that as many entities as live in His bosom should have motion."¹ This meant that natural law replaced the supernatural law of medieval theology, in which lex naturalis had never been more than a point of departure for lex divina.²

William Gilbert in 1600 had published a work in which he described gravity as a form of magnetic attraction and that the principle of the magnet explained the workings of the Copernican system. Galileo and Kepler were greatly influenced by Gilbert's work and further expanded the idea of natural law by demonstrating how it worked in individual cases, as in the phenomena of freely falling bodies and planetary motion. By 1678, Newton had established the principle of gravitation as a universal law.³ Thus, the method of natural science was not the understanding of nature through the assistance of revelation and the Church's doctrine of creation. Rather, the point of departure for knowledge was to make an exact analysis of things.

It is at this point where the influence of natural science came to bear upon the rise of modern philosophy. In medieval theology, philosophy had been the servant of theology. Now philosophy stood on its own feet and forged ahead with the critical questions of the validity and objectivity of human knowledge. Its task was to make an exact analysis of reality just as natural science had set out to do.

The crucial point of discussion in the rise of modern philosophy was the relationship between empirical and intellectual knowledge. On the one side were the rationalists (as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz) with their

¹Cited by Cassirer, p. 41. ²Ibid., p. 40.

³Ibid., p. 43.

emphasis upon a priori knowledge. On the other side were the empiricists (Locke, Hume) with their emphasis upon experience as the source of knowledge, thus asserting that the mind was a "blank tablet" at birth.

This tendency to bifurcate knowledge into two distinct levels--the rational and the empirical--brings into clear focus the epistemological question of religious certainty for Christian faith. Absolute knowledge for the rationalists could only be found through metaphysics, i.e., knowledge is derived from reason and innate ideas. In some cases, this resulted in the depreciation of historical knowledge, as with Descartes, Spinoza, and Lessing. On the other hand, Locke's empiricism led to a distinction between primary and secondary qualities and a corresponding rejection of innate ideas, which resulted in metaphysical agnosticism with Hume.

Thus, the rise of modern philosophy with its distinction between rational and empirical knowledge adumbrates the modern theological distinction between empirical fact and existential meaning. It will thus be the intention of this first part to show how this distinction between the different levels of reality in the seventeenth and eighteenth century helped to formulate an epistemology of history. Thus, Part One will mainly consist of a historical survey of those philosophies whose ontological and epistemological presuppositions for theology will be self-evident.

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MODERN HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A. Descartes: Methodological Skepticism

Rene Descartes in his "Discourse on Method" (1637) initiated a long series of attempts to provide a valid foundation for philosophical knowledge. In the early part of his educational training under the Jesuits in La Fleche, Descartes complained of an overwhelming sense of doubt. While he greatly respected the beliefs of the Church, he found them to be far above the powers of human reason to ascertain. What he thus sought to do was to establish a system which would lead to absolute certainty within the limitations of human reason.¹ This, in turn, would serve to convince the unbelievers of the truths of Christian faith.²

What, then, could serve as an adequate epistemology for the discovery of absolute certainty? The answer was found in the geometric method. Since mathematical certainty was demanded in metaphysics, this called forth the consistent application of reason to discover the axiomatic truths of philosophy.

In order to ascertain the axiomatic truths of philosophy, Descartes

¹Rene Descartes, "Discourse on Method," Essential Works of Descartes, trans. Lowell Blair with an intro. by Daniel J. Bronstein (New York: Bantam Books, 1966), pp. 4-6.

²Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy," Essential Works of Descartes, p. 48.

employed the use of methodological skepticism. This entailed four general principles. (1) Never accept anything as true which is not self-evident. This means the philosopher must renounce as false anything which is merely plausible. This means one must avoid bias and he must not include anything in his judgments which does not present itself clearly and distinctly to his mind. (2) It is necessary to divide each philosophical difficulty into as many parts as possible in order to reach a satisfactory solution. (3) One must conduct his thoughts in an orderly manner. He must begin with those objects which are simplest and easiest to know, and then he must rise little by little to knowledge of the most complex events. (4) He must be careful not to omit any of the facts. He must carefully scrutinize every event and make a complete enumeration and comprehensive review in order that he may not overlook anything.¹

It is these four principles which helped to lay down a basis for critical historical research, as it will be pointed out shortly. In terms of philosophical truth, Descartes' methodological skepticism led him to the following conclusions. First, there is the a priori knowledge of the self. Man could doubt the existence of everything around him, but he could not doubt the fact of his doubting. This could only point to the undeniable certainty that he was a thinking self. "I think, therefore, I am." He could have no misgivings about this self-evident truth.²

A second distinct idea is the existence of God. He uses an argument comparable to Anselm's ontological proof for God's existence. Since Descartes can think of a more perfect Being than himself, it is evident to him that

¹"Discourse on Method," Essential Works of Descartes, p. 12.

²Ibid., p. 20.

this idea must have come from a Being who is more perfect than he is. This argument cannot be used in regard to the sense world. The stars, the sun, and the moon stand in a different relation to him, for he can see nothing in them which could cause him to think that they were superior to him. In fact, it could be deduced that their existence really depends upon his own nature. On the other hand, this conception of a Being more perfect than himself could not have come from nothing, for it would be contradictory to believe that the more perfect would follow and be dependent upon the less perfect.¹ Consequently, this distinct idea of a Being greater than himself can only be the result of this idea coming from beyond himself. Descartes writes: "From the fact that I exist and have in me the idea of a supremely perfect being, that is, of God, it must be concluded that the existence of God is demonstrated in the most evident manner."²

A third axiomatic truth is that the soul is entirely distinct from the body. In fact, the soul is easier to know than the body and would be known if there were no body.³ This is so because "intellectual nature is distinct from corporeal nature."⁴ The justification for this argument is also found in the Cartesian skepticism concerning the empirical world. Anything that is based on sense perception does not qualify as genuine knowledge, though of course it may possess a strong degree of validity.⁵ This means: "We ought never to let ourselves be convinced of anything except by the evidence of our reason," and not by our imagination or

¹Ibid., p. 21.

²"Meditations on First Philosophy," Essential Works of Descartes, p. 81.

³"Discourse on Method," Essential Works of Descartes, p. 20.

⁴Ibid., p. 22. ⁵Ibid., p. 24.

our senses.¹ Thus, absolute knowledge is deduced from a priori concepts, not a posteriori.

This means that there is a bifurcation between body and mind, the intellectual and the empirical. This can be seen when Descartes makes it clear that the innate ideas do not need any corresponding reality in the empirical world.² For these innate ideas are imbedded within the mind from birth. They are just as axiomatic and clear as any demonstration of mathematical knowledge.

If there is such a radical distinction between mind and body, between a priori concepts and sense perceptions, then methodological skepticism becomes actual skepticism in regard to historical knowledge, for empirical perception cannot be compared with the clear a priori knowledge of the mind. This is why Gustave Lanson says that the Cartesian method is radically hostile to history, that history as a science is in fact abolished and becomes nothing more than a curiosity and a series of confused representations, capable only of amusing the imagination.³

This historical pyrrhonism (Collingwood's term) marks the beginning, in a paradoxical way, of the modern historical movement.⁴ It served as a challenge to historians to establish a solid and sure foundation for historical knowledge. Collingwood calls this constructive response, "Cartesian

¹Ibid.

²"Meditations on First Philosophy," Essential Works of Descartes, p. 99.

³Gustave Lanson, "L'Influence De La Philosophie Cartésienne Sur La Littérature Française," Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, IV (1896), p. 533.

⁴Cassirer, p. 201.

historiography," since it was based on the critical principles of Cartesian methodological skepticism.¹

B. Bayle: Historical Positivism

Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) was one such historian who responded to the challenge of Cartesian methodological skepticism. He adopted the Cartesian ideal of the distinct idea and sought to establish certain knowledge for historical facts, thus becoming the first "positivist."² His concern was not with any teleological interpretation of history, but with establishing the mere facts of history in a critical fashion. In this respect, his General Dictionary, Historical and Critical "proposes only to collect errors with regard to fact."³ It intends to be of "the most minute detail."⁴

His method was to examine all phenomena and to distinguish between the certain and the uncertain, the probable and the erroneous. He writes: "Errors are the only thing that can be of any service to me, provided I am able to correct them."⁵ He thus does not use his Cartesian methodological doubt against historical knowledge, but rather uses it to examine critically what can be certain historically. In each of the articles of his dictionary, he thus restricts his primary remarks in correcting historical errors of the subject in question.⁶ It can thus be seen that Bayle's positivism led

¹Collingwood, The Idea of History (Oxford: University Press, 1962), p. 60.

²Cassirer, p. 202.

³Pierre Bayle, "A Proposal for a Critical Dictionary," A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical, trans. J. P. Bernard, et al. (London: James Bettenham, 1741), X, 388.

⁴Ibid., p. 383. ⁵Ibid., p. 378. ⁶Ibid., p. 379.

him to search for the facts of history for their own sake and that he was not so much interested in their "meanings."

Bayle thus rejected the Cartesian anti-historical influence. He asserts that historical study can lead to a greater type of certainty than mathematical study. He writes:

It may, perhaps, be observed that those things, which seem the most abstract and fruitless in the Mathematics, are productive, at least, of the following advantage, that they lead us to the discovery of truths which cannot be doubted of; whereas, historical enquiries, and researches into the actions of men, leave us always in the dark, and ever furnish occasions for fresh contests. But how imprudent is it to touch this string! I assert that historical truths may be carried on to a more undoubted degree of certainty, than what geometrical truths are brought to, provide we consider these two kinds of truth according to the species of certainty which is peculiar to them.¹

What Bayle is arguing is that geometric truths may not exist outside the mind, while historical facts can be ascertained with greater certainty insofar as they exist externally to what the mind merely thinks. Bayle writes: "Thus it is more certain metaphysically, that Cicero has existed out of the understanding of any other man, than it is certain that the object of the Mathematics exists out of our understanding."²

From what has been pointed out concerning Bayle's critical approach to history, it can be seen that the Cartesian criticism of history inevitably led to historical criticism. While Descartes elevated the axiomatic truths of reason, Bayle likewise was devoted to truth in terms of historical facts. Bayle describes his devotion to truth this way:

All such as are acquainted with the laws of history, will own, that an historian, who will discharge his duty with fidelity, ought to divest himself of the spirit of flattery and of slander, and put himself as far as he is able in the condition of a Stoic, who is not actuated by any passion. Insensible to all other things he

¹Ibid., p. 386. ²Ibid., p. 387.

ought to be attentive to nothing but the interests of the truth, and to this he ought to sacrifice the resentment of an injury, the remembrance of a benefit received, and even the love of his country. He ought to forget that he is of a certain country, was brought up in a certain communion, that he owes his fortune to certain persons, and that certain persons are his relations or friends. An historian, as such, is like Melchisedec, without father, mother, or pedigree. Should he be asked, What countryman are you? he must answer, I am neither a Frenchman, a German, an Englishman, nor a Spaniard, etc. I am an inhabitant of the world; I am not in the service of the Emperor, nor of the King of France, but only in that of truth; she only is my Queen, and to her only I took an oath to be faithful.¹

It can thus be seen that Bayle's goal was to release history from all authoritarianism and to put historical studies on an entirely independent basis. In this respect, Cassirer points out: "Bayle accomplished scarcely less for history than Galileo did for natural science. . . . It is he who carries out the 'Copernican revolution' in the realm of historical science."²

C. Spinoza: Reason and History

Another Cartesian thinker, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), became the founder of modern biblical criticism with his publication of Theologico-Political Treatise in 1670.³ For Spinoza, pure being is the source of absolute certainty, while the temporal exists in becoming and thus is relative. Since the philosopher must rise above the temporal world in order to ascertain absolute certainty, this could only have negative consequences for the biblical claim to absolute validity, for it is both subject to historical development and contains historical material.⁴ This can be seen when Spinoza differentiates sharply between what is self-evident knowledge and what is experiential knowledge. He writes:

¹"Usson," Remark F, A General Dictionary . . ., X, 69, cited also by Cassirer with a different wording, pp. 208-209.

²Cassirer, p. 207. ³Ibid., pp. 185-186. ⁴Ibid., p. 185.

If anyone wishes to persuade his fellows for or against anything which is not self-evident, he must deduce his contention from their admissions, and convince them either by experience or by ratiocination; either by appealing to facts of natural experience, or to self-evident intellectual axioms. Now unless the experience be of such a kind as to be clearly and distinctly understood, though it may convince a man, it will not have the same effect on his mind and disperse the clouds of his doubt so completely as when the doctrine taught is deduced entirely from intellectual axioms--that is, by the mere power of the understanding and logical order, and this is especially the case in spiritual matters which have nothing to do with the senses.¹

This leads him to say that conclusions reached through the deductions of general truths a priori make use of extensive arguments. This means that the intellectual effort required for such deductions causes most men to prefer to learn through experience "rather than deduce their conclusion from a few axioms, and set them out in logical order."² Thus, religion is for the majority of people, while philosophy is for the learned.³

In this way, it can be seen that for Spinoza the eternal truths of reason known through philosophical deduction are far superior to truths learned through experience. But, this does not mean that the Scriptures are irrelevant to most people. Quite the contrary, the Scriptures teach what is already known through the light of reason.⁴ This is to say that the Scriptures embody eternal truths through the use of allegories, legends, and parables.⁵ The chief speculative doctrine of the Bible is the existence of God and that He directs and governs the world. Though experience cannot "explain the nature of God, nor how He directs and sustains all things, it

¹"A Theologico-Political Treatise", The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza, translated with an introduction by R. H. M. Elwes (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883), I, 76-77.

²Ibid., p. 77. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 14. ⁵Ibid., p. 25.

can nevertheless teach and enlighten men sufficiently to impress obedience and devotion on their minds."¹ Thus, the philosopher may allow limited validity to its teachings, yet at the same time pointing out its subordinate position to philosophy with its axiomatic truths.

In this way, Spinoza says that the historical trustworthiness of the Bible is of no consequence to knowledge of God. He writes:

The truth of a historical narrative, however assured, cannot give us the knowledge nor consequently the love of God, for love of God springs from knowledge of Him, and knowledge of Him should be derived from general ideas, in themselves certain and known, so that the truth of a historical narrative is very far from being a necessary requisite for our attaining our highest good.²

What Spinoza is pointing out is that philosophy and theology are entirely separate in their procedure to knowledge.³ In this connection, he identifies the "Word of God," not with the books of the Bible, but with the idea of God which was impressed a priori upon the prophets and the apostles, who in turn urged obedience to God.⁴ It is this obedience to God that constitutes faith and piety, and it is not contrary to reason.⁵ This means theology is not dogma, but precepts and rules of life.⁶ Thus, theology exercises a necessary and practical task for the majority of people, but it is restricted in that it does not teach philosophy, i.e., its teaching comes from experience rather than the self-evident and distinct ideas of reason. Nevertheless, if one will strip away the historical framework of the teachings of the Bible, Spinoza thinks that theology and philosophy will agree. He writes:

Now, as in the whole course of my investigation I found nothing taught expressly by Scripture, which does not agree with our

¹Ibid., p. 78. ²Ibid., p. 61. ³Ibid., p. 10. ⁴Ibid., p. 9.

⁵Ibid., p. 195. ⁶Ibid.

understanding, or which is repugnant thereto, and as I saw that the prophets taught nothing, which is not very simple and easily to be grasped by all, and further, that they clothed their teaching in the style, and confirmed it with the reasons, which would most deeply move the mind of the masses to devotion towards God, I became thoroughly convinced, that the Bible leaves reason absolutely free, that it has nothing in common with philosophy, in fact, that Revelation and Philosophy stand on totally different footings.¹

It follows from this divorce of revelation and philosophy, historical knowledge and philosophical knowledge, that the Scriptures only have a practical value. Spinoza writes: "The sphere of reason is, as we have said, truth and wisdom; the sphere of theology is piety and obedience."²

This distinction between truth and piety, wisdom and obedience, with truth and wisdom relating to philosophy and piety and obedience relating to theology, is not altogether unlike the modern theological distinction between faith-knowledge, inner history--outer history, etc. (which shall be dealt with in Part Two). This trend of modern theology seems to place emphasis upon the decision of faith at the expense of knowing whether or not the basis of faith is grounded in historical reality. Likewise, Spinoza's definition of the "Word of God" as being the unmediated idea of God to the prophets and apostles which idea prompts to obedience is not unlike the neo-orthodox view of revelation with its emphasis upon the Word of God being the unmediated confrontation of God and man which confrontation calls for an act of obedience.

It can thus be seen that the first one to provide a systematic and objective foundation for biblical criticism³ (whose method is not dissimilar

¹Ibid., p. 9. ²Ibid., p. 194. ³Cassirer, p. 184.

to our own procedure today)¹ permitted the Cartesian dualism to vitiate the historical character of revelation.

D. Richard Simon: Faith vs. Historical Certainty

Nicole Malebranche, another Cartesian philosopher, inspired Richard Simon, a member of the Congregation of the Oratory, to conduct a critical study of the development of the books of the Bible.² This was the first time that such a study had been conducted.³ In his work, A Critical History of the Old Testament (1678), he set forth a critical study of the original texts along with the various translations. Simon's indirect purpose for this critical analysis of the biblical books was to enhance the authority of the Roman Catholic Church which had been challenged by the Protestant Reformation. He attempted to argue that the Bible alone is no sure protection against doubt, but needs to be supported by the tradition and the authority of the Church.⁴ Thus, the Protestant's total reliance upon the Bible was thought to be inadmissible.

Some of the presuppositions of this critical study are as follows.

(1) The original texts of the Bible were fully and equally inspired. He

¹Robert M. Grant, A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 149. That Spinoza's method is similar to ours today can be seen with the following four principles: (1) the original language should be known; (2) an analysis of each book should be thoroughly made according to its content, with special attention being given to obscure or contradictory passages; (3) a thorough historical background study of each author and book should be made--who wrote it, how did it become a part of the canon, etc.; (4) the interpretation must take into full account the intention of the author, so that our study will be objective and without the interference of our opinions. The Chief Works of Spinoza, I, 100-103.

²Cassirer, p. 184. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.

objects to a certain "Divine" who believed the Bible was inspired only in matters of faith.¹ (2) The original authors abbreviated those larger acts of the people which were the most instructive.² (3) The original authors did not always intend to give an exact chronological order of things, for they were not merely writing factual and chronological history. Rather, they were writing theological history, though the matters of detail were likewise accurate.³ (4) Biblical books were sometimes written by authors of a later age who compiled the book from the public records. Nevertheless, these authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit.⁴ (5) In this way, Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch as we have it, though the original composition was extracted from Moses' public records.⁵ (6) The original texts have undergone serious changes with the result that our present texts are replete with errors.⁶ (7) Consequently, the authority of the Roman Catholic Church is needed to provide faith with its foundation.

Simon writes:

Instead of believing with the Protestants that the shortest and most certain way of deciding the questions of Faith is to consult the Holy Scriptures, we shall on the contrary find in this Work that if we join not Tradition with the Scripture, we can hardly affirm any thing for certain in Religion.⁷

It can thus be seen from the uncertainty which Simon thinks attaches to the Scripture (because of its historical development) that the certainty of faith is independent of historical research. This is to say that nothing "certain in Religion" can be established from historical study. Rather, the certainty of faith finds its support in the authority of the

¹Richard Simon, A Critical History of the Old Testament, translator unknown (London: Walter David, 1682), p. iv.

²Ibid., p. vii. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. iv. ⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. viii. ⁷Ibid., p. ix.

Church. In this way, the Cartesian methodological doubt was used to support the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.¹

E. Vico: A Metaphysic of the Human Race

Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), an Italian philosopher, made a deliberate attempt to counteract the anti-historical character of Cartesian rationalism.² He blames the Cartesian influence for the "great and sudden revolution in literary affairs in Naples" in which the literary appreciation for the past was neglected in favor of the sole study of metaphysics and the natural sciences.³ He complains of Descartes' Meditations and On Method in which Vico says that Descartes discourages "the study of languages, orators, historians and poets, and by setting up only his metaphysics, physics and mathematics, reduces literature to the wisdom of the Arabs, who in all these three fields produced men of great learning."⁴

Vico proposes to restore the study of history to its proper position. In The Principles of a New Science of the Common Nature of Nations (1725), he sets forth a new critical method in which he says that he "discovers new historical principles of philosophy, and first of all metaphysics of the human race."⁵ Cassirer points out that this was the first systematic attempt to give a theory of knowledge along these lines.⁶

In establishing this new critical approach to the nature of the nations, Vico contends that this new metaphysic of the human race does not

¹Cassirer, p. 184. ²Cassirer, p. 209.

³The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico, trans. Max H. Fisch and Thomas G. Bergin (New York: Cornell University Press, 1944, p. 137.

⁴Ibid., pp. 137-138. ⁵Ibid., p. 167. ⁶Cassirer, p. 209.

repudiate the validity of Cartesian rationalism with its emphasis upon the "clear and distinct ideas" of reason. Rather, he rejects the one-sided use of rationalism. He distinguishes between philosophy and philology (historical data). He writes: "Philosophy contemplates reason, whence comes knowledge of the true; philology observes that of which human choice is author, whence comes consciousness of the certain."¹ This means that philosophy as such is knowledge of what is true and is derived from reason a priori. In this sense, philosophy is mediated knowledge which gives rise to reasoned truth. Philology is knowledge of human actions. It deals with what is immediately given in human consciousness and thus deals with what is made certain by the choice of the will.

Vico thus distinguishes between truth and certainty, intellect and will. This is further seen when he says: "Men who do not know what is true of things take care to hold fast to what is certain, so that, if they cannot satisfy their intellects by knowledge (scienza), their wills at least may rest on consciousness (coscienza)."²

By pointing out this distinction, Vico intends to show that philosophy and philology must be integrated in his new metaphysic of the human race. This means that the New Science is to go directly to the subject matter through the help of the philologists and philosophers.³ In this way, truth and certainty become one. This was the failure of the previous attempts of both the philosophers and the philologists, for they did not work together. He writes:

¹Vico, The New Science of Giambattista Vico, revised translation of the third edition (1744) by Thomas G. Bergin and Max H. Fisch (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 63.

²Ibid., pp. 62-63. ³Ibid., p. 100.

Philosophers failed by half in not giving certainty to their reasonings by appeal to the authority of the philologists, and likewise how the latter failed by half in not taking care to give their authority the sanction of truth by appeal to the reasoning of the philosophers. If they had done this they would have been more useful to their commonwealths and they would have anticipated us in conceiving this Science.¹

Vico delineates seven main principles of the new science. (1) Divine Providence is seen to be a universal belief both through the observed customs of even the most ancient nations as well as through the rational demonstration of the philosophers.² The development of the world begins with the first nations and their poetic theology (mythology), continues through the natural theology of the philosophers in their rational demonstration of the existence of God (the Greeks), thus preparing the way for revealed theology (Christianity).³ Thus, the new science is a "rational civil theology of divine providence."⁴ This is to say that both philology (a posteriori knowledge) and philosophy (a priori knowledge) serve as arguments for God's existence.

(2) The new science presupposes the principle of authority. First, there is divine authority (fear of the gods); second, there is human authority in the philosophical sense; i.e., the free use of the will; third, there is the authority of natural law.⁵

(3) There is the history of ideas as a further principle of the new science⁶ (this foreshadows Hegel).⁷ It is at this point that Vico draws a sharp distinction between "the world of civil society" and "the world of nature." The study of "the world of civil society" is the "queen of the sciences," for its subject matter consists of the thoughts of man's first

¹Ibid., p. 63. ²Ibid., pp. 97, 121, 170. ³Ibid., pp. 111-112.

⁴Ibid., p. 121. ⁵Ibid., pp. 121-122. ⁶Ibid., p. 123.

⁷Infra, p. 98.

beginnings down to the present day.¹ Since history is the history of ideas, history is one sure reality that man can know. This is to say that since this world of civil society was created by man, and since whatever is created by man originates in thought, then one certain truth is that man can know history. Vico writes:

But in the night of thick darkness enveloping the earliest antiquity, so remote from ourselves, there shines the eternal and never failing light of a truth beyond all question: that the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind. Whoever reflects on this cannot but marvel that the philosophers should have bent all their energies to the study of the world of nature, which, since God made it, He alone knows; and that they should have neglected the study of the world of nations, or civil world, which, since men had made it, men could come to know.²

He further says that when history is reported by one who also creates it nothing can be more certain.³ This means that thought and deed are indistinguishable, that a deed is what it is because of its concept, as Hegel would say.⁴ This is further seen when Vico says that even as thought and deed are the same with God, even so thought and deed are indistinguishable in man's contemplation of history. In this respect, Vico pursues an argument quite similar to Bayle's concerning the difference between mathematical and historical knowledge. Vico writes:

Now, as geometry, when it constructs the world of quantity out of its elements, or contemplates that world, is creating it for itself, just so does our Science [create for itself the world of nations], but with a reality greater by just so much as the institutions having to do with human affairs are more real than points, lines, surfaces, and figures are. And this very fact is an argument, O reader, that these proofs are of a kind divine and should give thee a divine pleasure, since in God knowledge and creation are one and the same thing.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 104. ²Ibid., p. 96. ³Ibid., p. 104.

⁴Infra, p. 81. ⁵The New Science, pp. 104-105. Cf. Supra, p. 18.

(4) The fourth principle is one of philosophical criticism in which judgments will be made on the basis of the history of ideas.¹

(5) The fifth principle is one of "an ideal eternal history traversed in time by the histories of all nations."² This means that every nation will follow the same pattern "in its rise, development, maturity, decline, and fall."³ This pattern forms a triadic movement--the age of the gods, the age of the heroes, and the age of men.⁴ This triadic movement is pursued in eleven developments. This means there will be three kinds of natures, three kinds of customs, three kinds of natural law, three kinds of governments, three kinds of languages, three kinds of linguistic characters, three kinds of jurisprudence, three kinds of authority, three kinds of reason, three kinds of judgments, and three kinds of sects of time.⁵ For example, there are three kinds of natural law corresponding to the three ages of the gods, the heroes, and men. The first kind of natural law was the divine law whereby men lived in fear of the law of the gods. The second was a heroic law whereby men were held in control by force. The third was "the human law dictated by fully developed human reason."⁶

(6) Vico further lifts out the principle of natural law as one of the main aspects of the new science.⁷ This law is a natural law, for it "proceeds with the greatest equality and constancy through the three ages."⁸ This means that the eleven triadic divisions are "all embraced by one general unity."⁹ This one general unity is a unity of a "provident divinity,"¹⁰

¹Ibid., p. 123. ²Ibid., p. 124. ³Ibid., p. 79. ⁴Ibid., p. 335.

⁵Ibid., pp. 335-362. ⁶Ibid., p. 338. ⁷Ibid., pp. 124f.

⁸Ibid., p. 20. ⁹Ibid., p. 335. ¹⁰Ibid.

who is "the unity of spirit that informs and gives life to this world of nations."¹ Though this development of the nations is called a providential development, it nevertheless is characterized by the naturalness of its movement. It is "a constant and uninterrupted order of causes and effects present in every nation."² The naturalness of this providential law can be seen in the fact it corresponds to the needs and usefulness of human nature.³

(7) Finally, the new science is based on the principle of universal history. This means that divine providence as the general unity which embraces all the eleven lesser triadic unities is working out in an orderly and natural way the history of all nations. This means that the whole of humanity demonstrates in its history a theodicy.⁴ Vico puts it this way:

Our new Science must therefore be a demonstration, so to speak, of what providence has wrought in history, for it must be a history of the institutions by which, without human discernment or counsel, and often against the designs of men, providence has ordered this great city of the human race. For though this world has been created in time and particular, the institutions established therein by providence are universal and eternal.⁵

While Descartes depreciated the study of history, Vico seemed to restore it to a rightful position with his emphasis upon the unity of thought and deed, that a thing is what it is because of its concept. This is to say that history can be known as it really is, for it is a reality created by man. However, if Descartes depreciated history, Vico naturalized it. This can be seen in the way that Vico defined the historic process in terms of a rational civil theology of providence through which the world is seen to follow a rigid prescribed course of the eleven triadic divisions. This natural providential movement of the world toward human freedom is not unlike Hegel's

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 63. ⁴Cf. Hegel, Infra, p. 90.

⁵New Science, p. 102.

Idea (Reason) which is a secularized form of providence and which is coming to the consciousness of freedom through a dialectic movement.¹ Also, Vico's eleven triadic categories which are embraced by the one general unity of providence is remarkably similar to Hegel's Absolute Idea which embraces all the lesser categories of reality.²

Croce points out that Vico's principle of the natural development of nations, especially in regard to the rise of myths and religion, was anti-religious by implication, even though Vico himself was a devout Catholic.³ In this respect, Croce points out that Vico adumbrated many of the ideas of Hegel. He writes: "It almost seems as if the soul of the Italian Catholic philosopher had migrated into the German thinker, reappearing in him at the distance of a century, more mature and more self-conscious."⁴

Vico made a decisive step toward providing a valid basis for historical knowledge in that history can be known as it really is since history is a reality created by man and exists in the form of thought; on the other hand, his rational civil theology of providence so naturalized historical reality that history seemed to be defined exclusively in anthropological terms. This in effect eliminated the transcendent reality of God in the world, i.e., history became totally a human reality.

F. Leibniz: The Concept of Historical Probability

G. W. Leibniz (1646-1716) brought into a more systematic formulation the Cartesian dualism of the distinct and clear ideas of reason and the

¹Benedetto Croce, What Is Living and What Is Dead of The Philosophy of Hegel, trans. Douglas Ainslie (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1915), pp. 72-73. Cf. Infra, pp. 97f.

²Infra, p. 82.

³Croce, p. 72.

⁴Ibid., p. 77.

contingent facts of experience.¹ He points out that the primary function of reason in metaphysics is making logical connections of truths.² In this respect, Langley points out that Leibniz speaks of reason not in terms of the *Voûs* of Plato and Aristotle, i.e., as the faculty of ideas and principles. Rather, reason for Leibniz is *Logos*, the power to connect truths and draw conclusions.³

Leibniz distinguishes between reason and experience. Pure reason relates to truths which are independent of sense experience. These truths of pure reason are "called the 'Eternal Verities', which are altogether necessary, so that the opposite implies contradiction. Such are the truths whose necessity is logical, metaphysical or geometrical, which one cannot deny without being led into absurdities."⁴ However, Leibniz does not distinguish between reason and experience in any absolute sense. In contrast to Descartes, he does not hold the view that innate ideas of reason exist as such, but rather they exist as potentialities which became actualities on the basis of experience. This is to say, eternal truths of reason cannot be read off in the soul as in a book, but rather the senses furnish the occasion for the discovery of these innate ideas.⁵ Thus, experience is the

¹Cf. Niels Thulstrup, "Commentator's Introduction" in Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, trans. David F. Swenson and Niels Thulstrup (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. xlvi-xlvii. Cf. Cassirer, pp. 192f.

²Leibniz, Theodicy, ed. with an intro. by Austin Farrer, trans. E. M. Huggard (London: Routledge & Kegan, Ltd., 1951), pp. 73f. Cf. Theodicy, p. 74.

³Langley's editorial note in Leibniz, New Essays Concerning Human Understanding, trans. Alfred Gideon Langley (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1896), p. 555n. Cited hereafter as New Essays.

⁴Theodicy, p. 74. ⁵New Essays, p. 44.

necessary occasion for the awakening of these ideas.¹ Here it can be seen that Leibniz will not allow for a body-mind dualism.²

In addition to these necessary truths of reason are the truths of fact. But, these truths are "verified" through the analysis of reason which perceives "the fitness of things."³ This means that sense-data are given an objective existence outside our consciousness (i.e., what we perceive as external objects are not dreams)⁴, and the truths of these facts can be known because reason perceives a priori "the connection of phenomena."⁵ However, the conclusions which reason draws from the analysis of things are contingent. This is to say that the truths of experience cannot be demonstrated to be necessary as the truths of pure reason are as, for example, in geometry. Leibniz is not doubting the objectivity of our experiences. Rather, he is calling attention to the tentative conclusions which we infer from our experiences. Thus, we conclude from our experiences of nature that there are laws of nature. But, these laws do not contain a demonstration of geometrical necessity. They are known "by consideration of the fitness of things."⁶

This fitness of things has also its rules and reasons, but it is the free choice of God, and not a geometrical necessity, which causes preference for what is fitting and brings it into existence. Thus one may say that physical necessity is founded on moral necessity, that is, on the wise one's choice which is distinguished from geometrical necessity.⁷

Leibniz shows in this way that the laws of nature are not mechanically necessitated, but are contingent and subject to the creative act of God.

¹Ibid., p. 110. ²Ibid., pp. 117-118.

³Ibid., pp. 422; Theodicy, p. 74. ⁴New Essays, p. 421.

⁵Ibid., pp. 422, 445. ⁶Theodicy, p. 74. ⁷Ibid.

This can be seen when he writes: "It is therefore true that God gave such laws not without reason, for he chooses nothing from caprice and as though by chance or in pure indifference; but the general reasons of good and of order, which have prompted him to the choice, may be overcome in some cases by stronger reasons of a superior order."¹

What is a truth of pure reason is thus necessary, and its opposite is impossible. What is a truth of fact is contingent, and its opposite is possible.² Both of these kinds of truths are subject to demonstration. This means that they must be shown to be true. This is to say that they are a reasoned knowledge, i.e., reason perceives the connection of truths and draws inferences from what is given, thus reaching a reasoned conclusion.³ The reasoned truths of fact are governed by the law of sufficient reason,⁴ while the necessary truths of reason are governed by the principle of contradiction, e.g., a thing cannot be and be at the same time.⁵

Leibniz has Philalethes (who represents Locke's An Essay concerning Human Understanding) to distinguish three kinds of knowledge. First, there is intuitive knowledge, which is knowledge of two ideas which are immediately known by themselves so that reasoning is not needed. Leibniz calls this intuitive knowledge--primitive truths of reason or fact.⁶ Second, there is demonstrative (or, reasoned) knowledge, where the connection of ideas is seen to exist necessarily by means of proofs. i.e., through other intervening ideas. Each of the stages of proofs in this demonstration is intuitive

¹Ibid. ²New Essays, p. 404. ³Ibid., p. 556.

⁴The Philosophical Works of Leibniz, trans. George Martin Duncan (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor, Publishers, 1890), p. 222.

⁵New Essays, pp. 404f. ⁶Ibid., pp. 404, 410.

knowledge.¹ Each of the truths of reasoned knowledge is either logical, metaphysical, or geometrical, and thus they are necessary.² Third, there is sensitive knowledge. This is knowledge that things really exist outside the mere thinking of them. While this knowledge may not be known with the absolute certainty that adheres to intuitive and reasoned knowledge, yet its certainty stands above mere probability.³ It is the "connection of phenomena" in space-time that guarantees the reality of things outside the mind.⁴ To deny the certainty of sensitive knowledge is to deny the possibility of any knowledge at all. Leibniz has Philalethes (representing Locke) to say: "For I do not believe that any one can seriously be so sceptical as to be uncertain of the existence of things which he sees and feels. At least, he who can carry his doubts so far will never have any controversy with me, since he can never be certain that I say anything contrary to his opinion."⁵

In addition to intuitive knowledge, demonstrative knowledge, sensitive knowledge, Leibniz speaks of a fourth kind of knowledge--knowledge which relates to what is probable.⁶ Leibniz also calls this knowledge "opinion" in the best sense of the word.⁷ Such knowledge is the truths of experience, especially those truths derived from a study of history. These truths of experience likewise can be called truths of reason, since the truths of experience consist in showing the connection that exists among empirical facts through reasoning.⁸ The difference between what Leibniz usually calls

¹Ibid., p. 411. ²Ibid., pp. 411-414; Theodicy, p. 74.

³New Essays, pp. 417, 419. ⁴Ibid., pp. 422, 511f.

⁵Ibid., p. 511. ⁶Ibid., p. 420. ⁷Ibid., p. 417.

⁸Theodicy, p. 74.

truths of reason and truths of fact is primarily the difference between what is absolutely necessary and what is contingent. The truths of fact are contingent, for whatever conclusions are drawn from what is observed are tentative. This is to say that these conclusions are not necessary conclusions as it is with the conclusions of mathematical, metaphysical, or logical reasoning. It can be seen from this distinction between what is necessary and what is contingent that Leibniz is not suggesting that our knowledge of the external world is uncertain. He makes it quite clear that both "primitive truths of reason" and "primitive truths of fact" are intuitive knowledge. This is to say that a thing is what it is, that A is A. It needs no proof, for it is immediately known for what it is.¹ Such a primitive truth of fact would be sensitive knowledge. For example, when I perceive an object, I immediately know that this is an object and that I am not dreaming.²

However, the conclusions which are drawn from the concatenation of ideas derived from intuitive knowledge are either necessary or probable. In this respect, Leibniz shows that the truths of reason are of two kinds: (1) "Eternal Verities" and (2) "positive truths."³ The former refers to what he usually calls the truths of reason and the latter, to truths of facts. The truths of fact refer to the laws of nature. This is to say that we learn that nature behaves in a certain way through experience, and we reason from our experience that nature thus behaves in a orderly fashion by the choice of God. We cannot say that nature behaves a certain way through geometrical necessity. This is to say that the laws of nature are contingent upon the choice of God, and thus any conclusions we infer from our experience of nature

¹New Essays, p. 404-410. ²Ibid., pp. 410, 421.

³Theodicy, p. 74.

are likewise contingent. Thus, the truths of pure reason are necessary, while the truths (conclusions) of facts are contingent. In this way, it can be seen that Leibniz has sought to provide a valid basis for the historical claims of Christian faith. Since the conclusions drawn concerning facts of nature are contingent and not necessary, one cannot "disprove" the truths of faith. Leibniz writes: "If the objection is not conclusive, it can only form a probable argument, which has no force against faith, since it is agreed that the Mysteries of religion are contrary to appearance."¹

It can further be seen that degrading the validity of truths of facts is not in any way the intention of Leibniz. Rather, he has sought to distinguish properly among the degrees of knowledge. And, when he speaks of the contingency of truths of facts, he is not resorting to skepticism. Neither is he putting a higher value on the necessary truths of reason. He shows that the necessary truths of reason, in fact, are only conditional: "As regards eternal truths, it must be observed that at bottom they are all conditional and say in effect, such a thing posited, such another thing is."² Henry Chadwick has suggested that "truths of reason belong to a higher order and valuation than mere truths of fact" for Leibniz.³ However, this hardly seems to be the intention of Leibniz. It would be difficult to see how Leibniz could place a higher valuation on truths which are so conditional as the truths of pure reason.

Leibniz thus does not intend to depreciate the truths of experience

¹Ibid., p. 75.

²The Philosophical Works of Leibniz, p. 359. Cf. New Essays, pp. 515f.

³Lessing's Theological Writings, translated with an introductory essay by Henry Chadwick (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1956), p. 30.

when he says that they are only contingent, while the truths of pure reason are necessary. He points out that to doubt something simply because it does not bear the necessary demonstration of mathematical proof is "madness." What is important for truths of experience is that they be established with sufficient reason.¹ Thus, truths of experience can be considered sufficiently based when they stand in a positive relationship to what is practical.

To doubt seriously is to doubt in relation to the practical, and we might take certainty as a knowledge of truth which we cannot doubt in relation to the practical without madness; and sometimes we take it still more generally, and apply it to cases where we could not doubt without deserving to be severely blamed. But evidence would be a luminous certainty, i.e. where we do not doubt because of the connection we see between ideas. According to this definition of certainty, we are certain that Constantinople is in the world, that Constantine, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar lived. It is true that some peasant of Ardennes might justly doubt about these, for lack of information; but a man of letters and of the world could not do so without great derangement of mind.²

Insofar as truths of facts are concerned, Leibniz (following Locke) points out the degrees of probability that adheres to them.³ (1) When a particular fact conforms with what we repeatedly and constantly observe, and it conforms likewise with the testimony of others, then this particular fact may be considered certain knowledge. This is a reasoned knowledge of the highest degree of probability; e.g., that fire warms, that a rock sinks in water. Thus, this belief prompts assurance. (2) When historians report that an individual preferred his own selfish interests to that of the public interests, then these histories are met with confidence, since we observe this to be the custom of the majority of men. (3) If a fact is reported by those of highest integrity (that is, those whom we do not suspect), and if

¹The Philosophical Works of Leibniz, p. 222. ²New Essays, p. 513.

³Ibid., pp. 537-538.

this fact has nothing for or against its validity insofar as our observations are concerned, then it may be received with a firm belief. For example, that Julius Caesar lived can be firmly believed. (4) If a reported fact is contrary to what we usually experience, or if the fact is reported with conflicting testimonies among historians, then the degrees of probability will vary, ranging from belief, conjecture, doubt, uncertainty, to distrust. In this case, exactness is demanded so that a right judgment can be formed. This means we must "proportion our assent to the degrees of probability."¹

Leibniz further illustrates the problem of ascertaining the varying degrees of probable knowledge in connection with the judicial process of law.² There is "notoriety," which demands no proof. There are "complete" proofs upon which sentences of conviction are based, but the degrees of "complete" proofs required for a conviction will themselves be governed by the nature of the offense, e.g., in criminal cases "complete" proofs have to be more comprehensive than in civil cases. Thus, some proofs more than "complete" will be demanded in severe cases of criminal trials. There are also "presumptions" which may serve as sufficient ground for a conviction. Thus, the juriconsults show that proofs in regard to probable knowledge may vary from notoreity, to more than half complete proofs to less than half complete, presumptions which hold good unless the contrary is proved, finally down to varying degrees of conjectures and indices. What Leibniz is thus calling for is a "new kind of logic"³ which would come to terms with the problem of the probabilities of knowledge.

In thus delineating the varying degrees of probabilities of knowledge, Leibniz shows a high regard for historical knowledge, especially in the way

¹Ibid., p. 538. ²Ibid., pp. 538f. ³Ibid., p. 541.

that he points out the need for "historical criticism." Not only is historical criticism a legitimate study for Leibniz, but it is a necessary study for lending support to the foundation of revelation.¹ In this respect, he says that faith finds its justification "upon the experience of those who have seen the miracles whereon revelation is founded, and upon the trustworthy tradition which has handed them down to us, whether through the Scriptures or by the account of those who have preserved them."² Just as it is the credibility we ascribe to those accounts concerning what others have experienced that gives rise to assent,³ even so faith (as Philalethes puts it) "is a firm assent, and assent, regulated as it should be, can only be given upon good reasons."⁴ This leads Philalethes to say (with Leibniz's strongest approval): "He who believes without any reason for believing may be in love with his fancies."⁵ Leibniz takes further into account "the inward motion of the Holy Spirit," insofar as the truth of Holy Scripture is concerned.⁶

It is thus seen that Leibniz has not bifurcated the necessary truths of reason and the contingent truths of reason (or, truths of fact) in order to gain room for the truths of faith. He is quite emphatic that faith is not contrary to the truths of reason. In this respect, he says that reason cannot deceive, i.e., reason defined in terms of linking together intuitive knowledge. On the other hand, our senses and understanding may be misled, but not reason. Whatever is seen to be contrary to reason must be acknowledged as false.⁷ In this way, the truths of reason are distinguished from the truths of facts. Truths of reason are necessary; truths of facts are

¹Ibid., p. 547. ²Theodicy, p. 74. ³Ibid.

⁴New Essays, p. 580. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Theodicy, p. 74.

⁷Ibid., pp. 89, 110.

contingent.

For I observed at the beginning that by REASON here I do not mean the opinions and discourses of men, nor even the habit they have formed of judging things according to the usual course of Nature/truths of facts/, but rather the inviolable linking together of truths.¹

Leibniz complains that many are willing "to grant that the Holy Trinity is contrary to that great principle which states that two things which are the same as a third are also the same as each other: that is to say, if A is the same as B, and if C is the same as B, then A and C must also be the same as each other."² If this basic principle of logic is rejected in favor of faith, then all basis for reasoning with certainty is destroyed.

Thus when one says that the Father is God, that the Son is God and that the Holy Spirit is God, and that nevertheless there is only one God, although these three Persons differ from one another, one must consider that this word God has not the same sense at the beginning as at the end of this statement. Indeed it signifies now the Divine Substance and now a Person of the Godhead.³

Leibniz brings Pierre Bayle into sharp criticism at this point for confusing the relationship of faith and reason. Under the influence of the Cartesian dualism of the distinct ideas of reason and the empirical facts of the world, Bayle failed to correlate adequately the relationship of faith and reason. Austin Farrer points this out:

So far as he had a philosophical opinion, he was a Cartesian; in theology he was an orthodox Calvinist. He could not reconcile his theology with his Cartesianism and he did not try to. He made a merit of the oppositions of faith to reason and reason to itself, so that he could throw himself upon a meritorious and voluntary faith.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 88. ²Ibid., p. 87. ³Ibid., pp. 87-88.

⁴"Editor's Introduction," Theodicy, p. 35.

Leibniz will not have this opposition of faith and reason. He writes:

M. Bayle appears to have taken the matter quite otherwise: he declares himself against reason, when he might have been content to censure its abuse. He quotes the words of Cotta in Cicero, where he goes so far as to say that if reason were a gift of the gods providence would be to blame for having given it, since it tends to our harm. M. Bayle also thinks that human reason is a source of destruction and not of edification (Historical and Critical Dictionary, p. 2026, col. 2), that it is a runner who knows not where to stop, and who, like another Penelope, herself destroys her own work.¹

Instead of setting forth an opposition between faith and reason, Leibniz distinguishes between what is above reason and what is contrary to reason. "What is contrary to reason is contrary to the absolutely certain and inevitable truths; and what is above reason is in opposition only to what one is wont to experience or to understand."² Thus, the distinction between truths of reason and truths of faith serve the purpose of pointing out that faith is in perfect harmony with the necessary truths of reason, while at the same time the contingent truths of facts have "no force against faith," for these truths of facts are inconclusive and probable.³ This is to say that the truths of facts are contingent upon the choice of God, and while the truths of facts substantiate the orderly working of nature, yet these laws "may be overcome in some cases by stronger reasons of a superior order."⁴

Thus, the truths of faith stand on a higher level than the truths of facts (that is, faith sees what is contrary to appearance, but not to facts as such). Further, faith does not contradict the necessary truths of reason.

¹Theodicy, p. 99. ²Ibid., p. 88. ³Ibid., p. 75.

⁴Ibid., p. 74.

This leads Leibniz to point out that faith is neither contrary to the truths of reason nor the truths of facts. However, faith cannot be fully explained, but it can be sufficiently apprehended by the understanding so that our will may give assent to its truth. Leibniz writes:

But one must not always demand what I call 'adequate notions', involving nothing that is not explained, since even perceptible qualities, like heat, light, sweetness, cannot give us such notions. Thus we agreed that Mysteries should receive an explanation, but this explanation is imperfect. It suffices for us to have some analogical understanding of a Mystery such as the Trinity and the Incarnation, to the end that in accepting them we pronounce not words altogether devoid of meaning: but it is not necessary that the explanation go as far as we would wish, that is, to the extent of comprehension and to the how.¹

Thus, the necessary presupposition of faith is not the how it is, but what it is. This means that faith must be substantiated by the following: (1) The credibility of the Scriptures must be established on the basis of historical criticism;² (2) The truths of faith must be seen to be in perfect harmony with the necessary truths of reason (that is, the articles of faith should be as exact as the proofs of mathematics);³ (3) there is the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit who persuades and prompts one to faith and charity.⁴

Finally, it can be seen that Leibniz shows that the faculty of reason is not to be disparaged, especially since it is a gift of God as well as faith.⁵ In this respect, he finds the harmony of faith with reason to be a basis for "the motives of credibility."⁶ This means that reason shows that faith is sufficiently based and is thus credible.

¹Ibid., p. 103. ²Ibid., p. 74; New Essays, p. 547.

³Theodicy, p. 87. ⁴Ibid., p. 74. ⁵Ibid., p. 91

⁶Ibid., pp. 76, 91; New Essays, p. 579.

G. Lessing: The Fallacy of Misplaced Necessity

Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), who was largely influenced through the rationalism of Spinoza and Leibniz, transposed the philosophical distinctions of reality (i.e., the truths of reason and the truths of facts) into a strictly theological context.¹ The critical question which Cartesian rationalism had posed for theology is--how can religious certainty be attained with the polarization of the temporal and the eternal? This polarization is especially seen in Spinoza whose bifurcation of reality into eternal truths and historical facts led to his rejection of the decisive significance of history for revelation. Likewise, Lessing refused to allow history to be of any decisive significance for eternal salvation, for history is the realm of the mere probable and uncertain. He writes:

We all believe that an Alexander lived who in a short time conquered almost all Asia. But who, on the basis of this belief, would risk anything of great, permanent worth, the loss of which would be irreparable? Who, in consequence of this belief, would forswear for ever all knowledge that conflicted with this belief? Certainly not I. Now I have no objection to raise against Alexander and his victory: but it might still be possible that the story was founded on a mere poem of Choerilus just as the ten-year siege of Troy depends on no better authority than Homer's poetry.²

Thus, Lessing writes: "Accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason."³ In this way, Lessing clearly bifurcates reason and history. This is to say that he refuses to believe the most probable of all historical events, if it should go against what he knows

¹Cassirer, pp. 190-194. Cf. Thulstrup in Philosophical Fragments, p. xlix.

²Lessing's Theological Writings, p. 54.

³Ibid., p. 53.

can be from his own experience. If all historical evidence supports the statement that Jesus was raised from the dead, he still cannot find this a convincing argument against what reason says can and cannot happen according to what he himself has experienced. Since historical truths and truths of reason are different kinds of truth in that the former cannot be verified,¹ Lessing finds it impossible to accept historical events as possessing absolute significance for faith.

But to jump with that historical truth to a quite different class of truths, and to demand of me that I should form all my metaphysical and moral ideas accordingly; to expect me to alter all my fundamental ideas of the nature of the Godhead because I cannot set any credible testimony against the resurrection of Christ: if that is not a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*, then I do not know what Aristotle meant by this phrase.²

It is this bifurcation of historical knowledge and reasoned knowledge that "is the ugly, broad ditch which I cannot get across, however often and however earnestly I have tried to make the leap."³ This leads him to say: "If anyone can help me over it, let him do it, I beg him, I adjure him. He will deserve a divine reward from me."⁴ Cassirer shows how Lessing sought to provide his own solution.

But neither the theology nor the systematic metaphysics of the eighteenth century contained a principle by virtue of which Lessing's question could really be answered and his demand truly satisfied... . In his Education of Humanity Lessing created a new synthesis of the historical and the rational. The historical is no longer opposed to the rational; it is rather the way to the realization of the rational and the real, indeed the only possible place of its fulfillment.⁵

In the Education of the Human Race, Lessing defines revelation in terms of the growth of man's perfection. He writes: "Education is revelation

¹Ibid., pp. 51, 53. ²Ibid., p. 54. ³Ibid., p. 55. ⁴Ibid.

⁵Cassirer, p. 194.

coming to the individual man; and revelation is education which has come, and is still coming, to the human race."¹ But, this education is nothing which man could not get for himself from within himself. He says: "Revelation gives nothing to the human race which human reason could not arrive at on its own."²

The growth of this "education" is traced from the time of polytheism, through the Hebrews and the Greeks, up to the Christian religion. This development is further seen as the movement from revealed truths to truths of reason. He puts it this way: "The development of revealed truths into truths of reason, is absolutely necessary, if the human race is to be assisted by them. When they were revealed they were certainly not truths of reason, but they were revealed in order to become such."³ It can be seen from this "demythologizing" of revealed truths into natural religion⁴ through the education of mankind in history that Lessing's Education of the Human Race is a theodicy of history.⁵

It can further be seen that this essay on the Education of the Human Race shows certain similarities both to Spinoza and Leibniz. Spinoza

¹Lessing's Theological Writings, p. 83. Cf. p. 96.

²Ibid., p. 83. ³Ibid., p. 95.

⁴Lessing says that all revealed (or, positive) religions are equally true and equally false. They are "equally true: insofar as it has everywhere been necessary to come to an agreement over various things in order to get uniformity and unity in public religion." They are "equally false: in that the matters on which agreement is reached not only stand beside what is essential but also weaken and supplant it." This leads him to say: "The best revealed or positive religion is that which contains the fewest conventional additions to natural religion, and least hinders the good effects of natural religion," ibid., p. 105.

⁵Cassirer, p. 192.

maintained: (1) "that the truth of a historical narrative is very far from being a necessary requisite for our attaining our highest good,"¹ even as Lessing says that historical facts, no matter how certain, cannot serve as the basis for belief, for no one "would risk anything of great, permanent worth, the loss of which would be irreparable," upon historical facts;² (2) that the essential teachings of Scripture are in perfect harmony with the eternal truths of reason,³ even as Lessing maintains that revealed truths must be turned into truths of reason (which establishes natural religion);⁴ (3) that theology teaches eternal truth "in the style, . . . which would most deeply move the mind of the masses to devotion to God,"⁵ which teaching is easy to comprehend, and that philosophy reaches its conclusions through the deductions of general truths a priori,⁶ while Lessing maintains that positive religions clothed abstract truths in historical allegories, for this made it possible for the education of the human race to take place sooner.⁷

It can thus be seen that Lessing's main theological points are essentially derived from Spinoza's philosophy.⁸ On the other hand, Leibniz's philosophical categories serve as Lessing's point of departure.⁹ This is seen in the Education of the Human Race in which Lessing adapted Leibniz's Theodicy as a model for showing that man is progressing toward spiritual maturity in the process of historical development.¹⁰

This Leibnizian influence is further seen in the way that Lessing draws a sharp distinction between the truths of reason and the truths of

¹Supra, p. 21. ²Supra, p. 44. ³Supra, pp. 21-22.

⁴Supra, p. 46. ⁵Supra, p. 22. ⁶Supra, p. 20.

⁷Lessing's Theological Writings, pp. 83, 91. ⁸Cassirer, p. 190.

⁹Ibid., p. 192. ¹⁰Ibid.

history.¹ However, there is a profound difference in the way that Leibniz intends his distinctions of reality to be taken. Lessing fails to draw the distinctions between the two kinds of reason that are so crucial for Leibniz's philosophy. For Leibniz, there are the necessary truths of reason whose necessity can be seen in that if opposite conclusions were drawn in the reasoning process, then the truths (conclusions) would be contradictory and thus false. Such are the "Eternal Verities" of geometry, logic, and metaphysics.² Furthermore, these "Eternal Verities" (truths of reason) are all conditional, for they have no reality outside the mind. They are simply the connection of ideas. This is to say that if such and such a thing should exist, then it will be characterized in a certain way. For example, the proposition that every figure which has three sides will also have three angles says nothing more than if such a figure with three sides should exist, it will also have three angles.³

For Leibniz, there are also contingent truths of reason (truths of fact). This is to say that what we observe of the experienced order of nature suggests that there are certain laws of nature which can be said to be the result of the choice of God. We reason to these truths (laws) of nature through a consideration of the fitness of things. We cannot prove these laws of nature (truths of facts) to be of a kind of geometric necessity. Thus, whatever conclusions we may come to, they are at the most probable and contingent. This means the arguments of critics against the miracles of faith have no force.⁴ On the other hand, Leibniz insists that the truths of faith must conform to the fundamental principles of logic and the truths of pure

¹Cassirer, p. 192. ²Theodicy, p. 74. ³New Essays, p. 515.

⁴Theodicy, p. 75.

reason, which truths can be seen to be absolutely necessary.¹

Lessing does not draw this distinction between the necessary and contingent truths of reason. He only distinguishes between reasoned knowledge and historical knowledge. In this way, Lessing depreciates the significance of history for faith. However, Leibniz holds historical knowledge of great value, not only because of its practical value, but because it is through historical study, along with the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, that one finds supporting evidence for revelation.²

Thus, Lessing's distinction between "the accidental truths of history" and "the necessary truths of reason" is not in line with Leibniz's intention at all. This can especially be seen when Lessing suggests that he cannot believe in miracles because "I live in the eighteenth century, in which miracles no longer happen."³ Here it can be seen that Lessing is confusing "necessary truths" and "contingent truths." That Lessing believes that miracles cannot happen because he does not see them to happen is not a "necessary truth of reason," but it is "contingent truth" which merely expresses a opinion. Thus, when Lessing says "accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason," Leibniz would argue otherwise. Leibniz would show: (1) that necessary truths of reason (e.g. geometry, logic) cannot disprove the truths of faith; (2) that pure reason is in perfect harmony with faith, though faith stands above reason, but not against reason; (3) that Lessing's argument against the factual resurrection of Jesus on the basis that reason will not permit him to alter his fundamental ideas of the laws of nature is in fact only an example of a

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 74.

³Lessing's Theological Writings, p. 52.

contingent truth of fact since it cannot be proved to be a necessary truth of reason and thus this argument only expresses an opinion and yields no force against faith; (4) that "the accidental truths of history" are not necessarily accidental and uncertain.

This fourth point is of special importance in the discussion between the difference of Leibniz and Lessing. Leibniz's distinction between the two kinds of reason is intended to show that reason is in conformity with faith, and he does not intend to depreciate the validity of historical knowledge. In fact, Leibniz establishes a basis for the validity of historical knowledge through his distinctions among the various degrees of probability.¹ In this connection, Leibniz shows that "to doubt seriously is to doubt in relation to the practical, and we might take certainty as a knowledge of truth which we cannot doubt in relation to the practical without madness."² He cites as one of the examples of the certainty of historical knowledge the existence of Alexander the Great whom one could not doubt really existed "without great derangement of mind."³ In sharp contrast to Leibniz, Lessing suggests that even a historical fact as certain as the existence of Alexander the Great may in fact have been derived from "a mere poem of Choerilus."⁴

Finally, it can be seen that Lessing did not distinguish correctly between the (necessary) truths of reason and the (contingent) truths of facts (reasoned knowledge of facts). This is to say that it would appear that Lessing has not adequately stated the theological problem of historical reality when he questions how "accidental truths of history" can become "necessary truths of reason." For example, faith is wrongly categorized as

¹Supra, pp. 38ff. ²New Essays, p. 513. ³Ibid.

⁴Lessing's Theological Writings, p. 54.

a necessary truth of reason. Furthermore, instead of holding to the Leibnizian distinction of the two kinds of reason, it seems he exaggerated the incertitude of historical knowledge, and at the same time it appears he has confused the contingent truths of reason with the necessary truths of reason. This can be seen when he suggests that since he has not seen a miracle, reason neces-
sarily compels him to abandon belief in the resurrection of Jesus despite whatever conclusive historical evidence may be put forward to substantiate it.¹ For Leibniz, the validity of the resurrection is to be decided on the basis of history and the "inward motion of the Holy Spirit" and not on the basis of arguments which merely express opinions, such as those which are derived from a reasoned knowledge of facts. On the other hand, Lessing holds to what may be termed--the Fallacy of Misplaced Necessity. That is, Lessing clearly suggests that the truths of fact necessarily exclude the possibility of the laws of nature being superseded by a higher law of divine providence. It may be that a reasoned knowledge of contingent facts will not permit him to accept the idea of miracles, but such a conclusion is a conviction and not a demonstration of necessity and thus, as Leibniz has said, has no force against faith. Further, Lessing classifies faith as a necessary truth of reason which cannot be damaged by the incertitude of historical knowledge. He asks: "But who, on the basis of this historical belief, would risk anything of great, permanent worth, the loss of which would be irreparable? Who, in consequence of this historical belief, would forswear for ever all knowledge that conflicted with this belief? Certainly not I."² Instead, the teachings of Jesus are what is significant, for they represent the necessary truths of reason and thus qualify as a legitimate basis for faith.³

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 55.



Now it may be for Lessing that faith corresponds to what are the necessary truths of reason, but clearly this is not the distinctive feature of Christian faith. Conversely, what is theologically necessary for Christian faith is its historical frame of reference, though to be sure the condition of fiducial faith has its sole basis in God himself. Thus, Lessing holds both to a philosophical and theological Fallacy of Misplaced Necessity.

So far, this discussion on the problem of faith and history has been restricted to the various forms of Cartesian rationalism, and it has sought to do two things in particular: (1) to show that the bifurcation of reality into the rational and the empirical led to a criticism of history which then gave rise to historical criticism; (2) to show that the depreciation of historical knowledge (because it lacked the certainty of rational knowledge) led to a devaluation of history for Christian faith. Thus, the field of historical studies developed with the result that, in the words of Cassirer, "theology had recognized an ally which was to prove stronger than itself, and which in the end was to challenge it on its own ground."¹

H. Herder: The Categories of "Individuality" and "Relativity"

It is Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744-1803) concept of history (which is representative of the Romantic view) that became especially significant for what Collingwood calls "scientific history."² There are especially two significant features of Herder's concept of history as it relates to the

¹Cassirer, p. 201.

²Collingwood, pp. 86-93. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, History and Eschatology (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1957), pp. 9f., 78, 84. Friedrich Gogarten, Demythologizing and History, pp. 27-28.

question of theology. (1) There is the principle of the unique individuality¹ of the various phases and developments of the historical process. Instead of forcing a modern standard of interpretation or pattern on the historical development of the past as it had been done with the analytical thinking of the Enlightenment, Herder sought to understand every development and phase of history as possessing its own unique significance.² In this respect, Herder condemns the Enlightenment, for example, for dismissing the European Middle Ages as an era of darkness and barbarity.³ What is thus required of historiography is to understand each era within its own context. For example, when one writes of the history of Egypt, Herder says:

It is silly to take a single Egyptian virtue out of the context of its country and time, out of the youth of the human spirit, and then to appraise it with a standard of a different time! Even if the Greek could . . . be so mistaken in his judgment of the Egyptian, and if the Oriental could hate the Egyptian; yet it seems to me, one's first thought should be to see him in his proper place. Otherwise one sees, especially from the European viewpoint, a most distorted caricature.⁴

Tillich points out that one of the main reasons for Romanticism's appreciation of the historical periods of the past was the belief in the immanence of God in the world. He writes:

The infinite was also present in the past periods of history through expressive forms of life and their great symbols. They had their revelatory character also. This means that history,

¹While the idea of individuality is clearly formulated by Herder, Troeltsch points out that it was Schleiermacher who actually "coined the catchword 'individual.'" (Ernst Troeltsch, The Absoluteness of Christianity, trans. David Reid (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1972), p. 76.

²Cassirer, p. 231.

³Herder, "Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit," Werke, ed Suphan, V, cited by Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 209.

⁴"Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit," Werke, V, 489f., 501f., cited by Cassirer, p. 231.

the historical past, be taken seriously. Tradition could be important for Romanticism, whereas the Enlightenment was merely the critic of tradition.¹

(2) There is the principle of historical relativity which Troeltsch was subsequently to develop more fully.² For Herder, history is seen to be a continuous tradition. Barth shows this means that historical beings are not monads, "but links in a chain, drops of water in a stream, the living cells of a growing organism."³ Herder puts it this way:

Why should I become a mind of pure reason when my sole wish is to be human, and when in knowledge and belief I am just what I am in my being, drifting like a wave in the sea of history?⁴

Even as Lessing had sought for the reconciliation of "the accidental truths of history" with "the necessary truths of reason," so Herder sought to effect a reconciliation between the general and the particular, thought and extension, God and the world, reason and history, noumenon and phenomenon.⁵ It is at this point that Herder particularly breaks with Kant.⁶ This is seen

¹Paul Tillich, Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, edited with an introduction by Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 84.

²This principle of historical relativity was to become the dominant motif in Troeltsch's philosophy of history. For him, "the historical and the relative are identical" (The Absoluteness of Christianity, p. 85). He offers this concise definition of historical relativity: "Relativity simply means that all historical phenomena are unique, individual configurations acted on by influences from a universal context that comes to bear on them in varying degrees of immediacy. It means, therefore, that every independent structure leads one to a perspective that embraces broader and still broader horizons till finally it opens out onto the whole" (Ibid., p. 89.)

³Barth, Protestant Thought, trans. Brian Cozens (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 210.

⁴Briefe d. Stu. Theol. betr., Werke, ed. B. Suphan, Berlin, 1877ff, X, 290, cited by Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 210.

⁵Herder, God, Some Conversations, trans. with a critical introduction and notes by Frederick H. Burkhardt (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1949), pp. 101-113.

⁶Ibid., p. 149.

in the two main features of his concept of the world and man--the dynamism of nature and the immanence of God.

Now you yourself see, Philolaus, that the Highest, or rather the All (for God is not the Highest in a gradation of things like Him), could reveal itself as active in nothing else than in All. Nothing could be dormant in Him, and what He expressed was Himself, an indivisible wisdom, goodness and omnipotence. The world of God is thus the best, not because He selected it from among the less good, but rather because neither good nor bad existed without Him, and He, according to the inner necessity of His existence could effect nothing bad. Therefore all forces exist which could exist, all together forming an expression of the All-wise, All-good and All-beautiful. He is active in the smallest and in the largest, in every point of space and time, that is, in every living force of the universe. For space and time are only phantoms of our imagination, conditions of measurement for a limited mind which must acquaint itself with things one after another and side by side. For God there is neither space nor time, but all is an eternal connection. He is before all and all exists in Him. The whole world is an expression, an appearance of His eternally-living, eternally-active forces.¹

What Herder is maintaining is that the development of the world forms a continuous and dynamic unfolding plan of God. This means history shows no gaps nor leaps, but it is a steady movement toward the perfection of man's nature and the world. Despite the great diversity of the cosmos, it is one continuous whole; God is One and All (ἐν καὶ πάντα).² This reconciliation of spirit and matter, thought and extension, is effected through the idea of "substantial forces."³ In this way, Spinoza's Substance is made dynamic, while at the same time Leibniz's monads are no longer seen to be separate entities.⁴ This means that thought and being, spirit and matter, are no longer isolated.

I am happy, Theophron, that you have cleared up the obscure conception of matter for me. For although I gladly accepted the system of Leibniz which said that it could be nothing but a phenomenon of our senses, an aggregate of substantial monads,

¹Ibid., pp. 169-170. ²Ibid., p. 137. ³Ibid., p. 103.

⁴Ibid., pp. 102-103.

yet the so-called "ideal connection between such substances," in this system remained an enigma to me. Leibniz compared matter to a cloud which is made up of rain drops and only seems a cloud to us, or even to a garden full of plants and trees, to a pond full of fish, and the like. But by those means I was still unable to explain to myself the existence of this appearance, the connection of these forces. The raindrops in the cloud, the plants in the garden, the fish in the water have a connecting medium, and what could such a medium between the forces constituting matter be, except the forces of the substances themselves, through which they act upon one another? In this way, then, are organs formed; for the organ itself is also a system of forces which in their inner connection serve a single ruling one. Matter no longer remains for me merely an appearance in my idea, or something connected only through the ideas of perceiving creatures, but exists itself through its nature and truth, through the inherent connection of active forces. Nothing is isolated in nature, nothing is without cause, nothing without effect. And since everything possible exists, and exists in connection, nothing in nature therefore is without organization. Every force is connected with other forces which either serve or rule it. Hence, if my soul is a substantial force and its present realm of activity is destroyed, then it can never lack a new organ in a creation in which there is no gap, no leap, no island. New serving forces will come to its aid and form its sphere of activity in its new connection with a world in which all is connected. (italics mine.)¹

It can thus be seen that Herder's attempt to reconcile the polarization of reality is made through his synthesis of Spinoza's Substance and Leibniz's monad. In this respect, Herder acknowledges his dependence on Lessing,² who likewise sought to reconcile reason and history through a synthesis of Spinoza and Leibniz in his Education of the Human Race.³ Barth also points this out: "In what concerns history, too, Herder shouted what Lessing had whispered. History, for him, is nothing else but living experience understood in the macrocosmic and universal sense, instead of, as previously, in the microcosmic and individual one."⁴

Herder, again following the lead of Lessing, exempts particular facts

¹Ibid., pp. 173-174. ²Ibid., pp. 134-161, especially.

³Supra, pp. 47f. ⁴Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 211.

as possessing any decisive significance for faith in so far as their objective truth is concerned. What is important for theology is not isolated facts, which cannot be, for in creation there is "no gap, no leap, no island."¹ Rather, what is important for theology is the world seen in its necessary and inter-connecting phases.

Every true physico-theology thus exhibits nothing but divine reason and power according to eternal necessary laws in the structure of creatures and in their entire interrelation in place and time. Everywhere it involves one and the same inference, or rather one and the same insight, in a thousand examples and objects, from the most vanishingly minute to the most unsurveyably great. (*italics mine.*)²

In this way, Herder rejects Leibniz's distinction between the necessary truths of reason and the truths of fact. For Leibniz, the laws of nature operated as such, not as a mathematical necessity, but as a "physical necessity . . . founded on moral necessity."³ This means the laws of nature are contingent upon the choice of God, and are not of themselves necessary.⁴ Herder rejects this idea of "moral necessity."⁵ For Herder, the laws of nature are necessary and immutable.⁶

Herder further considers metaphysical speculation as being irrelevant, for what one knows he derives from experience. And, these experiences cannot be transplanted "to the province of demonstration."⁷ To demand such demonstration would be to engage in "metaphysical hair-splitting"⁸ and "hypercriticism."⁹ Thus, the epistemological basis for Kant's noumenon and phenomenon, or even Leibniz's truths of reason and truths of fact, appear to be without

¹God, Some Conversations, p. 174. ²Ibid., p. 152.

³Theodicy, p. 74. ⁴Ibid. ⁵God, Some Conversations, p. 142.

⁶Ibid., pp. 150-152, 173. ⁷Ibid., p. 153. ⁸Ibid., p. 146.

⁹Ibid., p. 153.

significance. This would clearly suggest a rejection of an objective demonstration of faith. Barth puts it this way:

We must get used to the idea that with Herder and with the whole line of theological development which began with him there is not that burning interest in the question of truth which we might at first expect where the establishment of a working basis for a theology is at stake which had to come to terms with Kant of all people. Herder's theology finds the reality of revelation so conclusively in living experience or history, in feeling or practical knowledge, that it thought it could dispense with the enquiry into its legitimacy.¹

Herder's attempt to overcome the philosophical disjunction of reality in terms of the concepts of "Individuality" and "Relativity" aided not only the rise of the modern historical consciousness, but also his systematic effort to bring theology into a constructive relationship with history forecasted much of subsequent theology. The same likewise could be said of Lessing, whose influence is particularly felt today through Kierkegaard.² Barth points out the pervasive influence of Herder.

The master in the art of circumventing Kant was Johann Gottfried Herder. He has been called the 'theologian among the classical writers'. He was also truly a classical theologian, because he was the first to discover in convincing manner a way of making a theology possible which was able to bypass Kant. The possibility which Lessing was too cautious to exploit, and which, according to Kant, was forbidden, is to Herder a joyous event, in the course of which, as I. A. Dorner has well expressed it, his mind stands like a help-meet beside the masculine mind of Lessing. Herder's significance for those theologians who came after him can scarcely be rated highly enough. Without him the work of Schleiermacher and de Wette would have been impossible, and also the peculiar pathos of the course of theology in the nineteenth century. Without Herder there would have been no Erlangen group and no school of religious history. But for Herder there would have been no Troeltsch.³

While Herder is credited with having taken the first most significant

¹Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 216. ²Infra, pp. 155 et passim.

³Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 200.

step toward establishing a basis for the modern principles of historiography with his appreciation for the historical past,¹ he could not have done so without the pioneering efforts of the eighteenth century. Cassirer shows that, though Romanticism was superior to the Enlightenment in its historical appreciation for the past, the basis for establishing a positive relationship with the past is to be found in the critical epistemological considerations of the Enlightenment. This is to say that the attempt to delineate the relationship between the general and the particular, thought and extension, etc., raised the central philosophical question of history.

However remote from the Enlightenment the Romantic view of the content of history--its material "philosophy of history"--may be, in method it remains dependent on, and most deeply indebted to, the Enlightenment. For it was the eighteenth century which raised the central philosophical problem in this field of knowledge. It inquires concerning the "conditions of the possibility" of history, just as it inquires concerning the conditions of the possibility of natural science. To be sure, the eighteenth century seeks only to establish these conditions in preliminary outline. It tries to grasp the meaning of history by endeavoring to gain a clear and distinct concept of it, to ascertain the relation between the general and the particular, between idea and reality, and between laws and facts, and to draw the exact boundaries between these terms.²

In this respect, Cassirer also shows that Herder could not have taken his decisive step toward establishing a genuine basis for historical study without "the intellectual tools ready at hand."³ This is to say that Herder wrestled with the already systematically-formulated problem of the relationship of reason and history, God and the world, thought and extension, spirit and matter. Cassirer thus further indicates what has been intended in this Part One--i.e., a methodological study of the general question of epistemology

¹Cassirer, pp. 195, 230-233; Collingwood, pp. 86, 88-89, 113.

²Cassirer, p. 197. ³Ibid., p. 230.

shows that the attempt to ascertain the nature of reality (thus giving rise to the terminological distinctions such as thought and extension, truths of reason and truths of fact) provided "the intellectual tools" for the rise of the modern historical method.

CHAPTER II

TRUTH: SUBJECTIVE OR OBJECTIVE?

In distinguishing the subjective and objective aspects of truth, what is being questioned is whether truth is mere subjective certainty or objective truth? Is truth solely an anthropocentric determination? That is, is the truth of reality merely what man determines it to be, or can he achieve an objective knowledge of the truth of reality in terms of his human subjectivity? Stated succinctly, can man's subjective certainty be determined as objective truth? The implications of this question for theology can be readily seen, especially in its claim that man can have an experiential knowledge of God on the basis of his knowledge (i.e., insight) of historical reality.

Perhaps the two most significant philosophical systems that have more or less determined the epistemological presuppositions for modern theology are those of Kant and Hegel. It is their attempt to resolve the problem of subjective certainty as opposed to objective truth that will now be considered.

A. Kant: An Epistemological Dualism

Immanuel Kant's significance in regard to the problem of theology and history can hardly be exaggerated, especially as it is seen in his distinctions between (1) noumenon and phenomenon, and (2) theoretical reason and practical reason. It was his intention to bring about a synthesis of rationalism and empiricism. Following his contact with David Hume's skeptical

philosophy, he was aroused from his "dogmatic slumber,"¹ and subsequently formulated, instead, a critical philosophy. He developed two basic convictions concerning the nature of knowledge. First, knowledge of objective reality cannot be merely deduced from certain innate laws of reason (rationalism).² Second, empiricism is correct in emphasizing the priority of sense experience over against pure speculative thought, but it is wrong in saying that first-hand contact with reality is in itself equivalent to knowledge. Rather, sense experience only provides the faculty of understanding with source material, which taken together (i.e., sense data and the concepts of the understanding) forms synthetical a priori judgments. This means that reality can be known only as we have first-hand intuitive contact with it and intellectually analyze what this empirical intuition provides.

However, what the senses perceive is only appearance (phenomenon), not reality as it is in itself (noumenon). This means that reality which the intellect analyzes undergoes a transformation in the process of being received by the sense. Thus, sense data are the mere appearance of reality. Kant writes: "The only manner in which objects can be given to us is by modification of our sensibility."³ Kant even goes so far as to say that "the order and regularity in the appearances, which we entitle nature, we ourselves introduce. We could never find them in appearances, had not we ourselves, or the nature of our mind, originally set them there."⁴ Not only

¹Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics, with an introduction by Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1950), p. 8. Cited hereafter as Prolegomena.

²Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1929), p. 32.

³Ibid., p. 182. ⁴Ibid., p. 147.

is appearance a modification of reality and thus it is not reality itself, but also the connection of the appearances of reality are subjectively introduced through the activity of the mind, and it is not inherent in the reality itself.¹

Consequently, knowledge relates only to what appears and there can be no knowledge of reality as it is in itself. Kant writes: "What objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains completely unknown to us."² Knowledge, rather, is the combination of the concepts of the understanding (spontaneously activated by the intellect) with the empirical intuitions of the senses.³ Thus, knowledge is a convergence of the concepts with empirical intuitions. Otherwise, there can be no knowledge, for "thoughts without content are empty," while "intuitions without concepts are blind."⁴

It is this dualism of appearance and reality, noumenon and phenomenon, that has had far-reaching influence in the epistemology of history.

Maurice Mandelbaum has shown that Kant's theory of knowledge became the presupposition of much of subsequent philosophies of history--that whatever meaning and value lie in the objects of our knowledge are the result of the activity of the mind and not the inherent characteristics of reality itself.⁵ This aspect of historical relativism is to be found in Kant's own philosophy of history, Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht.

¹Cf. H. W. Cassirer, Kant's First Critique (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1954), pp. 75-76.

²Critique of Pure Reason, p. 82. ³Ibid., p. 105.

⁴Ibid., p. 93.

⁵The Problem of Historical Knowledge (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1938), p. 203.

Kant says that while human deeds are the results of moral laws, i.e., they stem from freedom of the will (which has its basis in noumenon), these deeds as seen from the perspective of the historian are considered phenomena and are subject to natural laws. These phenomena of history say nothing of what really is the objective basis of history (though noumena are the basis of the phenomena of history, i.e., moral laws are the basis of human deeds). Thus, one can only know history as it appears (in the sense of a spectator) and not as it really is.¹

In addition to this dualism of noumenon and phenomenon is the dualism of theoretical reason and practical reason. The task of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is to determine the boundary lines of human knowledge. "It is a call to reason to undertake anew the most difficult of all its tasks, namely, that of self-knowledge, and to institute a tribunal which will assure to reason its lawful claims, and dismiss all groundless pretensions, not by despotic decrees, but in accordance with its own eternal and unalterable laws."² What results from this critique is that "reason by all its a priori principles never teaches us anything more than objects of possible experience, and even of these nothing more than can be known in experience."³ On the other hand, there is nothing to "prevent reason from leading us to the objective boundary of experience, namely, to the relation to something which is not itself an object of experience but is the ground of all experience."⁴ Here is the practical use of pure reason--to move beyond the limits of sensibility.⁵

¹Kant, "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht," Sämmtliche Werke, IV, 143. Cf. Collingwood, pp. 93ff.

²Critique of Pure Reason, p. 9. ³Prolegomena, p. 110. ⁴Ibid.

⁵Critique of Pure Reason, p. 27.

Thus, the distinction between practical and theoretical reason corresponds to the distinction between noumenon and phenomenon.

The critique of pure reason is thus to define the boundary of human knowledge and limit it to appearances (i.e., representation of objects in the mind).¹ These appearances are called phenomenal reality. But, phenomenal reality is not the whole of reality, for the practical use of pure reason leads us "to the objective boundary of experience" to "the ground of all experience." This "ground of all experience" (ultimate reality) is called the noumenon (thing-in-itself).²

Here we have a clear bifurcation of reality into the phenomenon and the noumenon with the result that theoretical reason will not permit any knowledge of the noumenon. This means that God, freedom, and immortality cannot be proved on the basis of pure reason alone, but they are rather the necessary postulates of practical reason. This suggests that speculative reason relates to "knowledge" of phenomena, while practical reason relates to "faith" insofar as noumenal reality is concerned. Thus, practical reason must "surrender the language of knowledge" and employ "the quite legitimate language of a firm faith."³ This distinction between theoretical and practical reason is further illustrated in this well-known quotation of Kant:

Even the assumption--as made on behalf of the necessary practical employment of my reason--of God, freedom, and immortality is not permissible unless at the same time speculative reason be deprived of its pretensions to transcendent insight. For in order to arrive at such insight it must make use of principles which, in fact, extend only to objects of possible experience, and which, if also

¹Prolegomena, p. 36. ²Ibid., p. 103. Cf. Critique of Pure Reason, p. 268.

³Critique of Pure Reason, p. 597.

applied to what cannot be an object of experience, always really change this into an appearance, thus rendering all practical extension of pure reason impossible. I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith.¹

Consequently, Kant rejected the three traditional proofs for the existence of God because of their over-stepping the boundary of pure reason. The ontological argument is faulty because reality cannot be postulated on the basis of mere thinking. Whether or not something exists must be proved by experience and not by mere thinking.² The cosmological argument falsely assumes the absolutely necessity of a Supreme Being as a sufficient cause for all effects. The law of cause-effect is observed on the phenomenal level of reality, but there is no proof that such a law reaches back to an ultimate ground.³ The teleological argument deserves respect, for it is the oldest argument and the most adequate to common sense.⁴ However, it cannot claim to be an apodictic argument, for there is no way we can experiment with the noumenal level of reality.⁵ Further, this argument cannot prove the idea of a creator, but only suggests the idea of an architect. Kant writes:

The utmost, therefore, that the argument can prove is an architect of the world who is always very much hampered by the adaptability of the material in which he works, not a creator of the world to whose idea everything is subject. This, however, is altogether inadequate to the lofty purpose which we have before our eyes, namely, the proof of an all-sufficient primordial being. To prove the contingency of matter itself, we should have to resort to a transcendental argument, and this is precisely what we have here set out to avoid.⁶

Thus, Kant agreed with Hume that natural theology cannot be supported by mere rational demonstration. What, then, is the basis for postulating the existence of God? Is there no intellectual basis? Kant, having rejected the

¹Ibid., p. 29. ²Ibid., pp. 500-507. ³Ibid., p. 511.

⁴Ibid., p. 520. ⁵Ibid., pp. 522-523. ⁶Ibid., p. 522.

idea of the finite reaching into the infinite, believes there is a basis for belief. Having abolished knowledge, he makes room for faith by giving it a rational basis in man's freedom, the evidence of which is found in the practical use of pure reason. Kant puts it this way:

Inasmuch as the reality of the concept of freedom is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, it is the keystone of the whole system of pure reason, even the speculative, and all other concepts (those of God and immortality) which, as being mere ideas, remain in it unsupported, now attach themselves to this concept, and by it obtain consistent and objective reality; that is to say, their possibility is proved by the fact that freedom actually exists, for this idea is revealed by the moral law.¹

This means that freedom is the only idea of speculative reason "of which we know the possibility a priori (without, however, understanding it), because it is the condition of the moral law which we know."² Thus, without freedom there could be no moral law and without the moral law we would not know freedom.³ The ideas of God and immortality are not conditions of the moral law, but are the conditions of the practical use of pure reason. These ideas can only be assumed from a practical use of pure reason, not from any necessary or theoretical reason.⁴

Theoretical reason sees these transcendental ideas only in terms of "a merely subjective principle of assent," while practical reason sees them as "objectively valid . . . by means of the concept of freedom," which "assures objective reality and authority to the ideas of God and Immortality."⁵

It is this practical use of pure reason in terms of "freedom" which

¹Critique of Practical Reason and other works on the theory of Ethics, trans. T. K. Abbott (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., Ltd., 1927), p. 88. Cited hereafter as Critique of Practical Reason.

²Ibid., p. 88. ³Ibid., p. 117. ⁴Ibid., pp. 88-89.

⁵Ibid., p. 89.

makes it possible for us to make contact with the transcendent world without encouraging theoretical reason "to run riot into the transcendent."¹ Thus, freedom has its basis in the noumena, while on the other hand causality controls things on the phenomenal level.²

This inter-relatedness of morality and freedom excludes the necessity of religion, for morality is seen to be self-sufficient. It is a law within itself.³ However, morality does inevitably lead to the idea of religion and ultimately to the idea of a moral legislator.⁴ This means the moral argument for God is a matter of faith, not knowledge. This is so because finite reason cannot break into the infinite.

Theodore Greene in his introduction to Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone summarizes the four characteristics of the moral law. (1) The moral law is defined as what ought to be, in contrast to what is. (2) The moral law is self-legislative and autonomous within each man. Man's own conscience is the final judge in all matters of right and wrong. (3) The moral law is universally binding upon all men because it is the law of reason. (4) The moral law has its basis in the noumena and not in the phenomena.⁵

God's existence is postulated on the basis of a moral certainty, not a theoretical certainty. This is to say that a moral certainty is "faith" and that theoretical certainty is "knowledge." Thus, the bifurcation between the phenomenon and the noumenon leads to a bifurcation between faith and knowledge. The obvious consequence of Kant's divorce between faith and knowledge

¹Ibid., p. 147. ²Ibid., pp. 91, 145, 210.

³Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, trans. with an introduction and notes by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (London: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1934), p. 3.

⁴Ibid., pp. 5f. ⁵Ibid., pp. liii-liv.

means that man can never claim knowledge of the object of his worship. Thus, Kant says that Hume's criticism of natural religion really affects theism more so than deism. Kant writes: "Hume's objections to deism are weak, and affect only the proofs and not the deistic assertion itself."¹ Thus, Kant reestablished deism from the practical use of pure reason; namely, through the moral argument, while destroying (he believed) any basis for theism with its "dogmatic anthropomorphism."² However, Kant distinguished his moral philosophy from deism in that he would allow "symbolical anthropomorphism, which in fact concerns language only and not the object itself."³ In thus postulating the existence of God as Supreme Will, Kant is not suggesting a theoretical knowledge of God, for moral certainty can only speak in terms of als ob. Neither can one say that "it is morally certain that there is a God," but only, "I am morally certain."⁴

It is not within the scope of this work to offer an extensive and critical commentary on Kant's philosophy. Rather, I have attempted to show that Kant brought together in a systematic way certain principles of rationalism and empiricism. In doing this, Kant sought to overcome the skepticism of Hume which, if followed, would mean the end of science as well as theology especially since Hume denied objective validity to the connection of phenomena. On the other hand, Kant taught that scientific knowledge is possible on the basis of what he called synthetic a priori judgments.⁵ This means that the judgments of perception are combined with universal laws of the understanding

¹Prolegomena, p. 104. ²Ibid., p. 105.

³Ibid., p. 106; Cf. Critique of Pure Reason, p. 568.

⁴Critique of Pure Reason, p. 650. ⁵Prolegomena, pp. 42-74.

which give rise to valid judgments of experience.¹ Though these universal laws of the understanding give our empirical judgments objective validity, nevertheless these judgments tell us nothing of things-as-they-really-are. Rather, our judgments of experience are objectively valid only for phenomena (things-as-they-appear).

Here, then, is the way Kant attempted to synthesize the a priori concepts of rationalism with empiricism. But, in so doing, he excluded any empirical basis for knowledge of God as well as denying the a priori knowledge of God's existence in rationalism. Rather, God's existence is a "faith" assertion (to be sure, it is a valid assertion for Kant) derived from the practical use of the apodictic moral law of reason.

It can be seen that Kant sought to provide a philosophical basis for scientific knowledge with his synthetic a priori judgments, but on the other hand, he substituted the "language of faith" for the "language of knowledge" insofar as practical reason is concerned, thereby providing faith with a valid foundation for belief in the existence of God, but with the result that faith in God would serve no constitutive purpose especially since the categorical imperative is sufficient in itself for morality.

That the Idea of God has no constitutive purpose (though it has a regulative status)² necessarily follows if "we are compelled to consider the world as if it were the work of a Supreme Understanding and Will,"³ for whatever is "constitutive" obviously must be based on more than the mere supposition of an als ob. Kant further says that the world bears a relation to God in the same way that "the world of sense (or whatever constitutes the substratum of this complex of appearances) does to the unknown, which I do

¹Ibid., pp. 48f. ²Ibid., p. 98. ³Ibid., p. 106.

not hereby know as it is in itself but as it is for me, that is, in relation to the world of which I am a part."¹ This analogy is not to be understood as an imperfect comparison between two similar things. Rather, it is "a perfect similarity of relations between two quite dissimilar things."² In this way, Kant maintains that "there remains a concept of the Supreme Being sufficiently determined for us, though we have left out everything that could determine it absolutely or in itself."³ The theological problem that Kant has raised here is not his clarification of the use of language in reference to what is transcendent, but whether or not faith can be Christian faith on the mere basis of an als ob.

It is this divorce of knowledge and faith, noumenon and phenomenon, the Supreme Being "in itself" and the Supreme Being "for us," that has had far-reaching influence on theology. This is particularly seen in the way that contemporary theology, when it begins with the Kantian distinction between "God in himself" and "God for us," defines the certainty of faith exclusively within the context of the unmediated presence of God, which is devoid of any propositional content. As it will be pointed out in "Part Two," it is this Kantian influence that has become the point of departure for much of contemporary theology. In this respect, Kant has been called the philosopher of Protestantism.⁴

B. Hegel: Absolute Knowledge and World History

Hegel's importance for the problem of theology and history is twofold: (1) he sought to go beyond the Kantian bifurcation of reality into phenomenon and noumenon (which epistemological dualism more or less has served as the

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid. ⁴Tillich, pp. 65-66.

philosophical framework for the neo-orthodox dualism of faith and history); and (2) he sought to establish an epistemological basis for history. Hegel acknowledges that Kant serves as the point of departure for his own philosophical system.¹ He points out that philosophy had come to accept uncritically Kant's results, "that reason can cognize no valid content, and with regard to absolute truth must be referred to faith."² It is this skepticism that Hegel says has become "a pillow for intellectual sloth, which soothes itself with the idea that everything has been already proved and done with. Those who look for knowledge and a definite content of thought, which are not to be found in this dry and sterile acquiescence, must turn to that preceding exposition [Kant]."³

Inasmuch as Kant is the precursor of Hegel's epistemology and philosophy of history, it would be helpful in this exposition to offer a comparison between Hegel and Kant in order to lessen some of the complexities of Hegel's thought and thus bring into the foreground a summary of Hegel's epistemology, which is presupposed in his philosophy of history. In other words, Hegel assumes in his philosophy of history that "Reason" governs world history. But, he says that the justification for this presupposition is to be found in his Science of Logic.⁴ This indicates that a knowledge of his metaphysics is necessary prior to an understanding of his philosophy of history. Further, inasmuch as Hegel follows up many of Kant's thoughts, it is fitting to begin

¹Hegel, Science of Logic, trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, with an introductory preface by Viscount Haldane (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1929), I, 73n. Cited hereafter as Logic.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴Hegel, Reason in History, trans. with an intro. Robert S. Hartman (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1953), pp. 11, 22, 31.

with Hegel's critique of Kant's philosophy of critical idealism.

Hegel's Critique of Kant. In the preceding discussion on Kant, it was pointed out that Kant set about to examine critically the possibilities and validity of the knowing faculties. He distinguished the cognitive faculties into (1) sense, (2) understanding, and (3) reason.¹ The function of the senses is to perceive phenomena. The function of the understanding is to take these empirical intuitions and to bring them into conformity with the a priori concepts of the understanding, which conformity is defined as the a priori synthetic judgment of the understanding. This is to say, the judgment of perception becomes the judgment of experience when perception is united with its corresponding categories.² These judgments of experience are synthetic a priori, not a posteriori, for these concepts do not come from empirical intuitions and thus are not synthetic a posteriori judgments. Rather, these concepts are a priori and are universally binding, thus rendering objective validity to the synthetic a priori judgments. It follows from this, then, that truth is the correspondence of the concepts of the understanding with empirical intuitions.³

¹Critique of Pure Reason, pp. 300-301. ²Prolegomena, p. 48.

³Kant shows how a judgment of perception becomes a judgment of experience when he writes: "Before, therefore, a judgment of perception can become a judgment of experience, it is requisite that the perception should be subsumed under some such concept of the understanding; for instance, air belongs under the concept of cause, which determines our judgment about it in respect to its expansion as hypothetical. Thereby the expansion of the air is represented, not as merely belonging to the perception of the air in my present state or in several states of mine, or in the perceptual state of others, but as belonging to it necessarily. The judgment, 'Air is elastic,' becomes universally valid and a judgment of experience only because certain judgments precede it which subsume the intuition of air under the concept of cause and effect; and they thereby determine the perceptions, not merely with respect to one another in me, but with respect to the form of judging in general (which is here hypothetical), and in this way they render the empirical judgment universally valid." (Prolegomena, pp. 48-49).

Reason receives the pure concepts of the understanding for its source material just as the understanding receives empirical intuitions from the senses and the senses perceive objects for its material.¹ Just as space-time condition the senses, and the categories of the understanding condition judgment, even so do these three transcendental Ideas condition reason--(1) the Idea of the Self, (2) the Idea of the Material World, and (3) the Idea of God.² Now Kant does not deny the reality of Self, the World, and God, but reason cannot postulate what that reality is, for we can only know what is an object of possible experience. We cannot know their reality, only their ideas.

Hegel charges that Kant has merely replaced an objective dogmatism with a subjective dogmatism in that he denies knowledge of what is objective and dogmatically asserts the possibility of knowledge of what is subjective, i.e., phenomena.³ Hegel rejects a philosophy which limits knowledge to mere facts of experience. His Logic goes beyond this limitation and is concerned to know the truth of what-is, i.e., he intends to provide an epistemological basis for absolute truth. This is to say, it is not enough for the faculty of reason to merely "conceive" of the infinite,⁴ while on the other hand knowledge is restricted to mere empirical facts. Rather, "reason" must know the infinite (the unconditioned) which is the truth of the finite (the conditioned).⁵

Kant calls his philosophy a transcendental or critical idealism.⁶

¹Critique of Pure Reason, pp. 300-301, 318, 386-389, 533, 557, 569.

²Critique of Pure Reason, p. 323.

³Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, trans. E. S. Haldane (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1892), III, 427. Cited hereafter as History of Philosophy.

⁴Critique of Pure Reason, p. 308. ⁵Logic, I, 47. ⁶Prolegomena, p. 41.

By this he means that something lies at the basis of experience, that something (i.e., thought determinations) precedes experience a priori which makes knowledge of experience possible. If these concepts (categories) overstep experience, this would mean they are transcendent and this gives rise to illusion. Thus, transcendental is used to point out that knowledge is limited to experience only.¹

Hegel says that Kant has the merit of pointing out that thought is something concrete by his definition of synthetical a priori judgments. Hegel believes this to be an advance beyond Descartes who defined thought abstractly in terms of pure objectivity, while Kant defined thought as subjectivity. This is also seen to be an advance beyond Hume who denied the validity of universal categories except merely as relations of ideas.²

However, Kant is brought into sharp criticism for his transcendental logic. Though he posited the universality of the categories and showed they were independent of empirical intuitions, these categories were defined merely as subjective concepts of thought. They have no known objective reality, though they provide the objective element in human consciousness. Thus, the categories would be objective if they were predicated of some known object, but this in turn would suggest that man had transcended the subjective element in consciousness. However, since these conceptions of the understanding are themselves subjective, Kant says that they have validity only so far as man has existence. If man had no existence, these a priori concepts would be nonexistent.³

¹Ibid., p. 122n. ²History of Philosophy, III, 423, 427-430.

³Ibid., pp. 71-72.

On the other hand, Kant's ideas of Reason (the self, the world, and God), which may have objective reality, cannot be known as such. For example, the empirical ego (the empirical apperception) is the unity of all the representations of reality in consciousness. Though it is through our consciousness that we as a thinking self (as the empirical apperception) know the objects of our experience, we cannot know the absolute subject of our experience. Thus, for Kant, the empirical ego is the unity of self-consciousness from which Reason infers the idea of an absolute self (the pure ego, or the transcendental apperception). That is, the self as the empirical unity of all thought is the basis for Reason to form the idea of an absolute self, "yet in so doing it has nothing in view save principles of systematic unity in the explanation of the appearances of the soul."¹ That is, Reason's idea of the self "cannot be represented in concreto."² Consequently, Reason's idea of the self has a regulative (and not a constitutive) value.³

Hegel says this definition of the ego has an important characteristic-- it shows that thought produces unity, that thought organizes all the manifold things into one.⁴ For Hegel, when this unity of all the modes of truth converge in self-consciousness, then this is absolute knowledge, for truth is the whole of what-is. Further, this knowledge is absolute because it is a knowledge of the unconditioned, the infinite. It can also be seen that what is for Kant the transcendental ego is for Hegel self-conscious spirit, i.e., the spirit (Notion, the Idea, Reason) knowing itself as what actually is (the Absolute Idea).⁵

Hegel faults Kant because he simply adopted the traditional categories

¹Critique of Pure Reason, p. 557. ²Ibid., p. 558. ³Ibid., p. 557.

⁴History of Philosophy, III, 437. ⁵Logic, II, 466ff.

without subjecting them to a critical analysis, while Hegel says he should have provided a critique of the categories instead of a critique of reason. Hegel rejects the idea of a critique of pure reason, and he substituted instead a critique of the categories in his Logic. To criticize the knowing faculties before knowing is like trying to learn to swim before getting into water.¹

However, Hegel commends Kant for dividing the twelve categories into four triadic divisions.² Hegel says that these four divisions of the categories into triads is moving in the right direction of seeing that one universal is the whole of all the various categories. Kant sees these four divisions as mere titles for the categories of the understanding, but Hegel suggests these titles really express the development of the categories into one universal.³ Hegel thus suggests that the triadic divisions point to the Notion--the unity of subject and object.

It betrays a great instinct for the Notion when Kant says that the first category is positive, the second the negative of the first, the third the synthesis of the two. The triplicity, this ancient form of the Pythagoreans, Neo-Platonists and of the Christian religion, although it here reappears as a quite external schema only, conceals within itself the absolute form, the Notion.⁴

What Hegel is saying is that Kant failed to see the inner dynamic of this triplicity. Kant merely accepted the traditional categories and put them in a stilted form of triplicity without introducing movement between them. Thus, Kant lacked consistency in regard to his "rhythm of knowledge," so far as Hegel is concerned. That is, Kant set forth a universal (the ego, the

¹History of Philosophy, III, 428-429.

²These four triadic divisions are--(1) as to Quantity: Unity (Measure), Plurality (Magnitude), Totality (Whole); (2) as to Quality: Reality, Negation, and Limitation; (3) as to Relation: Substance, Cause, Community; and (4) as to Modality: Possibility, Existence, Necessity. (Prolegomena, p. 51.)

³Logic, I, 91.

⁴History of Philosophy, III, 439.

unity of apperception) which has difference in itself and delineated a triplicity (thesis--antithesis--synthesis), yet this scheme lacked a dynamic quality.¹ This leads Hegel to say: "Kant has thus made an historical statement of the moments of the whole, and has correctly determined and distinguished them."² But since Kant did not follow through with this dynamic quality of his triplicity, Hegel charges that Kant ends up with a dualism of subjective certainty as opposed to objective truth.³ Somewhat superficially stated, what Hegel is proposing as the dynamic structure of this triplicity can be illustrated this way. In his Logic, the three main categories are: (1) the doctrine of Being, (2) the doctrine of Essence, and (3) the doctrine of the Notion. Being relates to what is immediately given (thesis); Essence relates to what is mediated as the deeper understanding of Being, suggesting that what merely appears is contrary to what really is (antithesis); the Notion is the self-conscious ego (synthesis), i.e., the unity of an objective entity (Being) and a subjective entity (Essence).⁴

From what has been said so far, the following parallels between Kant and Hegel have been indicated, which further illuminate what Hegel has in mind in regard to his idea of world history. (1) Hegel transformed Kant's ideas of Reason into one universal Idea, which he variously but comparably described simply as Reason, Idea, Absolute, thought, infinite, God, the unconditioned, etc. (2) Kant's conceptions of the understanding become the successive definitions of Hegel's Notion.⁵ (3) The totality of these definitions become the

¹Ibid., p. 477. ²Ibid., p. 478. ³Ibid., p. 476.

⁴Cf. Logic, I, 71; II, 217, especially pp. 479-480.

⁵Logic, I, 46, 91-92: Cf. Critique of Pure Reason, p. 113.

Notion, the Absolute Idea, which is also comparable to Kant's transcendental ego.¹ (4) While Kant's triplicity provided the definition for the moments of the whole of reality, Hegel says he failed to see the dialectic movement involved in this triplicity. Hegel, in contrast, introduced movement into the dialectic, while at the same time preserving the distinct moments of the opposites.² (5) It will be seen that Kant's synthetic a priori judgments become comparable to what Hegel calls his dialectic moment.³ (6) Kant says the thinking "I" knows itself, not through the categories, but knows the categories (and through them knows all objects) in the absolute unity of apperception, and therefore the "I" comes to know itself through itself.⁴ Similarly, Hegel speaks of the Notion (the Idea, the Soul, Spirit) coming to awareness of itself through itself, i.e., in self-consciousness. Here then is the logical (metaphysical) demonstration, so far as Hegel is concerned, that "Reason" governs world history. Metaphorically speaking, history "is the exhibition of spirit striving to attain knowledge of its own nature."⁵ "World history in general is the development of Spirit in Time."⁶ That is, even as the self (the Notion, or Spirit) organizes its experiences of the world into a rational and coherent whole (as Hegel has sought to show in terms of pure thought), even so history is the progressive and the outward unfolding of this rational activity of man, thus giving rise to his belief that reason governs world history.

¹Logic, I, 59-60; II, 218-219. Cf. Critique of Pure Reason, pp. 303, 318, 364-365.

²Infra, pp. 90ff. ³Infra, p. 93.

⁴Critique of Pure Reason, p. 365. ⁵Reason in History, p. 23

⁶Ibid., p. 87.

The Objectivity of Truth. In contrast to Kant (as it has already been pointed out), Hegel says that the most pressing need of metaphysics is a critique, not of reason, but of the categories. That such a critique is necessary can be seen, Hegel says, in the way that the categories originate in the mind in an instinctive and unreflective way. Furthermore, that these categories originate in such a spontaneous way would indicate that language in its penetration of our inner ideas intends to externalize what is universal and thus to speak of things as they really are.¹ Thus, the study of logic is the study of categories, which is a study of things-as-they-are. Hegel puts it this way: "Pure Science includes Thought in so far as it is just as much the Thing in itself as it is Thought, or the Thing in itself in so far as it is just as much pure Thought as it is the Thing in itself."²

What Hegel thus proposes to do in his Science of Logic is to evaluate the various concepts which are used in speaking of man and the world. He does not intend to set forth propositional truths as such. For example, his discussion on the concept of judgment³ is not intended to make individual judgments and statements, but it is a reflection on the concept of judgment in general.⁴ Thus, as Findlay says, Hegel offers us a series "of what are now called 'linguistic recommendations'. Hegel recommends for our adoption a given way of talking about the world, then discovers flaws and inadequacies in this mode of speaking, then supersedes it by a further recommendation which also comprehends it, until his last recommendation supersedes and comprehends all others."⁵

¹Logic, I, 46. ²Logic, I, 60. ³Logic, II, 258-300.

⁴Cf. J. N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958), p. 151.

⁵Ibid.

These concepts used in speaking of the world are given only a subjective significance in Kant, though they do give objective validity to the judgments of perception, which then become judgments of experience. In contrast, Hegel's logical system has objective existence, i.e., his categories are real, not nominal. Consequently, truth is objective when an object corresponds to its category.¹ This objective truth is called a subjective judgment.

In the subjective Judgment the attempt is made to see one and the same object twofold,--first in its individual actuality, secondly in its essential identity, or in its Notion: the individual raised to its universality, or, what is the same thing, the universal individualized into its actuality. In this manner the Judgment is truth; for it is the agreement of Notion and reality.²

In this way, it can be seen that an object is what it is by virtue of its concept.

Hegel divides his logic (metaphysics) into subjective logic and objective logic. Objective logic corresponds partly to Kant's transcendental logic.³ It includes not only the metaphysical ideas of the self, the world, and God, but also a study of ontology in general. It relates to such concepts as number, measure, difference, appearance, substance, cause, etc.⁴ Subjective logic is the study of the Notion, i.e., the Notion as it pertains to the subject himself. Whereas objective logic is directed towards objective things in the world, subjective logic is directed toward thought itself. Whereas the former considers thought-determinations, the latter considers the thought-determinations of thought itself. In this respect, subjective logic is both subjective and objective at the same time. Thus, subjective logic is comparable to Kant's transcendental ego. This can be seen when Hegel writes:

¹Logic, II, 425. ²Logic, II, 266. ³Logic, I, 73.

⁴Findlay, p. 221.

The Notion, in so far as it has advanced into such an existence as is free itself, is just the Ego, or pure self-consciousness. It is true that I have notions--that is, determinate notions; but Ego is the pure Notion itself, which as Notion has reached Existence.¹

Hegel in enunciating his own subjective logic thus considers it to be one of the greatest contributions of Kant to see "that the unity which constitutes the essence of the Notion is recognized to be the original and synthetic unity of apperception, as unity of the 'I Think' or of self-consciousness."²

It can be seen from the following discussion that the Notion is the Absolute which embraces all the categories evaluated in the Logic. Thus, the doctrine of the Notion embraces both the subjective and objective aspects of reality. Hegel writes:

The Absolute Idea is the only object and content of philosophy. As it contains every determinateness, and its essence is to return to itself through its self-determination or particularization, it has various phases. It is the business of philosophy to recognize it in them. Nature and Spirit are different manners of presenting its existence; art and religion, different manners in which it comprehends itself and gives itself an adequate existence. Philosophy has the same content and end as art and religion; but it is the highest manner of comprehending the Absolute Idea, because its manner is the highest--the Notion. Consequently it comprehends within itself these phases of real and ideal finitude, as well as infinitude and holiness, and understands both them and itself.³

The Notion is thus variously described as the Absolute Idea, the "Spirit's knowledge of its own pure essence,"⁴ the "Truth of all modes of Consciousness,"⁵ "Absolute Knowledge,"⁶ etc. Further, the Notion embraces the whole of logic. This is to say that the two "moments" of logic--the subjective and objective entity--are distinct and yet inseparable in self-

¹Logic, II, 217. ²Logic, II, 218. ³Logic, II, 466-467.

⁴Logic, I, 62. ⁵Logic, I, 60. ⁶Ibid.

consciousness.

Logic was there found to determine itself as the science of pure thought, having pure knowledge as its principle, which is not abstract, but a concrete living unity; for in it the opposition in consciousness between a subjective entity existing for itself, and another similar objective entity, is known to be overcome, and existence is known as pure concept in itself, and the pure concept known as true existence. These are then the two Moments which are contained in Logic. But they are now known as existing inseparably, and not as in consciousness each existing for itself; it is only because they are known as distinct and yet not merely self-existent that their unity is not abstract, dead, and immobile, but concrete.¹

It is this goal of reconciling thought and being that Hegel says is the task of modern philosophy.² But, so long as the Idea of God was expressed in terms of some external reality separate from this world of existence, this reconciliation of thought and being could not take place.³ Hegel thus contends that the Idea (or, God) is nothing more than an expression of a universal, a concept. He makes this quite clear:

In order that we may at least envisage this we must put aside the opinion that Truth is something tangible. Such tangibility has for example been imported even into the Platonic Ideas, which are in the thought of God, as though they were things existing, but existing in a world or region outside the world of Reality, a world other than that of those Ideas, and only having real Substantiality in virtue of this otherness. The Platonic Idea is nothing other than the Universal, or more precisely the Concept of an Object of Thought; it is only in its concept that anything has actuality; in so far as it is other than its concept, it ceases to be actual and is a nonentity. (*italics mine.*)⁴

Hegel says that the history of the world and philosophy is the striving for the reconciliation of thought and being.⁵ This is to say that the Universal Idea (variously described as God,⁶ the Absolute, Reason,⁷ Providence,⁸ Truth⁹)

¹Logic, I, 71. ²History of Philosophy, III, 160-161.

³Logic, I, 61. ⁴Ibid. ⁵History of Philosophy, III, 551-552.

⁶Hegel, Reason in History, p. 21; Logic, I, 90.

⁷Reason in History, p. 11. ⁸Ibid., p. 15. ⁹Logic, I, 60.

has been striving to know itself through its reconciliation with the finite spirit. This means the Universal Ego knows itself in the particular ego.

Our standpoint now is accordingly the knowledge of this Idea as spirit, as absolute Spirit, which in this way opposes to itself another spirit, the finite, the principle of which is to know absolute spirit, in order that absolute spirit may become existent for it.¹

When this unity of absolute Spirit and finite spirit are seen to be distinct and yet inseparable, this unity is absolute knowledge.² It can be seen from this use of the Idea as God and absolute Spirit that Hegel's philosophy lacks all content of any mysticism. Haldane points this out in his introductory preface to The Science of Logic. He writes: "He [Hegel] had, notwithstanding what has been said by people who have not mastered his system, nothing of the mystic in his composition."³

It can thus be seen that the Notion as absolute knowledge corresponds to Kant's transcendental ego. This is to say that just as it is the nature of myself to organize all my thoughts of objective reality into a single unity, even so it is the nature of the categories to be organized into one single universal. This means that "I" myself am given an objective existence, for my self-consciousness "is the pure Notion itself, which as Notion has reached Existence."⁴

This goal of absolute knowledge where thought and being are brought together in the thinking self-consciousness means that what is and what is thought coincide. This means that subjective certainty becomes objective truth. Hegel writes:

Absolute Knowledge is the Truth of all modes of Consciousness,

¹History of Philosophy, III, 553. ²Ibid., p. 551.

³Logic, I, 8. ⁴Ibid., II, 217.

because according to the process of knowledge, it is only when absolute knowledge has been reached that the separation of the Object of Knowledge and Subjective Certainty is completely resolved, and Truth equated to this Certainty, and this Certainty equated to Truth.¹

This distinction between truth and certainty leads to Hegel's logical development of the Absolute Idea. In the beginning of this logical development, the beginning is absolute and immediate. It is absolute, for it begins with what is universally recognized as the subject matter of the mind.² Further, it is absolute, for it is an abstract beginning in that it begins with Being abstractly conceived.³ This is to say, this beginning is immediate, but it is mediated through existence, for Pure Being as the beginning of logical science arises from finite consciousness.⁴ Thus, this immediate beginning is not the last word insofar as knowledge of Being is concerned, for this knowledge does not end with the immediate certainty that something is and can be abstractly conceived. It is the function of logic to examine "pure knowledge in the whole extent of its development. In its result, this Idea has determined itself to be certainty become truth; certainty which in one aspect is no longer over against the object, but has incorporated it with itself and knows it to be itself."⁵

In this way, it can be seen that subjective certainty and objective truth correspond to immediate knowledge and mediated knowledge. Immediate knowledge is subjective certainty; it is what is given in the empirical consciousness and has no connection with such "explosive abruptness" as inner revelation, faith, and intellectual intuition.⁶ Mediated knowledge comes as a result of the critique of the categories. It begins with what is immediate,

¹Logic, I, 60. ²Logic, I, 59. ³Logic, I, 82.

⁴Logic, I, 80-81. ⁵Logic, I, 81. ⁶Logic, I, 79.

namely, Being, and critically examines the various categories (which are used for talking about the world) until finally the highest stage of the categories is reached, which in turn comprehends all that preceded. This final stage is Absolute Spirit.¹ In this way, whatever came before were more or less adequate expressions for the various definitions of the Absolute Spirit.² But, this movement toward the Absolute Spirit is not to suggest that new "truths" are being discovered. Rather, this critique which leads to the highest category of Absolute Spirit only points out the limitations of other categories. In this way, Absolute Spirit only becomes a fuller expression for the truth which was lacking in the beginning.

What is one-sided in the beginning, owing to its general determination as something abstract and immediate, is lost in this movement: it becomes mediated, and the line of scientific advance becomes a circle.--It also follows that the constituents of the Beginning, since at that point they are undeveloped and without content, are not truly understood at the Beginning; only the Science itself fully developed is an understanding of it, complete, significant, and based on truth.³

Hegel is thus pointing out that truth is something eternal. It does not change, and whatever progress is made in the logical development toward the fuller comprehension of the truth is in fact only a return to the foundation. This means truth forms a circle. This means that however one-sided and abstract the category Being may be, the truth of what this category intends to express is the same as that of Absolute Spirit. Hegel writes:

Thus consciousness is led back on its road from immediacy, with which it begins, to absolute knowledge as its inmost truth; and the first term, which entered the stage as the immediate, arises, precisely, from this last term, the foundation.--Still further, we see that Absolute Spirit, which is found to be the concrete, last, and highest truth of all Being, at the end of its evolution freely passes beyond itself and lapses into the shape of an

¹Logic, I, 83. ²Logic, I, 83. ³Logic, I, 83-84.

immediate Being.¹

Consequently, Hegel says it is not so much important where the beginning is. Rather, it is important that logical science in its totality "forms a cycle returning upon itself, wherein the first is also last, and the last first."²

It can be seen that this circle which the categories form in their totality as the Absolute Idea corresponds to the sum-total of Kant's conceptions of the understanding.³ Hegel divides his logic into three primary categories-- Being, Essence, and Notion. We have already pointed out that Being is mediated through existence, i.e., Being is abstractly conceived from what is given in existence. In this way, Being is immediacy and absolute (abstract). Essence is mediated. It is reflection. It is the truth of Being. Logic presses "beyond the immediate and its determinations, penetrates further, assuming that behind this Being there is something other than Being itself, and that this background constitutes the truth of Being."⁴ Notion is subjective logic. This is to say that the Notion is the exact correspondence of the pure concept with existence. But, this correspondence is known in the subjective thinker.⁵

Under the category of Being (which is the most elementary and abstract of all the categories)⁶ Hegel discusses the categories of finite and infinite. It turns out that this distinction between finite and infinite parallels the distinction between pure Being and determinate being. Determinate being is the finite, while indeterminate Being is the infinite.⁷

¹Logic, I, 83. ²Ibid.

³Logic, I, 91; II, 466; Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, p. 316.

⁴Logic, II, 15. ⁵Logic, I, 71. ⁶Logic, I, 83.

⁷Logic, I, 151f.

Hegel distinguishes between the bad infinity of the understanding and the true infinity of Reason.¹ The bad infinity of the understanding makes the finite and the infinite exclusive of each other, so that any connection between them is only external. While the finite is seen to be the existent reality, the infinite is put in opposition to the finite so that the infinite is "the indeterminate void, the beyond of the Finite, whose Being-in-Self does not depend on its Determinate Being, which is a determinate."² The result of this external connection between the finite and the infinite is a contradiction. Hegel writes:

This contradiction is immediately found in the fact that the finite remains opposed to the infinite as a Determinate Being; thus there are two determinatenesses: there are two worlds, the finite and the infinite, which being related the infinite is but the limit of the finite, and thus is merely an infinite itself determinate and finite.³

On the other hand, the true infinity of reason "does not stand above the finite as something complete in itself, the finite still permanently remaining without or beneath it."⁴ Rather, Hegel writes: "If it is asked how the infinite becomes finite, the answer is that there is no infinite which first is infinite and then must become finite or pass on to finitude, but that for itself it is already finite as much as infinite."⁵ What Hegel is saying is that the a priori does not exist independently of the a posteriori, i.e., that "the eternal truths of reason" do not stand divorced from "the accidental truths of history."⁶ The finite is the perishing object, while the infinite is the ideal. In this way, it is evident that any category is a one-sided abstraction unless it takes into consideration its opposite.

¹Logic, I, 150. ²Logic, I, 152. ³Logic, I, 152-153.

⁴Logic, I, 151. ⁵Logic, I, 166-167. ⁶Logic, I, 75.

This is why Hegel says that Kant's thing-in-itself is an abstraction without content. This is to say that it is an indeterminate Being, and Being is Nothing when it is void of content. This means that Kant's thing-in-itself is a product of thought (abstracting thought) and that thought is not the product of the thing-in-itself.¹ Whatever has content has determinacy, and since Kant's thing-in-itself is an absolute essence without determinacy, the question "what" of the thing is either impossible or self-contradictory.² What Hegel is maintaining is that what is a priori and what is a posteriori do not stand separate from each other in any absolute sense. A thing is what it is by virtue of the concept. To consider a thing apart from its concept is an abstraction. Likewise, to consider one concept separate from its opposite is an abstraction.³ Thus, a thing-in-itself and its concept are distinct, but not bifurcated. The finite and the infinite are juxtaposed, but not divorced.

Likewise, Hegel distinguishes between reason and passion. Passion refers to the particular, to the private interest and self-seeking purposes of the individual, though this selfish goal of the individual is the unconscious activity of reason actualizing itself in the attainment of freedom.⁴ Thus, Hegel says that reason governs the world and that its goal is actualized by the special interest of passion. It is passion that "pays the penalty and suffers the loss,"⁵ while reason does not involve "itself in opposition and combat and exposes itself to danger; it remains in the background, untouched and uninjured."⁶ This is the "cunning of Reason."⁷ Thus, passion

¹Logic, I, 73. ²Logic, I, 133. ³Logic, I, 134.

⁴Reason in History, pp. 22ff., 29. ⁵Ibid., p. 44.

⁶Ibid., p. 43. ⁷Ibid., p. 44.

pertains to the finite, while reason relates to the infinite.

It is this distinction between the finite and the infinite that helps to clarify one of the most difficult of Hegel's sayings: that "the actual world is as it ought to be."¹ In the Logic under the category of finitude, he discusses two further categories--Barrier and Ought.² The finite contains a barrier within itself. This barrier is the determinateness of a limit. But, this barrier also implies an ought. This is to say that something contains a barrier, but if it contains a barrier then this implies an ought. Hegel writes:

What ought to be is, and also is not; for if it were, then it could not also be the case that it ought to be. Thus, essentially, Ought has a Barrier.³

It can thus be seen that Hegel is not intending to absolutize the finite when he says that the actual world is as it ought to be. He writes: "But certainly no philosophy, nor opinion, nor Understanding in general, will allow itself to be saddled with the point of view that the finite is absolute."⁴

Thus, when Hegel speaks of the "ought to be" he is referring to what is infinite, for "the Ought is the accomplished transgression of the barrier."⁵ This is to say that infinite reason is accomplishing its purpose in world history. In this respect, Hegel says that both his Philosophy of History⁶ and History of Philosophy⁷ can be viewed as a theodicy.

It remains to be pointed out that Hegel did not follow with his dialectic method any rigorous three-step thesis-antithesis-synthesis. Walter

¹Ibid., p. 47. ²Logic, I, 144. ³Logic, I, 145. ⁴Logic, I, 143.

⁵Logic, I, 146. ⁶History of Philosophy, III, 546.

⁷Reason in History, p. 18.

Kaufmann has shown that Hegel never once used this rigorous three-step method in any of his writings. He points out that there is only one place in all of Hegel's writing where the three terms (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) appear in combination.¹ The place where Kaufmann points to is Hegel's lecture on Kant's philosophy. He suggests that Hegel reproached Kant for having "posited thesis, antithesis, synthesis."² Actually, quite the contrary seems evident to me. In fact, Hegel praised Kant for having made "an historical statement of the moments of the whole." He says that Kant "has correctly determined and distinguished them."³ Hegel's criticism of Kant at this point was that Kant's triplicity was "unspiritual," i.e., it lacked the dynamic.⁴

However, it seems to me that Kaufmann has correctly pointed out that Hegel did not make use of any rigorous three-step dialectic. He writes:

Fichte introduced into German philosophy the three-step of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, using these three terms. Schelling took up this terminology; Hegel did not. He never once used these three terms together to designate three stages in an argument or account in any of his books.⁵

Kaufmann further points out that Hegel made use of triadic arrangements for the purpose of organizing his material. The particular occasion for this type of triadic arrangement was when Hegel had become the principal of the Gymnasium at Nurnberg in 1808. Hegel here lectured to teenage students in philosophy. Kaufmann writes:

¹Walter Kaufmann, Hegel (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), p. 168n.

²Ibid., Cf. History of Philosophy, III, 477. While Kaufmann says this is the only place where Hegel uses the three terms in combination, yet he does use it in a similar discussion on Kant on page 449, History of Philosophy, III. Cf. W. Kaufmann, pp. 428-431.

³History of Philosophy, III, 478. ⁴Ibid., p. 477.

⁵Walter Kaufmann, p. 168.

He aimed at clear outlines that could be readily remembered, at great brevity, and at definitive formulations. The organization henceforth becomes neat to a fault--triads everywhere (but not theses, antitheses, and syntheses).¹

Hegel's use of dialectic was unique in that he sought to put it on a different level than ever before used. It has previously been used in an external manner, and it did not relate to the subject matter as such. It sought to expose the inadmissibility of certain false assumptions. Hegel writes:

Since the Dialectic was regarded merely as the art of producing deceptions and bringing about illusions, it was straightway assumed that it played a cheating game, and that its whole power depended solely on concealment of the fraud; that its results were reached surreptitiously, and were a mere subjective illusion.²

Kant had used the dialectic to point out the restriction of reason's knowledge. In this respect, he eliminated its arbitrary use. He showed that it was a necessary assumption of reason.

When Kant's dialectical exposition in the Antinomies of Pure Reason are looked at closely . . . it will be seen that they

¹Ibid., p. 185. Cf. J. N. Findlay, Hegel, p. 75. That Hegel did not intend his triadic divisions to be mistaken for his dialectic is clearly stated in his introduction to the Logic: "The procedure consists, it may be, in grouping together what is similar, in putting what is simpler before what is compound, and other external considerations. But as for any inner necessary connexion, this goes no further than the list of Section, and the transition consists merely in saying Chapter II;--or We now come to Judgment, and the like" (Logic, I, 66). Kaufmann suggests that the only possible place where such a three-step method of thesis-antithesis-synthesis could be found is in the first chapter of the Science of Logic. "The sole possible exception comes in the first chapter: the first triad of the book, that of being, nothing, and becoming, seems to substantiate the myth; though even here the further breakdown of the discussion of becoming will not fit, and even the mere headings of Notes 2 and 3 suggest the shallowness of the traditional misrepresentation" [p. 208]. Kaufmann further writes: "It is tempting to suggest that those who cling to the legend of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis have obviously never got beyond the first triad, and have not even read the Notes that explain what it is all about" (ibid.).

²Logic, I, 67.

are not indeed deserving of any great praise; but the general idea upon which he builds and which he has vindicated, is the Objectivity of Appearance and the Necessity of Contradiction which belong to the very nature of thought-determinations; primarily indeed in so far as these determinations are applied by Reason to Things in themselves; but further, just what these determinations are in Reason and in respect of that which is self-existent,--just this it is which is their own nature.¹

When Hegel thus speaks of the necessity of contradictions in the categories, he is pointing out that any one category is only a one-sided abstraction unless its opposite category is seen to be inseparably related. In this respect, Findlay has shown that Hegel's use of "contradiction" is in fact only one of ordinary usage which implies that any one thing contains opposite tendencies.²

It can thus be seen that Hegel's dialectic does consist of three "moments," though it would not be accurate to speak of these moments as thesis-antithesis-synthesis as Kaufmann and Findlay have shown. Two of these moments are opposites (e.g., finite and infinite). The third moment is the dialectic moment, which forms the unity of the opposites.

This equally synthetic and analytic moment of the Judgment, by which the original universal determines itself out of itself, to be its own Other, may rightly be called the dialectic moment.³

It is the Notion that initiates the movement of the opposites. Otherwise, the categories remain isolated and contradictory. Hegel makes this clear when he writes:

Thus all opposites which are taken as fixed, like (for example) finite and infinite or individual and universal, are contradictory not in virtue of some external connexion, but rather are transitions in and for themselves, as the consideration of their nature showed; the synthesis and the subject in which they appear are the product of the auto-Reflection of their Notion. Notionless contemplation

¹Ibid. ²Findlay, p. 193. ³Logic, II, 473.

halts at their external relation, isolates them and leaves them as fixed presuppositions: the Notion scrutinizes their very selves, is their moving soul, and stimulates their dialectic.

Thus the dialectic "method has emerged as the Notion [i.e., the ego as the unifying principle for the whole of man's experience] which knows itself and has for object itself as the Absolute, both subjective and objective, that is, as the pure correspondence between the Notion and its Reality, as an existence which the Notion itself is."² It is this correspondence between the Notion and Reality that constitutes the whole of truth, absolute knowledge. Hegel says: "Everything else is error and gloom, opinion, striving, caprice, and transitoriness; the Absolute Idea alone is Being, imperishable Life, self-knowing truth, and the whole of truth."³ Hegel does not seem to be suggesting that one person can grasp absolute knowledge in the sense of omniscience. Rather, he seems to be strongly emphasizing that what one knows of the world he really knows to be true objectively and that this knowledge is not some postulate of faith or mere subjective certainty. This is to say that immediate knowledge as subjective certainty can be seen to be objective truth upon further reflection. Findlay also points this out in regard to Hegel's statement that the Absolute Idea is the whole of truth. Findlay writes:

Hegel may be forgiven the extreme gorgeousness of this passage:⁴ its import is perfectly clear. To conceive things with adequacy and truth is to see them as having no other meaning or function but to call forth the intellectual and practical efforts of conscious person, beings who are and must remain atomically separate in their self-enclosed personality, but who also share an endless open horizon of rational enterprises, for which the rest of the world provides no more than the stepping-off place or the stimulus. There is no ref-

¹Logic, II, 475. ²Logic, II, 468. ³Logic, II, 466.

⁴"this passage" refers to the quotation cited in the previous footnote.

erence here to any absolute, timeless or supra-individual experience: the Absolute Idea is merely the categorial form of self-conscious Spirit, something we all exemplify when we admire art, practise religion or cultivate philosophy.

Paradoxical though it is, it can be said that Hegel's philosophy has no place for "faith," and in this sense it is quite anti-metaphysical as well as wholly non-religious. To introduce a world that does not have an empirical foundation in this world would be to adopt the "bad infinite of the understanding." Findlay points out this amystical and anti-metaphysical aspect quite clearly.

Here it may first be held that, despite much opinion to the contrary, Hegel's philosophy is one of the most anti-metaphysical of philosophical systems, one that remains most within the pale of ordinary experience, and which accords no place to entities or properties lying beyond that experience, or to facts undiscoverable by ordinary methods of investigation.²

Findlay further points out the amystical aspect of Hegel's philosophy.

"Hegel often speaks the language of a metaphysical theology, but such language, it is plain, is a mere concession to the pictorial mode of religious expression."³

Though Hegel eliminates faith and the transcendence of a personal God who stands above and beyond the empirical world, his importance for this thesis is found in his emphasis upon the objectivity of truth. This is to say that he attempted to show that the cognitive faculties are so constituted that they can be a reliable guide to what is objectively true. This means that it is man's quest not to be satisfied with subjective certainty; he can only rest content when subjective certainty is seen to be objective truth.

¹Findlay, p. 265. ²Findlay, p. 348. Cf. W. Kaufmann, pp. 273-278.

³Findlay, p. 348.

This appreciation for Hegel's attempt to provide a basis for objective truth is not intended to suggest that he has conclusively resolved the problem of epistemology. It can also be seen that no pretense has been made for giving a comprehensive critique of Hegel's philosophy which would far exceed the limited scope of this thesis. Neither has any attempt been made to trace the many features of its pervasive influence. Nor has any attempt been made to blame or justify the negative features of this influence. Rather, this appreciation lies in the idea behind Hegel's philosophy; namely, that subjective certainty must be shown to be objective truth. What is a further important feature of this summary discussion on Hegel's logic (metaphysics) is found in the fact that Hegel considers his Science of Logic to be the justification for the presupposition in his philosophy of history that "Reason" governs the course of world history. We now turn to that discussion.

Hegel's Philosophy of World History. What is of paramount significance for the purposes of this thesis on the problem of theology and history is Hegel's idea of history, which has been the goal toward which the previous discussion on his logic has been directed.

Collingwood points out that "the culmination of the historical movement which began in 1784 with Herder [i.e., with his Ideen zur Philosophie der Menschengeschichte] came with Hegel" in his lectures on the Philosophy of History.¹ Hegel's interest in the philosophy of history, as well as in the history of philosophy, is motivated by his desire to reconcile thought and being, reason and history.² It is at this point that Hegel criticizes the weakness of Locke's philosophy, which is not greatly concerned with the difficulties

¹Collingwood, p. 113.

²Reason in History, pp. 11-67; History of Philosophy, III, 545.

which thought presents concerning the nature of what is objectively true.

Hegel writes: "Before the need for reconciliation can be satisfied, the pain of disunion must be excited."¹ It is this "pain of disunion" between thought and being, reason and history that prompted, in fact, all of Hegel's philosophical writings.²

In depicting "this strife"³ between reason and history, thought and being, Hegel enunciates his own means of effecting a reconciliation. This is seen in the closing lecture of his History of Philosophy, which also parallels the intention of his Philosophy of History.⁴

It has been my desire that you should learn from it [history of philosophy] that the history of Philosophy is not a blind collection of fanciful ideas, nor a fortuitous progression. I have rather sought to show the necessary development of the successive philosophies from one another, so that the one of necessity presupposes another preceding it. The general result of the history of Philosophy is this: in the first place, that throughout all time there has been only one Philosophy, the contemporary differences of which constitute the necessary aspects of the one principle; in the second place, that the succession of philosophic systems is not due to chance, but represents the necessary succession of stages in the development of this science; in the third place, that the final philosophy of a period is the result of this development, and is truth in the highest form which the self-consciousness of spirit affords of itself. The latest philosophy contains therefore those which went before; it embraces in itself all the different stages thereof; it is the product and result of those that preceded it.⁵

The following principles can be seen to emerge from this. (1) Reason governs the movement and progress of history.⁶ (2) Each stage in history is

¹History of Philosophy, III, 312.

²Logic, I, 59-60, 65; History of Philosophy, III, 545.

³History of Philosophy, III, 552. ⁴Reason in History, pp. 68-95.

⁵History of Philosophy, III, 552-553.

⁶Cf. Reason in History, p. 11.

a necessary moment of the whole development of history. (3) Each successive stage includes all the previous stages of truth. (4) History is the growth of the self-conscious spirit toward freedom, which is the ultimate goal of world history.¹ (5) History is thus movement toward the perfectibility of man.² (6) History means both Geschehen and Geschichte; it is both events and the narration of events.³ This means history is not merely ascertaining what happened, but apprehending why the event happened.⁴ This is to say that history can be known, for thought and being, history and reason, are not fundamentally different spheres of reality. Being is what it is because of thought; history is what it is because of reason.

Finally, it can be said that Hegel's principles of historiography clearly enunciate the relativity of history. Truth (or, Reason) is progressively actualizing itself in each stage of history. Each subsequent generation more fully embraces the various aspects of truth which have existed in the previous stages. To be sure, Hegel said that his method was the only true and absolute method for reconciling thought and being (history and reason),⁵ but he did not claim that philosophy nor history would make no further progress beyond his own system or the present day. He insists that he can only write from "the standpoint of the present day."⁶ He further points this out in his enunciation of the relativity of history.

Thus, in dealing with the idea of Spirit only and in considering the whole of world history as nothing but its manifestation, we are dealing only with the present--however long the past may be which we survey. . . . This implies that the present stage of Spirit contains all previous stages within itself. These, to be

¹Ibid., p. 70. ²Ibid., p. 68. ³Ibid., p. 75.

⁴Collingwood, p. 113. ⁵Logic, I, 65.

⁶History of Philosophy, III, 552. Cf. Walter Kaufmann, p. 70.

sure, have unfolded themselves successively and separately, but Spirit still is what it has in itself always been. The differentiation of its stages is but the development of what it is in itself. The life of the ever-present Spirit is a cycle of stages, which, on the one hand, co-exist side by side, but, on the other hand, seem to be past. The moments which Spirit seems to have left behind, it still possesses in the depth of its present.¹

This relativity of history means that no gaps nor individual absolutes can be found in history.² It also means that no individual stage in the historical development of Spirit toward the actualization of freedom can be absolutely unique, though his emphasis upon the fulfilment of universal history in the present-day stage of the historical development has opened up his philosophy of history to the charge that he glorifies the present and thus gives support to a rigid political conservatism.³ The individual and the particular are non-essential and arbitrary. Only the universal (world history seen as a whole) and the infinite are essential.⁴ Herein lies the theological weakness of Hegel's epistemology of history--having eliminated the concept of biblical transcendence (which for Hegel corresponds to the spurious infinite of the understanding), historical events cannot serve as the point of departure for faith, e.g., the Christ event as a particular point in the process of historical development cannot have absolute meaning for all mankind. Rather, the Idea (Reason) is the perspective whereby world history can be surveyed. To be sure, it is hardly fair to charge Hegel with the naive assumption that world history mediates a total conception of world events and meaning. Rather, Hegel insists that world history is a convergence of empirical facts and a priori judgments. These a priori judgments make the idea of world history feasible. These

¹Reason in History, p. 95. ²Ibid., p. 66.

³Collingwood defends Hegel against this charge, p. 120.

⁴Logic, I, 130; Reason in History, p. 80.

a priori presuppositions are the result of his Logic, namely, the Idea of Freedom is progressively being unfolded in the development of world history. This, then, is the ultimate purpose of world history for Hegel.

However, despite Hegel's attempt to go beyond Kant's dualism of noumenon and phenomenon, he himself ends up with a dualism of the particular, individual, and arbitrary aspects of reality on the one hand, and the universal, enduring, and essential aspects of reality on the other hand. As already noted, the difficulty of this "dualism" is that Hegel's metaphysical system thus vitiates the concept of uniqueness in regard to historical events. What is significant for Hegel is Reason's logically-fixed Idea of Freedom actualizing itself in the development of world history by means of particular and mere transitory events and dispensable persons. Theologically interpreted, the Christ event can have no absolutely unique significance for all mankind.

CHAPTER III

HEIDEGGER: TRUTH AS THE SELF-DISCLOSURE OF BEING¹

Martin Heidegger has attempted to resolve the critical epistemological problem in terms of primordial thinking. Insofar as he is concerned, Western metaphysics represents a breakdown in thought. The ontological difference between Being and beings² has been obscured, especially as it is seen in modern philosophy from Descartes to Hegel. Traditional metaphysics has established the categories of the positive sciences, while at the same time ignoring the existenzial concepts of Dasein.³ The truth of Being has been reduced to the scientific grasp of truth in terms of a known conformity of subject and object, thereby re-interpreting and degrading Being as beings. Heidegger thus calls for a "destroying of the history of ontology," in order that the primordial foundation of metaphysics might be retrieved.⁴

¹Because of the difficulties involved in the translation of Heidegger's works, I have not always followed the English translations, especially in those places where particular words which are not used in the translations would add consistency to the style and clarification of ideas in regard to my discussion of Heidegger in this section. Thus, I will in all cases give reference both to the English editions and the German editions. The German editions will be enclosed in parentheses.

²The word "Sein" will be translated throughout this section as "Being," while "Das Seiende" (that-which-is) will be translated as "being."

³Since "Dasein" (There-Being) has become a familiar Heideggerian word to express the kind of Being that uniquely belongs to man, it will not be translated or italicized in this discussion.

⁴Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), cited hereafter as BT, pp. 41-49 (Sein und Zeit / Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953, pp. 19-27, cited hereafter as SZ).

In this way, Heidegger attempts to overcome the subject-object bifurcation of reality, thus going behind the conception of truth as conformity to the primordial significance of truth as unconcealment ($\alpha\text{-}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$), as a letting-be. In placing exclusive emphasis upon truth as ontological disclosure, it will be pointed out in the following discussion that Heidegger's epistemology succumbs to a dualism which is expressed in more or less related terms as, Vorhandenheit and Existenz, nature and history, language as "statement" and language as "unconcealment."

Being and Dasein. Heidegger contends that the question of Being is the fundamental question of man. Since Being is the Being of beings, it is not a Being among beings. It is not one category among other categories. It is not that of a class or genus.¹ Just what Being is, however, is the task which philosophy must once again raise. It is a question that cannot be assumed to be self-evident or negligible. It is not a new question, but one that extends back to the very beginning of Western metaphysics in the pre-Socratic thinkers. It is a question that has become muddled in the course of philosophical development, beginning with Plato's reduction of Being to ἰδέα (in an extended sense) and the resulting distinction between idea as what really is and sensibility as a mere copy of the idea. This distinction was then intensified with Descartes' res cogitans and res extensa, and it finally culminated in Hegel's theory of absolute knowledge--the Notion as the absolute unity of subject and object, thought and being.

What is thus required of philosophy is a "backtracking" to primordial

¹BT, pp. 22, 26 (SZ, pp. 3, 6).

thinking, i.e., one must go behind beings to Being.¹ The earlier Heidegger sought to get at the truth of Being through an interrogation of beings. But, this interrogation of beings was not just any being, but man as he stands related to Being. Thus, man is Dasein (There-Being). This means that man "exists." "Existence" is a term to express man's relationship to Being. Man "exists" in the sense that Being expresses itself in the "There."² Existence does not mean existentia as an occurrence (Vorkommen) or presence (Vorhandensein). "Nor does 'existence' mean, 'existentially' speaking, man's moral preoccupation with himself--a preoccupation arising out of his psycho-physical constitution. Ex-sistence, grounded in truth as freedom, is nothing less than exposition into the revealed nature of what-is-as-such."³

A piece of wood has "real being," but it does not "exist," for it does not stand in a relationship to Being. On the other hand, existence is the determining factor of Dasein. Dasein conceives itself in terms of existence, i.e., its possibilities to be itself and whether or not it so chooses to be itself. In this way, inauthentic or authentic existence depends upon Dasein's relationship to Being. Dasein in its forgetfulness of Being is inauthentic existence, while Dasein reconciled with Being means that man

¹Heidegger, Essays in Metaphysics: Identity and Difference, trans. Kurt F. Leidecker (New York: Philosophical Library Inc. 1960), pp. 44-45, cited hereafter as Essays in Metaphysics (Identität und Differenz / Pfullingen: Verlag Gunther Neske, 1957), pp. 47-48, cited hereafter as Identität).

²BT, pp. 32-33 (SZ, p. 12).

³Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," Existence and Being, trans. R. F. C. Hull and Alan Crick, with an intro. by Werner Brock (London: Vision Press Ltd., 1949), p. 335, cited hereafter as Existence and Being ("Vom Wesen der Wahrheit, Wegmarken / Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1967), pp. 84-85, cited hereafter as Wegmarken).

experiences authentic existence.¹

That Dasein asks the question of Being means that man is an ontic-ontological being. He is an ontical being because he is a being as such. He is an ontological being because he stands in a relationship to Being. Heidegger further clarifies the terminological distinction between ontic and ontological by his use of the terms, existenzial and existenziell.² "Existenzial" refers to the analytic of Dasein's existence. "Existenziell" refers to the actual existence itself of Dasein. Thus, ontic and existenziell, on the one hand, and ontological and existenzial, on the other hand, closely correspond.³

What Heidegger is ultimately concerned with is not Dasein, but Sein (Being). Not the "There" of Being, but the Being which effects the "There." It is the ontological question that is most significant, not the ontic-existenziell. This distinction between the ontic and the ontological is intended by Heidegger to point out the inadequacy of the traditional categories, especially as they are articulated in Kant's a priori transcendental logic. His categories related to only one aspect of the subject matter--nature. In this respect, Kant pursued an ontical inquiry rather than an ontological one. What Kant (following Aristotle) effected was a foundation for the positive sciences. They provided the concepts for understanding the subject matter of the natural sciences, which concepts are validated only

¹BT, pp. 67ff. (SZ, pp. 41ff.).

²Because of the technical distinction that Heidegger makes of these two terms and because of the difficulty of conveying this distinction in English, existenzial and existenziell will be left untranslated in this chapter.

³BT, pp. 32-33 (SZ, pp. 12-13).

after an investigation into the beings themselves. On the other hand, Heidegger calls for an "ontological inquiry" which "is indeed more primordial, as over against the ontical inquiry of the positive sciences."¹ Thus, the ontical sciences are severely restricted until they have become ontological. It is not enough to interrogate scientifically beings as such, but one must "back track" to the primordial investigation of Being. It is "the domineering nature of modern technology" that must give way to a "back track" to the essence of metaphysics if the nature of Being is to be unfolded.²

In this way, it can be seen why Heidegger claims he is an ontologist rather than an existentialist.³ However, that he inquires after Being through an existenzial analytic of Dasein would seem to justify classifying him also as an existentialist. This is particularly pronounced in Being and Time. It is in this work that he seeks to clarify human Dasein, which in turn would open up the meaning of Being. The method for getting at Being is phenomenology--to the things themselves.⁴ In adapting the phenomenology of Husserl,⁵ Heidegger uses phenomenology as the method whereby the Being of beings is unfolded. But, the task of encountering Being through Dasein by the means of phenomenology is not "the naïveté of a haphazard, 'immediate', and unreflective 'beholding'."⁶ Rather, it is a phenomenological method in which Being must "be wrested from

¹BT, p. 31 (SZ, p. 11).

²Essays in Metaphysics, p. 44 (Identität, p. 48).

³William J. Richardson, Heidegger (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), p. 259. Marjorie Grene, Martin Heidegger (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1957), p. 12. John Macquarrie, An Existentialist Theology (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1955), pp. 29-30.

⁴BT, p. 50 (SZ, p. 27). ⁵BT, p. 62 (SZ, p. 38).

⁶BT, p. 61 (SZ, p. 37).

the objects of phenomenology."¹ This "wresting" comes about through a methodical interpretation, which is called a "hermeneutic of Dasein."

Heidegger writes:

Our investigation itself will show that the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation. The *lóyos* of the phenomenology of Dasein has the character of a *ἐρμηνεύειν*, through which the authentic meaning of Being, and also those basic structures of Being which Dasein itself possesses, are made known to Dasein's understanding of Being. The phenomenology of Dasein is a hermeneutic in the primordial signification² of this word, where it designates this business of interpreting.

Thus, the primary significance of hermeneutic is that it is "an analytic of the existentiality of existence."³ Insofar as it unfolds the historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) of man, hermeneutical inquiry points out the ontical basis for Historie, which is the methodical study of world history. Hermeneutic as the method of the human sciences is a derivative of hermeneutic as the existenzial analytic of Dasein.⁴

Historicity, existence, ontology, are parallel terms and are primary. The scientific study of history (Historie), existenziell, ontic, positive sciences are also parallel terms and are only secondarily derived from the idea of historicity, existenzial, and ontology.

Thus, hermeneutic in its primary sense is an exposition and clarification of man's relationship to Being. What this hermeneutic explicates of Dasein can be seen primarily in three main descriptive terms which are called existentials (Existenzialien), i.e., concepts of existence in contrast to the categories of the positive sciences.⁵ These three existentials are: (1) existentiality, (2) facticity, and (3) Being-fallen. These existentials

¹BT, p. 61 (SZ, p. 36). ²BT, pp. 61-62 (SZ, p. 37).

³BT, 62 (SZ, p. 38). ⁴Ibid.

⁵BT, p. 70 (SZ, p. 44).

are disclosed in the phenomenon of anxiety (Angst). The ontological term which Heidegger coins to express the unity of these existentials is "care" (Sorge).¹

These existenzial characteristics are not pieces belonging to something composite, one of which might sometimes be missing; but there is woven together in them a primordial context which makes up that totality of the structural whole which we are seeking.²

Existentiality refers to "the state of Being that is constitutive for those beings that exists."³ It is the term which includes all the possibilities of Dasein. These "possibilities" of Dasein are not ontical categories, for Dasein does not possess the general properties of a static object. Dasein is not a "what" (a mere being), but a "who" (one who exists).⁴ Dasein is a "way of existing" (eine Weise zu existieren), not "a being present-at-hand" (ein vorhandenes Seiendes).⁵ Since existentiality thus refers to Dasein's "ownmost potentiality-for-Being,"⁶ one can say: "Become what you are."⁷

The second main existenzial concept disclosed in ontological anxiety is facticity. Facticity means that Being is not a worldless and thus indeterminate subject. Being is Being-in-the-world. "To Being-in-the-world, however, belongs the fact that it has been delivered over to itself--that it has in each case already been thrown into a world."⁸ But, "world" does not mean to suggest a factum brutum. It is not a world of objects "welded together with a subject."⁹ Heidegger writes:

¹BT, p. 235 (SZ, p. 191). ²BT, pp. 235-236 (SZ, p. 191).

³BT, p. 33 (SZ, p. 13). ⁴BT, pp. 70-71 (SZ, pp. 44-45).

⁵BT, p. 312 (SZ, p. 267). ⁶BT, p. 236 (SZ, p. 191).

⁷BT, p. 186 (SZ, pp. 145-146). ⁸BT, p. 236 (SZ, p. 192). ⁹Ibid.

Facticity is not the factuality of the factum brutum of something present-at-hand, but a characteristic of Dasein's Being--one which has been taken up into existence, even if proximally it has been thrust aside. The "that-it-is" of facticity never becomes something that we can come across by beholding it.¹

Thus, the world is not the cosmos; not the world of a cause-effect mechanism. The world (the "that-it-is") "which is disclosed in Dasein's state-of-mind must rather be conceived as an existenzial attribute of the being which has Being-in-the-world as its way of Being."²

The third ontological term which characterizes Dasein is "Being-fallen" (Verfallensein). This fallenness of Dasein is further described as "everydayness," "publicness of the 'they'," "inauthenticity." This fallenness means that Dasein is a "not-Being-its-self."³

Anxiety not only discloses the fallenness of Dasein, but also opens up the possibility of authentic existence. Anxiety relates to an indefinable threat.⁴ It is the feeling of nothingness which one gets from simply Being-in-the-world. This sense of dread characterizes man because when he senses the entirety of his life he knows that he is a Being-unto-death. It is this sense of ontological anxiety that jars man from his self-forgetfulness. Thus, anxiety (Angst) releases man from his everydayness to authentic being, a Being-unto-Death.

This potentiality for authentic existence is further attested through the voice of conscience. Conscience is not understood here in a theological sense, nor as proofs of God. The ontological analysis of conscience is also "prior to any description and classification of Experiences of conscience."⁵

¹BT, p. 174 (SZ, p. 135). ²BT, p. 174 (SZ, p. 135).

³BT, pp. 220, 236, 237 (SZ, p. 175, 176, 191-192).

⁴BT, p. 231 (SZ, p. 186). ⁵BT, p. 313 (SZ, p. 269).

Conscience calls us to authentic existence. This call of conscience "asserts nothing, gives no information about world-events, has nothing to tell."¹

"'Nothing' gets called to this Self, but it has been summoned to itself-- that is, to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being."²

"Resoluteness" is the authentic answer to the summons of conscience.

"'Resoluteness' signifies letting oneself be summoned out of one's lostness in the 'they.'"³ This resoluteness always happens at a particular time. It

is not open to ontico-psychical investigation. Rather, it is existenziell indefiniteness. "Only in a resolution is resoluteness sure of itself."⁴

What is to be resolved? "Only the resolution itself can give the answer."⁵

Thus, resoluteness is "Dasein's authentic potentiality-for-Being, in its existenziell attestation."⁶

This call of Being gives rise to man's awareness of lostness in the "they," the common everydayness of inauthentic existence. Resoluteness restores Dasein's potentiality-for-Being-its-Self. Finally, when one comes to an authentic and ontological understanding of the inevitability of death, then the potentiality-for-Being becomes authentic. Heidegger writes:

When the call of conscience is understood, lostness in the "they" is revealed. Resoluteness brings Dasein back to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self. When one has an understanding Being-towards-death--as one's ownmost possibility--one's potentiality-for-Being becomes authentic and wholly transparent.

Stated succinctly, authentic existence is anticipatory resoluteness.

¹BT, p. 318 (SZ, p. 273). ²Ibid.

³BT, p. 345 (SZ, p. 298). ⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid. ⁶BT, p. 349 (SZ, p. 302).

⁷BT, p. 354 (SZ, p. 307).

Being and Temporality. We have already pointed out the three main characteristics which follow from an existenzial analysis of Dasein-- existentiality, facticity, and fallenness. These three characteristics are interrelated, and they do not exist separately from each other. The comprehensive term Heidegger uses for expressing the meaning of existence as a whole is care (Sorge).¹

Care is defined as an ontological-temporal concept. It is ontological because it designates man's existence as it stands inauthentically towards Being.² It is temporal, for the meaning of Care is temporality (Zeitlichkeit).

Care is temporality in the sense that man exists as time, not "in time" like a thing. Temporality is the ultimate ground of Dasein's existence as a whole (Care).³ Thus, temporality in its primordial significance is existenzial time. It is ontological, not ontical.

Existenzial time points in three directions. This is to say that existenzial time is "ecstatic"--i.e., it refers to "states of mind."⁴ First, it points to the future through man's existentiality, i.e., the possibilities of existence in that man projects what he can be.⁵ Heidegger also calls this direction (ecstasis, i.e., state of mind) "ahead-of-itself."⁶ Second, existenzial time points to the past through his facticity, i.e. his thrownness into the world, his has-beenness.⁷ The present is seen in his

¹BT, p. 237 (SZ, p. 192). ²BT, p. 370 (SZ, p. 323).

³BT, pp. 376-377 (SZ, p. 328).

⁴BT, pp. 377, 425 (SZ, pp. 328-329, 373).

⁵BT, pp. 378, 401, 373 (SZ, pp. 329, 350, 325-326).

⁶BT, p. 293 (SZ, pp. 249-250).

⁷BT, pp. 293, 373 (SZ, pp. 250, 325-326).

fallenness, i.e., his lostness in everydayness.¹

It is from this existenzial phenomenon of time as it is experienced in everydayness that gives rise to the interpretation of time in terms of inauthentic temporality, i.e., an endless succession of "nows." This mechanical and derived view of time stands in sharp contrast to authentic and historical time--time as the structural constitution of Dasein.²

This temporality of Dasein is further worked out in the concept of historicity (Geschichtlichkeit). Historicity is here an ontological-existenzial concept. Just as man does not exist "in time" neither does he exist "in history." Rather, Dasein is history as temporality.³ History is the "happening" (Geschehen) of man; it is man's existence. It is the "connectedness of life", i.e. "the movement of existence."⁴ Heidegger writes: "The movement (Die Bewegtheit) of existence (der Existenz) is not the motion (Bewegung) of something present-at-hand (eines Vorhandenen)."⁵ This movement of existence (as the connectedness of life or it may be described as Dasein stretching itself along) is by definition called "happening" (Geschehen).⁶ Here it can be seen that Heidegger sharply delineates Existenz and Vorhanden, the movement of existence and the motion of something present-at-hand, and Geschehen and Vorhanden. Thus, the movement of existence is not a succession of nows, nor the motion of something present-at-hand. Neither is Geschehen a making of something to be present-at-hand. Rather, it is a "happening", a making of history, a connectedness of life in an ontological sense. This is to say, that man's life is "connected" ontologically from birth, through Care, to death.

¹BT, pp. 236-237 (SZ, p. 192). ²BT, p. 374 (SZ, pp. 326-327).

³BT, p. 428 (SZ, p. 376). ⁴BT, p. 427 (SZ, pp. 374-375).

⁵BT, p. 427 (SZ, pp. 374-375). ⁶BT, p. 427 (SZ, p. 375).

Thus, the connectedness of life is the "ends" and their "between" of Dasein. The "between" is Care. The "ends" and their "between" are.¹ This unfolding of the existenzial structure of Geschehen in its temporality (Zeitlichkeit) is thus characterized as the ontological interpretation of Dasein's historicity (Geschichtlichkeit).²

The "connectedness of life" means that Dasein's future, past, and present (in that order) are united into a whole. This means that Dasein does not live in history which is characterized by a past, present, and future. Rather, the historicity of Dasein means that man lives in such a way that the past, present, and future are intrinsically the very structure of Dasein. When this ontological unity "happens" in the "moment of vision," then man's "fate" (Schicksal) is achieved. Fate thus is authentic historicity.³ Fate further expresses in terms of history what has already been expressed as anticipatory resoluteness.⁴

Historicity is the wholeness of Dasein from its birth to its death, including its existentiality (the future), its facticity (the past), and its fallenness (the present). Historicity in the sense of Care is inauthentic existence. Historicity becomes authentic existence in its fate--in authentic temporality when Dasein becomes resolute in the anticipation of Being-unto-Death (anticipatory resoluteness).⁵

In pointing out the primordial significance of history (Geschichte) as the historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) of Dasein, Heidegger plays up the

¹BT, p. 426 (SZ, p. 374). ²BT, p. 427 (SZ, p. 375).

³BT, p. 437 (SZ, p. 385). ⁴William Richardson, p. 91.

⁵BT, pp. 438-439 (SZ, pp. 386-387).

terminological distinction between Historie and Geschichte. Historie is the science of history.¹ Geschichte is the historical reality itself. It is what makes Historie possible. Heidegger, however, is concerned primarily with Geschichte.

Heidegger summarizes four popular views of history. These views speak of history as a being (that-which-is) of the past in their primary signification. He is not here speaking of the science of history (Historie). First, history (Geschichte) is interpreted to mean something that is past and no longer present-at-hand. Second, history means something that is past, but is still having an effect in the present. Here history is a becoming in which events are related through a connection of time--the past, the present, and the future. Third, history means the historical development of cultures. Fourth, history is what is handed down by tradition.²

In each of these four interpretations of history, Heidegger points out the fact that they refer to man as the "subject" of history. This leads Heidegger to stress the fact that history (Geschichte) is primarily the "happening" (Geschehen) of Dasein, i.e., history is man himself. The secondary meaning of Geschichte is called "world-historic."³ For example, remains, monuments, records have a historisch significance because of their world-historic (welt-geschichtlich) character.⁴ A battlefield, place of worship, a countryside are world-historic beings, for they have an "essential existent unity with Dasein."⁵ Thus, whatever geschichtlich significance adheres in world beings is only derived from having stood in relationship to Dasein's

¹BT, p. 430 (SZ, p. 378). ²BT, pp. 430-431 (SZ, pp. 378-379).

³BT, p. 433 (SZ, p. 381). ⁴BT, p. 446 (SZ, p. 394).

⁵BT, p. 440 (SZ, p. 389).

historicity.¹ In this way, Heidegger stresses that Geschichte precedes and is the basis of Historie. He writes:

World-historic beings do not first get their historic (geschichtlich) character, let us say, by reason of an historical (historisch) objectification; they get it rather as those beings which they are in themselves when they are encountered within-the-world.²

Heidegger restricts the task of the historian in making the science of history (Historie) solely a study of what is a repeatable possibility for authentic human existence today. The existenzial foundation of Historie is the historian's own historicity (Geschichtlichkeit).³ This is to say, the historian examines the "past" from the present standpoint of his own historicity. Heidegger writes:

Our going back to 'the past' does not first get its start from the acquisition, sifting, and securing of such material; these activities presuppose historic (geschichtlich) Being towards the Dasein that has-been-there--that is to say, they presuppose the historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) of the historian's (Historiker) existence. This is the existenzial foundation for Historie as a science, even for its most trivial and 'mechanical' procedures.⁴

The ultimate goal of the historian is to make a study of the possibilities of Dasein; this historical study is to reveal "by repetition the Dasein which has-been-there" and it is to reveal Dasein "in its possibility."⁵ Heidegger writes:

The question of whether the object of Historie is just to put once-

¹BT, pp. 432-433 (SZ, pp. 380-381). ²BT, p. 433 (SZ, p. 381).

³The "historicity" of the historian as the necessary presupposition for a study of the historical past closely corresponds to Schleiermacher's "psychological interpretation", Dilthey's "understanding of mental life" (BT, pp. 429, 449-450, SZ, pp. 377, 397-399), and Bultmann's "pre-understanding." Cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Hermeneutics and Universal History," History and Hermeneutic, ed. Robert W. Funk (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 130.

⁴BT, p. 446 (SZ, p. 394). ⁵BT, pp. 446-447 (SZ, p. 395).

for-all 'individual' events into a series, or whether it also has 'laws' as its objects, is one that is radically mistaken. The theme of Historie is neither that which has happened just once for all nor something universal that floats above it, but the possibility which has been factually existent.¹

This means that historical science studies the possibilities of authentic existence in the past, which possibilities are seen to be repeatable as possibilities for man today. Thus, the presuppositions of (1) the historicity of the historian and (2) authentic repetition (i.e., "the repetition of a possibility of existence that has come down to us")² serve as the principles of selection for Historie.³

In this way, it can be seen that "facts" are important only as they arise in connection with the question of human existence. Heidegger writes: "Only because in each case the central theme of Historie is the possibility of existence which has-been-there, and because the latter exists factually in a way which is world-historic, can it demand of itself that it takes its orientation inexorably from the 'facts'."⁴

Though Being and Time sought to explicate the meaning of Being through an existenzial analytic (hermeneutic) of Dasein, a clear and precise definition of Being is not set forth. Rather, what has emerged in Being and Time has been an interpretation of "the primordial whole of factual Dasein with regard to its possibilities of authentic and inauthentic existing."⁵ One might say

¹BT, p. 447 (SZ, p. 395). ²BT, p. 437 (SZ, p. 385).

³(1) Existentiality as the futural direction (ecstasis) of Dasein in the sense that the possibilities of Dasein's authentic existence are unfolded, and (2) "authentic repetition" as unfolding the possibilities (existentiality) of human existence seem to correspond to what Bultmann means in his use of "eschatological existence." Cf. John Macquarrie, An Existentialist Theology, p. 166.

⁴BT, p. 447 (SZ, p. 395). ⁵BT, p. 486 (SZ, p. 436).

that the purpose of Being and Time was to serve as a prolegomenon to an interpretation of Being. This can be seen when Heidegger writes his concluding remarks:

The conflict as to the Interpretation of Being cannot be allayed, because it has not yet been enkindled. And in the end this is not the kind of conflict one can 'bluster into'; it is of the kind which cannot get enkindled unless preparations are made for it. Towards this alone the foregoing investigation is on the way.¹

That Heidegger changed his hermeneutical approach from an existenzial analytic of Dasein to a more direct approach to Being in terms of primordial thought has frequently been pointed out.² This change of method is especially evidenced in his An Introduction to Metaphysics. Heidegger himself points this out in his preface to the seventh edition of Being and Time. When Being and Time was first published, it was designated as the "First Half." Now Heidegger acknowledges that the second half which was to follow Being and Time can no longer be added "unless the first were to be presented anew."³ Thus, he suggests that one should turn to his Introduction to Metaphysics for an "elucidation of this question" of Being.⁴ It is this book which represents his methodological change.

Being and Truth. To reiterate, Heidegger wants to overcome traditional metaphysics which basically is nothing more than an inquiry into beings as mere entities rather than into the Being of beings. Such metaphysics is ontical, i.e., a type of physics. What he is calling for is a meta-physics;

¹BT, pp. 487-488 (SZ, p. 437).

²William Richardson, pp. 623-628. ³BT, p. 17 (SZ, p. V).

⁴Ibid.

an investigation into what lies behind beings.¹

This investigation into Being follows from the question, "Why are there beings rather than nothing?" "The question aims at the ground of what is insofar as it is."² Thus, this question is to be taken strictly as ontological independent of any particular ontical being. Heidegger writes:

Accordingly, if our question "Why are there beings rather than nothing?" is taken in its fullest sense, we must avoid singling out any special, particular being, including man. For what indeed is man? Consider the earth within the endless darkness of space in the universe. By way of comparison it is a tiny grain of sand; between it and the next grain of its size there extends a mile or more of emptiness; on the surface of this grain of sand there lives a crawling, bewildered swarm of supposedly intelligent animals, who for a moment have discovered knowledge. And what is the temporal extension of a human life amid all the millions of years? Scarcely a move of the second hand, a breath. Within the being as a whole there is no legitimate ground for singling out this being which is called mankind and to which we ourselves happen to belong.³

Here it can be seen the decisive shift in Heidegger's focus from Dasein to Being, which is characteristic of his later writings.

This question of Being is not a theological question and it is in no way intended to be related to theology. Heidegger maintains this is so because theology cannot raise the question "why" there are beings, for it already knows the answer. Thus, to speak of a Christian philosophy is like talking about a "round square," though this is not to imply that Christian experience cannot be theologized, i.e., theology may think and raise questions.⁴ Heidegger writes:

¹Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. Ralph Manheim (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 17, cited hereafter as IM.
Einführung in Die Metaphysik (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953), pp. 13-14, cited hereafter as EM.

²IM, p. 3 (EM, p. 2). ³IM, p. 4 (EM, p. 3).

⁴IM, p. 7 (EM, p. 6).

Only epochs which no longer fully believe in the true greatness of the task of theology arrive at the disastrous notion that philosophy can help to provide a refurbished theology if not a substitute for theology, which will satisfy the needs and tastes of the time.¹ For the original Christian faith philosophy is foolishness.

In thus posing the "why" of beings, Heidegger is not raising the traditional metaphysical questions of God, the soul, and the world. Basically, his question of Being is an epistemological primordial question--how can one know the ground (the Being) of beings?² This means that in raising the question of Being Heidegger is raising the question of truth. To ask what is Being is to ask what is truth.³ This correlation between Being and truth can further be seen through the inseparable connection of language (as primordial thought) and Being. Heidegger writes: "It is in words and language that things first come into being and are."⁴ Heidegger here is enunciating the "linguisticity of reality" which is the point of departure for the so-called "New Hermeneutic" of Ebeling and Fuchs.⁵

The fact that Being is an empty word today is because man has not learned to exist authentically, i.e., he does not stand in an adequate relationship to Being. His conquest of beings in technology has caused him to eliminate the question of Being. It is this "destroyed relation to Being as such" that "is the actual reason for the general misrelation to language."⁶ If the possibility is to be opened up for a new relationship of man to Being, then we must look for the meaning of Being, not in the existenzial analytic of Dasein, but in the grammatical and etymological question of language. Heidegger writes:

¹Ibid. ²IM, pp. 3, 22, 27 (EM, pp. 2, 17, 21).

³BT, p. 196 (SZ, p. 154). ⁴IM, p. 13 (EM, p. 11).

⁵Infra, pp. 304f. ⁶IM, p. 51 (EM, p. 39).

Because the destiny of language is grounded in a nation's relation to Being, the question of Being will involve us deeply in the question of language. It is more than an outward accident that now, as we prepare to set forth, in all its implication, the fact of the evaporation of Being, we find ourselves compelled to take linguistic considerations as our starting point.¹

This shift of emphasis from "authentic existence" (Being and Time) to "authentic language" (An Introduction to Metaphysics) does not represent a clean break between the two works. Being and Time gives a considerable amount of attention to the question of language,² and An Introduction to Metaphysics does not ignore Dasein. In fact, Heidegger makes it explicit that there is no truth except as Dasein stands in a relation to Being. Thus, there is no such thing as an "eternal truth" unless it could be proved that man has and will always exist.³

Just as hermeneutic, Dasein, time, and history were interpreted in the primordial sense of Dasein's existence and only secondarily in their external objective sense, even so truth is primarily existenzial, i.e., Being as it discloses itself to Dasein. Heidegger points this out when he says that truth is not in the primary sense a correspondence between res and intellectus. Rather, truth is the appearing of Being. Heidegger writes:

Let us think of the sun. Every day it rises and sets for us. Only a very few astronomers, physicists, philosophers--and even then only on the basis of a specialized approach which may be more or less widespread--experience this state of affairs otherwise, namely as a motion of the earth around the sun. But the appearance in which sun and earth stand, e.g. the early morning landscape, the sea in the evening, the night, is an appearing. This appearance is not nothing. Nor is it untrue. Nor is it a mere appearance of conditions in nature which are really otherwise. This appearance is historic (geschichtlich)

¹IM, p. 51 (EM, p. 39). ²BT, pp. 203-214 (SZ, pp. 160-170).

³BT, pp. 269-270 (SZ, p. 227).

and it is history (Geschichte), discovered and grounded in poetry and myth and thus an essential area of our world.¹

Heidegger denies that this definition of truth as the appearance of Being is mere subjectivism. Rather, truth as self-disclosure is the primordial significance of *ἀλήθεια*.

Only the tired latecomers with their supercilious wit imagine that they can dispose of the historic power of appearance by declaring it to be "subjective," hence very dubious. The Greeks [i.e., the pre-Socratics] experienced it differently. They were perpetually compelled to wrest Being from appearance and preserve it against appearance. (The essence of Being is un-concealment.)²

It is this experience of Being as appearance that points to the necessity of "linguistic considerations" as the point of departure for getting at the "why" of beings.³ Language is called "the House of Being."⁴ "Essence and Being express themselves in language."⁵ "Our aim, rather, is an essential clarification of the essence of Being in respect to its essential involvement with the essence of language."⁶

In order for language to open up Being, what is necessary is a return to primordial thinking. This primordial thinking is accomplished in the pre-Socratic thinkers, for it is here that Being comes to expression in authentic language. This necessity of returning to the pre-Socratics can be seen in the way that language has been corrupted (according to Heidegger), beginning with Plato's *ἰδέα*⁷ and especially Descartes' dualism of res and intellectus.⁸

¹ IM, p. 105 (EM, p. 80). ² Ibid.

³ IM, p. 51 (EM, p. 39). ⁴ William Richardson, p. 528.

⁵ IM, p. 53 (EM, p. 41). ⁶ IM, p. 54 (EM, p. 41).

⁷ IM, p. 180 (EM, pp. 137-138).

⁸ BT, pp. 44, 122-134 (SZ, pp. 22, 89-101); IM, p. 195 (EM, p. 149).

Heidegger engages in a detailed grammatical and etymological study. Whether this study is "philological fancies"¹ or not intended to be a scientific philology² is not of great importance for the purposes of the present discussion. Thus, we shall not try to pursue the intricate details in his attempt to open up the primordial and authentic language of Being in early Greek thought. Rather, we shall make use of some of the results of these word-studies to indicate how Heidegger in his attempts to resolve the epistemological question of Being delineated a dualism of language as the "happening of Being" and language as the "statement of correctness," i.e., the primordial significance of language as the coming-into-expression of Being and language as propositional correctness.

Φύσις. Being for the early Greeks was φύσις, the emerging, arising, enduring presence of Being. Φύσις is an overpowering presence; it is not yet something which has been conquered in thought.³ This word is translated "nature" and comes from the Latin natura, which means to be born. Thus, the original meaning of the word is forfeited, for φύσις originally meant "self-blossoming emergence (e.g. the blossoming of a rose), opening up, unfolding, that which manifests itself in such unfolding and perseveres and endures in it; in short, the realm of things that emerge and linger on."⁴ Thus, φύσις is the emergence of what we today call "nature" (phenomena), but this emerging is not the same as nature in itself. Heidegger writes: "This opening up and inward-jutting-beyond-itself must not be taken as a process among other processes that we observe in the realm of being. Φύσις is Being itself, by virtue of which

¹Marjorie Grene, p. 100. ²William Richardson, p. 296.

³IM, p. 61 (EM, p. 47). ⁴IM, p. 14 (EM, p. 11).

beings become and remain observable."¹ In this way, it can be seen that the early Greeks learned what Being was, not through natural phenomena, but through Being itself emerging into being. This is to say, Being is known because it emerges from the hidden.²

Φύσις is equal to ἀ-λήθεια (un-concealment). Truth is no addition to Being; it is not correspondence of Being and thought. It is not "propositional correctitude."³ Rather, truth is the very essence of Being. Truth is Being unveiling itself.⁴ Truth is freedom in the sense that truth is the "letting-be" of what is.⁵

Φύσις as emerging and lingering presence is an over-powering. In this over-powering, φύσις is πόλεμος as it is seen in Heraclitus. Πόλεμος is the original struggle which is prior to beings. It is a struggle between concealment and un-concealment of Being. This conflict is not a split in Being, but is its unity, its binding-together. It is this conflict that causes beings to emerge.⁶

When the conflict ceases, the beings which emerge in the conflict do not vanish, but Being itself falls into the background. The being which has emerged becomes a ready-made datum. Φύσις consequently degenerates into a mere object; it becomes "nature." Heidegger writes:

The being becomes an object, either to be beheld (view, image) or to be acted upon (product and calculation). The original world-

¹IM, p. 14 (EM, p. 11). ²IM, pp. 14-15 (EM, pp. 11-12).

³Being and Existence, p. 334 (Wegmarken, p. 84).

⁴IM, p. 102 (EM, pp. 77-78).

⁵Being and Existence, p. 333 (Wegmarken, p. 83).

⁶IM, pp. 61-62 (EM, pp. 47-48).

making power, *φύσις*, degenerates into a prototype to be copied and imitated. Nature becomes a special field, differentiated from art and everything that can be fashioned according to plan. The original emergence and standing of energies, the *φαίνεσθαι*, or appearance in the great sense of a world epiphany, becomes a visibility of things that are already-there and can be pointed out. The eye, the vision, which originally projected the project into potency, becomes a mere looking at or looking over or gaping at. Vision has degenerated into mere optics (Schopenhauer's "world eye"--pure cognition . . .).¹

Λόγος. Though *λόγος* has come to mean speech, Heidegger claims originally that it did not relate to language in its primary meaning. Rather, its primordial meaning was to gather, to collect (in the sense of an orderly collection), even as the primary meaning of the Latin legere and the German lesen mean to gather, to collect. For example, "Holz lesen" means to gather wood. Lesen in the sense "to read" is a derived meaning of lesen in the strict sense, for reading is the joining of one word with another word in an orderly fashion, i.e., a bringing together and collecting of words.²

The primordial meaning of *λόγος* in its inner relation to *φύσις* (as Being) is seen in Heraclitus and Parmenides. Without trying to follow the intricate explanations, we shall summarize briefly what Heidegger has to say in regard to both early Greek philosophers.

Heidegger summarizes Heraclitus' use of *λόγος* in the two following ways. (1) Authentic speaking and authentic hearing "are directed in advance toward Being, the logos."³ It is only when logos as Being discloses itself that a "phonetic sound" becomes an authentic word. Without this element of disclosure, i.e., Being as *ἀ-λήθεια* (un-concealment), there can be no authentic hearing and speaking. (2) "Because Being as logos is basic gathering, not

¹IM, p. 63 (EM, p. 48). ²IM, p. 124 (EM, p. 95).

³IM, p. 132 (EM, p. 101).

mass and turmoil in which everything has as much or as little value as everything else, rank and domination are implicit in Being."¹ This suggests that truth is reserved for the strong (i.e., the poets and philosophers), not the weak. This means that Being shows itself ($\alpha\text{-}\lambda\acute{\omicron}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$) as it pleases; man cannot set himself up as the arbiter of truth. Rather, Being is the sole arbiter of truth.²

Heidegger rejects the traditional interpretation of Heraclitus' philosophy in terms of "everything flows." Heidegger writes:

If these words stem from Heraclitus to begin with, they do not mean that everything is mere continuous and evanescent change, pure impermanence; no, they mean that being as a whole, in its Being, is hurled back and forth from one opposition to another; Being is the gathering of this conflict and unrest.³

Thus, $\lambda\acute{\omicron}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ for Heraclitus means, according to Heidegger, an orderly gathering-gatheredness, not a "haphazard dispersion."⁴

Heidegger contends that Heraclitus says the same thing as Parmenides in this regard. He rejects the view that Parmenides and Heraclitus were opposed in their respective doctrines of Being and Becoming. In Fragment 5, Parmenides says: $\tau\acute{o}\ \gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\ \nu\omicron\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\nu\ \tau\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$. Heidegger rejects "the crude translation prescribed by a long tradition" which reads: "Thinking and Being are the same."⁵ This translation leads to the definition of $\nu\omicron\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ in terms of thinking as an activity of the subject. In this way, thinking delimits what Being is with the result that Being is only what is thought. This means Being is nothing in itself, but is only what is thought. In following this traditional line of interpretation, it has been said that

¹IM, p. 133 (EM, p. 101). ²IM, p. 133 (EM, p. 102).

³IM, pp. 133-134 (EM, p. 102). ⁴IM, p. 134 (EM, p. 102).

⁵IM, p. 136 (EM, p. 104).

Parmenides adumbrated German Idealism. Plato is said to have furthered this idealism, while Aristotle with his realism foreshadowed medieval philosophy.¹

This popular view, Heidegger believes, distorts "the authentic truth of the primordially Greek words spoken by Parmenides."² Heidegger attempts to explicate Parmenides' intended meaning by a lexical study of the words in this text.

(1) $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ is seen to be equivalent to $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma$.³

(2) $\lambda\omicron\nu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$ is interpreted to mean vernehmen--to apprehend.

$\lambda\omicron\nu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma$ means Vernehmung--apprehension. Heidegger writes:

To apprehend means to accept, to let something (namely that which shows itself, which appears) come to one. Vernehmen means also to hear a witness, to question him and so determine the facts, to establish how a matter stands. To apprehend in this twofold sense means to let something come to one, not merely accepting it, however, but taking a receptive attitude toward that which shows itself.⁴

Thus, $\lambda\omicron\nu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$ is defined as the "receptive bringing-to-stand" of Being.⁵ In this way, $\lambda\omicron\nu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$ is seen to be intrinsically related to Being, while at the same time they are distinct. In this sense, Being and apprehension are the same.

(3) $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omicron$ does not mean, Heidegger explains, self-sameness, nor mere equivalence. He writes: "Unity is the belonging-together of antagonisms. This is original oneness."⁶ $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omicron$ does not mean that thinking equals Being in a monotonous and tautologous sense. Rather, it indicates that Being and thinking belong together in the sense of a "nexus," i.e., "a necessary com-

¹IM, p. 137 (EM, pp. 104-105). ²IM, p. 137 (EM, p. 105).

³Ibid. ⁴IM, p. 138 (EM, p. 105).

⁵IM, p. 138 (EM, pp. 105-106). ⁶IM, p. 138 (EM, p. 106).

combination of one thing with another."¹ Heidegger's exposition of τὸ καὶ is fundamentally a further elucidation of what he has to say about τὸ αὐτό.

Heidegger contends that what Parmenides' maxim means is not that "thinking and Being are the same," but that "there is a reciprocal bond between apprehension and Being."² Thus, apprehension does not mean mere "thinking" for Parmenides. Nor does it intend to suggest a human activity. Heidegger writes:

Apprehension, as Parmenides says, is not a faculty belonging to man already defined; apprehension is rather a process (ein Geschehen) in which man first enters (appears, i.e., in the literal sense, comes into being) into history as being.³

Heidegger thus contends that apprehension is not an attribute of man, but that man is an attribute of Being, thereby showing that "apprehension is the happening that has man."⁴ In this separation of man and Being is revealed their togetherness instead of "the pale and empty dichotomy of 'Being and thinking.'"⁵ However, it is when Being emerges in this togetherness with man (i.e., man knows himself as a historic being) that he becomes defined as the rational animal (ἔσθον λόγον ἔχον). This use of λόγος, Heidegger says, represents a departure from its primordial significance.⁶ While Parmenides' maxim defines the essence of man in the light of Being itself, immediately following him Being became interpreted in the light of human thinking. For Heidegger, this reversal represents a degeneration of primordial thinking.⁷

Heidegger believes that this decline of Western metaphysics began with

¹ Essays in Metaphysics, p. 19 (Identität, p. 20).

² IM, p. 145 (EM, p. 111). ³ IM, p. 141 (EM, p. 108).

⁴ Ibid. ⁵ IM, p. 141 (EM, p. 108).

⁶ IM, p. 142 (EM, p. 108). ⁷ IM, p. 145 (EM, p. 111).

Plato. Ἰδέα became the name for Being, replacing φύσις.¹ The Ἰδέα (Being) became the "whatness" of beings (the visible "thatness"). Thus, Being becomes an extended thing, i.e., reduced to the level of being.² This reduction of Being led to the definition of truth as "correctness of vision," as the correlation of a "thatness" and a "whatness."³ The idea (Being) became what-really-is, and being became a mere copy of the idea. Heidegger writes:

Being Sein as Ἰδέα is exalted, it becomes true eigentlich being Seienden, while being Seiende itself, previously dominant, is degraded to what Plato calls μή οὐ, what really should not be and really is not, because in the realization it always deforms the idea, the pure appearance, by incorporating it in matter. The Ἰδέα now becomes a παράδειγμα, a model. At the same time, the idea necessarily becomes an ideal. The copy actually "is" not; it merely partakes of Being, it is a μέθεξις. The χωροτόμος, the cleft, has opened between the idea as what really is, the prototype and archetype, and what actually is not, the copy and image.

Here Heidegger points out that the distinction between thinking and Being became decisive. With Descartes, the distinction was intensified, so that truth came to be determined on the basis of a known certainty, not merely a conformity of thought and Being. Being is brought under man's control, and it becomes a mere objective entity. Whatever value it has is attributed to it by man as the thinking subject. For Descartes, truth is certitude in the sense that only what can be verified analogously to the subject's certitude of itself is true. In this way, Heidegger complains that Being as the emergence into truth is forgotten.⁵ It is this emphasis upon the human subjectivity of truth that reached its culmination in Hegel.⁶

¹IM, p. 180 (EM, p. 137). ²IM, p. 181 (EM, p. 138).

³IM, p. 185 (EM, p. 141). ⁴IM, p. 184 (EM, p. 140).

⁵Cf. William Richardson, p. 321. BT, p. 46 (SZ, p. 24).

⁶Cf. William Richardson, p. 360. IM, p. 180 (EM, p. 137).

Λόγος (Being) in Aristotle underwent the same misfortune as *φύσις* (Being) in Plato. Originally, *λόγος* as Being meant a "collecting-collectedness."¹ It is a "collecting" in the sense that Being is a process of disclosing itself. It is a "collectedness" in the sense that Being (*λόγος*) is the collectedness of beings. "*Λόγος* is the steady collecting, the intrinsic collectedness of being, i.e., Being."² "The disclosure of being happens in the logos as collecting."³ *Λόγος* in the secondary sense of language meant that speech and hearing were authentically oriented towards Being. In this way, a "phonetic sound"⁴ is an authentic word. Thus, language became "the custodian of the disclosed being."⁵ This is to say, what comes to expression in language is Being (as the *λόγος*, the collecting-collectedness). Just as Being as *φύσις* is "what-is-as-such-in-totality"⁶ even so Being as *λόγος* is the orderly collection of being in its totality. When *λόγος* finally became understood primarily in terms of language, the truth that is passed on was not freshly appropriated by the hearers with the result that language was corrupted in mere terms of statement rather than un-concealment (*ἀ-λήθεια*).

Heidegger writes:

What has once been said can be repeated and passed on. The truth preserved in it [language] spreads, and in the process being originally gathered and disclosed is not each time experienced for itself. In the transmission the truth detaches itself as it were from being. This can go so far that the repetition becomes a mere babbling by rote, *αὐτοματῶς*.⁷

What results from this de-volution of language is that logos becomes

¹ IM, p. 128 (EM, p. 98). ² IM, p. 130 (EM, p. 100).

³ IM, p. 185 (EM, p. 141). ⁴ Supra, p. 123.

⁵ IM, p. 185 (EM, p. 141). ⁶ Existence and Being, p. 335 (Wegmarken, p. 85)

⁷ IM, p. 185 (EM, p. 141-142).

statement in which truth is defined in the sense of correctness.

Initially the logos as gathering is the event of unconcealment, grounded in unconcealment and serving it. Now logos as statement becomes the abode of truth in the sense of correctness. And this process culminates in Aristotle's proposition to the effect that logos as statement is that which can be true or false. Truth that was originally unconcealment, a happening of the dominant being itself, governed by gathering, now becomes an attribute of the logos.¹

Finally, it can be said that what Heidegger has described as "truth" is not intended to be only one definition among many definitions. Rather, "truth" in this primordial signification is "the mark of 'truth' of every kind,"² whether it be religious belief, technology, scientific research, art, practical experience, or philosophical contemplation.³

One could point out the many parallels in Heidegger's philosophy to what is in a broad sense called neo-orthodoxy. (1) There is the "moment of vision" in which one achieves authentic existence. This is comparable to the idea of revelation as the "moment" of the encounter with God in which man is given redemptive existence. (2) The call of conscience is an indefinable call in that it asserts nothing, but is simply a summons to be oneself. This is comparable to the call (encounter) of revelation which asserts no propositional truth, but is a summons to live obediently before God. (3) The call of conscience is precluded from any authoritative criterion or description, but is solely attested in its actual existenziell situation. Likewise, faith is self-authenticating and is not exposed to the critical criteria of any scientific investigation. (4) Being is not a category alongside other categories. Rather, Being is the essence (ground)

¹IM, p. 186 (EM, p. 142).

²Existence and Being, p. 319 (Wegmarken, p. 73). ³Ibid.

of all beings. It is not subject to the manipulation of man, but stands beyond the confines of human experience. Being discloses itself as it pleases. Being solely determines its truth. Man is not the arbiter of truth. The truth of Being "has" man. Man is never in possession of primordial truth, but rather, truth possesses man. Being conceals itself at the same time that it discloses itself. What is here described as Being could equally be said of the neo-orthodox emphasis upon the reality of God, though, to be sure, Being for Heidegger is not at all intended to be a description of any religious belief as such. (5) There are many interesting parallels particularly in regard to Rudolf Bultmann. Heidegger's ecstatic future (existentiality, i.e., the possibilities of Dasein) closely correspond to Bultmann's "eschatological existence." This can be seen in Bultmann's exposition of the Kingdom of God. The future of the Kingdom of God is "not really an event in the course of time, which is due to occur sometime."¹ "Rather, the Kingdom of God is genuinely future, because it is not a metaphysical entity or condition, but the future action of God."² Thus, this future as the action of God means that man comes to stand in the "crisis of decision," but this future is not related to the present in the sense that "the Kingdom begins as a historical fact in the present and achieves its fulfillment in the future."³ In this way, Bultmann's exposition of the future of the Kingdom of God parallels Heidegger's existentialist definition of time.⁴

¹Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, trans. L. P. Smith and E. Huntress (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1935), pp. 52-53.

²Ibid., p. 51. ³Ibid.

⁴Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, "Bultmann Replies to His Critics," Kerygma and Myth, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 208.

Another parallel is Heidegger's hermeneutic of Dasein which is guided by the prior question of Being,¹ whereas Bultmann's hermeneutic of the New Testament texts is guided by the prior question of human existence.

Heidegger's ultimate goal was to move beyond the question of human existence to an independent understanding of Being,² whereas Bultmann never intended to move beyond the question of human existence. For Bultmann, the question about man and God was inseparable.³ (6) The later Heidegger's emphasis upon the linguistic focus of Being serves as the basis for Ernst Fuchs' and Gerhard Ebeling's new orientation of hermeneutics,⁴ as well Heinrich Ott's systematic theology which seeks to overcome the subject-object schema.⁵

(7) What has emerged as of paramount importance for the purposes of this present discussion can be seen in the way that Heidegger, in his attempt to provide the primordial foundation of truth, has bifurcated nature and history, Vorhandenheit and Geschichte.⁶ What is primordially significant for Dasein is not the world as an object (Vorhandenheit), but Dasein in the ontological sense of Being-in-the-world (historicity); not history as mere facts, but history as the historic (geschichtlich) structure of Dasein; not time as the moving succession of "nows," but time as the temporal structure of Dasein; not death as an ontical possibility, but death as the ontological possibility which opens up Dasein's "ownmost Potentiality-of-Being" (authentic

¹BT, p. 24 (SZ, p. 5).

²Laszlo Versényi, Heidegger, Being, and Truth (London: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 189. Cf. W. Richardson, pp. 623-641.

³Infra, p. 218. ⁴Infra, pp. 304f.

⁵Heinrich Ott, "What Is Systematic Theology?" The Later Heidegger and Theology, ed. James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), pp. 106ff.

⁶Cf. Macquarrie, pp. 85ff.

existence); not thought as the arbiter of truth, but thought as the means of truth coming to expression in language; not language as statement, but language as the happening (un-concealment) of Being; and finally, not truth as the correspondence of subject and object, but truth as the primordial self-disclosure of Being.

The question arises whether or not the truth of Being is adequately defined so long as Vorhandenheit and Existenz are split into two parts. To be sure, Heidegger intends to view the structure of Dasein in its primordial wholeness, but this unity can hardly be achieved so long as the ontological signification of human existence does not take into sufficient consideration the ontical aspects as well, including what-is-present-at-hand (Vorhandenheit). Though Heidegger cogently points out the inauthenticity of mere things, does not his exclusive preoccupation with Being on the other hand undermine the significance of beings (including Vorhandenheit) for Existenz?

Though Heidegger correctly stresses the necessity of one's "openness" to Being, it does not seem to follow necessarily that to ascertain the correctness of what is disclosed is irrelevant or that it represents a devolution of thought. It may be that the "tired latecomers with their supercilious wit" will call our experiencing the sun in terms of a rising and a falling "subjective."¹ But, does not intellectual integrity compel us to verify to the highest degree of probability the truth of what we experience? In this respect, "objectifying thought" is an essential tool for historical research, as well as in all the sciences. To be sure, the critical tools of historical research are not the same as those of the physical sciences in that history must treat its "objects" as human subjects, not as mere things. However, Heidegger's emphasis upon

¹Supra, p. 120.

the self-disclosure of Being does point out the fact that symbolical, poetic, and mythical language is often necessarily employed for expressing what one does experience of reality. In theological terms, the necessity of symbolical language is quite evident, especially as it is seen in the biblical writers who have expressed their experiences of the transcendent reality of God in anthropomorphic language. In this respect, Heidegger's emphasis upon truth as the self-disclosure of Being is highly instructive.

Laszlo Versényi points out that in Heidegger's later writings his quest for Being and a corresponding neglect of beings has led him to mystical overtones, especially in Gelassenheit and Nothing Is without Ground. Even speech falls into the background, and what is significant is a passive waiting for the disclosure of the Wholly Other, the absolute, transcendent Being (though not in a theistic sense).¹ In this respect, Versényi's criticism of Heidegger seems to be just:

As such a reaction and protest, existentialism was a necessary philosophical movement, a wholesome corrective to the shortcomings of an all too radical and absolute rationalism. But unfortunately existentialism remained a mere reaction and a protest, and thus became, in its turn, just as absolute and one-sided as the movement it opposed. Because rationalism insisted on the immutability of truth and Being, existentialism insisted only on historicity, change, and becoming. Because essentialism insisted on the universal, on Law, and on the fixity of all good and value, existentialism insisted only on the unique, opposed all tradition, rule and law, and even refused to think in terms of good and value. Essentialism mistook nomos--the particular truths, values, goods, rules, and laws disclosed to man at a particular moment in his historical existence--for physis--absolute truths, values, and laws. Existentialism, in its turn, eliminated physis and even turned against nomos, thus leaving man altogether without guidance, rule, principle, and law.²

¹Laszlo Versényi, Heidegger, Being, and Truth, pp. 159-198.

²Ibid., pp. 196-197.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORY AND THEOLOGY: A RECAPITULATION OF THE PROBLEM

It has been pointed out that the rise of modern philosophy with its terminological distinctions between the intellect and sensibility brought into clear focus the question of history for theology. Though Descartes himself depreciated the field of historical study,¹ his clear and distinct ideas of reason became the epistemological ideal for the new historiography. In this way, his criticism of history led to historical criticism, which in turn raised the theological question of the relationship between history and reason. Though Descartes insisted that his methodological procedure of systematic skepticism had no effect on the independent field of theology,² in fact its influence was quite revolutionary in regard to the significance of history for theology.

This is seen in Richard Simon who sought to enhance the authority of the Catholic Church against the growing Protestant influence through his critical analysis of the biblical books, thereby pointing out the unreliability of the present texts of the Bible for belief. Thus, an attempt was made to make faith independent of the results of historical criticism.³

¹Supra, pp. 15ff. Cf. Collingwood, p. 59.

²Essential Works of Descartes, p. 48.

³Supra, pp. 23 ff. Cf. Cassirer, p. 184.

Spinoza became the founder of modern biblical criticism with his publication of the Theologico-Political Treatise. The immediate occasion for his interest in the Bible was that the ultimate authority ascribed to it by the Church was in direct conflict with his own metaphysical presupposition that the basis of absolute certainty was rational, not empirical. We have pointed out that Spinoza located the source of certainty in pure being, not in becoming. This means the temporal elements have no significance for philosophical knowledge; history and reason lie on totally different levels. Thus if the Bible is accorded such a place of prominence by the Church, then reason is sacrificed, for how can the absolute certainty of metaphysical truth in any way depend on the historically-conditioned elements of the Bible? Cassirer puts it this way:

And yet Spinoza was the originator of the idea of the historicity of the Bible, and the first to develop it with sober precision and clarity. If we pursue this idea to its place in Spinoza's system as a whole, we find that it arose from no immediate historical tendency, from no interest in historical method as such, but that it represents an indirect conclusion from the logical premises of the system. Spinoza's monism is offended by the special position of the Bible, indeed by the special place of thought in general. Extension and thought, nature and mind, the order of things and the order of ideas, are not two fundamentally different spheres; they are identical orders of being depending on the same basic law. Hence contemplation of historical being is not to be separated from contemplation of natural being; both orders of being are to be treated from the same standpoint.¹

Thus, it can be said that in following the line of Cartesian rationalism with its distinction of reality into intellect and sensibility Spinoza was led to a depreciation of historical events as possessing any real significance for truth. Since truth is eternally the same, it cannot be made dependent on derived being, but rather on the contemplation of pure being.

¹Cassirer, p. 185.

Leibniz further sought to resolve the question of religious certainty that had been raised by the delineation of reason and history. He sought to reconcile the truths of faith with the truths of reason and the truths of fact. In contrast to Spinoza, Leibniz did not drive a wedge between the temporal elements and the eternal elements of religious and philosophical certainty. Neither did he divorce the truths of reason from the truths of fact. The necessary truths of reason possess absolute certainty, while the truths of fact are contingent. However, this is not to suggest a depreciation of the empirical truths or historical knowledge. The purpose of this distinction is to delineate the two kinds of reasoning. The "Eternal Verities" (necessary truths of reason) can be demonstrated with absolute certainty to be necessary. Such truths are logical, mathematical, and metaphysical. The truths of fact are truths of reasoning which cannot be demonstrated to be absolutely necessary. That the sun must rise tomorrow cannot be demonstrated with absolute certainty, and thus it is not a necessary truth of reason. Rather, it is a contingent truth of reasoning. The truths of fact stand superior to the truths of reason in that the necessary truths of reason are only conditional. For example, that a triangle with three sides has three angles says nothing more than that if a triangle should exist, such would be its necessary truth. On the other hand, the truths of reason stand superior to the truths of fact only in that the former can be shown to be absolutely necessary.

The truths of faith relate to the truths of experience, for faith is dependent upon both the witness of those who saw the miracles of revelation and the historical reliability of that tradition. In this way, it can be clearly seen that Leibniz did not depreciate the contingent truths of fact;

neither did he depreciate history. Rather, he sought to establish a valid basis for historical knowledge through his careful delineation of the degrees of probable knowledge.¹ Thus, Leibniz, as a result of his distinction between the truths of reason and truths of fact, set forth the concept of probability as a basic category of historical knowledge.

Following the lead of Spinoza, Lessing rejected the decisive importance of historical events for faith. He formulated a natural religion of reason through which he sought to reconcile "the accidental truths of history" with "the necessary truths of reason." This he attempts to accomplish in the Education of the Human Race in which he traces the progressive development of the human race in terms of a religious education. This interaction of the universal and the particular, the eternal and the temporal, stands in sharp contrast to Spinoza's divorce of thought and extension. In this respect, Lessing follows the idea of Leibniz's monad which expresses the nature of the universe in terms of "unity in multiplicity."² This means that what Leibniz's monad sought to do for the cosmos, Lessing's natural religion sought to do for the human race. Cassirer puts it this way:

Just as Leibniz had defined the monad as the "expression of multiplicity in unity," so Lessing could have defined it as the expression of the temporal in the immutable. For the monad is only in so far as it is constantly evolving, and no phase of this evolution is absolutely dispensable for the whole. The form of temporality as such is not incompatible with being; for only in such form can being appear and reveal itself in its purest essence. In applying this fundamental concept to religion Lessing encounters a new problem. For the historicity of the sources of religion is no longer utilized merely for the purpose of criticizing, or of refuting, religious doctrine; it now becomes a fundamental element of the deepest sense of religious teachings. If Spinoza seeks to dispute the

¹Supra, pp, 38ff.

²Cassirer, pp. 31-32, 191.

absolute truth of religious revelation by an investigation of its history, Lessing attempts by the same procedure to accomplish the opposite end, namely, the restitution of religion. The authentic, the only absolute religion is simply the religion which comprehends within itself the totality of the historical manifestations of the religious spirit.¹

In attempting this synthesis of the "accidental truths of history" with the "necessary truths of reason," Lessing fails to make the precise distinction between the truths of reason and the truths of fact. Lessing includes as part of the truths of reason those which Leibniz maintains are merely contingent. This can be seen in the way that Lessing suggests that the laws of nature are necessary truths of reason. Thus, he refused to believe in miracles since they are contrary to nature. He insists regardless how reliable a historical testimony may be, he cannot believe what experience teaches him cannot happen. In this respect, Lessing merely assumes that the laws of nature are necessary, when he in fact cannot demonstrate them to be such. From Leibniz's standpoint, Lessing has thus confused the two kinds of reason with the result that faith does not depend upon any particular historical point of departure, and thus religion is not affected by the incertitude of historical knowledge.

It can thus be seen that the rise of the modern historical consciousness had its beginnings "in the sphere of theology" which Cassirer shows "spread from there until it pervades progressively all the fields of knowledge."² It has been pointed out that both Bayle and Vico were inspired to make their own critical study of history on the basis of the Cartesian model of the clear and distinct ideas of reason, thus putting historical studies on an independent footing from theology and philosophy.³ This development of

¹Ibid., pp. 191-192. ²Ibid., p. 199. ³Ibid., pp. 207-209.

historical studies into other fields of knowledge (politics, sociology, science, philosophy) can be further traced in the Enlightenment era to Voltaire, Montesquieu, Turgot, Condorcet, Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, d'Alembert, Lagrange, the Encyclopaedists, Kant, and Herder.¹

It was with Herder and Romanticism that history entered into the "threshold of scientific history."² There are two categories which were especially significant--"individuality" and "relativity." The category of individuality emphasizes that each age possesses its own uniqueness and must be interpreted within the context of its own environment. The category of relativity stands in tension with the category of individuality, for the relativity of history means that the historical process is a continuous and dynamic development so that each historical period is only a link in the whole chain of history.

Herder's emphasis upon the relativity of history follows as a result of his deliberate rejection of Leibniz's distinction between the necessary truths of reason and the contingent truths of reason, as well as a rejection of Kant's dualism of noumenon and phenomenon. For Herder, the relativity of history means the necessary linking together of all events so that the whole of history forms a continuous development. Furthermore, the laws of nature are necessary and immutable in contrast to Leibniz's emphasis upon the contingent truths of fact.³

Kant's epistemological dualism is presupposed by his idea of history in that while historical phenomena have their origin in noumena (i.e., human deeds originate in freedom of the will), nevertheless the historian can only

¹Ibid., pp. 197-233. ²Collingwood, p. 86.

³Supra, p. 57.

know history as phenomena as opposed to noumena. This suggests that the historian can never know history as it really is, but only as it appears.

Hegel's Logic intended to be a rational demonstration that "Reason" governs world history, that history is moving toward the ultimate goal of human perfectibility and the full realization of human freedom. What is called in ontology the tension between thought and being, noumenon and phenomenon, the infinite and the finite is called in Hegel's philosophy of history the tension between God and history, Reason and Passion. This is to say, God (as the metaphorical expression of Reason, or the Idea of Freedom) is actualizing himself in history. History thus is the ongoing process of the dialectical unity of the infinite and the finite, thought and being, the absolute spirit and the finite spirit. There are three important concepts of history that Hegel thus enunciated. First, there is the concept of thought. This means that history can be known as it really is, for history as the record of events is the record of what man has thought. For Hegel, thought is the ultimate (the "infinite") side of human experience, while finite being only exists for the sake of this ultimate aspect. Thus, when one studies history, he studies not the history of mere facts, but the history of thought, which is to know history as it really is. Second, there is the concept of relativity, which means that the historical process has no gaps or breaks in it, but is the progressive movement of each historical period, so that each subsequent period is the necessary development of what went before. This means, to speak of the relativity of history is to speak of the relativity of truth itself, for truth is the comprehensive whole of reality. Third, there is the concept of individuality, which means that each period is to be appreciated in terms of its own realization of Freedom. This further suggests that

the historian's task is restricted to the present day, which "implies that the present stage of Spirit contains all previous stages within itself."¹ This means the historian cannot speak of the future, but only the present. Truth is thus mediated in terms of the present stage of world history only.

With Heidegger, history takes on a different orientation. What is significant about history is not an objective course of world events, but the historicity of each individual person, i.e., not man in history, but man as history.

Thus far, the following concepts of history have been enumerated--probability, individuality, thought, relativity, and historicity. Finally, the problem which history poses for theology can be summarized in the thought of Ernst Troeltsch whose principles of historiography represent the systematic formulation of the modern historical-critical method. Troeltsch acknowledges that his own method follows in the general line of Lessing, Kant, Herder, Schleiermacher, de Wette, and Hegel.²

Troeltsch articulates three basic principles of his historical-critical method. First, there is the principle of historical criticism itself, which means that the critic has to cope with judgments of varying degrees of probability in regard to what is contained in the tradition.³ This means that all historical knowledge is characterized by relative uncertainty.⁴ Second, there is the application of the principle of analogy to tradition. This principle serves as the very basis of criticism concerning the judgments

¹Reason in History, p. 95.

²Ernst Troeltsch, "Historische und dogmatische Methode in der Theologie," Gesammelte Schriften (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1913), II, 738.

³Ibid., p. 731. ⁴Ibid., p. 738.

of varying degrees of probability. Through the agreement of what is reported in the tradition to what we observe in daily life as the normal and the usual, we are led to render the judgments of probability concerning the events in the tradition. Troeltsch writes: "On the analogy of events known to us [*italics mine*] we seek by conjecture and sympathetic understanding to explain and reconstruct the past."¹ This means that there is an underlying similarity of all events, though this does not imply that there is an equality among all historical events.² Third, there is the principle of correlation, which means that there is a reciprocal action among all events. No changes can occur at any point without preliminary and subsequent alterations in the historical process, so that all events stand necessarily in an unending correlative relationship.³ He writes: "The sole task of history in its specifically theoretical aspect is to explain every movement, process, state, and nexus of things by reference to the web of its causal relations. That is, in a word, the whole function of purely scientific investigation."⁴

Troeltsch thinks that these basic principles of a historical method do not need to be supported by some philosophic theory, for he finds them to possess an irresistible necessity in the human mind. The Hegelian thought expressed by David Strauss, that the Idea is not so inclined to exhaust its fulness on a single individual,⁵ is for Troeltsch self-evident.⁶ However,

¹Ernst Troeltsch, "Historiography," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, VI (1914), 718.

²Gesammelte Schriften, II, 732. ³Ibid., p. 733.

⁴Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, VI, 718.

⁵David Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, p. 780.

⁶Gesammelte Schriften, II, 734.

these self-evident principles of criticism, analogy, and correlation, Troeltsch contends, only affected theology at first reservedly, then more energetically, then ultimately it completely uprooted the historical claims of traditional theology.¹ This means that when the historical-critical method is followed through in theology to its full and unprejudiced consequences, (1) every single historical fact will be seen to be at best uncertain and (2) all historical events will be seen to be inseparably connected according to the law of cause and effect, so that no facts are isolated and absolute.² In this way, Troeltsch believes that this "new scientific mode of representing man and his development . . . shows at all points an absolute contrast to the Biblico-theological views of late antiquity."³ This is to say that the historical method is like leaven which bursts the hitherto existing form of theological methods, and thus produces a radical transformation both in theology and Church history.⁴

That a radical transformation has taken place in contemporary theology is particularly evidenced in the way that the idea of revelation has been inflated.⁵ The tendency to accept categorically the relativity of history has prompted theology to exempt faith from any necessity of historical proof, with the result that faith and history tend to be bifurcated, thereby subsuming all Christian doctrines under the idea of revelation. In this way, the relativity of history is interpreted to mean that the historical process as such reveals no ultimate purpose and meaning.⁶ Rather, the truths of

¹Ibid., p. 735f. ²Ibid., pp. 736, 738.

³Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, VI, 718.

⁴Gesammelte Schriften, II, 730. ⁵Infra, p. 242.

⁶Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, History and Eschatology, p. 120.

faith are "eschatological phenomena" which are immune from the necessity of proof.¹ To be sure, Troeltsch did not so interpret the consequence of historical relativity, for in his "history-of-religion theology" he esteemed highly the historical tradition, which tradition in no way suggested to him historical chaos and meaninglessness.² Nevertheless, the radical transformation which he envisaged the application of historical criticism to effect was carried out along different lines than which he himself projected.

Finally, it can be said that the Cartesian disjunction of reality into res cogitans and res extensa and his negative criticism of history not only led to the rise of historical studies, but also posed the crucial question of history for theology--how can historically conditioned events serve as the point of departure for theology with its claim of the absoluteness of the Christ event? This is to say, what is the relationship of history and revelation, of the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ?

Even as in the rise of modern philosophy an attempt was made to provide an epistemological access to reality through delineating the terminological distinctions of thought and extension, truths of reason and truths of fact, relation of ideas and matters of fact, noumenon and phenomenon, thought and being, even so modern theology has attempted to come to terms with the epistemological question of revelation through such distinctions as "the What" and "the How," "Deus dixit" and "Paulus dixit," Historie and Geschichte, "mere fact" and "pure Word," "inner history" and "outer history," and "nature" and "history." These latter distinctions may be considered theological reactions to the general problem of epistemology. Thus, these latter distinctions

¹Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," Kerygma and Myth, p. 44.

²Troeltsch, Gesammelte Schriften, II, 738, 747, 748.

somewhat parallel the former philosophical distinctions of reality.

Each of these theological distinctions, which will be discussed in Part Two, has been formulated on the basis that Christian faith is not destroyed or even vitiated by the rise of historical criticism. Indeed, the function of these distinctions has been to preserve Christian faith from what seem to be the negative results of the rise of the modern historical understanding, which in Troeltsch's words, "assail the traditional Christian view of the world from the most diverse quarters and with the most manifold results."¹ In preserving the character of Christian faith from the relativity of history and the uncertainty of historical knowledge, the question arises-- is it possible to maintain "peaceful coexistence" (Gerhard Ebeling's terms)² between faith and history? It is this question that serves as the focus of a critique of the theological reactions now to be discussed.

¹Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, VI, 716.

²Gerhard Ebeling, Word and Faith, trans. J. W. Leitch (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1960), p. 292.

PART TWO

DUALISMS IN RELIGIOUS EPISTEMOLOGY

Karl Barth has delineated three possible theological options, particularly in response to the implications of Kant's philosophy for theology.¹ First, he suggests that theology can pursue Kant's philosophy, assuming the validity of its presuppositions. This approach is especially seen in the rationalistic theologians at the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. Their attempt was to provide a naturalistic interpretation of biblical history.² This attempt presupposed the uniting of historical criticism with the theological restrictions imposed by Kant's philosophy, which ultimately reduced Christian faith to the status of a mere ethical religion. This can especially be seen in Eichhorn and Paulus.³

There was also the "Back to Kant" movement in the second half of the nineteenth century as it is seen in Albrecht Ritschl and Wilhelm Herrmann. Tillich points out that this movement led to Troeltsch in Germany and to Rauschenbusch and the "liberal theology" in America.⁴ Tillich describes it this way:

The Ritschlians said that Kant is the philosopher of Protestantism. Protestantism does not aspire to climb up to the divine, but keeps itself within the limits of finitude. The attempt of the great synthesis is ultimately a product of mysticism, of the principle of identity between the divine and the human. Therefore, this "back to Kant" movement was extremely hostile to all forms of mysticism,

¹Protestant Thought, pp. 190-196.

²Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, pp. 47ff.

³Ibid. ⁴Tillich, p. 215.

including the theologies of experience, because there is a mystical element present in Schleiermacher's idea of religious consciousness and the other forms of experiential theology. Experience means having the divine within ourselves, not necessarily by nature, but yet given and felt within our own being. But this was not admitted by the neo-Kantian school. They protested not only against genuine mysticism, but also against every theology of experience. What then was left? Only two things. The one is historical research. This is the greatness and at the same time the shortcoming of liberal theology. It is the greatness insofar as it dares to apply the historical method to the biblical literature; it is the shortcoming insofar as it tries to base faith on the results of historical research. . . .

But there must be a second factor, for how can there be religious certainty? According to the Ritschlians, Kant has left but one window out of our finitude, and this is the moral imperative. The real basis of certainty is the moral point of view. We are certain of ourselves as moral personalities. This is not the experience of something mystical outside of ourselves; this is the immediate personal experience, or more exactly, the experience of being a person as such.¹

It is obvious that such a reduction of Christian faith to a moral ethical religion is hardly satisfying, for the message of the New Testament is that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the power that effects an inner transformation in the life of a man (Ephesians 1:19-20). Tillich points out that the result of the "back to Kant" movement was the reduction of the message of Jesus to love and forgiveness, while at the same time rejecting the idea of transformation, that the Spirit is present in man and transforms him.² Tillich says that this in effect was denying the power of God and thus was the weakest point in the Ritschlian theology.³

In addition to the first option of merely pursuing theology within the bounds prescribed by Kant, Barth suggests that one can adapt and modify the basic Kantian premise by pointing out that there is an additional a priori capacity which is a part of human reason, though distinct from the

¹Ibid., pp. 216-217. ²Ibid., p. 230. ³Ibid., p. 219.

theoretical and practical--the capacity of "feeling" in Schleiermacher's terms and "presentiment" in de Wette's terms.¹ Tillich defines Schleiermacher's procedure this way: "The methodologically decisive thing is that theological propositions about God or the world or man are derived from man's existential participation in the ultimate, that is, from man's religious consciousness."² This is likewise the procedure of Tillich who substitutes "ultimate concern" for "feeling."³ This is not altogether unlike what Kant himself has suggested can be the basis of theology when he says that the matters of faith are based "on a certain (to be sure, not a demonstrable or explicable) feeling of divinity."⁴

We now come to the third method that Barth suggests that one may choose as an option to Kant's philosophy. There is the possibility of theology insisting to stand on its own feet in relation to philosophy. This would mean that theology would take as its point of departure the method of revelation just as philosophy takes reason as its point of departure. This would mean that theology would be "a dialogue with philosophy, and not, wrapping itself up in the mantle of philosophy, a quasi-philosophical monologue."⁵ This third option Barth points out is characteristic of the Hegelian school of theology (Marheineke and I. A. Dorner), as well as certain conservative schools of thought.⁶

This third option is likewise characteristic of Barth's method--that theology finds its justification solely within the context of the Bible.⁷

¹Protestant Thought, p. 190. ²Tillich, p. 111. ³Ibid., p. 98.

⁴Immanuel Kant, "Der Streit der Facultäten in drei Abschnitten," Sämmtliche Werke, ed. G. Hartenstein (Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1868), VII, 339-340. Translation Mine.

⁵Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 191. ⁶Ibid. ⁷Ibid., pp. 191-196.

This means that theology will not intrude into the philosopher's domain of deriving truth through reason. Nor will the theologian concern himself with the philosopher's speculations. Barth writes:

Philosophy, however, is in itself a strict study concerning a vast field, and it is not for the theologian to conduct himself as if he were in a position to propound a philosophy, as if this were some subsidiary part of his office, and to pull a philosopher's work to pieces, especially if that philosopher happens to be Kant.¹

Rather, the theologian must be content solely with the Bible as the source of truth insofar as religious knowledge is concerned.²

Barth, in maintaining the separation of theology and philosophy, finds support for this position in Kant, who likewise maintains the separation of theology and philosophy. Kant contends that philosophy and theology form two distinct kinds of professions. Since each possesses its own unique characteristics, it should not invade the other's restricted domain which in turn possesses its own unique features.³ This is to say that since theology takes its teaching from the Bible and not from the faculty of reason, it should not attempt to refute philosophy, but neither should philosophy infringe on the rights of theology.⁴ Further, since there is no one who is authorized of God to interpret Scripture, the theologian must rely on his understanding by means of the Spirit who guides into all truth. This means the faculty of reason cannot be the source of biblical theology.⁵

However, Kant does not mean to suggest that the biblical theologian can dispense with reason. He writes:

¹Ibid., p. 192. ²Ibid., p. 196.

³Sämtliche Werke, VII, 340. Cf. Protestant Thought, pp. 191-196.

⁴Ibid., p. 339. Cf. Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, p. 8.

⁵Sämtliche Werke, VII, 340.

Were Biblical theology to determine, wherever possible, to have nothing to do with reason in things religious, we can easily foresee on which side would be the loss; for a religion which rashly declares war on reason will not be able to hold out in the long run against it.¹

Nevertheless, Kant maintains that the biblical theologian can prove that God exists only because He has spoken in the Bible. This means that the biblical theologian establishes God's existence as a fact of faith based "on a certain . . . feeling" (auf ein gewisses Gefühl).² While "this certain feeling of divinity" may be valid, it cannot be objectively demonstrated, for the biblical theologian as such cannot prove that God has spoken through the Bible as a historical fact. Neither can the theologian prove that the Bible itself contains historical facts as such, for it is the sole prerogative of the philosopher to deal with such matters as objective proof.³ Kant thus renounces any attempt of the biblical theologian to validate the authority of the Bible through historical or philosophical proofs. Rather, the reliability of the historical faith of the Church must come from the Bible itself as a fact of faith. Kant puts it this way:

It [theology] does not, however, speak according to the laws of the pure and a priori knowable religion of reason (for this would humiliate it and reduce it to the level of philosophy), but it speaks according to statutory precepts of faith contained in a book, which is preferably called the Bible; that is, it [the Bible] is a codex of the revelation of an Old and New Covenant of men with God composed many hundred years ago, whose authentication as a historical faith (quite certainly not as a moral faith, for that could also be extracted from philosophy) may indeed be expected more from the effect, which the reading of the Bible is inclined to make on the heart of men, than from the proofs established by means of a critical examination of its inclusive teachings and accounts.⁴

Barth suggests that in this segregation of theology and philosophy "an insight lies hidden, which had, and still has, a right to be heard, an insight

¹Religion within . . . , p. 9. ²Sämtliche Werke, VII, 339-340.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 378. Translation mine.

which, it is true, was of no direct usefulness within the framework of Kant's undertaking, but one in which that determination of the place of theology might well have its deep and justified reason."¹

Barth points out that some of Kant's apparent concessions to theology may have been made in view of the Wöllner edict, which was issued on July 9, 1788, and which threatened with civil punishment and dismissal from all offices under King Frederick William II's jurisdiction those who failed to adhere to biblical teachings.² In spite of whether or not these concessions were made in the light of this edict, Barth asks: "Is it not the case that the philosopher of pure reason has said something very significant to the theologian in telling him in all succinctness that 'The biblical theologian proves that God exists by means of the fact that he has spoken in the Bible'?"³

It can be seen from this third option that Barth's own theological method (that the only proper prolegomenon to theology is the doctrine of the Word of God) is not uninfluenced by the restriction which Kant placed upon reason with the result that faith cannot look for support in either philosophy or objective critical study. Rather, as Kant says, faith is effected through "the reading of the Bible," or, as Barth says, faith comes from the Word of God, the truth of which is self-authenticating. Barth puts it this way:

We found that the possibility of knowing God was literally founded, raised, and bound up in the very event of its realisation, and our Yea to this possibility became a particular indication of this event. We cannot bring this event upon the stage and so we cannot prove

¹Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 196.

²Barth, Protestant Thought, p. 195. Cf. Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, p. xxxii; Sämtliche Werke, VII, 324ff.

³Protestant Thought, p. 196.

our indication; we could only prove it by bringing the event it indicates on to the stage and letting it speak for itself.¹

Thus, following the lead of Kant, Barth has renounced any objective proofs of faith, for the truth of the Word of God "is based purely upon itself."²

This means theology precedes anthropology, God-certainty precedes self-certainty. This means no historical or philosophical question enter, for

men can know the Word of God because and so far as God wills that they should know it, because and so far as over against the will of God there is only the weakness of disobedience, and because and so far as there is a revelation of the will of God, in His Word, in which this weakness of disobedience is removed.³

While Kant in principle has segregated theology and philosophy, in practice he shows that at least theology must come to terms with the questions raised by philosophy. In this connection, he suggests that it would be beneficial for a candidate of biblical theology to include in his curriculum a course in the philosophical theory of religion. After having taken this course, the theological candidate should either adopt the theories of the philosopher, or else he must refute the philosopher.⁴ At this point, Barth would disagree, for it is not within the theologian's concern whatever may be the theories of the philosopher.⁵ Theology's sole responsibility is to examine the language of the Church in the light of the Bible.⁶ There is here no

¹Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God, trans. G. T. Thomson (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), I, 1, 260-261.

²Ibid., p. 223. Paul Althaus has pointed out that this attempt to place revelation beyond the necessity of historical proof is the direct result of Kant's critical philosophy, which thus led to the inflation of the idea of revelation ("Die Inflation des Begriffs der Offenbarung in der gegenwärtigen Theologie," Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie, 18 [1941], 134-135, 148f.).

³Church Dogmatics, I, 1, 223-224. ⁴Religion within . . ., p. 10.

⁵Church Dogmatics, I, 1, 223; Protestant Thought, p. 192.

⁶Church Dogmatics, I, 1, 11.

question of any objective demonstration of faith, for the certainty of faith comes from the unmediated self-revelation of God. "Faith as faith in God stands on its own feet, and is the basis of knowledge."¹ "Truth of revelation is the freely acting God, Himself and quite alone."²

In delineating these three possible options, Barth has shown the way that theology has "re-acted" to the philosophical distinctions which have been drawn between truth and certainty, faith and knowledge, which follow from the delineation of thought and being, thought and extension, relation of ideas and matters of fact, noumenon and phenomenon, etc. This is to re-iterate what has been said, that the sharp philosophical distinctions of reality into intellect and sensibility marked the rise of modern philosophy and brought to light with a high degree of intensity the general problem of epistemology which in turn came to serve as the epistemological presupposition of our modern idea of revelation.

Attention shall now be focused on selected theologians who have especially dealt with this relationship of faith and knowledge, history and reason, truth and certainty, and a critique will be offered of each of their methods. However, this section is not intended to make a critique of theologians who could be used as "whipping-boys" in order to bolster an alternative position. However, it may give the appearance of one-sidedness in restricting Part Two to theological "re-actions," but on the other hand, the strength of this approach is to be found in that it facilitates in lifting out the general nature of the problem of history and faith, particularly as it has led to dualisms in religious epistemology. Thus, Part Two self-consciously does not intend to consider in any comprehensive way the many positive and

¹Ibid., p. 15. ²Ibid., p. 16.

constructive aspects of the theological positions under consideration here, though each of these theological positions is appreciated. Finally, the choice which has led to the selection of these particular theologians should be self-evident on the basis of their contribution to the discussion on the problem of faith and history.

CHAPTER V

THE DUALISM OF KIERKEGAARD

One scarcely needs to point out the imposing influence of Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) on contemporary theology. His influence was restricted in his own day¹ (partly because his thought was not in step with the Hegelian philosophy on the one hand and the complacent orthodoxy on the other hand, and partly because his writings were not in one of the major world languages); yet since World War I his influence has not been without great magnitude as it is especially seen in modern existentialist philosophy and in what is broadly termed as neo-orthodoxy.² Paul Tillich speaks of Kierkegaard's influence upon his own thought during his days as a student in theology at Halle. He happened across Kierkegaard's writings through a translation made by an isolated individual in Württemberg. Tillich found that Kierkegaard provided for him the initiative for a constructive alternative to the theology of reprobation which Tillich said had failed to take into serious account the results of historical criticism. On the other hand, Tillich says he could not be satisfied with the Ritschlian alternative with its mystical theology and empty moralism.³ He writes:

¹"Commentator's Introduction" to Søren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, translated by David F. Swenson with an introduction and Howard V. Hong with a new introduction and commentary by Niels Thulstrup (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. XCV. Cited hereafter as Fragments.

²Tillich, p. 164. ³Ibid., pp. 162-163.

So we were extremely happy when we encountered Kierkegaard. It was this combination of intense piety which went into the depths of human existence and the philosophical greatness which he had received from Hegel that made him so important for us. The real critical point would be the denial that Hegel's idea of reconciliation is a genuine reconciliation. Man is not reconciled by the reconciliation in the philosopher's head.¹

For the purposes of this paper, it will be my restricted intention to point out that Kierkegaard radicalized the Kantian bifurcation of reality and that this in turn tended toward a negative alliance of faith with reason and history.² In this respect, Kierkegaard transposed the philosophical distinctions of reality (which have been variously but comparably described as truths of reason and truths of experience, relation of ideas and matters of fact, thought and being) into theological usage. It is likewise a comparable distinction that underlies much of contemporary theological formulations, as it has already been suggested and will be further indicated subsequently.

Thought and Being. Thought and being cannot be brought together into any self-identity except in some abstract way. Kierkegaard says that thought abstracts from what is concrete being, and in this abstraction thought and being are identical. In this abstract sense, truth may be so defined as to be complete and final since thought and being have an exact correspondence. This correspondence is a mere abstraction since it is only an abstract self-identity. Thus, to say that thought is being is tautologous. On the other hand, whenever being becomes empirically based in existence, truth (which is

¹Ibid., p. 163.

²This section deals primarily with the two writings of Kierkegaard which present the question of history for faith--Philosophical Fragments and Concluding Unscientific Postscript /trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), cited hereafter as Postscript 7.

the conformity of thought with being) is put into a process of becoming. This means that truth--the conformity of thought with being--is only realized for God, but it cannot be so realized for man who is the process of becoming.¹

Since man is an existing spirit and thus in process of becoming, he can never attain objective certainty. He can never know an object as-it-really-is. Truth for man is not an objective certainty, but an objective uncertainty held fast in passionate subjectivity. Any talk of the identity of subject and object, thought and being, is a pure abstraction. This is to say that whenever being is an empirical entity, knowledge of this being is essential knowledge when it relates to the individual and is only accidental knowledge when it is unrelated to the individual. Kierkegaard writes:

That essential knowledge is essentially related to existence does not mean the above-mentioned identity which abstract thought postulates between thought and being; nor does it signify, objectively, that knowledge corresponds to something existent as its object. But it means that knowledge has a relationship to the knower, who is essentially an existing individual, and that for this reason all essential knowledge is essentially related to existence. Only ethical and ethico-religious knowledge has an essential relationship to the existence of the knower.²

Kierkegaard is not denying the reality of objective knowledge as the conformity of thought and being--i.e., truth as the identity of thing-as-it-is and thing-as-it-appears. This is to say that he is not denying the category of substance as Hume did when he said that all knowledge is knowledge of isolated impressions and not knowledge of things-as-they-really-are in the form of extramental reality. Rather, Kierkegaard is saying that truth for the individual exists only as it appears to the individual and that only God knows a thing-as-it-really-is. Kierkegaard writes:

Not for a single moment is it forgotten that the subject is an

¹Postscript, pp. 169-170. ²Postscript, p. 177.

existing individual, and that existence is a process of becoming, and that therefore the notion of the truth as identity of thought and being is a chimera of abstraction, in its truth only an expectation of the creature; not because the truth is not such an identity, but because the knower is an existing individual for whom the truth cannot be such an identity as long as he lives in time. (*italics mine.*)¹

This means if man were to achieve truth as an objective certainty, he would have to be capable of standing outside time completely. But, since man is a synthesis of finite and infinite, it is impossible for him to completely transcend the temporal order. "It is only momentarily that the particular individual is able to realize existentially a unity of the infinite and the finite which transcends existence," for "existence exercises its restraining influence."²

What then is truth for man, since he cannot completely transcend existence? Kierkegaard answers: "An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth" (*italics Kierkegaard's*).³ It can thus be seen that truth is the will's decision to believe what is objectively uncertain.

Kierkegaard works this dualism of thought and being out in terms of the "what" and the "how." Truth as subjectivity is not concerned with the objective "what," but with the subjective "how" of human existence.⁴ He writes: "The thing of being a Christian is not determined by the what of Christianity but by the how of the Christian. This how can only correspond with one thing, the absolute paradox."⁵ The "what" is a thing-in-itself unrelated to existence. The "how" is a mode of existence; it is truth as subjectivity; it is the thing-as-it-appears which is held fast in passionate

¹Ibid., p. 176. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 182. ⁴Ibid., p. 181.

⁵Postscript, p. 540.

inwardness.

It can be seen that Kierkegaard's disjunction between thought and being stands in sharp contrast to Hegel's philosophy. As it has already been pointed out, Hegel rejected the absolute Kantian disjunction of subject and object. Hegelian logic is the study of thought-determinations, which is a study of things-as-they-really-are. This is to say that what is thought and thought itself coincide. Thus, Hegel attempted to resolve the question of epistemology by showing that truth resided in the thinking subject. While Kierkegaard accepted this subjectivity of truth, he rejected the logic of Hegel which in its dialectical method pointed out the difference between what is and what is conceived and then resolved this distinction (or, dialectic) in such a way that the object as it is for us is seen to be the same as the object as it is in itself. This means that the reconciliation of subject and object takes place in the concrete thought of the human spirit (ego). Thus, Hegel explains, through his critique of the categories, that logic is the pure concept known as true existence.¹

It is this unity of "pure concept" and "true existence" that Kierkegaard attacks. Kierkegaard recognizes the validity of abstract thought. But, abstract thought concerns itself only with possibility, not reality. He writes: "A valid thought is a possibility, and every further question as to whether it is real or not should be dismissed as irrelevant."² This is to say that thought and being are bifurcated in existence, whereas in abstract thought the question of reality does not emerge. When Hegel introduces the dialectic moment into his logic, that the opposition of subject and object is overcome in the concrete concept, Kierkegaard repudiates it.

¹Supra, p. 82. ²Postscript, p. 292.

Kierkegaard writes: "To answer Kant within the fantastic shadow-place of pure thought is precisely not to answer him."¹ Kierkegaard says the only way to overcome skepticism is simply to break with it, i.e., risk a decision by postulating what you believe the truth is.² This is to say that subjective certainty cannot be objective truth.

This means movement from possibility to actuality cannot take place in the realm of the abstract. Rather, this movement takes place in the realm of existence. This movement is a leap, an act of the will.³ Thus, Kierkegaard says that Hegel's "pure thought is a phantom."⁴ Hegel cannot show how subject and object are united. Kierkegaard writes:

Instead of conceding the contention of Idealism, but in such a manner as to dismiss as a temptation the entire problem of a reality in the sense of a thing-in-itself eluding thought, which like other temptations cannot be vanquished by giving way to it; instead of putting an end to Kant's misleading reflection which brings reality into connection with thought; instead of relegating reality to the ethical--Hegel scored a veritable advance; for he became fantastic and vanquished idealistic scepticism by means of pure thought, which is merely an hypothesis, and even if it does not so declare itself, a fantastic hypothesis.⁵

What Kierkegaard is pointing out is that there is a breach between thought and being. Kant made the mistake of relating reality to thought instead of being. This is to say that being has priority over abstract thought. This means what man thinks is merely abstract (it does not relate to existence); what man is is existence. Here it can be seen that Kierkegaard radicalized Kant. Kierkegaard is not really concerned with knowing either Kant's noumenon or phenomenon. While Kant said that the conceptions of the understanding provided an objective basis for knowing a thing-as-it-appears,

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 306. ⁴Ibid., p. 279.

⁵Postscript, p. 292.

Kierkegaard is not interested in this objective knowledge of phenomena. He is concerned only with postulating what a thing might be.

On the other hand, to assert the priority of thought is Gnosticism.¹ Thus, reality for man is subjective; it is existence; it is action. Thought is possibility; reality is "an internal decision in which the individual puts an end to the mere possibility and identifies himself with the content of his thought in order to exist in it."²

When an individual thinks, he does not think existence: "The only thing-in-itself which cannot be thought is existence, and this does not come within the province of thought to think."³ What does an individual think, then, when he thinks? He thinks abstractly, i.e., he abstracts from existence. "It signifies that he thinks intermittently, that he thinks before and after. His thought cannot attain to absolute continuity. It is only in a fantastic sense that existing individual can be constantly sub specie aeterni."⁴

The result of this absolute discontinuity between thought and being is that there can be no such thing as an existential system. The reason for this is obvious enough since man is in a state of process as an existing individual, which means all attempts to finalize truth and reality must be rejected. Only in the realm of thought is there finality. But, thought in the existing individual is abstract thought and to say that thought and being are the same is a tautology because in abstract thought there is no actuality, only possibility. But, the identity of thought and being from the standpoint of eternity is both actual and final, for what is eternal does not exist, but always is. The eternal is thus defined as timeless.

¹Ibid., p. 305. ²Ibid., p. 302. ³Postscript, p. 292.

⁴Ibid., p. 293.

In this way, Kierkegaard rejected Hegel's attempt to convert the empirical self into the Absolute Spirit by the use of pure thinking. This cannot be done because of the bifurcation of being and thought in existence, for whatever exists cannot be thought and what is pure thought does not exist. Kierkegaard writes: "God does not think, he creates; God does not exist, He is eternal. Man thinks and exists, and existence separates thought and being, holding them apart from one another in succession."¹

Kierkegaard introduces the will as the category through which man achieves the unity of the infinite and the finite instead of Hegel's concrete concept. This unity is the moment of passion, the leap of faith.² This is to say that the unity of being and thought is the passionate appropriation of the will of that which is objectively uncertain. This means that Kierkegaard rejected Hegel's reconciliation of subject and object by means of his dialectical movement in logic, for reconciliation cannot be achieved in the mind of the philosopher. Only in the divine mind can there be reconciliation, while alienation is the lot of human existence. Hegel thus confused essence and existence, for his logic was in fact only one relation of ideas, not real movement in time.³

We have thus far delineated the way Kierkegaard's dualism has been worked out in terms of thought and being, essential knowledge and accidental knowledge, the "what" and the "how." We have pointed out that Kierkegaard revived the Kantian dualism of thing-as-it-is and the thing-as-it-appears in terms of existence rather than thought. In this way, Kierkegaard radicalized the Kantian bifurcation so that truth is not what is known through thought, but what is believed in existence.

¹Postscript, p. 296. ²Ibid., p. 176. ³Ibid.

Paragraph-Material and Existential Communication. Christianity is a res in facto posita from an objective viewpoint. As such, it comes under the investigation of critical study.¹ But, to view Christianity objectively as doctrine (paragraph-material) is in fact to eliminate Christianity. Kierkegaard says that Christianity is not a doctrine (a series of propositions to be understood), but is an existential communication. He writes: "To assume that this denial that Christianity is a doctrine should imply that Christianity is contentless, is merely a chicane. When the believer exists in faith his existence acquires tremendous content, but not in the sense of paragraph-material."² He further says that Christianity understood as a doctrine of the Incarnation or of the Atonement is a misunderstanding, for this would reduce Christianity to the level of speculative philosophy.³ What he is pointing out is that Christianity is not a speculative doctrine, but an existential doctrine. This is to say that Christianity may be defined as a doctrine in a restricted sense when it is meant to be realized in existence.⁴ This means the question of the truth of Christianity can be raised only as an existential problem, not as an objective problem.⁵

This distinction between paragraph-material and existential communication is helpful so long as the two are not bifurcated. Yet, this tends to happen when Kierkegaard draws such a sharp contrast between what is objective and what is subjective. For example, that "Christ died for our sins" is paragraph-material (is objectively true) whether it is existentially appropriated or not. This is to say that the doctrine of the Atonement is a truth of Christianity and can be intellectually received even though it may never

¹Ibid., p. 23. ²Ibid., pp. 339-340. ³Ibid., p. 340.

⁴Ibid., p. 339n. ⁵Ibid., p. 331.

be existentially appropriated. But, Kierkegaard will not allow Christianity any such speculative status. For example, the Bible as a historical document cannot be the basis of religious authority.¹ Christianity is not to be discussed; it is not to be intellectually grasped; it is to be received; it is to be believed. The only presupposition to be allowed for a "Christian philosophy" is:

that Christianity is the precise opposite of speculation, that it is the miraculous, the absurd, a challenge to the individual to exist in it, and not to waste his time by trying to understand it speculatively.²

It is at this point that Kierkegaard invites a misunderstanding when he restricts the validity of trying to understand Christianity and when he denies the Bible to be an objective standard of religious authority. He says that one must believe against the understanding.³ What is important for him is to believe, to take the leap of faith. The only objective content necessary is "the historical fact that the God has been in human form"⁴ He further writes:

If the contemporary generation had left nothing behind them but these words: 'We have believed that in such and such a year the God appeared among us in the humble figure of a servant, that he lived and taught in our community, and finally died,' it would be more than enough. The contemporary generation would have done all that was necessary; for this little advertisement, this nota bene on a page of universal history, would be sufficient to afford an occasion for a successor, and the most voluminous account in all eternity do nothing more.⁵

The question arises whether this is enough paragraph-material for one to take a leap of faith. It seems to me that Paul Tillich has correctly pointed out faith needs more content than the mere fact that Christ came.

¹Ibid., p. 4, 38. ²Ibid., p. 338. ³Ibid., p. 504.

⁴Fragments, p. 130. ⁵Ibid., pp. 130-131.

Tillich criticizes Kierkegaard thus:

Can we solve the problem which historical criticism has opened up by a theology of the leap? I do not believe it is possible. Philosophically the question is this: In which direction am I to leap? You can leap in all directions, but if you have a direction in mind, you already have some knowledge, so it is not a pure leap anymore. If you are in complete darkness and jump without knowing in what direction you are jumping, then you can land anywhere, maybe even on the place from which you jumped. The danger in this concept is asking someone to jump without showing him the direction. Then we have more than subjectivity and paradox; we have willfulness and arbitrariness; we have complete contingency. But if you already know in which direction to jump, in the direction of Christ, for example, then you must have a reason for this. This reason may be some experience with him, some historical knowledge, some image of him from church tradition, etc., but in any case, you have some content. The mere name alone does not say anything.¹

This distinction between paragraph-material and existential communication parallels yet another distinction--quantitative approximation and qualitative dialect.

Quantitative approximation and Qualitative Dialectic. A qualitative dialectic presupposes the disjunction between subject and object, thought and being. It presupposes movement. It presupposes existence. It presupposes the impossibility of direct communication, for direct communication implies certainty and certainty is an impossibility for one who is in process of becoming.² Thus, an existential system cannot be formulated. Reality is a system only for God, but it cannot be a system for an existing spirit.³

Thus, whatever man has of the truth of reality is made available through dialectics. This is to say dialectics lead one to the place "where the resistance of an objective uncertainty tortures forth the passionate certainty of faith."⁴ Dialectics lead one to take the leap of faith--to make

¹Tillich, p. 175. ²Postscript, p. 68n. ³Ibid., p. 107.

⁴Ibid., p. 438.

a decision concerning the truth of what is objectively uncertain. It is this decision that the Greek skeptics refused to make. Thus, by abstaining from judgment on issues they sought to avoid mental insecurity. Diogenes Laertius expresses this suspension of judgment this way:

We recognize that it is day and that we are alive, and many other apparent facts in life; but with regard to the things about which our opponents argue so positively, claiming to have definitely apprehended them, we suspend our judgment because they are not certain, and confine knowledge to our impressions. For we admit that we see, and we recognize that we think this or that, but how we see or how we think we know not.¹

Kierkegaard thus points out that truth does not exist objectively for the individual. In this respect, he does not differentiate between truth and faith. Subjective truth (faith) is one thing; objective knowledge is something else. Subjective truth is the certainty of faith, while objective knowledge is only a quantitative approximation. Faith is a venture, an uncertainty of knowledge. This venture is madness (passion). It is a risk. "To ask for certainty is on the other hand prudence, for it is an excuse to evade the venture and its strenuousness, and to transfer the problem into the realm of knowledge and of prattle."²

In contrast to dialectics which lead to faith, critical study leads to quantitative approximation. This latter is so, for whatever comes into existence is in process of becoming and uncertain, and whatever is uncertain cannot be the basis for eternal happiness. This uncertainty is attached to what has come into existence, and it points to the inadequacy of any objective scientific investigation of the Bible when such an attempt intends to provide

¹Diogenes Laertius (IX, 103; Loeb Classics, II, 515), cited by Thulstrup's Commentary in Fragments, p. 249.

²Postscript, p. 381.

faith with an objective basis and thus intends to secure faith against the doubt that it may not have a basis beyond itself. This is to say that the certainty of faith does not rely upon the dependability of the Bible as a historical document.¹ He makes it quite explicit that faith is independent of the incertitudes of historical research. Thus, he rejects the idea of the Bible as the final authority of Christian truth when it is viewed from the historical point of view. In this respect, he says that all philological and critical scholarship is of no concern for faith.² This is so, for all that scientific inquiry can produce is an approximation, which is insufficient as a basis for faith. This leads Kierkegaard to say that whenever faith seeks a demonstration, then it ceases to be faith.³ He writes: "Anyone who posits inspiration, as a believer does, must consistently consider every critical deliberation, whether for or against, as a misdirection, a temptation for the spirit."⁴

The question arises whether or not Kierkegaard's disjunction between qualitative dialectics and the quantitative approximation-process fails to do justice to the historical frame of reference of Christian faith. This is to suggest that he does not draw a proper distinction between the certainty of faith and the certainty of historical knowledge. The two certainties lie on different levels, but are not antithetical. In fact, it seems to me impossible to escape the realization that if historical study could historically demonstrate that revelation has not taken place in the world (a fact which Christian faith must at least theoretically allow), then it would show that faith is an illusion. Of course, it is just this dependence of faith upon historical

¹Ibid., pp. 25-26. ²Ibid., p. 29. ³Ibid., p. 31

⁴Ibid., p. 27.

research that is looked upon as highly problematic in contemporary thought.

Faith and Knowledge. The dualism of Kierkegaard can further be seen in the rather sharp distinction that he draws between faith and knowledge. He defines reality in terms of truth as known and truth as believed.

Faith and doubt are passions and have nothing to do with certainty. Certainty relates to knowledge (metaphysical truth), while faith relates to passion.¹ This is to say that one does not believe what one knows. To relate critical inquiry to faith, Kierkegaard says, is to confuse knowledge with faith.² It is this separation of faith and the certainty of objective knowledge that intensifies the passion of faith. The less objective knowledge is seen to be, the greater the passion of faith. The more objective knowledge one has, the less is the passion of faith. He writes:

Thus the subject merely has, objectively, the uncertainty; but it is this which precisely increases the tension of that infinite passion which constitutes his inwardness. The truth is precisely the venture which chooses an objective uncertainty with the passion of the infinite. I contemplate the order of nature in the hope of finding God, and I see omnipotence and wisdom; but I also see much else that disturbs my mind and excites anxiety. The sum of all this is an objective uncertainty. But it is for this very reason that the inwardness becomes as intense as it is, for it embraces this objective uncertainty with the entire passion of the infinite.³

Kierkegaard differentiates between two levels of faith--faith in the general sense and Faith in the eminent sense. Faith in the general sense is not a form of knowledge, but a free act of the will. Faith is the will to believe what is objectively uncertain. It is this refusal to will belief that characterized the Greek skeptics. They suspended judgment in order to avoid mental insecurity. Belief is the daring to overcome uncertainty. Belief is without error, for belief does not draw logical conclusions, but makes

¹Ibid., p. 30. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 182.

resolutions. Further, it is the will that creates belief, not immediate sense impression, nor the testimony of some contemporary to a past event.

Kierkegaard explains it this way:

A successor believes, to be sure, on account of the testimony of some contemporary; but only in the same sense as a contemporary believes on account of his immediate sensation and immediate cognition. But no contemporary can believe by virtue of this immediacy alone, and neither can any successor believe solely by virtue of the testimony to which he has access.¹

Kierkegaard further explains the difference between faith and knowledge in relation to the law of cause and effect. That an effect is the consequent of some cause cannot be known, but believed by an act of the will. In this way, doubt is excluded. He writes:

The conclusion of belief is not so much a conclusion as a resolution, and it is for this reason that belief excludes doubt. When belief concludes: this exists, ergo, it must have come into existence, it might appear to be making an inference from effect to cause. However, this is not quite the case; and even if it were so it must be remembered that the cognitive inference is from cause to effect, or rather, from ground to consequent (Jacobi). But it is not accurate to say that the conclusion of belief is an inference from effect to cause; I cannot sense or know immediately that what I sense or know immediately is an effect, since for the immediate apprehension it merely is. I believe that it is an effect, for in order to bring it under this category I must already have made it doubtful with the uncertainty implicit in coming into existence. When belief resolves to do this, doubt has been overcome; in that very instant the indifference of doubt has been dispelled and its equilibrium overthrown, not by knowledge but by will. Thus it will be seen that belief is the most disputable of things while in process of approximation; for the uncertainty of doubt, strong and invincible in making things ambiguous, disputare, is brought into subjection within it. But it is the least disputable when once constituted, by virtue of its new quality.²

For Hume, only isolated facts as mental impressions could be known and all connections between matters of fact were not real connections, only

¹Fragments, p. 106. ²Ibid., pp. 104-105.

relations of ideas. Thus, the law of cause and effect was not a metaphysical truth, but merely a relation of ideas. For Kant, the law of cause and effect was a synthetic a priori knowledge. For Kierkegaard, the law of cause and effect was neither a mere relation of ideas nor synthetic a priori knowledge. Rather, it is a belief--a free act of the will. But, it is not known as such except to God.

Further, one does not know what is historically true, for whatever comes into existence is only an approximation from the objective standpoint, and approximation is not knowledge. Thus, the objective truth of the past is "a matter of cognition and concerns not existence but essence."¹ This is to say that the objective truth of the past cannot be known in historical existence. When an event takes place before the eyes of a contemporary, its actual perception is immediate and can be said to be non-deceiving.² But, when this event has happened and thus comes into existence, then its truth becomes uncertain even for the contemporary who may have just witnessed the actual event. It can be said that this contemporary who just witnessed this event does not know the past, but believes it. It likewise follows that a successor believes on account of the testimony of the contemporary in the same way that the contemporary believes on account of his immediate perception of the event. But, it is the will that does the believing, not knowledge nor immediate perception. Thus, it cannot be said that the historical can be known.³

So far we have defined faith in the general sense, but now we turn to the definition of Faith in the eminent sense. First, it can be said that this Faith in the eminent sense includes the definition of faith in the general

¹Ibid., p. 106. ²Ibid., p. 100. ³Ibid., p. 106.

sense, i.e., the relationship of the mind to something historical. But, this Faith is eminent for the fact that God came into existence. This means that Faith is a paradox, that the eternal and the historical were united at a definite point of time. But, this Faith is not knowledge. It does not raise the question of content, but rather raises the question of assent. Kierkegaard writes:

No one can become immediately contemporary with this historical fact, as has been shown in the preceding; it is the object of Faith, since it concerns coming to existence. No question is here raised as to the true content of this; the question is if one will give assent to the God's having come into existence, by which the God's eternal essence is inflected in the dialectical determinations of coming into existence.¹

What Kierkegaard is pointing to is the distinction between the eternal and the historical. Faith does not exist from an eternal standpoint, but rather, faith relates only to what is historical. Thus, one does not say that he has Faith in God from the eternal perspective. One can only speak of Faith in God from a historical perspective. Thus, to say that Socrates had Faith in God is a misunderstanding.

Socrates did not have faith that the God existed. What he knew about the God he arrived at by way of Recollection; the God's existence was for him by no means historical existence . . . ; for Faith does not have to do with essence, but with being, and the assumption that the God is determines him eternally and not historically.²

Kierkegaard does not at all suggest that Faith is a mere act of the will (as it is the case of faith in the general sense). Rather, Faith receives its condition by God Himself. This means that Faith is not based on historical knowledge, but it is based upon the condition created by God Himself in the Moment. While this Faith is not based on historical knowledge, yet it has a

¹Ibid., p. 109. ²Ibid., p. 108.

historical frame of reference. Kierkegaard writes:

How does the learner then become a believer or disciple? When the Reason is set aside and he receives the condition. When does he receive the condition? In the Moment. What does this condition condition? The understanding of the Eternal. But such a condition must be an eternal condition.--He receives accordingly the eternal condition in the Moment, and is aware that he has so received it; for otherwise he merely comes to himself in the consciousness that he had it from eternity. It is in the Moment that he receives it, and from the Teacher himself.¹

This disjunction between faith and knowledge corresponds to the disjunction between certainty and passion. Knowledge is objective and certain and relates to the realm of essence. Faith is subjective and passionate and relates to the realm of existence. Thus, faith is existential truth, a truth which is objectively uncertain, but believed through a passionate intensity of the will. This is to say that faith is a risk. Kierkegaard writes:

Without risk there is no faith. Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty. If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this I must believe. If I wish to preserve myself in faith I must constantly be intent upon holding fast the objective uncertainty, so as to remain out upon the deep, over seventy thousand fathoms of water, still preserving my faith.²

Kierkegaard's disjunction between faith and knowledge tends to be injurious to the reality of Christian Faith. In this respect, Karl Jaspers has said: "One cannot theologize Kierkegaard and affirm the Church."³ Does the disallowance of historical knowledge in regard to faith (in the general sense) and Faith (in the eminent sense) solve the problem which historical criticism has raised in regard to the Bible? To be sure, Christian faith is

¹Ibid., p. 79. ²Postscript, p. 182.

³Karl Jaspers, Philosophical Faith and Revelation, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), p. 349.

more than historical knowledge--it is a relationship to God. But, to depreciate the objectivity of knowledge and to define truth solely in terms of faith does not seem to me to be in the interest of Faith when such Faith has a historical frame of reference. This is to say that if Faith claims a historical point of reference, and yet this Faith refuses to allow this historical point of reference to be examined, then it could suggest that Faith is dishonest.

On the other hand, his emphasis upon the priority of Faith helps to show that Faith receives its condition from God himself. Paul writes: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Romans 10:17). It is God coming to man that creates the condition of Faith. Kierkegaard's discussion of the contemporary disciple is helpful at this point. Being a contemporary of Jesus did not guarantee Faith. This is to say that immediacy in the time of Jesus did not of itself create Faith. There were many who saw the historical Jesus, but did not have Faith. Thus, the statement of Jesus in response to Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ: "For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). This means that the fact that God became man exists through Faith. This content exists for Faith as color exists for sight and sound for hearing.¹ Thus, this fact must really exist if Faith is to have content. This means it is imperative that the first disciples really saw the historical Jesus if Faith is to exist just as it is imperative that this fact be preached today if men are to have Faith. Kierkegaard writes:

The successor believes by means of (this expresses the occasional) the testimony of the contemporary, and in virtue of the condition he himself receives from the God.²

¹Fragments, p. 128. ²Ibid., p. 131.

Eternity and Time, the Moment and the Historical. Kierkegaard

distinguishes between the moment and the historical. The moment is decisive; it is filled with the eternal; it is the "fulness of time"; it is brief; it passes away.¹ The moment is immediate perception and immediate cognition. The moment does not deceive so long as it is this moment. But, when the moment comes into existence, then it ceases to be the moment and becomes historical. He writes:

Immediate sensation and immediate cognition cannot deceive. This is by itself enough to show that the historical cannot be the object of either, because the historical has the elusiveness which is implicit in all coming into existence. As compared with the immediate, coming into existence has an elusiveness by which even the most dependable fact is rendered doubtful.²

The moment is dependable so long as it is this moment, but when it is a past moment it becomes uncertain. Thus, immediate sensation and immediate cognition cannot deceive, for it is this moment. Immediacy does not have the suspicion of uncertainty which attaches to the following moment.³ Whatever has come into existence is historical. "But the historical is past (for the present pressing upon the confines of the future has not yet become historical)."⁴ On the other hand, the eternal has no history, but neither does the moment. Eternity is timeless.⁵ But, time is characterized by a duality, for what is present becomes past.⁶

Kierkegaard points out this disjunction between the eternal and the historical with reference to Lessing's statement that the accidental truths of history cannot serve as the necessary truths of reason.⁷ It is this breach

¹Ibid., p. 22. ²Ibid., p. 100. ³Ibid., p. 101.

⁴Ibid., p. 94. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid., p. 97.

⁷Postscript, p. 86.

between the historical and the eternal that is united paradoxically through the leap of faith in the moment. This decision of Faith happens in the moment and is not something historical. Thus, one can speak of the certainty of Faith, for it is the moment and what is present as this moment is immediate and thus certain. This means that Faith happens every moment, for whenever Faith becomes historical it ceases to be Faith.

The moment is similar to the eternal in that the moment and the eternal are without any history and thus certain. The difference between the moment and the eternal is that the moment takes place in time and thus passes away, whereas, the eternal is timeless and never passes away.¹ Yet, the absolute paradox is that the eternal did enter time and became historical.

It is this paradoxical relationship of eternal happiness and its historical point of departure that Kierkegaard intended to show was incompatible not only with Hegelianism, but all idealistic philosophy. This Kierkegaard shows by going back to the beginnings of idealistic philosophy with Socrates.² It is a presupposition of Socratic thought that truth inheres in man. Man cannot be taught truth, but can only be reminded of what he already knows. This is the doctrine of recollection, that man existed *priori* to birth and thus has the truth within himself. Socrates, as a dialectical teacher, only serves as the accidental occasion whereby the learner can come to an understanding of himself, and thus this provides Socrates himself an accidental occasion for coming to an understanding of himself. It can be seen from this that the truth is eternal and has nothing to do with the accidental truths of experience. This means that reconciliation is a matter of being reconciled with the truth which already inheres in his being.

¹Fragments, p. 97. ²Ibid., pp. 11-45.

This means that the historical cannot have any decisive significance for the existing individual, for truth is already immanent in the mind of man. It is this Socratic doctrine of recollection and presupposition of idealism that universal truth inheres in man that most characteristically differentiates Christianity from all philosophy and paganism. The teacher and the pupil in Socratic thought exist in a state of error, and the teacher can only serve as an accidental occasion for both the teacher and the learner to remember what he already knows. For Christianity, the historical takes on decisive significance, for man is not in a mere state of error, but exists in a state of sin. Truth does not inhere in the individual, but the Teacher brings the learner to the Truth. But this is no mere teacher; he is God. The Teacher prompts the learner to recall that he is error, due to his own guilt, which is sin. Thus, the doctrine of recollection in this regard does not bring pleasure but anguish. Man becomes aware of the break that separates God and man. But, God is not responsible for this breach, nor is it due to an accident. Rather, it is due to man's sin. This Teacher, through a self-imposed bondage, becomes Saviour, Redeemer, Reconciler, Judge. This means that the Teacher brings to the learner not only truth (which the learner does not already possess), but also makes the learner aware of his own sin. In this respect, Socrates did not have the consciousness of sin.¹ Thus it can be seen the historical becomes of decisive importance. Kierkegaard writes:

It is well known that Christianity is the only historical phenomenon which in spite of the historical, nay precisely by means of the historical, has intended itself to be for the single individual the point of departure for his eternal consciousness, has intended to interest him otherwise than merely historically, has intended to base his eternal happiness on his relation to something historical. No system of philosophy, addressing

¹Ibid., p. 58.

itself only to thought, no mythology, addressing itself to the imagination, no historical knowledge, addressing itself to the memory, has ever had this idea: of which it may be said with all possible ambiguity in this connection, that it did not arise in the heart of any man.¹

Kierkegaard points out that this historical aspect of Christianity is the sharpest contrast to paganism and to eliminate the historical is to resort back to paganism.² Thus, he says when modern philosophy believes it has moved beyond Christianity it has in fact only moved back to paganism and to Socratic thought.³ What Kierkegaard is saying is that if one rejects the historical point of departure of faith by rejecting the Incarnation he is thereby denying that which makes Christianity Christian. It is thus an illusion to think that one finds this absolutely distinguishing feature dispensable or easy to believe.

It is this paradoxical relationship of Faith to something eternal which is at the same time historically conditioned that distinguishes Christianity from all philosophy and pagan religions. It is at this point that the absolute paradox can be seen. For Socratic thought, the historical can only have an accidental significance.⁴ For Christianity, the historical takes on decisive significance for Truth. The absolute paradox is the moment when the eternal and the historical are united. This is the supreme paradox in that faith is the moment where something happens which thought cannot think. But, paradox is characteristic of thought. One cannot think without it. It is this paradoxical passion of reason--for thought to reach out beyond itself to the Unknown--that unsettles man's knowledge of himself. How is man to know this Unknown? Socrates believes man could have ontological truth

¹Ibid., pp. 137-138. ²Postscript, p. 330. ³Ibid., p. 323.

⁴Fragments, p. 13.

through recollection. For Christianity, this truth could be known only through the absolute paradox--that God entered time and that Faith which receives its condition from God appropriates this revelation of truth which has a decisive historical frame of reference.¹ It is an absolute paradox, for it cannot be thought, only encountered in the moment of Faith.

Kierkegaard's emphasis upon the historical frame of reference for Christian faith in contrast to idealistic philosophy is extremely helpful, but his sharp disjunction between the eternal and time, the moment and this historical seems to be more Platonic than Christian.

Jürgen Moltmann points out that Kierkegaard's definition of the moment and the eternal as timeless is directly joined to Greek thinking and basically cannot be harmonized with the Christian knowledge of God.² To bifurcate reality into the eternal and time is to emphasize the moment of Faith at the expense of the historical. Moltmann writes:

This mysticism of being, with its emphasis on the living of the present moment, presupposes an immediacy to God which the faith that believes in God on the ground of Christ cannot adopt without putting an end to the historic mediation and reconciliation of God and man in the Christ event, and so also, as a result of this, putting an end to the observation of history under the category of hope.³

He further points out that the biblical God is not one who "never was nor will be, because he now is all at once as a whole," but one "who maketh the dead alive and calleth into being the things that are not."⁴

God and Man. The bifurcation between eternity and time is further

¹Ibid., p. 18.

²Moltmann, Theology of Hope, trans. James W. Leitch (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 29.

³Ibid., p. 30. ⁴Ibid., p. 31.

worked out in terms of an absolute difference between God and man. This absolute difference seems to be the result of man's finitude and creaturehood. This seems to be due to man's particularity in time while God is eternal. He writes:

But the absolute difference between God and man consists precisely in this, that man is a particular existing being (which is just as much true of the most gifted human being as it is of the most stupid), whose essential task cannot be to think sub specie aeterni, since as long as he exists he is, thought eternal, essentially an existing individual, whose essential task it is to concentrate upon inwardness in existing; while God is infinite and eternal.¹

It is this absolute difference between God and man that leads Kierkegaard to term the Incarnation as an absolute paradox. 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. As such it cannot relate itself to a relative difference between men. A relative paradox relates itself to the relative difference between more or less cleverness and brains; but the absolute paradox, just because it is absolute, can be relevant only to the absolute difference that distinguishes man from God, and has nothing to do with the relative wrangling between man and man with respect to the fact that one man has a little more brains than another.²

Since there is this absolute difference between God and man, reason cannot attain to knowledge of God. Neither can the absolute paradox be comprehended by the mind. To explain the paradox would be to explain it away. That the understanding cannot grasp the paradox is to say that it is the absurd, to believe what one cannot think. Yet, Kierkegaard is precise in pointing out that this absurdity is not nonsense. He recognizes the awkwardness of this term "absurd."³ He thus speaks of the absurd as a higher understanding, but this does not mean that one can "defend oneself against every accusation by remarking that it is a higher understanding."⁴ He

¹Postscript, p. 195. ²Ibid., pp. 194-195. ³Ibid., p. 504n.

⁴Ibid., p. 504.

further points out the understanding is not completely sacrificed, but that understanding itself becomes the principle for understanding that something cannot be fully understood. He puts it this way:

So the believing Christian not only possesses but uses his understanding, respects the universal-human, does not put it down to lack of understanding if somebody is not a Christian; but in relation to Christianity he believes against the understanding and in this case also uses understanding . . . to make sure that he believes against the understanding. Nonsense therefore he cannot believe against the understanding, for precisely the understanding will discern that it is nonsense and will prevent him from believing it; but he makes so much use of the understanding that he becomes aware of the incomprehensible, and then he holds to this, believing against the understanding.¹

In a theological way, Kierkegaard is thus providing a critique of reason--reason coming to an understanding of its limitation--in an analogous way to the Kantian philosophical critique of reason. By limiting the scope of reason's possibilities, Kierkegaard is making room for revelation.

While it is admitted "the thinker without a paradox is like a lover without feeling,"² it does not seem necessarily to follow that one needs to speak of the Incarnation as the absurd or as an absolute paradox when such terms are used to stress the absolute difference between God and man (even if these terms are not intended to suggest nonsense). Is it justifiable to speak of an absolute difference between God and man? To be sure, there is a qualitative difference in so far as God is holy and man is sinful. In Philosophical Fragments, Kierkegaard speaks of the absolute difference between God and man in terms of man's sin.³ But, even man can hardly be absolutely sinful, for if such were the case there would not be any good in the world and the human race would hardly have survived to this date! Thus, the doctrine of prevenient grace (Wesley) or common grace (Calvin) means that there is not an

¹Ibid. ²Fragments, p. 46. ³Ibid., p. 58.

absolute difference between God and man even in a qualitative sense, for there is a measure of grace inherent in man as an unconditional benefit of the Atonement.

We have pointed out that Kierkegaard radicalized the Kantian dualism of reality. This is seen in his multiple use of sharp distinctions--Thought and Being, Paragraph-material and Existential Communication, Quantitative Approximation and Qualitative Dialect, Faith and Knowledge, Eternity and Time, the Moment and the Historical, God and Man, etc. While these distinctions have relative validity, to bifurcate them results in a negative alliance of faith with history, for this reduces all knowledge to belief--that one can never know anything, but only believes. This would then leave Faith open to the charge that it is mere arbitrariness and that the will merely compels belief in spite of what reason says the facts really are.

For example, Kierkegaard says that in the immediate moment of seeing a star one is not deceived. But when one remembers this moment of seeing this star, it is not known with objective certainty, even if it is the next moment. This is to say that when the moment of seeing a star has come into existence one does not know with certainty that he saw a star; he only believes it.¹

The obvious implication of such a bifurcation of reality forbids one from pursuing any systematic construction of theology, especially when such a construction would purport to assist Faith. Kierkegaard makes it quite clear that any existential system is impossible and that all critical inquiry is of no concern to Faith. Faith is a risk. It takes its point of departure from an "if."² To reduce the risk is to weaken Faith. To be sure, Kierkegaard

¹ Ibid., p. 100.

² Journals of Søren Kierkegaard, edited and translated by Alexander Dru (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 368.

was concerned with how to become a Christian, and he was intent on making it as difficult as possible, especially since it had become quite an easy thing to call oneself a Christian without realizing what it really meant to be a Christian. He further acknowledged that his approach was one-sided, hoping that an exaggeration would draw attention to the truth of what it means to be a Christian.¹ In this respect, his importance can be seen in his emphasis upon the priority of Faith, the otherness of God, the historical point of departure for faith, and the significance of the individual.

¹Ibid., pp. 467-468; Hermann Diem, Kierkegaard, trans. David Green (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), p. 123.

CHAPTER VI

MARTIN KÄHLER: DER HISTORISCHE JESUS UND DER GESCHICHTLICHE CHRISTUS

Martin Kähler was born in 1835, and he lived during the time of the old quest for the historical Jesus. These "questers" attempted to write a biography of the historical Jesus on the basis of a positivistic historiography which precluded the possibility of an absolutely unique occurrence.¹ Albert Schweitzer's The Quest of the Historical Jesus (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954) provides a detailed research into this "life of Jesus" movement. It is this work that brought the movement to a close. Carl Braaten writes: "In retrospect we can see that Albert Schweitzer's The Quest of the Historical Jesus, 1906, served as an impressive scientific obituary to a movement which fourteen years earlier had been mortally wounded by Kähler's prophetic pen."²

Barth has pointed out the following basic presuppositions of the rationalistic biographies of Jesus which were composed mainly under the Kantian influence.³ (1) Just as faith comes from man's inner consciousness, so it developed in Christ in the same way as it had in any other historical personality. (2) The gospels are the only existing sources for our knowledge of

¹Cf. Collingwood, p. 136.

²Carl Braaten, "Martin Kähler on the Historic Biblical Christ," The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), selected essays trans. and ed. Carl Braaten and Roy Harrisville, p. 79. I am indebted to this essay for introducing Kähler's work to me.

³Protestant Thought, pp. 378-379.

Christ, and they must be used in the same way as any other source material for historical study. (3) The historical Jesus is the object of our source material. It is both possible and necessary to discover his true personality behind the sources. (4) Jesus was immersed in the relativities of history as much as any other historical personality. Thus, the miracles ascribed to him can be explained away by interpreting them as misunderstandings, hidden forces of nature, or myth. In any case, Jesus can be seen to be a religious genius who had a spectacular form of God-consciousness. (5) Insofar as we are able to comprehend Jesus historically, the nineteenth century biographers believed that he was the chief revealer of God.

Kähler pointed out that the Jesus presented by these "modern biographies" (by such writers as Reimarus, Eichhorn, Paulus, Strauss, Renan, etc.)¹ only hid the real Christ from the believers. Their production was no better than the dogmatic Christ of Byzantine Christology. He writes: "In this respect historicism is just as arbitrary, just as humanly arrogant, just as impertinent and 'faithlessly gnostic' as that dogmatism which in its day was also considered modern."²

Thus, he draws a sharp distinction between "der sogenannte historische Jesus" and "der geschichtliche, biblische Christus." In this way, he "mortally wounds" (as Braaten puts it) the "life of Jesus" movement and provides a theological alternative to the problem of faith and history, i.e., with his emphasis upon the historic, biblical Christ as opposed to the so-called historical

¹Cf. David Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, pp. 45ff. Cf. Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus.

²Martin Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ, trans. with an introduction by Carl Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 43.

Jesus. It is this theological alternative to the "life of Jesus" movement that makes him so important for contemporary theology. Heinrich Ott writes, in this respect, that Kähler's So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ "still speaks with astonishing pertinence."¹ Paul Tillich also points this out when he says that Kähler "was a prophetic forerunner of what developed more fully only in the twentieth century. The heritage of Martin Kähler has been rediscovered only in the present-day discussion in view of the radical criticism."²

His terminological distinction between historisch and geschichtlich seems to be the origin of the modern theological and technical distinction between Historie and Geschichte which is particularly characteristic in Bultmann's usage.³ This is not to suggest that Kähler intended to bifurcate faith and history, though he did lend a helping hand in that direction. This can be seen when Tillich writes: "One emphasis in Kähler's answer is decisive for our present situation, namely, the necessity to make the certainty of faith independent of the unavoidable uncertainties of historical research."⁴

Kähler's first concern in his work, The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ, is "to criticize and reject the wrong aspects" of

¹Heinrich Ott, "The Historical Jesus and the Ontology of History," The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, p. 148.

²Paul Tillich, Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, p. 215.

³Cf. Julius Schniewind, "A Reply to Bultmann," Kerygma and Myth, p. 82 (all references to Kerygma and Myth will be to volume one unless specifically designated as volume two); Braaten's introduction in Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus . . ., p. 20; Ott, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, p. 143ff.; Bartsch, "The Present State of the Debate," Kerygma and Myth, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch, trans. R. H. Fuller (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), II, 51; Michalson, Worldly Theology, p. 9.

⁴Tillich, "Foreward," The So-called Historical Jesus . . ., p. xii.

the approach of the "life of Jesus" movement.¹ His negative judgment against this approach was not its placing the Bible over against an abstract dogmatism. Rather, he rejected its failure to understand the nature of Scripture. He writes: "We have no sources for a biography of Jesus of Nazareth which measure up to the standards of contemporary historical science."² This is why Kähler charged the "modern biographers" for heading up a blind alley. That is, their cul-de-sac can be seen in the fact that they did not understand the nature of their source material. Kähler points out quite concisely the justification for this charge. He writes:

Our sources, that is, the Gospels exist in such isolation that without them we would know nothing at all about Jesus, although the time and setting of his life are otherwise entirely clear to historians. He could be taken for a product of the church's fantasy around the year A.D. 100. Furthermore, these sources cannot be traced with certainty to eyewitnesses. In addition to this, they tell us only about the shortest and last period of his life. And finally, these sources appear in two basic forms whose variation must--in view of the proximity of the alleged or probable time of origin of these forms--awaken serious doubts about the faithfulness of the recollections. Consequently the "unbiased" critic finds himself confronted by a vast field strewn with the fragments of various traditions.³

Though Kähler was quite skeptical about the possibility of writing a scientific biography of Jesus, he is quick to point out the reliability of the kerygma's presentation of Jesus as the Saviour.⁴ Furthermore, he points out that the nature of the Bible is perfectio respectu finis. Thus, he shows that the purpose of the gospels was not to present a "scientifically reconstructed biography of Jesus." Rather, the gospels have a theological intention: "To awaken faith in Jesus through a clear proclamation of his saving activity."⁵

¹Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus . . ., p. 45.

²Ibid., p. 48. ³Ibid., pp. 48-49. ⁴Ibid., p. 48.

⁵Ibid., p. 127.

Thus, the perfection of the Bible is a theological one. It contains recollections which are also confessional. This means the gospels witness to a reality which is beyond any mere historical fact. The Scriptures "have a reliability which lies completely beyond proof and which would preclude the necessity of submitting them to a scientific test."¹

Since the "life of Jesus" biographers were concerned with the discovery of the real historical Jesus through the means of a positivistic historiography (as though facts were independent of meanings), it was necessary for them to discard all confessional statements. However, for Kähler, to do this was to destroy Christian faith. "Portrayals like those of a Renan or a Strauss, . . . are for believers in Christ an offense which cuts to the quick."² Further, if their portrayals are correct, then the generations who have humbled themselves before the Christ of the Bible are in immediate conflict with the First Commandment. He writes:

All of us who want to remain--and out of innermost conviction must remain--within the churchly tradition of the Reformers and thus in continuity with the theologians who have held to the divinity of Christ are united in our concern for the "biblical" Christ. For the divinity of Christ, however it may be more precisely defined in theology, means for us: that by virtue of which he may become the object of faith, without this faith's coming into conflict with the First Commandment and without its leading to deification of the creature.³

Thus, the failure of the "modern biographers" was due to their misunderstanding of the person of the biblical Christ. They seemed to think that he was only a man who possessed larger dimensions than our own nature. But, the truth of the matter for Kähler is this: "The distinction between Jesus Christ and ourselves is not one of degree but of kind."⁴

¹Ibid., p. 126. ²Ibid., p. 45n. ³Ibid., pp. 103-104.

⁴Ibid., p. 53.

If this historical assertion (i.e., the Incarnation) can be made, then any attempt to write a biography of Jesus is not permitted. This is so, for the principle of analogy would have to be used. Kähler asks: "Is this method justified in writing about Jesus? Will anyone who has had the impression of being encountered by that unique sinless person . . . still venture to use the principle of analogy?"¹ If he is the incarnate God, does this not rule out the principle of analogy? The meaning of history for Christian faith is brought into clear focus at this point. If it is historically impossible to assert that God came into the world at a definite moment in time, then Kähler is correctly pointing out that the historical continuity within the churchly tradition is broken. This means that the problem of history is twofold--the historical claims of Scripture and the historical continuity within the entire churchly tradition.

Consequently, Kähler out of theological necessity rejected the "life of Jesus" movement. He writes: "The historical approach is no longer concerned with safeguarding and interpreting a solid core of the content of faith. Only an extremely fluctuating picture of Jesus' personality is approximately certain."² Therefore, faith cannot afford to put itself at the mercy of the "modern biographers."

On the other hand, faith is only concerned with the biblical presentation of Jesus. Kähler puts it this way:

It is clear that the historical Jesus, as we see him in his earthly ministry, did not win from his disciples a faith with power to witness to him, but only a very shaky loyalty susceptible to panic and betrayal. It is clear that they were all reborn, with Peter, unto a living hope only through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (I Pet. 1:3) and that they needed the gift of the Spirit to "bring to their remembrance" what Jesus had said, before they were able to understand what he had

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 103.

already given them and to grasp what they had been unable to bear (John 14:26; 16:12, 13).¹

What Kähler is arguing is that it is illegitimate to try to go behind the New Testament picture of Jesus in order to get at a "historical Jesus" without taking into account the reality of the resurrection.

Kähler further points out that the disciples did not think of Jesus as the founder of some new school of religious belief. Nor did they envisage their task of merely spreading his teachings. Rather, they went forth into the world to witness to his person. They went forth to call men everywhere to faith in Christ.²

If all this clear and certain, it is equally certain that Jesus' followers were capable of understanding his person and mission, his deeds and his word as the offer of God's grace and faithfulness only after he appeared to them in his state of fulfillment-- in which he was himself the fruit and the eternal bearer of his own work of universal and lasting significance, a word (to be exact) whose most difficult and decisive part was the end of the historical Jesus. Even though we once knew the Messiah according to the flesh, now we regard him thus no longer (II Cor. 5:16).³

This means that the real Christ is the Christ who is preached. This further means that the real Christ was not seen for what he really was until after the resurrection. This is to say that any picture of Jesus that leaves out his resurrection, that seeks to bypass the resurrection kerygma, is not a true picture of Jesus Christ. This, in fact, is the same point that Panenberg has made over against Ebeling and Fuchs who seek the real historical Jesus apart from the factual reality of the resurrection event. However, this anticipates what is to follow later.

Further, in contrast to the rationalistic theologians, Kähler points out that faith in Christ does not mean "an assent of our conscience to Jesus' religious ethic."⁴ Neither is this historic Christ an "ideal to be realized

¹Ibid., pp. 65-66. ²Ibid., p. 66. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 121.

in the remote future by scientific investigation."¹ Rather, this faith is "directly accessible" through the biblical tradition which "possesses the inherent power to convince us of its divine authenticity. . . . That makes it impossible for me even to differentiate the 'historic' from the 'biblical' Christ."²

It can be seen from this that Kähler did not accept the historical approach of a positivistic historiography whose concern was with a scientifically-reconstructed biography of Jesus based on the presupposition that "Jesus" could be had apart from what he meant to the primitive church. Rather, he shows that any historical knowledge of Jesus can be had only from the perspective of the biblical "picture." The epistemological implication of Kähler's thesis is to be found in that history is not merely scientifically-reconstructed "bare" facts, but rather, historical facts speak their own language by means of "pictures," i.e., historical reality imposes its own meaning by creating a mental picture of what is meaningfully experienced.

Kähler is not suggesting, thus, any bifurcation between faith and history. Rather, he is calling into question the validity of positivistic historiography for establishing a basis for faith. In this respect, he asks: "How can Jesus Christ be the authentic object of the faith of all Christians if the questions what and who he really was can be established only by ingenious investigation and if it is solely the scholarship of our time which proves itself equal to this task?"³ It should also be pointed out that Kähler was not rejecting historical studies. Neither was he suggesting that the New Testament could not be read historically as other documents. He says, however: "For me the more important question is whether we can do justice to the Bible when we

¹Ibid., pp. 121-122. ²Ibid., p. 122. ³Kähler, p. 102.

view it from the historical perspective alone."¹

What Kähler is correctly pointing out is that dogmatics and historical studies must converge in Jesus. He is quick to point out that dogmatics is not arbitrariness. Rather, dogmatics is the mediator between the past and the present. It takes what is a past reality and puts it at the service of the present.² He writes:

This task of mediation, then, belongs to dogmatics, after it has made a thorough and serious study of what historical study can accomplish and has learned from history what is important enough to warrant consideration by dogmatics. The task of dogmatics is to provide an inventory of our assets.³

The convergence of dogmatics and historical study shows that faith is interested only in the Jesus who is at the same time the risen Christ and this picture of the whole biblical Christ is the true basis for understanding the "real" Jesus. This means faith cannot endure a bifurcation between the "Christ of faith" and the "Jesus of history," for the Christ of faith is "a tangible human life."⁴

What is further significant for Kähler is the christological authority of the Bible. He is not willing, on theological grounds, to surrender the authority of the Bible and replace it with the authority of the alleged results of a scientific investigation which prides itself with a presuppositionless approach in its historical treatment of the Bible. To be sure, the Bible contains "historical accounts," but they do not "have the value of historical documents in the strict sense of the term. Nor do they themselves make such a claim."⁵ Neither is the Bible primarily a book of doctrinal propositions or a book of devotion and edification.⁶ Rather, the Bible as kerygma is what

¹Ibid., p. 124. ²Ibid., p. 67 ³Ibid., pp. 67-68.

⁴Ibid., p. 95. ⁵Ibid., pp. 125-126. ⁶Ibid., p. 129.

is decisive. Since the central theme of the Bible is the proclamation of Jesus as the Christ, the authority of the Bible is derived from the authority of Christ, i.e., "the passionately held dogma about the Savior vouches for the reliability of the picture transmitted to us by the biblical proclamation of Jesus as the Christ."¹ Thus, whatever view one holds of Jesus as the Christ predetermines his view of the authority of the Bible.²

It would be wrong to conclude from this that Kähler depreciates the historical quality of faith. To be sure, historical research cannot establish any basis for "a life of Jesus," for "from the sources we know his personality for a period of only about thirty months, at the most, of his public ministry."³ Yet, we know enough of the historical facts as such that are "sufficient for preaching and dogmatics."⁴

If the authority and truth of the Bible (including historical events) is authenticated in faith, is there then any necessity for a historical validation of faith? The answer seems to be YES and NO. The answer is NO, insofar as the necessity of historical science is concerned. The picture of Jesus as the Christ in the Bible is as easily accessible to the layman as to the trained historian. "For in relation to the Christ in whom we may and should believe the most learned theologian must be in no better or worse a position than the simplest Christian."⁵ On the other hand, the historical "validation" of faith may have an apologetic use. For example, those who are predisposed against the idea of revelation and the authority of the Bible should be encouraged to abandon their prejudices against the Bible, despite the so-called assured negative results of biblical criticism. Then, "we must go to the content of

¹Ibid., p. 95. ²Ibid., pp. 95, 104, 112, 119, 123, 148.

³Ibid., p. 92. ⁴Ibid., p. 95. ⁵Ibid., p. 73.

the earliest preaching and, starting with a 'minimum' of what can be historically ascertained, introduce them to problems which serious research cannot easily dismiss."¹ In this way, one may be led to faith in Jesus as the Christ and ultimately be led to belief in the authority of the Bible. However, Kähler is not advocating in any way a verbally-dictated view of inspiration. However, on the basis of what can be historically ascertained, one may be persuaded to lay aside his bias and to listen to the preaching of Christ. But, in the final analysis, it is not this historically-ascertained "minimum" that brings one to faith in Christ, though it may be the apologetic occasion for causing one to listen with openness to the message of Christ. Rather, faith comes from the preaching of the Word of Christ.²

Wolfhart Pannenberg has maintained that Kähler's idea of "suprahistory" does not do justice to the meaning of revelation. This is to suggest that the content of faith is thoroughly historical, not suprahistorical as Kähler says.³ To use terminology such as suprahistory assumes that the historical-critical method with its emphasis upon a scientific verification leaves no room for redemptive event.⁴ Whether or not Pannenberg's assessment is justified will be considered in Part Three. However, the question must be raised at this point whether Kähler in fact does not make too much of a concession when he makes faith independent of the probabilities of historical knowledge.

Despite this, Kähler did not intend to divorce Historie and Geschichte. This is to say, he did not intend to divorce der geschichtliche Christus der Bibel from der historische Jesus, except in the sense that der historische

¹Ibid., p. 144. ²Ibid., pp. 104-105. ³Ibid., pp. 47, 65, 95.

⁴"Redemptive Event and History," Essays on Old Testament Interpretation, trans. Shirley Guthrie, pp. 314f.

Jesus exists only as der geschichtliche Christus der Bibel.¹ However, Kähler did contribute to the present-day divorce between historisch and geschichtlich that has come into technical usage for differentiating the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith,² though Kähler did not carry out this divorce himself. In this respect, Braaten shows that Stauffer misrepresents Kähler:

When Ethelbert Stauffer interprets Kähler as being interested merely in "the theological truth of the Gospels" and not in "the historical reality of Jesus Christ" or in "the pneumatic historic (geschichtlichen) Christ" and not in "the sarkic historical (historischen) Jesus," Kähler is definitely being misrepresented. Such a sequence of theses and countertheses does not exist in Kähler's mind at all. The impression is given that Kähler was not interested in the earthly reality of Jesus Christ and therefore presumably not in the incarnation. Cf. Ethelbert Stauffer, "Entmythologisierung oder Realtheologie?" Kerygma und Mythos, edited by H. W. Bartsch (Hamburg: Herbert Reich, 1952), II, 30.³

Kähler's contribution to the discussion on the problem of history and faith can be summarized as follows: (1) the gospels have primarily a theological intention and only secondarily are they to be used as scientific historical sources. (2) Thus, the gospels were written by authors, not by objective reporters.⁴ (3) The "life of Jesus" historians, despite their claim of neutrality and objectivity, were motivated by preconceived views with the result that the true image of Jesus was distorted. Kähler writes of this distortion: "What is usually happening is that the image of Jesus is being refracted through the spirit of these gentlemen themselves."⁵ (4) Faith has its sole condition in the preaching of the Word of God, though this preaching

¹Kähler, Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1896), pp. 65-66.

²Supra, p. 185. ³Braaten, The Historical Jesus, p. 96n.

⁴Kähler, The so-called Historical Jesus, p. 44.

⁵Ibid., p. 57.

has a historical frame of reference. Thus, the trained historian does not have any "corner" on the truth of faith. (5) The Christ of faith is not divorced from the Jesus of history, but he is "a tangible human life."¹ (6) What Jesus did and who Jesus was cannot be separated, for Jesus' "work is his person in its historic-suprahistoric effect."² (7) The authority of the Bible has its validation in the authority of Jesus whom the primitive church proclaimed as the living Christ. Thus, even as the principle of analogy is without force in considering Jesus as the Christ, even so the Bible cannot be merely treated as one book among books, despite Lessing's advice that "if you simply place the Bible alongside of all other books, it will prove itself to be a very reliable and excellent book." Kähler replies to Lessing this way: "Yes, indeed--but it will no longer be the Book of books."³ Kähler thus argues for the christological authority of the Bible. (8) Finally, the real Jesus is none other than der geschichtliche Christus der Bibel, and not der historische Jesus of the "life of Jesus" movement. But, this biblical, historic Christ is not an importation of the primitive community, but rather, the primitive community proclaimed Jesus as the living Christ because "Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of the Christ."⁴ In whatever way Kähler may have been the forerunner of form criticism in New Testament studies, he did not share the skeptical conclusion, for example, of Bultmann who maintains that there is no continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.⁵ Nor did Kähler contend that the preaching of the primitive church was mere confession as opposed to what is historically factual. Rather, the

¹Ibid., p. 95. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., pp. 117-118.

⁴Ibid., p. 87. ⁵Infra, p.224.

kerygmatic Christ is none other than the Jesus who died and rose again and whom the church confesses as Saviour.



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CHAPTER VII

KARL BARTH: THE WORD OF GOD AND HISTORY

James Smart points out that Barth had realized his disillusionment with the theology of neo-protestantism even before the outbreak of World War I at which time the message of liberalism failed to measure up to what was required of it as the sinfulness of man in all his depravity was unveiled.¹ This is to say, Barth had already come to realize the inadequacy of the liberal message which sought to "lay hold on the inner life of the Jesus of history" and which did not take seriously enough man's sin and his need for transformation. This awareness of the difference between what he had learned from Herrmann and what he discovered was the actual message of the Bible came as the result of the practical need of communicating Christian faith to modern man with his desperate condition. It had been with this practical task of preaching that occupied his time since the second year following his graduation.² Since Barth's practical concern with preaching lies at the basis of his theology of the Word of God, it will be helpful to indicate some events in his early life as a preacher and theologian which helped to shape his theology.

Two years after Barth had begun his pastorate in Safenwil, Switzerland (1911-1921), he became intimately acquainted with Eduard Thurneysen, who had

¹James Smart, The Divided Mind of Modern Theology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 57f.

²Ibid., p. 44

come to serve a pastorate in a neighboring valley, Leutwil. They frequently met together to discuss their sermons, theological studies, and the problems of the church and the world at large.¹ It was through Thurneysen that Barth was introduced to new points of view. They were the Blumhardts (father and son) whose emphasis upon the sovereignty of God revealed to Barth how man-centered his own sermons had been.² There was also the influence of Dostoevsky whose writing exposed the contradictions between Christianity and Western culture.³

The greatest influence upon Barth was his own intensive study of the Bible. Thurneysen writes of Barth's taking seriously the task of the preacher:

He sat down before the Bible each day of the week and in his own new way ploughed it like a farmer who goes out into his fields in the early morning and makes furrow after furrow. . . . Karl Barth stands before us already in this early period as a reader and expositor of Scripture. The tablets of Holy Scripture are erected before him and the books of the expositors from Calvin through the biblicists and all the way to the modern critical biblical interpretation lie open in his hands. Both then and now this has been the source from which his theology has come That the springs of the Bible should flow afresh in our time is the great concern that here is central, and indeed the sole concern.⁴

Then on September 4, 1914, the decisive change in Barth's theology became quite evident. On this day he had written a letter to Thurneysen expressing his regret and amazement at the manifesto that appeared in Rade's Die christliche Welt in which many German theologians (including some of Barth's most respected teachers) had given approval of the Kaiser's war.⁵ This manifesto indicated to Barth the bankruptcy in theology. Smart writes:

¹Ibid., p. 58. ²Ibid., p. 60. ³Ibid., p. 65.

⁴Revolutionary Theology in the Making, Barth-Thurneysen correspondence, 1914-1925, trans. James D. Smart (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 12-13, cited by Smart, The Divided Man, p. 66.

⁵Ibid., p. 67.

"A failure in ethics revealed to him a bankruptcy in theology. But he was able to see it only because already for him forces had been at work shaking the theological structure in which he had been living and laying bare ominous cracks in its foundations."¹

Then in 1919, Barth published his commentary on Romans, which he subsequently revised in 1921.² In Barth's preface to the English translation, he points out that his only purpose for producing the commentary was to interpret the Scripture. He writes: "I felt myself bound to the actual words of the text, and did not in any way propose to engage myself in free theologizing."³ He further points out his purpose when he says:

The purpose of this book neither was nor is to delight or to annoy its readers by setting out a New Theology. The purpose was and is to direct them to Holy Scripture, to the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, in order that, whether they be delighted or annoyed, whether they are 'accepted' or 'rejected', they may at least be⁴ brought face to face with the subject-matter of the Scriptures.

It is this priority of Scripture which from then on characterizes all of Barth's writings. This means that he completely rejected liberalism at this point in the line of Schleiermacher-Ritschl-Herrmann "because in any thinkable continuation of this line I can only see the plain destruction of Protestant theology and the Protestant church."⁵ Thus, in his Church Dogmatics the first volume is entitled "The Doctrine of the Word of God." He believes the "Word of God" in Holy Scripture is the only valid prolegomenon to dogmatics, that there is no other approach to dogmatics apart from God's

¹ Ibid.

² Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, trans. from the sixth edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Humphrey Milford, 1932), p. vi.

³ Ibid., p. ix. ⁴ Ibid., p. x.

⁵ Barth, Church Dogmatics, I, 1, x.

self-revelation.¹ In his Epistle to the Romans (the preface to the English translation), Barth writes: "Theology is ministerium verbi divini. It is nothing more nor less."²

It is this priority of Scripture that Barth believed was subordinated to an interest in historical criticism in theological liberalism. It was this preoccupation with historical criticism over against an exegesis of Scripture that Barth felt was totally incompatible with the preacher's task. He puts it this way in the preface to the second edition of Romans:

I myself know what it means year in year out to mount the steps of the pulpit, conscious of the responsibility to understand and to interpret, and longing to fulfil it; and yet, utterly incapable, because at the University I had never been brought beyond that well-known 'Awe in the presence of History' which means in the end no more than that all hope of engaging in the dignity of understanding and interpretation has been surrendered.³

What Barth is rightly suggesting is that historical criticism must be integrated with dogmatics. Otherwise, there can be no "Protestant theology" or "Protestant church."⁴ Surely this is the greatness of Barth's contribution to theology--the Word of God in Scripture. However, this emphasis upon the Word of God in Scripture points to what seems to me his greatest weakness--the relationship of revelation and history.

Barth's bifurcation of God and history can be readily seen in his commentary, The Epistle to the Romans. In this respect, Barth cites Kierkegaard's influence as of paramount importance in this work, along with Dostoyevsky, the Blumhardts, Overbeck, and even Plato.⁵ He writes of Kierkegaard:

¹Church Dogmatics, I, 1, 304. ²The Epistle to the Romans, p. x.

³Ibid., p. 9. ⁴Church Dogmatics, I, 1, x.

⁵Karl Barth, "A Thank You and a Bow: Kierkegaard's Reveille," Canadian Journal of Theology, trans. H. Martin Rumscheidt, XI, (January, 1965), 5.

What attracted us particularly to him, what we rejoiced in, and what we learned, was the criticism, so unrelenting in its incisiveness, with which he attacked so much: all the speculation which blurred the infinite qualitative difference between God and man, all the aesthetic forgetfulness of the absolute claims of the Gospel and the necessity to do it justice by personal decision; in short, all the attempts to make the scriptural message innocuous, all the too pretentious and at the same time too cheap christianism and churchiness of prevalent theology, from which we ourselves were not as yet quite free.¹

Barth further shows the Kierkegaardian influence, not only in his commentary on Romans, but also its lasting influence on his thought, which was later to take a less significant role in Barth's works after the appearance of the commentary. Barth points this out in two separate passages:

The second edition of my Commentary on Romans is the very telling document of my participation in what has been named "the Kierkegaard Renaissance." There were to be for all of us, and indeed also for me, new dawns with new questions and answers, and yet I believe that I have remained faithful to Kierkegaard's reveille, as we heard it then, throughout my theological life, and that I am so today still. To go back to Hegel or even Bishop Mynster has been out of the question ever since.²

I consider him to be a teacher into whose school every theologian must go once. Woe to him who has missed it! So long as he does not remain in or return to it! His teaching is, as he himself once said, "a pinch of spice" for the food, not the food itself, which it is the task of right theology to offer to the church and thus to men. The Gospel is firstly the glad news of God's Yes to man. It is secondly, the news which the congregation must pass on to the whole world. It is thirdly the news from on high. These are three aspects, in relation to which I had to do further study, after my meeting Kierkegaard, in the school of other teachers.³

This Kierkegaardian influence on the Epistle to the Romans can be seen in the way that God and history are absolutely contrasted. History is understood to be the relative, the profane, the materialistic. History under the judgment of God means the end of history, not a new beginning nor a second epoch. It is "separated absolutely" from God.⁴ This means that God cannot be

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 7. ⁴Epistle to the Romans, p. 77.

"concreted and humanized in a particular department of history," for He would then cease to be God.¹ Thus, God cannot share in any aspect the relativities of history. Further, this means the promises and faithfulness of God "is a matter neither of historical nor of psychological experience, and because it is neither a cosmic happening within the natural order, nor even the most supreme event of our imaginings."² The only point of contact between God and man is faith in Jesus Christ. But this means faith is a miracle. It is the establishing of a relationship with God which takes place freely of God's grace alone.³ But, this salvation is not a part of history, nor of man's spiritual experience as such. Rather, it comes solely from the mercy of God; it is a "miracle--'vertical from above.'"⁴ Salvation is the possibility "where the history of the relation between God and man begins; where there is no history to record, because it only occurs, and occurs eternally And this occurrence IS--in Jesus Christ."⁵

This "occurrence" is not to be understood thus as a recordable fact of past history, for it has no structural relationship to history as such. This is so because God cannot be domesticated within the historical process. This is the fallacy of all religions, for they look for the evidences of God in history or in themselves.

So all religions assume either that God will act or that He has acted; making the assumption quite apart from a consideration of the 'Moment' when men stand naked before God and are clothed upon by Him. They do not consider before and after to be before and after the 'Moment' when men are moved by God; or they suppose either that the 'Moment' depends upon some previous behaviour or that it carries with it some subsequent behaviour: that is to say, they conceive of the 'Moment' as in some way comparable and

¹Ibid., p. 79. ²Ibid., p. 98. ³Ibid., p. 102. ⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 76.

commensurable with human behaviour. Consequently, all religions admit the possibility of boasting of what men are and do and have, as though they were divine. In all religions it is therefore possible to disregard or to escape from the paradox of faith.¹

On the other hand, faith is the "occurrence" of Jesus Christ, the "Moment" which has no past or future. It is the point of eternity inserted vertically from above, but without any history in the past nor in the future.

Barth writes:

In Jesus everything that occurs in the world is bent under the judgement of God and awaits His affirmation. The words apart from cover everything both before and after the 'Moment' when men stand before God and are moved by Him; for no comparison between the 'Moment' and works which are done either before or after it is possible.²

Therefore, it is the moment that is decisive for faith. It is "the eternal 'Moment' when before God we are unrighteous and humiliated, in order that by Him we may be justified and exalted."³

Even the "life of Jesus" is a non-historical event. Paul says that "Jesus is declared to be the Son of God with power" (Romans 1:4). Barth understands this "declaration" not to mean some kind of historical assertion. The years A.D. 1-30 in the life of Jesus are not historical.⁴ Barth explains this when he says:

The effulgence, or, rather, the crater made at the percussion point of an exploding shell, the void by which the point on the line of intersection makes itself known in the concrete world of history, is not--even though it be named the Life of Jesus--that other world which touches our world in Him. In so far as our world is touched in Jesus by the other world, it ceases to be capable of direct observation as history, time, or thing.⁵

What Barth is doing is to bifurcate the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith. He writes: "Within history, Jesus as the Christ can be

¹Ibid., p. 111. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 440. ⁴Ibid., p. 29.

⁵Ibid.

understood only as Problem or Myth. As the Christ, He brings the world of the Father."¹

It seems that Barth was trying to do at least two things in his Epistle to the Romans. First, he was seeking to overcome Neo-Protestantism which emphasized the immanence of God over against His transcendence. Second, he was re-asserting the priority of Scripture. That he over-reacted against liberalism with his bifurcation of revelation and history by affirming the absolute transcendence of God can be partly explained on the basis of his acceptance of the presuppositions of a historical-critical method which left no room for redemptive events which could be scientifically reconstructed. This is to say that rather than challenging the positivistic presuppositions as being valid he accepted without question Troeltsch's historiographical principle of causality which ruled out the possibility of anything absolutely unique occurring in history. This is clearly seen when Barth writes:

There is under this heaven and this earth no existence or occurrence, no transformation, be it never so striking, no experience, be it never so unique, no miracle, be it never so unheard of, which is not caught up by a relativity in which great and small are inextricably woven together. Therefore, if the Resurrection be brought within the context of history, it must share in its obscurity and error and essential questionableness. Against the influence which the Resurrection has exerted upon individual souls must then be set the far more obvious distortions and disfigurements of which it has been the cause; against the social benefits it has conferred must be set the far more manifest impotence of Christians and their fraudulent behaviour; with its purest and most brilliant rays must be compared the rays which have emanated from other and even greater lights and powers (Overbeck!) Think of those 150,000 years of human history and of 'the ebb and flow of great civilizations; consider the ice-ages which are past and which will presumably return, and remember that they are caused by the tiniest movement of the pole' (Troeltsch).²

To be sure, Barth revised his position toward history considerably in

¹Ibid., p. 30. ²Ibid., p. 204.

his Church Dogmatics. In it he calls attention to his over-reaction to a liberalism which had placed God and man practically on the same level. He writes:

I should like at this stage to utter an express warning against certain passages and contexts in my commentary on Romans, where play was made and even work occasionally done with the idea of a revelation permanently transcending time, merely bounding time and determining it from without. Then, in face of the prevailing historicism and psychologism which had ceased to be aware at all of any revelation other than an inner mundane one within common time, the book had a definite, antiseptic task and significance.¹

Revelation is thus no longer understood as permanently transcending time. Neither is God merely the Wholly Other. Revelation is now given an objective basis in temporal reality. "God's freedom for us men is a fact in Jesus Christ, according to the witness of Holy Scripture. The first and the last thing to be said about the bearer of this name is that He is very God and very Man."² This means the life of Jesus is no longer understood as a non-historical occurrence. Rather, Jesus Christ, as very God and very Man, is the objective reality of divine revelation.

Though Barth does ground the basis for revelation within history, yet revelation is never history. The Word of God is God's act. Revelation is attested in the Bible; it proceeds from the Father; it is objectively fulfilled in the Son; and subjectively made possible by the Holy Spirit.³ But in a direct way, revelation "has nothing to do with the general problem of historical understanding."⁴

This means that revelation is not a part of the relative sphere of

¹Church Dogmatics, I, 2, 50.

²Church Dogmatics, I, 2, p. 25. ³Ibid., p. 1.

⁴Church Dogmatics, I, 1, p. 168.

history as we know it. This is crucial to Barth's theology of the Word of God, for he wants to guard against the idea of revelation being something one could "have." Revelation is always a matter of God's free grace.

To say "the Word of God" is to say the work of God. It is not to contemplate a state or fact but to watch an event, and an event which is relevant to us, an event which is an act of God, an act of God which rests on a free decision. That God's Word is from eternity to eternity does not allow us to evade it But it happens, and happens as nothing else happens.¹

The Word of God is thus never subjected to the relativities of history. It is always dynamic, never static. Revelation is the same whether it "comes" through (1) the revealed Word of God, (2) the written Word of God, or (3) the proclaimed Word of God.² These three forms of the Word of God do not mean three different words of God. For example, there is a distinction between Deus dixit and Paulus dixit. Yet, when the Word of God becomes an event, they are one and the same.³ This means that revelation is the Word of God. "God's Word is God Himself in His revelation."⁴ This means that revelation is distinct from Scripture and the Church's proclamation.⁵ Finally, revelation (1) is not relative, (2) does not differ from the Person of Jesus Christ, and (3) does not differ from the reconciliation that took place in Him.⁶

It can thus be seen that Barth still defines revelation as the "Moment" of the pure presence of God as he did in his commentary on Romans. This is why Barth can say that revelation is not concerned with the general understanding of history as such.⁷ What Barth seems to be doing is to divorce revelation and history. To be sure, revelation has an objective basis in

¹Church Dogmatics, I, 2, p. 527. ²Ibid., I, 1, 136.

³Ibid., p. 127. ⁴Ibid., p. 339.

⁵Ibid., p. 350. ⁶Ibid., p. 134. ⁷Ibid., p. 168.

historical reality, but revelation itself is non-relative and non-historical. This means that the question on the knowability of the Word of God is answered by the Word of God itself. It is totally self-authenticating.¹

Barth sees the modern discussion on the problem of revelation and history to be "a portentous failure to appreciate the nature of revelation."² He delineates what he considers to be three persistent errors in this connection. First, the question of revelation cannot be answered from the standpoint of history, for "it may well be said it is the historical as such in its universality and relativity which is the necessary 'offence' to revelation."³ This "questionableness and uncertainty of history"⁴ stands in sharp distinction to revelation. Barth writes:

There has been a failure to see that in answering this question we cannot start with the general phenomenon of time, or, as it is preferably called, history. We cannot assume that we know its normal structure on the basis of comparative observation, and then go on to ask whether and how far the phenomenon of revelation discloses itself, perhaps, to the said comparative observation at a specific point. On this it is to be said that the general phenomenon of time or history in its manifold state is certainly not the text in perusing which we will ever come directly or indirectly upon the phenomenon of revelation.⁵

Second, revelation can be "seen" only when it has been "found." This means that "there are no problems in the axiomatic Deus dixit."⁶ Revelation is self-authenticating; it does not depend on an empirical verification.

Barth writes:

There has been failure to see that the event of Jesus Christ as God's revelation can be found only when sought as such, i.e., when we are seeking what we have already found. This rule which apparently--but really only apparently--grossly contradicts all honest investigation of truth, is the inevitable result of the nature of the question before us here. God's revelation in

¹Ibid., p. 350. ²Church Dogmatics, I, 2, 56. ³Ibid., p. 57.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid., p. 56. ⁶Ibid., p. 57.

Christ, in the way in which Holy Scripture declares that it has taken place, is not something problematic.¹

Third, revelation precedes history. Revelation is always the subject and history is the predicate. Revelation becomes history, but history never becomes revelation. "Revelation is not a predicate of history, but history is a predicate of revelation."² This means that revelation cannot be discovered by human means. Barth writes:

There has been a failure to see that if revelation is revelation, we cannot speak of it as though it can be discovered, dug up, worked out as worked out as the deeper ground and content of human history. If the sentence "God reveals Himself" has anything even remotely in common with interpretation, hypothesis, assertion, with appraising and valuing, with an arbitrary fixing, extracting, or excising of a definite bit of human history out of its context, if anything like "absolutising" a reality relative to itself is even remotely the meaning of the sentence in question, then it will be better omitted altogether, especially if it is perhaps to be general, as expressing a very profound and congenial historical intuition.³

This leads Barth to say that if one attempts to determine historically the reality of revelation (i.e., if one seeks to locate revelation through historical investigation), then he shows in this human endeavor that he is in fact not obedient to revelation.

But we may not first of all speak of history in order subsequently or by epithet to speak with force and emphasis about revelation. When the latter happens, we betray the fact that we have gone our own way in interpreting, valuing, absolutising. We have not gone the only possible way, the way of obedience.⁴

Barth is not denying the temporal and historical aspects of revelation, but he is denying the human attempt to locate and find revelation, for revelation is God Himself coming to man.

Barth further says that revelation is qualitatively different from ordinary time and general history, for revelation creates a "third time."

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 58. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.

This "third time" is so named, for in God's revelation a new situation is created in temporality. It distinguishes itself from the time before the Fall (the first time) and the time after the Fall (the second, or fallen time). This third time, as the time of God's revelation, is real time, but it is distinct from general time as such. It is not subject to the relativities of fallen time. In so far as ordinary history and general time are concerned, God cannot be known nor expressed.¹ Barth points this out in dialogue with Karl Heim.

K. Heim writes . . . "Zeit und Ewigkeit", Glauben und Leben, 1928, p. 560: "If God is the highest reality upon which all existence rests, then this fact carries with it a negative judgment upon the time form. For in the latter God is invisible. The highest reality can only be expressed indirectly in the time form by denying temporality. God cannot be objectified in time." These statements may be approved only with the reservation that from our standpoint God is invisible in the time form, cannot be directly "expressed" in it by us, cannot be objectified in it by us--but that it has pleased Him to make Himself visible in the time form, to express, to objectify Himself and thereby to create a "time form" not liable to a negative judgment. What would have been the meaning of "revelation," how could it have become an event in Jesus Christ, if He had not done so?²

While this emphasis upon a "third time" with its reality and temporality is moving in the right direction toward establishing a positive connection between revelation and history, it does not seem to me to follow that one can exempt revelation entirely from the relativity of history; nor does historical-critical study seem to be irrelevant. Does not the fact that Jesus is the God-man mean that he was immersed in the relativities of our history, thereby redeeming fallen time? Further, if revelation became history (as Barth clearly states), then why should not theology be constructed from the

¹Ibid., pp. 45-50. ²Ibid., p. 49.

standpoint of salvation history with Christology being the guiding-principle?¹

Further, if revelation is non-relative and is identical with the unmediated presence of God, does this do justice to the Scriptures where the Word of God is identified with the words of God which words have definite content? (Mark 13:31; Luke 11:28; John 6:63; John 14:23-24; Rev. 1:1-2). This is the question that Pannenberg has addressed to the Barthian theology of the Word of God.²

Jürgen Moltmann says that Barth derived his definition of revelation as "self-revelation" from Wilhelm Herrmann. For Herrmann, the "self" of the "self-revelation" of God means man's self. Barth replaces the subjectivity of man with the transcendental subjectivity of God.³ Herrmann had accepted the Kantian premise that revelation cannot be objectively grounded. Thus, we cannot say what God is, only what effect He has on us.⁴ Barth transforms the "self" in Herrmann's anthropological sense to a theological form. God proves Himself, not in the depths of human existence, nor from history; rather, God proves Himself through Himself. Moltmann puts it this way:

Where the knowledge of God stood in Herrmann as the 'defenceless expression of religious experience', there we now have the self-revelation of God in the proclamation of the Deus dixit in the same defencelessness—namely, non-groundable and therefore indestructible, unprovable and therefore irrefutable, grounding and proving itself.⁵

Thus, revelation, while becoming history, never is preceded by history. This

¹Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time, trans. F. V. Filson (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1951), p. 26n.

²Revelation as History, p. 12.

³Moltmann, p. 52. (Pannenberg points out that Barth's idea of self-revelation ultimately goes back to Hegel. Cf. Infra, p. 242.

⁴Ibid., p. 54. ⁵Ibid., p. 55.

permitted him to take history seriously without putting revelation at the mercy of historical criticism. In this connection, he points out that in his commentary on Romans he failed to do justice to Romans 13:12, in which he did not see "the teleology which it ascribes to time as it moves towards a real end . . . The one thing that remained as the only tangible result was precisely that one-sided supra-temporal understanding of God which I had set out to combat."¹ Moltmann shows that this "supra-temporal understanding of God" meant that the truth of God was contained in the eternal "Moment" without a past or future. Thus, if Barth found it necessary to revise his understanding of eschatology, why should he not have found it necessary to revise his understanding of revelation as well?² For example, Barth says that the Easter story "does not speak eschatologically."³ Rather, it was the self-revelation of God, "the pure presence of God."⁴ "The Easter story . . . actually speaks of a present without any future, of an eternal presence of God in time."⁵

Moltmann shows that if this is so, then the event of the resurrection of Christ would in itself be the eschatological fulfillment. It "would not point beyond itself to something still outstanding that is to be hoped for and awaited."⁶ Moltmann points out:

If the idea of self-revelation is not to change tacitly into an expression for the God of Parmenides, then it must have an open eye for the statements of promise in the third article of the Creed. Yet this must not happen in such a way that the future redemption which is promised in the revelation of Christ would become only a supplement, only a noetic unveiling of the re-

¹Cited by Moltmann, p. 57. Cf. Church Dogmatics, II, 1, 635 with a slightly altered translation.

²Moltmann, p. 57. ³Church Dogmatics, I, 2, 114.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid. Referred to by Moltmann, pp. 57-58.

⁶Moltmann, p. 58.

conciliation effected in Christ, but in such a way that it gives promise of the real goal and true intention of that reconciliation, and therefore of its future as really outstanding, not yet attained and not yet realized. Then the Word of God--Deus dixit--would not be the naked self-proof of the eternal present, but a promise which as such discloses and guarantees an outstanding future.¹

Finally, it seems to me that if Barth separates history and revelation this tends to depreciate the decisive events in the life of Jesus, such as the cross and the resurrection, with the result they lose their soteriological and eschatological meaning. We have just pointed this out in regard to the resurrection. But it seems to be likewise true of his cross. For example, Barth equates reconciliation and revelation.² Does not reconciliation speak of man's offense and sin against God? Does not reconciliation refer to the enmity between God and man? Paul writes: "And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled" (Col. 1:21-22). But, Paul makes it quite clear in verse twenty-three that this reconciliation is made possible because of Christ's death on the cross. In this instance, it would seem that reconciliation is the predicate of a historical event. This means that Christ's death on the cross effected something entirely new for man and all of creation (Romans 8:22). This means a revelation of something new, not something that had been hidden. Thus, if Barth contends that revelation and reconciliation are the same and if he says that revelation is not the predicate of history, then what meaning does the historical event of Christ's death have for Christian faith? In the final analysis, Barth himself does not seem to have gotten beyond the Kantian premise that there can be no verification of God in objective temporal history. This is in itself a tacit acceptance of the bifurcation of God and history. This leads me to say that

¹Ibid. ²Supra, p. 206.

Barth's emphasis upon the Word of God is a definite advantage over the "irrationalist" trend in liberal theology which precluded the possibility of God speaking. Barth especially cites Paul Tillich who wants to make "God speaks" into a symbol.¹ Barth writes:

Nor are we bound to envelope certain anthropological centres with so fundamental a distrust and suspicion as has frequently been the case in the history of theology. Here I am thinking chiefly of the extraordinary polemic which it has been the fashion in recent years to wage against the so-called "intellect" of man, his powers of comprehension and thought, as a centre of possible religious experience of the Word of God.²

Barth further argues in a cogent manner the priority of God speaking.

He puts it this way:

We might very well be of the private opinion that it would be better and nicer if God had not spoken and did not speak with such deliberate "intellectualism" and that it would be more appropriate to God if "God's Word" meant all sorts of different things, apart from the meaning "God speaks." But is this private opinion of ours so important, resting as it does upon some sort of philosophy?³

However, it seems to me that the Word of God must not be seen merely as the moment of the pure presence of God. Neither does it seem necessary to limit revelation to Jesus Christ. To be sure, He is the final revelation and the only redeemer, but not the only revelation.⁴ This is why Pannenberg writes that "history is the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology."⁵ This is to say that revelation is history whether it be the inspired word of

¹Church Dogmatics, I, 1, 150. ²Ibid., p. 231.

³Ibid., p. 150.

⁴Cf. Carl Braaten, History and Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 14.

⁵Pannenberg, Essays on Old Testament Interpretation, p. 314.

man or a revelatory historical event.¹ This "revised" concept of revelation will be discussed in Part Three.

¹Pannenberg, "Response," Theology as History, ed. James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr. (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 239.



Eden Grove

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CHAPTER VIII

BULTMANN: THE DIVORCE OF HISTORIE AND GESCHICHTE

"No single work which has appeared in the field of New Testament scholarship during the war years has evoked such a lively discussion as Bultmann's original manifesto, New Testament and Mythology," writes Hans Werner Bartsch.¹ In 1941, when this essay was first published, it produced an explosion in theological circles and opened up again the historical question which Barth had silenced with his theology of the Word of God.² Tillich writes: "Bultmann saved the historical question from being banished from theology."³

We pointed out in the chapter on Barth that he had refused in his commentary on Romans to ground revelation in history. In so doing we said that he was over-reacting against the historicism of his background. For Barth, God proves Himself through Himself, not through history. We also pointed out that Barth added objectifying elements to his later theology, though he still held to revelation as a non-historical event and thus it is not concerned with the general understanding of history as such.

On the other hand, Bultmann took seriously the question of history in biblical criticism and worked in that direction as it is seen in his History of the Synoptic Tradition. This work summarizes his research in form criticism.⁴

¹"Foreword," Kerygma and Myth, p. vii. ²Tillich, p. 242.

³Ibid. ⁴Smart, p. 91.

Through form criticism, Bultmann sought to establish the New Testament as the viewpoint of the primitive church rather than that of Jesus of Nazareth. He further believes that to accept the thinking of the New Testament world view is to call for a sacrifice of the intellect, for modern science has made it impossible to revive an obsolete world view.¹ Thus, what is called for in the interpretation of the New Testament is a demythologizing.² This is to be accomplished through the use of existentialist philosophy. This is to say that the "only solution" to the problem of New Testament interpretation is "an existentialist interpretation."³ He sees the categories of Heidegger's philosophy of existence to be "saying the same thing as the New Testament and saying it quite independently."⁴ This suggests the existentialist philosophers have transposed Christian concepts into philosophical usage. He writes: "Heidegger's existentialist analysis of the ontological structure of being would seem to be no more than a secularized, philosophical version of the New Testament view of human life."⁵

While Barth did not systematically engage in historical criticism, Bultmann did. He believes that his existentialist approach deals consistently with the problem of historical criticism and provides a nonmiraculous interpretation of Christian faith which modern science demands. In this respect, Tillich believes that Bultmann's importance can be seen--he forged again to

¹Kerygma and Myth, p. 3. ²Ibid., p. 10.

³Ibid., p. 15. ⁴Ibid., p. 25.

⁵Ibid., p. 24. Cullmann shows Bultmann's demythologizing in existentialist categories is not really a demythologizing, but a dehistoricizing and thus a re-mythologizing, for the NT writers have already demythologized by historicizing "myth." ("Die Verbindung von Ur- und Endgeschehen mit der neutestamentlichen Heilsgeschichte," Vorträge und Aufsätze 1925-1962 [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1966], p. 163).

the surface the question of history.¹

Barth could only see the existentialist takeover in theology as the destruction of theology. He writes: "To the best of my ability I have cut out in this second issue of the book [Church Dogmatics] everything that in the first issue might give the slightest appearance of giving to theology a basis, support, or even a mere justification in the way of existential philosophy."² While it seems to me that Barth rightly insists upon the priority of the Word of God over against any other criterion, it seems that he tacitly accepts a bifurcation of history and theology by making revelation something else than history, thus "overcoming" the problem of history.

Like Barth, Bultmann does not want to make faith insecure by equating revelation and history. So they both speak of revelation as an "event." However, there is a profound difference between them. While Barth interpreted self-revelation to mean the transcendental subjectivity of God rather than a hidden correspondence between God and man's self, Bultmann remains closer to Herrmann. Moltmann puts it this way:

Whereas Barth broke away from Herrmann by separating, as we have seen, the non-objectifiable subjectivity of God in the act of the Deus dixit from the subjectivity of man, that is, God's 'self' from 'man's self', Bultmann remains under the spell of the hidden correlation of God and self. Hence for him the self-revelation of God finds its measure and development not in a doctrine of the Trinity, but in place of that we find the disclosing of the authenticity or selfhood of man.³

This leads then to the basic thesis of Bultmann, that revelation is the here and now of revelation, of encounter.⁴ This is to say that faith is man's response to the Word of God. But, this does not mean that the Word of

¹Tillich, p. 242.

²Barth, Church Dogmatics, I, 1, ix.

³Moltmann, p. 61.

⁴Kerygma and Myth, p. 201.

God, that Scripture, is a set of doctrines or objective facts. Rather, faith is simply an encounter with God in this specific here and now.¹

But, this means that faith cannot be proved in any way--"True faith is not demonstrable in relation to its object."² Bultmann says this is where the strength of faith lies, as Herrmann had taught, for to try to prove God would be placing God on the level of tangible reality and proving God apart from faith.³ Thus, revelation of God comes in the moment of faith and cannot be understood prior to its relation to faith. This leads him to say: "To speak of the act of God means to speak at the same time of my existence."⁴ This is reiterating what Herrmann had said, that we only know what God is in relation to us, not what God is per se.⁵

This likewise presupposes the Kantian disjunction between faith and knowledge, noumenon and phenomenon. "Faith" for Kant relates to noumenal reality, i.e., to the transcendent. Knowledge relates to phenomenal reality, i.e. to reality as it merely appears. Translated into theological terms, Kant says we can only speak of God in terms of what He is "for us," but not as he really is.⁶ This, for Kant, simply means we cannot "know" God. But on the other hand, the transcendental idea of God is a regulative idea, especially in regard to its implication for ethical behavior.⁷

Bultmann denies that he is making the reality of God merely an experience in man when he says that to speak of God means to speak of man's existence. Man's encounter with God is no mere psychic phenomenon just as

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 196. ⁵Ibid., p. 202.

⁶Supra, p. 71.

⁷Cf. Heinrich Ott, Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte in der Theologie Rudolf Bultmanns (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1955), p. 6. Cf. also Moltmann, p. 61.

to experience the love of another is no mere psychic phenomenon.¹ Thus, Bultmann contends that the proof for God does not lie in some historical verification, but rather, the proof for God's existence lies in man's existential experience of God, i.e., it is only in the "moment" of faith's decision that God is known to be at all. Bultmann writes: "Real belief in God always grows out of the realization that being is an unknown quantity, which cannot be learned and retained in the form of a proposition, but of which one is always becoming conscious in the 'moment' of living."²

This "moment" of faith's decision which brings man to a new and authentic understanding of himself is made possible by the act of God in Christ.³ However, this act of God in Christ is not an historical (historisch) act, which happened in some datable event of the past. Rather, it is an historic (geschichtlich) occurrence which happens, but happens now and happens only through the proclamation of Christ as the word, but not in the proclamation of Jesus as an historical man. Christ is the word of proclamation in contrast to Jesus as a man whom tradition designates as the "bearer" of the word.⁴ Thus, the kerygmatic Christ is identical to the word of proclamation. Bultmann writes: "It is clear that Christ is revelation and that revelation is the word; for these two are one and the same."⁵ Further, what the word of

¹Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, pp. 199-200.

²Essays, Philosophical and Theological, trans. James C. G. Greig (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1955), p. 7.

³Kerygma and Myth, p. 202.

⁴Essays, Philosophical and Theological, p. 18; Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 14, 215-219.

⁵Existence and Faith, shorter writings of Rudolf Bultmann, selected, translated, and introduced by Schubert M. Ogden (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961), p. 87.

proclamation reveals is not doctrines or objective propositional content. What is revealed also is not the reality of God as such, but the reality of my own self-understanding. Bultmann writes:

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.¹

It is this anthropocentric definition of faith (i.e., theology must begin with what is a determination of man's being and all theological questions must be answered accordingly) that places Bultmann fundamentally in the line of nineteenth century liberalism, as Barth has pointed out.² On the other hand, his existentialist definition of faith distinguishes him from liberalism. For the liberals, as Harnack, "the great truths of religion and ethics are timeless and eternal, though it is only within human history that they are realized, and only in concrete historical processes that they are given clear expression."³ For Bultmann, what is important is not the way these timeless truths are historically portrayed. He says that "history may be of academic interest, but never of paramount importance for religion."⁴ Rather, what is important for Christian faith is to see the way the understanding of human existence comes to expression in New Testament mythology. This is to say the New Testament must be interpreted existentially.⁵

This leads to Bultmann's divorce between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith." That this divorce is intended to be carried out

¹Ibid., p. 85. ²Church Dogmatics, I, 1, 39.

³Kerygma and Myth, p. 13. ⁴Ibid., p. 13.

⁵Ibid., p. 16.

theologically can be clearly seen in Bultmann's "Reply to the Theses of J. Schniewind." Schniewind suggests that Bultmann has not done justice to the relationship between Historie and Geschichte, for Bultmann tends to drive a sharp wedge between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith by distinguishing between the geschichtlich fact and the historisch event.¹ In this respect, Schniewind writes:

It is impossible to run away from Historie to Geschichte. We cannot reject Historie because it is not vitally present for us and accept Geschichte because it is. It is impossible to escape from the relativity of past history.²

Bultmann replies that he is "not running away from Historie and taking refuge in Geschichte." Rather, he says: "I am deliberately renouncing [*italics mine*] any form of encounter with a phenomenon of past history, including an encounter with the Christ after the flesh, in order to encounter the Christ proclaimed in the kerygma, which confronts me in my historic situation."³ He further says "that God has acted in Jesus Christ is, however, not a fact of past history open to historical verification."⁴

This divorce between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ is adumbrated as Bultmann shows in Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutic. Dilthey writes:

All dogmas need to be translated so as to bring out their universal validity for all human life. They are cramped by their connection with the situation in the past in which they arose. Once they have been freed from this limitation they become . . . the consciousness of the supra-sensual and supra-intelligible nature of historicity pure and simple Hence the principal Christian dogmas, which include such symbols as "Son of God", "satisfaction", "sacrifice", and the like, are, in so far as they are limited to the facts of the Christian story, untenable. But once they are re-interpreted as statements

¹Kerygma and Myth, pp. 37, 82-85, 117. ²Ibid., p. 83.

³Ibid., p. 117. ⁴Ibid., p. 207.

of universal validity they express the highest living form of all history. They thus lose their rigid and exclusive reference to the person of Jesus [italics mine], which deliberately excludes all other references.¹

Bultmann thus distinguishes between a geschichtlich fact and a historisch event.² We have already pointed out the way modern philosophy since Descartes has distinguished between intellectual and empirical truths, such as, body-mind, truths of reason and truths of fact, noumenon and phenomenon, etc. We pointed out that Kierkegaard radicalized this distinction of reality in terms of faith and knowledge. We have also pointed out the way that Kähler adumbrated later theology with his distinction between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ, i.e., der historische Jesus und der geschichtliche Christus. Now Bultmann seems to make a decisive terminological break between geschichtlich and historisch. Historie, in Bultmann's usage, refers to the datable past, i.e., to the actual event of past history. Geschichte refers to what is significant and meaningful.³

These two words as termini technici have their most immediate source in Heidegger. As it has been shown,⁴ Heidegger distinguishes sharply between Historie as the science of history and Geschichte as the essence of man. That is, man exists as history rather than in history. The meaning of Geschichte

¹Briefwechsel zwischen Wilhelm Dilthey und dem Grafen Paul Yorck von Wartenburgh, 1877-1897 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1923), p. 158, cited by Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, pp. 23-24.

²Kerygma and Myth, p. 37. Cf. Worldly Theology, p. 9; Ott, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, p. 143. Also cf. Ott, Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte, p. 10.

³Kerygma and Myth, p. 37. Cf. Carl Braaten, History and Hermeneutics, p. 38. Cf. Gisbert Greshake, Historie Wird Geschichte (Essen: Ludgerus-Verlag Hubert Wingen KG., 1963), especially pp. 1f., 36-42. Macquarrie, An Existentialist Theology, pp. 158-160.

⁴Supra, pp. 113ff.

leads to the derived idea of history as world-historic (welt-geschichtlich), which means that certain events are significant because they stand in a fundamental relationship to man's existence. Because of the derived meaning of Geschichte as welt-geschichtlich, the science of history (Historie) is possible. Nevertheless, what is basic to Heidegger's philosophy is man defined as history (Geschichte). History (Geschichte) is the happening (Geschehen) of man, i.e., history is man's existence. Thus, Heidegger not only sharply differentiates Historie and Geschichte, but he also makes a decisive break between existence (Existenz) and something present-at-hand (Vorhanden). It is this existentialist definition of history that is presupposed by Bultmann when he sets off the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith.

Bultmann thus makes use of this distinction to show that faith is concerned only with Geschichte (i.e., history as man's existence), not Historie (i.e., history as the scientific study of objective facts of the datable past). This is to say that "the Jesus of history is not kerygma For in the kerygma Jesus encounters us as the Christ--that is, as the eschatological phenomenon par excellence."¹ Thus, the divorce of the historical Jesus from the kerygmatic Christ puts faith beyond the onslaughts of historical criticism. Bultmann writes: "I still deny that historical research can ever encounter any traces of the epiphany of God in Christ."²

However, Bultmann points out that the kerygmatic tradition must not be questioned, for this would make the eschatological event insecure and would make it a part of the relativity of all historical knowledge.³ While the kerygma cannot be objectively validated, this is no problem for the man

¹Kerygma and Myth, p. 117. ²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 116.

who has come to exist eschatologically.¹ This is to say that eschatological existence is a possibility only in response to the Word of God, "which proclaims the manifestation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Since he is the Word of God, Christ is ante et extra me, not, however, as a fact open to objective verification and chronologically datable before me, but as the Christus pro me, who encounters me as the Word."² This means the kerygma is self-authenticating. This means that eschatological existence comes only with the message of the kerygma. This can be seen when Bultmann says:

The question is not whether the nature of man can be discovered apart from the New Testament. As a matter of fact it has not been discovered without the aid of the New Testament, for modern philosophy is indebted both to it and to Luther and to Kierkegaard.³

This brings us to the question--does Bultmann preserve faith from the results of historical research? First, it should be pointed out that Bultmann makes it quite clear that the historical Jesus has no continuity with the Christ of faith.⁴ However, the kerygma requires two necessary events in the Jesus of history. Bultmann writes: "His [Paul's] kerygma requires only the 'that' of the life of Jesus and the fact of his crucifixion."⁵ It can thus be seen that there is no historical continuity between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of History. However, the kerygma necessarily assumes the "that" of Jesus and his cross. Bultmann explains that these two facts are necessary in order to protect the kerygmatic Christ from a reduction to a mythological Christ.⁶ If

¹Ibid., p. 208. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 26.

⁴Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, p. 18.

⁵Ibid., p. 20.

⁶Bultmann, "Reply," The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann, trans. H. C. Kee, ed. C. W. Kegley (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 260.

"the cross of Christ is no mere mythical event, but a historic (geschichtlich) fact originating in the historical (historisch) event which is the crucifixion of Jesus"¹ then it does not appear that faith can be independent of the results of historical research, which seems to be what Bultmann implies when he says that historical research cannot establish any "traces" of the revelation of God in Christ. Ebeling points out that to have a Christology without the historical Jesus is a mere illusion.² This is to say that the Christ of faith has a "life or death" interest in the historical Jesus. Historie and Geschichte cannot endure a bifurcation; otherwise, it seems to me that Christianity would collapse if faith lost reason's knowledge of history.

Heinrich Ott has pointed out that Bultmann's historiography is still positivistic in the sense that it seeks to overcome bare facts with existential meanings.³ In this respect, Ott succinctly describes the task of coming to terms with Bultmann. He writes:

One must seek in connection with Bultmann (1) a concept of reality of a historic type that overcomes the Bultmannian cleavage with a synthesis embracing both 'significance' and 'corporeality,' 'history' and 'nature'; (2) a comprehensive interpretation of understanding as the actualizing of historic being that goes beyond the limits of Bultmann's hermeneutic; (3) a synthetic concept of time that takes into account both the eminent significance of the historic Now and the reality of past and future as such; (4) the primal essence of language.⁴

That his historiography is governed by the presuppositions of positivism can be seen by his acceptance of a scientific world view which sees all events as the result of cause and effect. He writes:

¹Kerygma and Myth, p. 37. ²Word and Faith, p. 292.

³The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, p. 151.

⁴Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte in der Theologie Rudolf Bultmanns, p. 210f., cited by James Robinson, "The German Discussion of the Later Heidegger," The Later Heidegger and Theology, p. 31.

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.¹

So long as this presupposition is allowed to remain, then it seems to be impossible to speak "christianly" of faith and history.² In this connection, John Macquarrie writes:

The truth is that at this point we perceive in Bultmann's thought not the influence of existentialism but the hangover of a somewhat old-fashioned liberal modernism. He is still obsessed with the pseudo-scientific view of a closed universe that was popular half a century ago, and anything which does not fit into that tacitly assumed world-picture is, in his view, not acceptable to the modern mind and assigned to the realm of myth.³

As a result of his positivistic presuppositions, Bultmann connects the kerygma with the historical Jesus only in a minimal way; it is not done so in any constitutive way. This is seen when Bultmann writes: "We must frankly confess that the character of Jesus as a human personality cannot be recovered by us."⁴ Furthermore, whatever the Bible may have to say to us, its truth-content as it relates to the possibility of a critical evaluation is of no consequence for faith. Bultmann writes: "For what God says to us through the Bible is in the form of address. It can only be listened to, not examined."⁵

While Bultmann insists that we cannot know the personality of Jesus, we can know something of the preaching of Jesus, for "we know enough of his message to make for ourselves a consistent picture."⁶ We further know that

¹Kerygma and Myth, p. 197. ²Moltmann, p. 180.

³John Macquarrie, An Existentialist Theology, p. 168.

⁴Existence and Faith, p. 52. ⁵Ibid., p. 166.

⁶Jesus and the Word, p. 12.

he appeared as a teacher of wisdom, a lawgiver, and as a prophet.¹ However, he says: "I do indeed think we can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus" [*italics mine*].²

Ebeling complains that Bultmann's connection of the kerygma with the historical Jesus is so minimal that its importance amounts to nothing more than a meaningless cipher.³ It does seem quite clearly indicated that Bultmann's bifurcation between Historie and Geschichte leads to theological agnosticism, at least so far as one cannot have an objective knowledge of the basis of his faith.

In this regard, the theological implication of Bultmann's divorce between Historie and Geschichte is not altogether unlike the implication of Hume's philosophical distinction between "matters of fact" and "relation of ideas." For Hume, what we experience of phenomena (matters of fact) is nothing but ideas. These ideas, though they are derived from experience, give rise to beliefs concerning phenomena, but they explain "nothing but a peculiar sentiment or lively conception."⁴ Likewise, what we know of a historical phenomenon is nothing but a belief, a sentiment.⁵ In this respect, he is contending that whatever meanings we attach to phenomena are meanings which we experience of phenomena, but this says nothing of phenomena per se. Rather, these meanings (ideas) are all existential; they say nothing of extra mental reality.

¹Existence and Faith, pp. 52-53. ²Jesus and the Word, p. 8.

³Gerhard Ebeling, Theology and Proclamation, trans. John Riches (London: Collins, 1966), p. 64.

⁴An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1955), pp. 193-194.

⁵Ibid., p. 194.

Hume acknowledged the danger of his metaphysical agnosticism. He puts it this way, in describing his own philosophy:

Our author insists upon several other skeptical topics; and upon the whole concludes that we assent to our faculties and employ our reason only because we cannot help it. Philosophy would render us entirely Pyrrhonian, were not nature too strong for it.¹

Likewise, it would appear that if faith "believed" in spite of the fact that it had no sure knowledge of an external basis in reality, then the ensuing result would be theological Pyrrhonism. This is to say that just as what we perceive and what is cannot be bifurcated without leading us to Pyrrhonism, even so a divorce between faith and history cannot be allowed without bringing faith into suspect. Bultmann seeks to avoid this by making the kerygma dependent solely upon the mere "that" of Jesus and the fact of his Cross.² Whether or not faith is strong enough to resist a thorough-going Pyrrhonism (Hume suggests that we are by nature restrained from adopting it in philosophy) is the crucial question, if we cannot have a more adequate basis for faith. H. P. Van Dusen suggests that if one must divorce the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, the result is such a theological Pyrrhonism. Consequently, he writes: "Both intellectual honesty and ethical integrity would compel me not merely to renounce the Christian ministry and resign from membership in the Church, but to surrender adherence to Christian Faith."³

The right-wing Bultmannians who have initiated "the new quest for the historical Jesus" are not content with Bultmann's divorce between the historical

¹Ibid.

²"The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, p. 20.

³Henry P. Van Dusen, The Vindication of Liberal Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 128.

Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ. Ebeling suggests that to construct a Christology upon the mere "that" is an illusion.¹ He thus has sought to establish a Christology directly upon the basis of the historical Jesus.² He has seen that the divorce between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ is to put an end to Christology.

In somewhat of a philosophical parallel, Kant sought to go beyond Hume's metaphysical skepticism. Kant says that when Hume denies the objective validity of our concepts, then "in plain language, this means that there is not and cannot be any such thing as metaphysics at all."³ This philosophical parallel serves to point out that just as metaphysics cannot survive without a knowledge of reality which has an objective validity other than a mere isolated mental impression, even so a Christology cannot survive without a knowledge of the kerygmatic Christ whose objective validity is the historical Jesus and who is not merely the kerygmatic confession of the primitive Christian community.

Finally, Bultmann's existentialist interpretation of eschatology which restricts meaning only to the present moment and sees no goal in the process of history itself⁴ disallows man's existential need for hope. In this respect, Bultmann's "eschatological existence" is an adaptation of Heidegger's category of existentiality, i.e., the future is spoken of in terms of the existential possibilities of Dasein without any reference to an objectively "real" future. It has been said that an eschatology without a future goal

¹Gerhard Ebeling, Word and Faith, trans. R. G. Smith (London: Collins, 1961), p. 292.

²Ibid., p. 289. ³Kant, Prolegomena, p. 6.

⁴Bultmann, History and Eschatology, p. 155.

is an "eschatology without hope."¹ Such a view, it would appear, means that man finds himself in an existential hopeless abyss so far as any "real" future is concerned. Paul put it this way: "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied" (Romans 15:19).

¹H. Grass, "Das eschatologische Problem in der Gegenwart", Dank an P. Althaus, 1958, p. 64, cited by Oscar Cullmann, Salvation in History, trans. Sidney G. Sowers (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1967), p. 179.

CHAPTER IX

EBELING: "PURE WORD" AND "MERE FACT"

Gerhard Ebeling has called into question the validity of Bultmann's exclusive preoccupation with the kerygma as opening up a new self-understanding. He points out that the kerygma is not merely concerned with man's existence, but that also it is "a testimony to that which has happened."¹ This is to say that if Jesus has no material relationship with the kerygma in any intelligible way, then the kerygma is nothing more "than abstract mythologumenon."²

Ebeling points out that kerygmatic statements such as "Jesus is risen" and "Jesus is Christ" cannot be interpreted on the basis of their predicates, but they must take into full consideration the person of Jesus.³ It is this indissoluble relation of Jesus and the kerygma that Ebeling says rightly calls for theology to renew its quest for the historical Jesus.⁴ The basis for this new quest is not the discovery of new source materials, but rather the necessity for finding a "hermeneutic key to Christology."⁵ But, this does not mean that we must get behind the kerygma in order to legitimate it; rather, it means that the historical Jesus is the criterion of the kerygma and thus he is necessary for interpreting the kerygma.⁶

¹Gerhard Ebeling, Theology and Proclamation, p. 38.

²Ibid., p. 39. ³Ibid., pp. 51-52. ⁴Ibid., p. 55.

⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid., p. 57.

Ebeling further points out that he is not interested in establishing a basis for faith "behind" the Word. This is to say that faith comes only in response to the Word, and not to some fact anterior to the Word. If this were the case, then this "fact" anterior to the Word "would thus sully the purity of faith."¹

In this respect, Ebeling finds Bultmann's emphasis upon the existential interpretation of the kerygma as moving in the right direction for overcoming a positivistic idea of history. This is to say that Bultmann rightly saw the kerygma was not interesting in mere objective facts of the past. In fact, the use of the historical-critical method has often assumed that its purpose was to lay bare the facts.² However, Ebeling calls for the use of the historical-critical method to do more than merely ascertain the facts. He wants to use it as tool for ascertaining what came to expression in Jesus. He writes:

If one only has objective facts in mind when one talks about getting back behind the kerygma, then one will hardly do justice to the questions we are dealing with here. For if one has to do with Jesus, one has to do not with mere facts [*italics mine*] but with pure Word. If we carry out our attempts to get back behind the primitive christian kerygma in a proper manner, then we shall not be looking for facts which confirm the Word, but we shall be looking beyond a word which needs interpretation for the word-event which is presupposed within it.³

This means that the emphasis should be upon the linguisticity of reality, not upon the concept of objective facts, i.e., reality expresses itself in words, not in mere facts. He writes: "Hence the proper question regarding the past is not: What happened? What were the facts? How are they to be explained? or something of that kind, but: What came to expression?"⁴

¹Ibid., p. 39. ²Ibid., p. 58. ³Ibid. ⁴Word and Faith, p. 295.

Thus, the significance of the historical Jesus for faith is to see him as the word-event (i.e., faith came to expression in Jesus). Ebeling writes: "The quest of the historical Jesus is the quest of this linguistic event which is the ground of the event of faith."¹ But, what is faith? Is it not a relationship with God? In answer to this Ebeling would say Yes.² If then faith is entering into a relationship with God and if Jesus is the "Son of God," does this not mean that Jesus is the "object" of faith? Ebeling says No. Rather, Jesus is the "witness of faith." He writes:

This unity of Jesus with faith comes properly to expression not really in what Jesus says of his own faith, but as a witness to faith in existing for others--in a word, in the communication of faith.³

In this way, the Easter event is the rise of faith. This is not to say that Jesus was not the occasion of faith prior to the Easter event. Rather, it is to say that after the Easter event faith became "proclaimable."⁴ This leads Ebeling to say: "The faith of the days after Easter knows itself to be nothing else but the right understanding of Jesus of the days before Easter. For now Jesus appeared as what he really was, as the witness to faith."⁵ This is to say that the appearance of Jesus and the rise of faith are the same thing.⁶ This means that all who saw the "appearances" were believers, for to see the appearance of Jesus was to experience the rise of faith.

It can thus be seen that it is Jesus who gives the kerygma its legitimation. But, this is not to say that the kerygma is proved by ascertaining the facts of Jesus' life. Rather, this means that Jesus is the hermeneutical key (as a word-event) for Christology. This is to say that Jesus is consti-

¹Ibid., p. 304. ²Ibid., p. 302. ³Ibid., p. 297.

⁴Ibid., p. 301. ⁵Ibid., p. 302. ⁶Ibid., p. 301.

tutive for Christology in so far as what came to expression in his person is the occasion of faith for others.

This means that Ebeling sees the importance of putting faith into a proper relationship with history, that the two cannot be divorced in so far as Bultmann does by saying that the historical Jesus has no historical continuity with the kerygmatic Christ.¹ It can thus be seen that Ebeling is interested in the historical Jesus because he is the key to a proper understanding of the linguistic elements of the kerygma. Bultmann is interested in the Christ of the kerygma because it is "faith in Christ" in the existential moment of encounter which makes eschatological existence possible. Ebeling sees Jesus as the witness of faith, as the word-event, but he is not the object of faith. Bultmann sees Jesus as a historical person as of no consequence for faith, except that he really existed and served as the basis for the kerygma. Thus, "faith in Christ" is not faith in Jesus as a historical person.

Both Bultmann and Ebeling are interested solely in the linguistic elements of the kerygma. Ebeling writes: "Now of course we would agree completely with Bultmann's resolution to confine speech about God's action strictly within the relationship between Word and faith."²

If Ebeling says that the kerygma is testimony to something that happened,³ why must he limit that happening merely to linguistics? We pointed out that Ebeling faults Bultmann for not making the necessary connection between Jesus and the Christ of faith. He appreciates Bultmann's attempt to overcome the positivistic idea of history, but he says that Bultmann has not

¹Supra, p. 224. ²Theology and Proclamation, p. 37.

³Supra, p. 231.

fully understood the historical problem.¹ This seems to be a tacit suggestion that Bultmann has over-reacted against positivism with the result that an existential interpretation does not need the historical-critical method in so far as faith in Christ is concerned. But, if this be true of Bultmann, it seems evident to me that Ebeling has not gotten beyond the influence of positivism himself. This is true for two reasons. First, Ebeling, like Bultmann, has over-reacted against positivism with its search for demonstrable facts of the past. This can be seen through Ebeling's exclusive interest in "pure word" over against "mere facts." This is to say that Ebeling can see the act of God only in the existential situation which is given a linguistic expression in the kerygma. Thus, existentialism is set over against positivism for the interpretation of the kerygma.

In the second place, it seems that Ebeling has not gotten beyond positivism because of the way in which he permits a scientific world view to determine what can and cannot be. For example, he speaks of the self-evident presuppositions which must guide the historian in his investigation of the past. He says that modern man can no longer accept the idea of a historia sacra which is ontologically different from ordinary history. Nor can he subscribe to the idea of a scriptura sacra.² Ebeling writes: "The fact that for the modern age all that is metaphysical and metahistorical has entered the dimension of the problematical is also a thing the modern historian cannot simply put out of his mind when reading sources which presuppose the self-evident character of the metaphysical and metahistorical."³ He further writes: "The modern historian is rightly convinced that he knows certain things better."⁴

¹Theology and Proclamation, p. 58. ²Word and Faith, p. 47.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.

The question arises--what is the "modern age"? Is Ebeling suggesting that only today has it become "self-evident" that God does not act in history? Cullmann has pointed out that the scandal of a historical divine revelation is no "modern" dilemma, for it was a problem for antiquity as well. He writes:

But is it not immediately suspicious when the very elements in the thinking of the Bible which is foreign to modern thought is excluded from the definition of its essence? Should we not instead consider whether perhaps the 'offensive' element, the skandalon, does not constitute the essence and centre of the New Testament proclamation, so that it simply cannot be removed from it? This is all the more likely when we find that the assertion that salvation is a history has not become offensive only in modern times, and has nothing to do with a changed world view (as Bultmann thinks), but was felt to be just as offensive in the ancient world.¹

This can be seen when the Greeks mocked when they heard the resurrection kerygma on Mars Hill (Acts 17:32). Further, the disciples knew as well as we do in the modern age that dead men do not rise from the dead. Thus, Thomas would not believe in the risen Lord without first an empirical verification (John 20:24-29).

Perhaps what Ebeling is rather suggesting is that the modern Christian community as opposed to the primitive Christian community must accept the "self-evident" assumption of pagan antiquity. In this respect, Cullmann writes: "The metaphysics of antiquity and modern existentialist philosophy, which is so different, both share a hostility to salvation history."²

Thus, it seems that these "self-evident" assumptions prevent Ebeling from dealing with the events in the life of Jesus which hold great significance for the believer. This is to say that in order to accommodate the kerygma to modern secular man Ebeling seems to be making the kerygma say something that

¹ Salvation in History, p. 22. Cf. Karl Jaspers, "Myth and Religion," Kerygma and Myth, II, 134ff.

² Ibid.

in fact it does not seem to say; namely, that Jesus is the witness to faith. It seems to me that one cannot gloss over the death and resurrection of Jesus merely with an existential interpretation and do them justice. This means that His death and resurrection hold soteriological and eschatological significance for the believer in an existential and historical sense because Jesus in fact enacted in history the ground of salvation and hope. Can this historical sense be compromised? This is to suggest that if we insist on absolutizing a world view which legislates what can and cannot be then any interpretation of Scripture could only appear to be a forced one in regard to the person of Jesus. For example, Paul writes:

Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins (I Cor. 15:12-17).

Now it can hardly be doubted within this context that the kerygma (at least the Pauline kerygma) took the resurrection of Jesus as a historical reality. Now if it is not a historical fact as Ebeling contends, how can he maintain its significance for Christian faith by means of an existential interpretation¹ without producing a forced interpretation? Pannenberg puts it this way:

Jesus' claim to authority by itself cannot be made the basis of a Christology, as though this only involved the "decision" in relation to him. Such Christology--and the preaching based upon it--would remain an empty assertion. Rather, everything depends upon the connection between Jesus' claim and its confirmation by God.²

¹Theology and Proclamation, p. 56. ²Jesus--God and Man, p. 66.

It would also appear that Ebeling's interpretation of Jesus as the word-event, i.e., what came to expression in Jesus was faith, can hardly be justified on the basis of exegesis.

David F. Strauss pointed this out long ago in his criticism of the Christology of rationalism. The rationalistic theologians saw Christ as the greatest man who ever lived and endowed by God with such natural capacities that he became the perfect moral example of mankind. His death serves as a motivation for the reformation of the sinner, for in it is revealed the forgiving love of God. Strauss argues that this Christ is not the Christ of the Scriptures. Since the Christ of rationalism is not a Christ who is the object of worship, but the one who is the example of pure obedience to God, this means that he is not the Christ whom the church proclaims as its Lord.¹

Bultmann has also criticized the idea that the historical Jesus is the witness of faith. He especially cites Ebeling in this criticism when he says the kerygma does not speak of Jesus' own faith. Bultmann writes: "In Heb. 12:2, Jesus is described as the 'pioneer and perfecter of our faith.' But this is not a description of Jesus as a believer, as Ebeling would suppose,² for he does not appear in the 'cloud of witnesses' in Heb. 11."³

This brings me to say that the linguistic elements of the kerygma must not be set over against empirical events if faith is to remain Christian. In this respect, Ebeling has not moved beyond an existentialist bifurcation between Historie and Geschichte.

While Ebeling has sought to integrate faith and history through his

¹David Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, p. 768.

²Word and Faith, p. 304.

³Bultmann, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, p. 34.

interpretation of Jesus as the word-event (thus, he believed he could avoid the charge of Docetism)¹, it would seem this is accomplished through a radical transformation of what the kerygma means by "faith in Christ," as Bultmann has pointed out. On the other hand, Bultmann has retained the "myth,"² "faith in Christ," as the essence of Christian faith, but he does so in view of the danger of Docetism because faith in Christ is divorced from Jesus.

This brings me to say an exclusive existentialist theology does not secure Christian faith from the charges of illusion and sacrificium intellectus, for it is difficult to see how linguistics and history can be bifurcated without bringing into suspect the character of Christian faith.

¹Theology and Proclamation, p. 35.

²Paul Tillich has charged that Bultmann does not understand the meaning of myth. Tillich says that all religious language is mythological, even "faith in Christ." Tillich says that Bultmann should more properly call his methodology deliteralization, not demythologizing, (Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, p. 228). Cf. Supra, p. 216n.

PART THREE

RELIGIOUS EPISTEMOLOGY AND UNIVERSAL HISTORY

Up to this point, we have delineated dualisms in philosophical and religious epistemology. It has been pointed out that the function of these dualisms in religious epistemology was to protect theology from the onslaughts of historical criticism which exposed faith to the incertitude of historical knowledge. That is, faith claims to have a historical point of departure which serves as the absolute center of all mankind. However, the modern historical consciousness of man is offended by such a claim since all events are supposed to be governed by a cause-effect relationship and since all historical knowledge is characterized by varying degrees of probability. Consequently, it has been assumed by much of modern theology that faith must free itself from any alliance with scientific objectivity. It thus sought to make the kerygma independent of Historie. It is this divorce between faith and history that has been critically evaluated in Part Two. An attempt now shall be made to offer a constructive proposal for integrating faith and history in terms of a theology of universal history. First, the idea of history as it relates to the self-revelation of God will be discussed. In this way, it is to be argued that revelation is not to be defined in terms of Geschichte as opposed to Historie. Nor is revelation to be defined as a "word event" as opposed to a propositional statement. Rather, revelation will be defined in terms of what has been called history as the indirect self-revelation of God.

Second, the nature of historical reality itself will be considered. An attempt will thus be made to provide an ontological basis for historical

and theological knowledge. Third, the relationship of hermeneutics and history will be pointed out. In this way, it is to be argued that the historical and hermeneutical aspects of revelation are inseparably connected. Finally, the Pannenbergian idea of universal history will be considered as a possible option for integrating faith and history, thus bridging the gap between such comparable dualisms as Geschichte and Historie, "mere fact" and "pure word," Paulus dixit and Deus dixit, faith and knowledge.

CHAPTER X

HISTORY AS THE SELF-REVELATION OF GOD

The concept of revelation today has become so all-inclusive in its meaning that it tends to become a synonymous term for theology. This can be seen above all in Barth's Church Dogmatics in which redemption, reconciliation, resurrection, etc., are all categorized under the one concept of revelation. It is in this connection that Paul Althaus has spoken of the inflation of the idea of revelation.¹

The concept of revelation in modern times as "self-revelation" (i.e., what is revealed is God Himself) finds its most immediate source in German idealism, especially in the Hegelian monistic metaphysical concept of the Spirit which reveals itself to itself through the human consciousness (i.e., the Spirit, or Idea, comes to the full awareness of its essence through the human spirit).² In his Science of Logic, Hegel calls this fully-developed consciousness of the Idea, the Absolute Idea, or the Notion.³ This connection

¹P. Althaus, "Die Inflation des Begriffs der Offenbarung in der gegenwärtigen Theologie," Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie, 18 (1941), 134-135.

²Cf. Wolfart Pannenberg, "Introduction," Revelation as History, ed. W. Pannenberg, trans. David Granskou and Edward Quinn (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969), pp. 4-5. Jesus--God and Man, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), p. 127. Pannenberg's frequent reference to Hegel creates the strong impression that he interprets Hegel to be a biblical theist. At any rate, Pannenberg has not made himself clear at this point insofar as I have been able to determine. In thus appropriating any aspect of Hegel's thought, it seems to me that one should clearly keep in mind the distinction between biblical monotheism and Hegel's metaphysical monism.

³Supra, p. 82.

between Hegel's concept of the Notion and the neo-orthodox view of revelation can be seen in Barth's qualified appreciation for the Hegelian Philipp Marheineke's concept of self-revelation. Marheineke writes:

In the human spirit God is manifest to Himself not through it but through Himself, and in that way is manifest to the human spirit also. The latter, as reason, is annulled in Him. The hardest thing science requires in all its devotees is that pure Substance itself should show itself as subject, man with his spirit to be subject to the divine spirit and be patient under it. His true knowledge of the absolute is itself an absolute knowledge.¹

In thus defining revelation as self-revelation, it can be understood why Barth has restricted the use of this word exclusively to the person of Jesus Christ.² If revelation means "self-revelation," i.e., what God reveals is nothing else than Himself, then Barth properly draws the logical deduction that only in one event can God be revealed, namely, in the Christ event. If God should be revealed elsewhere, then it would be obvious that God had not really revealed Himself in Jesus. The idea of several revelations would show a logical inconsistency. Thus, Barth concludes that revelation as the self-revelation of God occurred objectively only in Jesus Christ. When one thus speaks of revelations, he is not employing the use of this word in Barth's strict sense.³

For Barth, the subject of revelation and the object of revelation are one essence, i.e., subject and object are identical. Barth has thus emphasized the unity of God with Jesus, for if God is revealed in Jesus, then Jesus must be God. Barth asks: "But who can reveal God but God Himself?"

¹Grundlehren der Dogmatik als Wissenschaft, 1827, Paragraph 115, cited by Barth, Church Dogmatics, I, 1, 280. Cf. Pannenberg, Revelation as History, p. 5.

²Barth, Church Dogmatics, I, 2, 489.

³Pannenberg, Revelation as History, p. 6.

Thus, he argues that if Jesus reveals God, then "he must himself be God."¹

In this way, Barth says that the revealer, the means of revelation, and what is revealed are the same. He writes:

God reveals Himself. He reveals Himself through Himself. He reveals Himself. If we wish really to regard the revelation from the side of its subject, God, then above all we must understand that this subject, God, the Revealer, is identical with His act in revelation, identical also with its effect.²

Here it can be seen that Barth's idea of self-revelation is somewhat of a theological parallel to Hegel's metaphysical concept of the Notion, i.e., the full-developed awareness of the Idea in the human consciousness. Revelation for Barth is known only through the Holy Spirit and cannot be comprehended on the basis of man's intellectual achievement. Insofar as God unveils Himself through the human spirit, He is "His own double in His Revelation."³

Pannenberg, however, has pointed out that if Barth speaks of a veiling of revelation so that the form of revelation is both a manifestation and a veiling,⁴ then the unity of form and essence is endangered because this implies that they are as many manifestations as veiled forms. But if revelation means self-revelation, then the form is itself the revelation. Pannenberg writes: "Only if the form of revelation reveals God and--rightly understood-- does not veil him, only then is Barth's thesis of the unity of revelation tenable."⁵

The significant factor to be considered in any definition of revelation is whether or not it can be exegetically supported from Scripture. To be sure, there is no systematic use of the word, "revelation," in the Bible. Neither

¹Barth, Church Dogmatics, I, 1, 465.

²Ibid., p. 340. ³Ibid., p. 363. ⁴Cf. Ibid., pp. 189ff, 369.

⁵Revelation as History, p. 8.

is there any "concept" of revelation in the Bible,¹ just as there is no concept of history, ethics, ecclesiology, eschatology, etc. Rather, the Scriptures talk history and revelation, but do not talk about them, e.g., John's gospel says "the Word became flesh" (which is talking history), but he does not theoretically reflect on this event in the sense of a philosophical abstraction (which would be to talk about history). However, when a concept of revelation is used for purposes of systematic theology, it must appeal to Scripture for its support. This is to say, if revelation as self-revelation is to be theologically valid, then it must be shown exegetically to be in accord with the "given" of the biblical witness. This is not intended to be an arbitrary judgment, but rather is an acknowledgement that the Scriptures are the only records we have which "report" those events that specifically concern the Christian believer.

In what follows the thesis to be defended is that revelation only indirectly reveals who God is in His essence. In contrast to Barth's statement that "God's Word is God Himself in His Revelation,"² it will be argued here that revelation is the communication of content which is to be differentiated from God's essential presence. For example, in the Bible, the phrase, "the Word of God," is equated with the apostolic kerygma, thus indicating that revelation as the Word of God is linked to tradition (I Thess. 2:13; I Peter 1:25; Romans 10:8). Also, the appearances of Jahweh in the earliest Israelite traditions are not the unveiling of the essence of God, but the imparting of certain information and thus may be called manifestations of God, but not

¹Cf. John McIntyre, The Christian Doctrine of History (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), p. 2. F. Gerald Downing, Has Christianity a Revelation? (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1964), pp. 238-239.

²Church Dogmatics, I, 1, 339.

self-revelation. For example, in Exodus 3, God appears to Moses to inform him that he is to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage, and thus only indirectly reveals Himself to Moses.

To be sure, Barth emphasizes the verbal character of the Word of God. However, since "God's Word is God's Son," it is impossible to control and systematize the Word of God in the sense in which high orthodoxy sought to do, for it viewed the Holy Scriptures as "a fixed total of revealed propositions to be systematised like the sections of a corpus of laws."¹ On the other hand, Barth states that God makes Himself known "in propositions by means of language, and human language at that, to the effect that from time to time such and such a word, spoken by the prophets and apostles and proclaimed in the Church, becomes His Word."² Barth thus differentiates between the form and the content. The content is the Word of God, i.e., God Himself. The form is the language of the Bible. The form becomes the content in an indirect identity when God so chooses to unveil Himself through the form.³ Thus, Paulus dixit and Deus dixit are indirectly united in the moment of revelation. The fact that the words of the Bible and the Word of God form an indirect (and not a direct) identity is to point out that the identity is an assumed identity, which is brought about by the choice of God and thus is not an intrinsic identity.⁴

Barth, in this respect, likewise points out that "in the Acts and Epistles the preaching of the apostles is often regarded as equivalent to the Word of God itself."⁵ For example, Barth shows this to be true of Paul, who writes: "Christ is speaking in me" (II Cor. 13:3). However, Barth does

¹Ibid., p. 156. ²Ibid. ³Church Dogmatics, I, 2, 499.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid., p. 491.

not allow the Word of God to be historical, except in the objective reality of Jesus Christ, because revelation always means self-revelation, i.e., the revealer and what is revealed are identical. Thus, the propositional truth of Holy Scripture is not revelation, but only attests revelation and becomes revelation when God in His freedom so chooses it to be revelation. If one should equate the words of the Bible as being inherently the Word of God (as the post-Reformation Orthodoxy did), then this would be to reduce the Living God to a dead book.¹

If the biblical propositions contained in language are the words of man which though can become the Word of God through God's initiative, is there any necessity for ascertaining their authenticity and historical reliability? Further, if Jesus Christ is the objective reality of revelation, does this not necessitate the use of the historical-critical method for ascertaining who he really was? Barth's answer is a decisive NO. Rather, God reveals Himself whenever He so chooses and in no way is it a determination of man's initiative. One might ask, why put such heavy emphasis upon the Bible as a necessary medium through which God reveals Himself? Could He not reveal Himself through some other form than the Scriptures? Barth makes it unmistakably clear that Scripture is linked to the Word of God: "Preaching and the sacrament of the Church do indeed need the basis and authority and authenticity of the original Word of God in Scripture to be the Word of God."² The theological uniqueness of Holy Scripture rests in the fact that the prophets and the apostles were witnesses of the one revelation which took place in Jesus Christ, who is the objective fact of revelation, i.e., He is very God and very Man.³ The prophets witnessed to Jesus Christ in "expectation,"

¹Ibid., p. 522. ²Ibid., p. 501. ³Ibid., p. 490.

while the apostles witnessed in "recollection."¹

Because of their unique position in relation to Jesus Christ, their witness is essential. Thus, Scripture in its witness to the original revelation in Jesus Christ is the Word of God when God so chooses it to become His Word. Barth illustrates this unity of form (Scripture) and content (revelation) in connection with the Incarnation of Jesus as both God and man.² Even as in the Incarnation, God in His free act chose to reveal Himself in Jesus Christ, even so God chooses to reveal Himself in Holy Scripture. In revealing Himself in Jesus, Jesus himself was identical with God. This unity of Jesus with God is an assumed identity, i.e., the man Jesus was not inherently God, but God willed and created this unity, thus effecting an indirect identity. Likewise, the Holy Scriptures become the revelation of God when God so creates and wills the indirect identity between the Scriptures and God. To be sure, there are inherent differences between the incarnate Word and the Word of God in Holy Scripture. That Jesus became the Word of God in his humanity needs no repetition or confirmation, for he is the eternal presence of God.

On the other hand, the Scriptures as the witness to the revelation of God in Jesus are signs through which Jesus is revealed to man on earth. Thus, these signs must ever and again become the Word of God to us. This means that the Church stands in constant need of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to effect the Word of God through the Bible.³

Barth further draws the distinction between a "verbal inspiration" and "verbal inspiredness." By the former he suggests that God verbally spoke through the prophets and apostles by means of the inspiration of the Holy

¹Ibid., pp. 487ff. ²Ibid., pp. 499ff. ³Ibid., p. 513.

Spirit. By verbal inspiredness, Barth suggests that this is the attempt to freeze the Word of God in the Words of the Bible, thus bringing God under the control of man by reducing Him to the level of a mere book.¹ To be sure, the words of the Bible contain propositions, but these propositions are not revelation, though they can become revelation when God so chooses. Because of this dialectical relationship between the Word of God and Holy Scripture, Barth frequently refers to the Scriptures as the Word of God.²

However, if one should merely equate the words of the Bible with the Word of God, i.e., if the words of the Bible in themselves are defined as revelation, then this is to speak of verbal inspiredness. Barth does not see the Reformers saying anything materially different from what he says in this regard: "For them [especially Calvin] the literally inspired Bible was not at all a revealed book of oracles, but a witness to revelation, to be interpreted from the standpoint of and with a view to its theme, and in conformity with that theme."³ The shift from the perspective of "inspiration" to "inspiredness" occurred in high orthodoxy about 1700.⁴ Barth writes:

This new understanding of biblical inspiration meant simply that the statement that the Bible is the Word of God was now transformed . . . from a statement about the free grace of God into a statement about the nature of the Bible as exposed to human inquiry brought under human control. The Bible as the Word of God surreptitiously became a part of natural knowledge of God, i.e., of that knowledge of God which man can have without the free grace of God, by his own power, and with direct insight and assurance.⁵

The result of the freezing up of the Word of God into the words of the Bible in effect reduced saving faith to fides historica. Barth writes:

The Bible was now grounded upon itself apart from the mystery

¹Ibid., p. 518. ²Ibid., pp. 473-537. ³Ibid., p. 521.

⁴Ibid., p. 522. ⁵Ibid., pp. 522-523.

of Christ and the Holy Ghost. It became a "paper Pope," and unlike the living Pope in Rome it was wholly given up into the hands of its interpreters. It was no longer a free and spiritual force, but an instrument of human power.¹

This reduction of the Word of God to the words of the Bible was followed by the Enlightenment, which treated the Bible solely as a historical book, thus following high orthodoxy.²

Barth points out the aim of the post-Reformation interpretation of Holy Scripture in affirming its inerrancy and infallibility even to the minutest details was an attempt to set forth the Bible as "a codex of axioms which can be seen as such with the same formal dignity as those of philosophy and mathematics."³

However, if high orthodoxy attempted to guarantee the Bible to be the Word of God by means of its rigid doctrine of "inspiredness," Barth on the other hand completely eliminates the necessity of any natural proof of the Word of God in Holy Scripture. To be sure, Barth has only one intention-- to let the Bible speak on its own terms. Only in this way can the Word of God be found in Holy Scripture.⁴ But in no sense can man "find" the Word of God in Scripture.

This rejection of any natural proof for revelation necessarily follows from Barth's concept of self-revelation. If revelation is the direct self-disclosure of God, then obviously it is in no way dependent upon man. Revelation is totally a matter of faith. It is a miracle.⁵ It cannot be proved, only believed.⁶ For this reason, Barth is willing to concede that the Bible as the words of man is fallible, errant, and even contradictory. He says

¹Ibid., p. 525. ²Ibid., p. 523. ³Ibid., p. 525.

⁴Supra, p. 199. ⁵Ibid., p. 502. ⁶Ibid., p. 484.

the Bible can also be read historically for it is "human speech uttered by specific men at specific times in a specific situation, in a specific language and with a specific intention."¹

However, for Barth historical investigation into the Bible in no way can damage the concept of God's self-revelation through the Bible. Revelation in no way is dependent upon the results of historical research. Bultmann has raised against Barth the question concerning what his "principle of selection" is insofar as he seeks to interpret the Bible for modern man. Bultmann asks:

The purpose of my existential interpretation of myth is precisely to inquire into the possibility of a valid meaning for the mythical picture of the world, and in this I am trying to proceed methodically, while in the case of Barth I can perceive only arbitrary assertions. What, then, is his principle of selection?²

Bultmann's question misses the mark altogether insofar as Barth's doctrine of Holy Scripture is concerned. Barth makes it quite clear that the proof of Holy Scripture lies in God's self-authentication of it. That the Canon is Holy Scripture is the result of the Church confirming and establishing that which was already formed and given. The Church did not arbitrarily compose the Canon, but the Canon was formed because it imposed itself upon the Church.³ Likewise today, Scripture as the Word of God needs no external authority for its support. This means the believer is "absolved from differentiating the Word of God in the Bible from other contents, infallible portions and expressions from the erroneous ones, the infallible from the fallible, and from imagining that by means of such discoveries we can create for ourselves

¹Ibid., p. 464.

²Essays: Philosophical and Theological, p. 261.

³Church Dogmatics, I, 2, 473.

encounters with the genuine Word of God in the Bible."¹ This clearly means that the believer is not concerned with any "principle of selection." The question of the Bible as the Word of God is not a historical but a theological question. This is to say, it is exclusively a question whether or not God so chooses to reveal Himself through the biblical "form."

However, if Barth asserts that revelation became historical in Jesus Christ and if the apostles are given a unique position in the Church because they were "eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses" of God's revelation in time,² then must it not follow that man's faith can stand the test of critical rationality and historical examination? This is to say, if in fact this revelation did occur in time and space and was witnessed by certain men, must not the biblical texts then be treated as historical "sources" as well as kerygma? Paul Althaus shows that while in Kähler's time it was necessary "to emphasize the fact that the gospels are not primarily sources, but testimonies of faith, today the emphasis must be placed elsewhere; the gospels are also narratives and sources." Althaus thus points out that the historical question of the gospel is not only "theologically legitimate," but "by the character of the gospels, the New Testament itself invites us to such

¹Ibid., p. 531. Herein lies the significance of Tillich's statement that Bultmann saved the question of history for theology (Supra, pp. 216f.). Over against Barth who rejects the significance of historical-critical studies for faith, Bultmann has rightly re-instated the problem of historical understanding for faith. Whatever opinion one may take concerning Bultmann's existentialist exegesis, it must be admitted that he has shown that one must at least come to terms with the problem of historical understanding. Cf. R. Gregory Smith, Secular Christianity (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), pp. 80-81.

²Ibid., p. 505.

historical reflexion."¹

To be sure, Barth's emphasis upon the priority of faith over critical rationality is well taken, i.e., faith is a way of knowing as well as trust. But what faith believes should not have to be sheltered from critical investigation. Paul in defending the resurrection kerygma before King Agrippa appeals to the possibility of its public investigation. Paul says: "This was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26). Paul further makes it clear that the Word of God does not consist of gnostic secrets, but is open to all who can see, and if the gospel is veiled, it is because "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers" (II Cor. 4:2-4).

Without intending to surrender the freedom of God or to make faith the work of man, it will be argued that Jesus Christ is not the only objective reality of revelation, nor is revelation a direct self-revelation of God. To be sure, this presupposes a revised concept of self-revelation. It has already been suggested that the thesis to be defended in this chapter is the concept of an indirect self-revelation of God. In order to pursue this thesis, it has been necessary to follow Barth's proposal of a direct self-revelation of God, for it is he who has so cogently defined what is meant by self-revelation.

This proposal for an indirect self-revelation of God in history is consciously dependent upon certain presuppositions of Wolfhart Pannenberg, for it is he who has purposively sought to restore a proper balance between reason and faith, revelation and history, in contemporary theology.

¹Paul Althaus, The So-called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus, trans. David Cairns (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 25. The necessary change of emphasis today from "kerygma" to the "historical" is illustrated in Althaus' title, The So-called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus, in contrast to Kähler's The So-called Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ.

Crucial to this revised concept of revelation is thus the terminological distinction between direct and indirect self-revelation. Pannenberg clarifies this distinction in connection with the difference between direct and indirect communication. Direct communication means an exact identity between the content to be communicated and what is actually communicated.¹ Thus, in Barth's terminology, there is no difference between the Word of God and God Himself, for what is revealed is the revealer--thus a direct self-revelation of God. An indirect communication means that what is communicated is not identical with what was intended to be communicated. Pannenberg writes:

Direct communication transmits content without a break from the sender to the receiver. In indirect communication, the path is broken: the content first reveals its actual meaning by being considered from another perspective. Indirect communication is on a higher level: it always has direct communication as its basis, but takes this into a new perspective.²

It is insignificant whether or not such an indirect or direct communication is received immediately or mediated by a messenger. For example, the various Protestant Orthodox theories of inspiration presupposed direct communication which was immediately given to the prophets and apostles, but this direct communication was passed on to us as a mediated revelation. This is to say, the direct communication which immediately was given to the prophets and apostles through inspiration is revelation for us today because of their words as the Word of God. Such a view of direct communication, however, was formulated before revelation came to be re-defined as self-revelation. Pannenberg does not at all associate his view of revelation with any of the theories of inspiration. Rather, revelation for him is comparable to indirect

¹Revelation as History, p. 14. ²Ibid., p. 14.

communication rather than a supernaturally-inspired direct communication. At any rate, for the purposes of clarifying the difference between direct and indirect communication, Pannenberg shows that a direct communication can be received directly, i.e., without a third party being involved. Or, it can be received indirectly by means of a third-party messenger. The same can be said of an indirect communication. What is significant, however, is not the act of communicating, but the content that is actually received in the act of communicating. Does this content reflect directly or only indirectly what was intended in the communication?

Thus, direct communication would have God himself--without mediation--as its content, analogous to divine epiphanies in the sense of a complete self-revelation, and communication of the divine name would be a direct revelation if it involved a direct disclosure of the being of God himself.¹

Likewise, the Law would be a direct self-revelation if its content was identical with the will of God, for the will of God (in a comprehensive sense) is the essence of God.² The Word of God would be a direct self-revelation if its content was identical with God, either in Barth's sense of God's self-presentation through the medium of the Bible or in high orthodoxy's rigid doctrine of "inspiredness" in which the written Word was substituted for Christ, the Living Word.³ However, Pannenberg contends both in regard to the giving of the Law and in regard to the dogmatic concept of the Word of God that what is involved is an indirect (and not a direct) self-revelation. Likewise, the giving of Jahweh's name to Moses is not intended in the first place to be a self-disclosure of God.⁴

On the other hand, "indirect communication is distinguished by not

¹Ibid., p. 15. ²Ibid. ³Church Dogmatics, I, 2, 522-523.

⁴Revelation as History, pp. 9-10.

having God as the content in any direct manner."¹ Though God is the originator of the revelatory events and thus intends to disclose Himself, nevertheless, his essence is only known indirectly, i.e., by reflecting on the event which he originated.

One of the many christological models critically analyzed in Professor John McIntyre's book, The Shape of Christology, is the "revelation model."² What he proposes as an adequate concept of revelation closely corresponds to what Pannenberg means by an indirect self-revelation. Professor McIntyre points out that the paradigm of revelation in the Old Testament is triadic, i.e., the revealer (represented by A), what is revealed (represented by B), and the recipient of the revelation (represented by C) constitute the three-term relation of the revelation model. The three terms in the concept of revelation are thus related in this way: A reveals B to C. For example, in the exodus event, the drying up of the Red Sea is the revealer, A; what is revealed is God, B; and the recipient of the revelation, C, is Moses.³

The three terms of this basic revelation model (A reveals B to C) are further qualified. A is qualified by x, so that A (i.e., any empirical event, object, or situation) which reveals God, B, is not revelatory in itself, but requires a supernatural frame of reference, x. Thus, A(x) represents an occurrence in the space-time spectrum which possesses at the same time an ontological difference from everything else that naturally occurs, i.e., this occurrence is a supernatural event; otherwise, it would not be revelatory.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 15.

²John McIntyre, The Shape of Christology (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1966), pp. 145-171.

³Ibid., p. 146. ⁴Ibid., pp. 147f.

B is qualified by y, so that B (God who is revealed) is not the pure essence of God, but is some aspect of his essence, y. Thus, A(x) reveals B(y). For example, the drying up of the Red Sea as an act of God, A(x), reveals God's saving activity, B(y), but not God's pure essence, B(E). The second term of this model, B(y), is precisely what is meant by an indirect self-revelation. What is revealed is not God's essence, but some aspect of his being which indirectly reveals his essence.¹

The third term, C, is qualified by the Holy Spirit. The recipient, C, is not a passive agent in the revelation event. He is active either in rejecting or accepting the revelation. However, the recipient cannot truly understand the revelation event apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus, A(x) reveals B(y) to C(Holy Spirit).² Pannenberg would dispute the validity of this third term, C(Holy Spirit). Instead, his third term would be C(Historical Reason), i.e., what is revealed is open to anyone who properly exercises his powers of reason. This is to say, the Holy Spirit is not needed in order to ascertain the proper interpretation of revelatory events. Rather, events speak their own language, "the language of facts."³ This hard objective emphasis upon the self-clarity of historical events, which can hardly be maintained except purely as a polemical device, will be the subject of a critique below.⁴

In the New Testament, Professor McIntyre shows that the Old Testament model, A(x) reveals B(y) to C(Holy Spirit) undergoes a further modification. A represents Jesus of Nazareth as he appeared to his contemporaries as any other man would have. The x represents the transcendent reality of A, which

¹Ibid., p. 149. ²Ibid., pp. 149-150.

³Revelation as History, p. 137. ⁴Infra, pp. 371ff.

means that A can only be properly seen from the perspective of faith. B(y) is altered to become B(A), for what is revealed is not some aspect of God's essence, but his essence itself. Thus, B(A) refers to "God in Jesus Christ." The second form of the revelation model is thus: A(x) reveals B(A) to C(Holy Spirit).

Since A(x) is not just any event, but God as he is in Christ, then A(x) becomes B(A). And since what B(A) reveals is not some attribute of God's being, but God's being per se--which is given the term, B(E)--then the second form of the revelation model is altered to a third form: B(A) reveals B(E) to C(Holy Spirit). That is, the God-man reveals God as he is essentially in himself to believers through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.¹

According to the third form of the revelation model, B(A) reveals B(E) to C(Holy Spirit), the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is absolutely unique. That is, while there may be many instances of the Old Testament revelation model, A(x) reveals B(y) to C(Holy Spirit), there can logically be only one instance of the New Testament model, B(A) reveals B(E) to C(Holy Spirit).²

But even in this third form of the revelation model, it is not a matter of a complete direct self-revelation, though Professor McIntyre does not speak in these terms of a direct self-revelation. However, as he points out, what we do have in Jesus Christ is a revelation of God's self regardless how incomplete it may now be. He writes:

On the one hand, we want to do justice to the claim made by theologians who use this model that in Jesus God reveals not just one of his attributes, or some aspect of his nature or

¹The Shape of Christology, pp. 150-152.

²Ibid., p. 152.

even his whole purpose for mankind, but his very self;. . . .
 At the same time, on the other hand, it is obvious that in
 Jesus the naked glory of God's majesty is not beheld, and that
 we have to do, in the first instance, with the Word made flesh,
 God in Christ Jesus, God as a man among men.¹

F. Gerald Downing has given an extensive critical analysis of the
 biblical terms for revelation in which he concludes that the word "revelation"
 very often refers to the future appearance of Jesus Christ.² Likewise, Profes-
 sor McIntyre has indicated that only in the end-time will God's self-revelation
 be complete.³ Professor McIntyre further speaks of the incarnation as "the
 anticipation of the end," i.e., the eschaton.⁴ This suggests that what is
 given in the Christ event as God's self-revelation is the pre-actualization

¹Ibid., pp. 150-151.

²Downing has sought to provide an exegetical and lexical demon-
 stration that "the documents of the 'New Testament' do not, by and large,
 give a very large place to 'revelation' in any sense as a metaphor, concept
 or category to express their understanding of the purpose of Jesus or of
 God 'in' Jesus" (Has Christianity A Revelation?, p. 126). Particularly
 Downing points out the concept of revelation as an unveiling of the selfhood
 of God to man in an "I-Thou" confrontation is not a biblical idea (ibid.,
 pp. 197-199). On the other hand, he points out that "revelation" means
 the revelation of Christ in glory. He writes: "The Corinthians are waiting
 for the 'revealing' (ἀποκαλύψις) of our Lord, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1.7).
 The Thessalonians will receive rest 'at the revealing (same word) of
 the Lord Jesus from heaven' (II Thess. 1.7). The Colossians will be mani-
 fested in glory, when Christ is manifested (φανερωθῆ) (Col. 3.4). This
 is the same event as Paul earlier wrote about to Rome: 'The glory that
 shall be revealed', and 'the earnest expectation of the creation' that
 'waits for the revealing of the sons of God (ἀποκαλύψθηναί, ἀποκαλύψιν)'
 (Rom. 8.18ff.). This is 'revelation' in its technical sense in the New
Testament. It is a future hope; other elements of the end-time may make
 their presence felt now; but 'revealing' refers to those aspects of the end
 that are still very much in the future." (pp. 75-76).

³The Shape of Christology, p. 164. Cf. McIntyre, Christian Doctrine
of History, p. 83.

⁴The Shape of Christology, pp. 80-81.

of the end at which time God's self will be fully revealed.¹

In a way not altogether unlike Professor McIntyre's "revelation model," Pannenberg contends that "there are as many revelations as there are divine acts and occurrences in nature and history,"² i.e., A(x) reveals B(y) to C(Historical Reason). Admittedly, this eliminates the idea of a direct self-revelation except in a qualified sense so far as the Christ event is concerned.

What Pannenberg is asserting, in contrast to a direct self-revelation, is the idea of an indirect self-revelation of God which becomes a direct self-revelation only as the totality of reality is known, namely, at the end of history. However, this direct self-revelation has already been partially unveiled in Jesus Christ--thus Pannenberg's concept of the New Testament revelation model becomes: B(A) reveals B(some E) to C(Historical Reason). Only in the eschaton can it be said that B(A) reveals B(all E).

Pannenberg seeks to expound this fundamental idea of the New Testament (i.e., that God's indirect self-revelation has progressively unfolded in the

¹John Baillie likewise points out that the revelation in Jesus Christ is a partial pre-actualization of the revelation which is to be completed at the end-time. He writes: "Indeed as time went on, this word apocalypse, which is the most general word for revelation in New Testament Greek, tended to be used exclusively for that which still waits to be revealed. Yet the point needs clearly to be made that this is not an independent or extra revelation, over and above that which is given in the Gospel history itself. The revelation of what is still to be is contained in the revelation of what has already been, and is nothing else than an elicitation of its inherent promise. Our assurance of the full inheritance derives from the earnest of it which we have already received. Or, in another metaphor, our assurance of the final harvest rests on our having already reaped the first fruits of it in the resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit [The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 57/].

²Revelation as History, p. 16.

world but will be consummated in a complete direct self-revelation only at the end-time) in terms of universal history. Pannenberg acknowledges that this idea of a universal history goes back to German idealism, especially to Hegel, even as Barth's idea of self-revelation has its roots there. For Pannenberg, this recognition does not invalidate its use in systematic theology.¹ Rather, what is significant is whether or not the idea of universal history can articulate properly the idea of God's self-revelation. What follows is intended only to point out that the idea of an indirect self-revelation of God in terms of a universal history can be exegetically supported in Scripture.

First, it can be said that knowledge of God is derived on the basis of His historical activity which includes both word and event. This can be seen in the exodus event. Before the exodus, Jahweh tells Moses what He is going to do so that after the event the people will look upon it as the confirmation of the prophetic word. "And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses" (Exodus 14:31). In Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, it was God's action in consuming Elijah's sacrifice with fire that proved His divinity. "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God'" (I Kings 18:39). Jethro (Exodus 18:11) and Naaman (II Kings 5:15) likewise both acknowledged the sovereignty and deity of Jahweh on the basis of what they saw and experienced.²

The basis for Israel's belief in the divinity of God is thus found in

¹Ibid., p. 5.

²Rolf Rendtorff, "The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel," Revelation as History, p. 42.

the testimony of their history. They have not arrived at this fundamental conviction through philosophical speculation, but rather, it is derived from their experience of history. Yehezkel Kaufmann points this out succinctly.

The religion of the Bible is not set forth philosophically. It is urged on Israel on the basis of history; the basic attributes of Israel's God are historical. The first of the Ten Commandments grounds YHWH's claim to be recognized as sole God on the fact that he brought Israel out of the land of Egypt. Israel believed in YHWH and Moses after the miracle of the Red Sea (Exod. 14:31). Israel will have lasting faith in YHWH and Moses because of the Sinaitic theophany (19:9). "Knowledge of God" derives from historical experience: "To you it was shown that you might know that YHWH is God, there is none else beside him" (Deut. 4:35). The Exodus, the theophany at Sinai, the miraculous conquest of Canaan are repeatedly put forth as proofs that "YHWH is God, there is none else" (e.g., Josh. 23; 24; Judg. 2:1-2, 7; 10:11 ff.; I Sam. 12:6 ff.; I Kings 8:16, 53). It is the basis of prophetic arguments as well (Amos 2:9 ff.; Hos. 13:4; Mic. 6:1 ff.; Ezek. 16; 20; and elsewhere). The eschatological events that will proclaim the glory of YHWH to all men are also portrayed in images drawn from the legends of the Exodus.¹

Likewise in the New Testament the decisive factor of revelation is its historical character. For example, the mere claims of Jesus to authority in themselves did not verify his unity with God. Rather, the function of the miracle stories was to demonstrate this unity. Ulrich Wilkens points this out:

The answer of Jesus to the direct question: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" receives the direct reply: "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the good news preached to them." All of this was expected in the course of events on the judgment day and was also taken as a sign of salvation in the new age. If these miracles were done by Jesus, then they point to Jesus as "the one who is to come." This is the rationale for the answer of Jesus: "Blessed is he who takes no offense at me." Thus, these miracles are understood as the rule of God which

¹Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, trans. and abridged by Mosche Greenberg (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 132.

is imminent in the company of his person, and they are therefore to be taken seriously.¹

What is being argued here is that revelation is not a direct self-revelation, but is indirect in the sense that God is known on the basis of his historical activity, which means that the God who reveals Himself is not to be directly identified with what is actually revealed. To be sure, the purpose of God's revelation is to make Himself known, but in so doing He actually communicates a content other than His pure presence. It is by reflecting on this "other content" that indirectly reveals who God is. What is to be further contended is that this indirect self-revelation of God is progressively expanded in the course of historical development until it reached its proleptic culmination in the Christ event. By "proleptic" is meant the self-revelation of God has reached its climax in the course of the historical process and will not be overtaken by any other event until the eschaton at which time the direct self-revelation of God will occur. In other words, "prolepsis" means the provisional fulfillment of what is to be expected in the future.

Thus, revelation, as Pannenberg describes it, is related to a "chain of tradition, which runs from the Old Testament through the apocalyptic literature and on to the proclamation of Jesus found in the first community and in Paul."² Finally, it is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead that is the self-vindication of the God of Israel to be the God of all men, for Jesus' substantial unity with God and his claim to divine authority can be

¹U. Wilkens, "The Understanding of Revelation within the History of Primitive Christianity," Revelation as History, p. 77.

²Revelation as History, p. 131.

seen to be true from the perspective of the resurrection event. This emphasis upon the continuity of historical events reaching back into the earliest beginnings of Israel's history stands in conscious opposition to the "new quest" for the historical Jesus which constructs its Christology on the pre-Easter Jesus and his claim to authority. Jesus' claim to divine authority can only rightly be understood both in the light of Israel's historical development and the divine confirmation of Jesus' unity with God by his resurrection. Paul succinctly points out this continuous chain of tradition in which the revelation of God reaches its climax in Jesus of Nazareth. In this respect, he speaks of (1) the historical continuity between Israel and Jesus, (2) his resurrection as confirmation of his deity, and (3) the universal goal of history in bringing salvation to all nations.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1-6).

Thus, it is not just single historical occurrences that completely reveal the essence of God, but rather, it is a complex of events which points to the revelation of God, culminating in Jesus Christ. "But when the time had fully come (*ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου*), God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

This understanding of revelation as being the result of a complex of events is clearly expressed by the Deuteronomist: "And because he loved

your fathers and chose their descendants after them, and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power, driving out before you nations greater and mightier than yourselves, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as at this day; know therefore this day, and lay it to your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other" (Deuteronomy 4:37-39). That God's plan for his people had been revealed to their "fathers," and the fact that they now were to live in the promised land constituted for them the revelation of God: "know therefore this day . . . that the Lord is God." Thus, the purpose of history was to make Jahweh known to the people of Israel.¹

It can be said that the self-vindication of the deity of Jahweh was considered to be complete after the occupation of the promised land,² but the events of the fall of Judah and the exile brought about a revision in Israel's understanding of revelation. Revelation was now moved to a future expectation. While the exile itself came as the result of disobedience on the part of Israel, as the prophets proclaimed, the present tribulation was only transitory, for in the end of their distress would come the salvation of Jahweh. Edmond Jacob shows that the apocalyptic expectation of the prophets is a new understanding of revelation in connection with the exodus and conquest. "The Exodus theme with its accent on deliverance had a new flowering when the events of the exile were considered as the final point of Yahweh's judgments."³ This is especially seen in Ezekiel and Isaiah who take

¹Edmond Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, trans. Arthur W. Heathcote and Philip T. Allcock (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1958), p. 190.

²Pannenberg, Revelation as History, p. 132.

³Jacob, p. 192.

up the theme of the Exodus and the occupation of the promised land. Jacob writes:

By emphasizing the wilderness theme and by introducing into it the idea of punishment, they reconcile judgment with the promise: Yahweh will once more lead Israel into the wilderness of the peoples and will perform a judgment there (Ez. 20.35), for, through the dangers that it presented, the wilderness was a place of temptation rather than an idyllic setting. Ezekiel sees his own role in the light of that of Moses: as a sentinel with the duty of warning the people, he will proclaim the coming of a new shepherd, a new David, who will take up on a vaster scale the work of Joshua. The people will be restored: just as in former times they had crossed the Red Sea and the Jordan, which in each case had been a passage through death--think of the lasting association of the sea with chaos--they will again pass from death to life (Ez. 36-37) and the Temple rebuilt in the centre of the country will be the guarantee of the dependability of this promise. So Ezekiel proclaims nothing which is not to be found already in the ancient credo, so convinced is he that the faithlessness of the people does not cancel the faithfulness of God.¹

Isaiah also speaks of the future deliverance of Israel as being a new Exodus which then will be followed with a new Covenant (Isaiah 54).²

What the prophetic expectation thus conceives as decisive is the future revelation of God. It will be the inauguration of a new aeon which will also reveal the meaning of the present. History thus progresses toward this end according to the plan of God. Jacob shows that, though the belief that God is the initiator of events is not uniquely a biblical teaching, the idea "that God binds himself to historical events to make them the vehicle of the manifestation of his purpose" is a characteristic feature of revelation. Jacob writes:

While the powers of the gods of the nations cease at the frontiers of their territory, Yahweh directs universal history, and a declaration like that of Amos that Yahweh directs not only the destinies of Israel, but also that of the Philistines and of the Ethiopians, provides a good illustration of the specific power

¹Ibid., p. 193. ²Ibid.

of Israel's God, all of whose potentialities were developed by the prophets. Yahweh is not only a powerful God but a wise sovereign who leaves no place either for dualism or for chance: all is initiated and willed by him (Amos 3.6; Is. 47.7; Lam. 3.37), which does not mean that history is only the unfolding of a plan fixed in advance, for Yahweh holds the destinies of men in his hands, not in the way of a marionette operator, but by leaving them with the freedom of decision; and so history always appears to be a drama in which the two protagonists, God and men, call one another, flee from one another and finally become reconciled.¹

The ultimate purpose of God's historical activity is to make himself known to all peoples (Isaiah 43:9-10), to all "flesh" (Isaiah 49:26). "I gird you [Israel]. . . that men may know . . . that there is none besides me" (Isaiah 45:5-6). "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40:5).²

What is thus especially emphasized in the prophetic expectation is the extending of Heilsgeschichte into universal history. Thus, it is at the end of the present aeon that the essence of God shall be revealed, for then he shall come to inaugurate his kingship on earth so that it can be said that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9; Hab. 2:14).

It is this eschatological inauguration of the Kingdom of God on earth which can be said to be identical with the full knowledge of God. Pannenberg writes:

Placing the manifestation of God at the end of history means that the biblical God has, so to speak, his own history. That is, the historical event of revelation cannot be thought of in an outward way as revealing the essence of God. It is not so much the course of history as it is the end of history that is at one with the essence of God. But insofar as the end presupposes the course of history, because it is the perfection

¹Ibid., pp. 188-189.

²Rolf Rendtorff, Revelation as History, pp. 45-46.

of it, then also the course of history belongs in essence to the revelation of God, for history receives its unity from its goal. Although the essence of God is from everlasting to everlasting the same, it does have a history in time. Thus it is that Jahweh first becomes the God of all mankind in the course of the history that he has brought to be.¹

The significance of the resurrection of Jesus can be seen in the fact that the eschatological expectation of God's coming Kingdom on earth has already been pre-actualized in Jesus of Nazareth. This indicates that neither "the realized eschatology" of Dodd or "the consistent eschatology" of Albert Schweitzer can be seen to be the exclusive interpretation of Jesus' eschatological preaching. Rather, eschatology includes an "already" and "not-yet."² In the kerygma of Jesus is proclaimed the "already" of the Kingdom of God. The central proclamation of Jesus' kerygma was the imminent Kingdom of God: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matthew 6:33). Thus, the eschatological message of God's imminent reign formed the encompassing thrust of Jesus' preaching. Whatever attitude his hearers took toward his message and his claim to divine authority would ultimately determine their destiny. But, this "already" of the Kingdom of God stands in tension with the "not yet" aspect. The apocalyptic expectation had pointed to the earthly rule of the Kingdom of God, but such a political development did not happen. For this reason, Pannenberg points out that "without the resurrection of Jesus, his message would have turned out to be a fanatical audacity."³ It was, in fact, because of his resurrection that Jesus' message concerning the expectation of the near end was vindicated, for

¹Revelation as History, pp. 133-134.

²Cf. Cullmann, Salvation as History, p. 202.

³Theology as History, p. 116.

this end was proleptically fulfilled in his own person. In this way it can be seen that the "not yet" of the Kingdom of God still remains to be fulfilled in the eschaton, when "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11: 15).

We shall now summarize what has been said or implied concerning the relationship between revelation and history. (1) The concept of revelation is here defined as the self-disclosure of God, i.e., man's knowledge of God has its origin in God's disclosure of Himself. (2) Revelation as history is an indirect disclosure of God, i.e., the content of revelation in history does not directly coincide with the essence of God. This means that the Revealer and what is revealed do not have an exact correspondence. Rather, the content of revelation tells us something about God, and only indirectly who God is. (3) There are as many revelations of God as there are divine events. (4) Heilsgeschichte takes on a universal character, for all history is seen to be moving toward the eschaton at which time the full direct revelation of God shall be visible. (5) Insofar as Jesus' substantial unity with God can be seen on the basis of Jesus' claim to divine authority and his resurrection from the dead, he is the pre-actualization of the eschatological future. Thus, those who respond to his message and abandon their own self-sufficiency in favor of his lordship have a share in the coming Kingdom of God in the present. (6) Insofar as the eschaton has been anticipated in Jesus' person, i.e., insofar as Jesus is God, he possesses absolute significance for all mankind. This means no further revelation can overtake the Christ event so long as history is moving toward the eschaton. This suggests that all history is to be judged in the light of the Christ event. (7) It is the end of history

that can be said to be one with the essence of God, i.e., God will be fully known in a direct self-disclosure in the eschaton. This points out that the course of history constitutes an indirect self-revelation, while the end of history is a direct self-revelation.

That the Scriptures conceive of God as having acted concretely in history as a course of events is generally recognized. That this historical activity is the central focus of Christian faith has in more recent times appeared to be problematic. To argue as it has been done in this chapter that history is a primary medium of God's self-revelation thus indicates a different set of ontological and epistemological presuppositions from those theologies which pursue the Kantian dictum that there can be no degree of proof of God's divinity on the basis of His historical activity. This different set of metaphysical presuppositions, it is believed, is in accord both with the idea of a historical revelation and with the nature of reality itself. The subsequent chapters will thus address themselves to these ontological and epistemological considerations with the final chapter projecting the idea of a theology of universal history, which will then further develop the concept of an indirect self-revelation.

CHAPTER XI

THE ONTOLOGY OF HISTORY

The central epistemological problem is this question--what is the basis of knowledge? To ask this question presupposes that there is "something" to be known, and thus it shows that the epistemological problem cannot be divorced from the question of ontology. What is the nature of this "something" to be known? What is its truth? Is its truth metaphysical or empirical? The attempt to reckon with this question accounts for the repeated controversy in philosophical reflection over the relation between appearance and reality. In a previous section, it was pointed out that in the rise of modern science and modern philosophy truth was defined in terms of human subjectivity, i.e., truth was reduced to the control of man. The result of this anthropological narrowing down of the criterion of truth ultimately pushed the question of ontology into the background. In the natural sciences, A. N. Whitehead has sought to re-instate the ontological question. He charges that the scientific movement which began in 1600 has been anti-intellectual, for "it was a return to the contemplation of brute fact, and it was based on a recoil from the inflexible rationality of medieval thought."¹ He further writes: "It has remained predominantly an anti-rationalistic movement, based upon a naive faith."² Whitehead thus says that science "has never cared to justify its

¹A. N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, p. 12.

²Ibid., pp. 23-24.

faith or to explain its meaning."¹ This elimination of the ontological question from science resulted in "scientific materialism." Whitehead writes:

There persists, however, throughout the whole period the fixed scientific cosmology which presupposes the ultimate fact of an irreducible brute matter, or material, spread throughout space in a flux of configurations. In itself such a material is senseless, valueless, purposeless. It just does what it does do, following a fixed routine imposed by external relations which do not spring from the nature of its being. It is this assumption that I call "scientific materialism."²

Likewise, Heidegger has protested against the idea of brutum factum that dominates technology and the positive sciences. He shows that the ontical sciences have severely restricted the nature of truth because they are not ontologically oriented. It is not enough to interrogate scientifically beings as such, but what is required is to "back track" to the primordial investigation of Being, and thus overcome "the domineering nature of modern technology."³

In the rise of modern philosophy with Descartes, the classical distinction between appearance and reality was intensified into res extensa and res cogitans. This dualistic definition of reality resulted in a dualistic epistemology, i.e., the dualism of the absolute certainty of metaphysical truth and the relative validity of empirical knowledge. Thus, truth came to be defined in terms of not only the conformity of what-is and what-is-thought, but a known conformity. Being (reality) was brought under man's control and whatever truth of reality could be ascertained resulted from what man as a thinking subject knows according to the criteriological ideal of his self-certainty.

This elimination of the priority of ontology is further carried out

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 25. ³Supra, p. 105.

in British empiricism. Whereas Cartesian rationalism polarized metaphysical certainty over against the incertitude of empirical knowledge, British empiricism located the nature of truth in the sensible world and denied the existence of innate ideas. It asserted that all our ideas come from sense perception. Empiricism also embraced a metaphysical agnosticism by denying that our ideas of primary qualities correspond to the primary qualities themselves.

Both rationalism and empiricism presuppose a dualistic epistemology with rationalism embracing a skepticism concerning empirical knowledge and empiricism being agnostic toward the knowledge of what underlies sense experience. This dualism thus subordinates the ontological priority of truth to an anthropocentric determination of truth, i.e., man becomes the arbiter of truth. Hume not only eliminated the ontological priority of truth, but denied ontology itself. Nothing exists except isolated impressions of the mind. He thus distinguished between relations of the mind (i.e., ideas which the mind connects together, though this connection has no "real" basis) and matters of fact.

Kant sought to synthesize rationalism and empiricism in his philosophy of critical idealism. He asserted that rationalism correctly acknowledged the ontological basis of knowledge, but it wrongly attempted to deduce knowledge from metaphysical speculation. In this respect, empiricism correctly asserted the priority of sense experience over against metaphysical speculation, but it wrongly called this first-hand contact with the sensible world knowledge. Rather, knowledge, for Kant, is the correspondence of our empirical intuitions and the a priori conceptions of the understanding. Thus, Kant distinguished between noumenal and phenomenal reality, the thing-in-itself

and the thing-as-it-appears. For man, truth is limited to phenomenal reality. This is to say, truth is human subjectivity in the sense that what one knows is only reality as it "seems" to man, not what reality is in itself. Kant thus also makes man the arbiter of truth by his insisting that knowledge is what man subjectively conceives it to be and not what it is objectively. To be sure, Kant asserts the objective validity of our subjective knowledge, but it still remains merely subjective truth. However, Kant's insight that the conceptions of the understanding are related to the appearance (phenomenon) of reality (noumenon) "could lead to thinking of appearanceness as the fundamental characteristic of being [reality] itself," as Pannenberg has pointed out.¹ This suggests that access to reality lies in its appearance. This logical priority of appearance over reality is not to advocate a superficial empiricism which accepts "bare facts" as the epistemological access to reality. Rather, it is to say that the essence of reality is its appearance.

Hegel intended to move beyond Kant's critical idealism by showing that the knowledge of appearance is knowledge of reality. In this respect, he rejected the idea of the opposition between idealism and realism. Knowledge of appearance is only pseudo-knowledge unless it is likewise knowledge of reality. Both idealism and realism are correct. Whatever is exists. It is the essence of reality to exist. In affirming the objectivity of knowledge, he is not speaking of an identity of subject and object, but a reciprocity. He is not saying that A is A, but rather he is saying that A is B, while at the same time A is more than B. It is in this respect that Hegel speaks of the "dialectic moment," i.e., that knowledge is the synthesis of subject and

¹Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 130.

object. But he does not mean that this synthesis (or dialectic moment) is a "coincidence of opposites."¹ Rather, he is saying that there is a reciprocal relationship between appearance and reality. Not only does appearance refer to the essence of reality appearing in it, but it is also the essence of reality to appear. Hegel writes:

Essence must appear. Seeming (das Scheinen) is the definiteness, through which essence is not mere being, but essence, and fully developed seeming is appearance. Essence is thus not behind or beyond appearance, but existence is appearance by virtue of the fact that it is essence which exists.²

Pannenberg has pointed out that though Hegel was able to show the reciprocity of appearance and reality, he nevertheless conceived of the logical precedence of reality over appearance, despite his insight that the essence only comes into view for the first time in its appearance.³ Thus, it can be seen that for Hegel appearance was a copy of reality, for appearance was seen to be the self-alienation of essence. In this way, Hegel's logic (metaphysics) succumbs to the Parmenidian concept of the timelessness of Being. Pannenberg writes:

Since the Hegelian idea is thought of as timeless, logical structure--being therein similar to the timeless being of Parmenides--appearance in Hegel's philosophy (contrary to his insight into the reciprocity of the relation of essence and appearance) is again reduced to the status of the nonessential. Instead of--as Hegel asserted--the idea existing only in the appearances, it in fact finds in the appearances of religion or history merely subsequent illustrations of its fixed, logical structure.⁴

¹Benedetto Croce, What Is Living and What Is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel, p. 21.

²Enzyklopädie, p. 131, cited by Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 129.

³Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 130.

⁴Ibid.

Heidegger's central philosophical aim has been to "back track" to the primordial foundation of truth. In this respect, he has intended to emphasize the ontological priority of truth, i.e., truth as the self-disclosure of Being. This means for Heidegger that truth is determined on the basis of the appearing of Being, not according to a human grasping of truth in terms of a known conformity of Being and beings. This is to say, reality impresses and imposes its own truth upon man, and not vice versa.

As far as Heidegger is concerned, truth as the self-disclosure of Being is a universal definition, i.e., it applies to all branches of knowledge whether it be religion, art, science, or philosophy. Thus, Heidegger overcomes in principle the one-sided existentialism of his Being and Time.¹ As it has been pointed out in connection with Kant and Hegel, this emphasis upon truth as the appearing of Being is a move in the right direction toward overcoming a dualistic epistemology. It points out that Being (the essence of what is) has a reciprocal relationship to beings (existent entities). Beings (entities) are what they are because Being has made its appearance. On the other hand, beings as the appearance of Being are not mere semblances, but are in fact Being coming into existence. Though there is this reciprocity between Being and beings, beings are not in themselves the same as Being, for Being cannot be fully expressed in its appearance. Thus, Heidegger speaks of Being concealing itself while at the same time disclosing itself. The significance of what Heidegger is affirming is that the knowledge of appearance is not merely a subjective certainty, but is an objective knowledge, based on the appearance of reality. Thus, appearance and reality are not fundamentally different, though they are not identical.

¹Supra, p. 129.

If reality really expresses itself in appearance, then the application of this insight to the epistemology of history can be seen in the fact that it is the nature of historical reality to be known as appearance in the human consciousness. This means what one knows of historical reality is objective, i.e., its truth is disclosed to the mind instead of the mind arbitrarily making a value judgment on what it experiences. This is a clear rejection of the neo-Kantian distinction between value and fact. Such a juxtaposition of fact and value results in a splitting up of human consciousness and is intolerable as a basis for historical knowledge. Even as Whitehead has rejected "scientific materialism" because it dissects time into "simple location" without due regard to the prehensive character of space-time (thus resulting in the "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness"),¹ even so a positivistic historiography which would dissect historical time into sections of bare facts misunderstands the real nature of historical reality. Historical reality is not something that can be divorced from its appearance, i.e., events which are seen in their total context give rise to their own interpretation. In this way, it can be said that "value" constitutes the very Being of historical reality. This further means that the idea of a brute fact does not exist except as a mere abstraction, for the significance (or value) of an event is its historical reality.

Collingwood's distinction between the inner and outer aspects of historical events illustrates what is being contended here. The outside of an event relates to "bodies and their movements," as, for example, Caesar's crossing the Rubicon or the spilling of his blood on the floor of the senate chamber. The inside of an event relates to thought, as, for example, Caesar's

¹Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, p. 74.

defiance of Republican law or the conflict with his political opponents concerning constitutional policy. The historian is not merely concerned with either aspect. Rather, "he is investigating not mere events . . . but actions, and an action is the unity of the outside and inside of an event."¹ Thus, the task of the historian, after having discovered the outside of an event, is "to think himself into this action, to discover the thought of its agent,"² for ultimately "all history is the history of thought."³ In this way of differentiating between the inside and outside of historical events, it can be seen that Collingwood defines historical knowledge as inferential, i.e., history is imaginatively re-enacting the past by means of data given at hand. History, thus, is not partly knowledge of facts and partly knowledge of eternal truths, but it "is wholly a reasoned knowledge of what is transient and concrete."⁴

Henrich Ott in his essay, "The Historical Jesus and the Ontology of History,"⁵ has pointed out the inadequacy of a positivistic historiography which fails to acknowledge this inseparable connection of the inside and the outside of events. By positivism, Ott means the attempt to interpret "historical reality as a complex of 'naked facts' which a person possessing historical knowledge can control by securing them as facts on the basis of sources."⁶ Such was the presupposition of the life-of-Jesus theologians in the nineteenth century, even though this presupposition may not have functioned

¹Collingwood, p. 213. ²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 215. ⁴Ibid., p. 234.

⁵The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, ed. Carl Braaten and Roy Harrisville, pp. 142-171.

⁶Ibid., p. 152.

as a conscious axiom.¹

Ott shows that such an axiom lies in the background of Bultmann's Jesus and the Word, though his primary interest was in the question of historical knowledge and not historical being as such. Bultmann's historiography presupposed a dualism of objectively verifiable historical data (ascertained by the neutral observer) and the significance of this data. This can be seen when Bultmann says that the neutral historian who objectifies the past misses the real nature of history.² Bultmann thus allows the possibility of history being "objectified" in terms of isolated and detached data as though facts of history could be determined independently of their significance, while at the same time he calls for an understanding of history in terms of its significance. In this respect, Bultmann says his historiography is not governed by "what happened," but by what the "purpose" of history is and the "demand on us" it makes.³

Ott has put this question to Bultmann: "How does it happen that one part of historical reality eludes objective observation and the other not?"⁴ Ott points out the inadequacy of the thesis that historical reality is in part open to objective verification and part to existential encounter. He wants to overcome this aspect of Bultmann's dualistic definition of historical reality.⁵ To be sure, Ott does not charge Bultmann with pursuing a positivistic investigation of history, but "certain remnants of the view that Bultmann wants to overcome still persist in his thinking."⁶

¹Ibid., pp. 150, 152, 168.

²Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, p. 5. ³Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁴Ott, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, p. 146.

⁵Ibid., p. 150. ⁶Ibid., p. 151.

Instead of setting up a dualistic epistemology, Ott argues for the original unity of event and significance. He writes: "Every being which exists historically, perhaps any being which exists at all, is as such significant. It is significant as such; that is, its significance is not only one of its many attributes, but its significance constitutes its very being."¹ In thus showing that the significance of reality is its very being, Ott means reality itself impresses and imposes itself upon the human consciousness. This means that one cannot attach whatever meaning he likes to an event, but that the essence of the event exists in its significance. "This does not happen, however, in the sense that as the knower I can depotentiate, register, or put the real at my disposal: rather it happens in such a way that in becoming significant what exists overwhelmingly forces and impresses itself upon me."²

In thus rejecting a dualistic definition of reality as it is found in Bultmann who "allows the validity of both types of historical knowledge to stand side by side--the establishing of facts and encounters with history,"³ Ott shows that positivistic historiography reduces historical time to timelessness. "According to the positivistic view of reality time is understood as a line which can be surveyed. The individual points of time have their fixed place but have no extension. Like every past event, their being is something that is settled and finished. The facts, the bruta facta, can be established in this isolation."⁴ On the other hand, Ott holds to the view of reality that nothing in the past is finalized. "Nothing historical is finished and settled; rather everything historical extends its being--that is,

¹Ibid., p. 157. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 159.

⁴Ibid., pp. 158-159.

its significance--into time, into the future and into the present time of every knower."¹

Wolfhart Pannenberg has shown that this historical character of truth has its source in the Old Testament itself, which stands in fundamental disagreement with the classical Greek idea of truth.² Truth for the Greek was timeless in contrast to the Israelite view of the historicity of truth. The Hebrew word for truth is emeth. It means a "standing firm, establishing, supporting, bearing."³ It does not refer to timelessness, but rather it is a recurring event, thereby indicating its reliability. A man's word is true, for example, if it shows itself to be reliable. Thus, futurity is a fundamental feature of the Hebrew meaning of emeth. Hans von Soden shows that truth for the Israelite was a "reality (which) is regarded as history . . . not something that in some way or another lies under or behind things, and is discovered by penetrating into their interior depths; rather, truth is that which will show itself in the future."⁴

The Greek idea of truth is ἀ-κρύβεια, unconcealment, i.e., a letting-be-seen. Since the senses prevent the genuine "unconcealment" of what is, logos as rational thought must reach behind the appearance to the unchanging reality. Just as Being is unchanging, so is truth. This unchangeable unity of truth and what-is (Being) is distinguished from the changing

¹Ibid., p. 159.

²Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology, trans. G. H. Kehm (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1971), Vol. II, pp. 1-27, from which is the ensuing exegesis.

³Ibid., p. 3.

⁴Was ist Wahrheit? Vom geschichtlichen Begriff der Wahrheit, Marburger akademische Reden 46 (Marburg, 1927), cited in Basic Questions, p. 3.

multiplicity of appearances. This timelessness of truth and Being is thus opposed to the Israelite emeth, which emphasizes the historical manifestation of faithfulness and constancy. Thus, the happenedness of truth, i.e., the event which constitutes the revelation of what-is, is of no material importance for the Greek. On the contrary, truth is the enduring, unchanging, timeless attribute of what-is. Truth is the knowledge of what-is, and what-is is in no way different from truth.

For the Israelite, the essence of truth likewise was a knowledge of the enduring and constant, but it was knowledge based upon the continuing experience of the faithfulness of God in his historical manifestation. It is this historical aspect of truth that stands over against the Greek concept of logos (as rational thought) through which the truth of Being was uncovered. For the Israelite, one could attain stability in the midst of the flux of change through entrusting himself to God. Here faith (he^emin) and truth (emeth) are closely related, as it is suggested by their having the same stem. That one attains stability through trust points out that truth will be seen to be reliable from the future. However, this future verification of truth does not eliminate the present knowledge of truth. That the truth of Jahweh is the unchanging and constant reality is not axiomatic, however. It is not a logical necessity from the standpoint of thought. That-which-is, is not an abstract identity for the Israelite, but rather the constancy of God is known on the basis of his historical activity. "He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy, they are established for ever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness" (Psalm 111:6-8). Even the created order has its unity in the truth of

God: "Thy faithfulness endures to all generations; thou hast established the earth, and it stands fast" (Psalm 119:90). Pannenberg writes: "All constancy, whether it be in the orders of nature, in the life of nations, or in the individual, is embraced by the truth of God and is grounded in it."¹

What this indicates is that truth is historically mediated insofar as man's knowledge is concerned. In contrast to the Greek quest for the timeless unity of truth and true Being stands the Old Testament insistence upon the historicity of truth, i.e., that the truth of what-is is mediated historically. However, the Greek idea of truth with its emphasis upon what-is is not excluded in the biblically-derived meaning of reality, but is absorbed and modified. In fact, that the Greek defined Being (what-is) as the constant and enduring reality explains why Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity linked the God of the Bible with the Greek idea of true Being.

However, the Greek dualism of true Being and changing sense-appearance is overcome in the biblical meaning of truth. Instead of God as true Being described in terms of timelessness, he reveals his truth historically, which truth is not exhausted in the present but always points to the future. This means the biblical God is distinct from his creation as one who acts freely and contingently upon it in contrast to the Greek understanding of true Being in terms of timeless cosmos. In this way, the Israelite view holds to the permanency of truth (namely, God) while at the same including those aspects which are rejected in the Greek view (as in Parmenides and Plato)--i.e. changing sense-appearance. However, since thought is distinguished from sense-experience, the problem arises how the gap between the two aspects are bridged. This question again raises the problem whether truth is something

¹Ibid., p. 9.

that comes under man's control or whether truth is the passive reception of what presents itself to the senses. Perhaps the question is not properly framed in this way, for in either case one may fall either into a dualistic definition of reality in which one can only know what merely appears in contrast to what really is, or else one may fall into the abyss of Hume's metaphysical agnosticism.

The Old Testament idea of the Imago Dei suggests an answer. As Nicolas of Cusa pointed out, man creates ideas while God in His thought creates things. But since man is created in the image of God who created the world of things, then human ideas must be like the things God created. It follows from this then that God is the necessary presupposition for guaranteeing the unity of what is and what is thought.¹ In this respect, truth is neither the passive receptivity of sense experience or the anthropocentric control of truth. Rather, it must be said that truth is the work of man's creative rationality (i.e., he creates ideas) which conforms with extramental reality which is the work of God's creative rationality.

Ott has spoken of this interconnection between thought and being by pointing out that it is the nature of historical reality to create a picture-like character. He writes:

We must state that our experience of reality always has to do with "pictures" and never with "facts" (we use the term "facts" consistently in the sense of bruta facta). Reality always impresses itself upon us through pictures, perhaps in different ways to different people at different times. As it impresses itself upon us it creates within us an exposition, an interpretation, an explanation, a point of view in the widest sense; this does not even need to be conscious. When we receive an impression of reality we create for ourselves a picture of it. In this sense Nietzsche's dictum against positivism is justified: "There are

¹Ibid., pp. 16-17.

no such things as facts, but only interpretations."¹

Ott, however, points out that this picture-like character of historical reality is not a mere subjective picture. It is not a picture that "we create . . . for ourselves. Instead, reality itself is the first to impress itself upon us in the form of pictures."² These pictures are created simultaneously when reality is experienced. In this respect, "the pictures are primary; the facts are a secondary abstraction."³

Ott is not suggesting that knowledge is a naive apprehension of what imposes itself upon the human consciousness. He shows that "there are levels of phenomenality or of picture reality."⁴ Thus, it is necessary to get back to the original event to what really happened. But in so doing, one still gets a picture, not a "brute fact." "Thus we remain within the horizon of pictures and manifestations and cannot escape it."⁵

Ott does not intend to suggest that picture-reality is a mere copy of reality, but that the picture of reality is reality itself. Or, in terms previously suggested, appearance is reality itself coming into appearance. Ott illustrates this in connection with Kähler's thesis that the picture of the biblical Christ is the real Jesus over against the so-called historical Jesus of the life-of-Jesus biographers of the nineteenth century. For Kähler, knowledge of the biblical Christ was both theological knowledge and historical knowledge. Ott writes:

For Kähler the concept of the "picture" does not mean a copy or a duplicate. Instead, by the "picture of Jesus Christ" Kähler means nothing but Jesus himself in the act of his self-manifestation. The picture of Jesus in the apostolic witness is the unique impression which Jesus' appearance made upon the minds of

¹The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, pp. 160-161.

²Ibid., p. 161. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 166. ⁵Ibid.

his disciples. This picture is Jesus himself as he influenced his disciples, as he influences us also through their witness, and as he has appeared and still appears to the church in every age through the mediation of the Word--but really Jesus himself then and not only some opinion about him!¹

Ott, recognizing that there are levels of picture reality, attempts to overcome the problem of endless relativism by resorting back to Kant's Ding an sich as a limiting concept. In this way, he reckons with the multiple and inconclusive pictures created by encounters with reality.² Instead of falling back on Kant's dualistic definition of reality (which Ott so diligently attempts to escape), would it not be better to distinguish between the eternal truths of reason and the contingent truths of fact as Leibniz has done. While the eternal truths of reason are logically necessary but at the same time are only conditional (i.e., they only say a thing is true on the condition that it exists), the contingent truths of fact refer to knowledge which reason has inferred on the basis of repeated experiences of reality. This is to say, pure reason is governed by the principle of contradiction (i.e., something cannot be true and false at the same time), while contingent truths of fact are governed by the law of sufficient reason.³ In thus speaking of the latter truths, Leibniz speaks of degrees of probability and contingency without splitting reality into the Kantian subjective and objective level. Thus, to speak of the contingent truths of fact is more in line with what has been discussed above in regard to the inseparable connection of appearance and reality.

¹Ibid., pp. 159-160. ²Ibid., p. 167.

³Reason as defined by Leibniz does not refer to a faculty of innate ideas and principles, but the ability to connect ideas. Supra, pp. 32 et passim.

CHAPTER XII

HISTORY AND HERMENEUTICS

In the previous chapter, the ontology of history (i.e., historical being itself) was the subject of consideration. Attention shall now be focused on the general theme of history and hermeneutics, which also includes the subject of epistemology as well. That hermeneutics itself has come to include the question of epistemology dates back to Schleiermacher, as it will be pointed out. Traditionally history and hermeneutics formed separate studies. Hermeneutics was related to biblical exegesis, while historical-critical study confined itself to ascertaining the nature of the events lying behind the texts, as well as the historical development of the texts. This distinction between history and hermeneutics corresponds to the twofold problem which historical relativity raises for Christian faith--how can an historically conditioned event of the past which cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty be the point of departure for Christian faith?

The hermeneutical task of bridging the distance between the past text and the present age, on the one hand, and the historical-critical task of evaluating the probabilities of the events lying behind the text, on the other hand, will be seen in this chapter to form a single and not a separate theme.

A. Schleiermacher: The Psychological Interpretation

Wilhelm Dilthey has defined hermeneutics as the "art of understanding"

which "has its centre in the exegesis or interpretation of the remains of human existence which are contained in writings."¹ Prior to Schleiermacher, hermeneutics had been restricted to exegesis and a critical reconstruction of literary documents. It was first systematically formulated with the Sophists and especially with Aristotle in his Rhetoric and Poetics. It consisted of formal rules of literary interpretation which the early Greeks called grammar and rhetoric, and in the course of its development hermeneutics came to include various aspects--grammatical, historical, aesthetic-rhetorical, and impartial interpretation.² It was not until Schleiermacher that it was fully seen that the goal of philology in its interpretation of literary documents could not be successfully achieved until these formal and logical rules included the general question of epistemology.³ This epistemological inquiry requisite for hermeneutics Schleiermacher called an "art" of interpretation.

Schleiermacher's interest in hermeneutics came about as a result of his attempt to replace the theory of biblical inspiration which he believed had ignored philological study.⁴ His hermeneutics also developed in connection

¹Dilthey, "Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1961), V, 319, trans. H. A. Hodges, "Selected Passages from Wilhelm Dilthey," Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949), p. 127.

²Dilthey, "Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 321, 327. Cf. Hodges, p. 25.

³"Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 327-328.

⁴Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Problem of Language in Schleiermacher's Hermeneutic," Schleiermacher as Contemporary, ed. Robert W. Funk (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), pp. 69, 83-84. Cf. Schleiermacher, Hermeneutik, ed. Heinz Kimmerle (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1959), pp. 55, 93.

with his work of critically reconstructing and ascertaining the authenticity of historical documents, e.g., in regard to the Platonic and pseudo-Platonic dialogues. He came to see in the course of this work that criticism must be supplemented with the art of understanding, that the true understanding of historical documents demands more than a mere following of certain rigid rules of grammar and philology.¹ Thus, Schleiermacher stresses that hermeneutics and criticism are inseparably related so that the practice of one presupposes the practice of the other.²

To be sure, Schleiermacher did not intend to vitiate the significance of the grammatical and philological presuppositions. In this respect, he stresses the following conditions as the basic rules of hermeneutics: (1) a knowledge of languages,³ (2) a knowledge of the subject matter,⁴ (3) a knowledge of the historical conditioning of the language and the author,⁵ (4) a knowledge of the author's style of writing and linguistic usage,⁶ (5) a knowledge of the individual parts in the light of their whole context,⁷ and (6) a special talent for discerning the nature of man.⁸

In addition to these basic rules of philological study, his "analysis of understanding" points to the need of a psychological interpretation in accomplishing the goal of philology.⁹ This psychological interpretation

¹Dilthey, "Einleitung in Die Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 95. Cf. R. R. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), pp. 77-78.

²Schleiermacher, Hermeneutik, p. 79. ³Ibid., pp. 82, 103, 107.

⁴Ibid., p. 79. ⁵Ibid., pp. 90ff. ⁶Ibid., p. 108.

⁷Ibid., pp. 89, 91, 95ff. ⁸Ibid., p. 82.

⁹"Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 327.

means that one must re-enact the selfhood of the author.¹ Schleiermacher speaks of this re-enactment as a divination,² "a right feeling."³ It is this psychological interpretation that makes hermeneutics an art rather than a mere scientific study.⁴ The underlying presupposition of the psychological interpretation is that what is peculiar to any one individual is capable of being subjectively appropriated by another because of their common receptiveness to the same peculiarity. In this way, it can be seen that one can transform himself into a corresponding subjective feeling of another, thus re-enacting in the present what was the selfhood of another.⁵

When all these various aspects of the hermeneutical task are accomplished (i.e., the grammatical-historical, the psychological, etc.), then it is possible for the interpreter to understand the author even better than the author understood himself. Schleiermacher claims the interpreter has this advantage, for he brings to conscious awareness much of what was not consciously known by the author himself.⁶

B. Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason

Wilhelm Dilthey further pursued Schleiermacher's hermeneutics and extended it to fields of inquiry other than literary documents. For example, he pointed out that there was an archaeological hermeneutics, or a hermeneutics

¹R. R. Niebuhr, p. 79.

²Schleiermacher, Hermeneutik, pp. 87, 109.

³Ibid., p. 91.

⁴Ibid., p. 82. Cf. R. R. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion, p. 85.

⁵Schleiermacher, Hermeneutik, p. 109.

⁶Ibid., pp. 87, 91.

whose objects were paintings, statues, etc.¹

Dilthey points out that it was Schleiermacher who first extended hermeneutics beyond mere "philological virtuosity" to a "philosophical possibility."² He thus acknowledges his indebtedness to Schleiermacher and points out that all subsequent development in the art of interpretation depends on Schleiermacher's re-orientation of philology toward epistemology.³

Dilthey likewise shows that exegesis involves more than the logical processes of a grammatical-historical interpretation.⁴ But neither does the epistemological foundation of the natural sciences which has developed in modern times successfully broach the problem of literary interpretation. The method of the natural sciences relates to what one perceives of natural objects. It delineates between reality and appearance, the thing-as-it-is and the thing-as-it-appears. What we know of phenomenon is "a mere reflection in consciousness of something real."⁵ Dilthey further writes: "The whole natural world turns out to be a mere shadow cast by a reality hidden from us."⁶

On the other hand, Dilthey says the human sciences are concerned with what is distinctly human, not mere physical objects. Their epistemological inquiry is concerned with the reality as-it-really-is, not as-it-appears.

Dilthey writes:

¹"Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 319, trans. Hodges, 127.

²"Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 329.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 327.

⁵"Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 317 trans. Hodges, p. 125.

⁶"Einleitung in Die Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, I, xviii, trans. Hodges, p. 113.

For we wish to contemplate reality, and the course of our epistemological enquiry will show that reality as it is, in its actual being, unaltered by an medium, exists for us only in this world of the mind.¹

Thus, the specific task of historiography according to Dilthey is to ascertain what is objective knowledge in the strictest sense of the word (i.e., a knowledge of what really is insofar as the world of the mind is concerned), while the natural sciences (according to Kant's epistemology) only attain a subjective knowledge (i.e., a knowledge of what merely appears, not what really is).

The basis for objective knowledge in historiography lies in the fact that man in the primary sense of the word is history, i.e., a historic being. Dilthey writes: "So now appears the first significant moment for the solution of the epistemology of history: the first condition for the possibility of the historical sciences lies in the fact I myself am a historic being, that the one who investigates history is the same one who makes history."² He further writes: "We are first historic beings before we are observers of history, and only because we are the former do we become the latter."³ Since the mind can understand what it has created, man can thus know history as-it-really-is.⁴ It is this objectivity of knowledge that points out the advantage

¹"Einleitung in Die Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, I, 91, trans. Hodges, p. 137.

²"Der Aufbau Der Geschichtlichen Welt in Den Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 278. Translation mine.

³Ibid. Translation mine.

⁴Ibid., p. 148. This emphasis upon the objectivity of historical knowledge (i.e., history is what man creates and what he creates he can know as it really is) very closely corresponds to the ideas of Bayle (supra, p. 18), Vico (supra, p. 28), and Hegel (supra, 98).

of the human sciences over the natural sciences.¹

Both the natural and human sciences are concerned with natural objects. However, there is one great divergence between them. The natural sciences are concerned with objects which are produced independently of the activity of the mind, whereas, the human sciences are concerned with natural objects only insofar as they relate to the human consciousness.² The natural sciences distinguish between reality and appearance, while the human sciences distinguish between inner and outer.³ This inner and outer aspect of the human sciences points to the inseparable connection between man and the physical world. This is to say that insofar as the human sciences are concerned man does not exist as an independent subject over against the world as an independent object. Dilthey is thus rejecting the subject-object schema of the natural sciences as being inappropriate for the human sciences. This can be seen when he writes:

The historical world is always there, and the individual observes it not only from the outside, but he is interwoven with it. . . . It is not possible to isolate these relationships.⁴

That man in the primary sense of the word is history delimits the task of the historian--to unfold what are the possibilities of human existence. In this respect, hermeneutics plays a vital role, for man's happiness depends in a large measure upon his understanding of himself in the light of what others are and have been. Without this historical understanding, man's

¹"Die Entstehung Der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 317, trans. Hodges, p. 125.

²"Der Aufbau Der Geschichtlichen Welt in Den Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 148, 277-278.

³Ibid., p. 148. Cf. Hodges, p. 35.

⁴Ibid., VII, 277. Translation mine.

understanding of himself and his possibilities are severely restricted.

Dilthey writes:

The mind-body unit of life is known to itself through the same double relationship of lived experience and understanding, it is aware of itself in the present, it rediscovers itself in memory as something that once was; but when it tries to hold fast and to apprehend its states, when it turns its attention upon itself, the narrow limits of such an introspective method of self-knowledge make themselves felt. Only from his actions, his fixed utterances, his effects upon others, can man learn about himself; thus he learns to know himself only by the round-about way of understanding. What we once were, how we developed and became what we are, we learn from the way in which we acted, the plans which we once adopted, the way in which we made ourselves felt in our vocation, from old dead letters, from judgments on us which were spoken long ago. In short, it is through the process of understanding that life in its depths is made clear to itself, and on the other hand we understand ourselves and others only when we transfer our own lived experience into every kind of expression of our own and other people's life.¹

This need for exploring the possibilities of human existence leads to Dilthey's "critique of historical reason," which would do for historical science what Kant's Critique of Pure Reason did for the natural sciences.² Dilthey wants to lift the historical studies out of bondage to the natural sciences. He complains that history has adopted the method of the natural sciences. In contrast, he calls for an epistemological re-orientation in which inner experience (i.e., the facts of consciousness) becomes the point of departure for historical study.³

Though Kant's critique of reason established the epistemological

¹"Der Aufbau Der Geschichtlichen Welt in Den Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 86-87, trans. Hodges, p. 142. Cf. "Die Entstehung Der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 317.

²"Der Aufbau Der Geschichtlichen Welt in Den Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 278.

³"Einleitung in Die Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, I, xviii, trans. Hodges, p. 113.

basis for natural science, it failed to provide an epistemology of history.¹ Likewise, the philological rules of traditional hermeneutics failed to provide the epistemological basis of history. Dilthey points out that Schleiermacher was the first to accomplish an adequate basis for hermeneutics as a result of his "analysis of understanding" in which he indicated the necessity of a psychological interpretation for the exegesis of literary texts.² It was this new hermeneutical approach that helped to lay the foundation for Dilthey's epistemology of history. In this respect, Dilthey intended to further Schleiermacher's "analysis of understanding" in terms of "a critique of historical reason," thereby correcting the epistemological shortcoming of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.³

It will be recalled in the discussion of Kant that it was pointed out that he distinguished: (1) senses, (2) understanding, and (3) reason. For Kant, the function of the senses is to perceive phenomena. The function of the understanding is to take these empirical intuitions and to bring them into conformity with the twelve a priori categories. This conformity of the concepts of the understanding with the objects of sense perception is called knowledge. Reason in turn takes the concepts of the understanding and infers from them the Ideas of the self, God, and the world. However, reason tells us nothing of the reality of these Ideas, but rather they are postulated on the basis of the practical use of pure reason.⁴

¹"Der Aufbau Der Geschichtlichen Welt in Den Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 192, trans. Hodges, p. 115.

²"Die Entstehung Der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 327-329.

³"Der Aufbau Der Geschichtlichen Welt in Den Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 117, 278.

⁴Supra, pp. 73f.

In contrast to Kant's establishing the philosophical basis of the natural sciences, Dilthey seeks to establish the philosophical basis of the human sciences. This can be seen in the way that he gives the (1) senses, (2) understanding, and (3) reason an existential interpretation. The objects of the senses are not the phenomena of Kant's philosophy as opposed to the noumena. Rather, they are the objectifications of mental life. Dilthey writes: "But the existence of others is in the first instance given to us only from without, in facts of sensation, in gestures, sounds, and actions."¹ Neither does "understanding" have anything to do with the categories of Kant's transcendental logic. Dilthey says that one does not understand nature, but rather explains it.²

Understanding is effected when the inner reality behind the external signs are known. Dilthey writes: "We call the process in which, from signs given outwardly to the senses, we know an inner reality, by the name of understanding."³ "We mean, then, by understanding, the process in which from signs given to the senses we come to know a psychic reality whose manifestation they are."⁴ Thus, historical knowledge comes about as a result of understanding in the proper sense of the word. This is to say that historical knowledge is the identity of subject and object, "a rediscovery of the I in

¹"Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 318, trans. Hodges, pp. 125-126.

²Ibid. "Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergliedernde Psychologie," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 172, trans. Hodges, pp. 135-136.

³"Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 318, trans. Hodges, p. 126.

⁴Ibid.

the Thou."¹ "The knowing subject is here one with its object, and this object is the same on all levels of objectification."² Thus, it can be seen that the object of historical knowledge, for Dilthey, is not a mere physical object to be perceived by the senses, but rather, it is an external sign of an inner reality.

Understanding for Dilthey thus always means that we come to know an inner reality by means of signs which are given externally through the senses. It does not mean the analysis of texts pure and simple. It is not the application of a list of formal and logical rules of grammar and philology. Neither is it mere explanation (Erklärung) which is the method of natural science. Rather, understanding is a re-enactment, a reliving, a reproduction of the inner life of another.³ This art of imaginatively projecting oneself into another is likewise called by Dilthey as with Schleiermacher a divinization.⁴ It is this reliving, the "inner affinity and sympathy,"⁵ that makes possible the objectivity of knowledge insofar as the task of hermeneutics is concerned, while the objectivity of knowledge for the natural sciences depends upon the testing of hypotheses with mathematical exactitude.⁶ In this way, it can be

¹"Der Aufbau der Geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 191, trans. Hodges, p. 114.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 213-214, trans. Hodges, pp. 121-126.

⁴"Der Aufbau der Geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 226.

⁵"Beiträge zum Studium der Individualität," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 278, trans. Hodges, p. 128.

⁶"Der Aufbau der Geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften," Gesammelte Schriften, VII, 275, 191-192. "Ideen über eine Beschreibende und Zergliedernde Psychologie," Gesammelte Schriften, 169-170, trans. Hodges, pp. 133-134.

seen that hermeneutics does for history what mathematics does for the natural sciences.¹

If the function of reason in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason was to teach us only what are the objects of possible experience, thereby limiting our knowledge to the mere appearance of reality, the function of reason in Dilthey's "critique of historical reason" was to point out what reason can understand insofar as the human sciences are concerned, thereby showing that one can understand what-really-is. In this respect, Dilthey contends that historical knowledge is understanding, not in the sense of "rational comprehension" (rationales Begreifen),² but as the art of imaginatively projecting oneself into the life work of another person. This means that the most subjective approach is the proper epistemological basis of the human sciences.³ He thus defines the science of hermeneutics as "the technique (Kunstlehre) of the exegesis of written records."⁴

C. Bultmann: The Pre-Understanding of Human Existence

In line with Schleiermacher and Dilthey, Bultmann points out that the central problem of hermeneutics is historical knowledge.⁵ Schleiermacher sought to resolve this epistemological problem in terms of a psychological interpretation whereby hermeneutics becomes an art of divining the intention

¹Hodges, p. 84.

²"Beiträge zum Studium der Individualität," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 278, trans. Hodges, p. 129.

³Ibid.

⁴"Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Gesammelte Schriften, V, 320, trans. Hodges, p. 128.

⁵Bultmann, History and Eschatology, p. 110.

of the author instead of being simply an exegesis of literary texts according to standardized rules of philology. Dilthey further formulated the task of hermeneutics in close connection with his epistemology of history. Since man's essence is history and since what he creates is history, man can know history as-it-really-is. Thus, the hermeneutical task is for the interpreter to project himself into the author, thereby gaining an understanding of a historical text by re-thinking what the author himself thought. Heidegger likewise founded the science of hermeneutics on the basis of man's historicity, which is to say that the historian can properly interpret historical texts because he himself shares in the existentiality of existence, i.e., the possibilities of human existence. For Dilthey, the purpose of historical study is to furnish examples of what man has been in the past in order to deepen his understanding of himself.¹ For Heidegger, the function of historical science is to unfold what is authentic repeatable history.² In this way, it can be seen that the hermeneutical task is always guided by a prior interest in human existence. It is this "pre-understanding" of historical study that Bultmann more fully articulated in connection with his existential exegesis of the New Testament. Further, Dilthey's "critique of historical reason" and Heidegger's hermeneutic of Dasein in which the historical nature of human existence is set forth (thus effecting an epistemology of history), is likewise a presupposition of Bultmann's existentialist exegesis of the New Testament.³

Though Bultmann agrees with Schleiermacher and Dilthey that there must be a corresponding relationship between an interpreter of a text and its

¹Supra, pp. 293f. ²Supra, pp. 114f.

³Bultmann, Essays, Philosophical and Theological, pp. 251-252.

author, Bultmann chooses to stress the life relation to the subject matter of the text that the interpreter shares with the author instead of trying to effect a psychological reproduction of the selfhood of the author. He writes:

Instead of reflection on the individuality of author and expositor, on their psychical processes and on the spiritual make-up or intellectual consanguinity of the expositor, it requires consideration of the simple fact, that the presupposition for understanding is the interpreter's relationship in his life to the subject which is directly or indirectly expressed in the text.¹

This common relationship of author and interpreter to the same subject matter underscores for Bultmann "that every interpretation is guided by a particular purpose."² This particular purpose Bultmann calls a "pre-understanding."³ However, he intends to overcome the one-sided "pre-understanding" of Schleiermacher and Dilthey with their heavy emphasis upon the psychological aspect of hermeneutics. Rather, Bultmann points out that what is important as a pre-understanding of hermeneutics is "the putting of the question," i.e., what is to be understood.⁴ For example, when one seeks to understand mathematical, medical, musical, political, military, astronomical texts, etc., it is not necessary to reproduce imaginatively the selfhood of an author. Rather, what is important is a prior knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, politics, military strategy, music, medicine, etc.⁵ Likewise, if the putting of the question relates to "history as the sphere of life in which human

¹Ibid., p. 241. ²Ibid.

³History and Eschatology, p. 113.

⁴Ibid., p. 112. Cf. Essays, Philosophical and Theological, pp. 238-239.

⁵History and Eschatology, p. 112. Cf. Essays, Philosophical and Theological, pp. 252ff.

existence moves, in which it attains its possibilities and develops them, and in reflection upon which it attains understanding of itself and of its own particular possibilities," then what is necessary is a prior understanding of human existence.¹

Bultmann does not think that a "prior understanding" suggests that historical knowledge is mere subjectivism. To be sure, historical knowledge cannot achieve objectivity in the sense that natural science can, for human existence is a different kind of reality than the mere physical objects of natural science.² On the other hand, the interpreter can achieve objectivity of knowledge when he properly frames the question to be asked of a text, and then methodically pursues this question. Bultmann writes:

Knowledge gained methodically is an 'objective' knowledge, and that can only mean a knowledge appropriate to the subject, when this has found its way into a particular formulation of the inquiry. To call the formulation itself 'subjective' is absurd.³

Thus, Bultmann points out that it is impossible for one to eliminate his own subjective standpoint in order to achieve objectivity of knowledge, for it is only through subjectivity (in the proper sense of the word) that objectivity of knowledge can ever be attained, i.e. "only those who are stirred by the question of their own existence can hear the claim which the text makes."⁴ What must, however, be eliminated in the subjectivity of the interpreter is his own personal prejudices insofar as he tries to force on the texts an alien interpretation, thereby coercing the text arbitrarily to fit his own preconceived ideas.⁵ Furthermore, since historical texts can be

¹Essays, Philosophical and Theological, p. 253.

²Ibid., p. 254. ³Ibid., p. 255. ⁴Ibid., p. 256.

⁵Ibid., p. 255.

methodically questioned from many different perspectives of interest, one must guard against making any individual "putting of the question" absolute, for this would distort the objectivity of historical knowledge.¹

Bultmann's reflection on the task of New Testament exegesis, however, leads him back to Schleiermacher's and Dilthey's existential narrowing down of hermeneutics. The goal of his hermeneutical theory is to make a scientific exegesis of the New Testament in the light of his prior understanding of human existence as it is unfolded in the existential analytic of man's being. One does not obtain this existential knowledge from the New Testament, which is solely concerned with an existenziell understanding of man. Rather, it comes about through philosophical reflection.² Without this prior understanding of human existence, then the exegete would have "to read the biblical writings as a compendium of dogmatic pronouncements, or as 'sources' for the reconstruction of a section of past history," thus reducing the significance of the Scriptures by forbidding it to "speak as a power which has something to say to the present, to present-day existence."³

Though Heidegger defined the science of hermeneutics in terms of investigating the possibilities of existence even as Bultmann defined the task of biblical exegesis in terms of explicating the possibilities of human existence, Heidegger's hermeneutics intended ultimately to move beyond the mere human level to Being itself. In this respect, Heidegger offers a contrast to Bultmann. Heidegger's hermeneutic of Dasein in Being and Time seeks to make an existential analytic of Dasein in order to lay the ground work for

¹History and Eschatology, pp. 118-119.

²Essays, Philosophical and Theological, p. 258.

³Ibid., pp. 258-259.

understanding the meaning of Being. Thus, he also speaks of a prior understanding. Heidegger writes: "Inquiry, as a kind of seeking must be guided beforehand by what is sought."¹ But what is sought, for Heidegger, is not in the first place, authentic existence, nor the question of Dasein as such. Rather, what is sought is the Being of Dasein. In order to accomplish this goal, Heidegger believed it was necessary first of all to unfold and clarify the meaning of human existence through an existential analytic of Dasein. That he never followed through with the second half of Being and Time suggests that such an existential analytic did not serve as an adequate prolegomenon to the explication of Being.² Conversely, Bultmann is not concerned with the question of God as he is in himself, only as he is pro nobis. While Heidegger's ultimate goal has been to explicate the meaning of Being, Bultmann's ultimate goal has been to explicate the meaning of authentic existence in the light of Christian faith. While the earlier Heidegger sought to explicate the meaning of Being through an existential analytic of Dasein and the later Heidegger sought to accomplish this goal through an understanding of the primordial significance of language, Bultmann has consistently sought to achieve an understanding of man's relationship to God in terms of an existential exegesis of the New Testament. Stated succinctly, Heidegger's "putting of the question" is related to the nature of Being, not human existence, while Bultmann's "putting of the question" has consistently been concerned with human existence, not God per se.

D. Ebeling and Fuchs: Understanding Through Words

Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs have jointly worked out³ what

¹Being and Time, p. 25. ²Supra, p. 116.

³Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutics," Word and Faith, p. 305n. Cf. Braaten, History and Hermeneutics, p. 71.

J. Robinson calls "The New Hermeneutic."¹ Robinson contends "the New Hermeneutic" is a new theology in the sense that Ritschlian theology was new.² Carl Braaten, however, has discounted this interpretation of Robinson's. He further has pointed out the questionable distinction that Robinson draws between "hermeneutics" and "hermeneutic." For Robinson, traditional "hermeneutics" is to be distinguished from the new "hermeneutic," a distinction Braaten points out that cannot be made in the German language.³

Ebeling and Fuchs have intended to move beyond their teacher, Rudolf Bultmann, insofar as his existential exegesis (demythologizing) is concerned.⁴ While Bultmann pursued the early Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutic of Dasein in theological terms of going behind the objectifying language of the New Testament to discover the primordial thinking (i.e., existential intention) of the biblical writers and thus showing that the primary intention of the New Testament is to express an understanding of authentic existence, Ebeling and Fuchs have pursued the later Heidegger's ontological investigation of authentic language which discloses Being, i.e., language lets Being be. This change of emphasis from "existence" to "language" can be seen when Ebeling writes:

The real rub in the hermeneutic problem, as it presents itself for theology, consists in the connexion between exposition of the text as proclamation that has taken place and execution of the text in proclamation in the present. The concept of existentialist interpretation has been employed to characterize

¹The New Hermeneutic, edited by James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers).

²"Hermeneutic Since Barth," The New Hermeneutic, p. 67.

³Carl E. Braaten, "How New Is the New Hermeneutic?" Theology Today, XXII (1965-1966), pp. 219-220.

⁴Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth," The New Hermeneutic, p. 53. Fuchs, "The New Testament and the Problem," The New Hermeneutic, pp. 115ff. Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutics," Word and Faith, p. 331.

this fundamental hermeneutic problem. The efforts towards a closer definition of it are still going on. I think the concept can be meaningful and helpful if it brings out the fact that existence is existence through word and in word.¹

Robinson points out that it was Ernst Fuchs who first redefined theological hermeneutics within the context of Heidegger's ontological investigation of language. Robinson writes:

It was Ernst Fuchs who first translated the hermeneutical discussion from the categories of inauthentic and authentic existence derived from Being and Time into the later Heidegger's analogous distinction between the everyday language of the subject-object dilemma and the uncorrupted language of being.²

Ebeling defines theological hermeneutics as the doctrine of the Word of God.³ This is not to suggest that he is falling back on the traditional Orthodox distinction between hermeneutica sacra and hermeneutica profana, a distinction that was made possible by the coining of the concept, "hermeneutics," in the middle of the seventeenth century.⁴ Rather, he is speaking of theological hermeneutics in the sense of a special hermeneutics in contradistinction to general hermeneutics. It is this distinction of general and special that replaced sacra and profana hermeneutica at the beginning of the Enlightenment.⁵

Ebeling defines hermeneutics this way: "Hermeneutics as the theory of understanding must therefore be the theory of words."⁶ Insofar as hermeneutics is the theory of understanding, its task will be to remove "hindrances" which obscure the word. This task, in turn, will determine the scope of her-

¹Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutics," Word and Faith, p. 331.

²Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth," The New Hermeneutic, p. 49.

³"Word of God and Hermeneutics," Word and Faith, p. 323.

⁴Ibid., p. 315n. ⁵Ibid., p. 314. ⁶Ibid., p. 319.

meneutics. (1) It may be limited to philological and grammatical understanding of the text. (2) It may include the general problem of historical understanding. (3) It may be extended to an understanding of the reality that encounters us in the present through the text. (4) Or, hermeneutics may be an inquiry into the conditions under which understanding in general can take place.¹ As it has already been pointed out, Ebeling likewise shows that the modern turn in the theory of hermeneutics is traced from Schleiermacher, through Dilthey, to Heidegger. He shows that hermeneutics has become the essence of philosophy, thus replacing the classical epistemological theory.² Ebeling writes:

Rather, the development from Schleiermacher via Dilthey to Heidegger shows that the idea of a theory of understanding is on the move towards laying the foundation of the humanities, indeed even becomes the essence of philosophy, that hermeneutics now takes the place of the classical epistemological theory, and indeed that fundamental ontology appears as hermeneutics.³

Insofar as hermeneutics is the theory of words, what is significant is the word-event in which understanding is achieved. Ebeling's concept of word-event is intended to point out the linguisticity of reality.⁴ He writes:

This much, however, can be said in general terms on the question of what has to be the guiding light of hermeneutics: it must be a word-event in the comprehensive sense that it embraces both linguistic tradition and encounter with reality.⁵

¹Ibid.

²Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1960).

³"Word of God and Hermeneutics," Word and Faith, p. 317.

⁴Supra, pp. 232f.

⁵"Word of God and Hermeneutics," Word and Faith, p. 322.

This defining of the task of hermeneutics as removing those hindrances which obscure the mediation of reality through language corresponds closely to Heidegger's concept of language as the "house of Being," i.e., language lets Being be. This is to say, understanding takes place through language, not that language creates a new understanding. In this way, it can be seen that language is performatory, not informative.

The primary phenomenon is the realm of understanding is not understanding OF language, but understanding THROUGH language. The word is not really the object of understanding, and thus the thing that poses the problem of understanding, the solution of which requires exposition and therefore also hermeneutics as the theory of understanding. Rather, the word is what opens up and mediates understanding, i.e. brings something to understanding.¹

Ebeling further points out the performatory function of language when he writes: "The basic structure of word is therefore not statement--that is an abstract variety of the word-event--but appraisal, certainly not in the colourless sense of information, but in the pregnant sense of participation and communication."²

In this way, it can be seen that Ebeling and Fuchs have sought to re-adjust Bultmann's program of demythologizing which holds that the New Testament mythological language is a secondary objectification of authentic existence. Both Ebeling and Fuchs stress the performatory function of language in contrast to Bultmann's attempt to get behind the mythological language to an understanding of authentic existence.³

Since the function of hermeneutics is to allow reality to be understood

¹Ibid., p. 318. ²Ibid., p. 326.

³"Word of God and Hermeneutics," Word and Faith, p. 331. Fuchs, "The New Testament and Hermeneutical Problem," The New Hermeneutic, pp. 116-119, 124-125.

through language, Ebeling and Fuchs believe that theological hermeneutics can locate the significance of the historical Jesus. The historical Jesus is seen to be the Word of God, for in his preaching he made God present. Thus, by getting back to the preaching of the historical Jesus, one gets back to authentic language--the language of faith.¹ Jesus' word is called a gift which was given to his hearers, and thus by clinging to his word the hearers have a "model of faith" to take along with them.² It was subsequent to his crucifixion that Jesus himself became adorned with honorific titles. Thus, the primitive church ultimately replaced Jesus' preaching with his person as the "model of faith."³ Thus, to believe in Jesus is to believe in Jesus' message of love.⁴ Furthermore, Jesus' message, as the word of God, is significant, not because of its content. Rather, what is significant is that in the phenomenon of language one speaks not so much to be understood, but he speaks because he understands. Fuchs writes: "At home one does not speak so that people may understand, but because people understand!"⁵ Language does not create anything new, i.e., it is not informative, but mediates understanding. Language "announces what it is time for."⁶ Thus, the significance of Jesus' parables and his language is that his message announces that now God has come forward in his concrete revelation. Fuchs writes:

For I can really love God from now on. I can rejoice in him, since Jesus has made God present for me. And how has he done that? Through his words, which now lie like Christmas presents on the table. What we should put on--so to speak, what we

¹Fuchs, "The New Testament and the Hermeneutical Problem," The New Hermeneutic, p. 123.

²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 130. ⁴Ibid., pp. 135, 136.

⁵Ibid., p. 124.

⁶Ibid., p. 126.

should clothe ourselves with--are indeed Jesus' words themselves. And clothed in them we should henceforth carry on our daily life. It will have become a completely new life.¹

This, then, is the theological relevance of the historical Jesus. It is through his preaching that man encounters God. Fuchs writes:

This is why I have in my own way renewed the question of the historical Jesus. Jesus himself had been God's word to which all clung, for Jesus did not want to be or to be understood as anything other than God's word, which entered into his daily life and began here its work. He was this word, for he let himself be heard at precisely that place where God himself had begun to speak. Jesus was God's word, if at that time the time for this word had come! And that is what faith in Jesus believes, by believing in the historical Jesus. This alone is the true meaning of "Easter faith." Jesus and those who believe through him belong forever together. For this reason they believe in him by confessing him as God's word, indeed as God's "verb," God's "time-word."²

Ultimately, the New Testament is seen as "a textbook in hermeneutic. It teaches the hermeneutic of faith--in brief, the language of faith--and it encourages us to try out this language ourselves, so that we may become familiar with--God."³

It can thus be seen that the ultimate task of theological hermeneutics is to bring one to an understanding of the historical Jesus in terms of a word-event (Ebeling), or language event (Fuchs).⁴ It is this "event" which is the saving event, for what came to expression in Jesus was faith. Thus, to have faith in Jesus means to re-experience Jesus' decision of faith.

E. Pannenberg: The Integration of History and Hermeneutics

Wolfhart Pannenberg seeks to resolve the hermeneutical problem in terms of universal history. He sees that the historical distance between

¹Ibid., p. 130. ²Ibid., p. 136. ³Ibid., p. 141.

⁴Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth," The New Hermeneutic, p. 57.

text and interpreter cannot be bridged merely in a psychological interpretation of the author, whether it be Schleiermacher's "divinization," Dilthey's reliving and reproducing the mental life of the author, or Bultmann's existential exegesis.¹ While these hermeneutical approaches intend to take seriously the historicity of author and interpreter and the claim which the text lays upon the hearer, they fail to grasp the comprehensive historical situation. This is especially seen in Bultmann who, while underscoring the significance of single historical phenomena and epochs of the past for the present, eliminates the question of any meaning in history as a course of events.²

To be sure, the distance between the author and interpreter was felt by these hermeneutical approaches. In this respect, the question which directed their primary hermeneutical inquiry was--how can historically-conditioned events of the past become meaningfully relevant in the present? However, what appears to be lacking in Bultmann, for example, is a corresponding interest in the second aspect of the historical problem--what are the probabilities of historical knowledge insofar as faith is concerned? To be sure, Bultmann's work in historical criticism has been as thorough as it has been radical. But can historical reflection be divorced from dogmatics in such a manner that the historical distance to be bridged between text and interpreter is the sole task of hermeneutics, while the historical authenticity of the events which the text reports is only minimally important? Must not the distance between text and events which are reported in the text be equally

¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Hermeneutics and Universal History," History and Hermeneutic, p. 130.

²History and Eschatology, p. 121.

relevant?

The chief merit of Pannenberg lies in his attempt to integrate historical reflection and dogmatics. It is his avowed purpose to show that the hermeneutical problem can be resolved only within the context of universal history. For him, there can be no bridging of the historical past and the present in terms of a psychological or existential narrowing down of the problem. Furthermore, the probabilities of historical knowledge have a significant bearing upon the reality of faith.

In sharp contrast to Bultmann who denies any meaning in history as a course of events since he says one cannot know the end, Pannenberg constructs a theology of universal history on the very basis that we can know the end of history since it proleptically occurred in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, Pannenberg intends to take seriously the twofold problem of hermeneutics and history for Christian faith--i.e., how can historically-conditioned events of the past have absolute significance for the present, and are the probabilities of historical knowledge sufficiently determined so as to provide faith with a rational basis?

First, it can be said that Pannenberg proposes the convergence of history and hermeneutics into a universal-historical perspective. Historical study must not conceive its task in mere terms of going behind the texts to ascertain bare facts. Rather, historical study in effect goes beyond the actual texts when it goes behind them, for what lies behind the texts cannot be understood as "an isolated datum, but reveals itself only within a universal context of events and meaning, only in terms of a universal history, which also embraces the era of the investigator."¹ Thus, the task of the historian

¹History and Hermeneutic, p. 123. Cf. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 150.

is not restricted to the "dead remains of the past."¹ On the contrary, the historical interrogation includes the historian's relationship to the subject matter, for the "object is already viewed from the perspective of the present time."² This is not to embrace a historical relativism in which it would be impossible to gain an objective knowledge of what really happened. To be sure, events have their own immediate environment in which they can be seen, but their true significance extends beyond this. "The more significant an occurrence, a figure, is, the more inclusive the context of events will have to be to which one has reference if one desires to do justice to its true significance, even in an approximate way."³

On the other hand, if historical study restricts its interest solely to what happened in the past, then it becomes a subsidiary science to hermeneutics.⁴ To be sure, this going behind the texts to the actual course of events to which the texts refer is the central task of historical study in itself. But, it must not stop there. Rather, its interrogation must be viewed from the standpoint of the present interrogator's era, if the true significance of the past is to be given its due credit. This bridging of past texts and the present era of the investigator is the central task of hermeneutics. In fact, it was this bridging of the distance between the past and present that originally gave rise to the need of historical study itself.⁵ At any rate, Pannenberg points out that the distinction between the historical investigation of going behind the texts and the constructing of hermeneutical bridges to the present can at best claim only tentative legitimacy, for both history and hermeneutics form a single theme.⁶

¹History and Hermeneutic, p. 125. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 124.

⁴Ibid., p. 127. ⁵Ibid., p. 123. ⁶Ibid.

That transmitted texts have a relevance that extends beyond their immediate historical setting explains the relative independence of hermeneutics from historical study.¹ Such is the case for example with the Pauline letters. Their significance is not exhausted in mere terms of historical study; they have a present day relevance concerning man's condition before God. Herodotus intended his history to be a memorial to the heroic deeds of his age which in turn would be an example for all mankind.² Pannenberg writes: "Historiography itself never intends to describe a completed, past epoch merely as past. That would not be worth the effort. Quite the contrary, historiography is constantly guided by an interest in the present."³

What Pannenberg calls for is not an either-or situation, but the integration of history and hermeneutics into a universal-historical method.

Pannenberg writes:

Thus a certain competition is evidenced between the hermeneutical and the universalgeschichtlich way of looking at things. Both have to do with texts. Both reach from the text to the interpreter's present, and both draw the interpreter into the interpretation of the text. However, the hermeneutical approach apparently moves exclusively between the past text and the present interpreter, whereas the universal-historical approach first of all goes back behind the text, and considers the occasion or the event which gave rise to the text in the context of its universal-historical significance, a context which includes the interpreter's own historical epoch. The universal-historical method of approach therefore takes a detour, the detour of going behind the text to the event which underlies it, the event to which it points, in order that by means of this detour a bridge may be built to the time contemporaneous with the interpreter (or the historian).⁴

In thus proposing the merging of history and hermeneutics, Pannenberg

¹Ibid., p. 127.

²Ibid. Cf. The History of Herodotus, trans. George Rawlinson (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1924), I, 1.

³History and Hermeneutic, p. 127. ⁴Ibid., p. 124.

wants to overcome the anthropocentric interpretation particularly of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, and Bultmann. Schleiermacher sought to reconstruct texts from the thought processes of the author without sufficient emphasis being placed upon the historical setting which is a necessary part of textual interpretation.¹ Dilthey limited history to what man had done, thus making it possible to intuit the actual meaning of texts on the basis that what man has created man can know. Pannenberg points out the theological weakness of defining history solely in terms of what man has done in the past. "It is simply not the case that the historian may concern himself only with the intellectual and spiritual activity of man, and may turn everything else over to physics."²

Dilthey thus constructed a faulty hermeneutical bridge because he was only interested in investigating the past in terms of its present possibilities of human existence. But if this hermeneutical task is to be accomplished, then it must go beyond "intuition" to an examination of not what man only did but what happened to man as well.

Bultmann's emphasis upon the "claim" which the transmitted texts make upon the investigator in principle overcomes his existentialist "pre-understanding."³ To be sure, Bultmann's "preunderstanding" does not intend to suggest that the text cannot speak anew. In this respect, he stresses the claim which the text makes upon the hearer. However, he does limit the "claim" of the biblical texts in terms of what it opens up as possibilities of authentic existence. However, Pannenberg shows that the biblical texts are not merely interested in human existence in such an abstract way. Rather, they speak also of God, the world, and history. In this respect,

¹Ibid., p. 128. ²Ibid., p. 130. ³Ibid., p. 134.

God mediates Himself to man not only through an existential encounter, but through the world and history. Man cannot understand himself in isolation from the whole of reality, but rather he seeks to coordinate his life in terms of his whole environment. Pannenberg writes:

Is it not true that the question concerning the possibilities of human existence is always referred, for its clarification, to the question concerning the world, concerning society, and beyond both toward the question concerning God? Is it not true that man cannot expect an answer to the question concerning himself without a knowledge of the world, of society, of history and of God? In that case, self-understanding cannot become thematic without taking into account a previous understanding of the world, and, in a certain sense, also a previous understanding of God. Man's understanding of the world and of God is not only an expression of his question concerning himself; rather, it is only the relationship to the world, to society, to God that mediates man to himself. Only through the mediation of this relationship does he gain his self-understanding.¹

Pannenberg further shows that the "past cannot be deprived of its past-ness" and then be re-interpreted as possibilities of present authentic existence. Instead, the past "must be related to the present precisely as what is past."² This accords with what has been defined as truth--the self-disclosure of the essence of what-is. In this respect, the texts must be allowed to speak for themselves.

If a transmitted text, precisely in its past, and therefore non-contemporary, form, can put a claim upon the interpreter, then one can obviously not set a priori limits around this claim (for example, through reflections on the spiritual and intellectual situation of the present time), but rather, the interpreter must expose himself entirely to the particularity of that which is past. He must apprehend the past situation to which the text is related in its differentiation from his own present, and may relate that situation only in this differentiation to his own present time.³

In thus pointing out the convergence of history and hermeneutics,

¹Ibid., pp. 132-133. Cf. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 3.

²Pannenberg, History and Hermeneutic, p. 133. ³Ibid., p. 134.

Pannenberg makes use of Gadamer's expression, "the fusing of horizons," which describes the meeting between the horizon of the past text and the present horizon of the interpreter.¹ But Gadamer speaks of the linguisticity of reality and says that the mediation of the past text to the present is an accomplishment of language. In this respect, Gadamer like Ebeling and Fuchs² devalues the assertive character of language in an attempt to preserve "the unspoken horizon" behind the text.³ However, Pannenberg argues that even the unspoken meaning of events in the past must be made into statements and cannot simply be comprehended in terms of a mere claim which the text makes upon the hearer in the sense of an existenziell encounter of an "I" with a "thou." This means that though the hermeneutical task is a linguistic process, the fact remains that the fusing of horizons (i.e., the past with the present) is not an accomplishment of language alone. But rather, it is mediated historically. This is to say, the fusing of horizons is the accomplishment of a new understanding which in turn gives rise to a new way of speaking.⁴ Thus, it is only through assertions, statements, and content that the past is mediated to the present. It has already been pointed out that truth is itself historical. This is not to eliminate the objectivity of truth. Rather, it points out that general concepts of man and the world are conceived of as timeless, while on the other hand the true content of experience is characterized by its historicity.

¹Ibid., p. 137. Cf. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 9.

²Supra, pp. 304ff.

³H. G. Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 444, cited by Pannenberg, History and Hermeneutic, pp. 142-143.

⁴Pannenberg, History and Hermeneutic, p. 142.

In thus broadening hermeneutics into a universal-historical perspective, Pannenberg is not adopting the Hegelian total mediation of present-day truth through history. Rather, on the basis of Jesus' eschatological message, the proleptic character of his resurrection, and his Israelite-Jewish background, Pannenberg projects the idea of universal history which leaves the future open, acknowledges the limitation of finite knowledge and at the same time attempts to provide a valid epistemological access to the whole of reality.¹

Before further examining the Pannenbergian idea of universal history as a constructive proposal to the problem which the rise of the modern historical consciousness has posed for theology, a few clarifying statements should be made. It should be borne in mind that no attempt is being made to evaluate in a comprehensive sense his systematic theology.² Nor is there any intention of discussing in a direct manner the various doctrines of Christian theology. For example, the christological problem concerning the divine and human aspects of Jesus' life insofar as their soteriological and revelatory significance is concerned is not here directly considered.

Thus, it can be said that this projection of a theology of universal history is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of all aspects of Christian doctrine. Nor is it intended to be a total narration of revelatory events. Rather, it is a perspective³ which brings into focus the whole of

¹Ibid., p. 151. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 174-181.

²For a strictly exposition of Pannenberg's theology, cf. Duane Allen Priebe, "History and Kerygma: A Study of the Concept of Revelation in Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg" (unpublished Doctor of theology thesis, School of Theology at Claremont, 1965).

³The word, "perspective," is meant here to be a rejection of Pannenberg's idea of universal history as an exclusive theological method. Cf. infra, pp. 374f.

reality in which God reveals Himself (and thus, this is not to say that revelation is an inference from history). In this respect, an emphasis upon certain doctrinal truths is not meant to devalue the significance of others, as though, for example, Jesus' crucifixion were insignificant in comparison with his resurrection.¹

One further clarifying statement perhaps should be made. It would far exceed the scope and purpose of this work to carry on a direct dialogue with those who have been engaged in critical debate with Pannenberg's idea of universal history, especially since what is intended here is a critical appropriation of certain of his presuppositions in an attempt to come to terms with the problem of a dualistic epistemology. Thus, this thesis is not a critical analysis of his whole theology. However, an appreciation for the critical debate will be indirectly reflected in the discussion that follows. Some of the more important points raised against Pannenberg's idea of universal history, which shall be evaluated, include these: (1) Does his emphasis upon the eschatological future devalue the significance of the present moment? (2) Is an indirect self-revelation of God theologically valid? In this respect, does he reduce Christian faith to the level of a mere fides historica? (3) Can Jewish apocalypticism do duty for what Pannenberg wants it to do? (4) Can the historical-critical method demonstrate even with a high degree of probability the reality of God's self-revelation? (5) Is it really possible to go behind the kerygma to the actual course of events which underlie the kerygma? That is, can the gospels be used as historical sources as well as testimonies of faith? (6) Does Pannenberg render innocuous the ministry of the Holy Spirit, especially in regard to

¹Cf. Moltmann's misunderstanding of Pannenberg at this point (Theology of Hope, p. 83).

biblical inspiration and prophetic inspiration? (7) Can his Hegelian emphasis upon the primordial unity of historical fact and meaning be ontologically defensible? That is, does his denial of a supernaturally-inspired interpretation of historical facts have a biblical or philosophical motive? Or, stated otherwise, do the facts of history really speak their own language so that God's self-revelation in history is self-evident to anyone who is properly informed of these events and their contexts. (8) Ultimately, is Pannenberg's idea of universal history a theological importation without a solid biblical foundation?

CHAPTER XIII

A THEOLOGY OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY

The relation of history to hermeneutics (which together form the two aspects of the idea of revelation) poses this question of priority-- is language or history the primary locus of revelation? In Bultmann's kerygmatic theology and Barth's theology of the Word of God, the primary locus of revelation is centered in the word, thus putting revelation outside the possibility of critical inquiry. Though Barth added objectifying elements to his dogmatics, revelation itself did not come under the general category of verifiable truth. Thus, revelation was seen as the self-authenticating Word of God. Ebeling and Fuchs modified Bultmann's "demythologizing" into the understanding of the linguisticity of reality, i.e., language is not a secondary objectification, but the reality itself coming to expression in the language event. However, this language event is not an assertion that can be objectively analyzed, but rather, it is a communication between persons as an encounter, an "appraisal."

A. Revelation and the Probabilities of Historical Knowledge

In contrast to this neo-orthodox understanding of revelation as encounter through word, Pannenberg radically redefines revelation in terms of history as the comprehensive whole of reality. Here the emphasis is not upon linguisticity, but upon the historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) of

of all reality.¹ This means that theological knowledge is historical knowledge. What Pannenberg is asserting is that knowledge of revelation is not a supernatural knowledge as though revelatory events occurred in a supra-historical ghetto. The knowledge (i.e., insight)² which faith presupposes is a knowledge of history which is accessible to human comprehension. To set the knowledge of revelation over against natural knowledge "is in danger of distorting the historical revelation into a gnostic knowledge of secrets."³ Pannenberg is thus projecting a theology of reason in which it is asserted that God has made Himself known within the context of our natural processes of thought. In thus emphasizing a theology of reason, Pannenberg eliminates the category of a supernatural order of knowledge as opposed to a natural order.⁴ In an exaggerated manner, his polemic is: "THE HISTORICAL REVELATION IS OPEN TO ANYONE WHO HAS EYES TO SEE."⁵ Pannenberg further polemicizes a strong methodically-objective approach in this way:

Nothing must mute the fact that all truth lies right before the eyes, and that its appropriation is a natural consequence of the facts. There is no need for any additional perfection of man as though he could not focus on the "supernatural" truth with his normal equipment for knowing. The event, which Paul witnessed, took place totally within the realm of that which is humanly visible. In particular, the Holy Spirit is not an additional condition without which the event of Christ could not be known as revelation.⁶

¹Pannenberg, Theology as History, p. 242.

²Pannenberg, Revelation as History, p. 198. ³Ibid., p. 135.

⁴Basic Questions in Theology, I, 13. ⁵Revelation as History, p. 135.

⁶Ibid., p. 136. It is this premise that God's revelation is self-evident to historical reason that has justly occasioned the criticism that in effect Pannenberg does not sufficiently clarify "the transition from historical fact to faith" (Helmut G. Garder and W. Taylor Stevenson, "The Continuity of History and Faith in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Toward an Erotics of History," The Journal of Religion, LI, no. 1 [January, 1971], 51). Cf. L. Steiger, "Revelation-History and Theological Reason: A Critique of the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," History and Hermeneutic, trans. J. C. Weber, p. 88.

This means a knowledge of revelation is a knowledge of history, i.e., what factually happened in the space-time spectrum. What cannot be ascertained in the biblical traditions by means of the historical-critical method cannot be true for Christian faith. This means what is theologically true cannot be historically false.¹ But, it is also saying that only those theological truths which can be sufficiently verified according to a critical reconstruction of the biblical traditions are to be considered valid.² In this way, Pannenberg intends to overcome the trend in theology which locates revelation in the moment of faith's experience rather than in "a reasoned knowledge of what is transient and concrete."³ Thus, "Christian faith must not be equated with a merely subjective conviction that would allegedly compensate for the uncertainty of our historical knowledge about Jesus."⁴ This would only make faith indistinguishable from superstition. Pannenberg thus sees the task of the theologian to be one of critically assessing the truth-claim of Christian faith.

For much too long a time faith has been misunderstood to be subjectivity's fortress into which Christianity could retreat from the attacks of scientific knowledge. Such a retreat into pious subjectivity can only lead to destroying any consciousness of the truth of the Christian faith.⁵

This leads Pannenberg to say: "Faith can breathe freely only when it can be certain, even in the field of scientific research, that its foundation is true."⁶ For example, the historical character of the resurrection of Jesus

¹Braaten, History and Hermeneutics, p. 92.

²Jesus--God and Man, pp. 99, 109. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 38-39, 50, 198-199.

³Supra, p. 278. ⁴Pannenberg, Theology as History, p. 131.

⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid.

(without which Pannenberg argues that there can be no Christology) cannot be ruled out a priori. It cannot be deprived of its historical past-ness and then be re-interpreted existentially. If there is any present significance to the resurrection kerygma, then the kerygma must be taken seriously when it reports an event that happened in the past. Thus, Pannenberg points out that faith in its claim to absolute certainty must reckon with the probabilities of historical knowledge. In other words, there can be no absolute dualism of the subjective certainty of truth and the objectivity of knowledge (i.e., insight). That is, one must not speak of the resurrection kerygma solely in terms of its existential relevance without also a critical assessment of its historical factuality, even as in philosophy Hegel has argued that one cannot divorce appearance and reality as though what-appears is relevant while the question of its reality is irrelevant. Such a dualism, Pannenberg would argue, is not any less unacceptable to philosophy than a theological dualism of faith and a historical knowledge of facts.

In arguing for the corporeality of Jesus' resurrection (which is the central event in his theology of universal history), Pannenberg pursues a closely reasoned argument which includes: (1) delineating the Old Testament and Jewish eschatological expectation of the general resurrection of the dead, (2) a historical-critical analysis of the resurrection traditions, (3) a careful exegesis of the resurrection texts, (4) a philosophical reflection on the possibility of Jesus' resurrection, and (5) anthropological considerations concerning man's hope for life beyond death.¹

There are, however, two especially significant factors Pannenberg considers in establishing the resurrection as a historical event. First,

¹Jesus--God and Man, pp. 53-114.

there is the language of the Old Testament and the Jewish eschatological expectation in which Jesus' resurrection was expressed. This prior expectation of the general resurrection of the dead presupposes that the Jewish community possessed a distinctive thought-pattern in which the resurrection as an expression of an imperishable life was clearly distinguished from this worldly-transitory experience of life. Thus, the encounters with the risen Lord were expressed in already-existing thought-patterns, such as "resurrection from the dead," "rising from sleep," etc. (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2; I Thess. 4:13ff; I Cor. 11:30; 15:6, 20, 51). Thus, the historical occurrence of Jesus' resurrection did not need to be interpreted for the first time, but its interpretation was inherent in the event itself because the disciples already had a prior conception of the resurrection from the dead. Thus, the resurrection of Jesus is described not as a mere resuscitation of the dead to a temporal life, but the transformation of an old body into a "spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:35-56). This is to say, the early Christian community knew the difference between "the intended reality and the mode in which it is expressed in language."¹ Without intending to negate the facticity of the resurrection of Jesus, Pannenberg thus designates it as a "metaphor" insofar as its linguistic expression is concerned. This means that the event happened in space and time, though the language itself is analogical because it speaks of a reality beyond man's present experience. Further, the term, "resurrection of the dead," is an "absolute metaphor," for it is "the sole expression for a definite subject matter, and is neither interchangeable with other images."²

In addition to the Old Testament apocalypticism, Pannenberg delineates the significance of Jewish apocalypticism in attempting to set forth an

¹Ibid., p. 75. ²Ibid., p. 187.

apologetic for showing how it was possible for the disciples to confess the reality of the resurrection. He wants to show that this confession was not an arbitrary or mythological interpretation, but a valid historical statement based on what factually happened. Thus, the disciples were reporting what they had seen and not confessing what they merely believed. This is to say, in arguing for a theology of reason, Pannenberg intends to show that what the disciples reported did not require a supernatural interpretation. Instead, the resurrection event can be seen for what it factually was by anyone as a natural (and not a supernatural) appropriation of the facts.

Whether or not Jewish apocalypticism can serve the apologetic purpose Pannenberg wishes is debateable. In fact, the Pannenbergian group, especially Rolf Rendtorff, Ulrich Wilkens, and Pannenberg in Revelation as History, is criticized for its interpretation of Jewish apocalyptic theology in establishing a theology of universal history. In appealing to Dietrich Rössler, Gesetz und Geschichte (Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1960),¹ they argue that God's self revelation took place in past decisive events, such as the Exodus and the Conquest, but with the exilic and postexilic prophets, the idea of revelation was shifted to a future perspective, and finally in Jewish apocalyptic theology revelation was expected to take place at the end of history.² Over against this, it has been asserted that Jewish apocalypticism comes from astrological determinism and ontological dualism, derived from Persia and Babylon. It is further contended that the apocalypticists were not concerned

¹Cf. Wilkens, Revelation as History, p. 62.

²Revelation as History, pp. 47-48, 59-66, 111-112, 128. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 20-21.

with history as the sphere of God's revelatory activity, but with the eschaton when this present evil world would be done away with.¹

However, Pannenberg's appeal to Jewish apocalyptic theology in the present context is to point out that the conception of the resurrection from the dead was not immediately formulated with Jesus' own resurrection, but that in fact there already had existed a prior conception of the resurrection. Thus, Pannenberg's apologetic use of the prior conception of the resurrection from the dead is to point out that the disciples knew how to express the reality of Jesus' resurrection (though it was necessary to recast this prior conception in the light of what actually happened), and thus they were not resorting to mythological conceptions as such.

The second factor to be considered in establishing the resurrection as a historical event (thus pointing out that the probabilities of historical knowledge must be reckoned with in reference to the certainty of faith) is the authenticity of the Pauline account of the appearances of the risen Lord to certain members of the Christian community (I Cor. 15:1-11). In contrast to the Gospels' accounts of the appearances of Jesus which Pannenberg (in his highly rationalistic methodical approach to the study of Scripture) thinks "have such a strongly legendary character that one can scarcely find a historical kernel of their own in them,"² he finds strong historical evidence

¹Cf. Robert North, "Pannenberg's Historicizing Exegesis," The Heythrop Journal, II, no. 4, 377-400; H. D. Betz, "The Concept of Apocalyptic in the Theology of the Pannenberg Group," Journal for Theology and the Church, VI (1969), 192-207; William R. Murdock, "History and Revelation in Jewish Apocalypticism," Interpretation, XXI (1967), 167-187. It should be pointed out that Pannenberg has acknowledged that his idea of the Jewish apocalyptic theology of history must be revised (Basic Questions in Theology, I, xviii).

²Jesus--God and Man, p. 89.

of such appearances in Paul. Pannenberg writes:

In view of the age of the formulated traditions used by Paul and of the proximity of Paul to the events, the assumption that appearances of the resurrected Lord were really experienced by a number of members of the primitive Christian community and not perhaps freely invented in the course of later legendary development has good historical foundation.¹

It is in this context of apocalyptic tradition and the appearances of Jesus as reported by Paul that Pannenberg considers decisively significant for ascertaining the resurrection as a historical event. However, the question arises whether Pannenberg has in fact "proved" the resurrection itself, or proved that Paul and those to whom he appeals as witnesses, whose testimony could be checked by Paul's contemporaries, merely said that Jesus was raised on the basis of their having remembered certain appearances of the risen Lord. Whether or not the mere fact that it can be proved that Paul said Jesus was raised from the dead constitutes a "historical demonstration" of the resurrection itself is problematic. If one understands history in Collingwood's sense, then Pannenberg's proof is not a historical demonstration of the resurrection. For Collingwood, what is merely remembered does not qualify as scientific history. Paul's statement of the resurrection is based on the "memory" of those who witnessed the appearances of the risen Lord, but there was no present concrete evidence that Paul could appeal to, excepting of course the empty tomb which Paul does not ever mention.

Collingwood, whose epistemology of history Pannenberg in general follows,² defines scientific historical knowledge in terms of what can be conclusively known comparable to the certainty that one can attain in mathe-

¹Ibid., p. 91.

²Basic Questions in Theology, I, 70-72, 78-80.

matics. It leaves "nothing to caprice," and allows "no alternative conclusion, but proved its point as conclusively as a demonstration in mathematics."¹ However, Collingwood does not define all reality as history.²

In this respect, a biography is not defined as historical knowledge insofar as it relies on memory and not concrete evidence. To be sure, Collingwood does not deny that a biography is genuine knowledge, but it is not historical knowledge inasmuch as there is no immediate appeal to tangible evidence but only an appeal to one's memory.³ Precisely what historical knowledge is for Collingwood can be seen when he writes:

If I say 'I remember writing a letter to So-and-so last week', that is a statement of memory, but it is not an historical statement. But if I can add 'and my memory is not deceiving me; because here is his reply', then I am basing a statement about the past on evidence; I am talking history.⁴

Thus, scientific historical knowledge is imaginatively re-enacting the past on the basis of what is currently given as concrete evidence.

On the other hand, whenever it is asserted that historical conclusions represent degrees of probability, then Collingwood says that one is resorting to scissor-and-paste history, which relies on memory and authority of others.⁵ However, Collingwood affirms that we may accept as true some things even though we cannot appeal to the grounds upon which they are based. But this "information" is not scientific historical knowledge, even though it may be said that such is real knowledge and not mere belief.⁶

Thus, when Pannenberg states that the resurrection of Jesus has "good historical foundation" on the basis of those who saw the appearances of

¹Collingwood, The Idea of History, p. 262. ²Ibid., pp. 210, 302.

³Ibid., p. 304. ⁴Ibid., pp. 252-253. ⁵Ibid., pp. 257-263.

⁶Ibid., pp. 256-257.

the risen Lord and that faith has its point of departure "on an event which we can know historically only with probability,"¹ then he is not providing a scientific historical demonstration of the corporeality of the resurrection, but rather he is only historically demonstrating that Paul and the early Christian community "said" that Jesus was raised on the basis of their memory of his having appeared to them. If this is to be called a historical demonstration, then clearly in Collingwood's terms this is a scissor-and-paste history, based on the memory and authority of those who reported the appearances. It is because theology has to do with degrees of probabilities in regard to history that causes the real rub for faith. This is why Kierkegaard and subsequent neo-orthodox theology refused to put faith at the mercy of historical research. For Kierkegaard, faith has its point of reference in history, but its sole condition is found in God Himself. That is, faith is solely the work of God. Though Pannenberg clearly distinguishes between the certainty of faith and the certainty of historical knowledge and shows that they lie on different levels,² nevertheless, his exclusively critical-historical approach is at best problematic from an apologetic standpoint, for the Scriptures are primarily kerygmatic in intention and only secondarily can be appealed to as "historical sources," though this is not to reject in principle Pannenberg's goal of historically vindicating the knowledge of revelation which is logically prior to faith. Thus, insofar as Jesus' resurrection is concerned, perhaps it would be more correct to say the resurrection as a historical event can be shown to be genuine knowledge and not mere belief, though it does not qualify as a historically verifiable "scientific" knowledge merely from the standpoint of the Pauline kerygma.

¹Theology as History, p. 273. ²Ibid.

According to Collingwood's epistemology, Paul's re-enactment of the resurrection event would have to elicit the support of concrete evidence (such as the empty tomb) and not merely the memory of witnesses before it could qualify as scientific knowledge.

To be sure, Pannenberg appeals to the tradition of the empty tomb and sees in this tradition a valid historical account.¹ Consequently, in theory Pannenberg can assume that the resurrection event can be historically demonstrated (even according to Collingwood's idea of "scientific" history) inasmuch as there is not only the tradition of the appearances of the risen Lord, but also the tradition of the empty tomb as well. This is to say, "scientific" historical knowledge based on what is concrete evidence (and not mere memory) can be claimed for the resurrection event itself, if in fact the tradition of the empty tomb is authentic. But on the other hand, when Pannenberg argues that (1) the Jewish apocalyptic expectation (which provided the language for expressing what is meant by the resurrection) and (2) the Pauline kerygma constitute in themselves a historical demonstration,² it is debateable. Only if the tradition of the empty tomb can be supported (which Pannenberg argues in favor of) can the resurrection in theory be called a "scientific" historical demonstration.

However, to restrict the term "historical knowledge" to Collingwood's definition is more confusing than instructive for the Christian believer whose faith has to do with historical events. Furthermore, the question arises whether or not Collingwood's so-called "scientific" history is more a subjective assertion rather than an objective possibility. To be sure, history

¹Jesus--God and Man, pp. 99-106. ²Ibid., p. 98.

should be "wholly a reasoned knowledge of what is transient and concrete."¹ But is it really possible to assert that "scientific" history proves "its point as conclusively as a demonstration in mathematics"?² This is to say, can historical knowledge ever advance beyond the concept of probability?

In contrast to Collingwood's epistemology and from a more "practical" (rather than "scientific") perspective, the believer can speak of the resurrection as a historical event on the basis of Jesus' appearance to the disciples and can refer to this knowledge as historical knowledge inasmuch as the appearance was an occurrence that happened in space and time. At the same time it is to be acknowledged in accordance with Collingwood's epistemology that there can be no "scientific" historical verifiability of the resurrection (if indeed there be such history at all!) merely from the standpoint of the Pauline kerygma, especially since Paul (I Cor. 15:1-11) only appeals to the memory of those who witnessed the appearances of the resurrected Lord. One might further suggest that in the light of what Paul says of the reality of Jesus' resurrection that to disbelieve that Jesus was raised from the dead reflects a particular Weltanschauung rather than what Paul's resurrection kerygma actually affirms on the basis of eye-witness testimony, whose testimony could be checked.

Pannenberg's emphasis in this regard has been to point out that the knowledge upon which faith has its point of departure is objective. It is his quest for the objectivity of knowledge that so characteristically differentiates Pannenberg from the Kantian presupposition that reason can cognize no valid theological content which rather must be referred to faith as a subjective postulation. Pannenberg's ontology is in fact a clear rejection

¹Supra, p. 278. ²Supra, p. 328.

of the Kantian dualistic definition of reality. In this respect, he cannot accept a dualistic epistemology in which history is dichotomized into the sacred and the profane. There are not two kinds of historical reality, for God works in the ordinary world of profane history. Thus, he criticizes Richard Rothe for making the distinction between the manifestation of God in the external events of history and the inspiration of the biblical witnesses whose interpretation is essential to a correct understanding of those revelatory events. Likewise, he criticizes Paul Althaus for holding to the view that the meaning of Jesus' history as revelation is only accessible to faith.¹

Pannenberg writes:

Such a splitting up of historical consciousness into a detection of facts and an evaluation of them (or into history as known and history as experienced) is intolerable to Christian faith, not only because the message of the resurrection of Jesus and of God's revelation in him necessarily becomes merely subjective interpretation, but also because it is the reflection of an outmoded and questionable historical method. It is based on the futile aim of the positivist historians to ascertain bare facts without meaning in history.²

Pannenberg insists upon the primordial unity of fact and meaning, event and interpretation. Every event imposes its own meaning to each inquirer. To be sure, not every event possesses equal clarity, but its clarity will be disclosed in proportion to the knowledge of its "context of occurrence and tradition in which it took place and through which it is connected with the present and its historical interest."³ Here it can be seen that Pannenberg is not resorting to a simplistic epistemology in which the mind passively receives reality. Rather, one must critically evaluate events in the

¹Theology as History, pp. 125-126.

²Ibid., p. 126. Cf. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 8.

³Ibid., p. 127.

light of their contexts.

This context of tradition extends from the present moment of each particular inquirer into the past event. One must not simply inquire into the past as though it were a dead past. The historian is no cemetery caretaker.¹ This reciprocal relationship of past and present means that our present thought-world is not to be sacrificed to a previous world view, but at the same time our own world view is not to be considered inflexible or absolute. Pannenberg is not embracing an absolute relativism of historical knowledge, but rather he is pointing out that any one event has its inherent meaning only as it is seen in the context of universal history. Obviously truth in any absolute sense of the word cannot be rationally comprehended by finite man, but this does not minimize the fact that the greater a knowledge of the traditional historical context of any event, the greater one's understanding of the event will be.

Pannenberg is careful to guard against permitting one's own subjective interpretation to be injected into an event of the past. Though an event must be interpreted in the context of universal history, this does not mean one can inject whatever interpretation he likes into the event. "If we are to take these facts seriously, nothing out to be inserted so as to allow them to be seen in a way different from what would naturally emerge."²

That one does not see the events correctly does not mean that they are beyond human reason to know. It could be that one does not have sufficient historical data to see the meaning of an event. At any rate, insofar as the meaning of the Christ event is concerned, that certain men do not see Jesus

¹Pannenberg, History and Hermeneutic, p. 125.

²Revelation as History, p. 137.

as the revelation of God does not indicate this unique event is above reason to know. "If the problem is not thought of in this way, then the Christian truth is made into a truth for the in-group, and the church becomes a gnostic community."¹

It can be seen that Pannenberg distinguishes between faith and knowledge in a comparable way to the Reformers' distinction of notitia, assensus, and fiducia.² Faith is trust in Jesus and his message. It is this fiducial faith that creates fellowship with God. But, this faith is not blind gullibility. It is based on knowledge, i.e., insight (notitia plus assensus). Faith has its frame of reference in historical events which can be sufficiently verified, thus satisfying the demands of our critical rationality, while faith itself, on the other hand, has its sole condition in the free grace of God. This means faith is logically preceded by knowledge and thus presupposes its basis is true. But the condition for faith is the work of God. To be sure, this knowledge of faith's basis may not be psychologically antecedent to faith, i.e., faith may not have a scientific knowledge of its basis, but it at least must presuppose that this basis is true.

It would thus not be accurate in the strict sense of the word to say that Pannenberg is trying to prove faith. Pannenberg is quite willing to subsume knowledge under the category of faith in the Reformer's terminology. Faith, in this respect, includes notitia, assensus, and fiducia. But even here, notitia and assensus logically precede fiducia.³ Pannenberg further points out the relationship of faith and knowledge when he writes: "One cannot really know of God's revelation in Jesus Christ without believing.

¹Ibid. ²Basic Questions in Theology, II, 30ff.

³Ibid., p. 30.

But faith does not take the place of knowledge."¹ Thus, faith has its sole condition in the work of God and is not the accomplishment of man, though at the same time Pannenberg contends that the knowledge which faith presupposes must be open to critical historical research. Thus, it is trust in Jesus which creates fellowship with God and not theoretical knowledge.

He who believes in Jesus has salvation in Jesus whom he trusts, without regard to the question how it stands with his historical and theological knowledge of Jesus. The presupposition is, of course, that fellowship with Jesus really mediates and assures salvation. The research and knowledge of theology, or at least of the theoretical disciplines of theology, deal with the truth of this presupposition of faith. Such knowledge is thus not a condition for participating in salvation, but rather it assures faith about its basis. It thereby enables faith to resist the gnawing doubt that it has no basis beyond itself and that it merely satisfies a subjective need through fictions, and thus² is only accomplishing self-redemption through self-deception.

This emphasis upon history as the locus of revelation which is open to rational inquiry stands in radical contrast to all forms of dialectical theology. Pannenberg readily admits that this exclusively historical approach puts faith at the mercy of historical research. In this respect, one must reckon with the possibility that the knowledge upon which faith is based could be shown to be false in the light of future research. To be sure, Pannenberg does not take this possibility to be a probability: "I see no occasion for apprehension that such a position of research should emerge in the foreseeable future. But in principle it cannot be excluded."³

The protests and objections⁴ to Pannenberg's proposals are hardly

¹Theology as History, p. 128. ²Theology as History, p. 269.

³Ibid., p. 274.

⁴In this respect, Pannenberg complains of the many misrepresentations of his position ("Postscript," Revelation as History, p. 187.) James Robinson also says "that argumentation by gibe, innuendo, misunderstanding and inadequate representation has characterized the debate, which makes it at times difficult to sift out the points worthy of serious discussion" (Theology as History, p. 80.)

surprising in the light of its radical divergence from the generally accepted concept of revelation which is not open to critical, rational inquiry. However, the question arises whether or not he has in fact articulated the central concern of faith? Has he not shown that concrete historical events cannot be treated as marginal or outdated aspects of the biblical witness? That such questions should be answered affirmatively has already been suggested. We now turn to a closer look at what Pannenberg means by universal history.

B. History as the Totality of all Reality

Reality as history necessarily implies the temporal development of reality, in contrast to the Greek concept of the cosmos as the timeless and unchanging reality. This means that all truth is historically mediated, and thus it is incomplete. There can be no total mediation of truth through history because the whole of reality as history is not yet known. This is not suggesting a relativistic narrowing down of historical knowledge, but a fundamental recognition of man's finiteness. In this respect, Pannenberg's proposal for universal history does not succumb to Hegel's total mediation of truth through history which is accomplished in the present moment.¹ However, Pannenberg does suggest a total mediation of truth through history which will be ultimately accomplished in the eschaton, but which is known now only proleptically and provisionally.² As we have seen, this total mediation of truth which is accomplished in the eschaton is a direct self-revelation of God. Until the eschaton, history mediates only indirectly the self-revelation of God.

¹Pannenberg, History and Hermeneutic, pp. 146ff.

²Ibid., p. 151.

To see the present as being drawn toward a definable goal in the future is not to overlook the irrational and diabolical characteristics of history. It is not a naive optimism, but rather it affirms on the basis of what God has done in Christ that ultimately the love of God will triumph. Even an optimistic philosophy of history such as Hegel's does not ignore the evil and the fragmentary nature of history. Hegel speaks of "history as the slaughter-bench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of states, and the virtue of individuals have been sacrificed."¹ He further says: "But actually history is not the soil of happiness. The periods of happiness are blank pages in it."² Despite this, Hegel asserts that history is governed by reason.³

However, in contrast to Hegel, to affirm "that reality is history hastening toward an End"⁴ does not mean that history is merely the external exhibition of a logically fixed Idea, for this in effect would reduce history to the nonessential insofar as anything really new occurring. World history for Hegel "represents the phases in the development of the principle whose content is the consciousness of freedom."⁵ This is to say, history is the manifestation of a logically fixed Idea (or Reason) which comes to its awareness in human consciousness, i.e., "world history is the exhibition of spirit striving to attain knowledge of its own nature."⁶

In contrast to Hegel, history as it moves toward its goal in the eschaton in fact undergoes further development which includes modifications and transformations of present reality.⁷ Despite this contingency and inconclusiveness of history, to think in terms of the whole of reality is an

¹Hegel, Reason in History, p. 27. ²Ibid., p. 33. ³Ibid., p. 47.

⁴Theology as History, p. 133. ⁵Hegel, Reason in History, p. 70.

⁶Ibid., p. 23. ⁷Pannenberg, Theology as History, p. 260.

inescapable fact of life, even though it is usually done unreflectively.¹

That it is the experience of man to organize his life in relation to the whole of his world has been shown in terms of Kant's transcendental ego. The self is the means of connecting all the appearances of phenomena into a unity by means of the conceptions of the understanding.² This means that it is through our consciousness that we as a thinking self (as ego, the transcendental apperception) organize all of our experiences of phenomena into a coherent whole. For Kant, this self-organizing activity of the transcendental apperception relates only to what are the objects of our experiences and not the subject of what we experience. This means the self is transcendental and thus not an absolute self. This further means that the coherent structure of phenomena produced by the transcendental ego is not absolute knowledge; i.e., it is not knowledge of what really is, but merely what appears.³ It is this "transcendental ego" that serves as Hegel's point of departure for showing what he means by universal history. Hegel says that this definition of the ego has an important characteristic--it shows that thought produces unity, that thought organizes all the manifold things into one.⁴ Thought for Hegel is reality (the Idea, Reason, God). This reality is a process of becoming aware of itself in human consciousness, or in history. Or, to put it otherwise, history is a process of reality becoming aware of itself in human consciousness. Thus, a knowledge of history is a knowledge of God, i.e., God (reality, freedom, thought, etc.) comes to know himself in human subjectivity.⁵ What Hegel is asserting is a metaphysical monism over against Kant's

¹Ibid., p. 242. ²Prolegomena, pp. 65-66. ³Ibid., p. 82.

⁴History of Philosophy, III, 437.

⁵Hegel, Reason in History, pp. 23, 67.

dualism. However, Hegel is building on to Kant's basic idea of the transcendental ego which organizes all the elements of human knowledge into one consistent whole. Hegel turns Kant's transcendental ego into the "Notion," the "Truth of all modes of Consciousness," "Absolute knowledge."¹ This purely logical description (which Hegel derives from Kant's transcendental logic) has its actual development in world history.² "For world history is the manifestation of the Divine, the absolute process of Spirit in its highest forms. It is this development wherein it achieves its truth and the consciousness of itself."³ Thus, in his Logic, the Notion is the "Spirit's knowledge of its own pure essence,"⁴ whereas in world history this concrete development of the Spirit's knowledge of itself takes place. Hence, just as it is the nature of Kant's transcendental ego to organize all its thoughts of phenomena into a single coherent whole, even so it is the nature of reason (the Idea, thought) to effect a unity of all reality. Thus, in terms of his Philosophy of History, the concrete actualization of God's essence (or, the Notion) constitutes universal history.⁵ To be sure, Hegel believed his dialectical method to be unsurpassable. Whether or not he believed that there would be no further progress in philosophy itself is debatable.⁶ At any rate, he did in principle overleap the boundary of finite existence by indicating that absolute knowledge could be mediated in the present in terms of world history.⁷

On the other hand, Pannenberg does not assert that one can attain absolute knowledge as though he would be able on the basis of present

¹Supra, p. 82. ²Hegel, Reason in History, p. 70.

³Ibid., p. 67, cf. p. 69. ⁴Supra, p. 82.

⁵Hegel, Reason in History, p. 95. ⁶Supra, p. 98.

⁷Hegel, Reason in History, p. 95.

experience to comprehend the whole of history. But, he does argue that the whole of reality can be historically mediated provisionally and proleptically on the basis of God's activity in the world. Pannenberg writes:

But the Hegelian conception of history is in fact not the only possible one, because the end of history can also be understood as something which is itself only provisionally known, and in consideration of this provisional nature of our knowledge of the end of history, the horizon of the future could be held open and the finitude of human experience preserved. Precisely this understanding of history as a totality presented from the perspective of an end provisionally and proleptically accessible, is the understanding which is presently to be gleaned from the history of Jesus in its relationship to the Israelite-Jewish tradition.¹

Pannenberg acknowledges his indebtedness to Hegel's insights concerning the idea of a universal history,² but Pannenberg locates the original source, not in Hegel, but in the biblical tradition itself.³ In this respect,

¹History and Hermeneutic, p. 151.

²Ibid.; Revelation as History, pp. 4, 5, 19.

³History and Hermeneutic, p. 151. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 12. Pannenberg has been accused of forcing theology into an alien philosophical mold (Cf. Martin Buss, "The Meaning of History," Theology as History, p. 143; William R. Murdock, "History and Revelation in Jewish Apocalypticism," Interpretation, XXI, 1967, 187), but is he not rather more fully explicating in non-biblical terms (i.e., the idea of universal history) what is the authentic biblical distinction between the present revelation of God in Jesus as Saviour and the future consummation of his revelation "when his glory (i.e., Jesus' divinity) shall be revealed" (I Peter 4:3). Cf. Baillie, p. 60. Lothar Steiger thinks Pannenberg uncritically adopted Hegel's concept of universal history without considering the problems which his epistemology raises in regard to the self-mediation of thought (Lothar Steiger, "Revelation-History and Theological Reason," History and Hermeneutic, p. 87). One may well wish that Pannenberg had defined his theology of universal history in more direct relation to Hegel (and in this respect this thesis has already pointed out the relationship between Hegel's idea of world history and his epistemology, as well as indicating its similarity to Pannenberg's theology). But surely Pannenberg did not intend to present his theology of history as directly dependent on Hegel, i.e., Pannenberg's idea of universal history was not a mere sacred version of Hegel's universal history. Thus, to discredit Pannenberg's theology of universal history simply because he does not comprehensively evaluate Hegel's thought is not justifiable, for Pannenberg intends to support his position from Scripture, not from Hegel. Thus, if one is to dismiss Pannenberg's proposal for a theology of universal history, he must do so exegetically and not with reference to how adequately Pannenberg understood Hegel.

Hegel's philosophical terms are an adoption of the vocabulary of theism, which in turn is transformed in its meaning to fit Hegel's monistic metaphysics.¹ In this respect, we have already pointed out that Hegel was a metaphysical monist, but not a monotheist.² On the other hand, Pannenberg derives his theology of universal history from five biblical themes: (1) the prophetic vision of the universality of the God of Israel,³ (2) the Jewish apocalyptic expectation of the coming Kingdom of God,⁴ (3) Jesus' claim to authority,⁵ (4) Jesus' eschatological message of the imminent reign of God,⁶ and (5) the self-confirmation of Jesus' unity with God through his resurrection from the dead.⁷

In asserting that it is history as the whole of reality (which culminates at the end) that reveals the essence of God, Pannenberg is not intending to suggest that the infinite is reduced to the finite or that God is identical with the process of history itself. But neither is God to be thought of as a timeless, static Being. Rather, He is creatively active in the process of history. He is the power of the future who works in the present in order to usher in his Kingdom. This is not to localize the infinite in the finite. Neither is it to adopt "an exclusive immanence" (which is itself a contradiction in terms)⁸ as opposed to a transcendency. Pannenberg writes:

¹Hegel, Reason in History, p. 25. ²Supra, p. 242n.

³Revelation as History, p. 133 et passim; Basic Questions in Theology, II, 113f.; Theology as History, pp. 118-125.

⁴Revelation as History, p. 127; Jesus--God and Man, pp. 67, 74-75, 78, 81.

⁵Theology as History, pp. 101-117. ⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., pp. 125-131; Jesus--God and Man, pp. 53-114.

⁸Theology as History, pp. 251-252.

History is not the field of a finitude which is enclosed within itself, an "immanence" to which one could and indeed would have to oppose a "transcendence." History is far rather the ongoing collapse of the existing reality which is enclosed in its own "immanence" (because centered on itself). The power of the infinite is active and present in this collapse of the finite.¹

Thus, history is not merely the sum total of what man has done and suffered, as Aristotle put it.² Neither is history merely the creation of man, as Vico and Dilthey asserted. What man is and has created are finite, but history in this sense is not finite. "Rather, it accomplishes the crisis of the finite throughout time. Hence man shows himself to be finite in his history."³ Pannenberg further writes:

If one regards history only as the sum of the self-contained finite, and understands it in this way as the total panorama of human deeds and sufferings, then it really becomes incomprehensible how it can be said of history that God is revealed in it.⁴

However, Pannenberg points out that history is not itself self-explanatory apart from the transcendent reality of God who chooses to make himself known in history.⁵ If history were thought of as being "wholly other" from the

¹Theology as History, pp. 251-252.

²Aristotle's Treatise on Rhetoric, edited and translated by Theodore Buckley (London: George Bell and Sons, 1894), p. 424.

³Theology as History, p. 252. ⁴Ibid.

⁵Writing from the standpoint of a "secular Christianity," Ronald Gregor Smith has pointed out in this regard the "malaise in the modern secularist position" in that it tends to eliminate the element of faith in the transcendent reality of God. For Smith, it is this "faith which makes man's autonomous responsible action possible" (The Doctrine of God, edited and prepared for publication by K. Gregor Smith and A. D. Galloway [London: Collins, 1970], p. 158). To be sure, Smith is not speaking of history in Pannenberg's sense; but from a different perspective he is arguing, as Pannenberg does, that what makes man's responsible action and meaningful experience possible in history is the historicity of God, i.e., man knows God to be the source of our own historicity because God himself "is involved in our history" (ibid., p. 166). Thus, Smith speaks of God's history because He is involved in man's history. Smith, in speaking of the history of God, does not mean to suggest that God undergoes a change in His essence and thus he parts company with those forms

reality of God, then there would be no purpose in speaking of God, if history in this respect were complete and comprehensible without Him.

Only because the infinite reality, which as personal can be called God, is present and active in the history of the finite, can one speak of a revelation of God in history. For it is thereby concretely shown that the finite is not left to itself.¹

Thus, God reveals Himself indirectly in history and in Jesus of Nazareth joins Himself to the finite. But this is not saying that history reveals God as an inference from history as though this would constitute a cosmological proof for the existence of God corresponding to the Greek idea of a timeless cosmos from which one infers the existence of one god.² Rather, God is "immediately perceptible to men" because He makes Himself known, and thus this knowledge "is not first discovered upon reflection by means of an inference."³

C. An Eschatological Doctrine of Creation

The central theme in Pannenberg's entire systematic theology is his eschatologically-oriented ontology. In this respect, he views historical time and the comprehensive whole of reality (i.e., history) from an eschatologically-oriented perspective.⁴

of process theology which adhere to Whitehead at this point (ibid., pp. 143-161). Likewise, Pannenberg argues that time is implicit in the essence of God, though God Himself does not change in His essence (infra, pp. 351ff.).

¹Theology as History, p. 253.

²Ibid., pp. 254-255. Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 77ff. Hiroshi Obayashi, "Pannenberg and Troeltsch: History and Religion," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, XXXVII (1970), 401-419.

³Theology as History, p. 255.

⁴This eschatological feature of Pannenberg's ontology is the overwhelming emphasis of all his writings so that it is not practical to provide a comprehensive system of footnote references to all that he has to say on this subject.

What he has to say about an eschatological conception of ontology has its exegetical basis in Jesus' message on the imminent Kingdom of God. Pannenberg takes seriously the well-known tension that expresses itself in Jesus' eschatological message, i.e., the tension between "the already" and "the not-yet" aspects of the Kingdom of God. Pannenberg sees this tension to mean that both future and present are "inextricably interwoven."¹ God's Kingdom is not merely some future cosmic event, while man simply waits and endures for its arrival. Rather, the present is pregnant with meaning because God, who is the power of the future, extends his rule into the present. This means the present is the effect of the future. God as the power of the future has acted decisively in His Son whose message, life, and fate have eschatological significance for all mankind. This means Jesus' eschatology cannot be narrowed down to a timeless eschatological "deed of God" in which the possibilities of human existence would merely be unveiled.² Rather, who Jesus was and what happened to him is a proleptic unveiling of the future. This also suggests that it is the "power of the future" which is so decisively significant for the "present" instead of the mere "power of the past."³

Thus, the imminent Kingdom of God as proclaimed in the eschatological message of Jesus is "a key to the whole of Christian theology."⁴ This presupposition of the Kingdom of God for theological reflection holds in utter seriousness the cosmic and historical implications of Jesus' eschatological

¹Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 53.

²Ibid., p. 52.

³Ibid., p. 64; Basic Questions in Theology, pp. 243 et passim.

⁴Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 53.

message. This to say, the eschatological future must not be reduced to a mere ethical attainment on the part of man as though he could bring about the Kingdom of God on earth by means of his own initiative. "This future is expected to come in a marvelous way from God himself; it is not simply the development of human history or the achievement of God-fearing men," according to the biblical witness.¹ The uniqueness of Jesus' eschatological message, however, consisted not in his preaching concerning the coming of God's Kingdom on earth, but rather that the presence of this coming Kingdom was now already happening in his person, thus showing that the present is to be seen in the light of the future and that he himself as God's Son is the pre-actualization of the future.

This radical nature of Jesus' eschatological message stands in sharp contrast to the ethical interpretation of the liberal theology of the nineteenth century. For Albert Schweitzer, Jesus' eschatological preaching was an offense to modern thought.² For Bultmann and the early Barth, eschatology was stripped of its temporal meaning. Bultmann still speaks of present eschatological existence to the exclusion of any concrete futurity.³ C. H. Dodd believed, as well as Bultmann, that the future aspect of Jesus' message was a dispensible remnant of Jewish thought.⁴ For Pannenberg, the eschatological future of the Kingdom of God, in contrast to a mere eschatological present, is seen to be the "resounding motif of Jesus' message," and for this reason cannot be summarily dismissed.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 52. ²The Quest for the Historical Jesus, p. 397.

³Supra, pp. 229f.

⁴History and the Gospel (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1938), p. 62.

⁵Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 53.

This brings us to Pannenberg's idea of an eschatological doctrine of creation.¹ This suggests that the present derives its significance and power from the future, which has always been active in the past. This reversal of the time sequence in which the future has priority over the past is a fundamental implication of Jesus' eschatological message, i.e., the coming Kingdom of God.

To speak of the Kingdom of God is to speak of the rule of God. To speak of the rule of God is to speak of the being of God, since His rule cannot be thought of apart from His existence. To speak of the being of God in connection with the rule of God is to speak of the power of God, for it is through the power of His being that He rules.² And, since Jesus' eschatological message proclaimed both the "already" and the "not-yet" of the Kingdom of God, it can be said "in a restricted but important sense, God does not yet exist. Since his rule and his being are inseparable, God's being is still in the process of coming to be."³ In this way, Pannenberg points out that it is in the eschaton that God's rule shall be universally established at which time it can be said that the goal of history will be attained, thus showing that the end of history will be one with the essence

¹Ibid., pp. 60, 70. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 237.

²Theology and the Kingdom of God, pp. 55f.

³Ibid., p. 56. Cf. Basic Questions in Theology, II, 242. Obayashi obscures this ontological implication of Jesus' eschatological message and resurrection when he suggests that Pannenberg's emphasis upon the future is derived from his ontological and cosmological presuppositions (Hiroshi Obayashi, "Pannenberg and Troeltsch: History and Religion," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, XXXVII [1970], 405, 413). Quite the contrary, it could be argued that Pannenberg's emphasis upon the ontological priority of the future has its basis in Jesus' eschatological message and not in any ontological presupposition per se.

of God. The meaning of this "not-yet" of God's existence will be further enunciated in connection with the idea of eternity.

The ontological implication of Jesus' eschatological message suggests a reversal in the traditional time sequence. Creation does not stand at the opposite pole of eschatology within the time spectrum. Rather, theology should speak of a "creative eschaton,"¹ thereby showing that the temporal beginnings of the history of the world eventuate from the future and that God as the power of the future is creatively directing the course of history toward the ultimate inauguration of His Kingdom. This means creation should not be seen from the perspective of a mere primordial beginning.

The notion of the Kingdom of God evokes a vision of the unity of each being and the unity of the whole world as flowing from the future. Far from creation being at one end of the time spectrum and eschatology at the other, creation and eschatology are partners in the formation of reality. The future decides the specific meaning, the essence, of everything by revealing what it really was and is. At present a being is "something," a unity in itself, only by anticipation of its unifying future. The future interprets the present and the past; all other interpretations are helpful only to the degree that they anticipate the future.²

Thus, an eschatological doctrine of creation calls for the rearranging of the traditional time sequence, so that the past and present are seen to be the effect of the future. This does not eliminate the contingency of events. On the contrary, contingency (freedom) is a necessary presupposition for the existence of a personal God who is the power of the future. Without the concept of freedom there can be no concept of person as such. Thus, the contingency of events suggests the reality of a personal God who brings into existence what is uniquely new.³

¹Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 67. Cf. Jesus--God and Man, pp. 391f.

²Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 60. ³Ibid., pp. 58ff.

Also, an eschatological ontology points to the constancy (pre-destination) of events. Both contingency and constancy are essential elements. Reality is not one blind chaotic process, but neither is it a mechanically operated cause-effect. What is significant is that despite the contingency of the world there is unity, for God as the power of the future guarantees the unity of all events through His sovereignty while at the same time allows for contingency in His freedom. Thus, the decisive feature of Jesus' eschatological message is that the present eventuates from the future, i.e., the present is being drawn toward a definable goal in which all reality shall come under the rule of God. Pannenberg writes:

Jesus' message of the Kingdom of God implies that the unity of the world is to be expected from its future. Therefore the unity of all things should not be understood in terms of an eternal cosmos but as something to be achieved by a process of reconciling previous schisms and contradictions. Reconciliation is a constitutive aspect of creation.¹

Here it can be clearly seen that Pannenberg does not divorce nature and history. He is not willing to restrict the theologian's concern to man and then simply turn everything else over to natural science. Rather, he shows that creation itself is in need of the reconciling activity of God.² In this respect, the theologian must reject the idea of natural causality in the sense that natural or historical processes are mechanically necessitated. It is this presupposition of natural science that Whitehead labels "anti-rationalistic," "a naive faith," and "scientific materialism."³

¹Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 60.

²Indeed the biblical witness includes "nature" as well as man to be fallen under the curse of sin (Genesis 3:17; Romans 8:19-23). Cf. Cullmann, Salvation in History, p. 146.

³Supra, pp. 271f. Whitehead's ontological consideration demands the existence of God as the Principle of Concretion in order to account for the "togetherness of all actual occasions." To be sure, this idea of God is a

While the scientific laws of natural science have their validity in the sense that they are descriptive of the processes of nature, they are not to be thought of as "deterministic models of reality,"¹ or as Leibniz has put it, they are not necessary laws of pure reason, but contingent truths of fact.² These laws of nature point to the unity of the world which has its basis in the sovereignty of God, thereby showing that natural processes are contingent upon the freedom of God. This means the law of causality must be seen in the light of the biblical doctrine of creation and eschatology if the eschatological message of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God is to be taken seriously. This further means that the concept of historical relativity does not rule out a priori the possibility of something absolutely unique occurring in history.

The eschatological conception of time (i.e., that the present which is now past eventuates from the future) overcomes the existentialist narrowing down of time as it is seen in the early Heidegger's Being and Time. In this work, Heidegger spoke of the order of time as originating from the future, through the past, and on to the present. For Heidegger, the future refers to what are the existential possibilities of human existence. The past refers to his facticity, i.e., his "thrownness" into the world. The present refers to his "fallenness," i.e., his not having appropriated his future possibilities. Time is thus understood existentially and ecstatically, i.e., to states of mind. This means man exists, not in time, but as time (temporality).³

metaphysical principle which attempts to explain the "separative," "prehensive," and "modal" characters of space-time and thus is not here introduced for religious purposes (Science and the Modern World, pp. 93, 94, 250).

¹Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 58. ²Supra, p. 33.

³Supra, pp. 110f.

Though Heidegger rightly seeks to correct the one-sided mechanical view of time, i.e., time as merely the moving sequence of "nows," on the other hand, Christian theology has the responsibility of showing that the possibilities of human existence are not exhausted in Heidegger's terms of an existentialist-eschatological narrowing down of the future whereby the future is deprived of its concrete reality and re-interpreted in terms of a "state of mind." Stated succinctly, eschatological existence is a present reality because God as the power of the future has acted decisively in the past in His Son who unfolded and made possible in his life, death, and resurrection the present possibilities of human existence and further unfolded what are the eschatological future possibilities of human existence through his resurrection from the dead.

In this respect, Pannenberg has attempted to show that the present meaning and possibilities of human existence eventuate from a concrete future, a future which is identical with the Kingdom of God; but it is a future that has already proleptically arrived in the present which may be thought of as a "permanent present" insofar as this future impinges upon the present.¹ This means that those who are rightly related to Jesus Christ and his message already share in the future, the eschaton.

To speak of the eschatological future of the Kingdom of God is not to eliminate the reality of God's presence and rule in the present. Present eschatological existence is available to man because the eschatological future has proleptically occurred in Jesus of Nazareth whose redemptive life effected man's reconciliation with God. Or, to put it otherwise, salvation is available to man today because the future of God's Kingdom in which God

¹Theology and the Kingdom of God, pp. 142-143.

reigns supremely and universally has been unveiled in Jesus' eschatological message and person, and those who accept his message of forgiveness also accept him, for it is through his cross and resurrection that Jesus' person and message are seen to be interrelated. Thus, those who believe in Jesus already participate in the coming Kingdom of God.¹

To speak of the coming Kingdom of God is not to degrade the past, for God as the power of the future rules the past as well as the present. This means to speak of God as the power of the future is to speak of His eternity. To be sure, eternity is not a timeless reality. It is not the unchanging, primordial, and eternal present of Platonic philosophy. Neither is God "the concept of a timeless ground of being in the depths of reality, in the background of the realm of being."² Rather, time is implicit in the very essence of God.³ This means that only in the actualization of the future, i.e., in the eschaton when God's Kingdom shall become a concrete and universal reality, will history be one with the essence of God. Only then will God's self-revelation be direct, for both his will and purpose will be communicated in an unbroken and direct manner. In philosophical terms, this means subject and object will be identical, that what-is will be fully revealed in what-appears, that the one who communicates and what is communicated will be identical.

In contrast to Whitehead who posits the idea of a development in God because of his involvement in time, Pannenberg sees the futurity of God's

¹Theology as History, pp. 116-117. Jesus--God and Man, pp. 245-280.

²Basic Questions in Theology, II, 244.

³Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 62.

Kingdom to mean that what the present truth is will be decided from the standpoint of the future. But, this does not mean that God undergoes a development in His essence. Rather, when the goal of history has been accomplished, it will be seen that what is true then was true throughout the movement of time. Pannenberg writes:

It is true that, from the view point of our finite present, the future is not yet decided. Therefore, the movement of time contributes to deciding what the definite truth is going to be, also with regard to the essence of God. But--and here is the difference from Whitehead--what turns out to be true in the future will then be evident as having been true all along. This applies to God as well as to every finite reality. God was present in every past moment as the one who he is in his futurity. He was in the past the same one whom he will manifest himself to be in the future. What distinguishes the present argument from Whitehead's philosophy is the ontological priority of the future as this priority is evident in the idea of God as the one who is coming.¹

Pannenberg is not suggesting that God merely relates Himself to finite man as the power of the future, but that God is in himself the power of the future. This means God is pure freedom.² However, without the concept of the future there can be no concept of freedom or person. In this respect, only if man has a future does he have freedom, for openness to the future is a fundamental feature of freedom and individuality. This means man is free to the extent that he can transcend himself and thus transform and go beyond the present. In contrast to man, God is pure freedom because there is no future beyond Him. This idea of the personality and freedom of God is distinguished from Paul Tillich who says that God is not a being or a person but Being itself, the Ground of Being.³ However, Pannenberg points out that unless God is thought of to some extent as an independent Being with

¹Ibid., pp. 62-63. ²Ibid., p. 63.

³Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, I, 235.

personality, the concept of God is meaningless.¹ Pannenberg shows that God is the power of Being because He is the power of the future and thus pure freedom. "Being is itself to be thought of from the side of the future, instead of as the abstract, most universal something in the background of all beings."² Since God (as Being) is the power of the future, this suggests His eternity. Pannenberg writes:

Because there is no future beyond God, his having been the future of his past creatures has not, for him, passed away. He remains the future of the whole of the past and keeps present to himself his having been the finite future of every finite present which has now become past. Thus he keeps his past creatures in the present of his future.³

¹Basic Questions in Theology, II, 236.

²Ibid., p. 246. From a different perspective, Ronald Gregor Smith also calls attention to the inadequacy of Tillich's category of Being in speaking of the reality of God. Smith argues for a more dynamic view of God's reality in which the emphasis falls upon the coming of God to man in terms of historical experience (The Doctrine of God, pp. 78-109). For example, instead of the words spoken to Moses at the burning bush, "I am that I am" (Ex. 3:13-15), suggesting the idea of Being as a fundamental category for speaking of God, Smith seeks to show that what is involved in the giving of this name to Moses is that God will show Himself to His people as He so chooses in His freedom. Smith cites von Rad in support of this interpretation of Ex. 3:13-15 as the dynamic coming of God to man in historical experience: "The whole narrative context leads right away to the expectation that Jahweh intends to import something--but this is not what he is, but what he will show himself to be to Israel" (Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology [Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962], I, 180, cited by Smith, The Doctrine of God, p. 95). Likewise, Pannenberg wants to speak of God in such dynamic terms, but Pannenberg defines the Being of God (ontology) in terms of His unbounded future (eschatology); i.e., God's Being is to be determined by what His eschatological future will show Him to be. In this respect, ontology and eschatology are not separated as they are in Michalson who says: "New Testament faith is eschatological and not ontological" (Worldly Theology, p. 105, cited by Smith, The Doctrine of God, p. 108).

³Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 63.

In this respect, Pannenberg calls for a revision of the Greek idea of eternity (as the eternal present). Since God exists as the final future, then the idea of eternity may be defined as "the totally comprehensive present."¹ In this way, the concept of eternity includes the element of change and time.

From man's finite perspective it can be said that "the eschaton is eternity in the fullest sense."² Eternity refers to the existence (or Being) of God. And since in the eschaton it is the essence of God to exist, the past, present, and future are merged into one. This means the eschaton is the arrival of the Kingdom of God. To be sure, God's existence has been from eternity and He has always remained the same because in His pure freedom He exists as the final future. But for finite man, God's essence does not yet fully exist. It is only in the eschaton that God's essence will be directly seen to exist.

By emphasizing the futurity of the Kingdom of God which will disclose the essence of God, it should be reiterated that this is not devaluing the present. Nor is it adopting any form of theological agnosticism. To be sure, man's knowledge of God's revelation can be ascertained historically as it is reported in the biblical tradition, and thus his relationship to God through Jesus of Nazareth is no pious self-delusion. But, man's knowledge (insight) of God's self-revelation is only indirect and partial, which can only be direct and complete in the eschaton. On the other hand, man's experience of God through faith (fiducia) in Jesus is direct and immediate, for fellowship with Jesus "really mediates and assures salvation."³

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 64.

³Pannenberg, Theology as History, p. 269.

"He who believes in Jesus has salvation in Jesus whom he trusts, without regard to the question how it stands with his historical and theological knowledge of Jesus," though of course one must at least presuppose the message of Jesus is true.¹ The distinction between God's direct and indirect self-

¹Ibid. Obayashi has overlooked Pannenberg's basic contention that faith is trust in Jesus and that this fiducial faith cannot be equated with theoretical knowledge (cf. Hiroshi Obayashi, "Future and Responsibility: A Critique of Pannenberg's Eschatology," Studies in Religion Sciences Religieuses, I, no. 3 / Winter, 1971 /, 191-203. To say that Pannenberg reduces faith to the level of a mere "cognitive substitute" (ibid., p. 196) is not to do justice to his position. Further, Pannenberg clearly distinguishes between the certainty of faith and the certainty of historical knowledge, thereby showing that faith in Jesus assures and mediates salvation while historical knowledge is characterized by degrees of probability (cf. Pannenberg, Theology as History, p. 273). Thus, faith and historical knowledge lie on two different levels, but they are not antithetical. Neither is it accurate merely to say that for Pannenberg faith is a "cognitive substitute. It is a trust in the realm of cognition, one that consists in the suspended state of affairs between prolepsis and the eschaton. It is a kind of trust in which man hopes that his knowledge, based on the prolepsis, will be justified rather than disappointed at the end" (Obayashi, Studies in Religion, p. 196). This interpretation of Pannenberg's view of faith which completely ignores his emphasis upon man's existential participation in present salvation is at best a one-sided representation. For example, to say that Pannenberg "fails to ascribe any function to faith" (ibid., p. 198) is not an accurate assessment of Pannenberg's position. When Obayashi says that faith "must include the decision to believe" and that faith is self-commitment (ibid., p. 199), then he is not saying anything different from Pannenberg. On the other hand, Pannenberg would argue that for one to believe without a "factual ground for believing" (ibid.) is pious self-delusion. However, it is not fair to say that "the eschatological ontology of Pannenberg tends to dismiss faith in this sense of total commitment" (ibid., p. 199). Rather, it would be accurate to say that Pannenberg will not accept a divorce between reason and faith. Further, it is a caricature of his position to say that for Pannenberg man's "essence horrifyingly awaits him at the end imposing itself upon his existence as what he should have made of himself" (ibid., p. 198). Quite the contrary, Pannenberg believes that man can have salvation now because he has fellowship with Jesus Christ. But, this present participation in salvation is possible because of the self-revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth. To be sure, for Pannenberg God as the power of the future is bringing history toward its end when the believer will participate in the eschaton and enjoy the naked presence of God. Strictly speaking, fiducial faith, for Pannenberg, has its point of departure in past events (i.e., the Christ event) and this faith is also oriented toward the future. However, faith in Jesus has a definite function for Pannenberg, for it is faith (not theoretical knowledge) that mediates present salvation. Cf. Thomas D. Parker, "Faith and History,

revelation (or stated otherwise, the distinction between the "already" and "not yet" of the Kingdom of God) can be further illustrated in the philosophical distinction of appearance and reality.

The unity and difference between appearance and reality has already been suggested in the chapter on "the ontology of history." There it was pointed out that appearance is the fundamental feature of reality. What appears is what is, though at the same time it must be said that what is is not exhausted in what appears. Reality appears in more than one event, and yet reality is more than its appearances. This does not suggest that appearance is mere semblance. Rather, what is really appears. Pannenberg writes: "Connected with the possibility of manifold appearance of one and the same eidos is the fact that it exhausts itself in none of its appearances. There always remain other ways in which 'the same' eidos could appear."¹

Insofar as the Kingdom of God is concerned, it has already appeared in the ministry of Jesus. In his person, the coming Kingdom of God has al-

A Review of Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, "McCormick Quarterly, XII, no. 1 (November, 1968), especially pp. 72-73 where Parker defends Pannenberg against his critics at this point. Parker here shows that Pannenberg "indicates his awareness of the personal, existential dimensions of faith. He agrees with his critics that faith is a personal commitment made in response to the Kerygma." However, Obayashi (despite his misinterpretation of Pannenberg) does rightly emphasize that if the external evidences of Christian faith extended beyond the realm of more or less degrees of probability to the realm of absolute certainty then faith could easily degenerate into mere fides historica. John Wesley also long ago made this point in his controversy with the English deists. He wrote: "I have sometimes been almost inclined to believe that the wisdom of God has, in most later ages, permitted the external evidence of Christianity to be more or less clogged and encumbered for this very end, that men (of reflection especially) might not altogether rest there, but be constrained to look into themselves also and attend to the light shining in their hearts" (Wesley, "A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity," John Wesley. A Library of Protestant Thought, edited by Albert C. Outler [New York: Oxford University Press, 1964], p. 192).

¹Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 132.

ready commenced in the world, though at the same time the present appearance of the reality of the Kingdom of God does not exhaust its futurity. This is to say, the reality of the Kingdom of God has already made its appearance, even though this appearance is to be differentiated from its reality. Only in the eschaton will the reality of the Kingdom of God be identical with its appearance.

This distinction between the present appearance and the future reality of the Kingdom of God corresponds to the distinction between God as Father and Jesus as Son. That the Kingdom of God has appeared means that the reign of God was begun on earth in the person of Jesus. This means "that God himself had uniquely and definitely appeared in Jesus without the difference between Jesus and God himself being thereby dissolved."¹ Thus, the arrival of the future reality of the Kingdom of God in the present means that God joined Himself to the finite by making His appearance in Jesus, though without restricting the reality of Himself to His appearance in Jesus. Pannenberg writes: "The distinctive characteristic of the message of Jesus is that the future of the rule of God is not separated from the present as still outstanding, but that precisely as the future it becomes the power that determines the present and thus comes to appearance in the present."² Stated philosophically, this means appearance is the partial arrival of the future.³

¹Ibid., p. 134. ²Theology as History, p. 267n.

³Theology and the Kingdom of God, pp. 127-143. Obayashi thinks that Pannenberg's emphasis upon the eschatological future "minimizes the significance of the present." Cf. Hiroshi Obayashi, "Pannenberg and Troeltsch: History and Religion," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, XXXVIII (1970), 413. It is difficult to understand why such a judgment should be made against his idea of the eschatological future. Pannenberg certainly intends to show that the present is decisive because God as the power of the

It is this combined unity and difference in appearance and reality that places the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation at variance with the ancient oriental religions in which any certain form of the deity's appearance was inconsequential because its appearance constituted no essential unity with the god. Because of this separation of appearance and reality, the mythical god could "appear" in as many forms as it wished, for its appearance was nonessential to its being. Likewise, in Platonic philosophy appearance was nonessential to true being. Such is not the case with the idea of the Incarnation. The appearance of God in Jesus of Nazareth means his essential unity with God, thus suggesting that appearance and essential presence coincide. This inseparable interaction between appearance and reality insofar as the doctrine of the Incarnation is concerned is cogently described by Pannenberg.

In the ministry of Jesus, on the contrary, the God of Israel, the future of his Reign, comes definitively to appearance once. He manifested himself in this single event conclusively and for all time, and just for this reason only once. This is how the later ecclesiastical doctrine of the incarnation expressed the matter, over against all Hellenistic notions of an epiphany. The finality of Jesus' ministry is based on its eschatological character, on the fact that through it the ultimate future of God's Reign becomes determinative of the present and there-

future has already acted in the past, thereby giving meaning to the present. For example, Pannenberg says that the eschatological future "has already become decisive for the present since the appearance of Jesus. In virtue of Jesus' appearance and destiny it has become possible to live one's present existence in its specific, concrete constellation as it appears in the light of God's future and thus in his ultimate truth" ("The Question of God," Interpretation, XXI [July, 1967], 313). Perhaps it could be argued that Pannenberg does not actually say enough about the "present" in his writings (cf. Helmut G. Harder and W. Taylor Stevenson, "The Continuity of History and Faith in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Toward an Erotics of History," The Journal of Religion, LXI, no. 1 [January, 1971], 51-54). But to say his theology of the eschatological future "minimizes the significance of the present" is not convincing.

fore becomes present. Appearance and essential presence are here one. Is not this character of the appearance of God in Jesus-- as opposed to the different religio-historical background of the Platonic-Parmenidean relation between appearance and true being--also relevant for considering the problem of appearance in general?¹

Thus, the significance of the appearance of God in Jesus is that this appearance is an enduring present appearance because it is the essential presence of the unlimited future. Theologically stated, the reality of God as the unbounded future has appeared in Jesus of Nazareth, and this appearance is a permanent and enduring present because it is the appearance of the ultimate reality of the future (i.e., God). Pannenberg writes:

The confession of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ affirms, in this sense, that in him the future of God has become present among us, and not only a transitory present (in an event which in the meantime has become past once more for us), but an enduring present--through the spirit of Jesus--because it is a present that has an unbounded future.²

The obvious implication of such an "enduring present" is that in Jesus of Nazareth we have the finality of God's revelation so long as history is still hastening toward the eschaton. This is to say, that if the reality of God has appeared in Jesus, then he is the anticipation of the ultimate future which is God. And, if the appearance of Jesus is the arrival of what is the ultimate future, then no other event can surpass the Christ event without involving itself in a logical contradiction. To be sure, God continues to work in history, but He does not reveal Himself in any fundamentally new manner, i.e., if the appearance of Jesus is really the arrival of God as the power of the future.³

¹Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 135.

²Theology as History, p. 267n.

³Jesus--God and Man, pp. 128ff.

Finally, it can be said that Pannenberg's eschatological doctrine of creation is not a "mobile teleological concept of totality."¹ Rather, history is being drawn toward the eschaton, not inherently, but by God Himself. This means the directional character of history (i.e., history hastening toward its consummation in the eschaton) is not understood in terms of Aristotle's telos. It has no "teleologically-stamped idea of development." Pannenberg defines historical continuity as being "continually created backward by the restrospective attachment of the new to the earlier."² Pannenberg's criticism of Aristotle's doctrine of motion underscores this difference. He writes:

The futurism of this Aristotelian analysis of movement is neutralized, however, by two notions. The first is the notion of self-movement, already conceived of by the later Plato. According to this doctrine the entelechy is not the anticipation of the not yet attained goal, but is the already present (vorhanden) germ, out of which the goal unfolds itself. This inner teleology, which reverses the relation of present and future, has robbed evolutionary thought until our day of the possibility of seeing what is new in each event as something really new. Even more decisive for Aristotle himself is the notion expressed in his Metaphysics that the goal of the movement, in order to be able to cause the movement, must already be somewhere. But if the movement brings forth nothing except what is already actual somewhere else, then nothing new can arise. Also, for Aristotle the realm of forms is timeless, i.e., unlimited presence. Thus, in Aristotle the Eleatic understanding of being prevailed once again.³

D. History as the History-of-the-transmission-of-traditions⁴

As it has already been shown,⁵ Pannenberg points out that the funda-

¹Pannenberg says that Gehard Sauter (Zukunft und Verheissung [1965], p. 266) wrongly draws this conclusion (Theology as History, p. 260n.).

²Ibid., p. 261n. ³Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 139.

⁴James Robinson's translation of Traditionsgeschichte as "history of the transmission of traditions" will be used throughout this section. Cf. Theology as History, p. ix.

⁵Supra, pp. 254ff.

mental biblical meaning of the Word of God is not the direct self-revelation of God, i.e., the direct self-disclosure of God's essence. He writes: "If we do not wish to lose the specifically biblical content, then we must first of all orient the dogmatic concept of the Word of God to the words of God connected with the history of Israel and primitive Christianity--words that have various functions and specific content."¹ Pannenberg thus intends to restore the declarative function of the word. This means that the Word of God tells us something in the way of content that is not identical with the essence of God. In this respect, the Word of God relates to revelation, but is not in itself revelation. Rather, the word is "the concrete execution of the history of revelation."² To speak of the Word of God as a direct divine self-revelation is a gnostic understanding of the word, not a biblical one. Rather, the proof of the deity of God takes on the character of an "indirect self-revelation as a reflex of his activity in history."³ Thus, we have returned to what has been suggested would be Pannenberg's adaptation of Professor McIntyre's concept of revelation--A(x) reveals B(y) to C(Historical Reason).

If history is the sphere of God's revelation, then what significance is the word? The answer is found in the ontological structure of historical reality itself. History includes both natural events and meanings (words). It is not made up of a positivistic idea of brute facts. Rather, history speaks its own language within the context of its tradition.⁴ This means

¹Revelation as History, pp. 11-12.

²Ibid., p. 152. ³Ibid., p. 13

⁴Ibid., p. 137. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 85. Lothar Steiger has exaggerated Pannenberg's subordination of "word" to "event" when he says: "Pannenberg does not have any concept of the word-character of revelation

understanding is likewise a part of history, but understanding itself follows as a natural consequence of seeing events in their traditio-historical context. However, it is only in the context of the whole of reality that the true essence of any one event can be ascertained. Thus, when the word ascribes to any event its essence, i.e., its meaning, then this can only be provisional because the whole of reality in its historical development is not yet final. Only God as the power of the future has such omniscience.

What Pannenberg thus proposes as a solution to the epistemological question whether revelation is effected through word or event is a deeper understanding of history as "history-of-the-transmission-of-traditions."¹ He differentiates his systematic concept of history as the history-of-the-transmission-of-traditions from what is the formal method of exegetical and form-critical research, which inquires from the given literary unity to the original written traditions and then back to the oral traditions. Such an exegetical or form-critical approach is not necessarily concerned with the question of the factuality of the events reported in the traditions, but with Pannenberg the question of the factuality of the events and their meaning is of paramount importance. He thus broadens this method into a systematic structure designed to include "the whole implied behavior of the participating individuals . . . in the investigation."² This further means that "the

because he understands revelation to be the ordering of the data into the overall conception of a plan of salvation" ("Revelation-History and Theological Reason: A Critique of the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," History and Hermeneutic, p. 101). To be sure, Pannenberg does not ascribe any independent authority to words as revelation, but words are ontologically tied up with events, so that the kerygmatic proclamation is an essential part of God's revelation in Jesus Christ (Revelation as History, p. 154).

¹Basic Questions in Theology, I, 93.

²Theology as History, p. 257n.

systematic concept does not begin with the final stage of a text in order to inquire back about the derivation of the material that has been fashioned into it. Rather it begins at the points of origin reached through such historical research and inquires into an open future of transformations, mixtures, or ramifications of traditions."¹

Thus, the underlying presupposition of this concept is that the divinity of God is not comprehended in any one event, but is indirectly revealed in the course of the divine events reported in the traditions and ultimately it is only at the end that God will be directly revealed. Thus, the divine events which reach back into the earliest traditions of Israel's beginnings are continuously absorbed, transformed, or rejected by subsequent traditions. This means any particular divine event is not isolated in itself, but reaches beyond itself whenever it is expressed in words, which serve as vehicles to carry the meanings of the event to others for whom the word has general relevance in that it affirms something about God. This historical experience which "finds its precipitation in language"² is then absorbed by others, and it sheds light on their own historical experiences as well as these subsequent experiences reflect new light on the previous historical experience. In this respect, Pannenberg writes: "The natural events that are involved in the history of a people have no meaning apart from the connection with the traditions and expectations in which men live."³

This historical continuum thus presupposes "the relationship . . . between historical experience and language" which "makes it comprehensible that history takes place as history of the transmission of traditions."⁴

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 256. ³Revelation as History, p. 152.

⁴Theology as History, p. 256.

Pannenberg further describes it this way:

It is a consequence of the language-character of historical experience that human history always accomplishes itself as history of the transmission of traditions, in dialogue with the heritage of a past which is either adopted as one's own or else rejected, and in anticipation of a future which is more than the future of the particular individual concerned.¹

Tradition which is passed on is thus not an uncritical appropriation of the past. It is not the blind acceptance of what has been handed down. Rather, the history-of-the-transmission-of-traditions involves critical re-assessment, modifications, re-interpretations, and an occasional extraction of those parts no longer relevant or credible.² Pannenberg sees this understanding of the history-of-the-transmission-of-traditions to be at work in the biblical traditions. For example, though the prophetic word announced the future acts of God, the fulfillment did not always coincide exactly with what had been promised. Rather, the events at times themselves reflected a new understanding back upon the promises themselves.³ It thus follows that revelation as history is the totality of speech and events. In this respect, Pannenberg disallows a dualistic epistemology in which Historie and Geschichte, outer history and inner history, are divorced. Pannenberg in this way is pointing out that the concept of the Word of God must be linked to a complex of events, if it is to be revelation. The Bible is thus re-defined in terms of a history-of-the-transmission-of-traditions instead of an authoritative book of revealed oracles.

Pannenberg points out that there are three principal meanings of the "Word of God" in Scripture.⁴ First, there is the Word of God as promise.

¹Ibid. ²Theology as History, p. 258.

³Ibid., p. 120. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 88-95.

⁴Revelation as History, pp. 152-155.

However, the prophetic word is not established as proof of God's divinity until its fulfillment in history has come about (I Kings 22:28; Deut. 18: 9-22; Jer. 28:6-9). Second there is the Word of God as forthtelling. As such, the function of the word is to proclaim God's Law and commandments. Third, the Word of God is designated as the apostolic kerygma in the New Testament. Pannenberg writes:

By far the preponderant meaning of the designation "Word of God" in the New Testament is the word of the apostolic proclamation. The message of the apostles is called the Word of God, because it is decisively set in motion (I Thess. 2:13) through the appearances of Jesus (Gal. 1:12, 15f.). This is not because of human effort, but because of God himself. This is really more properly understood as a report of the event in which God is revealed, as the report of the fate of Jesus. This can be seen in the genitive constructions like Word of the cross, Word of redemption, as well as in the parallel usage Word of God and gospel. The appropriate response to this event of the eschatological self-vindication of God is that of "reporting," and this can be so proclaimed in every language, culture, and situation as the decisive act of God's salvation. In this connection, an objective and detached chronological description of this event would not measure up to what is involved in "reporting." Thus, the apostolic word in the sense of report is also essentially proclamation.¹

Thus, the kerygmatic proclamation of God's revelation in Jesus Christ is an essential element, for without this "universal notification" of God's act in Jesus, revelation would not be effected. Equally important is the realization that the kerygma does not "add" something to this revelation, but rather the kerygma is to be seen in the light of its content.² This means the kerygma as the Word of God has revelatory significance only to the extent that it points to Jesus. This further means the word has no autonomous status. The significance of the word lies in what it declares.

¹ Ibid., p. 154.

² Ibid., pp. 154-155. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 85.

Pannenberg thus rejects the idea of a Christology which takes its starting point either in contemporary Christian experience or the mere kerygma of the primitive church. The validation of Christian faith is to be decided on the basis of its content, not the mere proclamation of the kerygma. The content of faith relates to what Jesus was and then secondarily to what he is today for the believer. This means for Pannenberg that it is exclusively the historical method of critically reconstructing the events of Jesus' life upon which Christology must depend. Pannenberg writes: "Only in trust in the reliability of the report of Jesus' resurrection and exaltation are we able to turn in prayer to the one who is exalted and now lives, and thus to associate with him in the present."¹ The emphasis is on "reliability." Pannenberg argues that theology can only show the truth claim of Christian faith as it goes behind the kerygma to the events themselves. In thus stressing the declarative character of language, he points out the tension that exists between the kerygma and its content. This tension was worked out by Baur in terms of a "Tendenzkritik," which means one must ferret out the actual history behind the texts if an accurate picture is to be had. The texts thus exhibit various tendencies which indicate that what they express is not identical with the events to which they refer. This means the texts point away from themselves to other events.² In this respect, Pannenberg describes the kerygma as "report" rather than a mere "witness." He insists that the New Testament must be taken as a 'historical source' and not only as a 'preaching

¹Jesus--God and Man, p. 28.

²History and Hermeneutics, pp. 123ff. Cf. Peter C. Hodgson, The Formation of Historical Theology (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), pp. 196ff. Cf. F. C. Baur, Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien (Tübingen: L. F. Fues, 1847).

text'.¹ In this respect, Pannenberg rejects Kähler's identification of the kerygmatic presentation of Jesus Christ and the historical Jesus, though Pannenberg does insist upon their continuity. While Kähler argued that the real Jesus is the whole biblical Christ, Pannenberg denies that Jesus can be simply equated with the apostle's kerygmatic presentation.² For Kähler, the canons of modern historiography cannot do justice to the New Testament. At most, historical-critical study can ascertain only a "historical minimum" which may be used to persuade the "unbeliever" to give the kerygma an honest hearing. On the other hand, if the New Testament is to be judged exclusively on the basis of the historical-critical method, then the gospels are utterly unreliable. However, if historical study assumes a more moderate role of providing the working material for dogmatics whose task is to make "an inventory of our assets,"³ then it can point out that the activity of Jesus is to be seen from the perspective of his resurrection in the light of the Old Testament background, and that this then throws light on the historical activity of Jesus' earthly life as well.⁴ Similarly, Cullmann has pointed out that the apostolic kerygma refers back to the historical Jesus first of all through his resurrection, then to the actual kerygma of Jesus himself, and then re-interprets this in the light of the Old Testament kerygma.⁵ Pannenberg is in only partial agreement here. He cannot accept the view that the pre-Easter Jesus is to be seen in the light of his divine-human

¹Jesus--God and Man, p. 25.

²Ibid., p. 23. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 81-87. ³Supra, p. 191.

⁴Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ, p. 86.

⁵Salvation in History, pp. 104, 110, 111.

person. To be sure, Jesus appeared as a man with a sense of divine mission, but he did not appear as the God-man. Only on the basis of his resurrection can one affirm his divinity. Thus, the passion narratives are not historical, but mythological (in the bad sense of the word). He writes:

In retrospect from the perspective of the resurrection, it is true that Jesus in his person was one with God also in his life before Easter. However, when Jesus' pre-Easter life is conceived as having been already divine-human in a direct sense, our conception of Jesus falls back into the mythological realm.¹

Pannenberg also finds himself in disagreement with Paul Althaus, who asserts the resurrection is "historically perceptible," but not "historically demonstrable."² What Pannenberg is arguing is that only what can be historically demonstrated can be a valid theological statement.³ In this respect, his Christology begins "from below," not "from above." This means he does not pursue an incarnational Christology, but begins with the man Jesus himself. Only in this way does he arrive at an understanding of Jesus' unity with the Father. Thus, Pannenberg concludes that Jesus' divinity cannot be decided upon the basis of his earthly activity, but upon his resurrection.⁴

Since the only means of ascertaining the revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth is through the historical method (i.e., the historian must investigate what the facts are behind the kerygma),⁵ Pannenberg cannot subscribe to any form of an authoritative "Word of God" theology which would have the effect of merely suppressing critical rationality and compelling belief. In this sense, he denies to revelation the status of something

¹Jesus--God and Man, p. 224. ²Ibid., p. 109.

³Basic Questions in Theology, I, 198-199.

⁴Jesus--God and Man, pp. 33-37.

⁵Ibid., p. 99; Basic Questions in Theology, I, 139, 160, 195-198.

received supernaturally. Until the Enlightenment, the Bible had been more or less identified as the Word of God, which was conceived as supernaturally inspired. In neo-Orthodoxy, revelation was no longer identified with the Bible, but with the Word of God as kerygmatic proclamation (Bultmann) or as Jesus Christ who is the source of the preached and the written word (Barth).¹ Pannenberg says this shift from the orthodox concept of revelation nevertheless left intact the idea of authoritarianism. "But for men who live in the sphere in which the Enlightenment has become effective, authoritarian claims are no longer acceptable."² Pannenberg in this way is seeking to point out the inadequacy of all authoritarian theologies which in essence would exempt the truth-claim of Christian faith from critical rationality. He thus says: "It was for this reason that I finally turned away from the 'theology of the Word of God' in its different present-day forms."³

To be sure, Pannenberg admits that authoritarianism is a characteristic feature of both the Old and New Testaments, that the prophets conceived of their message as the authoritative Word of God and that the apostles (especially Paul) identified their message as the authoritative Word of God. Such authoritarianism is characteristic of episcopal and papal claims, as well as the Reformers' sola scriptura. However, Pannenberg sees in the

¹Theology as History, p. 226. ²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 227. It is not altogether justifiable for Pannenberg to charge that Barth's theology of the Word of God is merely subscribing to an uncritical acceptance of authority. Barth (as well as Bultmann) is just as concerned with the truth-claim of Christian faith as Pannenberg is. Instead of suggesting that Barth equates faith with blind gullibility, it would be more accurate to say that Barth locates the validation of Christian faith in God's authentication of His Word in Holy Scripture (i.e., testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum), whereas Pannenberg thinks the historical-critical method is entirely adequate for such purposes.

Enlightenment's demand for individual freedom over against all forms of authority the mature result of Christian faith itself.¹ Pannenberg thus wants to separate the authentic (in the sense of being verifiable) biblical experiences of God from the authoritarian claims of the Bible itself. In this respect, Pannenberg speaks of the dissolution of the Protestant Scripture principle. What is normative for valid theological statements is not the biblical texts themselves, but the historically verifiable events which the texts report.²

Thus, what Pannenberg calls for is a "depositivization" of the "pre-modern Christian tradition."³ This depositivization would render useless the idea of demythologizing, especially in the light of the fact that Pannenberg thinks demythologizing in Bultmann did not completely abandon the outmoded authoritarianism of the church tradition.⁴ Thus, his basic disagreement with the theology of the Word of God is its suppression of rational inquiry into revelation: "The question concerning the revelation of God, as it has been reformulated on the basis of the Enlightenment, is not seeking for some authoritarian court which suppresses critical questioning and individual judgment, but for a manifestation of divine reality which meets the test of man's matured understanding as such."⁵

He thus says that "thinking which has appropriated the questions of the Enlightenment can no longer be content with asserted authorities." Rather,

¹Ibid., pp. 227-228.

²Pannenberg, "La signification de l'eschatologie pour la compréhension de l'apostolicité et de la catholicité de l'Église," Istina, XII (1969), 163. Cf. Basic Questions in Theology, I, 4, 6, 7, 12; Theology as History, p. 228.

³Theology as History, p. 228. ⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 229.

modern man "must ask about the adequacy of the claims of authority." Otherwise, if authoritative claims compel belief then faith will "deteriorate into the 'work' of an illusory redemption of oneself." This would mean that "the believer who thinks that he can give the answer to the trial of gnawing doubt through the act of faith itself is already on the road to such a self-deceptive works-righteousness."¹ In thus rejecting any authoritarian feature insofar as the idea of revelation is concerned, Pannenberg is trying to guard theology against the charge of illusion in Feuerbach's or Freud's sense.²

Pannenberg, however, makes it quite clear that he is not intending to lessen the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. In reply to John Cobb's criticism that Pannenberg draws "attention away from the question of God's immediate dealings with individuals,"³ Pannenberg says: "Far be it from me to contest the immediacy of contingent divine activity in individuals."⁴ Cobb's criticism is prompted by Pannenberg's insistence that a direct self-manifestation (not a direct self-revelation) of God,⁵ i.e., God directly manifests himself to someone in the form of a verbal communication, is not truly revelation for us, except as it can be "confirmed" to be true on the basis of its traditio-historical context. This is to say, a direct self-manifestation of God which takes the form of "prophetic inspiration" does not have "an autonomous status as revelation,"⁶ so far as it relates to our

¹Ibid., p. 270. ²Ibid., p. 239.

³Cobb, "Past, Present, and Future," Theology as History, p. 209.

⁴Theology as History, p. 238.

⁵A direct self-revelation would be the full disclosure of God's essence, whereas a direct self-manifestation involves only the appearance of God without any reference to a disclosure of his essence. Cf. Revelation as History, p. 9.

⁶Theology as History, p. 238.

critical consciousness today.

In effect, it would thus certainly appear, despite his denial, that Pannenberg has minimized the prophetic word which is so characteristic of the Old Testament. He clearly rejects any "isolated supernatural inspiration" even if it should be the Old Testament prophets. Only as the prophetic word conveys what has happened in the past and from this announces provisionally what will happen in the future does it have any theological validity today. Thus, Pannenberg clearly suggests that he will not allow for the validity of any divinely-inspired communication to the prophets, for words are solely the vehicles which convey the meaning of divine historical acts. Thus, words in themselves are not to be seen as revelation.

To be sure, Pannenberg correctly points out that a direct experience of God as well as all consciousness "is itself mediated through the previous history of individuals within their environment, as well as through their relation to the future toward which their anxieties and hopes are directed."¹ And of course, his emphasis upon the inseparable relationship of historical experience and language is intended to be directed against the Barthian theology of the Word of God which says quite plainly that revelation is not concerned directly with the question of historical understanding. But, if the Barthian theology placed one-sided emphasis upon the "word" as the medium of revelation, it is clear that Pannenberg has one-sidedly emphasized historical events as the medium of revelation.

Further, if Pannenberg so strongly insists that the revelatory events are open for anyone who has eyes to see and that the interpretation of these events is self-evident to historical reason, why is there no general consensus

¹Ibid.

of opinion concerning the revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth? Pannenberg's answer is found in Paul's statement that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers" (II Cor. 4:4).¹ If this is so, then historical reason can hardly qualify as the sole means of ascertaining the proper interpretation of revelatory events. Instead, one must rely also upon the Holy Spirit "who will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). This is not to introduce the Holy Spirit as a "stop-gap" for ignorance, but a fundamental biblical recognition that man's powers of reason also come under the curse of the Fall.

This related question must also be put to Pannenberg. If he does not discount the direct influence of the Holy Spirit upon the believer, why must it be asserted that only through the historical method can God's revelation in history be established?² To be sure, revelation must show itself to man's critical rationality as being valid. But if God's Spirit is really operative in the life of the believer, then cannot "contemporary Christian experience" be a decisive factor? If God really acted in the past events to make himself known, can he not likewise confirm his past activity in our "contemporary Christian experience"? Is this not the significance of the Reformers' teaching concerning the testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum, that one is brought to fiducial faith through the inward motion of the Holy Spirit, who likewise guarantees the certainty of what is the basis of faith? John Calvin put it this way:

But I answer, that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to reason. For as God alone can properly bear witness to his own words, so these words will not obtain full credit in the hearts

¹Revelation as History, p. 136

²Jesus--God and Man, pp. 99, 109.

of men, until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who spoke by the mouth of the prophets, must penetrate our hearts, in order to convince us that they faithfully delivered the message with which they were divinely intrusted.¹

However, Pannenberg will not subscribe to the doctrine of Scriptural inspiration. Rather, for him "history is the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology."² To be sure, the idea of universal history can be supported from the "given" of the biblical witness. But, to say that it is "the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology" is affirming more than the biblical witness permits. In this respect, it is highly problematic to make the idea of universal history the single overarching principle of Christian theology, for the witness of Holy Scripture is too varied to be subsumed under a single concept.³ This is to say, any one all-embracing principle that is substituted for the Reformers' sola scriptura principle must be judged arbitrary and one-sided. Thus, not universal history, but Holy Scripture itself in its manifold witness⁴ is "the most comprehensive horizon of Christian

¹Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1879), I, 72.

²Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology, I, 15.

³Cf. Karl Gerhard Steck's criticism of the Heilsgeschichte theology in this regard ("Die Idee der Heilsgeschichte," Theologische Studien, LVI [1959], 10ff.). Cf. James Barr, "Revelation through history in the Old Testament and in modern theology," Interpretation, XVII (1963), 193-205.

⁴To be sure, Pannenberg recognizes the manifold witness of Scripture, but he thinks that the idea of the unity of Scripture is dissolved. Thus, following Käsemann (Essays on New Testament Themes, pp. 48-62), Pannenberg speaks of a canon within the Canon. In this respect, the "material norm" within the Canon is the Christ event which lies behind the kerygma and which can be ascertained by the historical-critical method (Basic Questions in Theology, I, 194-196). It is this presupposition that the unity of Scripture is dissolved, as well as his attempt to go "behind" the kerygmatic presentation of Jesus as the Saviour in order to ascertain the real historical Jesus (as though the gospels intended to be primarily "reports" rather than "witnesses,") that is highly problematic. Insofar as the unity of Scripture

theology." This is not to suggest that one can dispense with all presuppositions in his study of the Bible, or that one can simply read off the meaning of the biblical content as though the Bible consisted of a book of systematically-formulated oracles. In this respect, Professor McIntyre has shown, in special reference to the method of Christology, that theological method is "a complex of several distinct methods,"¹ including such methods as the literary-critical, the dogmatic, the historical, the sociological and geographical, the liturgical, and the ethical.² What is thus being argued here against Pannenberg is that while there is no single theological method, nevertheless, Holy Scripture (and not universal history) is "the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology."

This further question must be put to Pannenberg. Does he not in effect allow for at least the partial legitimation of the knowledge of revelation through the testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum when he says that one can have fellowship with Jesus without regard to his theological and historical knowledge? If one can say, thus, that the Holy Spirit imparts the inward certainty of the truth of revelation, is not Pannenberg's heavy reliance upon the historical method a one-sided neglect of the cognitive aspect of faith? To be sure, Pannenberg deserves the merit of pointing out so cogently that the biblical texts must be treated as historical sources if faith is not to be made suspect. He has thus impressively shown in his

is concerned, Kähler has (it seems to me) rightly argued for the theological perfection of the Bible (i.e., perfectio respectu finis). Insofar as the possibility of getting back behind the kerygma is concerned, one can also argue with Kähler that the biblical, historic Christ is not an importation of the early Church, but rather the early Church confessed Jesus as the risen Christ because "Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of the Christ" (Supra, p. 195).

¹The Shape of Christology, p. 38. ²Ibid., pp. 30-52.

book, Jesus--God and Man, that the believer's subjective certainty of God's revelation can be seen to be objectively true. But in thus stressing the exclusively historical method for getting at the actual course of revelatory events, has he not depreciated the theological intention of the biblical texts? This devaluation of the theological intention of the biblical texts is especially seen in his negative judgment concerning the passion narratives, as well as his rejection of the identification of the divine-human Jesus with the historical Jesus. To be sure, Pannenberg's desire for the rational purity of faith accounts for this devaluation, and thus the theological intention of the gospel writers looks too much like a subjective and arbitrary projection into the actual course of events of Jesus' life. Is this presupposition valid? Are the theological interpretations of the gospel evangelists arbitrary and mythological?

Since Pannenberg has broadened the historical method to a universal-historical method (i.e., he integrates the historical and hermeneutical methods into one universal-historical method thereby showing that historical facts speak their own language in the context of their own traditions which also embraces the era of the investigator), is this not an excellent way of showing how the disciples were able to see the historical Jesus for what he really was. That is, is not Pannenberg's universal-historical method an apt way of showing that Jesus as the divine-human person can be properly seen only from the perspective of his resurrection? Cullmann, who also speaks of the chains of traditions through which revelatory events are to be seen so that subsequent events cast light back upon previous events, or vice versa, points out that the real picture of Jesus could not be had until after the resurrection of Jesus. The reason why the resurrection kerygma

is so essential to a proper Christology is because the significance of Jesus' life did not come into full view until after the resurrection. This does not mean that the disciples placed a different interpretation on the life of Jesus than Jesus had himself, but rather it means that the disciples stood in a different relationship to Jesus after the resurrection. Cullmann puts it this way:

The recent debate about the 'historical Jesus' often suffers from failing to take into account that not only the events but also their salvation-historical interpretation--in the proclamation of Jesus--were given with the historical Jesus, and that the disciples were not announcing this interpretation for the first time after his death. Instead, after Jesus' death his interpretation was newly discovered by the disciples simultaneously with the new interpretation which they then shared in for the first time. For this reason the Johannine concept of the recollection effected through the Spirit is a particularly apt expression for this state of affairs.¹

Thus, if one follows Pannenberg's emphasis upon the chain of events, which is the bearer of revelation, then one can appreciate the historical character of the gospel "reports" on the very basis that the historical Jesus is the whole biblical Christ. That is, the picture of Jesus which emerges in the gospels is reflected from a "higher perspective" than what can be gained from a positivistic historiography. To be sure, Pannenberg is not at all pursuing such a positivistic historiography. He likewise points out the ontological significance of Jesus' resurrection for his divinity, but at the same time he fails to appreciate the historical significance of the gospels whenever they interpret the events of Jesus' life from the perspective of his divine-human person. Such an interpretation for Pannenberg is mythological, despite his insight that subsequent events illuminate previous events, and in this case Cullmann has rightly pointed out that the events of Jesus' life

¹Salvation in History, p. 104.

could only be properly interpreted from the perspective of the resurrection.

If one rules out a priori the doctrine of Scriptural inspiration, it is difficult to see how one could speak of relevatory events exclusively in terms of a "depositivization," so that the final judgment in any matter concerning historical events of the past must be decided by the historical method. Oscar Cullmann has shown that much that is reported as events in the Bible does not fall under the category of being historically verifiable. However, at the same time they are so intertwined with historically controllable events that it is impossible at times to differentiate the controllable from the uncontrollable elements. In this respect, Cullmann chooses to speak of events, such as, the creation, fall of Adam, the second coming of Jesus, etc., as "historicized myths," i.e., events which are divine events though real events which do not come under what is historically controllable. This is to say, these occurrences which are historically uncontrollable events nevertheless "really happen" and "must not be conceived as metaphysical and nontemporal," but rather they are "included in the temporal process."¹

The distinction that Cullmann is making between "history" and "myth" corresponds to the traditional distinction between what is naturally and what is supernaturally known. Though Cullmann clearly defines what he means by myth (e.g., myth is a divine, temporal event which cannot be historically ascertained), perhaps the distinction between the natural and supernatural would be terminologically less confusing, even though it may be apologetically more unsuitable. At any rate, for one who is not to dismiss the idea of inspiration so summarily in favor of a strictly historical-critical approach (as in the case of Pannenberg), it must be said that it is doubtful that

¹Ibid., p. 143.

one can sustain the reality of revelation exclusively in terms of what can be historically demonstrated. To be sure, that events play such a prominent role insofar as revelation is concerned makes historical-critical research necessary. Cullmann rightly points this out:

Just as eyewitnessing is a fundamental accompaniment to a witness of faith for the apostle, and one cannot be thought of without the other (εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσε John 20.8), in the same way, research on the narrated events with any available means precedes faith in the interpretation of the events for the exegete.¹

Further, Cullmann points out that what does fall under the category of being historically controllable indirectly confirms those parts, such as the creation, the eschaton, etc., which are not under historical control. Especially the witness of the prophets and the apostles is a key to faith in that they stand in close proximity to revelatory events. This leads Cullmann to say: "It must be noted that the apostles' eyewitness is more important than that of all the other biblical witnesses because it relates to the decisive events [i.e., the Christ event] and in this way indirectly guarantees the revelations of all the previous witnesses."²

What Cullmann is distinguishing here between the historically controllable and the historically uncontrollable elements of the biblical witness is illustrated in regard to the factual event of Jesus' resurrection. It is "not itself accessible to historical control," though it "is linked with facts at least theoretically provable within the historical framework--the resurrection appearances and the empty tomb."³ Thus, on the basis of the apostles' testimony, one can affirm the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, while acknowledging such an affirmation is not subject to a direct historical demonstration, though nevertheless it is a valid historical

¹Ibid., p. 73. ²Ibid., p. 296. ³Ibid., p. 143.

statement.

What is being argued here is that the knowledge upon which faith has its point of departure does not altogether qualify as historically controllable knowledge. But, this is not to bring in the Holy Spirit as a stop-gap for ignorance, but is a fundamental recognition of the cognitive aspect of faith, i.e., the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. Though faith has its frame of reference in historical events, these events do not necessarily qualify as being historically demonstrated. Though they may be "historically perceptible," nevertheless it is the witness of the prophets and the apostles that creates faith and not what can be merely demonstrated historically. Thus, faith also relates to the credibility of the witnesses of divine revelation, who themselves stand in a relationship to the witness of their predecessors, which culminates in the final witness of the apostles to Jesus Christ. This chain of witnesses to divine revelation which culminates in the witness of the apostles is the basis for Cullmann's statement that their witness "indirectly guarantees the revelations of all the previous witnesses."¹ Cullmann further points this out:

Faith is therefore also a faith in the witnesses, or rather in their function in salvation history. Faith intrudes upon us as we hear the witness, although we see the human weakness and imperfection of the witnesses themselves. We cannot be eyewitnesses any more. But to be witnesses ourselves we must believe in their witness. This looks like dead 'faith in authority'. But the biblical witnesses, the prophets and apostles, are so closely bound up with the salvation history revealed to them that their witness as such can become an object of a true and living faith in their mission the basis of which lies in the mission of the bearer of revelation, Christ. We have seen that the biblical witnesses too believe in the witness of their predecessors, so that the new facts and their interpretation are connected with the salvation history of the past. We find ourselves in this same situation, but now vis-a-vis the whole salvation history of

¹Supra, p. 379.

the Bible.¹

Finally, though Pannenberg seeks to show that Christian faith is not merely submitting to "asserted authorities" and thus he substitutes the idea of the inspiration of Holy Scripture with the idea of the history-of-the-transmission-of-traditions, it is questionable whether or not such a strictly rational approach to the truth of revelation will be convincing to non-believing "historians," especially since the Scriptures are primarily keryg-matic in intention and are only, though in an important sense, secondarily historical sources. Furthermore, since theology cannot move beyond the concept of historical probability, it is not likely to be convincing to non-believers to say that the revelation of God can be ascertained through a mere critical reconstruction of historical events unless at the same time one can speak of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. But, Pannenberg will not allow for this distinction. He says that "the word itself brings the Spirit with it," but the Spirit is "not a special condition for knowledge" of revelation.² If in fact the word itself is Spirit-filled as such, why is it that Pannenberg says that only the historical-critical method can "verify" the truth-content of faith? If the kerygma is "Spirit-filled" as such, why cannot the Spirit authenticate its own message? To be sure, this is not to reject his proposal for a historical revelation, but it is a rejection of his one-sided emphasis upon what the historical method can do. In place of this, why not hold to both Pannenberg's use of the historical method and the Reformers' teaching concerning the testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum? Thus, if Bultmann's one-sided existential exegesis of the New Testament is not acceptable, neither is Pannenberg's exclusive historical-critical exegesis.

¹Salvation in History, p. 323. ²Revelation as History, p. 196.

What, then, is the validation of Christian faith? A critical reconstruction of history provides faith with a knowledge of its basis and helps to remove its "gnawing doubt that it has no basis beyond itself."¹ Rational arguments may demonstrate that Christian faith deals more realistically with human nature than all other options.² But, in the final analysis, the validation of Christian faith comes about through the internal confirmation of the Holy Spirit. This means that one's experience with the risen Christ reveals itself in "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23). Otherwise, if faith is not a way of knowing, then Kähler's question is all the more pertinent: "How can Jesus Christ be the authentic object of the faith of all Christians if the questions what and who he really was can be established only by ingenious investigation and if it is solely the scholarship of our time which proves itself equal to this task?"³

D. Universal History and the Problem of Historical Relativity⁴

As it has already been pointed out, the central problem which historical relativity poses for Christian faith is this--how can events which are historically conditioned have absolute and universal significance for all mankind? Troeltsch puts it this way:

It is difficult to bring out a single point of history within

¹Supra, p. 335

²This is one of the main thrusts of Reinhold Niebuhr in his Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964).

³Kähler, p. 102.

⁴Cf. Laurence W. Wood, "A Study of David Friedrich Strauss on the Problem of Faith and History," (unpublished Master's thesis, Christian Theological Seminary, 1969), pp. 88-98.

this long time, and specifically to think of a direct middle point of our individual religious history as the exclusive center of all mankind. This looks much too severe to absolutize our accidental individual surroundings.¹

David Strauss says: "It [the Idea] is not wont to lavish all its fulness on one exemplar, and be niggardly towards all others--to express itself perfectly in that one individual; and imperfectly in all the rest."² We have cited many attempts to cope with this problem of "particularity." For example, Bultmann seeks to overcome historical relativity by leaving it undisturbed insofar as faith is concerned. He writes:

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.³

But does historical relativity mean that events are all governed by a natural cause-and-effect relationship which leaves out God's creative activity? In this respect, historical relativity, i.e., the historical conditioning of all truth, is to be seen from the perspective of an eschatological doctrine of creation, i.e., the present is to be judged not simply in the light of the past, but from the future which draws the present which is now past toward its ultimate goal in the eschaton.

How does this eschatological doctrine of creation resolve the problem of a single point of time in history as possessing universal and absolute meaning for all mankind? That is, the crucial philosophical problem thus is whether or not there can be such an absolutely unique event. Is it possible

¹Supra, pp. 2-3.

²The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, p. 780.

³Kerygma and Myth, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch, p. 197.

for the Christ event to be the mid-point of all history? Certainly if the historical claim of Christian faith is true, then the Christ event would have absolute meaning for all mankind since it would be the center point of universal history. But since this would be to "absolutize our accidental individual surroundings," Troeltsch would argue that it was not very probable.

However, Troeltsch points out that the development of the whole universe was "absolutely unique" and that it becomes comprehensible only when we "refer the existence of the actual to the arbitrary fiat of Deity. There is no other explanation of the world as a whole."¹ But if this is true, why is it incredible to argue that the Christ event itself is absolutely unique--at least from a philosophical perspective? That is, if the resurrection which Christian faith interprets to be the vindication of Jesus' claim to divine authority was really witnessed by his followers, would they have had any other choice than to "refer the existence of the actual to the arbitrary fiat of Deity?"

Thus, it seems that the burden of proof lies as heavily on one who does not accept the possibility of an absolutely unique occurrence happening within the historic process. To doubt the possibility of an absolutely unique occurrence is like doubting the reality of the universe inasmuch as Troeltsch has shown that the universe defined in terms of its entire development is an absolutely unique event. Thus, a critical reconstruction of history should be the criterion for evaluating the possibility of the absolute uniqueness of Christ rather than philosophical arguments. This is why Pannenberg has said: "The judgment about whether an event, however unfamiliar,

¹Ernst Troeltsch, "Contingency," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, IV, 88.

has happened or not is in the final analysis a matter for the historian and cannot be prejudged by the knowledge of natural science."¹

Though philosophically we may admit the possibility of such an unrepeatable occurrence, would it still not be arrogant to absolutize our own accidental sphere of history to say it happened only this one time? Further, is it not a selfish claim to be the chosen people of God, as it is claimed in the history of Israel?

It is only natural to think that all people have an equal opportunity in their quest for God. It would be less embarrassing for theologians to admit that Christianity only stands as the sublimest of religions. Reinhold Niebuhr writes:

It is a scandal for all rationalistic interpretations of history that the idea of a universal history should have emerged from the core of a particular historical event, whether that event be the covenant of God with Israel, or, as the New Testament conceives it, the "second covenant," instituted by the coming of Christ.²

It is this "scandal of particularity" that Christian faith cannot compromise. While there is no point in trying to deny any validity to other religions, it must be admitted that the biblical view of revelation speaks of God revealing Himself in a special way to certain individuals within the context of world history. Admittedly, this view of biblical revelation is highly selective. It is one man who fathers a nation. One man leads the Israelites out of slavery. Only a few prophets are selected to be God's messengers to the people. Only one king rules over the people at a time. Ultimately, one woman gives birth to Jesus of Nazareth, whose life, death,

¹Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 98.

²Reinhold Niebuhr, Faith and History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 105.

and resurrection have eschatological meaning for all mankind.

This process of selection seems to be highly unfair and arbitrary, or to put it in Strauss' terms, "niggardly."¹ Yet, this is a basic principle of nature. Why is it that all men are not born with the same mental capabilities? Why is it that some are born with physical defects and others are born normal? Why is it that the length of life is not the same for all? Why is it that all men are not born with equal economic and educational opportunities? Why is it that man only of all the living species is rational? Why is it that some men are chosen to govern others instead of every man governing himself without any outside political interference?²

To insist that certain individuals cannot be divinely chosen for the sake of others is to confuse the basic understanding of all nature. It is a characteristic of nature to be highly selective and arbitrary. This favoritism from the standpoint of nature is amoral, though its evil aspects are the results of man's sin (Romans 8:19-23). But, in regard to the biblical faith, God's favoritism is of a different kind. To insist that the biblical idea of selectivity is "niggardly" is to confuse the intention of God's revelation, for God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Since all men have sinned, all come under the judgment of God. There is no man who knows God apart from God making himself known to man. All men stand on equal footing before God. Consequently, God's favoritism to certain individuals carries with it moral implications. Each individual is chosen, not merely for the sake of his own personal destiny, but for the destiny of all mankind.

¹Supra, p. 383.

²Cf. C. S. Lewis, Miracles (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 121.

Lesslie Newbigin writes:

Abraham's call is to be the founder of the nation through which all the nations will bless themselves. Moses is called to be the liberator of an enslaved people. The great prophets are all called to be God's messengers to the people and politicians of their time. The apostles are called by Jesus to be his messengers to the nations. The calling of the individual is not simply for the acceptance of his own personal destiny; it is for the fulfilment of his role in God's plan for the salvation of mankind. It is a calling to responsible participation in the events which are the key to world history.¹

Ultimately, it was Jesus of Nazareth who was selected to be the one particular person whose purpose was to reconcile the world to God. Paul writes: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (II Corinthians 5:19). This reconciliation brought about a new situation altogether in the world since the time that sin entered the world and man's relationship to God was broken. This reconciliation further brought about a disclosure of meaning in history which otherwise could never have been known. Men everywhere can now have fellowship with God through an encounter with the risen Christ. Paul speaks of man's existential participation in salvation this way: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:12-13). Thus, it can be said that history has been the progressive unfolding of God's will in the world to all mankind, which was proleptically fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth in that he was the pre-actualization of the goal of history, i.e., the coming Kingdom of God has provisionally already arrived in the person of Jesus Christ and is to be fully consummated in the eschaton.

In this way, it can be said that revelation is not to be defined in

¹Lesslie Newbigin, Honest Religion for Secular Man (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 44.

terms of Geschichte in contrast to Historie, or faith in contrast to knowledge, or the moment of faith's decision in contrast to a knowledge of historical facts, or "mere word" in contrast to "mere fact." Rather, God's self-revelation is to be seen in terms of history as an indirect self-disclosure of His essence which is to be consummated in the eschaton at which time God's direct self-revelation will be effected. Here, then, is the proposal of a theology of universal history as a possible option for resolving the problems of a dualistic religious epistemology.

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