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THEOLOGICAL METHOD AND THE
PROCLAMATION OF THE CHURCH:
A STUDY OF KARL BARTH AND PAUL TILlich

by

MICHAEL CHARLES SANSOM

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Abstract

Despite being contemporaries and both deeply concerned about the proclamation of the Church, there are deep differences between Barth and Tillich in their understanding both of the task and nature of proclamation and of the theological method which informs it.

The differences in their understanding of proclamation may be traced to the very different situations in which their early and formative years were spent. Thus Barth displays a preoccupation with the problems of the sermon, while Tillich is concerned with those of the alienation from the Church of the intelligentsia and the working classes, the disintegration of the intellectual world and the isolation of theology.

Strongly influenced by Schelling, Tillich wished to effect not simply a synthesis of philosophy and theology, but a reintegration of the whole system of sciences which, with its ontological foundation, would provide an important place for theology. The premises worked out in this early period inform much of his later work. However, as a result of the impact on him of existentialist thinking, he works with not one but two different conceptions of the relationship between philosophy and theology. His confusion at this key point produces a further confusion in his exposition of the method of correlation. Yet despite this confusion and his tendency to exploit the ambiguity of words there is a fundamental consistency in his method which we characterise as a posteriori.

Like Tillich, Barth reacted strongly against liberal theology,

but unlike Tillich, rejected an ontological solution to the problems of theology. His early attempts to allow the Bible to speak to his own generation by-passed the dogmatic discipline and came under severe criticism. Nevertheless, the conviction that the concept of the Word of God is basic to preaching and theology remained fundamental in his thinking. Although his approach and emphases registered changes, his basic method, formed in the 1920s as he recognised the importance of dogmatics, did not alter substantially.

Whereas Tillich thinks of theology as seeking to translate the kerygma for the "situation", Barth looks upon it as a devotional engagement in faith and obedience as the believer seeks to understand his faith. He is committed, moreover, to the vulnerability of a revelation mediated through historical events. Nevertheless, at the heart of his understanding of revelation is the indissoluble subjectivity of God. Theology under the impact of divine revelation has no option but to develop an a priori method which in Barth's hands has strong similarities with linguistic analysis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Appraisal	Paul Tillich: An Appraisal
Beginnings	The Beginnings of Dialectic Theology
Boundary	On the Boundary
B.R.S.U.R.	Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality
C.C.T.	The Church and Catholic Theology
C.D.	Church Dogmatics
Chr.D	Die Christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf
Conquest	The Conquest of the Concept of Religion in the Philosophy of Religion
C.T.K.B.	The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth
D.i.O.	Dogmatics in Outline
Era	The Protestant Era
E.T.	English Translation
Ev.Theol.	Evangelical Theology
F.Q.I.	Anselm : Fides Quaerens Intellectum
F.u.A.	Theologische Fragen und Antworten
G.W.	Gesammelte Werke
Humanity	The Humanity of God
I.T.C.	On the Idea of a Theology of Culture
I.T.K.	Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur
J.B.R.	Journal of Biblical Religion
J.R.	Journal of Religion
P.C.S.R.	Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science and Religion
P.T.C.T.	Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought
1R	Der Römerbrief
2R	The Epistle to the Romans
Rev.Theol.	Revolutionary Theology in the Making
R.G.G.	Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart
Rph.	Religionsphilosophie/ The Philosophy of Religion
R.S.	Religious Studies
S.d.W.	Das System der Wissenschaften
S.J.T.	Scottish Journal of Theology
S.T.	Systematic Theology
T.C.	Theology and Church
Theol.Cul.	Theology of Culture
T.P.T.	The Theology of Paul Tillich
Überwindung	Die Überwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Religionsphilosophie
W.G.W.M.	The Word of God and the Word of Man
W.R.	What is Religion?
Z.Th.K.	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE CHURCH

1. Common Ground

The most cursory examination of the major works of Barth and Tillich reveals a common concern about the message of the church. Both have a clear vision of the responsibility of the Church to make known its message, and of the fact that this task lays upon theology certain obligations. Theology is in essence the handmaid of the church and should assist the Church to fulfil its task of proclamation. The message, therefore, is normative for theology in the sense that it sets certain limits within which theology must work. At the point at which theology ceases to serve the proclamation of the Church it ceases, strictly speaking, to be theology.

Consequently, both Barth and Tillich wish to be taken as Church theologians,⁽¹⁾ which is to say that they both believe themselves to be committed to the Church and to its message. They do not wish to conduct a critique of the Church's message from a position outside the Church, but to serve it from the inside, relating themselves to the message of the Church as based on Scripture. When we speak of them as Church theologians, we may be clear that by "Church" we mean the Christian Church.

Nevertheless, it remains true that Barth and Tillich differ widely in their views; their positions have been contrasted not only by their critics but also by themselves to such an extent, however, that it is not necessary to emphasise here the differences between them. It is

(1) Certain as the point is with reference to Barth, it appears that it is sufficiently uncertain of Tillich for David Kelsey to find it necessary to draw attention to it (The Fabric of Paul Tillich's Theology, p.3)

our intention to examine their common interests and the way in which they diverge in their understanding of those interests, in order to highlight the differences that are to be found in their methodology as well as the similarities. It is the intention of this present chapter to examine them in their historical contexts in order to understand the dominant motifs in their interpretations of the task and the message of the Church.

2. Barth

Barth has given various accounts of his theological pilgrimage, but they are for the most part sketchy, and Torrance's own account of the period up to 1915 is only a slightly expanded version of Barth's account at the 500th centenary celebrations of the founding of Basel University.⁽¹⁾ It appears, however, that Barth's father, Fritz Barth, who lectured at Bern, sought to encourage his son to follow a path similar to his own, which was of a conservative nature, and countered Karl's desire to study at Marburg under Wilhelm Herrmann, an exponent of Kant, with the suggestion that he should go to Berlin to study under Harnack. Barth, however, eventually did reach Marburg, having first spent a period under Schlatter in Tübingen. He listened with enthusiasm to Herrmann, whose influence on him was by his own admission both abiding and deep.⁽²⁾

Despite his commitment to liberal theology, he was not without reservations about it: in particular he felt uneasy about the philosophy of religion of Ernst Troeltsch,, which was a product of the Ritschlian

(1) Translated in SJT, vol. 14 (1961), pp.225ff, cf T.F.Torrance, Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology 1910-1931, (hereafter Introduction) pp.15ff

(2) cf. Theology and Church (hereafter T.C.), pp.238ff; cf also T.H.L.Parker, Karl Barth, pp.12ff

school.⁽¹⁾ That, however, did not prevent him from being a disciple of Herrmann, who himself rejected Troeltsch's theory of knowledge with respect to religion.⁽²⁾ There was much indeed in Herrmann's attitude to the theology of the preceding century that Barth shared, and continued to share, throughout his life. Dogmatics, he agreed, cannot be based on religion if religion is conceived as a human emotion or conviction and is reducible to something else which can be explained by reason. There is no rational demonstration of religion or of God; dogmatics can only work on the basis of the experience of the reality of God. Hence both the way of the philosophy of religion and of Schleiermacher's description of the feeling of absolute dependence are barred to the theologian, for theology is not concerned with a rationalisation of the subjective - any more than it is concerned with a rationalisation of the objective.⁽³⁾ Barth never forgot this lesson, that theology and proclamation are concerned with an encounter with the reality of God.

And yet, as Barth himself observes, he found himself compelled to understand Herrmann in a manner wholly different from the way in which Herrmann understood himself. Why should this be so? Barth, in 1925, believed that it was because what Herrmann knew to be true was different from the direction that he took. Herrmann knew, so Barth avers, that theology starts with the encounter with God, with the "Deus dixit", rather than attempting to attain to that by starting as a "mere reflection of faith on the summit of an alleged 'experience'".⁽⁴⁾

(1) "On Systematic Theology", SJT, vol. 14 (1961), p.225

(2) T.C., p.244

(3) T.C., pp.238ff

(4) Ibid., p.258

However, he might not have made such a reappraisal without the influence of three important factors, namely (a) The outbreak of the first World War, (b) his pastorate at Safenwil, (c) his reading of Feuerbach, Overbeck and Kierkegaard.

(a) The First World War

Barth describes the day in August 1914 when ninety-three German intellectuals declared their support for the war policy of Kaiser Wilhelm II. It was not the mere question of so many intellectuals endorsing aggression that horrified Barth, but the fact that among them were nearly all of his theological teachers, including Harnack, Schlatter and Herrmann.⁽¹⁾ If he had to reject their support of the Kaiser, Barth felt he must also reject ^{their} theology, including their ethics, their dogmatics, their understanding of the Bible and their understanding of history.⁽²⁾ At the same time, however, it must be said that such a reaction seems somewhat extreme: to reject a man, or a group wholly on the basis of a disagreement with one decision appears excessive. A man may draw the wrong political conclusions even while he holds fast to correct insights at other points. Was it really necessary for Barth to reject not only his teachers' politics, but their whole thought? Barth, unfortunately, does not give further explanations of his volte face, and a complete answer is, in any case, we believe, out of the question in a matter involving a variety of motives. However, we may suggest some elements in the motivation which produced such an important change of position. In the first place, we must recall the unease which Barth tells us he felt about the outcome of liberal theology in the philosophy of religion of Ernst Troeltsch, as early as 1910.⁽³⁾

(1) The Humanity of God (hereafter Humanity), p.14; Parker, op.cit. p.16, Torrance, Introduction, p.38

(2) Humanity, p.14

(3) SJT, Vol.14 (1961), p.225f; cf also T.C., p.60f, "If I am not mistaken, Troeltsch's thesis of the temporary social significance of the church and his dismal picture of the coming ice ages in which this social significance would be ended, constituted the last important stages which [the] discussion [of the position of Christianity in history] reached before

At the time he saw no alternative to the liberal school,^{and} it seems likely that the appearance of an alternative coupled with a sufficient impetus, would have induced Barth to abandon the Marburg theology. In 1914 Troeltsch moved to the faculty of philosophy at Heidelberg, having given up the chair of theology and we may believe that for Barth the move was indicative of a general tendency of liberal theology, namely, to seek to come to terms with current philosophical opinion, so that it ceased to retain its distinctive character as theology. Barth was deeply dissatisfied with the attempt of liberal theology to win the "Gentiles" for the Christian cause by first accepting the "Gentile" point of view,⁽¹⁾ for theology was deprived of any guiding principle, reduced to the history of religion, an objectivising of subjective responses unrelated to their ground.

"The Christian was condemned to uncritical and irresponsible subservience to the patterns, forces, and movements of human history and civilisation. Man's inner experience did not provide a firm enough ground for resistance to these phenomena. Deprived of a guiding principle man could turn anywhere. It was fatal for the evangelical Church and for Christianity in the 19th century that theology in the last analysis had **nothing** more to offer than the 'human', the 'religious', mystery and its noncommittal 'statements', leaving the faithful to whatever impressions and influences from outside proved strongest." (2)

In this passage Barth looks back from 1957 and it may be that it contains an element of reading back into the situation of 1914 of his later understanding. It is doubtful whether he could have analysed the situation as closely at the time. Similarly, we do not know whether Barth saw the significance of Troeltsch's move in the same terms as he later viewed it.

(continued from the previous page)

the war. I listened to him, in Aarau in 1910, with the dark foreboding that it had become impossible to advance any further in the dead-end street where we were strolling in relative comfort."

(1) Humanity, p.23

(2) Ibid, p.27

These two incidents, whatever their actual significance, came as a climax to Barth's dissatisfaction with liberal theology and provided the impetus for him to make a decisive break with the contemporary trend. Yet it may seem strange that the political action of the German intellectuals should have had such radical consequences for Barth's theology, unless we recall Barth's own deep commitment to politics, and, moreover, to the politics of Swiss neutrality. He does not tell us precisely what it was about the declaration that offended him, but we may suppose that it was the apparent theological support offered to nationalistic aggression. It may be going too far to suggest with T.H.L.Parker that in this act German neo-Protestantism declared itself "a religion sprung from culture and bound to a culture";⁽¹⁾ we do not know how Barth interpreted the action at the time, only that he declared himself unable to identify himself any longer with a theology which could offer support to the Kaiser's war policies. For Barth, it seems, disapproval of the war automatically involved rejection of his teachers' theology.

So in September 1914, Barth wrote to his friend Eduard Thurneysen

"The spiritual condition of our German friends is now more comprehensible to me even if it is not more congenial. I have issued a detailed, carefully edited manifesto against this condition to Rade.⁽²⁾ He seems to be so naive as to think that we must without question be pro-German (and not neutral) in our attitude. As Ragaz would say, it is of symptomatic significance that a man such as Rade can lose his head so completely in this situation. The unconditional truths of the gospel are simply suspended for the time being and in the mean-time a German war-theology is put to work, its Christian trimming consisting in a lot of talk about sacrifice and the like. Here is sufficient proof that the 'truths' were nothing more than a surface varnish and not an inmost possession of this 'Christliche Welt' Christianity. It is truly sad! Marburg and German civilisation have lost something in my eyes by this breakdown, and indeed for ever" (3)

(1) op. cit. p.16f

(2) Editor of 'Die Christliche Welt', who, with others had published a statement asserting the righteousness of the German cause in the war.

(3) Revolutionary Theology in the Making (hereafter Rev.Theol.), p.26

Finally, it may be that the shattering effect of the outbreak of the war on the easy and somewhat shallow optimism that tended to characterise liberalism's outlook on humanity and human nature, was a further impulse to set Barth on the search for a new foundation for his theology. Nothing of this kind, however, is mentioned by Barth, except perhaps in a very oblique fashion in the passage quoted above.

(b) The Pastorate at Safenwil.

In 1909 Barth was appointed Vikar of the German speaking congregation in Geneva, and then two years later moved to the small town of Safenwil where he stayed until 1921. During that time he found himself increasingly burdened with the problematic of preaching. What was he to preach? How could he preach at all? He paints a vivid picture of the preacher's dilemma in "The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching". (1)

Speaking of the congregation which comes to church, he observes:

"They want to find out, ^{and} thoroughly understand: they do not want to hear mere assertions and observations, however fervent and enthusiastic they may be. And they want to find out and thoroughly understand the answer to this one question, Is it true? - and not some other answer which beats about the bush. Let us not be surprised that this want of theirs seldom or never meets us openly with such urgency as I have indicated. People naturally do not shout it out, and least of all into the ears of us ministers. But let us not be deceived by their silence."

"There is no wisdom in stopping at the next-to-the-last and the next-to-the-next-to-the-last want of the people; and they will not thank us for doing so. They expect us to understand them better than they understand themselves. We are unfeeling, not when we probe deeply into the wound which they carry when they come to us for healing, but rather when we pass over it as if we did not know why they had come. We are misled not when we assume that they are brought to us by the last and profounder questions, but rather when we think that when they come to us they may really be put off with next-to-the-last and less profound answers." (2)

(1) The Word of God and the Word of Man (hereafter W.G.W.M.), pp.103-12

(2) Ibid., p.108f

The problem finds repeated mention in the correspondence of Barth with Thurneysen during his pastorate. Barth felt unable to produce the answers required by his congregation on the basis of the theology he had learned until then. To some extent, a question of technique was involved, but the more insistent question than the how? was the what? (1) Each Sunday he had to preach, but the production of a sermon was no mere mechanical process (2); he was faced with the same problem each week - what to say. He longed to be able to "blow some trumpet or other, to join somewhere in the jubilant cry: This is it", but instead of that

"the desire keeps rumbling about within one to demonstrate to himself and others what is essential and it does not even leave one with sufficient naiveté to build a stirring sermonette or lecture." (3)

The answer to the question "What am I to do?" eluded him.

Impressed as he was by what he read of the elder Blumhardt, he was no Blumhardt himself. (4) Imitation would be useless, as would be recourse to the kind of pietistic "hot-gospeiling", demonstrated by the evangelist Vetter, who visited Safenwil during November 1914. To Barth it seemed that Vetter substituted for the gospel a "quite bad form of religious mechanics". (5) The letters of this period portray Barth as a man frustrated on the one hand by not being able to do the one thing he felt necessary, but on the other hand, uncertain about the precise identity of that one thing. (6)

He found some help from Hermann Kutter and Leonhard Ragaz, both of whom were deeply involved in the religious socialist movement, and

(1) We may detect this even in a letter written in January 1916: "I have the feeling that we dare not evade the question: What impression do we make? ... Of course, it may be that we should let ourselves go a bit just now and that the comprehensive ordering and dispensing of our kerygma in a natural-divinely-permitted way will not be possible for twenty to thirty years. What I have in mind is simply how, for instance in Blumhardt's preaching... with all its fullness, each sermon has such a definite point and colour...." Rev.Theol., p.35f.

(2) Ibid., p.29

(3) Ibid., p.28f

(4) Ibid., pp.30,35f.

(5) Ibid., p.40

(6) e.g. Ibid., p.36

displayed a vigorous political orientation in their teaching. Barth himself was involved in the local industrial disputes of Safenwil; indeed, his activities earned him the nick-name of "the red pastor". In 1915 he became a member, although a not uncritical one, of the Social Democratic Party, and commented at the time:

"Just because I set such emphasis Sunday by Sunday upon the last things, it was no longer possible for me personally to remain suspended in the clouds above the present evil world but rather it had to be demonstrated here and now that faith in the Greatest does not exclude but rather includes within it work and suffering in the realm of the imperfect." (1)

He had great sympathy with Ragaz and Kutter, because they shared his social concern. He found in Kutter a more distinctly theological emphasis, but no clear attempt to apply the principles he expounded. Ragaz, on the other hand, sought to express his principles more clearly in a programme of action. Nevertheless, in a letter in which he describes the differences between the two on the basis of a lecture he had attended, given by Hans Bader, a founder of the religious-socialist movement, Barth makes this surprising observation:

"Conclusion: The religious-socialist 'concern' is finished, the taking of God in earnest is at its beginning." (2)

The remark is surprising because it is out of key with the generally enthusiastic tone of the letter. It seems to betray a certain confusion in Barth's mind, the reason for which is not difficult to find. He felt the pressing weight of the problem of what he should preach, and also felt the urge and need to take a positive stand in matters of social concern. Lack of clarity about the first led to a corresponding uncertainty about the second. Because religious-socialism had its roots in the very theology he had already rejected, with its emphasis on the

(1) Ibid, p.28

(2) Ibid, p.31

experience of God and on the essential achievability of the Kingdom of God in the here and now, he felt bound to reject religious socialism itself.

The conference at which Bader gave his lecture did have a positive outcome, however. Bader himself had suggested that the clergy should meet fortnightly instead of quarterly, for the express purpose of Bible study and Barth took up the suggestion readily, for it seemed to offer a way to progress in the search for clarity.

He was aware that his decision to take God in earnest was reflected by a different note in his sermons. Some noticed it, although he felt it could not get through to his congregation because he was as yet not certain what was happening himself. He was only just beginning to discover his message and still felt a certain lack of driving power:

"If only we were filled and driven, our sermons should appear simpler." (1)

As he sought to come to grips with the Bible, he began to discover what he described in a lecture in 1916 as a "strange new world", for, in contrast to all the ways in which liberal theology had made use of the Bible, he found it to be, not a source book for the history of religions, nor a text book for theological, liturgical or moral instruction, but a record of the activity of God and, supremely of the Word of God to man.

"It is not the right human thoughts about God which form the content of the Bible, but the right divine thoughts about men. The Bible tells us not how we should talk with God but what he says to us; not how we find the way to him, but how he has sought and found the way to us; not the right relation in which we must place ourselves to him, but the covenant which he has made with all who are Abraham's spiritual children and which he has sealed once and for all in Jesus Christ. It is this which is within the Bible. The word of God is within the Bible." (2)

This appears to have been one of the earliest occasions on which Barth spoke of the Word of God, but it became a phrase and a notion of

(1) Ibid, p.32

(2) W.G.W.M., p.43

of central importance, for this was what he sought in contrast to a theology of religious experience, namely a theology of the Word of God spoken decisively to man. Consequently, we find him engaged on a careful study of the Epistle to the Romans from 1916 onwards, which was to lead to the publication of the first edition of his commentary - the bombshell which landed in the theologians playground, as Karl Adam described it. (1)

In addition, in order to widen the area on which he drew for "inner concentration and strengthening" he renewed his university studies, in particular, by taking up Kant again. He felt both the need for a solid foundation for the position he was adopting and for a wide knowledge on which to draw when speaking. (2)

He did not withdraw completely from the field of social concern: indeed, in September 1917 he sought to mediate during a dispute at a local factory. But it seems that he felt a need first to obtain a grasp of the essence of the message of the Bible concerning God, in order, as it were, to reconstruct the foundations of his preaching. Upon those foundations a more secure structure could be built, but in the meantime he must suffer the tension of not being sure of his foundation while yet being unable to withdraw entirely from all activity in order to discover the foundation. (3)

In the teaching not only of the elder and the younger Blumhardt, but also in Ragaz and Kutter, he had found an emphasis on the Kingdom of God. He wished to begin again with this concept, but he could not adopt what he called the "foreground view" of the elder Blumhardt, or the identification by the others of the Christian expectation of the Kingdom of God with the socialist expectation of the future. Rather,

(1) Cited by Torrance, Introduction, p.17

(2) Rev.Theol, p.37

(3) cf. Rev.Theol, p.27

"We felt compelled to press ... to the view of a pure and absolute futurity of God and Jesus Christ as the limit and fulfilment of all time." (1)

Barth's understanding of the task of the Church in proclamation was taking shape as a declaration of the Word of God, entirely different from all that was proclaimed by liberal theology and by secular or religious socialism. It had to come, first, as a "No" to all that had been accepted, and fundamentally as the "No" of the Word of God, God's message to man. Thus the publication of the commentary on the epistle to the Romans in 1919 came as a climax to the campaign he had conducted against liberal theology.

His concept of the proclamation of the Church revolved now around the concept of the Word of God, "Deus dixit", as the word spoken by the authority of God, to man, for all time. Proclamation and theology must, therefore, concern themselves with the Word of God, not with the experience of faith, or religion, the expression of the human response to the Word of God. In other words, Barth required in theology and proclamation a shift in emphasis from the subjective to the objective.

It should cause little surprise, then, that the Epistle to the Romans had the effect that it had, for it treated the Epistle in a manner altogether different from the majority of the current commentaries. In the introduction, he stated boldly his conviction that the letter was not to be viewed simply as a document of first-century Christianity, but as one in which the author speaks

"... as a prophet and apostle of the Kingdom of God to men in all ages." (2)

It is of importance for an understanding of Barth's view of both proclamation and theology, that we recognise his conviction that God has

(1) Church Dogmatics (hereafter C.D.), II : 1 : 634

(2) Der Römerbrief (hereafter 1R), p.v. (E.T. in The Epistle to the Romans 2nd edition (hereafter 2R), p.1

spoken and still speaks. If God has not spoken, there is no task for proclamation and no datum for theology. He did not wish to sweep aside liberal theology as having achieved nothing at all, nor did he wish to deny the relevance of historical and textual criticism, but he did wish to introduce a change of perspective which would relegate historical and textual criticism to a subordinate position, where they might serve the real task of theology which is to ascertain what it is that God says to man. If he had to choose between the historical-critical method and the doctrine of inspiration, he would unhesitatingly choose the latter because of the tendency of the former to ignore the Bible as the record of the Word of God. He did not believe, however, that any such choice was necessary, if every branch of theological research would acknowledge its primary responsibility to serve the Church.⁽¹⁾

Barth believed that God's message stands for all time, and that the differences between the first and the twentieth centuries are of no major significance.

"Our questions, if we understand ourselves aright, are the questions of Paul, and Paul's answers, if their light illumines us, must be our answers." (2)

We have said that Barth's concept of proclamation revolves around the concept of the Word of God. It should be added that neither edition of Romans gives prominence to the phrase, but it is undeniable that it is a recurrent motif in the writings of the period and can also be shown to be the concept which is decisive of the significance of Romans because it is as such that he treats Scripture.

(1) Ibid. Barth discussed the matter in greater detail in the second edition and we shall also have cause to examine the matter in greater detail.

(2) Ibid

(c) Feuerbach, Overbeck and Kierkegaard

To this list we might have added the name of Dostoyevsky, for in the second edition of Romans Barth makes more frequent reference to him than to any other single author. However, there is good evidence to suggest that his knowledge of Dostoyevsky was largely, if not entirely second hand, mediated by Eduard Thurneyson. Thus, although the alleged influence of Dostoyevsky, may be significant, it is difficult to establish whether it was formative of Barth's position or whether it merely played what might be described as a supporting role;⁽¹⁾ we are here concerned with formative influences.

There is very little evidence to provide us with any precise information concerning Barth's reading. He tells us, however, that he possessed a copy of Kierkegaard's The Instant as early as 1909, but he adds:

"I assume that I also read it at that time. But it cannot have made a deep impression on me then as I was very much occupied and energetically set on the theology of Harnack, Herrmann and the Christliche Welt." (2)

Moreover, we know that between the first and second editions of Romans, Barth read Kierkegaard more seriously: the second edition of Romans makes frequent reference to Kierkegaard, and, in the foreword, the one "systematic principle" to which he adverts is the "infinite qualitative distinction" between man and God on which Kierkegaard insisted. (3)

(1) Thurneyson's monograph on Dostoyevsky appeared in 1921. Barth observed in a letter (Aug. 3rd 1921) that it had provided him with "steam for the whole section as well as a quotation". (Rev. Theol., p. 59). Although Barth uses illustrations from Crime & Punishment, The Idiot and The Brothers Karamazov, he never quotes directly, whereas he does quote from Kierkegaard, Feuerbach and Overbeck. A closer examination suggests that Barth could have learned all he knew of Dostoyevsky from Thurneyson. Both focus attention on the Grand Inquisitor and Barth refers to the very novels to which Thurneyson pays most attention.

(2) Fragments Grave and Gay, p. 97

(3) 2R, p. 10. For confirmation of his reading of Kierkegaard, but without specific references, see Fragments Grave and Gay, p. 97, Rev. Theol., p. 51

As for Overbeck, Barth wrote a lecture in 1920, following the publication of his papers under the title Christentum und Kultur in 1919. This lecture ⁽¹⁾ also displays a knowledge of another of Overbeck's works, Die Christlichkeit der heutigen Theologie, but we are unfortunately given no indication of when he read it.

Finally, Barth lectured on Feuerbach, at Münster in the summer of 1920, and drew, for his material, on at least three of Feuerbach's books. (2)

At first sight, Kierkegaard, Feuerbach and Overbeck can scarcely be thought to have much in common. Kierkegaard to the end remained a faithful church member and can with some justice be called a theologian, even if he himself would vigorously have denied the title. Overbeck remained a theologian in spite of himself, despite his claim that he was without any relation to Christianity of any kind, that he had no religious mission and that he did not count himself among its believers. (3)

Feuerbach was one step more radical than Overbeck: he did not even hold a theological post, but urged "anti-theology" on his listeners with all the vigour he could summon, demanding that theology should be what it ought to be, namely anthropology. But for all their diversity, the three authors had one point in common, namely, that their work consisted of an attack on theology. Each in his own way furnished material for Barth's attack on liberal theology. (4)

(1) "Unsettled Questions for Theology Today", T.C., pp.55-73, originally published apparently under the title, "Zur innern Geisteslage des Christentums" (Rev.Theol., pp.21, 50)

(2) i.e. Das Wesen des Christentums; Philosophie der Zukunft; Das Wesen der Religion (see T.C. p.218)

(3) T.C. p.64

(4) Barth also read Nietzsche about this time (June 1920) but seemed to find him less satisfactory (Rev.Theol., p.151)

(i) Barth used Feuerbach in a most oblique fashion, for their respective purposes had little in common. It was Feuerbach's intention to direct theology not to the old ways of the Reformation, but to what he saw as a genuinely modern way. He admitted that theology is concerned with God, and, indeed, with a personal God, but he went on to assert that God is, in fact, none other than man himself, or rather, the fulfilment of man's longings or the projection of his ideals. The attributes of God are, individually, projections of human ideals, and God himself no more than the aggregate of those ideals, without independent or objective being. Christ becomes the embodiment of the personal God for he alone meets the longing for a personal God.⁽¹⁾ Feuerbach is quite willing to assert the predicates of God, but only at the expense of the removal of their subject if their subject is God conceived as a supernatural being. Theology is about man, his feelings and desires: it is, in short, nothing other than anthropology. The only distinction between philosophy and religion is that religion, as an objectification of man's primitive essential needs, takes the objective images constructed by man as though they were not images while philosophy recognises them for what they are.⁽²⁾ Religion is based on feeling - so far he could agree with Schleiermacher - but he criticised Schleiermacher for not going far enough, for failing to recognise that God is in fact nothing but the essence of feeling. Theological prejudice, he maintained, had prevented Schleiermacher from drawing the necessary conclusions from his standpoint.⁽³⁾

(1) The Essence of Christianity, trans. Marion Evans, (London, John Chapman 1854), pp. 14, 20, 139ff. On God as the projection of human ideals, Karl Britton expresses a view similar to Feuerbach (Philosophy and the Meaning of Life, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p.191ff.)

(2) cf. K.Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche, trans. David E. Green (London, Constable, 1956), p.337

(3) Ibid, p. 336; The Essence of Christianity, pp. 9ff

Contemporary Protestant theology came under particularly heavy attack from Feuerbach on account of its adoption of Hegelian philosophy, a move which he saw as parallel to the adoption by Catholic theologians of Aristotelianism in order to combat Protestantism. Protestantism adopted Hegelianism as a last refuge, the final rationalistic support of theology in the fight against atheism.

"Hegelian philosophy is the last ambiguous attempt to re-establish lost, defeated Christianity by means of philosophy, by following the universal modern procedure and identifying the negation of Christianity with Christianity itself. The much-lauded speculative identity of spirit and material, infinite and finite, divine and human, is nothing more than the accursed paradox of the modern age: the identity of belief and unbelief, theology and philosophy, religion and atheism, Christianity and paganism, at the very summit, the summit of metaphysics. Hegel conceals this contradiction by making of atheism, the negation, an objective component of God - God as process, and atheism as one component of this process." (1)

In his lecture on Feuerbach, Barth detailed at some length the results of Feuerbach's explanations of Christian doctrines on the basis of feeling and the human desire to be everything that the human race is not,⁽²⁾ and observes

"For anyone who has listened, two impressions will obviously contend for priority. One is that we have heard something extremely, almost offensively trivial; the other that this triviality really propounds a question which could justifiably be directed to the theology with which Feuerbach was surrounded." (3)

It was the second impression which Barth proposed to amplify, for he saw that Feuerbach asked the question which was posed by the theology of Schleiermacher: should not theology become unashamedly anthropology?

(1) Über den Anfang der Philosophie, Sämtliche Werke vol. II, p.264f cited by Löwith op. cit p.77

(2) Or is only in part. Resurrection is the symbol of man's desire to be released from bondage to mortality. God is conceived of as love because man loves - but "God loves" is the ideal towards which man strives. However, God is good because man is essentially good. cf. The Essence of Christianity, pp. 18 ff, 27

(3) T.C. p. 227

Barth felt acutely the embarrassment caused by Feuerbach's driving to its logical conclusion of Schleiermacher's methodology, and by the failure of liberal theology to answer the question posed to it. For Barth, theology and preaching must speak of God as distinct from, and not as identical with, man.

(ii) Overbeck did nothing to dispel the anxiety engendered by Feuerbach's criticism, rather he made it more acute because he directed his critique at another point of the tottering edifice of liberalism, namely at its uneschatalogical character.⁽¹⁾ Overbeck maintained that eschatology was of the very essence of Christianity, and hence that historical Christianity - that is, the progress of the history of the Church - has absolutely nothing to do with primitive Christianity which is Urgeschichte, primal history. Christianity is supposed to have ushered in a new era, but the reality is entirely lacking; it is a figment of the imagination. The most significant fact about Christianity is its powerlessness, its inability to rule the world. It strives to ally itself with Socialism, to use the dynamic of Socialism to achieve the new age: but it can then by no means be said that Christianity has brought the eschatological new age which has replaced the old. Nor is Christianity any defence against nationalism.⁽²⁾

The burden of Overbeck's criticism, which Barth accepted, was the impossibility of identifying Christianity and culture, and so of treating culture as though it were a revelation of God. Theology must think again what it should proclaim, and face the meaning of its eschatology,

(1) cf. T.C., pp. 55-73, Löwith op cit, pp. 377-88

(2) Barth was, of course, particularly aware of this, with the outbreak of the first World War.

and its applicability to life. Without such a reconsideration, it could not call itself Christian theology. Schweitzer's answer to the rediscovery of eschatology was not a live option at all & it was not possible to ignore it, as a bee in the bonnet of a religious teacher named Jesus, and, at the same time, to claim to be pursuing Christian theology. Theology must either rediscover primitive Christianity or cease to claim any connection with Christianity at all.

If this attack achieved nothing else, it caused Barth to stop and think. Liberal theology treated God as though it was able to "put God daily into its bag"⁽¹⁾ and the reason lay in the fact, which Feuerbach had made plain, that it did not deal with God at all, but with man.

(iii) Feuerbach had concluded that Christianity should be swept out of the way altogether, Overbeck finished with a perplexing and ambiguous question, but Kierkegaard, the third assailant of Christianity, produced a positive answer, an answer which amounted to a demand that God should be allowed to occupy his rightful place. Attention has already been drawn to the inconclusive evidence of the extent and depth of Barth's reading of Kierkegaard.⁽²⁾ Nevertheless, the influence of Kierkegaard is unmistakable and even though their interests differ, they do at times say similar things. Barth was not so much concerned with the question of the Church-State relationship, and the compromise involved in an established church of the Danish type, but he was as concerned as Kierkegaard with the theology which did nothing to combat the abuses of the Church. Kierkegaard as much as Feuerbach rejected the appropriation of Hegelianism by theology and the confusion of philosophy with

(1) T.C. p.70: the remark is Overbeck's

(2) The second edition of Romans contains some very clear references to Kierkegaard's Works of Love (2R,p.495f, passim) J. Heywood Thomas traces the
(continued at the foot of the next page)

theology. In particular Barth learned from Kierkegaard the notion of the infinite qualitative distinctions between time and eternity⁽¹⁾, which made the building of a theology on the basis of an Hegelian, immanent dialectic quite impossible. The dialectic of time and eternity is not a dialectic of identity but of opposition.⁽²⁾ God stands over against man and the world in judgement on all attempts to divinise nature. Again Kierkegaard attacked the priests who had taken an oath binding them to the New Testament but in practice disregarded it, while he who had taken no such oath, nevertheless did feel bound to it.⁽³⁾ Barth likewise felt himself bound to the New Testament and to examine it in order to rediscover the content of the Church's proclamation.

In some respects even these three authors served more as a support to sharpen Barth's own attack, than as formative influences. He adopted various aspects of each, but as early as 1916 we find him saying some of the things which he later found supported by Feuerback, Overbeck and Kierkegaard, as for example, in his attack on the towers of Babel constructed by human righteousness - morality, culture, the state, religion - none of which have ushered in the radically new age and swept away the glaring faults of the old. He appealed too, for a readiness to listen for God to speak. It is true that he expected God to speak in the conscience, but he was also aware of what he called the "strange new world" of the Bible, with its talk of the acts and the word of God.⁽⁴⁾

(continued from previous page)

influence of Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Philosophical Fragments and Training in Christianity on the Christology of 2R ("The Christology of Søren Kierkegaard & Karl Barth", Hibbert Journal, vol. 53 (1954-55), pp. 280-88)

(1) cf. 2R, p. 10

(2) cf. J. Taubes "Dialectic and Analogy", Journal of Religion, vol. 34 (1954) pp. 111-19

(3) S. Kierkegaard: The Attack upon Christendom, trans. W. Lowrie (Princeton University Press 1944), pp. 21, 96 passim.

(4) W.G.W.M. ch. 1 and 2.

It seems certain that Feuerbach played a significant role in helping Barth to focus his critique of liberal theology in general and of Schleiermacher in particular. We may, for example, compare Feuerbach's claim that when Schleiermacher thinks he is speaking of God, he is in fact speaking simply of man, with Barth's rejection of Schleiermacher in the following terms:-

"... one can not speak of God simply by speaking of man in a loud voice." (1)

Barth's insistence that theology (and so also the pastor) must speak solely of God was the outcome of the pressure put upon him by his own pastoral situation. Yet at the same time he was painfully aware of the impossibility of such an undertaking. The consequent tension is vividly illustrated by two of his addresses, (2) which leave us in no doubt that the primary area of his concern at that time was the sermon. The pastor's dilemma is that while he is paid to speak of God, and while he is expected to do so by his congregation, he is incapable of fulfilling the task because he, like they, is human. He cannot speak of God any more than they. (3)

This need to speak of God led him to the notion of God as the God who speaks, and so eventually to a closer study of the Bible and, in particular, of the Epistle to the Romans. He claimed that his work was intended to act as a corrective, drawing theology back to its proper task, namely, to an interpretation and understanding of the Word of God. He expressed the desire to summon theology to a new consideration of the scripture principle, a principle which required, in his view, that the Bible should be treated as the Word of God. (4) Furthermore he wished to

(1) Ibid, p. 196

(2) "The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching" (1922);
"The Word of God and the Task of the Ministry" (1922)

(3) W.G.W.M. pp.100, 186ff

(4) Ibid, pp.102f, 242-49

summon theology and preaching to recognise that the sole basis on which it may speak of anything, and particularly of ethics, is the new reality initiated by the resurrection. (1)

In some respects, an influence even more important than that of Overbeck, Feuerbach and Kierkegaard, was that of the elder Blumhardt, for he spoke to Barth in a more positive manner, actually presenting him with an example. The impression on Barth made by Blumhardt is best gauged by the following comment:-

"... Blumhardt and Overbeck stand close together; back to back, if you like, and very different in disposition, in terminology, in their mental worlds, in their experience, but essentially together. Blumhardt stood as a forward looking and hopeful Overbeck; Overbeck as a backward looking critical Blumhardt". (2)

If Blumhardt could not be taken alone, but needed the critical acuteness of Overbeck, nevertheless, Overbeck alone was not enough. If Overbeck was the much needed "No!" to stop theology in its tracks, Blumhardt was the new "Yes" to set it going again. However powerfully Barth proclaimed the "No" it was the "Yes" that was his real goal. If Overbeck drew attention to the eschatological nature of early Christianity in order to attack theology, Blumhardt did so as a re-assertion of the "Easter faith". Above all

"Against the greater keenness of observation and thought on the side of Overbeck is to be set the greater love, the enthusiasm and the joy in witnessing on the side of Blumhardt." (3)

In summary, then, we may say that Barth's conception of the proclamation of the church was specifically concerned with the question

(1) Ibid, pp. 90ff

(2) T.C.p. 56 Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805-80) became pastor at Müttlingen where his work attracted much attention largely through the physical cures by which it was sometimes accompanied. From 1852 he worked at Bad Boll, which became a centre of influential international missionary work. At his death, his work was taken over by his son Christoph Friedrich ("the younger Blumhardt").

(3) T.C.p. 68; cf pp. 73, 232 The impression made on Barth by Blumhardt through Zündel's biography is witnessed by a letter to Thurneysen. (Rev. Theol. p. 30)

of the sermon in church, and the intention there to speak God's Word, to repeat God's message. The primary reference of the "Word of God" at this stage of his career, was to a message; it was not concerned primarily with Christology.⁽¹⁾ It was clearly Barth's conviction that it must be possible to speak of God, and directly so, rather than by means of circumlocutions, or by resort to speculative philosophy or to 'religious experience'.

The sermon in church is addressed to those who come to church - even if the congregation consists of only one old lady - but what relations does the sermon have to the needs and questions of those who come? Can Barth be accused of answering questions that no-one has asked?

The major difficulty in answering this problem is to determine the meaning of "asking" a question, a difficulty highlighted by Tillich's insistence on speaking of a question being implied by various aspects of man's existence. A question, it appears, does not have to be verbalised to be asked. But we are then faced with the problem of knowing how to determine what questions are being asked. Then again, even if a question comes to us in verbal form, we cannot be sure that the verbal form in fact put to us the actual question intended.

Barth's reply is that the sermon must deal with the listeners' deepest question and deepest need. The question is the question put to the assertion "God is present" - is it true? It is inseparably bound up with the question of the meaning of life, its origin and goal, and it is asked because of the remoteness of God.⁽²⁾ Barth is then, speaking to the kind of person who comes to church and asks in doing so, about God.

(1) Indeed, at this stage Christology was hardly considered, but he does show some awareness of the question in another letter to Thurneysen (Rev.Theol. p.105.)

(2) W.G.W.M., pp.107ff, 117, cf p186 ff

In speaking to him, he makes the demand that the listener should be prepared to listen to the Bible, for the minister is the minister of the Bible. Even those who do not come to church ask the same question, and so the minister must speak to them too, but again, as the minister of the Bible.

"... as the minister of the Bible he must be the first to be prepared to submit to God's question by asking the question about God, without which God's answer cannot be given. If he answers the people's question but answers it as a man who has himself been questioned by God, then he speaks - the word of God." (1)

In essence the sermon is an exposition of what the minister has himself heard when he has listened to the Bible in the belief that God has something to say through it. The minister must follow Calvin's method: having "first established what stands in the text" he must "set himself to rethink the whole material and to wrestle with it" until the walls separating the present from the first century are transparent and Paul, or any other Biblical author, can speak to the present age. (2)

In the Church Dogmatics, Barth maintains the notion that proclamation consists primarily in preaching, and preaching consists primarily in Biblical exposition. It is not a matter of preaching on religious topics - as Wilhelm Pauck described preaching in America

"It is important to remember ... that the difference between modern preaching in America and Protestant Europe is fundamental. The American sermon is seldom Biblical or expository. Its reference to the Scripture is in the majority of cases causal or superficial. It deals generally with "religious" topics. The European Protestant, however, follows the old tradition of preaching the 'Word' whether he is affiliated with liberal or orthodox theology." (3)

Barth comments:

"If what concerns America is pretty generally correct, even the actual confrontation of the Church with the Bible here presupposed is there no longer or scarcely any longer an event. In that

(1) Ibid, p.122 f

(2) Foreword to 2R, p.7

(3) Pauck: Karl Barth: Prophet of a New Christianity (1931), p.99

case naturally the problem based on this confrontation likewise does not arise. In that case I may expect among the successors of the Pilgrim Fathers neither interest nor understanding for what follows and at the same time for the whole of this dogmatics. But perhaps even there is at least a dim recollection that the preaching of the Church might stand in some sort of distinct connection with the Bible. And even there it will surely happen some day that 'religious topics' get for some so stupid and stale that from that dim recollection a clear one may arise once again." (1)

Proclamation is, then, primarily a matter of preaching, and preaching a matter of expounding the Biblical text in order to confront the listener with a God who speaks and has spoken decisively. It confronts man again with the revelation of God which renders all argument about the existence of God superfluous. It is, in short, intended not to answer the question "What do we mean when we say 'God'?" but the question "What has God to say?" Barth refuses to accept the proposition that it is not possible to speak of God without first explaining what is meant by "God", and in this way seems to sweep aside in a somewhat cavalier fashion the possibility of genuine ignorance or genuine scepticism. Similarly, he refuses to accept that it might be necessary to substitute for the name "God" some circumlocution such as, for example, Tillich's "the Unconditional". (2)

It is largely in his early works that Barth discusses the task of proclamation, and in them it is conceived exclusively in terms of preaching. He carries over this view into the Church Dogmatics, without any extensive re-examination of the question. However, in the Dogmatics his concern is not so much with the actual style of proclamation as with its primarily verbal form.

(1) CD, I:1 : 291f; cf I:2 : 743ff

(2) See for example the debate between Barth and Tillich in 1923. (Tillich, Gesammelte Werke, VII, pp.216-43. E.T. in The Beginnings of Dialectic Theology (hereafter Beginnings), ed. James M. Robinson, Vol. I, pp.133-58

Barth's argument amounts to a defence of verbal proclamation against those who, in his view devalue it, or seek to place it in a subordinate role to that of the liturgy or the sacraments, or to replace it with some other form of non-verbal communication. Thus he insists that preaching is not intended to be "moral exhortation" or religious instruction⁽¹⁾ but human language "in and through which God Himself speaks" ⁽²⁾ He treats the sacraments, at first, as a form of proclamation, but rather in a supportive role to preaching, underlining the preaching in the form of visible sacred signs appointed by God to convey better to man the promise of the Gospel.⁽³⁾ However, in his later work he becomes very cautious about the use of the word "sacrament"⁽⁴⁾ and although there is no evidence that he ceased to regard baptism and the Lord's Supper as providing some kind of visible illustration of the divine promises, he nevertheless appears to ignore entirely their function in Church proclamation.

That proclamation is essentially verbal in form is witnessed by the New Testament usage of the words κηρυγμα and ἀποστολος with their cognates. The preacher is sent as a herald to announce the king's (God's) message. Thus proclamation is based on mission, and consists essentially in speaking, because

"The decisive prerequisite for the office (of κηρυξ) was the ability and readiness to give the message exactly as commissioned."⁽⁵⁾

In his early works Barth views the idea of the Word of God primarily in terms of a message mediated through the Bible, but in later years he comes increasingly to find the controlling meaning of the concept in the incarnation and, indeed, tends more and more to the opinion that the term sacrament, at least in any primary sense, should be reserved for the incarnation.⁽⁶⁾ Nevertheless, it remains true that the most important

(1) CD, I:1 : 71ff

(2) Ibid p.57; cf. also CD, I:2 : 778

(3) CD, I:1:62; cf. CD, I:2:228 ff

(4) CD, IV:2:xi; IV:4

(5) CD, IV:2:201f; cf. also CD, II:2:251ff

(6) CD, IV:2:54ff, 107

single element in the concept of the Word of God is its verbal nature, that it is language addressed by God to man. Proclamation, therefore, takes as its primary characteristic, a verbal form, which Barth conceives largely in terms of the sermon. In short, proclamation has an unashamedly ecclesiastical air about it, in a very traditional sense, which marks off the Church as the group of believers from the rest of culture.

3. Tillich

When we consider that the formative period for Tillich's thinking coincided with Barth's, it may at first seem strange that they produced such different results. But against this, it must be said that whereas Tillich lived and worked in Germany, embroiled both in the disastrous war of 1914-1918 and the no less disastrous period that followed, Barth spent the whole of the wartime in a village parish in neutral Switzerland. Tillich had little experience of parish life and consequently shows little direct interest in the problems of the Sunday sermon. Indeed, he shows very little concern with the question of preaching at all. Rather, he is concerned with a dialogue with a humanistic culture moving away from the churches and out of sympathy with them. He does not speak of the "Word of God", nor does he address himself to the idea of God as speaking to man.

The relationship of the Christian Church to humanistic culture remains a central issue throughout his work.⁽¹⁾ and most of the other questions relating to the proclamation of the Church are closely connected with this theme. It is difficult, however, to untangle the strands

(1) See for example, "Lessing und die Idee einer Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts", (1929) in Gesammelte Werke (hereafter GW), XII, pp.97-111

which constitute the fabric of his approach. In the following exposition, therefore, we shall divide the discussion of the major determining factors in his view of proclamation into three sections: (a) the pre-war years, (b) 1914-1918, (c) the post-war years.

(a) The pre-war years

Tillich himself, in his various autobiographical reflections, offers extensive information on his early years and the tensions which he felt during them. Even during his schooldays, he says, he felt himself to be on the boundary between the rigid authoritarianism of his father's Prussian nature and the more Romantic nature of his mother, tempered with a Calvinistic moralism,⁽¹⁾ on the other between the traditional piety of the Lutheran church, and the humanistic culture of the Gymnasium which he attended first in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) and later in Berlin.⁽²⁾ Further, he felt himself on the boundary between the social classes, for his father, as a clergyman, was also a state official, and hence a member of the upper class, while Tillich felt greater affinity with the bourgeois pupils of his public school,⁽³⁾ who were critical of the upper class. But he did not feel himself to be thoroughly bourgeois either and came to have a "deep seated aversion" against a distinctly bourgeois life.⁽⁴⁾

The most important, however, of these various tensions was that which was represented by his education and his religious background, or more accurately, between the religious and the humanistic elements in his education, since both elements were present not only in his formal education but in his home.

(1) On the Boundary (hereafter Boundary) pp.13-15, "Autobiographical Reflections", The Theology of Paul Tillich (hereafter T.P.T.) ed C.W.Kegley and R.J.Bretall, p.8

(2) Boundary, pp. 19ff; T.P.T., p.9

(3) i.e. in the American sense, meaning state school.

(4) Boundary, p.22

"While we were introduced into classical antiquity in formal class meetings about ten hours a week for about eight years, we encountered the Christian tradition at home, in the church, in directly religious instructions (sic) in school and outside the school, and in indirect religious information in history, literature and philosophy." (1)

"In the tradition of classical orthodoxy, my father loved and used philosophy, convinced that there can be no conflict between a true philosophy and revealed truth." (2)

Even if his father was unaware of any tension, Tillich himself was.

"The result of this tension was either a decision against the one or the other side, or a general skepticism or a split-consciousness which drove one to attempt to overcome the conflict constructively." (3)

He determined to attempt the last path, seeking a synthesis of the two elements in order to achieve a sense of a unified culture. The desire to achieve a synthesis became a consuming passion which lies at the foundation of all his work.

His keen awareness of class differences, even while he was at school, induced a sense of social guilt that was to play an important role later in his life, arousing his interest in socialism. A member of the upper classes by virtue of his father's status, by inclination more sympathetic to the lower classes, he was, nevertheless, critical of all classes and wanted to bring them closer together. In the period after the Great War he found himself particularly concerned by the rift between the churches and the working classes.

During his last years at school, and his time at university, he found himself deeply interested in philosophy and particularly drawn to Schelling, not only on account of his philosophy of nature, but because he had tried to produce a synthesis of philosophy and theology. (4)

(1) T.P.T., p.9f

(2) Ibid, p.8

(3) Ibid, p.10

(4) Boundary, p.17, 47ff. We shall return later to the importance of Schelling for Tillich

Indeed, so great was the attraction that both of the dissertations which he wrote - for his doctorate and for his licentiate in theology - were on Schelling. His work made him deeply conscious of the rift between philosophy and theology. His consequent desire to achieve a synthesis, he maintains, led him to a new attitude towards the interpretation of church history and towards the problem of historical criticism. He aimed to give greater substance to theology than liberalism had allowed it, and to reveal the common ground with philosophy which would facilitate the synthesis.

(b) The years 1914-1918

Tillich was ordained in 1912, but, after two years of parish work in the Lutheran Church in the province of Brandenburg, became a military chaplain on the Western front. He tells us nothing in his autobiographical reflections about his parish work and little of his experience during the war, except for one important incident which was to play a significant part in his view of revelation. He records that, while on leave in Berlin, towards the end of the war, he saw a painting by Botticelli which, for him, amounted almost to a revelation. It was an experience that was part of a study of art on which he had engaged as a conscious reaction to the war. From this study he developed the fundamental categories of his view of religion and culture, namely, form and substance. As substance breaks through artistic form, so the Unconditional breaks through the conditioned form of finite being. (1)

The war not only provoked him to the study of art, but also served to heighten his political awareness. Although he had felt a sense of social guilt even at school, it had not issued in political activity. But the sense of guilt was now sharpened by the war to a deeper appreciation of the political situation and a desire for action. So he observed:

(1) Ibid, p.27f

"It was during the collapse of imperial Germany and the revolution of the last years of World War I that I began to understand such issues as the political background of the war, the inter-relation of capitalism and imperialism, the crisis of bourgeois society, and the schisms between classes." (1)

As a result he lent his support to the religious socialist movement immediately after the war, but he was not involved in any direct political activity.

He regarded religious socialism as a tool to bring together the churches and the working classes in a common purpose and so to bridge the immense gap between them. The rift was partly due, in Tillich's view, to the purely transcendent view of the Kingdom of God inherited from Luther and current in the Lutheran church, which led to a tendency to support the social and political status quo. (2) He was not entirely unrealistic, however, about the prospects for co-operation between the churches and the labour movement, because he recognised that if the labour movement did accept the support of the churches, it would inevitably mean some sacrifice of its Utopian ideals. Nevertheless he still believed that the common ground was sufficient to justify the belief that religious socialism could demonstrate that behind the Christian humanism of the labour movement and the entirely different sacramental forms of the Church the same substance could be found. (3)

With this in mind Tillich developed the concept of "kairos" to denote the demand to fulfil a particular task, namely, the creation of a new social order, which, though part of the work of the Church, was not to be viewed as a realisation of the fulness of the Kingdom of God. (4)

(1) Ibid, p.32f

(2) Ibid, p.76f; The Protestant Era (hereafter Era), p.xlii; Ultimate Concern, p.129

(3) Boundary, p.63

(4) Ibid, p.78f

(c) The post-war years

The period up to and including the First World War laid the foundations for most of Tillich's interests, but it was in the period after the war that he attempted in his writing to produce answers to the problems with which he found himself engaged. There were, in particular, three areas of concern

- (i) the rift between the churches and the proletariat
- (ii) the rift between the churches and the intelligentsia
- (iii) the general disintegration of the intellectual world.

It is our hope that by means of a brief examination of each of these we shall be able to discover some of the important elements in Tillich's concept of proclamation.

(1) the churches and the proletariat

We have already discussed at some length Tillich's sense of social guilt and his early involvement in the religious socialist movement and its attempts to establish relations with, and to exercise influence on, the Labour Movement. The task was not assisted by the long and deeply felt suspicion of the Labour movement towards the churches. It was feared that religious socialism would bring "the masses" under the Church's influence and thus alienate them from the struggle to achieve a socialist government. If the religious socialists were to have any influence with the masses, they had to align themselves with the ideals of the masses or seek to persuade them of a better way. Tillich's development of the notion of "kairos" was an attempt to create a theological reconciliation between the goal of the Church and the goal of the Labour movement, by means of an elaboration of the specific task of the Church at a certain moment within the overall task of the Church of directing itself towards the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God.

However, it was not sufficient to declare an identity of purpose, since the historical position of the Lutheran church was set against the

socialist convictions of this group. The Church, as we have already noted, was directed towards the maintenance of the status quo of the social structure and, in particular, tended to uphold the position of the upper classes in government, thus precluding the possibility of a socialist government.⁽¹⁾

Any attempt to draw the Labour movement and the Churches together had to take account of the antagonism felt towards the churches in its apologetic, and Tillich believed that such an apologetic could be mounted on the basis of the presence, albeit obscured, of a Christian substance in the humanism of the socialists.

"My contact with the Labor Movement, with the so-called de-christianised masses, showed me clearly that here too, within a humanistic framework, the Christian substance was hidden, even though this humanism looked like a materialistic philosophy that had long since been discredited by art and science." (2)

"The Church's attempt to frame an apologetic message without considering the class struggle was doomed to failure at the outset. Defending Christianity in this situation required active participation in the class struggle. Only religious socialism could carry the apologetic message to the proletarian masses." (3)

Only through active involvement, and an apologetic based on the Christian substance of socialism could a kind of maieutic be developed to prepare for the message of the Church. But Tillich was convinced that such a maieutic was possible.

However, the results of the efforts of the religious socialists were slender and very far from what they had hoped, due not least to the gravity of the situation, which they had miscalculated. The war had brought about the collapse of "bourgeois civilisation", apparently creating

(1) cf. The Religious Situation, p.44: "The Reformed Protestantism of England, America, Holland and Western Germany entered into alliance with the economic ethics of capitalism at an early date. Lutheranism stood and still stands aloof from it but by a roundabout way through state ecclesiasticism and the sanctification of the national will-to-power it became possibly even more dependent on capitalism than Calvinism had become."

(2) Boundary, p.62; cf also p.63

(3) Ibid, p.62

thereby the conditions necessary for an apologetic approach by the Churches to the proletariat, but

"... it was too late for such an attempt to be successful at that time. It proved impossible to break down the secular ideology and the mechanistic ... materialism of the labor parties. The Old Guard prevailed against us and against the youth of their own movement." (1)

Nevertheless, Tillich remained convinced both of the need for social action, which was closely connected with the influence on him of the prophetic criticism of social injustice in the Old Testament, and of the validity of the basis of his apologetic.

"We understood socialism as a problem not of wages, but of a new theonomy, in which the question of wages, of social security, is treated in unity with the question of truth, of spiritual security." (2)

The basically Christian humanism of the contemporary society was swamped by "neo-pagan" tendencies (by which we assume, Tillich means the 'mechanistic materialism' previously referred to) (3) as it disintegrated, and in the attempt to combat these tendencies the church appeared even more anti-humanist than ever before. Consequently

"The proletariat sank back into religious passivity." (4)

(ii) The Churches and the intelligentsia

Although, according to Tillich's account, the churches came to be admired by the intelligentsia for their stand against the rising tide of "nationalistic paganism", the intelligentsia were not drawn into the churches. They served as a useful tool against Nazism, and were admired for their opposition (inasmuch as they did oppose Nazism), but their message was no more acceptable than it had been previously. This, then, was another

(1) "Religion and Secular Culture", Journal of Religion (hereafter JR), vol. 26 (1946), p.79; cf. Ultimate Concern, p.131

(2) Era, p.xiv

(3) From which developed the National Socialism of Hitler

(4) Boundary, p.64

area in which Tillich felt it necessary to bridge the rift by means of a new apologetic approach, in order to strive towards the re-integration of society.

"The dogma defended by the Church did not and could not appeal to (the intelligentsia). In order to reach this group, the Church must proclaim the Gospel in a language that is comprehensible to a non-ecclesiastical humanism. It would have to convince both the intellectuals and the masses that the gospel is of absolute relevance for them. But this conviction cannot be imparted by the pointedly anti-humanist paradoxes that are used in confessional theology. The reality which gives rise to such paradoxes must first be illuminated." (1)

There was a split with the intelligentsia representing not only the empirical sciences, but also with those representing the humanities and, in particular, philosophy. On the one hand, to those involved in the empirical sciences the message of the church was not a product of scientific research and analysis. Theology was viewed, indeed, as thoroughly unscientific and therefore suspect. On the other hand, the war had had a destructive effect on the idealist synthesis which had brought philosophy and theology together. Tillich wished to present an apologetic to both groups by attempting to show how each discipline was related to others, but without permitting any one discipline to exercise domination over the others either in respect of method or in respect of its content. This intention provided the motivation for the writing of Das System der Wissenschaften nach Gegenständen und Methoden (2), which was to be a kind of preparatory apologetic to secure a hearing for the message of the church. Side by side with it was a further appeal to the Christian substance of the humanistic culture which the intelligentsia supported, which led Tillich to develop his notion of the latent church.

"The kind of distinction I suggested in that essay seems to be necessary in order to take into account the Christian humanism which exists outside the churches. It is not permissible to

(1) Boundary, p.64

(2) We shall refer in the text to the System of Sciences and in the footnotes to G.W.I. (S d W)

designate as "unchurched" those who have become alienated from organised denominations and traditional creeds. In living among these groups for half a generation I learned how much of the latent church there is within them." (1)

(iii) The general disintegration of the intellectual world.

We have already mentioned the isolation of theology by the empirical sciences on the one hand and by the humanities on the other, but that was not the sole feature of the situation in the intellectual world of importance to Tillich. There was a more general disintegration in the whole field of study, due on the one hand to the "methodological imperialism" of the mathematical physics, which required that every discipline desiring to be regarded as a science should be tested by the criterion of the empirical method, and on the other hand to the general loss of a sense of meaning consequent upon the destruction by the war of the national idealist philosophy. In these circumstances, Tillich saw it as part of the task of his System of Sciences that it should seek to relate the various disciplines, both scientific and non-scientific (in a modern English sense) to each other as parts of a coherent whole, and thereby to attempt to reconstruct a sense of meaning, or at least to make it possible.

Tillich himself says that in his System of Sciences his ultimate concern was with the questions: "How can theology be a science in the sense of Wissenschaft?", "How are its several disciplines related to the other sciences?", and "What is distinctive about its method?" He attempted to answer them

"... by classifying all of the methodological disciplines as sciences of thinking, being, and culture; by maintaining that the foundation of the whole system of sciences is the philosophy of meaning; by defining metaphysics as the attempt to express the Unconditioned in terms of rational symbols, and by defining theology as theonomous metaphysics." (2)

(1) Boundary, p.66f

(2) Boundary, p.55

In order to make a place for theology, Tillich classified it as a cultural science, where it could play a key role in the drawing together of the whole system through the search for meaning. In this way he sought to counter the loss of credibility which theology had suffered through its customary classification with the empirical sciences (Seinswissenschaften).

The philosophy of meaning was crucial for Tillich in drawing together the whole system, ⁽¹⁾ for not only did it provide a basis for the reintegration of the intellectual world, but it also provided the possibility of a new emphasis on substance instead of mere form, in contrast to the increasingly powerful materialism of the sciences. In Tillich's own terminology, he was seeking to reinstate the Unconditioned within the conditioned. ⁽²⁾

In his later works, the concept of meaning is replaced by the concept of being or Being-Itself, probably on account of the impact of Heidegger's thinking, which he heard expounded at Marburg in 1925, and reinforced by his antipathy for the obsession, as he saw it, of logical positivism, with meaning. The concept of Being-Itself brings to the fore, in a way which the concept of meaning does not, the ontological structure which embraces the whole of human activity, including the field of knowledge, and expresses the coherence and the depth of all that is. "Meaning" may appear to be something external, added as an alien ingredient, to that which is, to produce order from what is normally chaotic. Being-Itself expresses the coherence which is inherent within the ontological structure and which arises from its unity. Ontology, therefore, seems to offer a more promising foundation for a unified ^{view of} knowledge, than the concept of meaning.

(1) There has, however, been little recognition of this fact except by J.L. Adams Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture Science and Religion, (hereafter P.C.S.R.), pp.56ff

(2) For an exposition of the range of meaning of the concept of the Unconditioned Ibid, pp.41ff

In our survey of the early period of Tillich's work we have highlighted his chief concerns, namely, the Labour movement, the intelligentsia, and the intellectual world as a whole. He saw the task of the Church as the drawing together of a society rapidly disintegrating in the chaotic situation of the immediate post-war years. The situation had existed previously, but the war had had the effect not only of bringing it to a point of crisis, but also of impressing on Tillich himself the need for action. Thus the proclamation of the church he saw in terms of a proclamation of the fundamental unity of society and culture, in order that its reality should be realised in the contemporary situation. The paradigm of an integrated society he saw in what he described as the "theonomous" situation of the Middle Ages. Towards a new "theonomy" he now wished to direct the efforts of the church. (1)

However, he was aware of the rifts that existed between the churches on the one hand, and the proletariat and intelligentsia on the other, and sought, therefore, to construct an apologetic adequate for each situation, so that progress might be made towards co-operation. The focal point of the apologetic in both areas was the Christian substance of humanistic society, both in practice and in the ideals that were being debated. This Christian substance is identified with the substance which he wished to emphasise as the vital and unifying element in the system of sciences. His apologetic was directed at drawing attention not to the differences between the churches and other groups hostile or indifferent to them, but to the common ground between them. In this way he hoped that it would be possible for the church to be taken seriously, and its message to be listened to.

An approach such as this, however, carries with it its own problems. Common ground, no doubt, existed between those parts of the churches which

(1) cf "Religion and Secular Culture," JR, vol. 26 (1946), p.80f.

concurred with the views of the religious socialists and some, if not all, of the members of the Labour movement. The common ground consisted in the desire to rectify social injustice and to establish a socialist government. There was no guarantee, however, that both sides would understand the idea of a socialist government in the same way.

It is more important, however, to note that, while there may have been a measure of agreement on the practical aims of both groups, and while that might have led to a more sympathetic understanding of the other by each, the differences between them were still considerable, not only in terms of their ultimate aims, but also in terms of the ideology which informed them. Indeed it was their respective ideologies that gave them their different directions. The presence of some common ground is no reason for the adoption of the ideology of another group. Moreover, when Tillich sought to draw attention to the "Christian substance" of humanistic society he was doing no more than pointing to its cultural roots, not offering an argument for the relevance of the Church and of ecclesiastical structures, or even of the message of the Church. Humanistic society, as a product of the progress of thought from Christian roots, might consider itself as having outgrown any need for the Church. (1)

Part of the difficulty surrounding the problem of establishing a rapprochement with groups estranged from the Church was, in Tillich's view, the difficulty of speaking about God. His acute awareness of this is illustrated by his discussion with Barth in 1923 in the pages of Theologische Blätter (2) (continued on p.40)

(1) We may find a more modern form of the same argument expressed by P.L. Berger, A Rumour of Angels (London, Penguin Books, 1970), p.35: "Why should one buy psychotherapy or racial liberalism in a 'Christian' package, when the same commodities are available under purely secular and for that very reason even more modernistic labels? The preference for the former will probably be limited to people with a sentimental nostalgia for traditional symbols....."

(2) G.W., VII, pp.216-43 (E.T. in Beginning, vol. I, pp.133-58)

in which Barth took him to task for speaking of "this frosty monster", "the Unconditioned", instead of speaking directly of "the dear God".⁽¹⁾ Is not the latter way, Barth asked,

"safer in the end against dialectic, in the face of which I do not regard 'the unconditioned' as weatherproof either?" (1)

In his view, as many problems were posed by the use of Tillich's circumlocution as by the use of the term God. To this, Tillich replied:-

"It is impossible at present to speak as though the words in which Scripture and church refer to the unconditioned could directly achieve that which is their essential meaning. This is the fault of the Grand Inquisitor, of the law, of heteronomy, and of objectification. And all of us, theologians and non-theologians alike, share this same fate. For example, it is impossible for the one who is aware of this situation to speak of God as if this Word could directly convey to him its essential richness. Therefore we must speak of the unconditioned. Not that this is a substitute expression; it is rather a key to open for oneself and for others the closed door to the holy of holies of the name "God". Then the key should be thrown away. Precisely here it seems to me that the idea of any direct access to God and the assumption that one can obviously speak of God are forbidden." (2)

The last sentence suggests to us that to a certain extent Barth and Tillich are talking at cross purposes, since Barth's primary emphasis is on a God who has come to man and confronted him, a God who had confronted Barth pre-eminently in the Scriptures. But it is important to note that Tillich speaks of the term "unconditioned" as a "key", rather than as a substitute for "God". As such it is intended to fulfil an interpretative role, to unlock the richness of the concept of God. We may suggest, tentatively, that at this point Tillich is inclined more towards the use of "God" as a synthetic, and Barth towards its use as an analytic concept. By this we mean that Tillich uses it as a concept which draws together a number of elements in religious experience, whereas Barth, on the other hand, regards it as analytic of the Christian revelation.

(1) It is aptly that in the E.T. (Beginnings, vol. I, p. 147) the German phrase "Solte nicht der alte schlichte liebe Gott ..." (G.W., VII, p. 231) is translated "Is not the old simple word 'God' ..." ignoring the word "liebe" and so losing much of the force of Barth's question.

(2) G.W., VII, p. 241 (E.T. Beginnings, vol. I, p. 156)

However, it may be argued that a synthetic concept does not require a key so much as a patient explanation of the element of which it is composed. And, indeed, we find that Tillich appears unable to dispose of the keys he uses, ⁽¹⁾ because he treats them not as keys, that is to say, as apologetic devices, but as being linguistically appropriate in themselves, as descriptive of constituent parts of the synthetic concept. They are, therefore, not to be thrown away, but defended with all the weapons of a traditional metaphysic.

The use of these "keys" laid Tillich open to the charge of substituting the "God of the philosophers" or a philosophical concept for the God of the Bible and of the Christian Church. ⁽²⁾ He was aware, however, of the criticism and its implications and consequently devoted considerable effort to examining the relationship between philosophy and theology. To this subject we shall return in a later chapter, but we should note here that in 1925, when Tillich was at Marburg, he heard Heidegger lecture and concluded that Heidegger's philosophy offered a tool of great apologetic value for the Church's approach to the intelligentsia. He gradually adopted the mode of speech of Heidegger's existentialism, seeking to correlate an analysis of the human situation with the Christian message. ⁽³⁾

(1) Until his move to America, Tillich seems to have regarded "the Unconditional" as a satisfactory key, but by 1940 he was using the phrase "ultimate concern". No doubt he found that "the Unconditional" evoked little response from American audiences. Together with "ultimate concern" his favourite "key" seems to be "Ground of Being". He would have preferred "Being-Itself", *esse ipsum*, to the latter term but found it to be unacceptable (Ultimate Concern, p.46). It is worth noting that "ultimate concern" is always interpreted by Tillich in ontological terms. cf "The Problem of Theological Method", J.R., vol.27 (1947), p.18; Systematic Theology, I, pp.15ff.

(2) of Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality (hereafter B.R.S.U.R.), p.85: "Against Pascal I say: The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the God of the philosophers is the same God."

(3) "It took years before I became fully aware of the impact of this encounter on my own thinking. I resisted, I tried to learn, I accepted the new way of thinking more than the answers it gave." TPT, p.14; cf also T.O'Meara, "Tillich and Heidegger: a Structural Relationship", Harvard Theological Review, vol.61 (1968), pp.249-61; C.Rhein, Paul Tillich: Philosoph und Theologe (Stuttgart, Evangelischer Verlag, 1957), p.98; Boundary, p.56f; The Courage to Be, pp.145ff.

It is fundamental to Tillich's view of proclamation that the society in which the Church has to fulfil its task, is seen as alienated from its own roots, or in Tillich's own words, that it has substituted autonomy for theonomy. It is therefore the task of the Church in its proclamation to make society aware of its own roots and having repaired the alienation, to revitalise society. It was for this purpose that he made several attempts to elaborate a theology of culture, that is, an attempt to reveal the theological, or rather, "religious" roots of culture. Proclamation, if we may use such a term, is related more to apologetics, or dialogue, than to preaching, as the repetition of the Word of God previously heard. It is an attempt to attract the attention of the listener in order that he should hear the message of the Church. But when we try to define what the message of the Church is, on the basis of Tillich's early works, we are left in some doubt, for Tillich is much more concerned with what may appear to be the preliminaries or the method of approach, than with the content.

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that Tillich has no clear idea of the message which is to be proclaimed. He did not suffer the same doubts as Barth as to whether the Church had understood the message aright. His firm conviction that he knew the message made a re-examination superfluous. The pressing question for him was the method of presenting it in a rapidly disintegrating society.

Equally, it would be wrong to think that Tillich speaks only of the "Unconditional" or of "Ultimate Concern" or the "Ground of Being"; a most cursory glance through Systematic Theology shows that he frequently speaks directly of God, in a very traditional manner. Nevertheless, it is generally true to say that he tends to use the term "God" as a synthetic rather than as an analytic concept.

4. Comparisons and Conclusions

In our initial observations we remarked that Barth and Tillich shared a common concern for the message of the Church; Tillich - at least in 1940 - saw his approach as based on the same kerygma as Barth wished to proclaim.⁽¹⁾ We have noted that they shared a dissatisfaction with the situation in Europe immediately related to the chaotic effects of the first World War. Finally, we recalled that they both wish to be regarded as Church theologians. And yet our attempts to trace the development of their views of proclamation, crucial in itself for their views of theology and theological method, have revealed wide differences of approach and result.

(a) First, we noticed that despite their contemporaneity and their common experience of the disturbing effects of the War, yet their actual situations and their appraisal of the problems presented to the church differed considerably. It is important to keep in mind the fact that Barth was, throughout the war, engaged in a parochial ministry in a neutral country, while Tillich, by contrast, was a chaplain on the battle-front and not, apparently, immediately concerned with the rights or wrongs of the war. At the outbreak of the war, Barth's theological standpoint was so severely shaken that he rejected the theological liberalism of his teachers and strove to found his theology and preaching on the "Word of God". By contrast, no such change of position was registered by Tillich; he became politically, more aware, and resolved to take a more active role in social affairs, but there remained a fundamental continuity in his theological thinking.

(1) Era, p. 83f

Other articles also indicate common ground with Barth, e.g., "What is wrong with the Dialectic Theology", J.R., Vol. 5, (1935) pp. 127-45.

Barth's primary concern, we noted, in keeping with his parochial position, was with the weekly sermon and its contents, a concern which he carried over into his academic career, while Tillich, with little experience of parochial ministry, but with great concern both for the proletariat and the intelligentsia, estranged from the church, was concerned primarily with the approach to those groups. Tillich, ^{speaking} in dialogue, of the situation before and after the Second World War, has made the following summary of the situation:

"Karl Barth spoke in a very particular situation to a very particular group of people. He spoke to those who, in themselves, were attached to the church and who stood, as theologians or laymen, on the boundary line of a liberalism which might finally have led to so-called Germanic Christianity. And he saved Christianity from this pitfall. This is his achievement in church history and his greatness. I refer not only to German theology but to the European churches who had to fight against similar attempts during the Nazi period, and Barth saved them. But then the people who fought under his leadership in the struggle against Nazism, and often became martyrs in the fight, were victorious at the end of the war and became the leading persons in German and other Protestant churches

"And something happened. The so-called intelligentsia - the people who cannot escape the sad destiny of having to think - was left alone. These people were left in a desert, and they were conscious of this all the time. The result was a continuing secularisation which, after the heat of the fight with Nazism, occurred again in Germany and in Europe. So we now have a large group of people whom I would prefer to call the "thinking and doubting people" in respect to the Christian Tradition. There are thinking people who do not doubt and even more of them who have doubted but do so no longer. They have simply rejected Christianity and every other religion." (1)

"I presuppose in my theological thinking the entire history of Christians thought up until now, and I consider the attitude of those people who are in doubt or estrangement or opposition to everything ecclesiastical and religious, including Christianity. And I have to speak to them. My work is with those who ask questions, and for them I am here. For the others, who doubt, I have the great problem of tact. Of course, I cannot avoid speaking to them because of a fear of becoming a stumbling block for primitive believers. When I am preaching a sermon ... I speak to people who are unshaken in their beliefs and in their acceptance of symbols, in a language which will not undermine their belief. And to those who are actually in a situation of doubt and are even being torn to pieces by it, I hope to speak in such a way that the reasons for their doubts and other stumbling blocks are taken away. On this basis I also speak to a third group, one which has gone through these two stages and is now able again to hear the full power of the message freed from old difficulties." (2)

(1) Ultimate Concern p.189f

(2) Ibid, p.191

Although Barth and Tillich were contemporaries, Barth was seeking to answer the church member shaken in his faith by the events of the war, who asked "Is it true?" of what the preacher - and the Bible - proclaimed, while Tillich was seeking to approach those who had ceased to ask this question. In spite of the various different situations in which they were placed thereafter, we believe that the early period, during and immediately after the First World War, was determinative for both in their attitude to the task of proclamation. Of themselves, these two attitudes cannot be regarded as mutually exclusive.

For Barth there was never any question as to whether the congregation wished to listen; for Tillich the first problem was a matter of persuading his audience to listen, which involved both the support of the proletarian cause and the use of language to which each would listen. Barth never saw the disintegration of the intellectual world as a part of his concern.

(b) We have repeatedly referred to Barth's conviction that proclamation is concerned with the Word of God: that is to say, with what God has to say to man, about man's relationship with God. As is clear from both the major editions of Romans⁽¹⁾ and from the addresses of the period published in The Word of God and the Word of Man, the first component of the message is a "No" set against man and the whole of human culture and society, a "No" which is directed not only to secular culture, but also to the Church and to the theological endeavour of the church, in particular to liberal theology. Before any "Yes" can be proclaimed it must be preceded by a "No". The "No" however, is never alone, even though the predominant mood

(1) i.e. The first and second editions. Although the English translation is based on the sixth edition, it is substantially the same as the second. We refer here, to the first edition as 1R and the E.T. of the sixth as 2R.

of Barth's writings of the period appears to be negative: it is always accompanied by the "Yes". But the "No" is the precondition; no new building can be erected until the old one is completely demolished.

"Men are forgiven by God only when he condemns them, life only arises from death: the beginning stands at the end, and "Yes" proceeds from "No". (1)

The "No" and the "Yes" are closely related to the death and resurrection of Jesus, the death representing the "No", the resurrection the "Yes". The resurrection is the goal, but it cannot be reached without the preventient death. So if there is to be a resurrection for man, he must first experience the judgement and death of everything human in his approach to God, and so permit God's approach to him.

By contrast, Tillich lays little emphasis on the "No", although he was no means unappreciative of the importance of Barth's sharp critique. However, he sought rather to express the affirmation which also highlights that which is to be negated. He reverses, as it were, the sequence of the "Yes" and the "No," as is evidenced by his approach to the Labour Movement -- declaring his fundamental support for its goals in order to influence it by means of dialogue with it. Indeed we might describe Tillich's view of proclamation as dialogue rather than preaching. Similarly, he aims to establish a dialogue with the intelligentsia, directed towards re-establishing in intellectual and cultural activity an element, or dimension which had been ignored. Socialism, society, and culture and the intellectual world are first affirmed and only then criticised.

His defence of this procedure is based on the thesis that every paradox which involves the dialectic of affirmation and negation has, as its presupposition, a positive standpoint. Negation must be preceded by

(1) 2R, p.112; cf. ibid, p.111; also W.G.W.M., p.59 passim

affirmation, since, he argues, negation is logically impossible unless something has previously been affirmed. In Barth's opinion, however, Tillich has missed the point altogether, substituting a logical process for the actuality of the divine process. Consequently he rejects vigorously what he calls Tillich's "continual, confident reversal of the concepts 'judgement and grace'". (1)

There is a clearly prophetic streak in Tillich's work, which takes the form largely of a critique of social injustice and of ecclesiastical connivance or even support, but we do not find in him any emphasis on the concept of the Word of God spoken as a radical negation of all human activity. He is in continuity with the tradition of Schleiermacher, wishing to restore society to a "theonomous" orientation not by means of a radically new beginning but by a process of reversing the trend towards secularisation.

(c) There is, therefore, in Tillich's view, no fundamental discontinuity between the Church and society. The Church, indeed, is a part of society, but while this means there is no dichotomy between the two, it would be wrong to think that Tillich identifies the Christian message and its goals with those of a humanistic socialism. However, as we have seen, they share some common ground, so that it may be said that the proclamation of the Kingdom of God does imply co-operation, in certain areas, with other groups outside the Church.

It would be a caricature of Barth to suggest that he shows no interest in matters of social and political concern. His break with the religious socialists during his pastorate at Safenwil betokened not an abandoning of social concern, but of the theology which informed religious

(1) G.W., VII, p.233 (E.T. Beginnings, Vol, I, p.149)

socialism. Nevertheless, it is true that his early work displays a profound disillusionment with all attempts to prop up cultural and political structures with theological argument.

"[Let there be] civil referenda and civil obedience but no combination of throne and altar, no Christian patriotism and no atmosphere of a democratic crusade. [Let there be] strikes and general strikes and even street fighting, if there must be, but no religious justification for it, nor glorification of it. [Let there be] military service as soldiers or officers, if there must, but in no circumstances as army chaplains!" (1)

Violent as his reaction appears, it must be balanced against his view of the Church as playing an important critical role in society:

"The weakness of modern Christianity is revealed by its failure with respect to the social question, by its confused helplessness in the face of the war." (2)

If Barth is represented as adopting a wholly negative attitude towards culture, it is perhaps because of the kind of opinion expressed in the first of our two quotations. It is, therefore, argued that Barth shows no interest in politics except where the state trespasses on the freedom of the Church and of theology. This, however, is a gross oversimplification, for Barth's concern with political and social issues was very wide. It is true, however, that it frequently focussed on the issue of the relationship between Church and state. (3) Moreover, there is a constant tension in Barth's thinking: reform is needed in society, but for the Christian message, social reform is not sufficient. It ought to spring from the recognition of God's sovereignty over his creation. (4)

In short, the problem which faces both Tillich and Barth is the familiar problem, which also faced Kierkegaard, and even Joachim de Fiore,

(1) IR , p.390

(2) Ibid, p.330

(3) cf "The Christian Community and the Civil Community," Against the Stream , pp.15-50

(4) Tillich and H.R.Niebuhr are, therefore unfair when they suggest that Barth is in danger of supporting the status quo not because it is good but because all reforms are bad. (The Religious Situation, translator's preface, p.22)

namely, that of the re-introduction of Christianity into Christendom. Is the secularisation of society to be regarded as a radical reversal to paganism or merely a simple deviation and is the appropriate way to tackle the situation to begin again or merely to seek to reverse the process that has taken place? May we, perhaps, go further still, and argue that the tension which, apparently inevitably, arises from the confrontation of a non-Christian culture by the Christian message, precludes the possibility of a Christian culture? In short, is the very idea of a Christian culture a contradiction in terms? (1)

Clearly, neither Barth nor Tillich believe that a Christian culture is such a contradiction. Barth's position did, however, change, and it may well appear that his early, strong emphasis on the otherness of God, on the wholly eschatological nature of the gospel and on the pure transcendence of the Kingdom of God make it difficult to understand how any real impact on human culture can be made by the gospel. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that at the time of Romans he was more concerned to deny than to affirm: to deny, in particular, the casual identification of Christianity and culture. What was required was not simply a series of social reforms but a radical reorientation of man in his entirety towards God. Thus in 1925, we find him striking a more positive note, but in complete consistency with Romans, that culture is what man is intended to be. True culture occurs only when man hears the Word of God. (2) Later still he argued the necessity of making war on Hitler on the ground that the world is the place in which the resurrection took place and which God has therefore claimed for himself. (3) Yet later he argued that the state is the product not of sin but of divine grace. (4)

(1) As is suggested for example by K. Löwith, Meaning in History (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1949), p.153f.

(2) "Church and Culture" T.C., pp.334-54

(3) Eine Schweizer Stimme, p.185 (E.T. A Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland, p.9)

(4) Against the Stream, pp.21, 33, 44ff, 96ff

But throughout his work there is the insistent note that man himself must undergo a radical reorientation to God so that culture may become the expression of his having heard and responded to the Word of God. He will only hear the Word of God if the Church is faithful in proclaiming it.

Tillich, in contrast, sees himself not as bringing a message to man from beyond culture, but rather as seeking to display to culture its own roots and thereby to reunite it with its roots to realise the "religious dimension" in culture - in his own words, to re-establish a theonomous culture. In this way, through the dialogue undertaken with humanistic society, he aims to reverse the process of secularisation, or, in his own words again, to "deprofanise" society.

The details of the process of re-introducing Christianity into Christendom are a matter of much greater import for Tillich than they are for Barth, who shows a magnificent, almost reckless disregard for what he views as the

"idle question of how those who proclaim the Word should 'approach' this or that modern man, or how they should 'bring home' the Word of God to him." (1)

We must not, however, make the mistake of simply distinguishing Tillich as a supporter of culture and Barth as an opponent of it, despite the somewhat ambiguous positions adopted by the latter. We must rather, seek to understand how each, respectively, views the role of theology in relation to the task of the Church. To this question we address ourselves in the following chapters.

(1) Evangelical Theology (hereafter Ev. Theol.), p.182; cf p.35

P A R T I I

T I L L I C H

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

1. The Task of Theology

(a) Introduction

Tillich tells us in his autobiographical reflections that despite the debt that he owed to liberal theology, he found it impossible to reconcile his thinking with that of liberal dogmatics on two crucial issues. Much as he admired the "historical accomplishments" of liberalism, he could not accept the substitution of the "historical Jesus" for "the crucified Christ" or its dissolution of "the paradox of justification into moral categories".⁽¹⁾ He was in short, rejecting the intrusion into theology of Kantianism and of positivistic historiography. It was under the impact of Kantian philosophy that theology had become concerned chiefly with morals, and under the impact of positivistic historiography that the "Quest for the Historical Jesus" had been undertaken in the hope of furnishing a credible picture of Jesus, who would then act as a foundation for liberal ethics. Instead, Tillich set himself to ask how Christian doctrine might be understood "if the non-existence of the/historical Jesus were to become historically probable."⁽²⁾

This shift of interest away from the concerns of liberal theology was one decisive factor in shaping his view of the task of theology. A second factor, as we have already seen, was his awareness of the rifts in society and in the intellectual world, which prompted him to view the proclamation of the Church in terms of an attempt to reconcile the warring factions and to re-establish harmony/^{rather} than in terms of the declaration of the Word of God to man. In keeping with this, his theology takes upon

(1) Boundary, p.49

(2) Ibid, p.50

itself the nature of a dialogue with the various factions, aimed at uncovering their common cultural roots.

Tillich calls this kind of theology apologetic, but he also admits that theology has not only an apologetic but also a kerygmatic task. However, when we press him for a further explanation of this second task, we find his answers evasive. For example, he tells us, in a lecture delivered in 1940⁽¹⁾ that kerygmatic theology seeks to reproduce the content of the Christian message in an ordered and systematic way without reference to philosophy, while apologetic theology seeks to explain the contents of the same kerygma "in close interrelation with philosophy." No explanation is offered, however, of the difference between "reproducing" the message and "explaining" it, nor is any explanation offered of the idea of "philosophy". Again, he suggests that the difference is to be found in their direction, the one towards the kerygma in which God is revealed and the other towards man and the endeavour of human reason to receive the message, but fails to amplify his assertions.⁽²⁾

His meaning is made clearer in an article published seven years later, in which he says that kerygmatic theology seeks to reproduce, interpret and organise the Christian message either in "predominantly biblical terms" or in terms "taken from the classical tradition". Apologetic theology, on the other hand relates the message to the pre-philosophical and philosophical interpretations of reality. It begins to sound very much as though the difference were largely a matter of language. But there is more to it than this, for he adds that an apology answers the questions asked of, and the criticisms directed against, theology, and in doing so, presupposes the idea of a "universal revelation" to which reference can be made by both sides.⁽³⁾

(1) Era, pp. 83-93

(2) Ibid, p. 83f

(3) "The Problem of Theological Method", JR, vol. 27 (1947), pp. 16-26.

Kerygmatic theology is, in other words, very much what dogmatics has customarily been: an attempt to expound the doctrines of the kerygma for the benefit of the Church. Apologetic theology, however, is still something of an unknown quantity, because it is not clear what "philosophy" means, and what "universal revelation" can be appealed to by both sides in the conversation. That it is directed to those who are outside the church is quite clear, however.

In the first volume of Systematic Theology, the emphasis changes. Whereas he had previously spoken of kerygmatic theology as complementary to apologetic theology, he now speaks of it as necessary only inasmuch as it stands as a warning to apologetic theology not to forget the Christian message by becoming too immersed in the situation. It must not forget that it has to answer the question as well as to understand it. Moreover, he now speaks of the necessity for theology to "enter the situation", if it is to be apologetic.⁽¹⁾ But the concept of "situation" is itself curiously vague. Initially, it is defined in the following way:

"It refers to the scientific and artistic, the economic, political and ethical forms in which they express their interpretation of existence." (2)

The assertion that apologetic theology speaks to the situation is not to be interpreted in a pastoral sense, meaning that it is addressed to an individual or to a group. Rather, the situation is

"... the creative interpretation of existence ... which is carried on in every period of history under all kinds of psychological and sociological conditions." (3)

It is to the interpretation of existence that apologetic theology addresses itself and it finds the interpretation of existence of any particular period in its cultural, political, psychological and sociological expressions or forms.

Clearly, Tillich's conception of the task of theology is deeply influenced by his awareness of cultural conditions,⁽⁴⁾ since apologetic

(1) ST, I, pp. 6ff

(2) Ibid, p. 4

(3) Ibid.

(4) "Culture" is to be understood in the broadest possible sense.

theology is designed to meet the interpretation of human existence which is manifested in cultural forms. As yet, it is not clear how philosophy and "the situation" are related. We shall, therefore, be turning our attention to this question as we examine Tillich's understanding of the situation in Europe at the time of his early work, and his understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology.

(b) Cultural Disintegration

We have already discussed at some length the extent of Tillich's awareness of the cultural disintegration of the early years of the century, and have noticed that, according to his own testimony, this awareness stretched back to the tensions experienced in ^{his} childhood. In particular we observed his awareness of disintegration in three areas: the rift between the churches and the proletariat, that between the churches and the intelligentsia and the general disintegration of the intellectual world, marked by a kind of methodological civil war. In each case, the chief sufferer was, on the face of it, the church and theology, for the working classes and the intelligentsia had no time for the Church or were not prepared to take it seriously, while the methodological warfare of the intellectual world pushed theology into increasing isolation. Tillich however, believed that the real sufferers were those who had neither a place for the church nor for theology, and he set himself to make it plain. However, to accomplish such a task it was necessary to establish again the nature of theology. Tillich had, as we have said, concluded that the liberal reduction of theology to morals and positivistic historiography was to be rejected. He had therefore to rediscover the force which had made theology and culture the complementary forces they had been in the early Middle Ages. His efforts to achieve this rediscovery may be traced in publications such as Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur (1919)

Die Überwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Religionsphilosophie (1922),
Das System der Wissenschaften nach Gegenständen und Methoden (1923),
Religionsphilosophie (1925) and Die Religiöse Lage der Gegenwart (1926) (1)

The outline of Tillich's diagnosis of the problem and its solution is offered in Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur: indeed, although it requires supplementation and elucidation through the other works we have mentioned above, it is nevertheless, the foundation for the whole of Tillich's theological pilgrimage. It was no accident that a collection of essays written between 1940 and 1956 were entitled Theology of Culture, echoing the title of his earlier work. (2) The work of 1949 is concerned mainly with the relationship between theology and culture and with the attempt to reconcile them, but it also points the way forward to the System of Sciences. Indeed several of the points which he makes in the earlier work become clear only in the light of the later. For this reason we shall turn first to the System of Sciences, in order to furnish the background for the specific questions raised in the earlier work.

(i) The System of Sciences

The System of Sciences was intended primarily as Tillich's response to the general disintegration of the intellectual world. In it he sought not only to group the sciences according to their method and according to their object, but also to undergird the whole system and hold it together

(1) All but Das System der Wissenschaften have been translated into English. Except for Die Religiöse Lage der Gegenwart (ET. The Religious Situation) the translated works are published in What is Religion? In order to distinguish the individual works we shall cite the E.T. as W.R. adding in parentheses an abbreviation of the title, as follows: On the Idea of a Theology of Culture = W.R. (ITC), The Conquest of the Concept of Religion in the Philosophy of Religion = W.R. (Conquest), The Philosophy of Religion = W.R. (Rph). Similarly we shall cite the German editions as GWJ (ITK), GWJ (Überwindung) and GWJ (Rph)

(2) cf. op. cit. (hereafter Theol. Cul), p. v

by means of a philosophy of meaning. A purely descriptive arrangement would, he believed, do nothing to combat the methodological imperialism that was rife. A system that could bring about a reunification of the sciences would require deeper foundations. Such foundations, he believed, could be supplied by a philosophy of meaning. He did not, however, think that he was constructing a system, so much as expounding the system that actually existed and had been ignored. It was ironical, therefore, that the work should have attracted so little attention. The very audience for which it was intended, it seemed, could not understand it.

It had been customary since the middle of the 19th century to distinguish between two groups of sciences, namely the natural sciences (Naturwissenschaften) and the cultural sciences (Kultur - or Geisteswissenschaften). Among the Geisteswissenschaften (1) were included such subjects as history, philology, economics, social anthropology, sociology, comparative jurisprudence and comparative religion.

Tillich, however, adopted a scheme consisting not of two groups, but of three, which he called Denkwissenschaften, Seinswissenschaften and Geisteswissenschaften. The sciences of thought include logic and mathematics, the sciences of being include the empirical sciences, and the cultural sciences include some of the disciplines customarily assigned to this group. There are, however, significant differences between Tillich's classification and those that preceded it. Several of the traditional cultural sciences are placed among the sciences of being in company with the empirical sciences, including psychology, sociology, history, anthropology, linguistics and philology. Theology, on the other hand is classified as a cultural science.

(1) The term Geisteswissenschaften was originally used to translate J. S. Mill's "moral sciences".

Whereas Rickert⁽¹⁾ had insisted that method should form the criterion for classification, Dilthey⁽²⁾ had selected subject matter as being more fundamental. Tillich, however, proposes to build his system on the basis of both method and object. It should be added, however, that the word science is not used with the empirical and positivistic connotations it frequently carries, but refers to the broad idea of knowledge contained in the etymological derivation both of Wissenschaft (wissen) and of science (scientia).

The three groups into which the sciences are classified reflect and are based upon Tillich's conception of the principles of knowledge, namely, thinking, being and spirit, which are connected, respectively with form, content and substance or import (Gehalt)⁽³⁾ Now, the act of knowing itself consists of two elements, namely the act itself and that to which it is directed, known alternatively as the intention and that which is intended.⁽⁴⁾ These two elements Tillich calls thought or thinking (Denken) and being (Sein). He goes on to say, however, that Denken does not signify reflection (Nachdenken), the psychological process of thinking about something, and that Sein is not meant to signify an actually existing object (ein seiendes Ding). What then are they? Tillich answers that no further definition is possible except in an account of their relationship. This account he offers on the form of three propositions.

- "1. Thought posits (or recognises) existence as that which is grasped or conceived, as that which determines or gives content to thinking.
2. Existence is striven for by thought as that which is alien, elusive to intellectual conception, resistant to thought.
3. Thinking becomes aware of itself in the act of thinking: it is directed towards itself and thus becomes a part of existence." (5)

(1) Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936) author of Die Grenzen der Naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung

(2) Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)

(3) Tillich himself acknowledges the influence of Fichte on his arrangement GW, I (SdW), p.120

(4) Ibid, p.117f

(5) Ibid, p.118

The three propositions are concerned respectively, with the relationship between thinking and being, being and thinking and between spirit and both thinking and being. He further abbreviates them to "the proposition of absolute thought" ("Being is that which determines thinking") the proposition of absolute being ("Being is the contradiction of thought") and the proposition of spirit ("Thinking is itself being") (1)

He appears to have in mind the attempt to grasp ~~be~~ reality by means of concepts, laws and associations which is always resisted by reality, so that "thought" never controls it. Thought (or thinking) and being thus exist in a dynamic tension. When thought directs attention towards itself it becomes a part of the existential world of reality (ein Stück Existenz) and so itself resistant to the controlling force of thought.

"If we ask where this existing thinking is found, we can only answer: In the 'inner core' of the conscious being: for us, even all in the cultural life of humanity." (2)

At first sight, Tillich appears to be constructing a metaphysical foundation for his system, but it is not metaphysical in the traditional sense of a belief in the existence of a world of substances lurking behind the world of appearances. Being is not an "existing substance" (seiende Substanz) and metaphysics is therefore not a science among other sciences, but an attitude to reality. (3)

The strength of his position would appear to be its link with the philosophical traditions of the past, affirming an ontological conception of reality as basic to philosophical thinking and rejecting the strict empiricism of modern science as inappropriate to philosophy. But while he does have clear relations with the classical traditions of philosophy he must not be confused with them. The most important difference between

(1) Ibid., p.118f

(2) Ibid., p.120

(3) GW, I (Roh), p.302 (WR, p.35)

him and Hegelian idealism is his refusal to allow the dialectical relationship of thinking and being to be brought to an end by the final victory of thinking over being. He does not regard the existential order as simply the self-expression of thought, which is to be swallowed up again by thought.⁽¹⁾

The System of Sciences is not simply the exposition of a system in the sense of an account of what actually is the case. It is not, therefore, a simple account of what sciences there are and what methods they use; it is of the essence of systematics that it should be normative in character. It explains therefore how many sciences there ought to be and what methods they ought to use.⁽²⁾ But that is not to say that the system it proposes can be regarded as final or absolute. Every system must be provisional since it is the product of an attitude to reality. In the absence of final criteria no attitude to reality can be designated as absolute.⁽³⁾

"The living power of a system is its import,⁽⁴⁾ its creative standpoint, its original intuition. Each system lives by the principle on which it is based and with which it is constructed. Every final principle, however, is the expression of a final view of reality, a basic attitude to life. Thus at every moment, there breaks through the formal system of sciences an import which is metaphysical, i.e. which lies beyond every individual form and beyond all forms and so cannot itself be a form beside others according to a sort of false metaphysics. The metaphysical is the living power, the meaning and the blood of the system. In this, and only this, sense, is the formal system of sciences metaphysical." ⁽⁵⁾

The Geisteswissenschaften are also known, in Tillich's system, as Normwissenschaften or normative sciences. They are therefore, closely connected to the task of the production of a system of sciences, indeed, to the task of systematising in all areas of human activity. Norms are born, as it were, in the creative process of the cultural sciences;

(1) GW, I (S d W), p.123. This is not to say that there is no continuity between the existential order and thought. It is the correspondence of the logos of the mind and the logos of reality that makes knowledge possible, and it is the logos of reality that makes it possible for reality to be symbolic.

(2) Ibid, p.113

(3) Ibid, p.244

(4) We have adopted Adam's translation of the term Gehalt by the words "import" or "substance" to distinguish it from Inhalt or "content".

(5) Ibid, p.116f; cf WR(1TC), p.155f.

that is to say, they come into being as a direct result of the creative or productive work of the cultural sciences.

"Cultural science is productive, i.e. it is always at the same time the prius and the posterius of spiritual (geistig) creation. It owes its life to the creations which it helps to create (Sie lebt von den Schöpfungen, die sie mitschafft); it co-creates the object which it recognises ..." (1)

The productive character of the cultural sciences is accounted for in the following way:

"... in every spiritual-creative act an act of the consciousness directed towards the general is bound up with the individual substance." (2)

The cultural sciences seek to be creative, that is to say, to bring meaning (Sim) to light. This they do by relating individual things to the general, for the particular, or individual, is an embodiment of the general. The more individual, the more expressive it is of the general, as long as its intention is directed towards the general. Otherwise the individual becomes mere form. As the cultural sciences seek to relate the individual to the general, so they become productive of further individual forms and show the way towards a norm.

"This awareness, this looking at itself and determining of itself by thought in the creative act, is the fundamental characteristic of the spiritual. The awareness, the directedness towards the general, towards that which bestows value (das Geltende) is a co-creative element in every spiritual act. It is not the only element, for beside it or in it the creative substance is at work, the living structure (Gestalt) with its immediate existential relations, and it is only out of the co-operation of these two that the spiritual act arises. But awareness, directedness towards the general and towards that which bestows value is involved in every spiritual creation and is a productive element of the creative process." (3)

Tillich's intention may become clearer if we set it more concretely within the structure of the cultural sciences, which are constituted of three elements, namely, philosophy, or the theory of the principle of

(1) GW, I (SdW), p. 220

(2) Ibid., p. 218f

(3) Ibid., p. 219. The productive character of the cultural sciences is their contribution towards the creation of new cultural forms.

meaning, cultural history, or the theory of the material~~of~~ meaning, and systematics or the theory of the norms of meaning. It is important to note that they are elements and not independent disciplines. They are closely interdependent, and, so while having individual characteristics, overlap to a certain degree.

Philosophy, or the theory of the principles of meaning, is further defined by Tillich who tells us that the principles of meaning are the "spiritual functions and categories of meaning", rooted on the one hand in logic and on the other in metaphysics. The functions of meaning are those directions of action by which the areas of meaning are demarcated, while categories are the forms by which the objects in those areas are constituted.⁽¹⁾ In other words, the theory of the principles of meaning has a primarily critical role; taking the material furnished by the theory of the material of meaning (cultural history) it attempts to establish distinctions, to demarcate certain areas of investigation and to produce categories and concepts by which the material may be comprehended.

The principles of meaning, however, are not pure artefacts, since they are related to meaning, which itself comes to concrete realisation in history, that is to say: in concrete cultural structures. Without concrete cultural structures the theory of the principles of meaning could not exist, but, having drawn from the material of meaning its categories in the theory of the principles of meaning, cultural science returns to the consideration of the material of meaning, driving towards its goal in the theory of the norms of meaning or systematics.

"The principle of meaning, fulfilled with the material of meaning, becomes the norm of meaning." (2)

(1) Ibid, pp.231 ff

(2) Ibid, p.241

The theory of the materials of meaning performs the indispensable function of providing the material for both the first and the third elements as well as the link between them. (1) Tillich's main preoccupation however, is with the first and third elements which, it becomes clear, are related as first and second order thinking. Philosophy is second order thinking, asking questions such as "what is beauty?" and "what is morality?" while systematics is first order thinking, asking "what is beautiful?" and "what is moral?" (2)

Religion may similarly be regarded as a cultural science which can be organised into three elements, philosophy of religion occupying the place of the first and "theology" occupying the place of the normative element. Thus theology is no longer the science of "one particular object which we call God", or a "scientific presentation of a special complex of revelation" (3) but a part of that group in the system of sciences which is specifically concerned with bringing meaning to light by relating each component of the system to its unconditional ground.

The cultural science of religion, however, cannot be treated entirely in isolation. In order to make clearer its place within the system, it is necessary that we examine further Tillich's exposition of the cultural sciences as a whole.

The description of the cultural sciences is not completed by an account of the elements of which they are constituted. They must also be classified according to their attitude and to their object.

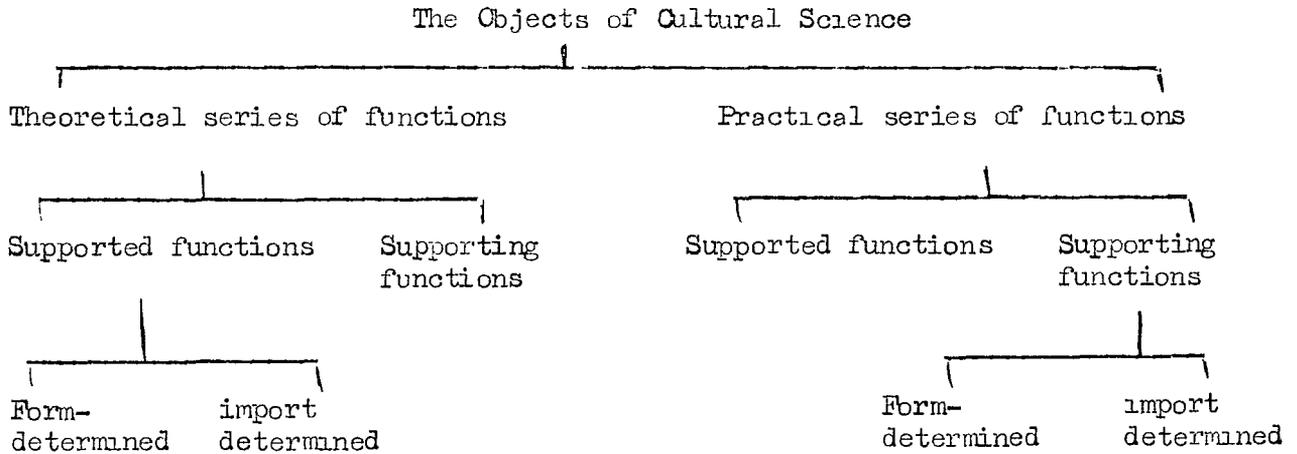
The two possible "attitudes" are those of "autonomy" and "theonomy" to which we shall return later. The objects, on the other hand, may be divided into two series of functions, which are described as "theoretical"

(1) The theory of the materials of meaning is also known as cultural history (Geistesgeschichte). This is not to be confused with Kulturgeschichte which, as an empirical science (a science of being) is concerned with the inter-connections of cultural forms inasmuch as they actually exist, where as cultural history views them from the point of view of their meaning. (Ibid, p.205; cf also p.239)

(2) cf WR(ITC), p.156f

(3) Ibid, p.157

and "practical". Each of these may be further divided into supported and supporting functions. Finally, the supported functions can be divided into those that are determined by form and those that are determined by import or substance.



In the theoretical series, the form-determined supported function is epistemology, the import-determined supported function is aesthetics and the supporting function is metaphysics, while in the practical series the respective functions are jurisprudence, political science and ethics.

Exactly how the arrangement of the cultural sciences is effected is never made clear by Tillich, for, having distinguished the components, namely, the elements, attitudes and objects, of cultural science, no clear explanation is offered of the way in which they fit together. Furthermore, having described the objects as consisting of two "series" of "functions" each of which we may assume, is constituted by the three elements, we find it difficult to see how there can be, in addition, a philosophy of science, unless it is to be regarded as a kind of by-product of the cultural sciences. In other words, it is not clear whether Tillich's exposition is intended to be exhaustive.

Nevertheless, in general the plan is fairly clear, despite the lack of explicit relating of the details to each other. Each of the separate functions or disciplines may be constituted of the three elements, while

retaining its own special characteristics. Thus, while epistemology is mainly directed towards the valid form of expression, aesthetics is directed more towards the import, that which breaks through both form and content, and metaphysics has what is called a direct intention towards the Unconditioned. The major distinction is that which exists between the supporting and the supported functions, for the supporting functions, with a direct intention towards the Unconditioned, are described as having a directly theonomous intention, in contrast with the directly autonomous intention of the supported functions. The supporting functions can only have an autonomous intention in an indirect fashion and the supported functions can only have a theonomous intention, likewise, in an indirect fashion.

What Tillich means to say here rests, clearly, on the meaning he attaches to the words "autonomous" and "theonomous", which in turn brings us back to the three terms form, content and import. Form and content alone cannot exhaust the object of study, for every object has a reference beyond itself. This "beyond" which may break through the object of study and impinge upon the subject's consciousness, is termed the import or substance. It is the Unconditional which breaks through every conditioned object. Where attention is directed towards the form, whether towards an individual form or a universal form, the attitude is said to be autonomous. But where attention is directed towards the import, the attitude is said to be theonomous.

The supported functions, concerned primarily, according to Tillich with form, are directly autonomous, and theonomous only in as far as they acknowledge import (which features, as we have said, more prominently in aesthetics than in epistemology), while the supporting functions are concerned primarily with import and are directly theonomous, and only indirectly autonomous in as far as conceptual forms are required to grasp the Unconditional.

As we have noticed in other areas of his exposition, Tillich is never very clear in his explanation of the Unconditional.⁽¹⁾ This fact is to be explained not least by the difficulty of characterising the concept except by means of negations to contrast it with all the marks of the relative world of conditioned reality. He can offer no evidence for the existence of such a world; indeed, to do so would involve a contradiction in terms, for existence cannot be predicated of it. Nor is it to be thought of in terms of an independent world of forms lurking behind the world of everyday experience. It is, rather the expression of Tillich's conviction that unless the world of conditioned reality (an idea itself not explicated) has its ground beyond itself, there can be no meaning. There is no question, for him, of conceiving of a universe compounded entirely of relativity.

The Unconditioned is fundamental to Tillich's world view, and stands at the centre of his dissatisfaction with the world views of the nineteenth century, and particularly with those of idealism and realism.⁽²⁾ The effect of Kant's rationalistic critical philosophy had been to reduce everything to a "closed system of forms" which allowed no room for metaphysics or for the individual. German idealism, in revolt against Kant, sought to restore metaphysics, but in doing so lost sight of the true character of the world of reality.

"The fundamental attitude of the time was too strongly realistic to be able to yield to an idealism which was unwilling to bear the burdens of the day. For what had brought about the first catastrophe of idealism and would have led to a second was just this, that it cannot see the true religious situation, the situation of time in the presence of eternity, that it seeks to evade the judgement under which the temporal stands before the eternal. Its forms, to be sure, are open to the reception of the living content; it restores to the state and even to logic their primordial and essential holiness, but it rests content with these sanctified forms; it does not penetrate to the absolutely transcendent, to that which lies beyond even the most sacred form, whether it be called church or state; it does not see the abyss which opens before every time and every present." (3)

(1) He offers some interpretative remarks in "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion" originally published in 1946, reprinted in Theol. Cul., cf p.24f

(2) EW, I(SdW), pp.230ff; cf The Religious Situation, pp.70ff, 80f;
GW, I(Roh), p. 307 (WR, p.42)

(3) The Religious Situation, p.73

If realism concerned itself solely with the closed circle of forms and idealism failed to recognise that the eternal or Unconditional places the conditioned world of reality under judgement, it remained for some other alternative to be able to bring to light not only the presence of the Unconditional in the conditioned, but also the implications for the conditioned world. This led to the development of what Tillich describes as belief-ful realism (gläubiger Realismus)⁽¹⁾ or, in his later works, self-transcending realism,⁽²⁾ that is, a philosophy which views reality not as existing in isolation, as it were, nor as a direct revelation of the ideal world, the Unconditional, nor yet as in total contrast to it. It seeks to ground the conditioned world in the Unconditional, not for its destruction, but for its support and correction:

"In opposition to romanticism the new metaphysics must be realistic, in opposition to critical philosophy it must be a belief-ful realism!" (3)

Metaphysics and ethics, then, are directly concerned with the Unconditional, and so with the relating of the conditioned and the Unconditional, so that the latter should be realised and brought to expression in both the theoretical and the practical disciplines of cultural life.

It is not yet clear, however, how theology is to fit into this scheme and it is our task now to attempt to expound Tillich's thinking at this point. We must take care, however, not to be led astray by his assertions in his autobiographical reflections⁽⁴⁾ that in order to incorporate theology in the system of sciences he defined it as theonomous metaphysics, since they neither coincide with the facts, nor do they give a sufficiently full impression of the way in which he saw theology around 1925.

(1) e.g. in Gläubiger Realismus I & II, in GW, IV, pp.77-87, 88-106.

(2) The Problems of Theological Method" JR, vol.27 (1947),p.16. Later still he also spoke of "self transcending naturalism" ST, II, pp.6ff

(3) The Religious Situation, p.83

(4) On the Boundary, p.55; Era intro. p.xxii

Metaphysics, as we have said, has a directly theonomous intention, but it may also have an indirectly autonomous intention, when it is concerned primarily with the conceptual forms used to grasp its perception or intuition of the Unconditional. Theonomous metaphysics Tillich calls not theology, but dogmatics; it is the representation of the truth concerning the Unconditional. To accomplish this task, it must use language, which it borrows from the language of aesthetics, science and other disciplines and uses in a metaphorical, or, as Tillich prefers to express it, symbolical, way to express the substance of the truth it has perceived.⁽¹⁾ The truth is expressed in its most highly rational form in metaphysics and in its most highly symbolic form in myth. Dogma stands between the two as a synthesis, seeking to apply scientific symbols as theonomous symbols and enabling myth to be seen as myth. In its normative aspect, as a first order enquiry, theonomous metaphysics, or dogmatics, as theology calls it, seeks to contribute towards the construction of new symbols.

It is to this normative task, however, that the name theology was given in 1919, and which is also described in the System of Sciences as theonomous systematics. But Tillich does not speak of theonomous systematics as assisting with the construction of symbols. Rather, working with the symbols which already exist in the material of the Church confessions, the Bible and Christian "mythology", its task is to represent, or grasp and bring to light, the original spirit of the religious documents and then transfer them into "the present consciousness" or the "modern mind", as we might say. Ultimately, this does appear to be what Tillich had in mind when he spoke of dogmatics and it has, therefore a specifically ecclesiastical character.

We begin to feel, however, that Tillich has not really made a place for theology at all. It is true that the Christian Church exists

(1) EW, I (SdW), p.278f; GW, I (Rph), p.302 (WR, p.35f);
The Religious Situation, p.80f

as a cultural entity and is for that reason worthy of study. It is never entirely clear however, quite how theology is related to the normative aspect of theonomous metaphysics. It appears, but is by no means certain, that he wishes to suggest that the Christian Church says in mythical language what a rational metaphysics says in another. No justification is offered, however, for such an assertion.

Nevertheless, it appears that Tillich views theology as providing some kind of link between metaphysics and ethics, the reason for which may be found in the concept of religion, which we shall discuss later. The existence side by side, of a philosophical and a theological ethics is, in Tillich's view, a contradiction in terms, for a genuine ethics is one that is directed towards the Unconditional. Thus the difference between a theonomous and a theological ethics is not one of substance, but, as in theonomous metaphysics, of form. Theological ethics is specifically concerned with the production of cultic forms, in keeping with its specifically ecclesiastical character.

(ii) On the Idea of a Theology of Culture

At this point we turn to the essay On the Idea of a Theology of Culture, for here, and in his Religionsphilosophie we find a rather fuller account of theology. It appears as the third element of the science of religion, (which is divided according to the elements of the cultural sciences), namely the concrete and normative science of religion. Here it appears to be a part of a separate discipline within the cultural sciences, whereas in the System of Sciences it is difficult to distinguish the specific role of theology. He describes the task of theology in the following terms:

"It is the task of theology, working from a concrete standpoint, to draw up a normative system of religion based on the categories of the philosophy of religion, with the individual standpoint being related to the standpoint of the respective confession, the universal history of religion, and the cultural-historical standpoint in general." (1)

It realises its work, therefore, in the same way as any other cultural science by working with the categories of the philosophy of religion applied to the material of the confession and the universal history of religion towards a normative system of religion. (2)

However, Tillich still found himself faced with the problem of the isolation of religion from the rest of culture; even to have described it as conforming to the pattern of the elements of cultural science did not necessarily imply its acceptance as a genuine science.

This isolation was represented, as we have mentioned above, by the distinction drawn between a philosophical and a theological ethics, reflecting the division in society between the sacred and the secular. But there can scarcely be two systems of ethics which can both sustain a claim to be true, and to attempt to resolve the problem by defining philosophical ethics as second order (i.e. assigning it to the first element of a discipline of ethics) and theological ethics as first order thought (assigning it to the third element) is not to explain why theological ethics should be the normative ethics. Philosophy would continue to produce its own system of ethics without a radically new understanding of philosophy and theology. Even to view them both as the products of concrete standpoints does not, according to Tillich, do anything to resolve the duality, because even though the church is a concrete ethical community, it is, in the ^{twentieth} century, neither the dominating cultural community, nor the cultural leader. What is required, therefore, is a reunification of culture with religion to replace their opposition to one another. Thus:

(1) WR (ITC), p.157f

(2) cf also CW, I (Rph), pp.300ff (WR, p.31ff)

"What was essentially intended in the theological system of ethics can only be realised by means of a theology of culture applying not only to ethics but to all the functions of culture. Not a theological system of ethics, but a theology of culture." (1)

Thus religion is applied to the functions of the objects of cultural science, to the theoretical and the practical series with which we are already familiar. But what is the result of this apparently promising procedure?

"The connection between religious principle and cultural function now enables a specifically religious-cultural sphere to emerge: a religious perception - myth or dogma; a sphere of religious aesthetics - the cultus; a religious moulding of the person - sanctification; a religious form of society - the church, with its special canon law and communal ethic". (2)

But this appears to be precisely what Tillich did not want, namely, the creation of a special area of influence of "the religious" which perpetuates the divided culture.

In the essay On the Idea of a Theology of Culture, Tillich does little more than point to the solution of the problem, but it is worked out in much greater detail in the two works The Conquest of the Concept of Religion in the Philosophy of Religion and The Philosophy of Religion, and we shall discuss the concept of religion as employed by Tillich more fully later in this chapter. The important, however, for Tillich's resolution of the conflict between a sacred and a secular culture lies in his definition of culture and religion. Thus, he says:

"Religion is the directedness of the spirit towards unconditioned meaning; culture is the directedness of the spirit towards conditioned forms. But they meet in as much as they are both directed towards the complete unity of forms of meaning, which for culture is the end, but for religion is a symbol both affirmed and denied from the standpoint of the Unconditional ... Religion is, therefore, not a function of meaning alongside the others." (3)

More succinctly:

"... Culture is the form of expression of religion, and religion is the import of culture." (4)

(1) W.R. (ITC) p.160

(2) Ibid, p.161

(3) My translation: GW, I (Rph), p.329 (W.R. p.72f); cf also GW, I (Überwindung) p.370 (W.R., p.126f)

(4) W.R., I (Rph), p.329

Culture cannot avoid being religious, whether it is so consciously or not, because intentionally or unintentionally, it expresses the Unconditional. (1)

Thus Tillich proposes a theology of culture which once again, may be patterned according to the elements of cultural science, with the reservation that the theologian of culture cannot exercise a normative function with respect of cultural forms, but can in this sphere only operate in a critical role. Having proposed such a discipline, he is able to advance to what he calls "cultural-theological analyses", in outline form in the work of 1919, but in very great detail in The Religious Situation.

We have, however, begun to find ourselves moving away, once again, from the possibility of conceiving of theology as an independent discipline within a system of sciences and we are bound to wonder if Tillich does not hold on to the idea of theology as an ecclesiastical discipline in spite of the movement of his own argument, so that we find him arguing for the continued existence of the church in terms such as these:

"... precisely in the manner of the pietistic communities in the seventeenth century, which liked to refer to themselves as ecclesiola in ecclesia, the church, as far as a theology of culture is concerned, will be something like an ecclesiola in ecclesia to the cultural community as such. The church is the circle, as it were, to which is assigned - ideally speaking - the task of creating a specifically religious sphere and thus removing the contingency from the living religious elements, collecting them, concentrating them in theory and in practice, and in this way making them into a powerful - indeed, into the most powerful - cultural factor, capable of supporting everything else." (2)

If theology is to remain a church discipline, then, when theology becomes a theology of culture, the church must undergo a radical change in its conception. Yet Tillich continues to speak, in the System of Sciences, of theology as related to the confessions and the religious documents of the church. On the one hand theology appears to be one element of the science

(1) Ibid, p.347

(2) W.R. (ITC), p.179

of religion, as a distinct and independent discipline within the cultural sciences, but on the other hand it threatens to engulf the whole of the cultural sciences, a tension which epitomises the tension felt by Tillich between the general and the particular: at ~~one~~ moment it is a particular example of the general, at another it is the general itself.

(iii) The Failure of a Mission

It is clear from his later reflections that Tillich regarded his early attempts to counter the disintegration of the cultural and intellectual world as over-optimistic; he had, in short, underestimated the gravity of the situation and therefore adopted means inadequate for the end in view. He had sought to create a theonomous analysis of culture; to treat culture not merely with respect to its form but also with respect to its import, to treat it not simply as representative of an age but of the Unconditional. The essence of his approach was contained in the formula we have already quoted:

"Religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion." (1)

But the culture he sought to analyse was not theonomous, it did not

"... express in its creations an ultimate concern and a transcending meaning ~~not~~ as something strange but as ~~something~~ its own spiritual ground." (2)

It was, rather, autonomous, asserting that man

"as the bearer of universal reason is the source and measure of culture and religion." (3)

However, he persisted in the belief that a theonomous analysis was possible, pursuing what he called "its other task":

"to show that in the depth of every autonomous culture an ultimate concern, something unconditional and holy, is implied." (4)

(1) of p.71 above. The quotation appears in this form in "Religion and Secular Culture", JR, vol.25 (1946), p.80

(2) Ibid

(3) Ibid

(4) Ibid, p.81

But in fact, this amounted ~~not~~ to an analysis of culture but of those elements of culture which he chose to regard as a protest, represented especially by the artistic school known as expressionism. Consequently, he concentrates his analysis more on such protest movements than on the fragmentary remnants of a religious substance in culture as a whole. But both come into view inasmuch as they represent an "unconscious, self-evident faith" which lies at a deeper level than the apparent antithesis of belief and unbelief, out of which both arise and in which both are equally rooted.

"This unconscious faith which is not assailed because it is the pre-supposition of life and is lived rather than thought of, this all-determining, final source of meaning constitutes the actual religious situation of a period." (1)

To this faith, a theology of culture must seek to penetrate, but in doing so, it is apt to take less than seriously "unbelief" or what Tillich later described as the sense of "estrangement", the lack of power ^{and} meaning, the absence of a sense of the ultimate. Thus Tillich moves away from the Lebensphilosophie of Dilthey, with its talk of meaning, to adopt the language and thought forms of existentialism with its emphasis on estrangement and on being. However, the result of this change of language was to make more urgent still the necessity to determine the precise relationship between philosophy and theology.

(c) Philosophy and Theology

In the System of Sciences, Tillich uses the word philosophy in two different ways. The primary use is to describe the first element of cultural science, the theory of the principles of meaning. In this sense philosophy has a critical role: it is second order thinking, distinguishing various areas of meaning, demarcating boundaries between disciplines and producing categories and concepts for their use. He also speaks, however,

(1) The Religious Situation, p.40

of "theonomous philosophy"⁽¹⁾ which has the task of countering the tendency of religion and culture to polarise. Thus it does by affirming the unity of form and substance. Thus philosophy cannot be concerned simply with form but must understand that form is used to bring substance to expression. At the other end of the scale, theonomous metaphysics has to recognise that it is only through form that substance comes to expression. Thus if theonomous systematics (theology) performs the same function as normative theonomous metaphysics, albeit in a more restricted area, it is related to philosophy as the third element of cultural science to the first.

While we may still detect traces of this scheme in his later accounts of the relationship of philosophy and theology, we also find that the relationship is very much less simple. It is our purpose, therefore, to examine the two concepts as expounded in the later works.

It is well known that the inspiration for his attempt to unite the two disciplines was derived from his early interest in Schelling. Despite the evident weaknesses of Schelling's philosophy and the disastrous effects of the First World War on its credibility, Tillich retained his enthusiasm for him. He was strongly attracted to him not only because of his attempt to reconcile philosophy and theology, but also because of his exposition of both a negative and a positive philosophy.⁽²⁾ In his later work Schelling sought to effect a unification of philosophy and theology by means of a philosophical interpretation of Christian doctrine, and in particular of the themes of mysticism and guilt as the symbols of union with and

(1) GW, I (SdW), p. 273f

(2) The latter was characteristic of his later philosophy, the former of his earlier. By "negative philosophy" he wished to be understood that philosophy which is concerned with essences, abstracting from the concrete situation in order to reach the essential structure of reality. Positive philosophy concentrates on the concrete situation, on existence itself, recognising the distorting effect of the negativities of existence. A negative philosophy is not possible without a positive philosophy as its presupposition, according to Tillich. (Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology, pp. 150f, 245; cf. "The Nature and Significance of Existentialist Thought", Journal of Philosophy, vol. 53 (1956), p. 742

separation from the Absolute. Into this pattern he sought to weave interpretations of the Christian doctrines of sin, wrath and grace, but did so apparently in the belief that it was possible to effect a simple translation from theological to philosophical terminology.⁽¹⁾ According to Tillich, however, the real weakness of Schelling's philosophy - and so of his attempt to write philosophy and theology - was his inability to do justice to the experience of "the abyss in our lives"; he could not translate satisfactorily into his scheme the doctrine of evil as that which threatens to swallow up and destroy everything. Even his positive philosophy seemed inadequate to the resolution of the dualism of good and evil.

(2)

In an article published in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart Tillich addressed himself to the relationship between philosophy and religion, no doubt preferring to speak of religion rather than theology on account of the very limited meaning he had given^{it} in the System of Sciences. He defines philosophy and religion as attitudes, philosophy as the attitude of radical enquiry, religion as the attitude of possession, so that it seems that the distinction between the two is that between possessing and not possessing, or between questioning and having the answer. He admits that this suggests that the two are in fundamental conflict, but proposes to show that this is not the case, arguing on the basis of their ultimate identity in dealing with the same "ultimate".⁽³⁾ But if he does succeed in showing that the two are not in fundamental opposition, he does not succeed in showing how precisely they are to be related. Philosophy's task

(1) Tillich offered an account of Schelling's attempts at interpretation in his licenciate dissertation. Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein in Schellings philosophische Entwicklung (GW, I, pp. 11-108)

(2) 2nd edition 1927-1932. E.T. "The Fundamental Relationship between Philosophy and Religion" Twentieth Century Theology in the Making (ed. Jaroslav Pelikan), vol. II, pp. 297-309.

(3) Ibid, p. 300

is primarily "radical inquiry", but Tillich readily admits that the philosopher cannot be totally detached from his enquiry: he is existentially involved.

"... philosophy can be understood in a 'non-existential' sense, that is in the sense that the enquirer stands outside his enquiry and adopts the point of view of 'pure knowledge', outside an existential situation. But this is only true of the purpose of the enquiry, which for philosophy must be radical, and not for the application of the enquiry as an expression of the situation of the enquirer." (1)

Nevertheless, in the case of philosophy the existential involvement remains in the background, whereas in religion it is in the foreground. Furthermore, religion is exoteric: it is universal in its claim and its symbols and actions are "directly accessible". By contrast philosophy, which is directed towards knowledge, is esoteric. But having made this distinction, Tillich qualifies it by admitting that religion develops an esoteric side, namely theology. This he describes as the philosophical aspect of religion, concerned with knowledge, which in turn leads us back to the identity of philosophy and theology, (2) albeit, we may say, on a somewhat slender basis.

Now it appears that philosophy and religion are connected by theology, which shares similarities with both. But it is still difficult to describe the relationships between the three because of the difficulty of ascertaining what they are, that is to say, whether there are attitudes - as he has suggested in his initial definitions of philosophy and religion - or disciplines, or some tertium quid. It seems, ultimately, that 'philosophy' is used in two ways, without adequate attention being paid to the fact. On the one hand it is indeed an attitude wishing to enquire after that which is not possessed. But on the other hand, it is the enquiry itself, as a search for knowledge. "Religion" is used rather more ambiguously; it is an attitude, the attitude of being grasped, according to Tillich. But we are doubtful whether it is proper to describe "being grasped" as an attitude. Moreover, it is wrong to characterise the contrast between philosophy and

(1) Ibid, p.302f

(2) Ibid, p.303f

religion as consisting in the difference between possessing and not possessing, as Tillich does, because he wishes to speak of religion not as "possessing" but as "being possessed". This is a very different concept from that which is involved in thinking of philosophy as striving for conceptual possession of what it does not know. To exploit the verbal similarities, as Tillich frequently does, is simply to make use of ambiguity instead of explaining it, and does not add to our understanding of the relationship of philosophy and theology.

Despite the confusing nature of this account, we may detect echoes of it as well as echoes of the account from the System of Sciences in his later work. His address on "Philosophy and Theology", given in 1940, presents philosophy in two roles. (1) In the first place it fulfils a function very similar to that of the first element of cultural science, providing concepts and categories. But secondly, it also raises the problems implied in those categories, for which theology is to give "the answers drawn from the substance of the Christian message" (2) This echoes the article in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart in which he spoke of philosophy as radical enquiry and of the relationship of possessing and not possessing. It is one of the earliest formulations of the question-answer formula that came to dominate his account of philosophy and theology. When the two are brought together in philosophical theology, an account may be given in these terms:

"Philosophical theology deals with the concept of reason and the categories belonging to it and leads to the existential problem implied in reason to which the answer is: revelation. Philosophical theology deals with the concept of being and the categories belonging to it and it leads to the existential problem implied in being to which the answer is: God. Philosophical theology deals with the concept of existence and the categories belonging to it and leads to the existential problem implied in existence, to which the answer is: the Christ. Philosophical theology deals with the concept of life and the categories belonging to it and leads to the existential problem implied in life, to which the answer is: the Spirit. Philosophical theology deals with the concept of history and the categories belonging to it and leads to the existential problem implied in history, to which the answer is: the Kingdom of God." (3)

(1) Era, pp.83-93

(2) Ibid, p.92

(3) Ibid, p.92f

In the article "The Problem of Theological Method", he speaks not of philosophical theology, but of apologetic theology, but he takes up the theme again of question and answer, which he insists is possible because of the "universal revelation" to which both philosophy and theology can refer. Although there must be, in the structure of society, those who ask questions, as outsiders, and those who seek to answer, as believers, yet Tillich also believes that each man possesses the answers as well as asking questions. Everyone is grasped by the Unconditional, and it is his possession of this "answer", indeed, that provokes questions. It may be, however, that the individual is not aware of this, and so appears able only to ask questions.

But clearly it would be wrong to suppose that it is universally recognised that philosophy is simply a matter of asking questions. It is evident that it is not, and Tillich appreciates the point. He recognises that the difficulty of relating philosophy and theology is due in large part to the absence of agreement on their definition. However, he himself appears to believe that it is possible to solve the problem simply by proposing further definitions.

When we turn to Systematic Theology we find that Tillich is still unable to dispel the confusion that surrounds his conception of the relationship of philosophy and theology. In the first volume he offers a definition of philosophy which is at first sight very similar to one offered in Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality.⁽¹⁾ In the first he writes of philosophy that it is

"that cognitive approach to reality in which reality as such is the object."⁽²⁾

and in the other he says that it is

(1) Hereafter cited in footnotes as B.R.S.U.R.

(2) ST, I, p. 22

"that cognitive endeavour in which the question of being is asked". (1)

The description of philosophy as a cognitive approach or endeavour reminds us that it is concerned with knowledge, but although there is clearly, at least in Tillich's mind, a connection between "being" and "reality", it is not certain that they are synonymous. (2) The definition of reality in Systematic Theology is expounded in this way:

"Reality as such, or reality as a whole, is not the whole of reality, it is the structure which makes reality a whole and therefore a potential object of knowledge. Inquiry into the nature of reality as such means inquiring into those structures, categories and concepts which are presupposed in the cognitive encounter with every realm of reality." (3)

Philosophy is revealed in its critical role again, exposing the structure of reality, producing concepts and enquiring into them. It is an ontological enquiry, treating reality as an integrated unity. The philosophical question is the search for the general structures that make experience of reality possible and as such is an elaboration of the rationale of reality which makes it a unity.

Whether what Tillich means here is the same as what he means by "the question of being" in Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality, is open to doubt. "The question of ..." is a recurring phrase in his work, but it is also very vague, and reflects again, his tendency to exploit the ambiguity of words. At times the phrase means "the quest for..." and indeed there are occasions when he actually substitutes that phrase, so that there is some doubt, with respect to his definition of philosophy, as to whether he really does mean "the question of ..." or "the quest for..."

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- (1) BRSUR, p.5 Further definitions are offered in Dynamics of Faith, p.90 (It tries to find the universal categories in which being is experienced) and "The Relation of Metaphysics and Theology", Review of Metaphysics, vol.10 (1956), p.57f.
 - (2) J.H.Randall points out that "being as such" is an Aristotelian conception, whereas "reality as a whole" is the object of 19th century idealism ("The Ontology of Paul Tillich", TPT, p.139)
 - (3) ST, I, p.22, cf also p.24: "Philosophy asks the question of reality as a whole, it asks the questions of the structure of being, and it answers in terms of categories, structural laws, and universal concepts. It must answer in ontological terms."

That he says "the question of ..." rather than "the question about..." may suggest that he wishes us to infer that philosophy is not a detached but rather, an involved inquiry. (1) At the same time, however, we must recognize that he may be exploiting the ambiguity of the German phrase "fragen nach ..." (2) This ambiguity is extremely convenient for it enables the transition to be made from "the question about" to "the quest for" without difficulty. It might also be said that the close similarity between "question" and "quest" in English, which enables the transition to be made almost unnoticed, veils the distinction in German between fragen and suchen.

It seems, from Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality, that the "question of Being" is indeed the quest, or search, for Being, a search for the ontological ground of all reality, but when we turn again to Systematic Theology we find this distinction made:

"Philosophy and theology ask the question of being. But they ask it from different perspectives. Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us." (3)

Moreover, "the meaning of being for us" has a very special force, for it is the ultimate meaning of being that concerns us. Consequently, having described the object of theology as that which concerns us ultimately he goes on, in the second of his formal criteria of theology, to say:

"Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or non-being. Only those statements are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter of being or non-being for us." (4)

The definition of philosophy in Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality coincides with the definition of theology in Systematic Theology,

(1) This concept of philosophy does not require the concepts and categories of traditional philosophy. It is a philosophical exercise in "pre-philosophical" form (cf. BRSUR, pp.8ff; Dynamics of Faith, p.90)

(2) of the German translation of BRSUR (GW, V, p.140) where "the question of being" becomes part of the following sentence: "Philosophie ist jenes erkennende Bemühen, in dem es um die Frage nach dem Sein geht". The section heading "The Meaning of Philosophy" becomes "Der Sinn der Frage nach dem Sein."

(3) ST, I, p.25 (4) Ibid, p.17

while philosophy in Systematic Theology is relegated to a lesser task which is not considered in the other work. Furthermore, we find again in Systematic Theology that Tillich wishes to speak of philosophy and theology in terms of questioning and answering. We have, therefore, in Systematic Theology two different definitions of the relationship of philosophy and theology. The one, drawn from the article in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart relates them as question and answer, or perhaps we should say quest/question and answer, reminiscent of the radical enquiry seeking to grasp, and the "being possessed" of religion. The other relates them in a different way: they have the same object, namely being, but approach it in different ways with different ends in view, philosophy enquiring after its structure, theology after its depth. This definition has its roots in the System of Sciences and recalls the notions of philosophy as the first element of the cultural sciences and theology as connected with theonomous metaphysics.

It may help to reintroduce the distinctions we made earlier between attitudes and disciplines, and to recall, also, that in the article in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Tillich chose to speak of religion and of theology as a part of religion.

Philosophy as a discipline, then, enquires about the structure of reality, and, in doing so, is concerned with concepts and categories. It takes, for example, the notion of causality from physics, and examines its use: it examines its use in historical writing and in other spheres; it is, in short, second order thinking. But it never loses touch with the structure of reality - it is not an examination of words and concepts detached from reality. Thus the philosopher

"...describes the epistemological subject and the relation of person and community. He presents the characteristics of life and spirit in their dependence on, and independence of, each other..." (1)

(1) ST, I, p. 28

It is a search for knowledge, pursued perhaps with passion, but ultimately detached, inasmuch as the absence of knowledge does not threaten the continued being of the philosopher as a human being. In Tillich's terms, it is "cosmological" in character. (1)

Philosophy as an attitude is different, however, for where the questions of philosophy as a discipline are in principle also answerable by the same discipline, philosophy as an attitude cannot answer its own questions, for it is not a question at all, but a quest, a search for Being, a search for the Ground of Being. No longer is it a detached enquiry; it is now an "involved" enquiry. It is, in fact, philosophy become theology, questing for the ground of Being, for to view an object theologically is to view it as an aspect of man's ultimate concern.

Now, however, philosophy as an attitude is identical with theology as an attitude: we cannot speak of philosophy as questing and theology as supplying the answer, unless, of course, we invoke the solution^{to} which Tillich sometimes appeals, (2) namely, that to ask a question implies possession of the answer, or, alternatively, the solution we have already suggested as implied in the way Tillich speaks, namely, that the philosopher is also the theologian: everyone is both.

Theology, according to the article in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, is the philosophical aspect of religion, the critical aspect which seeks knowledge and understanding, which is esoteric and accessible only to the few. Religion, in contrast, is the universal state of man. This distinction appears, at first sight, to have been abandoned by Tillich in his later writings: theology, asking the question of being for us, is not an esoteric matter. But, in fact, the distinctions must remain if we are to make sense of Tillich, for at the foundation of

(1) Ibid

(2) "What is Wrong with the 'Dialectical Theology'" JR, vol. 15 (1935), p.137, BRSUR, p.11, ST, I, p.69

Tillich's attempt at apologetic theology is the conviction that religion is a universal phenomenon of universal validity.⁽¹⁾ But just as man enquires, asking "radically" (his philosophical attitude), doubting and questioning, and this may lead to the discipline of philosophy, so man knows himself also to be grasped, and this state leads to theology as a discipline. We may also however, speak of theology as an attitude; it is the point at which man, philosopher, ceases to ask about the structure of being and to quest for Being itself. This, as we have seen is identical with philosophy as an attitude, and is sometimes called philosophy.

Between theology and religion, however, there stands a third factor, the religious community, or church, with its structure of symbols. Religion is no abstract concept, nor is it a phenomenon which receives a universal formulation. It is, rather, a concrete phenomenon; it receives concrete forms throughout history. It is existential, related to historical situations, and consequently receives varying forms because different communities have expressed their apprehension by the Unconditioned in different ways. These apprehensions are expressed in symbols which are in turn, handed on from generation to generation and to other groups, a process which necessitates constant re-interpretation of the symbols as each new generation or group has to learn what it is that the symbols symbolise. The symbols must be "unlocked", the myth "broken", so that the power contained in them - or rather the power or import to which they point, may break through and pour forth. It is the task of theology to unlock these symbols. But more is necessary, for it is pointless to "unlock" a symbol if the power pours forth into a void. Theology must, therefore, be "existential", interpreting the symbols to the "situation."⁽²⁾

(1) "Apologetic theology presupposes the idea of a universal revelation." "The Problem of Theological Method" JR, Vol. 27 (1947) p. 25

(2) Tillich uses the term existential to signify both the element of ultimacy (cf. ibid p. 17f) and also to refer to the concrete situation (ST, I, p. 29). Theology is therefore existential to the extent that it (i) deals with being as a matter of ultimate concern, (ii) seeks to relate itself to the cultural expression of the day. The cultural expressions represent, in turn, the "situation" that is the interpretation of human existence.

Thus Christian theology is

"The interpretation of the message that Jesus is the Christ, and of the symbols and institutions based on that message." (1)

or, in the words of the System of Sciences, it is to represent the original spirit of the religious documents and then to transfer it into the "present consciousness".

How then, are philosophy and theology to be correlated, in accordance with Tillich's declared aim? It should now be possible to grasp the full extent of the problem posed by Tillich's exposition. It is not a question of making a simple choice between one of two different definitions of philosophy and theology, between a question-answer relationship and a structure-depth relationship, because such a mixture has been made that no simple choice is possible; nor, indeed, does Tillich wish to make a choice. So many elements are involved that we may find ourselves compelled to wonder whether any relationship can be established at all. Nor is the fault to be laid simply at the door of the absence of general agreement on the definitions of philosophy⁽²⁾ or theology, for we might have expected that Tillich would clarify the issues by his own definitions. Instead he has only confused them further by his desire to include everything.

Philosophical theology may well be a correlation of a question posed in philosophical terms with an answer couched in the traditional terminology of theology by means of a translation of theological into philosophical terminology, but that is not necessarily the same thing as a correlation of philosophy and theology. If we think of philosophy as concerned with the structure of being and theology with its depth, we have to recognise that they work towards different goals and can scarcely avoid the conclusion that although they may be related, they cannot be correlated.

(1) "The Problem of Theological Method", p.19

(2) ST, I p.21f cf. Dynamics of Faith p.90: Tillich recognises that every definition of philosophy is an expression of the point of view of the philosopher who gave it, but insists on a "pre-philosophical agreement" about the meaning of philosophy which is that it is the attempt to answer "the most general questions about the nature of reality and human existence."

Even if we concede that a correlation of question and answer is the only genuine correlation that can be considered, we must not overlook the point we have just made, namely, that it is not necessarily identical with a correlation between philosophy and theology. In the face of widespread disagreement on the nature of philosophy, Tillich proposed definitions of philosophy and theology which will allow him to carry out his project but which will do little to meet the objections of philosophers, not to mention those of theologians.

In sympathy more with the continental philosophers than with Anglo-Saxon philosophy, which he saw as unrelieved logical positivism, Tillich seeks to re-establish ontology, and to press philosophy to ask ontological questions. For Tillich that means asking questions about what existentialism has taught him to think of as estrangement, the estrangement of all being from its ground, but, unlike many of the existentialists, he is also convinced that there are answers to the questions which overcome the estrangement.

The variety of philosophical outlooks would suggest, once again, that while theology might be conducted in dialogue with philosophy, it cannot be in correlation. However, a dialogue alone precludes the possibility of accomplishing the synthesis Tillich wishes to achieve since a synthesis ultimately requires that the two perspectives should not only have the same object, but should be capable of being shown to be identical, and clearly, the differing viewpoints of the various "schools" of philosophy cannot be shown to be identical, even with each other, and a hybrid incorporating elements of each produces only one more "school."

We conclude, then, that Tillich is unable to show that it is possible to correlate philosophy and theology, without giving very special meaning to the two words, a procedure more likely to estrange than to

reconcile. Further, we find his own account of the two objects he wishes to synthesise extremely confusing, not least because of his fusing of two different approaches, one of which we traced to the System of Sciences and the other to the article in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Finally, although we found in the System of Sciences some suggestion of the way in which he thought dogmatics and systematic theology might function with respect to what he later called kerygmatic theology, yet, in practice, we find that he has little room for a kerygmatic theology.

2. Ontology

(a) Schelling

We have already referred to Tillich's desire to recall philosophy to a concern with ontology or metaphysics, as he at first called it, and in the course of our study so far, we have found ourselves increasingly pressed to conclude that his view of the role of theology is to a considerable extent dictated by his view, however confused, of philosophy. The desire to produce a correlation of the two requires that any definition of theology should be able to "key into" a definition of philosophy. It is, indeed, our contention that his theological method is informed by his ontological and cosmological convictions and we shall, in this section, attempt to explain in what sense this is so.

Attention has already been drawn to the influence on Tillich of Schelling, an influence which Tillich was himself very willing to admit and which is witnessed to at an early date by the fact that Schelling provided the subject not only for his doctoral dissertation but also for his licentiate dissertation. But although Tillich regarded him, rather than Kierkegaard, as the father of existentialism,⁽¹⁾ and was deeply influenced by what Schelling himself described as his "positive philosophy", there are other aspects too, of Schelling's thought that may be recognised in Tillich, not the least being what Tillich described as

"the tremendous emotional impact [of] Schelling's philosophy of nature." (2)

Tillich prefers to distinguish two major aspects of Schelling's philosophy, those of the negative and the positive philosophy. But within the negative philosophy there are at least three phases, to be distinguished as the philosophy of nature, the philosophy of aesthetic intuition and the philosophy of identity.⁽³⁾ Although Tillich objected to the second of these, in which Schelling replaced religion with the arts, and put forward a kind of quietistic gnosticism in which the artist is treated as the prophet of God and his works as the revelation of God,⁽⁴⁾ nevertheless, he shows himself in sympathy with the views that hold the three phases of the first period together, for the problem Schelling was attempting to resolve was that of the unity of the universe, of the relation of the individual things to the totality. This problem has held a central position throughout the history of philosophy, whether viewed epistemologically, as by Augustine, in the problem of the relation of the subject and the object,

(1) "Schelling und die Anfänge des Existentialistischen Protestes" Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung vol.9 (1955), pp.197-208, "The Nature and Significance of Existentialist Thought", Journal of Philosophy vol.53 (1956), p.740, Perspectives on 19th and 20th century Protestant Theology, p.150f

(2) T.P.T., p.4

(3) GW, I (Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein...), pp.35-75. Perspectives on 19th and 20th century Protestant Theology, p.147 (hereafter Perspectives)

(4) GW, I, (Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein.), p.57f

or ontologically, as by Socrates, in the problem of the relation of the one and the many or the general and the particular. (1)

According to Tillich, Schelling's philosophy of nature was an application to nature of the principle of identity. He was able to assert, therefore that the individual is identical with God to the extent that he is identical with nature, since nature has the creator both within it and outside it. God is not dependent on nature, but does not stand outside it as a deistic conception, but within it, as a manifestation, in concrete form, of the Absolute. Nature is spirit in its immediacy. There is, therefore, no possibility of a dualism between God and nature nor of an opposition between man and God. Religion - except in the phase of aesthetic situation - is an essential function of the human spirit; it is the intuition of the divine in nature. (2)

The negative philosophy, however, had certain weaknesses, and led eventually (3) to the development of the positive philosophy, in which he sought to do greater justice to the notion of the awareness of guilt. He argued that there can be no talk of a synthesis unless there is first a contradiction to be overcome. But contradiction does not mean that nature and God are in irreconcilable opposition to each other, for he maintains his belief that nature is spirit. It is not, however, undifferentiated spirit, but rather the essence of God developed under the contradiction, a notion which is difficult to grasp and seems almost to be a tautologous way of expressing the conviction that finite and infinite are related but different, without explaining how this can be so. It appears to be a kind of symbol for the characteristics of existence, namely contingency and limitation. Man himself is not the contradiction, nor is nature: it is "existence" as an abstract concept that is the contradiction. In man,

(1) Ibid, p.18, Perspectives, p.145

(2) GW, I, pp.44ff

(3) According to Tillich, it was due to the impact of the death of Carolina Schlegel (Perspectives, p.148)

indeed, the contradiction is conquered for, in man as a whole, understanding is fully united with its ground. Consequently a religious relationship presupposes identity as well as contradiction, and identity contains the contradiction within itself.⁽¹⁾ Much as in Tillich's own work, it appears that an idea is incomplete without its opposite, for the positive "implies" the negative: it "contains" it within itself.

Like Schelling, Tillich wishes to produce a sketch of reality which has a monistic frame: yet an unconditional affirmation of the identity of the one and the many does not account for the element of separation in reality, nor does it take seriously the problem of evil. An unconditional denial of identity is no less unacceptable. Both wish to reconcile the element of separation and estrangement with a monistic outlook, and Tillich follows Schelling in his adopting of the notion of the contradiction in his account of the realization of being under the conditions of existence.

Schelling also elaborated a doctrine of "potencies", traces of which may be recognised in Tillich. In his later period, he spoke of three potencies, the irrational, the rational and the spirit, in which the first two are united.⁽²⁾ This^{is a} scheme which immediately recalls the System of Sciences, in which Being is associated with the irrational which resists thought, the rational. The two are brought together, however, in the Spirit (Geist), in which the relation to the Unconditional is realised so that meaning may be perceived. In his later writings, Tillich speaks of God as both ground and abyss, an idea in which, again, we may detect echoes of the potencies, as in his explicit connection with them of his account of God's potentiality and actuality, where his potentiality is the limit of his actuality. We find a further echo in his account of non-being as the limit of being which imposes finitude on being.⁽³⁾

(1) GW, I, pp. 78, 98

(2) Ibid, p. 84

(3) ST, I, pp. 210, 272f; cf. Randall, art. cit. TPT, p. 156. Adams also points to the theory of potencies as the foundation of Tillich's theory of the demonic. PCSR. pp. 230, 234

Tillich shares the interests of Schelling to the extent that he, too wishes to resolve the problem of the one and the many, of the finite and the infinite without falling into the undifferentiated monism of the philosophy of nature, or into dualism. Moreover, he takes what is fundamentally the same route as Schelling in his search for a solution, employing both the idea of the contradiction and also, as we have seen, the theory of the potencies, while yet insisting that there exists a final unity. He is also akin to Schelling in his distaste for the Kantian reduction of religion to ethics and his consequent viewing of the separation between God and man in ontological rather than ethical terms, but he also voiced his dissatisfaction with Schelling, because even in his later period he seemed unable to provide an answer to the destructive power of evil. (1)

(b) Schleiermacher

Not only has Tillich much in common with Schelling, but also with Schleiermacher, to whom we now turn in the attempt to characterise Tillich's ontological convictions and to describe the place that they hold in his theology.

We find points of comparison between Tillich and Schleiermacher not only with reference to their ontological outlook but also in the circumstances and motivation of their work. Indeed, we may venture to suggest that much of Tillich's overall positive response to Schleiermacher is due to his sympathy with Schleiermacher's aim, which was to mount an apologetic directed at the "cultured despisers" of religion, by which he meant not

"those who were full of modern erudition or skepticism, but those who were most affected and permeated with the great idealistic and spiritual characteristics culled from the poetry and philosophy of the age." (2)

(1) cf. Boundary p.52. Neither Tillich nor Barth however seem to be able to produce a more satisfactory answer in the eyes of Edward Madden and Peter Hare ("On the Difficulty of evading the Problem of Evil" Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, vol.28 (1967-8),pp.58-69).

(2) Schleiermacher, On Religion, introduction, p. xv f.

According to Rudolf Otto, Schleiermacher

"... aimed directly at the disciples of Herder, Goethe, Kant, and especially Fichte. He did not wish to overcome doubt or atheism, but a self-contradictory mood and state of mind." (1)

In short, the speeches were a challenge not to those who had despaired but to those who carried the banners of the proud optimism of Kant or of romanticism, which left no room for "religion". Religion was dispensable to both science and morality, and with it God, immortality, revelation and miracles could be dispensed with. But Schleiermacher, while sharing with the "despisers" a distaste for religion viewed as a system of doctrine, nevertheless regarded the total rejection of religion as self-contradictory and so set out to re-establish it.

Schleiermacher did not wish to deny to science its own way of looking at reality, nor did he wish to impose on morals the constraint of a divine imperative authoritatively declared by orthodoxy, but he could not allow to the two fields complete autonomy, for to do so would be to permit a dichotomy between the two and to encourage a compartmentalising of life and intellectual activity. Science was increasingly falling a prey to the temptation to treat individual objects as existing in watertight compartments, unrelated to each other, while morals regarded the individual as the prime category. (2)

The solution to this atomising process in science and morals was to be found in Schleiermacher's view, in the notion of religion. But religion was to be conceived not as looking in two directions at once, seeking to control science and morals. In that way it would become a mixture instead of having its own identity. (3) Rather it was to be conceived of as independent of science and morals, but deeply involved in both in order to inform them, giving them content and holding them together. As an independent discipline, it has its own characteristic, namely feeling.

(1) Ibid, p.xvi

(2) Ibid, p.73ff

(3) Ibid, p.31

~~(4) Ibid, p.15~~

whereas the characteristic of science is perception and that of morals activity. (1)

Feeling is not to be viewed as leading to subjectivism, nor is it the activity of a particular faculty; (2) rather it is

"fundamentally man's affective response to the relationships into which the whole of human nature is bound." (3)

It is an awareness of relationships, a feeling for the unity of the universe, which excludes individualistic ethics and "objective" science. It is the awareness that individuals, whether people or objects, stand in relation to one another, as parts of a whole. Indeed science and ethics ought not to be separated at all, for although they may be divided in contemplation, yet in practice they exist together.

"True science is complete vision; true practice is culture and art self-produced; true religion is sense and taste for the infinite. To wish to have true science or true practice without religion, or to imagine it is possessed is obstinate, arrogant, delusion and culpable error." (4)

All three spheres belong together, although religion, as is clear from Schleiermacher's account, has a special function which unites science and morals. We should notice, too, that morals is not to be equated simply with moral philosophy or ethics, but is concerned with all activity and can thus be spoken of as "culture" in its broadest sense.

Religion as a feeling and taste for the infinite has the function of relating everything in the finite world to the Infinite, of expressing the unity of reality with its ground and with itself.

"What is all science, if not the existence of things in you, in your reason? What is all art and culture, if not your existence in the things to which you give measure, form and order? And how can both come to life in you except in so far as there lives immediately in you the eternal unity of Reason and Nature, the universal existence of all finite things in the Infinite." (5)

(1) Ibid, p.45

(2) As Mackintosh suggests (Types of Modern Theology, p.49) cf. R. R. Niebuhr: Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion, p.76n

(3) Niebuhr, op. cit. p.181; cf. p.189

(4) On Religion, p.39

(5) Ibid

We must be clear that Schleiermacher does not think of religion as a form of naturalism or pantheism, as an emotion of fear, awe or joy inspired by the magnitude of the universe or the minutest detail of nature. Religion as a response is provoked by the eternal laws of the universe, in which is perceived the permeation of the world by divinity. The laws of the universe do indeed inspire a sense of the unity of the whole, but Schleiermacher recommends that we should start not with nature, but with our own inner life, in the search for the sense of unity.⁽¹⁾ It is in the individual that we find the awareness of the indissoluble unity of all things, for the individual is a manifestation of humanity, a microcosm in which the macrocosm may be discerned. From there, we will learn to look at everything as a microcosm and view all finite things as signs of the Infinite.⁽²⁾ Religion is seeing the Infinite in the finite for the Infinite is as near to us as our own heart.⁽³⁾

In consequence of this view of religion, Schleiermacher is able to remove some of the stumbling blocks of traditional religion. Religion can now speak of revelation and of miracles without embarrassment or the need to become defensive, since a miracle is merely an event which is a sign of the Infinite, and any event may have a claim to be a miracle. A sign of the Infinite is a revelation, as is any intuition and "original feeling". Other embarrassing and problematic features of traditional religion may be dealt with in a similar way, including inspiration, prophecy and grace. He argues that every sacred writing is a testimony, a "speaking monument" from "the heroic time of religion", and that the religious man is one who has a lively understanding of it, but for that reason, can do without it. Thus he is able to include the Bible within his framework, in a position to which honour may be accorded without its becoming indispensable.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Ibid, p. 71

(2) Ibid, p. 88

(3) Ibid, pp. 39, 79, 86

(4) Ibid, pp. 88-91

The Bible is the document of the Christian religion, which is itself simply a concrete example of the expression of the apprehension of the Infinite by the human mind. It is true that he goes on to argue that the Christian religion is the superior form of religion, but he cannot grant it any exclusive position.⁽¹⁾ The various forms of religion are merely variations to suit individuals and remain religion in the same way that the various forms of music still remain music.⁽²⁾

Schleiermacher was aware that in speaking as he had done of religion and especially in speaking of the finite and the Infinite, he appeared not to be speaking of God at all. He believed, however, that such a charge would be unjust, for God is the highest, indeed, the only unity. He will, therefore, have nothing to do with any "nominalistic" conception of God, for the idea of a personal God is not to be clung to, but to be left behind.⁽³⁾

Finally Schleiermacher shared his contemporaries' antipathy towards theology viewed as a dogmatic system or as a system of doctrines. His own dogmatic work, therefore, conforms with his outline of the idea of religion to become a study of the religious self-consciousness - the way in which awareness of absolute dependence is manifested. Consequently Christian "faith-propositions" are

"... conceptions of Christian religious soul-states set forth in speech."⁽⁴⁾

and dogmatic theology is

"... the science that systematizes the doctrine prevalent in a Christian church at a given time."⁽⁵⁾

Dogmatics is thus anchored firmly within the church, but at the same time, it becomes dependent primarily on the religious self-awareness, so that

(1) Ibid, pp.222

(2) Ibid, pp.51, 173, 222 The Christian Faith § 9 (E.T. pp.39ff)

(3) On Religion pp.94-99 Schleiermacher uses the word "anthropomorphic"

(4) The Christian Faith § 15 (E.T. p76) cf. Niebuhr op.cit. p.141

(5) The Christian Faith § 19 (E.T. p.88)

traditional doctrines must be treated as symbols for various aspects of that awareness rather than as seeking to make assertions directly about external reality. There is, therefore, no room for any sola scriptura principle, for the New Testament is as much dogmatics in Schleiermacher's sense as is his own dogmatics.

The essential orientation, then, of Schleiermacher's concept of religion is clear: it is the perception of the Infinite in the finite, the feeling or awareness of the unity of the universe, of which we are most immediately conscious when we examine ourselves. We see ourselves as representations of humanity and are aware of ourselves as part of the Whole, without which we can have no being. We have a "sense of absolute dependence."

If we call Schleiermacher a mystic, we must be sure of the sense in which we do so: for his is not the mysticism of negation, seeking to achieve the nothingness by asserting that the concrete world is illusory. He uses the mystical approach not to escape but, by looking into the depths of man and of nature, to perceive the true unity of all things with the universe and of the self with all other concrete objects in order to produce both a life for science and a content for "morals". It was his desire to establish the relationship between the finite and the Infinite and so to prevent science from becoming objectifying and morals from becoming individualistic. Religion was the concept he used to give substance to both. We may say that he wished to be what Tillich would call a theologian of culture.

We find that Tillich and Schleiermacher share a common apologetic **religion** interest. Both wish to commend / to its cultured despisers. In Schleiermacher's case the cultured despisers were the disciples of Herder, Goethe, Kant and Fichte, in Tillich's they are the disciples of the empirical method of mathematical physics. Tillich does not wish to

dispose with empirical science any more than Schleiermacher did; he wishes, rather, to relate it to its context in the whole of reality. He shares Schleiermacher's conviction of the validity of both science and culture, but like Schleiermacher, wants to demonstrate the emptiness of a culture separated from religion. He observes, therefore, that it was

"a misunderstanding of Schleiermacher's definition of religion ('the feeling of absolute dependence') and a symptom of religious weakness when successors of Schleiermacher located religion in the realm of feeling as one psychological function among others." (1)

Schleiermacher's concept of religion is, according to Tillich, close to what Tillich himself calls "ultimate concern about the ground and meaning of our being". Feeling is not a psychological function but

"the awareness of that which transcends intellect and will, subject and object." (2)

Tillich is close to describing feeling as an awareness of the unity of the finite and the Infinite. He does not use these words, however, but speaks instead, in his early work, of the conditioned and the Unconditional. Nevertheless, he is concerned, like Schleiermacher, to bring to consciousness a sense of the unity of every individual entity with everything else, so that the meaning of those individual entities may be revealed in relation to each other, and also, so that the Unconditioned ground of meaning may break through. It is Tillich's conviction as much as it was Schleiermacher's, that science, of whatever sort, is an empty concept and culture a dead form, without a sense and taste for the Infinite, the Unconditioned ground of all being.

In his discussion of the empirical sciences he does not seek to demonstrate directly their connection with the Unconditional. Rather he

(1) ST, I, p.18, cf. p.170

(2) Ibid, p.47 Tillich does criticise Schleiermacher, however, for trying to "derive all contents of the Christian faith from what he called the 'religious consciousness' of the Christian" because this ignores the fact that the data of the Christian faith are not found in experience but given in history (Ibid, p.47f)

seeks to show first their interconnections on the basis of their objects and methods. It is when he comes to discuss the cultural sciences that he takes the further step of seeking to relate everything to the Unconditional. The cultural sciences, thus, root the whole of scientific and cultural life in the Unconditional, in order that meaning should break through. Religion is the seeking of the Unconditional in the conditioned, and grace is the breakthrough of the Unconditional. (1)

It is especially with respect to culture that the concept of religion is employed; indeed they are so closely bound together, that Tillich defines them in terms of each other:

"Religion is the directedness of the spirit towards unconditioned meaning, culture is the directedness of the spirit towards conditioned forms. But both meet in their being directed towards the complete unity of forms of meaning, which for culture is the end, but for religion a symbol both affirmed and denied from the standpoint of the Unconditional ... Religion is, therefore, not a function of meaning alongside others."

"Culture is the form of expression of religion, and religion is the substance of culture." (2)

Culture may or may not be intentionally religious, but it cannot avoid being the vehicle of the expression of the Unconditional, for as he wrote later:

"Religion, like God, is omnipresent; its presence, like that of God, can never be forgotten, neglected, denied. But it is always effective, giving inexhaustible depth to life, and inexhaustible meaning to every cultural creation." (3)

The term "religion" itself expresses Tillich's ontological conviction concerning the relationship of the conditioned world with the Unconditional. The finite and the Infinite are interdependent, existing in a dialectical relationship. The world of finite entities - the conditioned - stands constantly under the judgement of the Infinite - the

(1) G.W., I (Roh). p.335 (WR p.82f); GM, I (Überwindung), p.386/passim (WR.p.150f)
 (2) My translation: GM, I, (Roh), p.329, (WR p.72f); cf V.R. (ITC), p.165, Theol.Cul, p.42.
 (3) Era, Introduction p.xi f; cf p. xiii

Unconditional - while yet being affirmed by it, for the conditioned could have no being without the Unconditional Ground of Being which is its source.⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, the conditioned and the Unconditional are so related that it is possible to experience the Holy within the finite, to perceive the Unconditional within the conditioned.⁽²⁾ Anything may be a symbol of the Unconditional, that is to say, may become a revelation of it, for there is a paradoxical immanence of the transcendent within the finite. There can, therefore, be no split between a natural and a supernatural world, nor between a profane and a sacred sphere.⁽³⁾

Religion is, therefore, not simply the orientation of the spirit towards the Unconditional, but the perception or intuition of the Unconditional within the conditioned. It is not one function of the human spirit alongside others but, in Tillich's own words "the dimension of depth in all of them."⁽⁴⁾ The relationship may, indeed be spoken of in precisely the opposite way, so that instead of our speaking of religion as a perception of the Infinite in the finite, we may speak of it as our being grasped by the Unconditional.

It is this two-fold conception of religion, as perception and as a sense of being grasped, that provides the link between the theoretical and the practical series of functions in the System of Sciences. Culture in the broadest sense includes both series, as would Schleiermacher's idea of culture,⁽⁵⁾ and religion provides, via the function of metaphysics and ethics, the connection of all the functions with the Unconditional. A theology of culture, therefore, proposes to lay bare the Unconditional within the conditioned cultural forms, which is precisely what Tillich was attempting

(1) cf. "What is wrong with the Dialectic Theology?" JR, vol.15 (1935) pp.127-145, "A Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Incarnation" Church Quarterly Review vol.147 (1949), p.137 cited by K. Osborne New Being, p.162n

(2) cf. The Future of Religions, p.86

(3) cf. Osborne: New Being, p.80ff

(4) Theol.Cul. p.6f; T.P.T., p.337

(5) Tillich proposes to understand Schleiermacher's "Handeln" as "philosophy of culture", ST, I, p.34

to do in writing The Religious Situation

The presupposition of any such undertaking must be that culture is made up not simply of form and content, but also has a transcendent reference which Tillich refers to as "import" or "substance". Every object points beyond itself, although there are some that do so more obviously and more adequately. Thus his enthusiasm for the Expressionist school of art is due to what he perceives to be the subordination of form and content to the import which thrusts through the paintings of the school.

"Not a transcendent world is depicted as in the art of the ancients but the transcendental reference in things to that which lies beyond them is expressed." (1)

Import does not break through all cultural forms in the same way. Indeed, unless culture is conscious of its own "transcendental reference" it is likely to become autonomous, that is to say, concerned merely with itself as form. It may even become heteronomous, dominated either by the form of another age, and therefore not true to itself, or by some principle which has raised a false claim to ultimacy, such as nationalism and ecclesiasticism.

Tillich never abandoned his theories on the interpenetration of religion and culture,⁽²⁾ nor their ontological presuppositions, but he met considerable difficulty in using them for his apologetic purposes. Culture is not simply theonomous: it may, as in expressionism, or in the social structure of early Middle Ages, allow import to break through, but it may also be autonomous or even heteronomous. It is not possible, therefore to make a simple appeal to the religious substance of culture. Culture requires to be interpreted and criticised. The capitalism and empiricism which dominate the interpretation of The Religious Situation are subjected to such criticism. Nevertheless, Tillich's early period

(1) Religious Situation, p.88; cf WR (ITC), p.169; Ultimate Concern, p.40; Theol.Cul., pp.71ff

(2) cf On the Boundary, pp 68ff; Theol Cul. pp.40-67

is characterized by what he himself describes as a romantic attitude. The article in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart suggests a slowly growing awareness of the over-simplification of his interpretation of cultural forms, but it was not until his move to America and the catastrophic effects of the Second World War, that he was finally compelled to review his over-optimistic assessment of culture. He was forced, then, to come to terms with what he describes as a new "mood of the end", a new pessimism wholly resistant to his romanticism.⁽¹⁾ From this spring his post-war analyses of the "situation" as interpreted by the various forms of cultural expression. Dominating them all he finds an interpretation of existence which is controlled by a sense of disjunction, isolation and estrangement.

His adoption of the term "Ultimate Concern" is significant, therefore, not simply because his move to America required a substitute for the unintelligible term "the Unconditional", but because it is susceptible of the wider interpretation required by the variety of cultural forms. Some cultural forms reflect man's "Ultimate Concern", his relation to the Unconditional. Some, however, do so only in a negative sense: they substitute other things for what should be their ultimate concern and elevate them to a position of ultimacy. "Ultimate Concern" also has the advantage to suggesting a subjective reference, consisting in the individual's or group's' apprehension of what is their ultimate concern. Faith is the genuine apprehension of one's ultimate concern, it is the state of being ultimately concerned.⁽²⁾

Tillich modifies, but does not abandon his romanticism. He retains this element which he inherited from Schleiermacher and Schelling, but he also learned that the simple romanticism of Schleiermacher and or the nature philosophy of Schelling was inadequate. The "situation"

(1) "Religion and Secular Culture", JR, vol. 26 (1946), p.82f

(2) Dynamics of Faith p.1

as expressed by cultural forms required the positive philosophy of Schelling for its interpretation in terms of alienation and estrangement. However, positive philosophy cannot exist on its own: existentialism (positive philosophy) requires essentialism (negative philosophy) in order to make any statement at all, even about existence.⁽¹⁾ To be able to ask questions about existence is already to have an inkling of their answer precisely because existentialism cannot exist without essentialism, because there cannot be estrangement without a previous union.

We turn, now, to the consequences of Tillich's views on religion and on the relationship between the finite and the Infinite and consider, first, their consequences for his view of the religions of the world.

According to Tillich himself, it was the influence of Schleiermacher mediated by the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule and by Rudolf Otto in particular, that broke down for him the rationalistic and moralistic interpretations of religion, enabling him to see religion as the perception of the Unconditional and the religions as concrete expressions of that perception.⁽²⁾ Consequently, he maintains a position very similar to that of Schleiermacher himself. He classifies the world religions according to different criteria, but his basic position is the same as Schleiermacher's: any pattern of religious devotion may be regarded as a realization of the state of being "unconditionally apprehended". No one religious pattern must be allowed to exercise domination, however, because it becomes heteronomous in the process.

"... the critical principle within religion forbids the limiting of religion to any existing form of religious devotion; it can, in the name of religion, take arms against religion as it is actually practised." (3)

All religion is an expression of the awareness of the Unconditional and, as such, looks toward the coming of the New Being in which the conflicts

(1) "Relation of Metaphysics and Theology", Review of Metaphysics, vol. 10 (1956) p.63; cf also "The Nature and Significance of Existentialist thought", Journal of Philosophy, vol.53 (1956), p.742f.

(2) of The Religious Situation, p.215; The Future of Religions, p.84f
 (3) Twentieth Century Theology in the Making, vol. II, p.301

and estrangement concomitant with human existence will be overcome.

Western religions, in keeping with their "historical" character, expect the New Being in the shape of transformed reality, in a historical process, whereas eastern religions, which are "un-historical" expect it in the form of the negation of reality which brings with it the "affirmation of the Ground of Being alone." (1)

Schleiermacher does not speak of New Being, of course, for his immanent conception of religion excludes any eschatological perspective, but there remains the belief expressed by both of them that every concrete religion is an expression of universal religion.

It seems, however, that Tillich shares Schleiermacher's belief that the Western forms and, more especially, Christianity, are superior. For Tillich the superiority consists in the affirmation of reality, but also in the belief that in Christianity the revelation of the New Being has its most adequate expression. That is not to say, however, that other religions have no revelation, for Tillich stands firmly by the conviction that "revelatory experiences are universally human". (2)

"Religions are based on something that is given to a man wherever he lives. He is given a revelation, a particular kind of experience which implies saving powers." (3)

Despite, then, his apparent belief in the superiority of Christianity, he can countenance only a dialogue with other religions, not proselytism or cross-fertilisation.

"A mixture of religions destroys in each of them the concreteness which gives it dynamic power. The victory of one religion would impose a particular religious answer on all other particular answers." (4)

(1) ST, II, p. 101

(2) The Future of Religions, p. 81

(3) Ibid

(4) Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions, p. 96

Not only is his view of the concrete religions essentially the same as that of Schleiermacher, but also his view of revelation and, we may say, of the Bible, for the Bible is the record of the revelation received by the early Christians and any other sacred book may have the same position with respect to the group with which it is associated.

From this, too, springs his somewhat ambivalent attitude to the historical foundation of Christianity. It is never quite certain whether Christianity can do without the events of the Gospels; on the one hand there appears to be the view, expressed in the 1911 theses that

"... the Christian cannot live as if every morning the mail might bring news of historical researches which discredit the Christian faith." (1)

On the other hand, however, there is the claim that the event on which Christianity is based, Jesus of Nazareth, is given in history (2) and his extended argument that the picture of Jesus given in the Bible must correspond to a reality. (3) On Tillich's own arguments, what matters is the truth of the insight received, of the revelation of Christianity, not the actual events or the concrete persons or things through whom the revelation was mediated. Inasmuch as it is one revelation among many, the events are unimportant, but inasmuch as Christianity is a concrete religion, the events must be said to have taken place, or there would be no Christianity.

Moreover, Tillich has a special reason for insisting on the historicity of the person of Christ, for he is the paradigm of the realisation of the New Being. In Christ, humanity is fully united with the Ground from which it was estranged. In Christ there was transformed

(1) D.D. Williams: Interpreting Theology 1918-1952 (London, SCM Press, 1953) p.105

(2) ST, I, p.48

(3) ST, II, p.112ff, of Kelsey's analysis of Tillich's argument and the fundamental self-contradiction involved in it (The Fabric of Paul Tillich's Theology, pp.91ff)

reality; it has actually happened in Christ. Christians may therefore stand by their belief in the coming of the New Being. Nevertheless, it is the power that breaks through the picture of Jesus as the Christ offered in the New Testament that is important to us, the import that breaks through both the form and the content, for unless we receive Jesus as the Christ as the bearer of the New Being, and so receive the import, he is not the Christ at all.

When we turn to the question of the relation of the finite to the Infinite we find, as we have already noticed, that he has to take account of the element of estrangement. Consequently, the ontological scheme with which he works speaks not simply of the Infinite and the finite, but also of finite being developed under the conditions of existence, which produces distortions so that things are not as they ought to be. Everything is separated from its essence, and so also from its Ground. Existence has, therefore, a very special meaning, closely akin to the meaning given to it by Schelling, so that it is impossible to view it except in negative terms. It is not to be confused with finitude, which is at least a neutral, if not a good concept.

"It is not finitude as such that is sinful, since finitude refers both to essence and existence. The positive element in the finite essence remains the good factor, not the sinful factor. Actualised creation and estranged existence are identical in the sense that they are found together necessarily - necessarily because existence has only one meaning: distortion or estrangement." (1)

Over against the Infinite Ground of Being is finite being, but it may be viewed from two points of view, from the point of view of essence ^{of} or existence. Tillich recognises the ambiguity of both words, which rests in the fact that both have two basic meaning. Essence can refer either to the nature of a thing without any valuation of it, or it can be a valuation: it can, in other words, have an empirical or a normative sense -

(1) Osborne, New Being p.119

what is or what ought to be the case. Similarly, existence can have an empirical or a normative sense, describing the actuality of a thing or its departure from the norm.⁽¹⁾ Tillich's own use of the two words, however, is restricted almost entirely to the normative or evaluative sense. Between essence as that which ought to be the case and existence as that which is the case, there still remains finite being, ensuring that however distorted a thing may become, it still retains its relation to the Ground of Being.

It appears, however, that the transition from essence to existence is necessary⁽²⁾ if man is to actualise his essence and to realise his freedom:

"... Man's being is not only hidden in the creative ground of the divine life; it is also manifest to itself and to other life within the whole of reality. Man does exist, and his existence is different from his essence. Man and the rest of reality are not only 'inside' the process of the divine life, but also 'outside' it. Man is grounded in it, but he is not kept within the ground. Man has left the ground in order to 'stand upon' himself, to actualise what he essentially is, in order to be finite freedom!" (3)

But this transition from essence to existence is itself the fall, so it seems that the fall must take place if man is to be man. In defence of this Tillich can only say:

"This is the point at which the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of the fall join. It is the most difficult and the most dialectical point in the doctrine of creation. And, as every existential analysis of the human situation shows, it is the most mysterious point in all experience. Fully developed creatureliness is fallen creatureliness." (4)

Tillich's adoption of the evaluative use of essence and existence precludes the possibility of a discussion of the relationship of esse and

(1) ST, I, p. 225f

(2) i.e. that it is a matter of logical necessity. Tillich, however, is somewhat unclear because of the way in which he wavers between logical description and empirical description. (cf J. Heywood Thomas, Paul Tillich: An Appraisal, p. 125f)

(3) ST, I, p. 283

(4) Ibid, p. 283f

operary and also removes the question of sin and the fall, as has been frequently noticed, from being an ethical and volitional question to being an ontological question. (1)

It follows, then, that Tillich prefers to think of God also in ontological terms, as the Ground of Being, or as Being-Itself, since for Tillich the most fundamental question that can be asked is the question of Being, the question about the relationship of the individual actualisation of Being to its infinite Ground. Thus we have the much debated formula "God is Being-Itself", prior to all essence and existence. (2) Existence cannot be predicated of God, for two reasons. In the first place, one cannot speak of God as a being, for he would, then, be simply one being among others, even if he were regarded as a supreme being. A being possesses finitude; to describe God as a being is therefore to involve oneself in a self-contradiction. Secondly, existence cannot be predicated of God because of the special, evaluative meaning given to the word "existence". It cannot be said that God is separated from his essence, so it cannot be said that God exists: it can only be said of God that he is Being-Itself.

But if God is Being-Itself, what must we say of the traditional conception of God of Christianity in personal terms? Tillich's solution to the problem of what he regards, with great distaste, as a nominalist conception of God (3) is that ontology absorbs personalism and as such is prior to it:

"...being and person are not contradictory concepts. Being includes personal being; it does not deny it. The ground of being is the ground of personal being, not its negation." (4)

(1) e.g. J. Heywood Thomas, Appraisal, p. 126; Osborne New Being, p. 180. Osborne however is wrong to describe the concept of sin as more ontological than theological, since Tillich would see little difference. It should also be noticed that Tillich does recognise the contribution of the concept of sin in emphasising "the personal act of turning away" (ST, II, p. 52f)

(2) ST, I, pp. 261ff

(3) cf "What is Wrong with the Dialectic Theology?" JR, vol. 15 (1935), p. 137; Religion & Secular Culture, JR, vol. 26 (1946) p. 85

(4) BRSUR, 83

If we ask about the status of such terms as God, sin and so on, we find that we have effectively turned full circle, to bring ourselves back to the conception of theology offered in the System of Sciences. Leaving aside the question, which Tillich himself appears never to have finally decided, as to whether the statement that God is Being-Itself is or is not ~~is~~ symbolical and also the question of whether ontological statements are themselves symbolical or literal, we find that theology has a role alongside that of metaphysics, namely that of "representing the spirit" of the original documents and transferring it to the modern mind. Theology has the role of relating the language of the perceptions of a particular group to that of the modern mind, which for Tillich appears to mean relating it to the heirs of classical philosophy. The connecting point rests in the fact that they are both concerned with the same thing, with the Unconditional. Since religious symbols have to be explicated to bring to light their ontological reference, we must assume that ontological statements are more easily understood and less likely to mislead.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STRUCTURE OF THEOLOGICAL METHOD

We have, so far, attempted to understand the precise role assigned to theology by Tillich and to bring to light the ontological convictions which inform his views. We encountered some difficulty because of the lack of consistency in his account of the nature of philosophy, but our investigations lead us to the conclusion that it is the task of theology to engage in what may tentatively be described as a translation of the religious symbols of the Christian Church into the language and thought forms of contemporary interpretations of human existence ("the situation").

The philosophical investigation of the structure of reality (the discipline of philosophy) is provoked by the philosophical attitude of radical enquiry, but it provokes in turn the philosophical attitude of a search for the answers to the problems encountered in the discipline, as it produces concepts and categories by which to grasp reality. When these questions become a matter of ultimate concern, they are a matter of philosophical, or rather, a theological attitude. The theological discipline seeks to explicate the symbols which are produced in the process of perception of the answers to the questions.

We turn, then, to a closer examination of the method of theology, as it seeks to fulfil this final task.

1. The Possibility and Rationality of Theology

(a) The Possibility of Theology

It is impossible to predicate existence of God, because to do so is to treat God as a being and, therefore, as one being among others. God, is therefore, not an object in the same sense in which anything else may be treated as an object. Indeed, God is not an object at all: as Being-Itself God is beyond the structure of subject and object. The very term "Being-Itself" is designed to avoid the suggestion that God can be regarded as an object.

If we eliminate the possibility of speaking of God as an object or as a being, we eliminate also the necessity and the possibility of speaking of natural theology, at least, in a Thomistic sense. Tillich, therefore, dismisses in a somewhat cavalier fashion the traditional arguments for the existence of God on the ground they all require the givenness of the world, a fact which precludes the possibility of conceiving of God as transcending the world infinitely. He argues that this is true not only of the cosmological, but also of the teleological and ontological arguments. (1)

He does not think, however, that the traditional arguments are entirely irrelevant to theology. While they are of no use to demonstrate the existence of a supreme being, they do serve the function of revealing the question, implied in finite being, of the infinite ground of being. The question could not have been asked if there were not in the world and self "something unconditional". The traditional arguments are formulations of the question implied in finitude under the impact of the apprehension of the unconditional element.

There may be substance in the charge that Tillich has constructed a disguised form of natural theology to supply a foundation of his own

(1) ST, I, pp. 227 ff

approach, in spite of his disavowal of natural theology.⁽¹⁾ The important point, however, is not whether the argument he used to dismiss the traditional arguments may be turned against himself, but the actual way in which he conceives the possibility of theology. It is quite clear that it rests on what we have already referred to as the "paradoxical immanence of the transcendent."

Having dismissed the question of natural theology, Tillich is under no obligation to discuss the question of a human capacity for God or for revelation. He nevertheless presupposes both in his ontological assumptions. If man is a part of the finite world, he too must contain an unconditional element, a link with the Infinite. Tillich is more interested, however, in the nature of the relationship between man and the infinite ground of his being. Man's existence, in a neutral sense, is evidence of a relation to the ground of being, but his "existence", in a technical sense, is evidence of his estrangement from, or lack of unity with it.

Equally, Tillich's ontological conception of God relieves him of the task of discussing the concept of the Word of God. It is not necessary to refer to God as speaking, when the essence of the Christian message is the conquest of existential estrangement. Talk of God as speaking involves a relapse into supernaturalism. Strangely, however, Tillich does himself lapse into ways of speaking about God that are very traditional and suggest the very supernaturalism he rejects. Moreover, he employs the concept of the Word of God, but he goes to considerable lengths to explain what he considers to be its legitimate uses. He insists that it can have only a symbolic meaning, referring to the manifestations of the divine life. In this sense it has a wide use and is particularly suitable because of its

(1) cf. Lewis S. Ford, "Tillich's Implicit Natural Theology", SJT, vol.24 (1971), p.269. "If the radical insufficiency of the world points to its source in being-itself, God as that which infinitely transcends the world has been derived from the world."

association with the concept of rationality contained in logos. The revelation of the divine life is rational, but includes within it the irrational principle of the abyss; the inexhaustible depth of all creation.⁽¹⁾ However, Tillich proscribes all reference to the Word of God as spoken. "Word" is, therefore, thought of in terms of the stress on rationality of the Greek notion of logos rather than the Hebrew idea of the (verbal) utterance of a personal God.⁽²⁾

Theology is possible, therefore, not because God has revealed himself in the spoken word and through the records of it, but because Being-Itself is the ground of our being. But there is more to the possibility of theology than this; it would not be possible if no question were implied in the categories and concepts of ontological analysis; it would not be possible if there were no answers; it would not be possible if the answers did not exist in symbolic form; it would not be possible without the theological circle.

At first sight, the concept of the theological circle suggests that Tillich believes, as has been maintained throughout the history of theology, that theology can only be engaged upon from the situation of faith; only he who knows God for himself can go on to a deeper understanding of God. In fact, however, the notion of the theological circle reflects Tillich's dialectical interpretation of reality, for the characteristic of the circle is not simply faith, but faith combined with doubt. Theology is only possible for the man who has entered the theological circle, that is to say: it is only possible if a man has committed himself. If he is dispassionate, detached and objective in his attitude, he cannot be said

(1) ST, I, pp. 174ff; "The Word of God", Language: An Enquiry into its Meaning and Function (ed. Ruth Nanda Anshen) pp. 122-33, The Interpretation of History p. 238

(2) cf. A. J. McKelway, The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich, p. 88f and note; E. la B. Cherbonnier, "The Theology of the Word of God", JR, vol. 33 (1953), p. 22ff.

to have entered the theological circle. But even having committed himself he still remains afflicted by doubt:

"Being inside the circle, he must have made an existential decision; he must be in the situation of faith. But no-one can say of himself that he is in the situation of faith. No-one can call himself a theologian ... Every/theologian is committed and alienated; he is always in faith and in doubt; he is inside and outside the theological circle." (1)

We are reminded again of our suggestion that when Tillich explains the relationship of philosophy and theology, he seems to be thinking of man who is at once both philosopher and theologian. It is not really possible to speak of entering the theological circle, for everyone who "acknowledges the content of the theological circle" as his ultimate concern has immediately entered it. And yet, inasmuch as he does not have the answer to the questions he wishes to ask, he stands outside it. The uncertain borderline between philosophy and theology which makes it possible to refer to one and the same attitude by both names is uncertain because it is man himself who represents the border, man who at times takes a detached approach, at times a committed approach, man who at times is torn by doubts, at times is grasped by faith, man who at times can do nothing but question, at times can verbalise the answer - who indeed could not ask the questions unless he knew the answers already. The possibility of theology is precisely the possibility of answering questions.

At the same time, the interpretation of theology which stems from the System of Sciences supplies the other important aspect of the possibility of theology, namely the possibility of interpreting the religious symbols of the Christian faith which are the product of an encounter with ultimate reality. The very existence of the symbols makes theology possible because they provide it with an object.

(1) ST, I, p. 13

The object of theology is not God, but the symbols of the Christian faith. Indeed, as we have already seen, God cannot be an object because as Being-Itself, he is beyond the "subject-object cleavage." To make an assertion such as this, however, leads to immediate difficulties - difficulties which are amply illustrated by Tillich's doctrine of religious symbols.⁽¹⁾ We do not wish to engage upon an extended discussion of the debate on religious symbols engendered by Tillich's doctrine, but it will be salutary to outline his theory and to draw attention to some of the salient features which are relevant to our investigation.

There are a number of accounts of religious symbolism offered by Tillich, among which there is a high degree of consistency,⁽²⁾ as is verified by the first table.^(p.115) There are also, however, a number of differences to which attention must be drawn. The most obvious of these is the difference between the account of the characteristics offered in the article "The Religious Symbol" and all the other accounts. The radical difference in terminology may be accounted for by the early date of the original article (1928)⁽³⁾ It reappeared in translation, however, in 1940⁽⁴⁾ (slightly revised) and again in 1958⁽⁵⁾, 1961⁽⁶⁾ and 1966⁽⁷⁾ (further revised). All the other articles cited appeared between 1955 and 1961⁽⁸⁾

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- (1) It was Tillich himself who made the assertion that the doctrine of the symbolizes at the centre of his theological doctrine of knowledge. (TPT, p.333)
 - (2) It should be added that the characteristics are rarely listed in the same order, and in some accounts do not appear in the form of a coherent list.
 - (3) Blätter für deutsche Philosophie, vol.I, reprinted in Religiöse Verwirklichung, (1930)
 - (4) Journal of Liberal Religion, vol. 2 (1940), pp.13-33
 - (5) Daedalus, vol. 87 (1958), pp.3-21
 - (6) Circulated at the fourth annual New York University Institute and published in the proceedings (Religious Experience and Truth, ed. S.Hook, pp.301-322)
 - (7) Myth & Symbol, ed.F.W.Dillistone, pp.15-34, The most significant alteration was the far from consistently pursued substitution of "ultimate concern" for "unconditional transcendent".
 - (8) "The Nature of Religious Language", Theol.Cul, pp.53-67; "Theology and Symbolism", Religious Symbolism (ed.F.E.Johnson) pp.107-116; "The Word of God", Language: Its Meaning & Function, (ed Ruth Nanda Anshen), pp.122-133; Dynamics of Faith, pp.41ff; "The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols," Religious Experience and Truth, pp.3-11

The very fact of its reappearance suggests that Tillich had not abandoned the opinions he expressed and we have therefore made some attempt to identify the list of characteristics offered there with his later lists. We may safely assume that he means the same by describing symbols as figurative, as he does by saying that they point beyond themselves. Two of our other identifications, however, are more tentative, namely those between perceptibility and the use of the media of ordinary or everyday experience and between acceptibility and the growth and death of symbols. This last identification is made on the ground that "acceptibility" is used to describe the social rooting of the symbol; where the symbol fails to connect with a social situation, it dies.

We turn, therefore, to some of the questions raised by Tillich's view.

(i) A certain degree of variation will be noticed among the descriptions of the third characteristic and we must ask, therefore, whether they are consistent with each other. For example, we may ask whether the possession of innate power is the same as participation in the reality of the referent or whether participation in the reality of the referent is the same as participation in its power, or its meaning.

Jean-Paul Gabus remarks that whereas Tillich speaks of innate or intrinsic power in the article of 1928, he spoke a year later of the power belonging to symbols as a power inherent in nature itself. He finds that the two accounts are different in meaning and dismisses the first as quasi-magical.⁽¹⁾ However, he explains neither the difference nor the meaning of the description as quasi-magical. In fact, if there is a difference, it is probably due to Tillich's desire to emphasise in the second that any object may, on account of its participation in being, become a symbol of

(1) J.P. Gabus, Introduction a la Theologie de la Culture de Paul Tillich, p.116
Gabus appears to have made a mistake concerning the date of the second account ("Natur und Sakrament") which was given as a lecture in 1928, and later published in Religiöse Verwirklichung (1930) (cf GW, VII, p.263)
It is translated in Era as "Nature & Sacrament" (pp.94-112)

TABLE 1.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

The Religious Symbol 1928, 1940, 1961, 1966	Religious Symbolism 1955	The Nature of Religious Language 1955	The Word of God 1957	The Dynamics of Faith 1957	The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols 1961
1. Figurative quality	Figurative	Point beyond themselves	Figurative	Point beyond themselves	Point beyond themselves
2. Perceptibility	-	-	Use the media of ordinary experience	Use the media of everyday experience	-
3. Have innate power	Participate in the power of what they symbolise	Participate in the meaning and power (? and reality) of what they symbolise	Participate in the power and meaning of that which they symbolise	Participate in that to which they point	Participate in the reality of that which they represent. Radiate its power and meaning.
4. Acceptibility	Grow and die, cannot be invented	Are born & die; cannot be invented or produced intentionally, born in the 'group unconscious'	Grow & die, cannot be invented or abolished, safe from criticism by non-symbolic language	Grow & die, cannot be produced intentionally. Created or accepted by the 'group unconscious'	Are born and die, cannot be created at will
5. -	Open up levels of meaning & corresponding levels of the mind	Open up levels of reality and levels of the soul.	Open up levels of being & levels of the soul. Point to ultimate reality.	Open up levels of reality & dimensions & elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions & elements of reality	Open up dimensions of reality in correlation to dimensions of the human spirit.
6. -	-	-	-	-	Have integrating & disintegrating power.

TABLE 2

TYPES OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOL

Level	"The Religious Symbol"	"The Nature of Religious Language"	"The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols"
I	<u>Objective</u> a. The world of divine beings - the supreme being God b. Characterisations of the nature and actions of God c. Natural and historical objects historical personalities etc	<u>Transcendent</u> a. God b. The attributes of God c. The acts of God -	<u>Primary</u> a. highest being and his attributes b. Divine actions c. Divine manifestations in finite reality
	II	<u>Self-transcending</u> a. Actions which symbolise the religious attitude e.g. "cultic gestures" b. Objects which symbolise the religious attitude e.g. cross - -	<u>Immanent</u> - c. Cultic sign-symbols e.g. cross, candles etc. b. "The Sacramental" e.g. The Lord's Supper a. Incarnations of the divine -

the Unconditional.⁽¹⁾ At the same time, however, he must recognise that some objects are in fact treated as religious symbols while others are not. He might have changed his mind, of course, but since he published more than one version of the 1928 article in which these essential details were not changed and did in fact circulate it at a conference in 1961, it seems reasonable to conclude that he did not change his mind and that no contradiction is intended between the two articles to which Gabus refers, nor between the 1928 article and those which describe symbols as participating in the reality of that to which they point.

The question of participation, however, has frequently worried Tillich's critics⁽²⁾ for it is not immediately clear in what way the symbols participate in the reality of that to which they point. However, from Tillich's own writings, it seems that participation in the reality of the referent is more than the mere participation of the finite object in the Infinite, it is, in fact, equivalent to participation in its meaning or its power.⁽³⁾ This suggests to us that the principal point that Tillich wishes to make is not concerned with participation at all but with mediation. Both in speaking of the innate power of symbols and of the participation of symbols in their referent, Tillich is seeking to say that a symbol owes its description as a symbol to the fact that it mediates the power and meaning of the reality to which it points. When a symbol ceases to function in this way it ceases to be a symbol.

(1) of GW, I, (Rph), p. 333f, (WR, p. 79f); ST, I, p. 266

(2) J. Heywood Thomas, "Religious Language as Symbolism", Religious Studies, vol. 1 (1965-6), p. 91; H. D. McDonald, "The Symbolic Theology of Paul Tillich" SJT, vol. 17 (1964), p. 425; V. T. Bullock, A Critical Examination of Paul Tillich's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, pp. 47ff; W. L. Rowe, Religious Symbols and God (Chicago & London, University of Chicago Press, 1968) pp. 112ff

(3) "Analyses of meaning are analyses of being because meaning brings being to spiritual fulfilment" (WR(Rph), p. 72) "...Being is conceived not simply as a logical category, but also as living import" (GW, I, (SdW), p. 122) G. F. McLean comments succinctly "The power participated in is not entitative but significative power" ("Symbol and Analogy: Tillich & Thomas", Paul Tillich's Catholic Thought (hereafter PTCT) p. 163

This in turn, suggests that there is little difference between the characteristic of participation and that of growth and death. Indeed Tillich's pointing to the arbitrariness of the sign during his discussions of the question of participation serves only to confirm this impression; to point to their arbitrariness is to say that they are not consciously selected and to point to their participation is simply to say that they grow and die. When they cease to mediate the Unconditional, they die. (1)

Tillich's constant movement among reality, meaning and power indicate his dissatisfaction with any one term. "Reality" is apt to suggest an ontology shorn of dynamics or form; "meaning" is likely to be confused with linguistic philosophy and so lose the dynamic of ontological relations; "power", is apt to degenerate into blind dynamics without meaning. Each word for him must include the connotations of the other two.

We must pass on, however, to some further points.

(11) Tillich explains that religious symbols are of two kinds, (2) but it is impossible not to notice the very considerable differences between the accounts he gives. This is due, no doubt, to the difficulty of deciding on criteria, as is evidenced by the variety of names which he gives to the two levels. It appears that he wishes to collect together in one group all those "symbols" which relate directly to our speaking about God, his attributes and actions, but is uncertain about the proper classification of other claimants to the name of "symbol". He is uncertain/where to place what he calls "divine manifestations in reality", we believe, because Christ, in particular, has the embarrassing feature of a claim to being God and man at one and the same time.

(1) Tvard has, therefore, missed the point when he objects to Tillich's claim that symbols grow and die that a symbol cannot lose its revelatory power ("Since ultimate truth does not disintegrate, neither do its symbols"). It is at the subjective pole that symbols may grow or die. ("Christology as Symbol", PACT, p.211f; Paul Tillich and the Christian Message, p.58)

(2) Table 2 sets out the contents of three of his accounts, (p.116)

The rest of the symbols included in the second level present a multiplicity of different objects, operating in many different ways. He hardly repeats himself in any of the articles, so that we may gain very different impressions of what may constitute a symbol on the second level and, consequently, of how such symbols may be said to operate.⁽¹⁾ However, all the symbols of the second level have a feature in common, to which Tillich, strangely, fails to draw our attention. Each of the symbolic objects may be encountered in human life, whether it is a candle, a poetic image, a sacred building or a "cultic sign". We cannot doubt their existence, since they may be seen or touched. We may say that they conform to the second of Tillich's characteristics, namely that they are objects of everyday experience.

One cannot, however, say the same thing of God, his attributes and actions. They are not objects of everyday experience, certainly not in the sense of the objects used in the second level. These are "objects" about the existence of which there has been endless debate. They must, therefore, be symbols in a very different sense from those of the secondary level. If they participate in the power and reality of that which they symbolise, they must do so in a different way from that of the symbols of the second level. "God" does not participate in the Ground of Being: he is the Ground of Being.

Once again, it is the question of the function of the symbol that is the important, indeed, the decisive factor, for the real criterion of the symbol is whether it mediates ultimate reality, whether unconditioned meaning breaks through it. The difference between the two levels lies in

(1) In another article, Tillich claims that there are three levels of symbol. The first includes God viewed as a supreme being, his attributes and actions; the second, manifestations of the divine infinite reality; the third, cultic signs-symbols, objects, gestures, clothing, and other symbolic objects such as water, oil, etc. ("Theology and Symbolism", Religious Symbolism, Ed. F.E. Johnson, p.114f)

the relation to their referent. The first level of symbols have an immediate relation to it, while that of the second level is one stage removed.

(iii) The crucial question, however, for the possibility of theology is the precise purpose of symbols. A symbol has a referent, but what is it to effect with respect to its referent? Surely, to say that a symbol has a referent is another way of saying that it has an object. But God is not an object, nor is Being-Itself. Yet unless a referent is an object nothing can be said about it. Perhaps, then, it is not the purpose of a symbol to tell us something but to evoke a response, by mediating ultimate reality to us. But there can, surely, be no response unless we know what we are responding to: there can be no response unless there is also conceptual content for us to respond to: fides esse nequit sine conceptione.⁽¹⁾

(iv) If "God" is a symbol, we must ask what its referent is, and the answer appears to be that God is a symbol for Being-Itself. However, it also appears that we cannot cease to talk about God and talk, instead, simply about Being-Itself, for, in the first place "God" symbolises the ground of personality in a way in which Being-Itself does not and perhaps cannot. Secondly, Being-Itself turns out to be a symbol too:⁽²⁾ to speak of God as Being-Itself is not to speak literally but conceptually, or rather, to use the conceptuality of a different tradition. It seems that

(1) W.P. Alston makes a similar point when he observes in a pseudo-Kantian dictum: "Concepts without feelings are empty; feelings without concepts are blind." ("Tillich's Conception of a Religious Symbol", Religious Experience and Truth, p.13) Tillich appears to come part of the way to the point when he admits that the fact that every symbol has conceptual potentialities makes theology possible. (Dynamics of Faith, p.95)

(2) As early as SW, Tillich observed that metaphysical concepts are symbolic not scientific.

it is out of the question to suppose that we can speak literally of the referent: it is impossible even to say what the referent is, since any word is immediately a symbol. The Unconditional cannot be an object at all: only its symbols can be objects.⁽¹⁾ But the concept of the Unconditional - or of Being-Itself - is immediately a symbol.

(v) If both the terminology of religion and that of metaphysics or ontology⁽²⁾ is symbolic, then it seems that the task of theology, is, in Scharlemann's words, to explain the content of religious symbols correlatively, correlating the philosophical concept with the religious symbol. But Scharlemann must surely be wrong when he says that a philosophical concept exists to enable us to grasp the content and the religious symbol to enable us to be grasped by it, because both philosophical concept and religious symbol are symbols. He makes a brave attempt to show that it is not a question of a translation of religious symbols into ontological symbols, or a reduction of one to the other, but a correlative explanation, but this explanation must fail because of the confusion inherent in Tillich's account of philosophy and theology.⁽³⁾ The possibility of theology is the existence of symbols, but unless we can have some more precise understanding of symbols and their referent it is difficult to see how theology can in fact be carried out.

(1) GW, I, (Rph), p.331f (WR, p.76f)

(2) Tillich uses "metaphysics" and "ontology" as synonyms, although ontology has, strictly speaking, a narrower range of meaning. He felt compelled to adopt the term ontology because of the "supra-naturalistic" connotations of "metaphysics" ("Relation of Metaphysics and Theology", Review of Metaphysics, vol. 10 (1956) p.57f.

(3) Scharlemann, Reflection and Doubt in the Theology of Paul Tillich, p.75

(vi) If the Unconditional cannot become an object, it is, as we have said, impossible to say anything about it. But it is clear that Tillich does not believe this to be the case at all. To say something symbolically is to say something, so that we must conclude that the Unconditional can become an object after all, even though it must be regarded as a very special kind of object.

(vii) The religious symbols of the Christian faith, as identified by Tillich, are in fact, not simply symbols of the Unconditional. Indeed the only one that is, strictly speaking, a symbol of the Unconditional is God, as correlated with finite being. Other symbols have a wide range of referents, more intimately connected with the conditions of existence, namely revelation, as the restoration of reason to its ground, Christ as the overcoming of existence, the Kingdom of God as the overcoming of the meaninglessness of history. We may say that these are symbols of aspects of the Unconditional, but there are other symbols yet which point in the opposite direction, such as the Fall and sin, which are symbols not of the Unconditional but of estrangement.

(viii) We have discovered that the most important aspect of a symbol is the fact that it mediates power. If it does not open up levels of reality and the human spirit it cannot be a symbol, for if it fails to connect with the social situation, it may be said to have died. One may wonder, therefore, whether there is any need for theology, for it might be expected that the aim of theology is to explain a symbol. But if a symbol needs explanation then one may be justified in supposing that it has in fact already died, for a symbol which does not in fact mediate ultimate reality is no longer a symbol. Three possible answers may be proposed for this dilemma: it might be said either that the symbols are still capable of mediating reality but require explication to do so, or that it is

necessary that we continue to use the symbols until new symbols are born, or that theology is simply a matter of correlating one set of symbols with another set. Again, however, the answers do not really seem able to satisfy the question.

(b) The Rationality of Theology

Just as everything participates in being, producing the possibility of symbolism, so human rationality has its ground in the rationality of the ground of being; consequently theology may be a rational exercise. There are, however, some qualifications to be made. In the first place, Tillich does not wish to surrender theology to rationalism, for rationalism restricts the sources of knowledge to rational inference from empirical reality. It is not reason alone that produces the contents of theology, but reason when it is united with, or grasped by, its ground, or ultimate concern. When reason is thus grasped, it may be called ecstatic, or self-transcending, reason, because it reaches out beyond itself.⁽¹⁾ But just as finite things under the conditions of existence are estranged from their infinite ground, so also is reason, under the conditions of existence, estranged from its ground. It is rooted in the universal logos and yet estranged from it. Inasmuch as the estrangement is overcome, we may speak of reason as having faith; inasmuch as the estrangement remains, we may speak of it as being in doubt. This is akin to the simultaneous states of sin and justification and so Tillich explains that we may indeed apply the doctrine of justification by faith not only to the "religious-ethical" sphere but also to the "religious-

(1) ST, I, pp. 59ff

intellectual" sphere, an idea which he claims to have received from Martin Kähler, his teacher at Halle. (1) The rationality of theology must, therefore, always reckon with this epistemological application of justifications: reason is not, of itself, self-transcendent. It is only when it is grasped by ultimate concern that it reaches out beyond itself.

The fact that the rationality of theology consists in the ecstatic uniting of reason with its own ground does not mean that theologian can lay aside all obligation to be rational in other senses of the word. Indeed, Tillich argues that it obliges theology to submit to three principles of rationality, namely semantic, logical and methodological rationality.

By semantic rationality, he means that theology must take account of the normal meaning of words. This is not to say that every word can be, or is to be, reduced to a single meaning as though it were a mathematical sign, but ^{that} every word used in theology must be related to its normal usage: Spirit, for example, must be related to spirit

"... the primitive magic sense must be excluded, the mystical connotations must be discussed in relation to the personalistic connotations, etc." (2)

Logical rationality is equally important to theology: it is not to flout at will the laws of formal logic. At the same time, however, it must not be the slave of formal logic. Contradictions are to be recognised as such, but paradox cannot be evaded in the effort to do justice to the dialectical nature of the material with which it is concerned.

"Dialectics follows the movement of thought or the movement of reality through yes and no, but it describes it in logically correct terms." (3)

Methodological rationality is the obligation laid upon theology to approach its work systematically and consistently:

(1) Era, p.xf; cf Dorothy M. Emmet, "Epistemology and the Idea of Revelation" TPT, p.203

(2) ST, I, p.62

(3) Ibid, p.63

"It implies that theology follows a method, that is, a definite way of deriving and stating its propositions." (1)

It is clear from Tillich's account of the ecstatic rationality of theology that he is fully in accord with his own principles, as we expounded them in the previous chapter. We do not require revelation to make known to us what we cannot know at all, but we require that reason be united with its own ground, that it become self-transcendent and reach out beyond itself. And yet it is not to be said that the act of reaching out beyond itself is the act of reason of its own volition: theology is not simply a process of inference from reason to its ground, for reason is itself grasped by its ground.

We are rather less than satisfied, however, with the accounts given by Tillich of the semantic and logical rationality of theology. Although it is clear that he does not wish to reduce language to what he describes as a pan-mathematical formalism, yet, not only in his explanation of semantic rationality but also throughout his work, he seems to be unwilling to redognise the extent of the flexibility of language. This is reflected not least in his attempts to explain the meanings of certain key words by appealing to their etymological derivation. He argues, for example, that existence is derived from exstare meaning "to stand out" and moves to the conclusion that existence is standing out of non-being. Although he is right to insist that the theological usage of words must be related to other usages, nevertheless, the theological usage cannot properly be understood unless careful attention is paid to the specific context in which they become theological words. We discover less about the meaning of "Spirit" by an investigation of the general concept of "spirit" than by examining the way in which it is used theologically.

Again, while it is clear that Tillich is correct in emphasising that theology cannot ignore the rules of formal logic and equally correct in insisting that it is wrong to dismiss dialectic and paradox as

(1) Ibid, p.65

contradiction, he nevertheless appears to make more use of the notion of dialectic than is justifiable. He criticised Barth severely for adopting a dialectic which was in his view no dialectic at all, one in which "Yes" and "No" are irreconcilably separated, but he himself sometimes stretches dialectic to the point of meaninglessness, as for example, in his assertion of the "dialectical value of erring knowledge".⁽¹⁾ He prefers to hold concepts "in dialectical tension" rather than to acknowledge them as contraries, arguing that since a concept implies its opposite, the opposite is included in the concept dialectically. In this way he believes himself able to reconcile what would elsewhere be acknowledged as opposites.

2. The Sources of Theology

We may ask ourselves now what effect Tillich's view of the task of theology and his ontological convictions have on the views he holds on the sources on which theology may draw for its materials.⁽²⁾

It is to be remembered that Tillich has always regarded himself as a Church theologian. By this we must understand him as wishing to operate not with religious symbols in general, nor with the religious symbols of western religions, but specifically with those of the Christian faith, in order to relate them to ontological symbols. We may trace this approach, once again, to the System of Sciences, where Tillich spoke of theonomous metaphysics and systematic theology. His intention was not explained clearly at that time, but from it developed the view of philosophy and theology as related in terms of their concern, respectively with the structure and the depth of being. Since the religious symbols

(1) "What is Wrong with the Dialectic Theology", JR, vol. 15 (1935), p.139f

(2) For this section see especially ST, I, pp. 39ff

with which he proposes to operate are those of the Christian faith, he must turn first to the Bible as a source for his material. But it is to the Bible as furnishing the data of religious symbols, as a record of the symbols of the early Christians. The Bible is a collection of religious literature and can only be a norm for systematic theology in the sense that it provides the earliest records of Christian religious symbols.

Symbols, however, grow and die, and so while the Bible furnishes the basic symbols of the Christian faith, it must be recognised that some of them may have ceased to convey what they originally did (Tillich cites the Virgin Birth as an example⁽¹⁾), while other new symbols may have appeared since which remain within the continuity of the Christian tradition. Theology must, therefore, look not only to the Bible, but also to Church history as a source for its material. Indeed, Tillich maintains that to use the Bible is to make use of Church history and there is a sense in which he is quite right. He might equally maintain that to use Church history is also to use the Bible, since some of the symbols which come to positions of prominence after the closure of the canon are nevertheless rooted in the Bible, to a greater or lesser extent. Here Tillich would cite as examples the Virgin Mary or justification by faith.⁽²⁾

To these two sources, however, Tillich adds two more, both thoroughly in keeping with his basic presupposition. First we remarked on Tillich's affinity with Schleiermacher, in declaring religion as a universal phenomenon and the individual religions as its concrete expressions. Theology must therefore take account of the work of the history of religions, not as a detached enquiry, but seeking within the concrete religions the intuition of the Unconditional. The perceptions of other religions expressed in their religious symbols may be of value in illuminating the

(1) Theol.Cul, p66

(2) ST, I, p. 142

symbols of the Christian faith as well as furthering the dialogue with other faiths. (1)

To a theological history of religion he adds, secondly, a theological history of culture, or a theology of culture, the task of which is to decipher the "style" of an autonomous culture in all its characteristic expressions and to find their hidden religious significance. (2)

However, there are certain difficulties inherent in Tillich's concept of a theology of culture. We have already seen that, on his own admission, his early attempts at a theology of culture were of a romantic character. It seeks in culture a religious significance: that is to say it seeks to look at culture in such a way that its import breaks through and it becomes transparent to the Unconditional. But Tillich quickly discovered that much of culture did not have the "theonomous" character requisite for such an approach. It was autonomous - directed not towards import but towards form. Nevertheless, he persisted in the belief that religion and culture are mutually interdependent, and even in his later period still appears to believe that such an approach to culture is possible.

Set against this, however, we find the attitude towards a theology of culture which he developed in his American period. At best it appears to be able to seek in culture those fragments of an awareness of the Unconditional or of ultimate concern which may be detected in democracy, depth psychology or art. For the most part, however, it seems to have a lesser task, which is described as "deciphering the style of an autonomous culture."

"... every style points to a self-interpretation of man, thus answering the question of the ultimate meaning of life. Whatever the subject matter which an artist chooses, however, weak or strong his artistic form, he cannot help but betray

(1) cf also The Future of Religions, pp. 80ff

(2) "Religion and Secular Culture", JR, vol. 26 (1946), p. 81

by his style his own ultimate concern, as well as that of his group, and his period. He cannot escape religion even if he rejects religion, for religion is the state of being ultimately concerned. And in every style the ultimate concern of a human group or period is made manifest." (1)

There is no guarantee that any culture actually expresses what is, objectively speaking, its ultimate concern. It may only express what it takes as its ultimate concern: that is to say, it may elevate to a position of ultimacy some object which is merely of "preliminary" or secondary concern. (2) At best a culture which substitutes some secondary concern for its ultimate concern may be said to witness to its ultimate concern negatively.

The kind of theology of culture which Tillich makes use of in Systematic Theology is that which he developed under the impact of existentialism and of the post-second World War situation. It is really a question of the self-interpretation of man and his existence. The cultural forms of the mid-twentieth century express man's awareness of estrangement and alienation, which Tillich interprets as alienation from his true being. (3) This is a matter of ultimate concern for his being is threatened unless he can find renewed union with that ground of being which unites him with the whole of reality and with himself. Theology, therefore, draws on an analysis of the "situation" (i.e. an analysis of man's self-interpretation).

It is this last stage in the theology of culture which leads to what Tillich describes as his method of correlation, the correlation of

(1) Theol.Cul, p. 70

(2) cf. ST, I, pp. 14ff; Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions, pp. 18ff. He speaks of the same thing as worshipping false idols and as creating quasi-religions.

(3) cf. "Existential Analyses and Religious Symbols" Four Existentialist Theologians, pp. 277ff. Tillich regards existentialist philosophy as the good fortune of theology, but it is not clear whether it is because it provides analyses which are more Christian than those of idealism or because its counsel of despair offers a point of contact for Christian symbolism.

questions and answers. The question is posed in the existentialist analysis (the "situation") and the answer provided in the religious symbol.

3. The Method of Correlation

(a) Antecedents

Before we can examine in detail the method of correlation, we must turn again to the early work of Tillich. The necessity of doing this is suggested by Tillich himself when he draws our attention to the "first and rather insufficient step towards what I now call the method of correlation" in the definition of theology as theonomous metaphysics. (1)

We noticed that Tillich did not, in fact, define theology as theonomous metaphysics and that there is a considerable degree of confusion surrounding his ideas concerning the role of theology as expressed in the System of Sciences and in other works of the same period, a confusion which is due not least to the ways in which he uses terms such as religion and theology.

It appears, at first sight, as if the cultural sciences are to be regarded as complete once the objects have been elaborated and divided into the two series of functions, the theoretical series, comprising epistemology, aesthetics and metaphysics, and the practical series comprising jurisprudence political science and ethics. Systematic theology then appears as serving approximately the same function as theonomous metaphysics, but working within the bounds of a particular religious tradition. It works with the symbols of a concrete religion and seeks thereby to contribute to the work of theonomous metaphysics. It claims a part in the system for this reason and also because, as a concrete tradition it supplies material for the cultural history of metaphysics.

(1) Era, introduction p. xxii, cf also Boundary, p. 55

In his Philosophy of Religion, however, Tillich elaborates more fully a science of religion which is to be included among the cultural sciences, but he also makes it clear that religion is not to be regarded as one function among others, and therefore existing alongside aesthetics, metaphysics and so on, but as a vital element of all the functions. It is, indeed, the element in all which is directed towards the Unconditional. At the same time, he sees it as necessary to develop an account of a science of religion constituted, according to the same pattern as the other cultural sciences, by the three elements of philosophy, cultural history and systematics. Within this pattern, theology represents the third element, with a normative function.

Religion has this see-saw existence because, while it is an element of all the functions (and necessarily so if Tillich's system of sciences is to be more than an arbitrary arrangement), the perception of the truth of the Unconditional has received not only unconscious expression, which requires to be investigated, but has also achieved more conscious expression in the particular, concrete symbols of various religious groups.

The system of sciences, however, is arranged not solely on the basis of the objects of the sciences, but ~~on~~ on the basis of method. Each individual science has its own particular method, appropriate for its own work, but each group of sciences has its own type of method, of which every method within the group may be described as a sub-type. The type of method which characterises the cultural sciences is the metalogical method. Indeed it is the metalogical method which is the method involved in the systematising of all the sciences, but first and foremost, it is the method of philosophy. But just because it is the method of philosophy and philosophy holds a fundamental position in the cultural sciences, it is also, according to Tillich, the method of the cultural sciences in general.

"... every construction in cultural history and systematics is rooted in the grasp of the elements and principles of meaning." (1)

Since the science of religion and theology are included within the scope of cultural science, they therefore share in the metalogical method.

The method of philosophy springs from its task, for it has not only to abstract the principles of meaning from "meaning-reality" but also to relate the principles of meaning to one another. The basis, therefore, of the philosophical method is the critical-dialectical method. It is critical inasmuch as it abstracts the principles of meaning and dialectical inasmuch as it relates them to each other.

"Both methods, however, are one: the critical method is always dialectical as well. For there is no possibility of articulating the principles of meaning from the meaning-reality other than by demonstrating their necessity for the construction of a unified order of being; and the dialectical method is necessarily also critical, for the necessary interconnection of meaning appears only in a system of the principles of meaning and not in the meaning-reality itself." (1)

In describing the way in which the critical-dialectical method achieves its purpose, Tillich rejects not only epistemological idealism but also epistemological realism. Although the method presupposes the autonomy of the spiritual over against every "immediately given existing thing", nevertheless it need not assume that spirit gives laws to nature. It is not thought which imposes meaning on reality, nor is it spirit which does this. Tillich does not substitute one form of epistemological idealism for another. But if he refuses to see the function of meaning in terms of the bestowal or imposing of meaning upon reality (Sinngebung), equally he refuses to see it in terms of the grasping of meaning: nature does not give laws to spirit, as epistemological realism asserts. (2)

"Idealism is wrong, because it cannot show how the forms of meaning reach things; realism is wrong because it cannot show how things reach forms of meaning." (3)

(1) GW, I, (Rph), p. 307 (WR, p. 41f)

(2) GW, I, (Rph), p. 307 (WR, p. 42) cf GW, I, (SdW), p. 138, 233

(3) GW, I, (SdW), p. 233

What is required is a method which is not restricted to the interaction of the object and the mind but can reach beyond; a method, in short, which sees individual meanings not only in the context of other individual meanings, but of the root of all meaning.

"It must assume that the principles of meaning to which consciousness submits itself in the spiritual act are at the same time the principles of meaning to which being is subjected. It must assume that the meaning of being comes to expression in the consciousness informed by meaning." (1)

So Tillich speaks of the "fulfilling" of meaning, instead of the bestowal or grasping of meaning. Meaning exists neither in the object itself, nor is it a product of the mind impressing itself upon reality. Meaning, rather, is fulfilled, or brought to conscious awareness, when the intention, or directedness, of individual things, towards unconditioned form, is recognised and examined. (2)

The critical method, however, is inadequate for philosophy, for philosophy must take account not simply of the forms. A critical method is apt to reduce everything to a matter of forms, so that Being ceases to be recognised as any more than the negative correlate of perception: that is to say:

"... it can only define being as a category, or as the boundary of perception. It passes over its positive content, because it sees in it a metaphysical hypostatisation."

This weakness is due to the logical (logistisch)⁽³⁾ starting point of the critical method. Logic becomes, thereby, not simply a tool, but a principle. Of itself, it cannot avoid falling short of the goal of recognising the intention of all things towards Unconditioned form and of recognising the reality of being. This logism (Logismus) as Tillich calls it, of the critical-dialectical method, prevents understanding and so precludes the possibility of grasping the essence of meaning.

(1) GW, I, (Rph), p. 307 (WR, p. 42)

(2) GW, I, (SdW), p. 233

(3) We must distinguish logistisch from logisch: logistisch refers to that situation in which the dynamic of being is subdued completely by logical form.

Now understanding is the business of phenomenology, and it is therefore from phenomenology that the critical method comes under severe attack, and phenomenology which must be used to make up some of the deficiencies of the critical-dialectical method.

The kind of phenomenology which Tillich has in mind is that of Husserl. Its purpose is, as we have said, understanding (Verstehen) which is achieved by the intuition of essences. In order to accomplish an intuition of essences, phenomenology employs the concept of "epoche". Although it commences its work with concrete or imaginary phenomena, it "brackets" the actual existence of those phenomena in order to consider their essence. Judgement as to whether the object actually exists is suspended in order that an understanding may be gained of the essence of the object. Accordingly, in a philosophy of religion, the phenomenological method would make possible the intuition of the essence and the peculiar qualities of religion in any example of it.

The great value of the phenomenological method is its ability to approach the real object of enquiry "more closely and vitally" than is possible for either criticism or dialectic. It lives, as Tillich says, "in the very thing itself, not in its rational-abstract aspect." (1) It can do justice to the particular character of the functions of meaning and grasp them in their peculiar characteristics, seeking to establish areas of meaning and to construct principles of meaning. (2) But it has, nevertheless, serious weaknesses.

Its chief fault is that it is unable to distinguish between an essence and a norm. This is occasioned by the inability of phenomenology to treat existence as any more than the "accidental and ultimately indifferent coming together" (3) in one individual thing of distinct

(1) GW, I, (Rph), p.309 (WR, p.45)

(2) GW, I, (SdW), p.237

(3) GW, I, (Rph), p.309f (WR, p.45)

essential attributes. Phenomenology cannot, in consequence, recognise the peculiar characteristics which may distinguish one phenomenon from another of the same type. Two alternatives, therefore, stand before phenomenological philosophy of religion: in producing an essence of religion, it can establish an essence which, in transcending all empirical religion, bears the features of one particular religion, or else constructs a new, ideal religion. (1)

"Since the directedness of all things towards Unconditional form and with it the dynamic relationship of reality and spirit is foreign to it, it has to dispute the meaning-fulfilling character of spirit and find meaning realised in the essences themselves." (2)

The consequence is that

"That which is given in idea (das Idealgegebene) is at the same time that which is normatively correct. So it comes about that phenomenological philosophy is also always normative systematics." (3)

If the critical method pays too much attention to form, and falls into "logism" phenomenology pays too much attention to being and falls into "alogism" and dogmatism.

The method of philosophy must combat both the "logism" of criticism and the "alogism" of phenomenology. It must, therefore, give due regard both to the element of thought and to the element of being, but it must also recognise the dynamic tension between them. Geist is itself a product of the tension between thought and being which makes possible the realisation of meaning, and so philosophy, as an element of cultural science (Geisteswissenschaft) must acknowledge the tension if it is to fulfil its purpose.

When the critical-dialectical method is thus modified by the phenomenological method it is on its way to becoming the metalogical method. Tillich gave it this name because it is, he says,

"logical (logisch) for the sake of the thought-forms, metalogical for the sake of the being-import." (4)

(1) GW, I, (Rph), p. 310 (WR, p. 46)

(2) GW, I, (SdW), p. 237

(3) Ibid

(4) Ibid, p. 122

Its logical character is derived from the specific concern of philosophy with pure rational forms; but philosophy cannot be satisfied with this alone. It is therefore also metalogical, by analogy with the idea of metaphysics, because it goes beyond forms both in that it seeks to grasp the import inhering in the forms and in that it drives towards the setting-up of norms. The metalogical method employs the critical approach but seeks to intuit the "inner dynamic of the structure of the meaning-reality." It employs the phenomenological approach but refuses to be bound to particular forms and, instead,

"reaches back critically and intuitively to the principles of meaning which are conditioned by both form and import...." (1)

The most important feature of the metalogical method is this drive towards the establishment of norms, that is to say the drive towards the realization of the Unconditional, towards making plain the orientation of everything to the Unconditional. It is for this reason that philosophy cannot be simply criticism, isolated from all other disciplines: it must also be theonomous philosophy, asserting the ultimate orientation of the whole of conditioned reality to the Unconditional.

If now, we see theology as a part of the science of religion, then we may see clearly that it must partake in the metalogical method. It cannot exist apart from the philosophy of religion and the cultural history of religion and indeed exists in the very tension between thought and being which makes possible the fulfilment of meaning. It is particularly concerned, as a normative science, to bring to consciousness the orientation of all things toward the Unconditional.

It is perhaps, somewhat misleading, to speak of a normative science, since the word norm tends to suggest that the goal of the cultural sciences is the production of something new, the establishment of standards by which other things may be measured. In a sense this is true, but it is

(1) *CW*, I, (*Roh*), p. 314 (*WR*, p. 51f)

not Tillich's intention that a system of sciences such as his should become a dictator to the various disciplines to tell them what they may or may not do. It is rather, an attempt to demonstrate the unity of the scientific world by laying bare the ontological roots. The perception of the ontological unity of all things and of their Unconditional rooting is also, at the same time, the perception of their meaning. The realisation of meaning is, thus, the establishment of norms.

"These norms are not 'subjective'. The term 'value' suggests subjectivity; hence it may be well avoided. The norms are strivings in the direction of the unconditionally valid, and the unconditionally real. The word 'value' accents the reference to the subject, a secondary characteristic of the norm. Spirit is primarily validity, truth, norm. There are numerous values - biological values, psychological values, economic values, and so on. Spiritual values, however, are oriented to the Unconditioned." (1)

The purpose of normative science is to lead towards the breaking-through of conditioned reality by Unconditional meaning, to assist, as it were, towards the revelation of the Infinite ground of all finite reality. But this breaking-through cannot be engineered: there is no possibility of its being deliberately brought about. We must speak of this phenomenon, when it takes place, as grace or paradox and the method, therefore, of theology, as the method of paradox. The normative sciences, and in particular, the normative aspects of metaphysics and ethics, seek to bring the Unconditional to our awareness by means of an intuition of the presence of the Unconditional within conditioned reality.

Inasmuch as it is directed towards Unconditional import, religion stands as the complement of philosophy, which has a primarily critical orientation, but we find ourselves yet again ^{faced} with the difficulty of placing religion and theology. Philosophy, according to an account we have just cited, seeks, by means of the metalogical method, to intuit the inner dynamic of the structure of "meaning-reality". If we then propose that theology, or religion, has the task of bringing to light the relation of

(1) Adams, P.C.S.R. p.157

"meaning-reality" to its Unconditional ground, then we should have the structure-depth relationship proposed by Tillich as the relationship between philosophy and theology. Religion, however, does not stand simply as the complement of philosophy but as the foundation of the whole of the cultural sciences. Religion is at the root of both metaphysics and ethics, since metaphysics and ethics represent the theoretical and the practical series of functions which arise from the directedness of all reality to the Unconditional.

Theology as a specific discipline within the cultural sciences, is a part of the science of religion which arises from the phenomenon of religion.

"Theology is the normative and systematic presentation of the concrete realisation of the concept of 'religion'. The cultural history of religion acts as a bridge between philosophy of religion and theology. It grasps critically the individual realisations of the concept of religion in history and thereby leads to a special systematic solution of its own." (1)

A norm is never unrelated to the cultural history, that is, to the material of meaning, and theology may then work with the material of any particular group provided that it does so in full recognition of the fact that the material of any one group cannot make exclusive claims. We must keep in mind Tillich's fundamental assertion that revelation is a universal phenomenon and that, therefore, the material of any one concrete religion may always be subject to criticism by that of any other. Theology, then seeks to bring to light the intuition of the Unconditional contained in the religious symbols of any concrete religious group. As far as Tillich is concerned, he is most concerned with those of Christianity. Theology must, therefore, see beyond the symbols as such, beyond the forms, to that to which they point and to do so clearly involves the metalogical method.

But the concept of the metalogical method is not so much an account of the method itself as of what it strives to achieve. It

(1) GW, I, (Rph), p. 301 (WR, p. 33)

describes the way in which reality must be viewed, namely, as pointing beyond itself to its Unconditional ground.

Clearly, any method which works towards this end has close affinities with the mystical method. Tillich does not deny this, but the question nevertheless, requires careful explanation, for Tillich will not permit the reduction of the essence of religion to a mystical intuition of the Unconditional. A phenomenological account of the essence of religion might well make such a reduction, but to do so is to ignore other important elements of religion, which may not be found universally, but which may nevertheless have an important role to fill, and indeed, a claim to a position in a normative account of religion. (1)

Mysticism is always an element of religion; it can never be regarded as though it were an independent type of religion. (2)

Indeed, it is clear that in Tillich's view, there is no true religion without a mystical element, but we must not imagine that by mysticism he means the eastern kind of mysticism which seeks to **escape** from the world of physical reality by means of a radical negation. Rather it recognises the presence of the Unconditional in the conditional and the orientation of the conditioned towards the Unconditional. It urges every kind of religion to recognise this relationship. The metalogical method achieves its purpose by a mystical intuition of the Unconditional within the conditioned. In other language, it recognises the principles of the macrocosm in the microcosm or the presence of God in the depth of things. (3)

Again, we may detect strong similarities between Tillich and Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher, as much as Tillich, rejected the negative type of mysticism, with the same purpose in mind, namely, of establishing the orientation of the finite to the Infinite, and of intuiting the

(1) In order to achieve its purpose of bringing meaning to light, the normative sciences must concern themselves with form as well as import.

(2) GW, I, (Rph), p. 341 (WR, p. 90); cf also Christianity & the Encounter of the World Religions, p. 88f; ST, II, pp. 92ff.

Footnote (3) will be found on the next page.

macrocosm within the microcosm. There are, however, some important differences between them that reveal Tillich as being only partially dependent on Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher recommended that we begin, in our search for the Infinite, not with nature, but with humanity, and in particular with the individual's awareness of the indissoluble unity of all things as represented by his awareness of himself as a manifestation of humanity. From his awareness of the unity of humanity he may go on to an awareness of the unity of all things and so to an awareness of the Infinite.⁽¹⁾ There is a danger here, however, that the Infinite will be confused with the totality of the universe, and that the individual may identify the depths of his own self with God. Against this Tillich guards himself when, in criticising Barth he observes:

"He is correct in his resistance to all mysticism, which would permit union with God in the depths of man's own human nature. Apart from the Augustinian transcendēte ipsum there is no access to God. But this precept does contain within itself the demand to proceed through self beyond self. Therefore, the other statement, in interiori anima habitat veritas, is more basal in the dialectic of Augustine. We can only find God in us when we rise above ourselves." (2)

We must beware of construing Tillich moreover, in such a way that our religious experience becomes a source of theology. It is true that both Schleiermacher and Tillich regard the Infinite as being revealed in the finite, but Schleiermacher is apt to elevate the individual's experience to a normative position, whereas Tillich wishes always to bring the intuition of the Unconditional within the interpretative orbit of existing religious symbols. Tillich, indeed, specifically rejects Schleiermacher's description

(Note 3 from the preceding page)

(3) GW, I, (Rph), p. 314 (WR, p. 52); cf GW, VII, p. 222 (E.T. Beginnings, vol. I, p. 138f)

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(1) On Religion, p. 71f

(2) "What is Wrong with the Dialectic Theology?", JR, vol. 15 (1935), p. 140

of experience as a source of theology, reducing it to the status of a medium through which the contents of systematic theology are existentially received. It is the symbols of theology which exercise a normative function, not the "religious consciousness".⁽¹⁾ The mystical intuition of the Unconditional in the conditioned reality is directed by the symbols which are the product of the "group unconscious". Thus mysticism always remains within the orbit of the church (i.e. of the religious group which produces the symbols) and is not allowed to become pure subjectivism. Similarly, the symbols of the church involve a strongly mystical element, in two different ways. Not only is there the participation of the symbol in the reality of that which it symbolises, but also the mystical element involved in the interpretation of the symbols where the subject seeks to allow the truth to break through the symbol in order that a mystical union may be effected which transcends the subject-object split normally involved in knowledge.

Because theology seeks to explain symbols it must have this mystical method, for it must penetrate through the symbols to the reality to which they point. Religion affirms the transcendental reference of the whole of reality and the religious attitude grasps that transcendental reference, or orientation to the Unconditional. Theology on the other hand seeks to penetrate those special religious symbols which are the products of religious groups. They are necessary it seems, because they have something particular to say which cannot be said by the ordinary transcendental reference of individual objects. Theology is carried out alongside metaphysics and ethics, and, indeed, is carried out as that particular aspect which is concerned with "import" and as the complement of the philosophical "element" which strives to classify and categorise the forms of reality.

(1) ST, I, p. 47f

(b) The Method of Correlation

As we have seen, Tillich regarded his classification of philosophy and theology in the System of Sciences as only a first and inadequate step towards the method of correlation. But he did not abandon this approach in spite of any inadequacy he may have discovered, for we may still detect the influence of the System of Sciences in the structure-depth account of the relationship of philosophy and theology, an account which reflects the relationship of negative and positive philosophy in Schelling. Furthermore just as in the System of Sciences the method of theology has two directions, that is, towards its own material and also towards philosophy, and the method is determined by his metaphysics, so also, we contend, in his later formulations of the task of theology his method has the same two directions, and is still determined by his metaphysic.

Having said this, however, we must, before going on to defend our thesis, bear in mind some of the conclusions we have already drawn regarding Tillich's views on philosophy and theology. In his early work the account given of their relationship in the System of Sciences reigns supreme, but beginning with the article in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, he gradually changes his position, so that although he still retains the structure-depth relationship the focus of attention is really fixed upon the question-answer relationship which is marked by the ambiguity of the word "question". This account of the relationship of philosophy and theology, which is central to his understanding of theological method, is further obscured by the difficulty of deciding what is the precise nature of philosophy and theology. Both terms are used in a bewildering variety of ways, which we have attempted to understand by describing both as attitudes as well as disciplines.

The confusion occasioned by Tillich's inconsistency is responsible for the confusion that we find among scholars who have sought to offer

accounts of the method of correlation. There is a marked absence of agreement among them which is due, we believe, to a failure to enquire sufficiently closely into the question of what is being correlated with what. On the one hand, then, we have A. C. Outler asserting that Tillich's Systematic Theology attempts to show that the Christian message

"does, actually and in truth, answer the questions which modern man is asking, or being forced to ask, about his existence, his salvation, and his destiny." (1)

Whether Tillich achieves this goal is a matter of considerable debate. Outler, with a few reservations seems to think that he does, while Tvard, on the other hand believes the precise opposite, for the philosopher is not "in quest of salvation". These two opposing conclusions are possible precisely because of the uncertainty surrounding the notion of philosophy which we have sought to expose. If we describe Tillich as seeking to correlate a philosophical question with a theological answer, we must be clear about how we are using the term "philosophy". Tvard is therefore quite right to say that Tillich is aware that the theological answer is only an answer to the philosopher's question when the question becomes a matter of ultimate concern. It cannot answer the philosopher who, like Leon Brunschwig, believes that his own death is philosophically irrelevant and quite uninteresting to himself. Nor can it answer the despair of those for whom despair is ultimate. (2) The method of correlation can only be a correlation of a question with an answer if the question is of the right kind, - the kind which is posed by man philosopher-theologian.

On the other hand, Loomer makes the claim that Tillich is seeking to correlate existentialist analysis with classical theology and philosophy (which he further describes as a "theology of being made relevant to contemporary man") and adds

(1) "The Method of Correlation" (Review of Systematic Theology, Vol. I) Interpretation, vol. 5 (1954), p.477

(2) G.H.Tvard "Christianity & the Philosophies of Existence", Theological Studies, vol. 18 (1957), p.11

"It is the existentialists whom Tillich is concerned to answer, and he attempts to do so in terms of traditional ideas and insights." (1)

Once again there is a degree of justice in his assessment, but it is not the whole truth, and fails to penetrate to the individuality of Tillich's own position. It is true that he wishes to conduct a dialogue with the existentialists, but to take philosophy to mean simply the existentialists is to have understood only a small part of Tillich's intention, for the existentialists are only representative or symptomatic of something far larger. Taubes, therefore, is nearer to the truth when he describes Tillich's correlation as dialectical. He observes that his interest in sociology, psychology and philosophy is not peripheral but that Tillich himself participates in the "cleavages and contradictions". He concludes from this that his analysis of the human situation is decisive in the shaping of his theological answer. (2)

It is scarcely possible to reduce Tillich's method of correlation to one idea, since Tillich himself wishes to include a number of different things within the scope of his correlation. We may draw attention to five elements, at least, of Tillich's programme.

First there is a sense of correlation in which Tillich seeks to hold together various ideas which are the result of the exposition of philosophical problems. We may say that he wishes to correlate ideas which are customarily, or at least frequently, taken to be mutually exclusive. We may take as an example his attempt to correlate the ideas of freedom and destiny. The antithesis is not resolved by a simple dissolution into a higher synthesis, nor by the destruction of one element by the other. Rather he seeks to show that they must be held in dialectical tension, as

(1) B. Lödner "Tillich's Theology of Correlation", JR, vol. 36 (1956), p.151

(2) J. Taubes "On the Nature of the Theological Method", JR, vol. 34 (1954), p.16

polar opposites, which require each other, contending that the one idea requires the other for its completion.⁽¹⁾ This kind of correlation stands as a witness to Tillich's relation to the idealist tradition, but the solution of the idealist problem is neither that of Hegel nor that of Kierkegaard; it is, rather, akin to Schelling's, and is based on his monistic metaphysic, in which all elements are held together in the ontological whole, which is itself rooted in the Ground of Being.

Secondly, there is the correlation noticed by Loomer, the attempt made by Tillich to answer the existentialists. There can be no doubt that Tillich conducts much of his theological discussion with the specific intention of engaging in a dialogue with certain specific philosophical traditions and even with individual philosophers. He has little time for Anglo-Saxon linguistic analysis (which he fails to distinguish from logical positivism), but he has much to say to the existentialist tradition and particularly in reply to Sartre, whose denial of essence Tillich counters with his doctrine of dialectical polarity. There cannot be existence unless there is essence, there cannot be non-being unless there is being, there cannot be meaninglessness unless there is meaning.⁽²⁾ Tillich wishes to put forward his own metaphysic as more adequate than that of the existentialists, or for that matter, of Hegelians or Kierkegaardians. His answer to the existentialists is not so much an appeal to the Christian message as an appeal to his own metaphysic which insists that existence cannot be understood without essence and that man's self-estrangement is not his final state. We may say that his theology is carried on in correlation with concrete philosophical traditions to the extent that he

(1) H. Schröder expresses a similar view, describing Tillich's use of correlation here as "complementary dialectic" Die Denkform der Paradoxalität als theologisches Problem, p.162f.

(2) cf "The Nature and Significance of Existentialist Thought", Journal of Philosophy, vol. 53 (1956), p.744; "Schelling und die Anfänge des Existenzialistischen Protestes", Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung, vol. 9 (1955), p.204; The Courage to Be, pp.147, 169ff

carries out a running dialogue with them within the broader context of his whole work. Whether he ultimately achieves his purpose is a matter of individual judgement, although we cannot ignore the comments of Tvard to the effect that he can only answer those for whom despair is not ultimate. Nor can we ignore the comments, for example, of G. F. Thomas, who brings to Tillich's attempts to re-establish the theonomous conceptions of reason the criticism that

"Naturalistic philosophers ... can see nothing wrong with the autonomy of reason, and cannot see why the "anxiety" of finite man should cause him to seek an "escape from reality" in religious faith." (1)

A third sense in which we may speak of Tillich's correlative method is a sense suggested by Scharlemann, a sense which is connected with Tillich's exposition of the relationship of philosophy and theology in terms of structure and depth and hence with the System of Sciences. The religious symbols of the depth of being are expounded in the light of the categories and concepts produced by an investigation of the structure of being. Thus the exposition of the symbols takes cognizance of such categories as causality, purpose and so on. We have already argued, however, that it is wrong to use the word correlation at this point, since correlation suggests that a much closer connection can be established than is in fact present in the structure-depth relationship. In any case, since theology is bound to employ philosophical terminology this kind of "correlation" can scarcely be avoided, and ^{to} schematize it according to the pattern of the cultural sciences is not after all, to have said very much.

The point made by Scharlemann, however, is slightly different. He argues that it is a mistake to think that Tillich denies that the referent of a religious symbol can be given nonsymbolically. What Tillich does deny is that they can be given noncorrelatively. It is

(1) G.F. Thomas "The Method and Structure of Tillich's Theology", TPT, p.102

impossible to reduce a religious symbol to an ontological concept or an ontological concept to a religious symbol. The two must be offered correlatively. (1) This is due to what Scharlemann believes to be the underlying themes of Tillich's doctrine of religious knowledge, which consists both of "grasping" by means of ontological concepts and of "responding" to being grasped in the form of religious symbols. Both, he argues are necessary if justice is to be done to the character of knowledge; both point beyond themselves to their referent in the Unconditional or Ultimate Concern.

That there is an element of truth in this claim we ^{do} not doubt but it is a somewhat confused idea, which itself rests on the uncertainty that Tillich himself shows about the character of religious symbols. (2) It is undoubtedly true that Tillich thinks that the exposition of religious symbols must be done in correlation with an exposition of ontological language, that they must be allowed to interpret each other, but even this is not the main thrust of Tillich's meaning when he describes the method of theology as the method of correlation.

Finally, therefore, we turn to what is clearly, in Tillich's view, the central aspect of his method of correlation, namely, the correlation of question and answer. Tillich himself, in discussing the method of correlation lists three ways in which it may be used (3) (which, incidentally, by no means exhaust the meanings that we have suggested so far). It can, he says, designate the correspondence of different series of data, such as, in theology, in the correspondence between the data "symbols" and

(1) of "The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols" Religious Experience and Truth, p.6f

(2) Reflection and Doubt in the Thought of Paul Tillich, p.75 Much of Scharlemann's argument rests on a play of the word grasp used to link the functions of grasping and being grasped, which reflects Tillich's own use of possessing and being possessed. An argument is thus built upon the uncertain foundation of the ambiguity of language.

(3) ST, I, p.68

the data "symbolizanda". Secondly, it can designate the logical interdependence of concepts, such as in the correlation of infinite and finite.⁽¹⁾ It is clear, however, that these two are minor matters for Tillich, even though they are in fact essential to his mode of operation, in comparison with the third meaning which designates "the real interdependence of things or events in structural wholes", which in theology refers to the interdependence of question and answer. It is to this usage of the idea of correlation that he dedicates the bulk of his exposition.

This central aspect of the method of correlation depends on Tillich's complicated understanding of philosophy and theology. It is clear, however, that when he speaks of a correlation between a philosophical question and a theological answer he does not mean by philosophy any particular philosophical school, nor an aggregate of the philosophical schools of the western world. Indeed, we have seen that the question which requires an answer is properly described as theological rather than philosophical. The theological question is implicit in the philosophical task because philosophy concerns itself with an investigation of the structure of being. When the philosopher asks "Why is there something and not nothing?" and goes on to treat the question as a matter of ultimate concern, he is asking a theological question. To elaborate on the question is to undertake a theological task.

"Theology formulates the questions implied in human existence, and theology formulates the answers implied in divine self-manifestation under the guidance of the questions implied in human existence." (2)

It is not difficult, however, to see that there is a very great difference between the philosopher seeking to elaborate on the question as a matter of ultimate concern to him, and Tillich, from within the Christian tradition, seeking to elaborate on the question in order to correlate it with an answer. Tillich glosses over this difference too easily. He

(1) This corresponds to the first of senses which we have expounded about, namely the dialectical relating of concepts.

(2) Ibid, p.69

argues, therefore, that philosophy is not irrelevant to theology: indeed, existentialist philosophy is of great value since it has made the clearest articulation of any philosophy, of the questions implied in existence. Moreover, besides philosophy, there is also poetry, drama, the novel, therapeutic psychology and sociology, all of which may contribute material on which theology may draw in order to make an analysis of existence. (1) He may even refer these analyses to specifically religious symbols, such as the symbols of sin and the fall. The fundamentals of the analysis have never changed:

"Whenever man has looked at his world he has found himself in it as a part of it. But he has also realised that he is a stranger in the world of objects, unable to penetrate it beyond a certain level of scientific analysis." (2)

But it seems, although the analysis has not changed, the terms in which that analysis have been expressed have, so that it is the function of the theologian not simply to elaborate the questions, or to reiterate them in a new set of terms, but to show each new age how the terms of the expression of the situation are to be understood, how they are to be related to the symbols of the situation erected by past ages and in particular to those of the New Testament era. The point, however, which Tillich glosses over, is the question as to whether there is any necessity to relate the modern expression of the situation to that of the New Testament era. Moreover, it is doubtful whether man in all ages has in fact made the same analysis of his existence.

It seems to be implicit in Tillich's thinking that the theologian working from within a concrete tradition can contribute to an analysis of existence in a way in which the man who works from outside cannot. It is certainly true that he may be able to offer the insights of that particular tradition for what they may be worth. Moreover, in Tillich's view, he must go further and correlate the questions with the answers he has received showing how the answers formulated within the concrete tradition with

(1) Ibid, p.71

(2) Ibid, p.70

which he is familiar are actually related to the questions. But it is not, strictly speaking, a matter of simple apologetics, since the scheme with which Tillich works is, as we have suggested, one in which man is seen both as philosopher and theologian, as asking and also knowing the answer, as estranged but also united. It is this scheme which enables Tillich to gloss over the difference between the philosopher elaborating the theological question and the theologian engaging on the same task.

The specific task of systematic theology, then, is not so much the correlation of question and answer as the correlation of the symbols of a concrete religious tradition with the questions and their answers. More precisely it is

"... the conceptual interpretation, explanation and criticism of the symbols in which a special encounter between God and man has found expression." (1)

We can see now the complexity of the scheme of correlation, for it includes the correlation of religious symbols representative of the situation with contemporary expressions of the situation, combined to produce an analysis of existence, the correlation of religious symbols representative of the apprehension of the Unconditional with the answers formed in the language of the analysis of existence, and finally the actual correlation of question and answer.

Tillich believes that his approach avoids the pitfalls which face others and, in particular, which face the approach of supernaturalism, of naturalism and/dualism, because it does not require belief in a body of revealed truths inaccessible to man, nor does it succumb to the tendency to identify the Christian message with man's religious self-realisation, nor does it appeal to a kind of "natural revelation". (2) It does, however, recognise that the answer comes from beyond man, as it must if man is to escape the vicious circle of his own existence. It recognises that the

(1) "Theology/Symbolism", Religious Symbolism, ed. F.E. Johnson, p.108

(2) ST, I, p. 72f

answers have been formulated in traditional symbols and therefore seeks to unlock those symbols so that the power they mediate may pour forth. But if the power is to be able to pour forth, the symbols must be subjected to careful attention in the attempt to relate them to the form of the question. It is for this reason that he offers the description of the task of theology in the terms we have just cited.

In order to ensure that the symbols are unlocked properly, theology must concern itself first with "conceptualisation" or the relating of symbols to each other. Thus it must for example, examine and describe the relation between the symbols of divine love and divine justice or between divine omnipotence and human sin. Secondly, it must explain the symbols, that is to say, it seeks to make understandable the relation of the symbols to that which they point by relating the religious meaning of the symbolic material to its "original and simple meaning". Thus, for example:

"...We may consider the symbol of the Kingdom of God. "Kingdom" is taken from the political realm. Theology asks, "How is the political reality, how is the historical development, related to this symbol? What does it say about the meaning of history in religious terms, in terms of ultimate concern." (1)

Thirdly, it must exercise a critical function, which is not an attempt to show that a symbol is historically, scientifically or psychologically untrue, but an attempt to ensure that they are not reduced to the level of non-symbolic thinking and also to test the adequacy of the symbols to their content.

We must, however, see this particular aspect of the method of correlation within the context of the movement of the method as a whole. Each section of the Systematic Theology begins with the question or, rather, the quest of finite man bound by the conditions of existence for reunion with his essential being and with the depth of being. Hence reason quests reunion with the depth of reason and being for reunion with the depth of being. The question is posed and the kind of answer that is required

(1) "Theology and Symbolism", Religious Symbolism p.112

suggested. In the second part the answer is developed in the form of an exposition of the symbol, incorporating the elements that we have just described in a method that he himself describes as critical phenomenology.

To speak of critical phenomenology recalls immediately the description given in the System of Sciences of the method of the cultural sciences in general and of philosophy in particular, except that in the earlier work he thought of the method in terms of criticism tempered by phenomenology, rather than phenomenology tempered by criticism. The end product, however, is the same, and the reasons given for the necessity of using both factors are likewise the same, although he does not give the same care to his discussion in Systematic Theology as we find in his earlier work.

The phenomenological approach is necessary, he argues, in order not only to compel the critics of theology to see what its concepts mean, but also to compel itself to a careful description of its concepts which will eliminate logical inconsistency. For these reasons,

"The present system ... begins each of its five parts with a description of the meaning of the determining ideas, before asserting and discussing their truth and reality." (1)

Thus, for example, he discusses the meaning of revelation or the meaning of spirit, disregarding, to begin with, the realities to which they refer. He wishes to expound the essence of the concept of revelation before going on to consider the specific claims of Christianity to revelation.

It is undoubtedly true that Tillich is faithful to his proposed method at this point, seeking to explain in each case what is the essence of the concept he wishes to use. However, in addition to the weaknesses which he himself recognises in the phenomenological method, we must take note again of a recurring tendency in his analyses to appeal to etymological derivation in attempting to uncover the meaning of elements of the concepts he uses. In discussing the concept of revelation, for example, he discovers

(1) ST, I, p. 118

the elements of mystery and ecstasy, which he traces to the root forms ~~μῦθος~~ and ex-sto. Useful and informative as etymology may at times be, it is a very uncertain weapon, and may produce highly misleading results, for a concept is surely better understood by an examination of the particular context in which it is used than by an examination of its derivation. In short, Tillich's idea of the way in which language functions seems more than a little naive, and seems to deny it the flexibility which in practice it clearly has. (1)

The major weakness of the phenomenological method, which Tillich acknowledges, is its inability to provide criteria by which we may select suitable examples from which to make an analysis. When contradictory examples make claims to be revelation, how are we to distinguish among them? Either, as Tillich said in his Religionsphilosophie, it will select one example quite arbitrarily as a norm or else it will produce a hybrid form. Tillich argues, therefore, that phenomenology also requires a critical element, or an existential-critical element, as he calls it, where the decision about the criterion of the choice is made apart from the phenomenological analysis. The only criterion, however, which Tillich produces, is conviction, namely, the conviction that a special revelation is the final revelation which is, consequently, universally valid. (2) This procedure, however, seems to involve Tillich in something of a vicious circle, since it may be argued that the critical choice made apart from phenomenology is every bit as arbitrary as any choice made by phenomenology. The result is that when Tillich comes to discuss the concept of final revelation, he offers a phenomenological description of its essence which he bases on the conviction that the final revelation is Jesus Christ. The end product of the analysis is to show that Christ fulfils the requirements of the concept of final revelation, a result which is scarcely

(1) cf above, p.125

(2) ST, I, p.119f

surprising because of the circular nature of the procedure. Indeed Tillich claims that this is the proper procedure for theology. (1)

It must certainly be admitted that Tillich exposes the dilemma of apologetic theology, inasmuch as it seeks to occupy two positions at once, namely that of the sceptic seeking valid criteria by which he may judge Christianity, and that of the believer, already firmly convinced of the truth of the faith. It seems, however, that he does not wish to find a solution to the dilemma, and consequently he finds himself in the common plight of apologists. His approach, at first sight, attempting to analyse the "situation" and to suggest the kind of answer that might be required, is attractive, but one never escapes the feeling that the answer appears rather like the rabbit from the magician's hat: the argument is loaded and the analysis is consequently guided by the answer which he knows he will give. (2)

There is one further point: while it is not unreasonable to accept with Tillich that there is a dimension to life which transforms the whole of reality, namely, the religious dimension, it is still not clear why Tillich selects the particular concrete religious tradition which he does, apart from the conviction that its symbols are the most adequate to the expression of that dimension, a conviction which draws its criteria from the symbols themselves. Indeed one may suspect that the reason is much rather simply that the Christian symbols are those of the western world. His preference for dialogue rather than proselytisation serves only to support this conclusion.

It is difficult to escape the impression that Tillich feels a certain embarrassment about the central concepts of the Christian faith,

(1) Ibid, p.150

(2) This point has been made frequently, as for example, by Tvard (Theological Studies, vol. 18 (1957), p.10f)

in spite of his own deeply felt faith⁽¹⁾ and seeks to defend them as symbols, since it is easier to defend symbols than to defend statements of fact. Even so there remains the one intractable question of fact, namely the question of the factuality of the New Being: is the drive towards "essentialisation" as he calls the reconciliation effected by the coming of the New Being, real, or are we left, finally, only with the assurance that despite the sense of estrangement we are nevertheless, still united with the ground of being? Moreover, the approach which he adopts seems to render the whole system questionable. He begins with man and the human situation, questing for an answer. He treats God phenomenologically, that is, as man's ultimate concern, and then ontologically, as Being-Itself, suggesting that God is, after all, a function of man's need. Likewise, revelation is treated as a function of the need of an answer to the problem of reason. In this way he appears to be moving, in what we may call an a posteriori fashion, from a concept of God and of revelation to the fact, in order to interpret the fact or the symbol in the light of the concept. But at the same time, he knows that God is not simply the function of man's need but that the religious symbols of the divine are produced under the impact of the encounter of man with the divine meeting him from beyond himself.

There is one more consequence flowing from the phenomenological method. It will be recalled that one essential feature of Husserl's method is the concept of "epoche", the suspension of judgement on the question of the actual existence of the object. Tillich's phenomenological approach to the symbols of the Christian faith, seeking to gain an intuitive understanding of their essence, tends to ignore the factuality of the symbols. Thus a choice which ought not to be made is made between factuality and truth. This is particularly clear with respect to the

(1) Ample evidence of this and his desire to make it understandable is offered by Nels F.S. Ferré in a review article on Kelsey's book (The Fabric of Paul Tillich's Theology), SJT, vol. 21 (1968) pp.157-169.

question of the factuality of Christ, of whom he more than once said that it made no difference to him whether or not Jesus ever lived.⁽¹⁾ The question which concerned Tillich was not history, but the power mediated by symbols thrown up in the course of history. Indeed the very essence of his system is the attempt to allow the power of the symbols to pour forth. Theology must, in the terminology of the System of Sciences be metalogical: it must strive, in a mystical understanding of the symbols to release their power for others, making them transparent to their referent. Scharlemann, then, is quite right when he corrects Tillich's assertion that systematics must demonstrate that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to the questions and observed:

"What Tillich actually does is to place the symbols properly, so that anyone can know what is being said by them. He does not try to prove that they are true. The truth of the symbols cannot be, and need not be, 'proved'. Their truth is their power to lay hold of and transform those for whom they are symbols; it is their capacity to express and communicate ultimate concern." (2)

We return, then, to the point at which we started, namely, Tillich's claim to engage in apologetic theology as the complement of kerygmatic theology, and to ask whether he has presented it in such a way that it can be regarded as complementary. It is difficult to give a final answer to this question since he rarely says much about kerygmatic theology and does not explain how he thinks it ought to operate. However, when he does speak of it, he usually does so with special reference to Barth. In the light of his own exposition of theological method, it appears that the only terms on which kerygmatic theology would be acceptable would require that it should abandon all claims to exclusiveness, recognising not only its character as a concrete response to the impact of the unconditional, but the character as one response among many. Its main value even then

(1) Ibid, p.163

(2) Reflection and Doubt in the Thought of Paul Tillich, p.136
At the same time, however, Tillich does at times attempt to prove the truth of symbols, as for example with the symbol of the doctrine of original sin. In doing so, he appears to contradict the essential movement of his method as he does in his arguments concerning the factuality of the picture of Christ (cf also ST, I, p.266)

is to act as a corrective to apologetic theology, recalling to apologetic theology the fact that the Unconditional comes to man from beyond him and therefore from outside his own control.

But one intractable problem remains, which Tillich's approach seems unable to resolve. Even granting that kerygmatic theology is willing to make the concessions required of it by apologetic theology, nevertheless there remains the question of reconciling the estimate of man offered by kerygmatic theology with the understanding of man which apologetic theology culls from literature, philosophy and other cultural work. Correct procedure though it may be for apologetic theology to seek to understand man's own estimate of himself, it must reckon with the fact that that estimate has varied enormously. If Tillich selects the estimate of one particular age he must surely show why he thinks it to be more accurate than any other. We are led to believe, in the long run, that in fact Tillich's analysis of man is furnished by the Christian message.⁽¹⁾

What Tillich wishes to do is to bring the Christian message into some kind of relationship with philosophy, whose central concern he takes to be ontological investigation. Granted that he may have performed a useful service in drawing the attention of those sectors of philosophy which decline to be any more than empiricist in a positivistic sense to the importance of a larger perspective, it remains questionable whether he can achieve his ultimate purpose without unjustified expense. On the one hand, he must, as we have seen, turn traditional Christian concepts into symbols.⁽²⁾ Even if he insists that ontological concepts are also symbolical, we find it difficult to believe that they are symbolical in the same sense as are religious symbols. Even though, ultimately, the status of symbols is determined by their actually fulfilling the function of

(1) cf McKelway; The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich, p.69

(2) This process almost escapes our notice in a work such as BRSUR

mediating power, nevertheless, we do not seem to have exhausted the content of the idea of symbol by saying this. We suspect that he calls ontological concepts symbolical purely because they are inadequate,⁽¹⁾ while religious symbols are both inadequate and metaphorical, and so one step further removed from their referent.

It is not as though Tillich works with some generally agreed ontological analysis of reality, which will readily provide a bridge between the discipline of philosophy and the discipline of theology. We must accept Tillich's own analysis, which is certain to have a somewhat limited appeal, even to disciples of Heidegger, for despite structural similarities with Heidegger, Tillich has, as Thomas O'Meara has shown, departed at a number of important points.⁽²⁾ Despite his attempts to show that ontology and theology are not only compatible but imply each other, it still remains true that even if we can dispose of the objections to his arguments, we are still bound to face his ontological scheme and the analysis which is founded upon it. In spite of Tillich's attempts to find common ground there remains the fact that the philosopher must come to terms with his scheme and the suspicion, which finds considerable justification, that Tillich cannot find the common ground he desires. The analysis of the human situation may be stated in terms congenial to the man who has absorbed existentialist terminology, but its content may be no more congenial than that of traditional Christian terminology. In short, Tillich cannot build the final bridge from the apologist to the inquirer (or to the sceptic): it can only be built by the sceptic himself. But we must, nevertheless, admire his desire to engage in honest dialogue with the sceptic, even if he becomes thoroughly dogmatic at times in doing so.

(1) i.e. inadequate as human words. We might also add that ontological symbols cannot be said to grow and die in quite the same way as religious symbols, since they are not the product of the group unconscious.

(2) T.F.O'Meara, Tillich & Heidegger: A Structural Relationship", Harvard Theological Review, vol.61 (1968) pp.249-261. Tillich himself admits that he learnt more from Heidegger's method rather than his conclusions (TPT.p14). It is interesting to note that Heidegger remarked that if he were to write a theology, as he was at times tempted to do, he would not allow the word

(continued at the foot of the next page)

In the last resort it is difficult to avoid the conclusion concerning the later Tillich that we felt compelled to draw about his early work, namely, that his method is determined by his ontological convictions rather than by his Church tradition. Even if the Christian symbols are given greater prominence in his later work than they were in his early work, yet he insists on interpreting them ontologically, and their very existence and operation depends on the ontological structure which is expressed in his concept of religion.

(conclusion of note from previous page) - "being" to appear in it. (Zurich, November 1951, cited by J. Taubes "On the Nature of Theological Method", JR, vol. 34 (1954) p. 20)

P A R T I I I

B A R T H

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

1. The Task of Theology

(a) The Period of the Epistle to the Romans

That theology is, for Barth, intimately related to proclamation is clear, but we must now examine in closer detail the nature of the relationship. In doing so, we must recognise a development in Barth's understanding which corresponds to a general development in his theology.

The task of proclamation consists in an attempt to repeat the Word of God and Barth concluded that in order to hear the Word of God he must engage upon a serious and patient study of the Bible. One product of this study was the writing of the commentary on Romans, which provoked a storm of criticism not least because of its approach to the Epistle. In treating Romans as a place in which the Word of God might be heard,

Barth adopted an approach quite out of character with contemporary trends in theology, which seemed to be setting the clock back to the Reformation.

In spite of the belief which he expressed in the first edition of Romans, that the doctrine of inspiration and the historical-critical method must both hold a place in theology, he was taken by Adolf Jülicher to be an opponent of historical criticism who did not even take the trouble to refute the contentions of literary criticism and the history of religions in their study of the text. Barth, therefore, felt it incumbent upon him to explain his meaning more fully in the preface to the second, radically revised edition of the Commentary. ⁽¹⁾

(1) "A Modern Interpreter of Paul", Beginnings, Vol. I, p. 74f (translated from the original published in Die Christliche Welt, vol. 34 (1920), no. 29, cols 453-57)

The chief point that he wished to make in the new edition was that, in his view, current commentaries on Scripture were inadequate because they came to a halt at the very point at which they ought to go on. Their work was indispensable to an understanding of the text, but purely preliminary: in short they were, as Barth put it, "merely the first step towards a commentary." (1)

For Barth, historical criticism involved simply the establishing of the text, appealing to the work of textual criticism, the attempt to offer precise translations of the Greek words and phrases, a collection of archaeological and philological notes and

"a more or less plausible arrangement of the subject matter that it may be made historically and psychologically intelligible from the standpoint of pure pragmatism." (2)

All this, Barth recognised, was essential to the work of exegesis and he claimed to be willing to listen to those who were more expert than himself in the matter. However, at the next stage he found it necessary to part company with Jülicher, for although both Jülicher and Lietzmann, among others, intended to go beyond this preliminary work to an understanding of Paul, they did so in a manner with which Barth could not find any sympathy. He commented

"Taking Jülicher's work as typical of much modern exegesis, we observe how closely he keeps to the mere deciphering of words as though they were runes. But, when all is done, they still remain largely unintelligible." (3)

He accused Jülicher of a failure to engage in a real struggle with the "raw material" of the epistle, and of resorting, for the explanation of a difficult passage, to the device of describing it as a peculiar doctrine or opinion of Paul, thus dismissing the need to take it seriously.

It is however, a little difficult to decide quite how Barth himself thought that the question of biblical commentary and exposition

(1) 2R, p6

(2) Ibid

(3) Ibid, p.7

should be approached. Even such a passage as this following one, does not seem to solve the problem:

"... how energetically Calvin, having first established what stands in the text, sets himself to rethink the whole material and to wrestle with it, till the walls which separate the sixteenth century from the first become transparent! Paul speaks and the man of the sixteenth century hears." (1)

From the general context of the whole preface, and from the approach revealed by an examination of the text of Barth's commentary, it appears that he has two aims in mind. The first of these is the understanding of Paul: that is to say, he wishes to grasp the message of Paul as a whole. Romans, and indeed the entire Bible, is to be seen ~~as~~ a whole rather than as a collection of fragments, each to be examined and explained *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*. The wrestling with the text is aimed at grasping the argument in its totality, at seeing the whole picture as St. Paul sees it.

The second aim is a question of making the walls between the present and the first century transparent. It is one thing to see and understand Paul in his own first century situation, but that is only what we might call an unilateral transparency. It is quite another matter to make the present transparent to the first century; that is the second aim of theology. Paul must be allowed to speak to the twentieth century, for, while he addressed his contemporaries,

"It is... far more important that, as Prophet and Apostle of the Kingdom of God, he veritably speaks to all men of every age." (2)

Every means available must be used in order to permit Paul to speak to the present age, or, to use Barth's words again, to expose "the Word ... in the words". It is this that Barth found lacking in contemporary commentaries, a failure to recognise the existence of any real substance in the Bible. To treat the Bible as history, even as the history of a remarkable and unique people, without reckoning with the decisive cause of that history, is to fail to understand the Bible at all. (3)

(1) Ibid

(2) 1R, p.v

(3) W.G.W.M., pp.34ff

To treat it, similarly, as a source document for the history of religions, is to fail to recognise its special content.⁽¹⁾

Theology, then, is charged with the task of the examination and understanding of the Biblical text, in order that the preacher should be able to declare the Word of God to his listeners.

But two points must be added to this. In the first place, Barth saw his task with respect to Romans in a rather restricted manner, which is expressed in a provocative remark as a concern

"with the veritable rather than the whole Gospel".⁽²⁾

It was Barth's contention that contemporary theology had lost sight of that "veritable Gospel", which we might describe as the kernel, and so the commentary on Romans has the polemical purpose of seeking to establish the precise centre of the Gospel, its kernel, in order that attention may then be directed towards the whole Gospel in its social and political implications. It is in this sense that we must understand Barth's description of his theology as a "pinch of spice", as a "corrective", a "marginal note".⁽³⁾ In the early period of his work, it was intended to help the preacher to know what to preach, and in so doing to recall theology to a new understanding of the centre of the Gospel. Barth was by no means convinced that theology knew what it was.

Secondly, we must ask how Barth proposed to embark on his new engagement with the Bible. To make the assertion that the Bible speaks not only to its own age, but to every age, is a different matter from showing in what way it does so. The problem is still the problem of understanding, of determining what the Bible is saying, or in Barth's words again, of actually locating the Word in the words. We are here already beginning to trespass on the ground of the method of theology, but we must make

(1) Ibid, pp. 60ff

(2) 2R, p.12

(3) W.G.T.M., p.98

some remarks on the exegetical principles of Romans which may shed some light on Barth's conception of the task of theology.

While he finds a place for the historical-critical method in the work of exegesis, he finds no place at all for the use of the material furnished by the history of religions:

"... I entirely fail to see why parallels drawn from the ancient world - and with such parallels modern commentators are chiefly concerned - should be of more value for an understanding of the Epistle than the situation in which we ourselves actually are, and to which we can therefore bear witness." (1)

The history of religions does not, in Barth's submission, contribute to an understanding of what Paul has to say about God. He prefers, rather to work with the assumption that Paul has as much to say about God to the present age as to his own because there is no fundamental change in the situation to which the Word of God is addressed.

Accordingly, Romans is treated as an attack on human misconceptions about God and on all forms of human self-righteousness. He feels at liberty therefore, to elaborate the implications of Romans in terms of an ^{twentieth} attack on / century forms of idolatry, and in particular, on those perversions of the gospel which he believes to have been fostered by the Church. In both editions he attacks vehemently the view of religion as a means of approach to God, which appears to treat God as within its reach. He attacks, too, romantic, mystical and moralistic reductions of religion, and the distortions of the truth by pietism. In addition, the first edition heaps scorn on the liberal identification of socialism with the Kingdom of God, on capitalism, and upon every form of individualism.

The aim of the attack is to demolish every form of human righteousness and to set in contrast to it, God's righteousness and the reconciliation which God alone effects.

In the process^{twentieth} of interpreting the Epistle to the / century, Barth determines to adopt an attitude towards the Bible which he describes

(1) 2R, p.11

as Biblicist, by which he means that he desires to take seriously those aspects of Paul's teaching which have caused embarrassment to other commentators, rather than to explain them away as merely Paul's opinion. (1)

Two conclusions may be drawn, so far, about Barth's view of the task of theology. First, he was seeking to re-establish the relationship between theology and preaching, a relationship which, it seemed to him, had dropped out of the consideration of the modern scientific commentary. The Bible was to be re-established as the Word of God to man, and therefore relevant to preaching. Attention was to be paid to the objective quality of scripture as the Word of God, rather than on its subjective quality, as a human response to "the divine". (2)

It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that Barth's efforts were greeted by a storm of protest from the proponents of a scientific theology, who sought to give to theology a respectability in the universities by adopting for it a method as close to that of the natural sciences as possible. Harnack protested that Barth wished to turn the professor's chair into a pulpit. (3) Barth contended that theology had no right to masquerade as scientific under the guise of the history of religions. If it was to hold a place in the universities it must do so only by undertaking to say, or by pointing out the need to say, what the other disciplines will not say, that

"... a chaos, though wonderful, is not therefore a cosmos." (4)

(1) Ibid, p.11f. Bultmann, however, replied in criticism of Barth: "It is impossible to assume that everywhere in the letter to the Romans the subject matter may have found adequate expression, unless one intends to establish a modern dogma of inspiration ..." "Karl Barth's Epistle to the Romans in its Second Edition", Beginnings, vol. I, p.119 (originally published in Die Christliche Welt, vol. 36 (1922), nos. 18, 19, and 20)

(2) "Ein Briefwechsel mit Adolf von Harnack", Theologische Fragen und Antworten (hereafter F.u.A), p.20 (E.T. Beginnings, vol. I, p.177)

(3) Ibid, p.14 (E.T. p.171)

(4) W.G.W.M. p.193f.

It must always stand as the question mark beyond "the furthest range of scientific possibility". In other words, Barth was moving towards the belief that theology must be confessional in character.

Secondly, Barth was seeking to re-establish the relationship between the Bible and preaching; for, if theology was to serve the preacher, it must direct its attention towards understanding the Bible. Not only is theology to be directed away from the history of religions and towards the Bible, but it is to be directed towards the Bible as the place where God still speaks to man. Theology, therefore, fulfils the role primarily of biblical exegesis, but not as the purely literary work that we are accustomed to regard it. Indeed, we may say that Barth short-circuits the whole theological process by using exegesis to turn a first century document into a ^{twentieth} century document, ignoring or concealing the dogmatic contribution and mixing strict exegesis with "application."

(b) From Romans to the First Edition of the Dogmatics

It would be wrong to suppose that it was a false modesty that caused Barth to speak of his theology as a corrective. He intended it to be so in conscious imitation of Kierkegaard. But even if he had intended it originally simply as a corrective, it could not remain such, especially in the highly un-Kierkegaardian situation of a university faculty. Nevertheless, he continued to maintain that theology has a fundamental and indestructible relationship with proclamation, as is particularly clear from his writings in Theology and Church and in Die Christliche Dogmatik. It is to these two works in particular that we shall now turn in order to continue to trace the development of his understanding of the nature of theology.

The first point which we must make is that Barth ceased to conceive of theology primarily in terms of a kind of biblical exegesis. Instead, he distinguished between three areas of theological work. The first of these areas is that of exegesis, charged with the task of continually raising the

"fundamental questions of the genuine prophetic and apostolic witness to the revelation given in the canonical sources." (1)

Such a discipline has two lines of approach, both of which are essential to the fulfilment of the task. The first line of approach is the line which is concerned with the establishment of the text. To achieve this, all the resources of textual criticism must be brought to bear. When this work is done, exegesis can turn to the second line of approach, which is the understanding of the text. In order to achieve the necessary understanding the exegete must struggle with the text, to think himself into the situation in which it was spoken, to create a picture for himself of the historical situations until he becomes a part of it.

It must be admitted that the essay "Church and Theology" from which the quotation above was taken, is too brief to offer more than the merest hint of the nature of the task set before exegesis. In Die Christliche Dogmatik, he reproduces and expands this outline, but his explanation lacks clarity. There he argues that biblical exegesis passes through stages identical to the stages of any other kind of exegesis. In other words, it is first of all a literary activity, in which the scholar seeks to establish the frame of mind in which he may acknowledge that someone external to himself is speaking, then to follow the argument as a fellow-traveller and finally to identify himself with the argument, so that the authors words are his also. (2) The Biblical exegete, however, must go one stage

(1) TC, p.303

(2) Die Christliche Dogmatik (hereafter Chr.D), p.394 f.

further, because he is called upon to treat the material in his hands as the truth. He therefore expounds not what Plato or Goethe thought but what God has said. (1)

Exegesis furnishes the sources for the second area of theological work, namely, dogmatics. But dogmatics must not be identified with or reduced to exegesis or homiletics. It has a distinct task of its own, although, like that of exegesis, its task is intimately related to the proclamation of the Church. It must, according to Barth,

"continually work out afresh the fundamental affirmations of the Christian message in accordance with the prevailing background and the norm of the witness in the creeds and the Fathers." (2)

Once again, Barth's definition in the essay "Church and Theology" lacks clarity and we shall have to turn again to his discussion in Die Christliche Dogmatik for further illumination. We must first repeat, however, that dogmatics is not proclamation. It is not intended to fulfil an apologetic role, nor can its material be preached directly. A true sermon only arises from the biblical text:

"Only the analytical sermon, only the homily, is true preaching." (3)

Dogmatics' task is not proclamation, although Barth admits that it may also be that - inasmuch, we may assume, as the outsider may pick up a volume of dogmatics and learn from it. Its first intention is not to teach others what Christians believe; nor is it to prescribe what is to be believed as a necessary requirement for salvation, taking as its motivation the opening words of the Athanasian creed⁽⁴⁾ and becoming a scientific commentary on it, as Barth believes to be the general case with Roman Catholic dogmatics. Dogmatics is not even a commentary on a rule of teaching (Lehrgesetz),

(1) Ibid, p.396

(2) TC, p.303

(3) Chr.D., p.438

(4) "Quicumque vult salvus esse, ante omnia opus est, ut teneat catholicam fidem, quam nisi quisque integram inviolatamque servaverit, absque dubio in aeternum peribit. Fides catholica haec est ... "

as though it were possible to prescribe what should be taught, for each dogmatic proposition or formulation is only a fragment, which can offer introductions, indicators, points of view, foundations or boundary fences, to that which is in itself inexhaustible. Finally, dogmatics is not to be regarded purely as the satisfying of the human desire to think. (1)

Dogmatics is, and can never cease to be, concerned with Christian speech. The opening proposition of Die Christliche Dogmatik makes this quite clear:

"Dogmatics is the name which we give to the striving for knowledge of the correct content of Christian speech about God and about man." (2)

Dogmatics is therefore a discipline to which no limits can be set: that is to say, its work is never at an end, both because Christian speech cannot come to an end, and because the subject matter of Christian speech can never be finally exhausted. It has, therefore, the character of research (Forschung) or striving (Bemühen), and is always in progress; it never becomes a compendium of results.

When we say that dogmatics is concerned with Christian speech, we should add that for Barth there is only one form of Christian speech which can be regarded as correct; preaching is the correct form because it expresses not an opinion but the truth and is therefore worthy of belief. In it the preacher is bound to reiterate the Word of God and so not only to declare the truth but also to demand a response. (3)

When the question of the correct form of speech has been asked, it is then, and only then, possible to ask about the correct content of Christian speech. But it is just **this** that is under question. Preaching therefore, supplies the raw material (Stoff) of dogmatics in the message that it preaches. (4) Dogmatics aims to serve preaching by examining what is

(1) Chr.D., pp.33ff

(2) Ibid., p.1

(3) Ibid., pp.18-21

(4) Ibid., pp.28ff

preached and testing its claim to speak the truth. Now, clearly, in order to achieve this purpose, dogmatics cannot listen to individual sermons; it is not a running commentary on the sermons that take place daily. Rather it listens to general trends, and thus examines what is being preached in the Church at large. It was, indeed, this question, of what was being preached in the Church at large, that troubled Barth as early as 1910. Whereas, however, the specific problem that Barth faced at Safenwil was the Sunday Sermon in Church, it must be admitted that the proclamation which troubled him was by no means mediated solely in the form of sermons, but also in books, lectures and the general content of Christian political action and ecumenical activity. Thus, although he describes preaching alone as the proper form of Christian speech, his attention is also directed to the wider activity of the Church.

Dogmatics arises, then, for the need for pure doctrine in the Church, but there remains the question of how dogmatics is to be able to test the proclamation in order to ascertain whether it is pure doctrine. Accordingly, Barth defines pure doctrine as "doctrine conforming to the Scripture and to the Spirit",⁽¹⁾ making clear, at least, that the work of dogmatics is achieved by comparing what is preached with the Bible. In so doing, it works out afresh the fundamental affirmations of the Christian message.

There remains, however, the puzzling assertion that this last objective is achieved "in accordance with the prevailing background and the norm of that witness in the creeds and the Fathers". The idea of "the prevailing background" is particularly obscure, but appears, in the light of Die Christliche Dogmatik to mean that dogmatics must be done in a style appropriate to the present day, however admirable the style and language of another day may appear.⁽²⁾

(1) TC, p.303

(2) Chr.D., p.444 In addition, Barth may have in mind the need for theology to address itself to the particular doctrinal questions which trouble preaching at a given moment.

The norm of the witness in the creeds and the fathers sets dogmatics firmly within the context of the Church. Strictly speaking, the norm set for dogmatics is the revelation itself which is testified to in Scripture,⁽¹⁾ but norms for the interpretation of the revelation are set by the creeds and the Fathers in the sense that they provide principles for understanding and boundary posts within which discussion may be continued. In this sense dogmatics may be called the science of the norms of Christian speech.⁽²⁾ It does not produce new norms but seeks to make explicit for the Church the norms it already possesses, and does so by constant re-examination of Scripture in dialogue, as it were, with the whole history of Christian thought and in particular with the early Church.

Not only is preaching the raw material of dogmatics, it is also the goal: its purpose is to inform the Church in its preaching role, so that we may say that it

"seeks ... in the preaching which takes place today the preaching which is to take place tomorrow." (3)

It may be described as a form of preaching to the preacher⁽⁴⁾ creating a two way traffic between preaching and the revelation of God. It does not tell the preacher precisely what he is to say; rather, it informs his thinking and so his preaching:

"... behind every particular sermon that is preached there stands and is afresh disclosed the dogmatic consideration of the unity, the wholeness, the truth and the intelligible coherence of the kerygma." (5)

Dogmatics does not, we repeat, tell the preacher what to say or how to say it: that is the task of the third branch of the theological discipline, namely, homiletics:

(1) Ibid, p.428

(2) Ibid, pp.133f, 428

(3) Ibid, p.36

(4) Heinrich Ott, Theology and Preaching, trans. Harold Knight (London, Lutterworth Press 1965), p.20f

(5) Ibid, p.26f; cf Chr.D. p.423

"As homiletics, safeguarded through the principles so won and taught by the unwritten command of the present hour, it must consider the What? and the How? of the Christian message to the immediate present." (1)

It has the function of seeking to improve the "rhetorical effectiveness" (2) of preaching, that is to say, it considers what we may call the mechanics of preaching. But it also considers, according to Barth, the "What?" of the Christian message to the immediate present. Clearly, more than a matter of technique is involved here, but precisely how homiletics decides on what is demanded by the "unwritten command of the present hour" is very far from clear. No theological discipline can tell the preacher precisely what he is to preach on any given occasion, since only the preacher himself can decide, on the basis of his awareness both of the gospel and of the concrete needs of the congregation. If this is to be regarded as a theological discipline, then it must be so in a sense different from that which it has when applied to the work of exegesis and dogmatics.

It would be useful to bring to a close our discussion of this period of Barth's work by considering what exactly Barth means by the Word of God. Not only does the idea figure more prominently than in Romans, but it also carries a more systematised range of meaning.

We argued earlier that although he did not make frequent use of the term in Romans and other works of the period, that it could nevertheless be shown to be the concept which is determinative of the significance of the writings of that time. It is as the Word of God that he treats Scripture, and his concern with the sermon is charged with the urgent desire to make it the vehicle for repeating the Word of God to man.

Underlying the work of Die Christliche Dogmatik is the same desire that preaching should be a repetition of God's Word to man, but he goes to some length to expound the concept of the Word of God. Whereas, in Romans,

(1) TC, p.304

(2) Chr.D., p.1

it was used primarily to denote the decree of God in creation, judgement or salvation, in this first edition of his dogmatics (which never went beyond its first volume), he dedicates the whole of the first volume to the doctrine, which he develops in a threefold form. The three forms he distinguishes as the sermon, the canon, and revelation. In practice, however, the distinction is somewhat artificial, because there is, in fact, only one form of the Word of God: the first two are derived from the third. The sermon has no authority of its own and is therefore only the Word of God when it permits God himself to speak. Similarly, the canon, by which he means Scripture, is also the Word of God in a derivative sense, in the extent to which it, like preaching, is a faithful witness to God's own self-revelation. It is only in the form of God's self-revelation through his activity directed towards man that the Word of God is underived. (1)

The concept is useful to Barth not least because it is related to the question of authority in theology. It places the weight of emphasis not upon theology and preaching as being concerned with an analysis of the subjective response to and apprehension of the "religious encounter", nor with a synthetic judgement based on those responses but with the objective activity of God addressing himself to man. It represents his resistance to the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule and its tendency to regard all religious data as material for a science of religion on the basis of which propositions may be made about the divine. Moreover, it emphasises Barth's conviction that God does actually address man: his revelation is rational in form.

"The Word of God, which has its correlate and reflection in the human words of the act of preaching, is itself originally and in its own right Word, language spoken from reason to reason, Logos resting on knowledge and relying on cognition." (2)

The adoption of this term, therefore, also reflects his rejection of

(1) Ibid, pp.37ff

(2) Ibid, p.62, cf also p.111

the interpretation of the concept of revelation by the concepts of the holy, the numinous or life-force. God's rational self-communication is normative for the work of theology; it is witnessed to by Scripture and should be the content of preaching.

Finally, he is able to exploit the concept inasmuch as God's Word shares God's nature. As God is eternal and unchanging, so is his Word; although it is revealed in history it is not subject to historical contingency or relativity.⁽¹⁾ Thus the significance of the temporal distinction between the hic et nunc of preaching today and the illic et tunc of the Biblical proclamation is eliminated. Just as the Bible was the product of a response to revelation, so preaching has its origin in a response to the revelation witnessed to in the Bible.

(c) Anselm : Fides Quaerens Intellectum

Before passing on to Barth's treatment of the task of theology in its relation to Church proclamation as described in Church Dogmatics, we propose to consider briefly the work on Anselm in order to establish its contribution to the development of Barth's thinking.

Barth himself drew attention to the importance of the book for an understanding of his theology, and to the fact that, with the exception of Hans Urs von Balthasar and a few others, his commentators had failed to acknowledge its importance.⁽²⁾ More recently, however, it has become something of an orthodoxy to draw attention to the significance of the book.

His interest in Anselm stretched back long before the seminar at Bohn in 1930 which gave rise to the book. Indeed, as early as 1920 we

(1) Ibid, p.45f

(2) Anselm : Fides Quaerens Intellectum (hereafter FQI), preface to second edition, p.11; cf also How I Changed My Mind, p.43; "On Systematic Theology", SJT, vol. 14(1961) p.225

find him declaring his intention to look into the Cur Deus Homo? of Anselm, in a letter to Thurneysen.⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, although the seminar and book are generally regarded as of decisive significance in marking a new direction in Barth's thinking, it cannot be ignored that Die Christliche Dogmatik published in 1927, contains a number of references to Anselm, which he took up again and developed in the book on Anselm. These references have as their central motif the task of theology.

In the two most extensive discussions of Anselm, Barth quotes Anselm's own dictum credo ut intelligam, in which is summarised the rationale and the task of theology. It is because he believes that Anselm wishes to understand. Accordingly, his proposal to conduct his work, remoto Christo and quasi nihil sciatur de Christo, cannot mean that it is to be done "as though Christ were not there" or "as though we did not believe in him". Rather, it means that we must for ourselves begin all over again with the task of theological thinking on the basis of the events of revelation. We must think them through for ourselves in order that we may understand for ourselves. The presupposition of theological thinking is always the fact of the revelation of the triune God in Christ. It therefore adopts an attitude of prayer in its attempt to serve the proclamation of the Church.⁽²⁾

In Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum he brings to fuller development the theme he began to elaborate in Die Christliche Dogmatik, and it is in this book that we see the full significance of the conception of theology as understanding. We can also see that the relationship between dogmatics and proclamation is an indirect relationship, since it appears that the first purpose of dogmatics is to feed the believer: not only does it seek to lead him to a closer understanding of the content

(1) Rev.Theol. p.55

(2) Chr.D., pp.4, 98-100, 226f

of his faith, but it seeks to allow the believer to penetrate into the very being of God.

"... for Anselm 'to believe' does not mean simply a striving of the human will towards God, but a striving of the human will into God and so a participation (albeit in a manner limited by creatureliness) in God's mode of Being and so a similar participation in God's aseity in the matchless glory of his very self, and therefore also in God's utter absence of necessity." (1)

In consequence of this, the aim of theology

"cannot be to lead men to faith, nor to confirm them in the faith, nor even to deliver their faith from doubt." (2)

Hence Credo ut intelligam means "it is my very faith that summons me to knowledge", and it is important to notice that it is my faith that summons me: that is to say, theology (or rather, dogmatics) is engaged upon for my own benefit, or rather, it is engaged upon by the Church, the whole company of believers, for their own benefit, that they should have joy. Faith cannot exist without conceptuality,⁽³⁾ that is to say at its very conception faith has an idea of its object. But it must strive towards a clarification of its object: it cannot exist in a "cloud of unknowing" as it were. Faith has an awareness of its object, an embryonic understanding, but in order that it may be more profound in character, dogmatics goes about its work. Faith stands at the beginning and the end of dogmatics: its understanding similarly stands at the beginning and the end, but between the beginning and the end there is an immense difference in quality.

Faith is itself an embryonic intelligere, but strives towards intelligere as its goal, by the use of prayer and by "the persistent application of (the) intellectual powers"⁽⁴⁾ Barth further defines

(1) FQI, p.17

(2) Ibid

(3) "Fides esse nequit sine conceptione" (Ibid, p.19); cf Torrance, God and Rationality, p.170: "Even though God transcends all that we can think and say of Him, it still holds good that we cannot have experience of Him or believe in Him without conceptual forms of understanding."

(4) FQI, p.41

intelligere as derived from intus-legere:⁽¹⁾ that is to say, understanding is a reflection upon what has been said in the Credo:

"In recognising and assenting to truth intelligere and credere come together and this intelligere is itself and remains a credere while the credere in and by itself, as we have seen, is also an embryonic intelligere. But intelligere means still more than that: to read and ponder what has already been said - that is to say, in the appropriation of truth, actually to traverse that intervening distance (between recognition and assent) and so therefore to understand the truth as truth." (2)

It is for this that it requires the use of prayer and the application of the intellectual powers, for it must discern the "inner text" of Scripture, which cannot be heard simply by a reading of the immediate text.

Dogmatics reflects on what has been said in Scripture and in the Credo.

It is important to notice that dogmatics is to be a reflection upon the inner text of the Scripture and the Credo. It cannot be a repetition of Scripture or the Credo, nor even a translation; rather it penetrates Scripture and the Credo. This means, on the one hand, that the believer aims through his mediation to penetrate to the Being of God, and on the other that he should in consequence, express what he sees and understands. This in turn means that theology begins where biblical quotation stops: it is a question (to use the words of Church Dogmatics) of what we may say "on the basis of the prophets and the apostles." No statement made by dogmatics that is in conflict with the Bible can be regarded as true, but at the same time, dogmatics may make many statements

(1) Barth's own interpretation of "understanding" may be legitimate, but there is little evidence to support his etymological account. We have found only one lexicon which offers support. Others are unanimous in deriving intelligere from inter-legere (Lewis and Short; A Latin Dictionary, OUP, 1879; Theaurus Linguae Latinae, Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1936-1956; A Walde & J.B. Hofmann, Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, Heidelberg, Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung (1933). The root meaning is, thus, "to choose between" or "to distinguish" and not "to read inside", and so, as Barth claims "to read the inner text."

(2) Ibid, p.40

that are not covered directly by the authority of the Bible:⁽¹⁾ indeed, any statement which is truly theological is a statement which is not covered by biblical authority. But as such it cannot be regarded as final

"... fundamentally it is an interim statement, the best that knowledge and conscience can for the present construe; it awaits better instruction from God or man." (2)

It may be objected, however, that both the Bible and the creeds, not to mention the Fathers, are themselves theology, and ought therefore to obviate the necessity for further dogmatic work, but it must be said first that the Bible is theology of a fragmentary and unsystematic character. It does not attempt to bring together the whole range of its reflexion in an ordered fashion, but is, rather, made up of several books, which are in varying degrees testimony to history, witness of revelation and reflexion upon revelation. Dogmatics, essentially, is an ordered reflection. The Bible cannot be read as a dogmatic textbook. Secondly, the creeds themselves only mark out the boundaries for theological discussion; they do not engage in deep reflection. Thirdly, neither the Bible, nor the Creeds, nor yet the Fathers, are the reflection of the Church of the twentieth century on its faith. Each new age must think out its faith and the expression of its faith in human language for itself.

In what sense can all this be said to be concerned with the Word of God? Dogmatics, as a profound meditation on the Scripture and the Credo,⁽³⁾

(1) cf Torrance Introduction p.188 "Scientific theological activity begins where straightforward biblical quotations end, precisely because it is the task of theology to penetrate to the solid truth upon which biblical statements rest. That does not mean that scientific theology can leave the ground of biblical teaching, for the inner text with which it is concerned is only to be discerned in and along with the external text, but it does mean that it must penetrate into the inner ratio of the Scriptures and so into the inner logic and form of the Word which it hears and seeks to articulate it in an orderly manner or ratio in our understanding

(2) FQI, p.31

(3) The term Credo is somewhat ambiguous, inasmuch as it could refer to any of the accepted credal formularies, or could even denote the content of the faith of the Church. However, in view of the attention given by Barth to the Apostles' Creed we take him to be referring particularly to that. Both Credo and Dogmatics in Outline are expositions of the Apostles' Creed.

is meditation on the Word of God inasmuch as it seeks a deeper understanding of all that God has said to man **about** himself, and about his relationship with man, in contrast to all that man can say to himself about God. (1)

This concept differs significantly from Barth's early talk of the Word of God only in the loss of the emphasis on the Word of God as God's Word of judgement against all human cultural and religious endeavour. Dogmatics is thus the material on which proclamation draws, not by taking over its language necessarily, but by mediating on the work of dogmatics, and then speaking itself in a manner appropriate to the situation. Dogmatics assists the expository sermon by enabling the preacher to relate the text to the whole of the Christian faith.

(d) Church Dogmatics (2)

In the initial volumes of the Church Dogmatics, Barth continues to distinguish three areas of theological activity, as he does in Die Christliche Dogmatik, describing them as exegesis, dogmatics and practical theology. (3) He does, however, make some attempt to classify the relations between them by speaking of their respective tasks as expositio, meditatio and applicatio and by describing the second as the bridge between the other two. (4)

He is still vague, however, about the precise task of practical theology, as he now refers to homilatics. It is concerned with the goal of the language of the Church, and is therefore responsible for the question

(1) cf TC, p.200

(2) In this section we include other works published during the span of Church Dogmatics

(3) CD, I, : 1 : 3

(4) CD, I, : 2 : 722ff, 766

of "the adaptation of the Word of God to the service of man." But this does not mean that it seeks to determine the "relevance" of the work of dogmatic and exegetical theology in answering "the so-called burning questions of the present day."

"It should and must be carried out in serene confidence that it will in fact do this; but it must be left to Holy Scripture to decide how far it does so." (1)

Practical theology stands on the boundary between two types of language, that of dogmatics and that of everyday life, and is therefore concerned with the adaptation of the one to the other. At the same time, however, Barth repeatedly asserts that it is concerned with the shape and form of the proclamation of the Church, but it is not clear whether he means by this simply the techniques of sermon construction and what he earlier called the "rhetorical effectiveness" of preaching, or whether he also includes the question of the adaptation of language. He does not give any detailed account of the task of practical theology which enables us to have a precise understanding of its scope.

When we turn to the task of dogmatics, we find some equivocation on Barth's part, about the role of Church History. In the first volume he is emphatic that it has only an ancillary role :

"Church History so called answers, from the point of view of Christian language about God, to no question that need be put independently and is therefore not to be regarded as an independent theological discipline. It is the indispensable auxiliary science to exegetical, dogmatic and practical theology." (2)

Later, however, he appears to have changed his mind, for while he maintains the same position in Dogmatics in Outline⁽³⁾ as he expressed in the first volume of Church Dogmatics, in Church Dogmatics IV:3 he describes Church

(1) Ibid, p.738

(2) CD, I : 1 : 3

(3) op cit, p.12

History as a fourth discipline within theological science. Its scope includes the study of "symbols" (in the sense of "symbolics") and confessions as well as the study of the activity of the Church in relation to the rest of history. (1)

It may be that he expressed this apparent change of mind in deference to Tillich's criticisms in the first volume of his Systematic Theology, (2) but it is difficult to know whether it is any more than an apparent change. It is doubtful whether he would have been willing to grant Church History a truly independent status. He must certainly have been willing to recognise that it must be conducted in accordance with its own integrity and without external interference, but it is impossible to suppose that he ever conceived of it as having a validity apart from its responsibility to support the work of dogmatic research.

It is interesting, also, to notice Barth's changing attitude to the term "systematic theology" as an alternative to "dogmatics". In his early work he displays a strong prejudice against the term which, in his opinion, implies that dogmatics comes under the control of an alien system or Weltanschauung. In some of his later work, however, he is prepared to allow its use, (3) but in Evangelical Theology he returns to his former contention that it is a contradiction in terms. If it is to be used at all, it can mean only that dogmatics must hold fast to the "order, formation and architectonics" prescribed by the Word of God itself. (4)

In the Church Dogmatics, Barth repeats the assertion made in Die Christliche Dogmatik that dogmatics is specifically concerned with the proclamation, but the opening theses of the two editions do reveal

(1) CD, IV : 3 : 380; cf also Ev. Theol., p. 178f

(2) Published in 1951, German Translation 1955

(3) Dogmatics in Outline (hereafter DiO), p. 12; CD, IV : 3 : 880

(4) Ev. Theol., p. 181

some difference of emphasis. Whereas in the first edition he refers to "Christian speech", in the second he refers to the language peculiar to the Christian Church. (1) In this way he seeks to anchor dogmatics more firmly in the context of the Church and also to tone down the somewhat pretentious claims to investigate "Christian speech". (2) Moreover, in the second edition he refers to language about God instead of speech about God and man; this must be seen as an attempt to dispel the impression created by Die Christliche Dogmatik that theology can speak about man, ~~has~~ independently of its speaking about God, in the form of an "existential analysis". (3)

Proclamation and theology are equally activities of the Church. It follows therefore that theology is not an esoteric activity to be pursued for its own sake. (4) Thus Barth says in the second edition of the Dogmatics, as he did in the first, that its task is to test the language of the proclamation of the Church. Once again he describes proclamation as the raw material and the practical goal of dogmatics, and again denies that proclamation is its task.

"The language about God to be found in the Church claims, as proclamation to be the Word of God. By this its own peculiar standard it is measured in dogmatics. In the raw material of dogmatics the first object is a series of expressions which, more or less constantly and emphatically, usually make up the spoken matter of proclamation in the whole Church. But here, as everywhere, these expressions acquire their meaning from the associations and contexts in which they are used. In virtue of this varying meaning, language about God becomes from time to time a definite, characteristic language. It exists for dogmatics in a congeries of analogous determinations (in einer Fülle von derartigen Bestimmtheiten) and the sense of the dogmatic question will generally be, whether and how far it (i.e. the meaning with which the expressions are used) is appropriate or not to its purpose of serving the Word of God." (5)

(1) Chr.D., p.1; CD, I : 1 : 1

(2) of CD, I : 1 : ix "When the word "Church" replaces the Word "Christian" in the title of the book, that means firstly that with regard to renouncing the light-hearted use, so much combatted by myself of the great word "Christian" I might proceed with good precedent - but also the material fact, that a priori I might point to the circumstances that dogmatics is not a 'frec' science, but one bound to the sphere of the Church..."

(3) of CD, I:1:141ff

(4) Ibid, 55,91ff

(Note 5 follows at the foot of the next page)

Dogmatics is, then, a kind of linguistic analysis, since it seeks to understand the meaning of the language used by the proclamation of the Church. But it is also more than linguistic analysis, since it seeks not simply to understand the rules of the language-game of proclamation, but to fulfil a normative role by measuring the appropriateness of the language to the object to which it refers,⁽¹⁾ which can be accomplished only by a profound meditation on and enquiry into the object. Thus dogmatics strives towards pure doctrine and is therefore useful not only for preaching itself but also for liturgy and even hymn writing.⁽²⁾

Barth repeats his assertion, made in the first edition that dogmatics is directed towards the preaching that is to take place tomorrow, but whereas, in 1927, he said that it seeks tomorrow's preaching in today's, in the second edition he says that it seeks it in yesterday's preaching as well as in today's. Moreover, he gives more precise suggestions as to where this preaching may be found, especially with respect to "yesterday's".

"Yesterday's proclamation, with criticisms of which dogmatics methodically starts out, would therefore consist fundamentally of the sum total of the attempts at Church proclamation that have occurred up to date, as variously determined by the meaning attached to the expressions in question. Actually it is but a very small fraction of this total which, where dogmatic work is done, can be taken as known and therefore can be made the object of investigation. But even within this known fraction there can be, once more, only some few elements, which stand out representatively from the rest in the series and with which this work can busy itself. Finally it could neither be relevant nor profitable for dogmatics to dream of associating itself at all with Church preaching as delivered yesterday or the day before or previous to that. Rather, in order to demand truly that the Church test herself concerning this her central function, it will get in touch with that form of yesterday's proclamation in which we find this function already tested, criticised, and revised, i.e. with the results of the history of dogmatics itself. (3) Precisely in her dogmatics up to date the church has given an authoritative deliverance on the extent to which, in her own opinion, she regards as proclamation the language about God to be found within her when measured by the standard of the Word of God." (4)

(Note 5 from previous page) (5) Ibid, p.86f The penultimate sentence in the E.T. is a bad translation of a very difficult sentence. The sense of the part we have quoted in German would appear to be "an abundance of these expressions."

(1) of CD, I:2:781 "The task of dogmatics consists generally in a critical examination of its material, which means in fact of those key-words and basic outlines of the Church's speech about God."

(2) CD, I:2:758ff; I:1:90

(3) I have corrected this sentence as the E.T. does not make sense.

(4) CD, I:1:87

It is quite clear that Barth takes this part of the task of dogmatics seriously, since a large part of the discussion of Church Dogmatics consists of a dialogue with the dogmatic work of the past, but it is also clear that he acts as a judge towards much of what has been written. The theologian is not, therefore, bound to treat the material of dogmatic writing as material for a gigantic synthesis, but as material for a conversation, material much of which may have to be rejected. Nevertheless, the last sentence of our quotation still appears to be making a rather pretentious claim, because, however true it may be that the general trend in proclamation in any period is reflected in its dogmatics, it remains true that dogmatics is largely the work of individuals. Moreover, assuming that Schleiermacher's work is included among the dogmatic work of the past, it is difficult to suppose that Barth would claim that in it the language used by the Church in proclamation is measured by the standard of the Word of God. In short, Barth's account is prescriptive rather than descriptive; he may well be right to maintain that his account ought to be the pattern presented by dogmatics, but he has not established that this is in fact the case.

He also maintains the position, which he defended in the first edition, that dogmatics ought to be confessional, by which he means that it must be carried out within the traditions of a particular church. For Barth himself, that can only mean the Reformed tradition of the Evangelical Church. It therefore takes particular cognizance of the creeds and confessions acknowledged by the Reformed Church. At the same time, he does not wish to perpetuate historical differences, but to create a genuine Church dogmatics. (1)

The Authority of the creeds and confessions is only relative and secondary to the binding authority of Scripture (2), so that it must be said

(1) Chr.D., pp.441ff, CD,I:2:828ff

(2) D16, p.13

that their role, like that of the history of dogmatic thought, is to assist the Church in its understanding of the Scripture and so in its efforts to test the language of its proclamation.

To say that Holy Scripture has binding authority, however, is not to restrict dogmatics to a repetition of what the Bible says. He maintains his Anselmian stance that dogmatics is an attempt to understand what is to be said "on the basis of the Apostles and Prophets" and is therefore an attempt to hear the Word of God within Scripture, and in that sense to seek revelation.

"The precise task of theology ... is *credo ut intelligam* ... In the fulfilment of this task, theology seeks to grasp and understand specifically one thing: the extent to which the canonical collection acknowledged by earlier generations actually is the canon of Holy Scripture. But how can this question be decided other than through knowledge of the content of those writings. How other can the rightness of traditional respect for the canon be tested other than by activating that working hypothesis? How other than by questioning the texts of the Old and New Testaments as to whether and to what extent authentic witness of God's Word may be actually heard in them? How else, therefore, can the careful investigation of those texts in the light of this question, by engagement in the exegetical circle that is unavoidable if the texts are to be understood? This investigation does not consist in premature anticipation but in expectation of an event, an event in which the authority of those texts announces itself." (1)

Because God has revealed himself, dogmatics is a response which is characterised by such attitudes as prayer, service and love⁽²⁾ as it seeks to hear and understand God's Word in Scripture. Indeed, prayer is so much a characteristic of dogmatics that it may be seen, according to Barth, as language addressed to God. For this reason, theology is not, strictly speaking, the work of individuals, but of the whole Church. It may even be regarded as a kind of liturgical act, from which arises the particular dogmatic writings of individual theologians.⁽³⁾

(1) Ev.Theol. p.44f; cf pp.39ff

(2) cf The final section of Ev.Theol (part IV)

(3) CD, I:1:18,25; I:2:771ff; IV:3:882; Ev.Theol. pp.16f, 164.

We conclude this section with a further consideration of the concept of the Word of God, which Barth continues, in Church Dogmatics to expound under the threefold form as preached, written and revealed. He lays a greater emphasis, however, on the person of Christ and on the Incarnation as the locus of God's self-revelation.⁽¹⁾ He does draw attention to the precedent in Reformation theology for his threefold conception, and in particular in the writings of Luther. But he also draws attention to Luther's scant regard for the concept of preaching as the Word of God and to other combinations of three that he made, such as the three ways in which truth is revealed, in Scripture, word and thought. He further notes the rapid disappearance of the third form of the Word of God with the rise of the doctrine of verbal inspiration.⁽²⁾ Curiously, however, it appears that Barth himself virtually abandoned his attempt to rehabilitate the concept after the second part of volume one of Church Dogmatics. Thus, although he speaks of the Word, the Witness and the Community in Evangelical Theology, and of the Word as God's revelation in Jesus Christ and as Holy Scripture, he does not speak of preaching as the Word of God.⁽³⁾

The reason may perhaps be seen even in the first volume of Church Dogmatics where the phrases je und je or jeweils⁽⁴⁾ frequently appear in connection with preaching. Human language as such is not language about God, even when the claim is made for it that it is. This is true too of human language in Scripture and in proclamation; but if it is true for the former it is much more so for the latter.

(1) cf CD, I:1:131ff; I:2:883 ("God's Word is his Son Jesus Christ"); IV:3:96. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that the idea is absent from Chr.D (cf p.243)

(2) CD, I:1:137ff

(3) Ev.Theol. pp.15-47 Barth could have appealed to Bullinger for support for the use of the term Word of God with reference to preaching (Confessio Helvetica Posterior 1:2) but does not appear to do so.

(4) Translated in ET as "from time to time" CD, I:1:103, 123, 131 passim.

"Real proclamation ... means God's Word preached, and God's Word preached means ... man's language about God on the basis of God's self-objectification which is neither present nor predictable nor relatable to any design, but is real solely in the freedom of His grace, in virtue of which from time to time He wills to be the object of this language, and is so according to his own good pleasure." (1)

"... we must say of proclamation and the Bible, that they are God's Word, by from time to time becoming God's Word." (2)

Not only does he speak of human language as becoming the Word of God "from time to time", but also speaks of the Word of God as "event",⁽³⁾ in order to signify the same point, namely, that human language becomes the Word of God only by God's grace. Similarly he speaks of man's knowledge of God and his freedom under the authority of the Word of God as "event", signifying that they are contingent upon God's good will. (4)

The important qualification to the description of preaching as the Word of God that it is so only as "event", "from time to time", appears to have convinced Barth of the undesirability of continuing to use the description. However, he could not likewise abandon its use with reference to Scripture, because however much it has^{to} be qualified, it is nevertheless essential to his conception of the task of theology. To abandon this use would be to undermine his theological enterprise.

(1) CD, I: 1: 102f

(2) Ibid, p.132f

(3) Ereignis

(4) CD, I:1:45, I:2:697ff

2. God and Man

We have already indicated that Barth's conception of the task and method of theology as related to proclamation must be seen in the context of his reaction against liberal theology. But it was not only against liberal theology that he reacted. Schleiermacher also exercised a strong negative influence on him, as a representative of romantic idealism, and his work is characterised by a constant dialogue with the positions not only of liberal and romantic theology but also with that of the Bultmann school. All three contain fundamental presuppositions with which Barth cannot agree, and which therefore affect profoundly the conception of the nature and task of theology. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his conception of the relationship between man and God as expressed, for example, in his treatment of such questions as revelation and history and revelation and religion. In order, therefore to illuminate this aspect of his work we shall in this section pay special attention to these two questions.

(a) Revelation and History

In the work of Albert Schweitzer, liberal theology fell firmly under the influence of what is variously known as "positivistic historiography" "historicism" or "historism" (Historismus). Theology was, therefore, required to work with the same presuppositions as that concept of historical study which had adopted the positivism of empirical science. Not only did this mean a very clear idea of what may be described as possible, but also an outright rejection of anything that might be described as supernatural. Accordingly, theology engaged upon a "Quest for the Historical Jesus" which

would produce a credible account of the life and teaching of the remarkable rabbi, of such a kind as would furnish authority for the liberal conception of the Gospel. In the process, Schweitzer found it necessary to shed the eschatological teaching of Jesus as irrelevant illusion.

In contrast, Barth took up again just those points which liberal theology had found it necessary to give up, in particular the supernatural character of the events of the years AD1-30 and the eschatological perspective of the Gospels.

Barth returns to the contention of orthodoxy that Christ is the Absolute Paradox, being both God and man. The history of the life of Jesus cannot therefore be regarded as simply an element of the flux of historical causality. It is not possible, therefore, to treat Jesus, as positivistic historiography does, simply as an historical figure, for the real significance of Christ does not consist in the ascertainable facts of his life and deeds, but in those very events which positivistic historiography discards as impossible or improbable, namely, in those events which surround the resurrection. The resurrection is the focal point of revelation, the point at which the two spheres of the human and the divine touch. However, Barth's fear of appearing to suggest that historical events can as such be regarded as revelation, cause him, in Romans, to hold apart the two spheres so severely that it can only be said that they touch tangentially.

"The years AD1-30 are the era of revelation and disclosure; the era which, as is shown by the reference to David, sets forth the new and strange and divine definition of all time. The particularity of the years of AD1-30 is dissolved by this divine definition, because it makes every epoch a potential field of revelation and disclosure. The point on the line of intersection is no more extended onto the known plane than is the unknown plane of which it proclaims the existence. 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." (1)

"In the Resurrection the new world of the Holy Spirit touches the old world of flesh, but touches it as a tangent touches a circle, that is, without touching it. And, precisely because it does not touch it, it touches it as its frontier - as the new world. The Resurrection is therefore an occurrence in history, which took place outside the gates of Jerusalem in the year AD 30, inasmuch as it there "came to pass", was discovered and recognised. But inasmuch as the occurrence was conditioned by the Resurrection, in so far, that is, as it was not the "coming to pass", or the discovery, or the recognition, which conditioned its necessity and appearance and revelation, the Resurrection is not an event in history at all." (1)

In order to make clear his belief that the events of AD 1-30 are not to be reduced to the flux of historical causality he describes them, and particularly the resurrection, as non-historical. (2) He does not mean by this term that the events did not take place. Nevertheless, he appears to feel acute discomfort at times, on account of the vulnerability of a theology which does insist that supernaturally caused events should also be historical events, because in being historical events they may be thought to share the same relativity as all other historical events.

"Were there a direct and causal connexion between the historical 'facts' of the Resurrection - the empty tomb, for example, or the appearances detailed in I. Cor. xv - and the Resurrection itself, were it in any sense of the word a 'fact' in history, then no profession of faith or refinement of devotion could prevent it being involved in the see-saw of 'Yes' and 'No', life and death, God and man, which is characteristic of all that happens on the historical plane. There is under this heaven and this earth no existence or occurrence 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 its obscurity and error and essential questionableness." (3)

Barth wishes to assert that the events of revelation are genuine events of history, but he does not want to commit himself to a position which would allow positivistic historiography to compromise their significance by discounting the resurrection and reducing the events to the same value as all other events; for that reason he has to insist on their supernatural

(1) Ibid, p.30; cf also W.G.W.M. p.283

(2) 2R, p.195 passim

(3) Ibid, p.204

character. But the relativity which seems to be attached to historical events causes him to adopt a somewhat ambivalent attitude particularly towards the resurrection. At the same time he is afraid of the danger of falling foul of the belief that all events may be regarded as revelation of the divine. This was the view of Hegel, who, by involving human history in the dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, erased the distinctions between theology and anthropology. Barth joins with Kierkegaard in rejecting this view,⁽¹⁾ but his fear of appearing to surrender either to it, or to positivistic historiography tends to give an air of unreality to his account of the resurrection and of eschatology. Consequently his interpretation of eschatology consists largely in viewing the resurrection as confronting human history with the eternal "now" of divine history, which does not enter human history but only touches it. Later he was to say of himself

"Because we were more consistent and proceeded in a more clear-cut way than our predecessors we were well on the way to just as systematic a reduction of God's eternity to the denominator of post-temporality, the eternally future, as the Reformers had that of pretemporality and the Neo-Protestants of supra-temporality".

"That we had only an uncertain grip of the matter became apparent ... in those passages of the exposition in which I had to speak positively about the divine future and hope as such. It emerged in the fact that although I was confident to treat the far-sidedness of the coming Kingdom of God with absolute seriousness, I had no such confidence in relation to its coming as such. (2)

He made a further attempt to defend the position he held by adopting a term which Overbeck had used in his attack on Christianity as mediated by Christian history. Overbeck argued that the history of the Christian Church was such as to discredit all the claims of Christianity unless Christianity should itself be distinguished sharply from the history of the Church.

(1) cf Philosophical Fragments, trans. D. Swenson (Princeton University Press 1967), p.73; Training in Christianity trans. W. Lowrie (Oxford University Press, 1941), pp.26ff

(2) CD, II:1:635

"To include Christianity under the concept of the historical, means to admit that it is of this world, and like all life has lived in the world in order to die." (1)

In consequence, he argued that the only possible "abode" of Christianity is in "Urgeschichte" (primordial history).

It is uncertain whether Overbeck thought that in using this idea, he was removing Christianity from serious consideration. Barth, apparently, did not think so, and seized upon the term as a synonym for the non-historical, to highlight the distinction between God and man and the total absence of continuity between the old and the new creation. We stand in Urgeschichte by God's grace alone. (2)

Barth continued to use the concept of Urgeschichte, but abandoned it after the publication of Die Christliche Dogmatik. It had already by then undergone some change of meaning, as he had succeeded in clarifying some of the issues that concerned him. The principal point that he wished to make was summed up in an axiom which he proposed in a lecture on Erich Peterson's conception of theology (3) and later repeated in Die Christliche Dogmatik and in Church Dogmatics:

"History can indeed become a predicate of revelation, but never possibly can revelation become the predicate of history." (4)

Consequently, in Die Christliche Dogmatik, he uses Urgeschichte not so much to stress the discontinuity between human and divine history, as the impossibility of treating history as such as revelation. His contention is that there is nothing in history as such on which to base faith, nothing that the historian could examine and conclude to be divine revelation. At the same time, however, revelation does not take place in an entirely

(1) Christentum und Kultur cited by Barth, T.C. p.62

(2) 2R, pp.29, 140, 171, 237, 249f, W.G.W.M. pp.74ff

(3) The lecture was prompted by the publication of Peterson's book What is Theology? in 1925. At the time, Peterson was Professor of Theology at Bonn but he was later (1929) received into the Roman Catholic Church.

(4) "Church and Theology", T.C. p.292; Chr.D.p232 CD, I:2:58

separate sphere: it is not super-history (Übergeschichte), as though it were some kind of eternal happening between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (1) Revelation is Urgeschichte, and as such in some sense distinct from history and therefore beyond the scrutiny of positivism, but it is also Geschichte. It takes place in history, but is more than history because it is an act of God in history. (2)

"That revelation is more than eternal history is demonstrated by the fact that it is a point in temporal history. That it is more than temporal history is demonstrated by the fact that it is not bound to the irreversible sequence of temporal history, that the rest of history is united as a circle about it as its centre point, even if it is distinguished as events preceding and following it." (3)

The historian may indeed see this history as revelation, but only if he first becomes a member of the Church and so a theologian. (4)

So far we have discussed two theological options which Barth regards as closed if theology is to fulfil its proper task. It cannot accept the canons of historicism, even if it must submit to some historical research. Equally, it cannot accept the thesis of romantic idealism, that all history may be regarded as revelation.

There are however, two further options coming into view which Barth also regards as closed. The one is related to the thesis of romantic idealism which we have just mentioned, and is the view held by members of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule that Christianity should be regarded as one manifestation of religion and revelation among many. Against this, Barth insists on the absoluteness of the revelation in Christ and therefore of the events of Christian revelation. The other is the approach he perceives to have been adopted by Strauss, Drews, or Bultmann, in which

(1) Chr.D. p.231

(2) Ibid, pp.81, 232ff

(3) Ibid, p.239

(4) Ibid, p.335f

the "historical kernel" of the statements of the biblical documents is regarded as so clouded that the question arises as to whether they are historical at all or whether they are merely a matter of "myth-construction." Against this view he urges that revelation is indeed history and finally rooted in historical events.⁽¹⁾

As we have already indicated, Barth abandoned the term Urgeschichte after the first edition of the Dogmatics, but he did not abandon the idea he had sought to convey by it. He ceased to use it, it seems, in order to cut links with the past, in order to allay suspicion that he was under the influence of various philosophies or Weltanschauungen, such as Kantianism or Existentialism, and to destroy the impression given by the use of the term that there is a strict dichotomy or diastasis between the spheres of the divine and the human which prevents any real concept of incarnation.⁽²⁾

But he could not abandon the idea as long as there remained the threat of positivistic historiography to theology. Consequently there is to be found in Church Dogmatics an extensive polemic against historicism and against the option taken by Bultmann in response to it.⁽³⁾ Divine and human history are not held rigidly apart as in Romans, but, nevertheless, while Barth maintains that the events of revelation are genuine historical events, and that all the acts of God in the sphere of the created world genuinely take place in history, he still insists that such events are not accessible to the research of positivistic historiography. He admits that the category of saga may well be applicable to certain parts of the material

(1) Ibid, p.235f

(2) cf Torsten Bohlin "Die Reich-Gottes-Idee im letzten halben Jahrhundert" Z.Th.K. vol.43 (vol.10 of Neue Folge, 1929), pp.1-27

(3) cf also Ev.Theol. p.29 passim; "Rudolf Bultmann, An Attempt to Understand Him" Kerygma and Myth, ed Bartsch, trans. R.Fuller (London, SPCK, 1959) Vol. II, pp.83-132: "...all I can do is to put to (Bultmann) the real theological question on which everything devolves. Is the demythologised kerygma allowed to say anything about God's having condescended to become this worldly, objective and ... datable?" (Kerygma and Myth, vol. II, p.109)

contained in the Bible, but denies that historicism can have anything of value to say about it, and certainly cannot make it irrelevant to the Church. (1) Thus although he does not use to any extent the terms Heilsgeschichte or Historie and Geschichte, nevertheless the ideas lie under the surface of the discussion. Geschichte refers to the activity of God, inaccessible to historians and therefore described as non-historical or pre-historical history. Historie on the other hand, is that which is observable for the historian as creaturely activity. (2) The distinguishing feature of the events of "the very special history of God with man" is that they are unique and unrepeatable: they cannot be regarded as examples of a general occurrence.

"Historical' in regard to 'revelation' must rather mean an event as a fact with no court of reference above it by which it could be inspected as a fact and as this fact." (3)

We find in Church Dogmatics an increasing emphasis on the incarnation; whereas in Romans Barth stressed the divinity of Christ almost to the exclusion of the humanity, we find him speaking, in 1956, of "The Humanity of God", and stressing the historicity of Jesus to such an extent that at least one critic claimed that Feuerbach had, after all, been proved correct. (4) Barth, however, is also at pains to emphasise that God does not cease to be God because of the incarnation. He is not subject to the contingencies and relativities of history in the incarnation: this historical event remains the absolute event with absolute significance. (5)

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- (1) cf for example his discussion of Creation in CD, III:1:80ff and angelology in CD, III:3:374 ff
- (2) The terms Historie and Geschichte are used with particular reference to the doctrine of creation (CD, III:1:59ff, 78ff) but he does not maintain the distinction consistently elsewhere. He says of reconciliation that it is Geschichte but means by that that it must be recognised as actual fact, as having genuinely taken place. To try to grasp it as supra-historical or non-historical is not to grasp it at all. It is indeed divine activity, not the activity of man, but it is "truth actualised in a history (Geschichte) and revealed in this history as such - revealed, therefore as history". Nevertheless it is "the very special history of God with man, .. of man with God" (CD, IV:1:157)
- (3) CD, I:1:378
- (4) J. Taubes, "The Copernican Turn of Theology", Religious Experience & Truth (ed S. Hook). p. 74. (5) cf From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 299f

The resurrection compels us to view Jesus in an altogether different light from that in which the Quest for the Historical Jesus saw him. The resurrection itself is also an event in history, just as the incarnation is; it is not a timeless idea.⁽¹⁾ But at the same time it is more than an event in the flux of historical causality: it is the prism through which Jesus should be regarded, indeed it is the prism which alters our perspective on the whole of reality.⁽²⁾

In Jesus, therefore, divine and human history genuinely come together: Jesus is not timeless truth, but truth in history. For this reason we find it impossible to accept Alan Richardson's characterisation of Barth's work as a "disengagement from history"⁽³⁾ It is rather, as Richardson himself admits, a rejection of historicism, but it is also a rejection of the Bultmannian school and of the romantic idealist interpretation of history. Theology can have only one goal, a deeper understanding of God as revealed in Jesus Christ; it cannot, therefore, engage upon the philosophy of history apart from Christ, for it is concerned with the "very special" history of God with man. It therefore claims for the events of the Gospel a unique significance and must be prepared to allow the exposition of those events to appear to be "supernaturalistic" because they are the activity of a God who is quite distinct from man and from the natural world.

(1) CD, III:2:442

(2) Ibid

(3) History Sacred and Profane (London, S.C.M. Press, 1964), pp.134-39

(b) Revelation and Religion

Although Barth is well known for his vehement rejection of natural theology he did at one time contemplate its validity. In 1923 he wrote to Thurneysen:

"There is a 'natural theology'; even the proofs of God are not to be wholly despised; specifically from the standpoint of revelation one must postulate a relative and naturally imperfect knowledge of God on the part of the intellect." (1)

This he had learned from an understanding of Book I of Calvin's Institutes through Peterson's lectures on Aquinas. (2) However, he never promulgated the view and indeed the lecture "Church and Theology" seems to mark his turn against Peterson and natural theology. When he came to write his Church Dogmatics he was ready for a vigorous disavowal of natural theology and the notion of analogia entis which he saw as responsible for it. (3)

It is not our intention to engage in a discussion of Thomistic studies in order to decide what Aquinas meant by the analogy of being - in any case we have Bouillard's well-documented evidence that it was Przywara who led Barth astray and not Aquinas (4) - but to draw attention to the fact that the analogia entis of which Barth speaks in Church Dogmatics and in No! (5) is the doctrine which attributes Being both to God and to creation as the common factor on the foundation of which it is supposed that a natural knowledge of God may be constructed which is relevant to Christian theology. This Barth contests vigorously, but chiefly on the ground not so much that no analogy exists (he can scarcely deny that a doctrine of creation is essential

(1) Rev.Theol. p.161 (Dec 20th 1923)

(2) Peterson lectured on Church History at Göttingen from 1920 until 1924. Barth added after his remarks on natural theology however: "But tell that to no-one, I must first sleep on it for a while until it becomes ripe for promulgation" (Ibid, p.162)

(3) CD, I:1:x, 28-30, 44 *passim*

(4) Karl Barth, vol.3, p.212f; Knowledge of God, p.120. Bouillard further says that it was not Aquinas' doctrine of analogy that Barth should have attacked, but that of Cajetan and Suarez (Karl Barth, vol. 3, pp.194ff)

(5) Published in Natural Theology, pp.65-128

to any doctrine of the Incarnation), but that any attempt to build a theology in this way is futile. What Barth wishes to reject is not so much analogy itself, as the use made of it by natural theology to infer knowledge of God from finite reality.

But if there is no continuity between God and nature of such a sort as to furnish a foundation for the knowledge of God, that is not to deny that the created world is God's creation, but merely to point to the fact that for Christian theology it is the Incarnation, the cross and the resurrection that must be both normative and the starting point.

Not only was Barth in opposition to Brunner and the advocates of natural theology⁽¹⁾ but also to Schleiermacher and the romantic approach to nature which is in some respects closely related to natural theology. A consideration of Schleiermacher is, therefore, important to a study of Barth's theological method on account of the strong negative influence which he exercised on him.

The focal point of Barth's negative response to Schleiermacher as the representative of 19th century theology is Schleiermacher's thesis that the point of contact between God and man is to be located in the concept of religion. However, when Barth speaks of religion, particularly in Romans, his target is not always Schleiermacher, but in many cases is the idea of religion as piety. It is in his later works and chiefly in Die Christliche Dogmatik, that he is concerned more with Schleiermacher's own conception of religion. Nevertheless, the two are not entirely distinct and we must speak of both.

(i) In the volume of criticism of the concept of religion it is easy to gain the impression that Barth took a wholly negative view of the concept,

(1) Barth would include Althaus with his "Prime" or "Primal" revelation in this category.

but such is not in fact the case⁽¹⁾ Religion (and here he is speaking more of religion conceived as piety than in Schleiermacher's sense of the word) does have some positive value, as is evidenced in both the first and second editions of Romans. It is, indeed, a necessary and inevitable outcome of God's action.

"Religion is the necessary response of the spirit to the creative act of God, the Church an inevitable historical, controlling, directing and channelling of the divine spring as it bursts out." (2)

"Religion is the unavoidable reflection in the soul - in experience - of the miracle of faith which has occurred to the soul. The Church, from which we can never escape, is the canalisation in history of that divine transaction in men which can never become a matter of history." (3)

Religion is akin to circumcision: it is a result of the event of revelation, but it is in itself nothing at all. Its value is as a token, or a seal, pointing beyond itself, like the value of circumcision:

"[Theocracy, Religion and the Church] are the living sign of the divine promise, not for those who casually gather around the sign - at best it is a sign for them too - but for those for whom it has indispensable value, for the church of Abraham in faith, who, like him are in deed and in truth genuine hearers of the divine Word." (4)

"True religion is a seal, reminding men that they have been established by God and that they will be established by Him; it reminds them also of their dissolution and of their redemption, and of the daily renewed faithfulness of God. As a seal it points onwards to the covenant between God and man, which still remains unfulfilled, and which still awaits its inauguration." (5)

Barth has, therefore, no interest in winning men, whether they be cultured, artisans or young people to "religion" or "the Church"⁽⁶⁾ since these are

(1) As J.A. Veitch has recently pointed out in "Revelation and Religion in the Theology of Karl Barth", SJT, vol. 24 (1971), pp. 1-22

(2) 1R, p. 86

(3) 2R, p. 129

(4) 1R, p. 87

(5) 2R, p. 129f

(6) 1R, p. 89

not things which exist for themselves. Schleiermacher himself would have agreed, for the idea of religion which he commended to its cultured despisers could not be expected to lead to a resurgence of piety without a transformation out of all recognition of existing structures.

(ii) In the first edition of Romans, Barth speaks of religion as a reminder of the fact that man is a member of a divine race, as a recollection of the former immediate relationship with God and as a longing for the lost origin.⁽¹⁾ He speaks in similar Platonic terms in the second edition

"Our memory of God accompanies us always as problem and warning. He is the hidden abyss; but He is also the hidden home at the beginning and end of all our journeyings." (2)

But no religion, or natural theology, can save us, or bridge the gulf between man and his "lost origin."

The difference between the two editions at this point lies in the sharpness with which the line is drawn between man and his lost origin. If the first edition suggests that religion makes man aware of the problem, Barth seeks to correct the impression in the second with the assertion that religion does not even discover the problem, let alone solve it; it merely makes the problem more pointed.⁽³⁾ Nor is an awareness of the problem, however acute the awareness may be, the solution: it is mere "pious dialectic" to speak as though disapproval of sin was its dismissal and forgiveness.⁽⁴⁾ Religion can only sharpen the awareness of the contrast between God and man: it marks out the last human possibility, in contrast to divine possibility, and the great gulf between them. Through religion grace is seen to be grace, for religion makes man aware of his own impotence;

(1) Ibid, pp.18,26

(2) 2R, p.46

(3) 2R, p.258

(4) Ibid, p.261f

but this very fact confronts man with the divine possibility and awakens the desire to be reached by that divine possibility. Religion itself can only leave man in a "Yes" and "No" position, hovering between the Either and the Or, and so points to its own impotence, but thereby also, negatively, to God's grace which confronts man.

"Religion speaks only of dissonance ... Religion merely exposes the disunion of human knowledge and human life; for it speaks of one reality only - the reality of sin." (1)

But paradoxically:

"In the inexorable reality ... of this supreme human possibility sin is shown forth as the power which reigns within the closed circle of humanity. Nevertheless, its power is bounded by the freedom of God, of God himself, and of God alone. But it has no other boundary. This is the meaning of the law: it sharpens our intelligence that we may perceive ... the sheer impossibility of our attaining that freedom from the law, that service in newness of the spirit, at which have gazed - outside the frontiers of religion." (2)

The very existence of religion as the worshipping of God is an indication of sin: Eve ought not to have worshipped God because doing so separated her from God. When men, knowing good and evil, become like God, their direct relation gives birth to independent action and so the direct relation is broken off. Religion, therefore, is the symptom of the fact that our whole concrete existence is sinful. (3)

"Religion is that human necessity in which the power exercised over man by sin is clearly demonstrated." (4)

It is clear from the account so far given, that there is a certain lack of precision in Barth's concept of religion, which can lead to the impression that he is contradicting himself. On the one hand he has described religion as a token of the promise of God, and on the other hand as the supreme human possibility which is a token of the inability of man to reach God. However, it is to be remembered that the first

(1) Ibid, p.262

(2) Ibid, p.257

(3) Ibid, p.246f

(4) Ibid, p.253

definition is proposed within the exposition of the meaning of circumcision. Thus the piety of the church is the reminder of God's promise, but it is the reminder of God's promise, and so in the discussion of Romans VII, it is also the reminder of man's incapacity to solve the problem of sin for himself - the reminder that piety is a response and not a method of salvation.

Religion viewed as piety is incapable of saving man, of bridging the gulf between God and man. (1) But it does appear to serve the function of confronting man with the impossibility of reaching God, and of driving him to despair in the face of this apparent impasse. At the moment of his despair, however, he can be confronted with the impossible possibility that is within God's power. Not only does Barth approximate closely to the method of Kierkegaard at this point, but he was, as he saw later, in danger of creating a kind of negative natural theology, inasmuch as the despair engendered by religion may be thought to expose some negative 'point of contact' (Anknüpfungspunkt) (2)

(iii) Religion viewed as piety or "religiosity" is not the sole type of religion discussed by Barth. Mixed with the attack on "religiosity" is also a fierce attack on Schleiermacher, and his concept of religion. Nor are the two concepts wholly unrelated, even though they are to be distinguished, for they both treat of the relationship between God and man. The difference is that religiosity regards the gulf as in principle bridgeable, while Schleiermacher's concept treats it as non-existent.

The critical point in Barth's attack on the concept of religion is the relationship between God and man. In opposition to Schleiermacher's assertion of a fundamental continuity, Barth maintains that there is a

(1) Where chapter VIII in 2R is used for our attack on Religion, in 1R it is used for an attack on individualism. The effect, however, is very similar as in 1R he attacks the pietistic complaint "My sin! my sin! What shall I do?"

(2) Natural Theology, p.114f

radical discontinuity between God and man, for the question of the relationship between God and man, is, at base, not a question of the relationship between the finite and the infinite, but a question about sin. To treat it as a question of the relationship between the finite and the infinite, to be solved on the basis of our living, moving and having our being in God, is not only a misreading of the intention of the passage from the Acts of the Apostles,⁽¹⁾ but is indeed a trivialisation of the problem of sin; it makes religion into a "trivial and harmless" thing that does not approach the awfulness of the problem of sin and cannot cause any offence.⁽²⁾ Barth resists any attempt to shift the focus of the relationship between God and man from the realm of an interpersonal relationship to an ontic relationship, and is therefore unwilling to countenance the shift of the centre of theology from the resurrection to a consideration of ontology or creation. Consequently for Barth, religion, far from emphasising the ontic continuity between God and man, and being a "feeling and taste for the infinite",⁽³⁾ is the final possibility of a lost humanity which serves only to emphasise the personal discontinuity and the gravity of sin. If God encounters man in this manner in religion, then he will do so in no other manner in nature or culture.⁽⁴⁾ Nature, culture and religion offer no certainty of God's presence, nor of his mercy.

"True statements about God can only be made at all where one knows he is placed not on some height of culture or of religion, but before revelation and therefore under judgement...." (5)

The cross and the resurrection are the tokens of judgement on all aspects of human life, including culture. Culture is merely man's self-expression and as such, stands not in opposition to religion but with it, capable only of

(1) Acts 17²⁸

(2) 2R, p.258

(3) Barth uses Schleiermacher's own phrase - 2R, p.260

(4) 2R, p.244, cf also Humanity, p.54; W.G.W.M. p.107

(5) F.u.A., p.11 (E.T. in Beginnings, vol. I, p.168)

leading to a sharpened awareness of human incapacity to reach God.

To regard religion as a means of apologetic is, then, fundamentally mistaken, for to attempt to draw conclusions about divine truth on the basis of a penetration of culture, or on the basis of the religious affections is not to speak of God at all, but, as Feuerbach charged, so speak of man. (1)
Therefore, Barth, pronouncing judgement on Schleiermacher, observes:

"With all due respect to the genius shown in his work, I can not consider Schleiermacher a good teacher in the realm of theology, because, so far as I can see, he is disastrously dim-sighted in regard to the fact that man as man is not only in need, but beyond all hope of saving himself; that the whole of so-called religion, and not least the Christian religion, shares in this need; and that one can not speak of God simply by speaking of man in a loud voice." (2)

It may be that Barth tends to view Schleiermacher through Feuerbach's - and also Overbeck's - spectacles, so that his view of "religion" is rather that of Feuerbach than of Schleiermacher, but it was Schleiermacher's view that made possible the view that Feuerbach attacked.

Barth summarises his criticism of Schleiermacher's concept of religion in Die Christliche Dogmatik (3) under the heading "The Subjective Possibility of Revelation" and maintains that Schleiermacher's identification of the subjective possibility of revelation with the concept of religion is deficient at four points.

(i) Instead of representing man as naked and destitute before God, Schleiermacher represents religion as the pride and crown of humanity: religion is the "sense and taste for the universe", a part of the soul in which divinity lives pre-eminent and reveals itself in its immediate effects. All that is required to experience the eternal is to bring together the right view of the universe with the right feeling for it.

(1) 2R, p.236; TC, pp.217-237; F.u.A. p.9f

(2) W.G.W.M. p.195f

(3) Op cit. pp.301ff

(ii) It is impossible for Schleiermacher to speak of a "certain personal presence of God which is, as such, unambiguously distinguishable"; for Schleiermacher the subjective possibility of revelation consists in ascribing the divine subjectivity to man, so that he can say

"I lie in the bosom of the infinite world, I am its soul at this moment, for I feel all its powers and its infinite life as my own, at this moment it is my body, for I penetrate its muscles and limbs as my own and its innermost nerves move according to my sense and idea as my own." (1)

There is no world over against the religious man, only one world of which he is a part; consequently, religion has no object to which obedience and faith are the appropriate response. Piety is a sense of absolute dependence, which is a sense of relation or relatedness to God, which is in turn the name for the origin of our existence, a pure symbol denoting no object at all.

(iii) Religion cannot be a knowing and a doing, since it has no object: it can only be joy. It cannot understand faith as risk or obedience as duty.

(iv) Schleiermacher's concept of religion does not take account of the fact that our relationship with God, viewed from our side, is a drama, a struggle, a conversation, the constancy of which rests in God alone. Schleiermacher's use of the assertions that we "live and move and have our being" in God is a misuse. It is wrong to view all things as revelation, all events as miracles, for God "appointed some vessels to honour and some to dishonour". All these objections point to a failure on Schleiermacher's part to take sin seriously.

Since Barth rejects Schleiermacher's view of religion and the view of the relationship of man and God associated with it, it is not surprising to find that he also rejects the mysticism which is their correlate. In spite of his own admission that Schleiermacher's mysticism

(1) Chr.D., p.308f

has a positive character inasmuch as it seeks to engage with culture instead of fleeing the concrete world by a radical negation of the whole of reality,⁽¹⁾ Barth finds that the chief characteristic of Schleiermacher's mysticism is its passivity.⁽²⁾ Consequently he maintains that the interests in culture and in mysticism are two separate tendencies, which, despite all attempts by Schleiermacher, cannot be brought together in a synthesis. Although Barth's own argument is not very clear - he does not explain precisely why it is that the two tendencies are incompatible - it appears that his real objection is that if the feeling of absolute dependence is purely passive, and the interest in culture is directed at seeking the infinite within the finite, mysticism cannot be expected to have any positive effect on culture, since it can neither offer any criterion by which to recognise the infinite within the finite nor, consequently, show how culture is to be a more adequate expression of the infinite.

If Schleiermacher's mysticism founders on the rock of epistemology, the true mysticism, with its wholly negative character with respect to the material world, can fare no better, for it can give validity neither to the world of concrete objects nor to historical events.

In the section in the Church Dogmatics ⁽³⁾ parallel to the section in Die Christliche Dogmatik, Barth once again takes up the attack on religion, but at this point his target is not primarily Schleiermacher, as is the case in the first edition. Religion is here conceived of as any form of human piety, whether Christian, Muslim, Buddhist or any other. As human piety, an attempt to reach God, it assumes that the gap between man and God is bridgeable. It is therefore, unbelief, because it ignores the fact that the gap has been bridged by God in Christ.

(1) TC, p. 176

(2) Ibid, p. 197

(3) CD, I:2:pp 280-361

"Revelation does not link up with a human religion which is already present and practised. It contradicts it...." (1)

Nevertheless, Barth makes a concession that he would not have made earlier;⁽²⁾ there is such a thing as true religion. But we can only speak of true religion in the sense in which we speak of a "justified sinner"⁽³⁾ It is never a human possibility of reaching God, but rather a response to God which must never leave behind ^{itself} / the revelation of God.

Religion, neither as human piety, nor as Schleiermacher's "feeling and taste for the infinite" can be admitted by Barth to be relevant to theology, not simply because they ignore, or treat as insignificant the discontinuity between God and man, but because they undervalue the revelation of God, and, indeed seek to leave it behind.

The point which we have been attempting to make in this section has been largely negative. We have sought to focus attention on certain key points at which Barth thinks it necessary to dispense with attitudes which he regards as inimical to the real task of theology. But it has been not merely a survey of the jetsam cast off in the lightening of Barth's load; it has also been an attempt to reveal the position which he adopts, as a foundation stone of his theological method, concerning the relationship of human and divine reality.

Many of the theological trends which he rejects are built on cosmological and ontological assumptions which he finds to be in conflict with the fundamental proposition of theology, namely that God has spoken. What is at stake in theology is not, in his view, an ontological relationship between God and man, but an inter-personal type of relationship. But he

(1) Ibid, p. 303

(2) Except in his exposition of religion as a parallel to circumcision

(3) Ibid, p. 325f

cannot escape altogether the ontological question. Even though he believes ontology to be incapable of furnishing a foundation for theology, there still remains the question of the ontological relationship between God and man. This is not, however, a question which interests Barth. Again, granted that the separation from fellowship with God which man suffers has been overcome solely by the gracious activity of God in Christ, and granted that theology knows anything of God solely because of God's own self-revelation, there remains the question of why it should be that the language which theology uses to conceptualise its knowledge of God is inadequate. Does its inadequacy stem from the sinfulness of man or from his finitude and his ontological dependence on God?⁽¹⁾ Barth is reluctant to reply. He regards the positing of an analogia entis, between man and God, a common concept of Being, as irrelevant to theology and appears to suggest that the answer is that the reality of God is so different from that of man that the concepts which man uses to grasp the reality of his own world are, of necessity, bound to be inadequate when applied to the divine reality.

"The divine and creaturely subjects are not like or similar, but unlike. They are unlike because their basis and constitution as subjects are quite different and therefore unlike, that is, there is not even the slightest similarity between them." (2)

Whether Barth is indulging in hyperbole here is difficult to be certain, but it is the kind of statement that prompts Bouillard to comment

"One would be tempted to say that (Barth) superimposes upon a natural equivocality an univocity lent by grace." (3)

Barth's main contention, however, is that neither the concept of analogia entis, nor the romantic idealist view of history, nature or

(1) cf Henning Schröter; Die Denkform der Paradoxalität als Theologisches Problem (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1960), p.52 "[Theology] must ... ask whether it regards its thought form as more adequate than others. When that happens, it has a particular ontological conception of phenomenality. Secondly it must ask whether this inadequacy is based in sin or in createdness. That is a question which dialectical theology, for example, has seldom answered with precision."

(2) GD, III:3:103

(3) Bouillard, Karl Barth, vol. 3, p.210; Knowledge of God, p.118

religion are relevant to theology, because theology takes its cue from the actuality of the divine revelation in Christ. No ontological continuity that may exist between God and man is of any relevance to theology, for to treat it as such is a token of the pride that ignores God's gift of his self-revelation.⁽¹⁾ The doctrine of justification is relevant, therefore, not only to man's status as a sinner, but to his status as ignorant of God's truth. His language can only be spoken of as adequate to divine truth by the grace of God in the same way as that he can be regarded as righteous only by God's grace.

The significant aspect of the relationship between God and man, is for Barth, its personal quality, and the dependence of that relationship upon God's will and activity. We may say that his concept of God is, to this extent, nominalistic. But it cannot be said that Barth's concept is nominalistic in the same way as is that of Ockham, for whom God's will is such that he can dispense with all order to achieve his purpose. God is not subject to his own caprice, and therefore unknowable.⁽²⁾ Rather, it is Barth's belief that God has revealed himself in order to be known by man. It is the task of theology, therefore, to reflect on that revelation and to develop its concept of God from that reflection.⁽³⁾

(1) In "The Humanity of God" he qualifies what he said in the passage quoted about from CD, III:3:103, cautiously admitting that the concept of analogy may come into its right in the idea of the humanity of God, but he observes at the same time; "Man is not elected to intercourse with God because, by virtue of his humanity, he deserved such preference. He is elected through God's grace alone. He is elected, however, as the being especially endowed by God" (Humanity, p.53)

(2) cf Gordon Leff; Medieval Thought: St. Augustine to Ockham, (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1958) pp.255ff, 290. strictly speaking, Nominalism should not be applied to Ockham, since the philosophical debate of the 14th century was not a continuation of the battle between realism and nominalism. We use the term, however, since it is popularly employed as a term of abuse (directed particularly by Tillich against Barth) to underline the primacy of the Divine will.

(3) cf DiO, p.38

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STRUCTURE OF THEOLOGICAL METHOD

1. The Possibility and Rationality of Theology

(a) Introduction

Much of Barth's discussion of the nature of theological method is taken up with a polemic directed against the main trends of Protestant theology since the Reformation. It is not however, a matter of mere padding, for, as we suggested in our last chapter, it is intended not simply as a catalogue of mistakes, but as an attempt to expose the correct way for theology. The main reason for the various mistaken paths taken by theology, is, in Barth's view, the influence of rationalism on theology, and in particular the influence of Descartes and Kant.

When Descartes asked himself whether it is possible to escape from doubt about the reality of the external world, he answered in the affirmative, on the ground of the subject's own self-certainty. The subject knows that he exists because he is able to think (cogito ergo sum). The guarantee, therefore, of the external world is our idea of it. Similarly the existence of God is guaranteed by our possessing an idea of God. Theology, therefore, takes as its task, the exposition of our idea of God: in short, for knowledge of God it looks not to a Word of God given to man and mediated through Scripture, but to the idea that man himself has of God.

Kant, in contrast, denied the possibility of the rational proof of God's existence offered by Descartes. There can be neither a rational nor an empirical proof of the existence of God. Nevertheless, Kant was no atheist: his dismissal of attempts to prove the existence of God is not to be taken as a denial of the validity of the concept of God. His contention,

rather, was that it is impossible to discuss the existence of a thing which has no phenomenon. God cannot, therefore, be regarded as a constitutive idea, but he is necessary as a regulative idea, for without him, there can be no explanation of the universe. (1) The concept of God is also necessary to the work of practical reason, as the necessary postulate of moral thinking. Nevertheless, it is always impossible, in Kant's view, to assert that God exists. However, despite the differences between Kant and Descartes, the effect of theology is, at one point, the same: for its data, theology must look inwards, to the heart of man.

In Barth's opinion, the tendency towards rationalism in theology becomes discernible soon after the Reformation, with the introduction into theological writing of prolegomena, which gradually became extended discussions of Scripture, natural theology and religion. But the influence of rationalism reached its height in the ^{nineteenth} century, with Descartes' self-certainty becoming the foundation of theology and Kant's discussion of practical reason having the effect of reducing theology to morals. The chief error of the rationalist tendency was also the main characteristic of ^{nineteenth} century theology, namely, its methodological error of looking inwards for its data.

A further element of Kantian philosophy reinforced this trend; his doctrine of phenomenon and noumenon made it impossible to regard God as an object. God, argued Kant, has no phenomenon, no form in which he appears to man. He has, or, at least, may be thought to have, a noumenon, but since the noumenon or thing-in-itself cannot be known, God, lacking also a phenomenon and therefore lacking objectivity, cannot be known at all.

While Schleiermacher rejected Kant's rationalism, he was unable to deny entirely the force of his argument, for what Kant had done was, apparently,

(1) Kant; Critique of Pure Reason B710: "... this transcendental thing is only the schema of the regulative principle by which reason, so far as lies in its power, extends systematic unity over the whole field of experience." cf also F. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, vol. VII; H. Gollwitzer, The Existence of God as Confessed by Faith, pp. 67-71

to make it impossible, through his doctrine of knowledge, to approach "the reality of the Word of God". The theory of knowledge constructed in advance of the work of theology rendered a theology of the Word of God impossible.

"What cognitive method (Erkenntnisweg) leads us to the reality of the Word of God and gives us the right to do what we intend to do here? In the light of the almost insuperable difficulty of this question we must regard the procedure of neoprotestant theology as classically represented by Schleiermacher as at least understandable." (1)

Nevertheless, understandable as his course of action may have been, it remained true that Schleiermacher had substituted for an investigation of the Word of God an examination of the human religious affections. (2)

Not only did Schleiermacher and / ^{nineteenth} century theology in general come under the influence of rationalism; so also did Harnack, with his attempts to create a scientific theology, supplementing historical knowledge and critical reflection with "a high regard for morality". (3) The Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, with its phenomenology of religion, was in no better case.

Having rejected as alternatives to Schleiermacher's method the possibilities of a return to a "dead, impossible orthodox belief in authority" an "uncritical and unchristian metaphysics" or a "subjectively determined irrational intuition". (4) Barth determined to make a new attempt to approach the Word of God instead of the human religious awareness as the object of theology. Crucial to an understanding of this attempt is a recognition that the chief characteristic of knowledge of God is its personal character, produced in the encounter between man and God in his revelation of himself. It is, we may say, not only savoir, but connaitre. Correlatively, the Word of God is to be construed as God's speaking to man, not as a simple

(1) Chr.D., p.92

(2) Ibid, p.92ff, cf also CD, I:1:240ff

(3) F.u.A. pp.7ff (E.T. Beginnings, vol. I, pp. 165 ff)

(4) Chr.D., pp.91,95

disclosure of information to fill an intellectual vacuum,⁽¹⁾ but as God's revelation of himself designed to restore and promote fellowship with man.

Since theology is concerned with the Word of God, it follows that the introduction of prolegomena to dogmatics should consist in a doctrine of the Word of God. Consequently Barth devotes the first section in both editions of his Dogmatics, to an account of this doctrine, beginning with the concept itself, and then proceeding to a closer examination of revelation as the revelation of the triune God, and of the concept of Holy Scripture. There are, however, certain differences between the two editions, which have been seen as significant for an understanding of Barth's method.

In the first edition, Barth announces that, having treated the concept of the Word of God "phenomenologically" - that is to say, having discussed the various aspects of the Word of God by which it is to be understood⁽²⁾ - he proposes to examine it existentially

"We can no longer, [in the quest] for a closer definition of the sermon as the starting point and goal of dogmatics, pass over the fact that it is man who speaks and hears, and with respect to the closer definition of the Word of God as the meaning and closer definition of dogmatics, no longer pass over the fact that it is also the relation of God to man which speaks for itself. If we posit man as a factor in our reckoning, then it stops being a merely apparent reckoning. The speech will no longer be, as it was, what we asserted and promised, a play, and we its spectators. Then we must understand everything up to now as a concrete situation, as an act in which we are involved. He only thinks truly of humanity when he thinks of himself....."

"It can be no more truly a case of the human than here, where human speech and hearing of God, where the Word of God ... is in question. And therefore we speak in what follows, no longer of Christian speech and preaching but of preacher and hearer.... Only thus can it become clear ... what we mean by the Word of God." (3)

There follow two sections, entitled respectively "The Word of God and Man as Preacher"⁽⁴⁾ and "The Word of God and Man as Hearer"⁽⁵⁾ in which he

(1) of Gustav Wingen, Theology in Conflict, (trans. E.H. Wahlstrom, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1958). Wingen argues, on the basis of this conception of knowledge, that Barth founds his theology on an anthropological presupposition, namely, man's lack of knowledge of God.

(2) As sermon, as canon (Scripture) and as revelation.

(3) Chr.D. p.48f

(4) Ibid, pp.47ff

(5) Ibid, pp.65ff

apparently contends that an understanding of the Word of God involves an understanding of man to whom it is directed, as though an analysis of the situation of the preacher and the hearer can lead to a closer definition of the Word of God. At the end of each of the two sections is a discussion entitled "Closer definition of the Word of God".⁽¹⁾ Their content, however, is not dependent upon the material in the rest of the sections. They are not conclusions drawn strictly on the basis of the analyses, but rather on the basis of further (implicit) "phenomenological" investigation. His conclusions, which he still draws in the Church Dogmatics, are that the Word of God is rational; that, in the Word of God, God always remains subject; and that the Word of God, as that which becomes clear in revelation, is always event, and therefore is marked both by hiddenness and revealedness.⁽²⁾

As a result, the discussion of the concrete situation of man, appears as quite irrelevant to the argument of the book, and it is therefore difficult to understand how Siegfried could have made the mistake which he did in asserting that Barth intended to build his dogmatics on the existential thinking he has introduced.⁽³⁾ Barth was right to omit the offending passages in the second edition, although one may wonder whether he did perhaps over-react. He had not intended to give the impression that was received by Siegfried. In view of this and of the generally irrelevant character of the analyses which do not contribute to the overall intention, it is hardly fair to suggest that Barth was guilty of methodological error at this point.⁽⁴⁾ Even his assertion that the fact that the Word of God is not simply word but address, implying that man is included in the concept

(1) Ibid, pp.62-64, 79-81

(2) Barth himself later acknowledged that the conclusions drawn in these two discussions and in a further similar discussion (pp.110-112) are not drawn on the basis of the preceding analysis. "Between the analyses and the closer determinations stood certain thought associations, but, take them all in all, the latter were proved elsewhere...." CD, I:1:143

(3) Ibid, p.142, quoting Th. Siegfried, Das Wort und die Existenz Vol. I, p.36

(4) pace Torrance (Introduction, pp.140ff) and Parker (Karl Barth, p.67)

of the Word of God, and that there can be no speaking of the Word of God if nothing is said of its reception by man⁽¹⁾, does not significantly influence the overall discussion of the whole volume.

(b) The Possibility of Theology

At the beginning of the sections in Die Christliche Dogmatik on "The Incarnation of the Word" and "The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit", Barth places paragraphs entitled respectively "The Objective Possibility of Revelation" and "The Subjective Possibility of Revelation", in the course of which he discusses the reality of the incarnation and of grace.⁽²⁾ It thus appears that he discusses the question of possibility first, so that the reality seems to be dependent on the possibility. Torrance comments:

"... the theologian [must] raise and establish the question as to the possibility of the object on the actual ground on which knowledge of the object arises, and then proceed critically from within its actuality outwards to its possibility. The question as to the possibility, therefore, cannot scientifically be posed a priori, but only a posteriori." (3)

He adds, therefore, in a footnote,

"Hence in his discussion of the subjective reality and possibility of Revelation, and its corresponding subjective reality and possibility, Barth reversed in his CD 1:2 pp.1ff and 203ff the order he had adopted in his Chr.D., pp. 214ff and 284ff." (4)

In the second edition of the dogmatics Barth did in fact include separate sub-paragraphs on the objective reality, objective possibility, the subjective reality and subjective possibility under the paragraphs entitled "God's Freedom for Man" and "Man's Freedom for God", instead of treating reality under the heading of possibility. Furthermore, he treats of reality

(1) Chr.D., p.111

(2) Chr.D., p.214ff, 284ff

(3) Introduction, p.193

(4) Ibid

before possibility. These alterations, however, are not to be taken as indicating any fundamental change in ^{his} methodology, for the whole of Die Christliche Dogmatik presupposes the methodological priority of the reality of revelation over the question of its possibility. Indeed, Barth himself says of the first edition:

"I knew that in all enquiries into the possibility of God's revelation we had first to reckon with the reality of it... I was aware that I had to express this if only in the form of numerous 'reservations'. But I did it only in the form of 'reservations' within an investigation, in which, by pointing to grace confirmed by baptism, I aimed to advance from a description of the subjective possibility to revelation to the description and valuation of its reality, or, as it were, from the problems raised by this concept to their actual solution." (1)

The actual structure of the argument was in conflict with his own pre-suppositions and yet, in spite of the mistake, the result was the one intended by the presupposition and not that intended by the structure of the argument.

The burden of Barth's argument so far is that theology cannot proceed by discussing first the possibility of theological knowledge, on the basis of a preconceived method of obtaining knowledge. For theology, knowledge (Erkenntnis), is to be understood primarily as acknowledgement (Anerkenntnis)⁽²⁾ The possibility of revelation, therefore, can be discussed only after the question of the reality of revelation.

There remains, however, the question "How do we know the Word of God?" To this Barth answers that we know by being known. If this appears to involve theology in a petito principii, taking for granted the premise which depends on the conclusions, then theology must not be ashamed of it, for to be ashamed of it is to be ashamed of the Gospel itself. It is dishonest to seek some way out, as does Schleiermacher, or Schüder, by investigating the religious affections, because the question still remains:

"Who can ... investigate his consciousness for its God-content, without knowing from somewhere else what he is looking for." (3)

(1) CD, I, :2:205f

(2) Chr. D., p.102; CD, I:1:233ff.

(3) Chr. D., p.107

In the knowledge of God, God himself is sovereign. The possibility of man's knowledge of God resides, therefore, not in a religious a priori, but in the work of the Holy Spirit.

"Subjective revelation can consist only in the fact that objective revelation, the one truth which cannot be added to or bypassed, comes to man and is recognised or acknowledged by man. And that is the work of the Holy Spirit." (1)

The certainty of theology, therefore, is not based upon a Cartesian self-certainty, but upon the certainty of God given by the Holy Spirit. (2)

In complete defiance of Kant, Barth asserts that God is an object of knowledge. But it is important to note that when we speak of God as an object of knowledge, we do so in a very special sense, for God is never under our control. In the relationship of knowledge between God and man, God always remains subject, active and sovereign, for knowledge of God is God's own gift to man.

In order to signify God's sovereignty in the knowledge, Barth speaks of him as Gegenstand rather than as Objekt, apparently because of the connotations of Objekt, which suggest the disinterestedness of the empirical method and the scepticism of positivism. (3) If God is the object of our knowledge, he is so in a unique sense: he cannot be treated as one object among others.

(1) CD, I:2:239

(2) Chr. D., p.108. "The procedure in theology is to base self certainty upon God - certainty and to measure it by God-certainty and so to begin with God-certainty without waiting for this beginning to be legitimised by self-certainty" (cf CD, I:1:223), cf also "Offenbarung, Kirche und Theologie" FuA, p.166 "Descartes was wrong: our own existence is .. less certain than this event, the existence of God for us." "God for us" refers not to our subjective apprehension of God "what he is for us" but to the objective activity of God on our behalf.

(3) cf CD, II:1:13. We cannot agree with James Brown's argument ("Subject & Object in Modern Theology pp.140-67) that Barth uses Gegenstand in preference to Objekt on account of its more active connotations as against the passivity implied in the etymological derivation of Objekt. The point which Barth wishes to make is primarily a matter of denying the possibility of "objectifying" God. Gegenstand lacks the verbal connection with "Objektivismus" of "Offenbarung, Kirche, und Theologie", FuA p.166: "It is precisely in the Church that one knows God's truth is not an object (Gegenstand) and not a 'supernatural' object either - but the eternal subject which is known to us only in its secrecy, only to faith". (continued at the foot of the next page)

"If they (i.e. Schäfer etc) shake their heads and say to us that an object (Objekt), which is not reality in our awareness, is not as such a knowable object (Objekt), then we reply, shaking our heads just as much, that we are not speaking of an 'object' (Objekt) when we refer to God's Word, but of the subject which, if it is turned into an object (Objekt), is not what it is; we are speaking of an object (Gegenstand) which can become an object (Gegenstand) for us only in strict 'non-objectivity' (Nicht-Gegenständlichkeit)" (1)

Not only does Barth wish to avoid the kind of objectivism involved in empiricism but also the kind involved in philosophical realism, which, he contends, treats God as the "ontic and noetic fate" of man, which man cannot avoid by reason of his participation in the orders of being and knowing, and as an object to be found in the external world or within human awareness. (2)

It is not simply that Barth wishes to emphasise that knowledge of God is the result of an act of grace; a kind of theological realism, or idealism even, might incorporate such an assertion, admitting that were it not for God's grace we could not know anything of him, but asserting that the act of grace being completed, revelation is everywhere and at all times available to man. Barth, in contrast wishes to emphasise the continuing subjectivity of God in revelation; revelation is never at the disposal of man. He therefore refuses to designate it as "the given"

"We find that by 'the Word of God' we are, in all circumstances, to understand a speaking of God, an act, whose subject is God and God alone ... As such, this reality clearly cannot be the content of our human awareness. It is really in God's awareness, not elsewhere. As such it may then, in faith, be believed, but in truth not, as it were, thereby given to man in faith as its object-content (Objektgehalt) But it is precisely as that which is not-given (Nichtgegeben) as God's own and as remaining God's own, that faith believes it. We are led to the same conclusion by the memory that the Word of God occurs, is spoken, in the diacrisis, in the decision between revelation and hiddenness, and so as a giving, not as a given-ness". (3)

(Note (3) continued from previous page) In a similar sentence written five years earlier he used the word 'Objekt' instead of Gegenstand (Schicksal und Idee in der Theologie" FuA, p.56) It should be added that his preference for Gegenstand may also reflect his Kantian heritage.

- (1) Chr.D, p.96
- (2) "Schicksal und Idee", FuA, pp.62-72
- (3) Chr.D, p.95f; cf also FuA, p.65

The possibility of theology, therefore, resides entirely in the actuality of revelation which, as a dynamic concept, always remains in the control of God himself. The actuality of revelation focusses upon the act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ, from which it can never be separated.

"Reconciliation is not a truth which must first be made known to us through revelation, but the truth of God himself, which he himself gives us in his revelation ... Revelation is reconciliation, as certainly as it is God himself: God beside us, God with us, and, decisively and above all, God for us". (1)

In view of this, there is no place in Barth's view for a natural theology, and he engages upon a vigorous attack on all talk of a point of contact, (2) whether conceived as positive, residing in a capacity for words, or some other anthropological point such as the intellect, the unconscious or sub-conscious, (3) or some special religious capacity, (4) or whether it is conceived as negative, residing in the ability of man to despair. (5) All discussion of these points is irrelevant to dogmatics, since the concern of dogmatics is not with questions of whether and how far man is able to grasp the content of the divine revelation on the basis of his own capacities, but with the question of the actual content of revelation, which is the "act of the free love of God." (6)

(1) FWA, p.164

(2) The chief target of his attack in CD and in "No!" was Brunner. His attack was sharpened by the belief that Brunner was undermining the stand of the Confessing Church against the German Christians (Parker, Karl Barth p.99; Torrance "Natural Theology in the Thought of Karl Barth" R.S. vol. 6 (1970), p.125

(3) CD, I:1:231 ff; cf also pp. 28-30

(4) Ibid, 220,232

(5) Ibid, 271; Natural Theology, p.114f

(6) CD, I:1:221. There are moments when Barth appears, in seeking to combat natural theology, to enter the anthropological ground of Brunner in order to argue that man has no capacity for God. But that it is not his intention to do so is clear from his own methodological principle that theology must begin with the reality of revelation and expound that. "Barth does not reject the possibility of a natural knowledge of God through agnosticism, nor in the name of a critique of knowledge. He does so in the name of biblical revelation." (Bouillard, Knowledge of God, p.17)

"[It is not that we have to regard the Word of God] as if man who is addressed and listens belonged by any essential necessity to the concept of the Word of God. That man is the addressee of the Word of God is a fact, so far as it is true, and not derivable from something else of which we might previously be aware concerning the nature of God. Still less ... from something of which we might previously be aware concerning the nature of man; God's Word ceases to be grace or grace itself ceases to be grace when we ascribe to man a disposition towards this Word, a possibility of knowledge independent of it and peculiar in itself over against this Word." (1)

Theology is built upon the actuality of revelation and a doctrine of revelation, therefore, is an account of and investigation into the actuality of revelation in Jesus Christ.

(c) The Rationality of Theology

It is not only the possibility of dogmatics which is of importance for theology, but also its rationality, but before we discuss Barth's particular approach to the subject, and in view of the various accusations of irrationalism that have been made against Barth, we must discuss briefly the ways in which the group of words "rational", "irrational", "rationality", "irrationality", "rationalism" and "irrationalism" may be used.

There are, broadly speaking, three types of rationalism. The first is that of Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza, in which it is asserted that certain ideas are purely the product of reason and not dependent upon sense experience for verification. The opponent of this kind of rationalism is empiricism (Locke and Hume) in which all ideas are derived from sense experience. Secondly, there is nineteenth century rationalism, which, in contrast to that of Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza, was atheistic and secularistic. More commonly spoken of in this century as humanism, it is, at least in part, a marriage of ^{seventeenth} century rationalism with empiricism, mixing the methodological scepticism of Descartes with a real scepticism about

(1) GD, I:1:221

the possibility of the existence of supernatural or other non-empirical entities. Finally, there is religious rationalism, which itself has two manifestations. On the one hand there is the rationalism of Aquinas, for whom reason and revelation are complementary in theology, revelation supplying that which reason is unable to provide. On the other hand, there is the rationalism of the Deists, who proposed to dispense with revelation altogether, and who insisted on the possibility of preaching an adequate knowledge of God by means of rational inference. Although it was Kant's intention to release religion from this kind of rationalism, he did in fact bolster it, so that reason came to be regarded as supremely competent in all matters of faith and morals.

Barth is attacked as an irrationalist on the one hand because of his rejection of a belief in the capacity of the human reason to achieve knowledge of God, or indeed to make any significant contribution to theology by itself. He is thus accused of irrationalism on account of his rejection of the religious rationalism of Aquinas and the religious rationalism of the Deists. (1)

On the other hand he is also attacked as irrationalist because of his refusal to accept the case of non-religious rationalists. One of his most severe critics is W. W. Bartley III, who accuses not only Barth, but most rationalists, of a "retreat to commitment". He argues that Popper or Ayer are every bit as irrationalist as Barth because of their claim that a minimum concession to irrationalism is necessary in the form of a commitment to, or faith in, reason, which is unjustifiable. Their kind of rationalism is as authoritarian in character as Barth's theology. Bartley argues that a consistent rationalism is possible if every commitment is open to criticism and is accepted only on a rational basis. (2)

(1) Criticism of this sort is usually made in the form of an attack on his adoption of revelation as furnishing the sole data of theology. cf Brand Blanshard's criticism in Faith & the Philosophers, ed J.Hick, pp.159ff

(2) W.W.Bartley III: "Karl Barth", Encounter, March 1970, p.49; The Retreat to Commitment (London, Chatto & Windus, 1964), pp.126ff, 134ff. Neither Barth nor Kierkegaard, in fact, believe the commitment to be irrational, nor that it is the product of pure subjectivism.

The chief criticism of the non-religious rationalists is that Barth's kind of theology is irrational because it is authoritarian or because it is non-empirical. However, if it is authoritarian, it is so on the basis of a commitment which Barth does not believe to be irrational, but to have been made under the impact of the Word of God through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

He rejects, then, not only religious rationalism, but also humanistic rationalism and what we might term a neutral rationalism: that is to say he rejects theistic, a-theistic and agnostic (in the popular sense rather than Huxley's) rationalism. His reason is that all are based on the Cartesian faux pas, that unaided human reason can construct a concept of God, and ignore the actuality of the revelation of God in Christ. He does not, however, reject the rationality of theology or the rationality of the object of theology. Theology is rational, in the sense that it seeks to conform itself to the rationality of its object and can be articulated in a logical fashion. Nevertheless, the final criterion of the truth of theological statements cannot be a system of formal logic, particularly if that system is governed by metaphysical assumptions.⁽¹⁾

We have already seen that when Barth wrote Die Christliche Dogmatik he had a considerable understanding of Anselm's theological method, and in particular had grasped from him the fact that theology is only possible from within faith, that its essential nature is fides quaerens intellectum. It was the task of lecturing in theology first at Göttingen and later at Münster that compelled Barth to consider the question of the rationality of theology: it was certainly not a matter of concern in the writing of Romans, with its focus on the Word of God as the paradoxical judgement of

(1) We have in mind the apparent logical contradiction involved in the assertion that Jesus is both God and man. The statement is paradoxical in that it confounds customary expectation, but it is only a logical contradiction if one holds certain beliefs about the nature of God and of man which preclude the possibility of the incarnation.

the guilt and the justification of men. Having decided to devote his lecturing entirely to the history of dogma, Barth found himself repeatedly facing questions that raised the problem of the rational basis of theology.⁽¹⁾

There can be little doubt that in his emphasis, at an early stage, on the fact that preaching is a declaring of the Word of God, that the preacher speaks because God has spoken, he was also aware of the implication of speaking of the Word of God, namely that revelation has a rational content, and is not simply a matter of a feeling of absolute dependence or of awe before the numinous. But that awareness did not come to the fore immediately. In Romans, the Word of God is thought of primarily in terms of a message, rather than of the message having a rational character.⁽²⁾ By contrast, his lecture, given in Cardiff on the task of the Reformed Churches, displays a growing awareness of the importance of rationality,⁽³⁾ while his two lectures on Schleiermacher and on the Word in Theology are quite explicit.⁽⁴⁾ He criticises Schleiermacher sharply, because it seems that, for him, the essence of theology is more akin to music than to a strictly rational (i.e. conceptual) science.

(1) cf Rev.Theol. pp.96, 167, 176, 182f, 185, 202f

(2) In Romans it appears that Barth believes the prime characteristic of the message to be its contradictoriness, even for believers. Alastair McKinnon maintains that in representing Christianity in this manner, Barth was under the influence of a popular German misconception of Kierkegaard and that later, when he thought he had gone beyond Kierkegaard he was in fact reflecting Kierkegaard more accurately. "Barth's Relation to Kierkegaard: Some Further Light" (Canadian Journal of Theology, vol.13 (1967), pp. 34,36

(3) Where he says, for example "At their very beginning the Reformed churches saw that truth is contained only in the Word of God, that the Word of God for them lay only in the Old and New Testaments, and that every doctrine must therefore be measured against an unchangeable and impassable standard discovered in the Scriptures." W.G.W.M. p.240f.

(4) T.C., pp.136-158, 159-199, 200-216.

"We could ask 'why music precisely?' And we should be answered: because words stand opposed to all that Schleiermacher understands as the genuine miracle of Christmas. Words are hostile to it, detrimental, always powerless to justify it. The man who undertakes to celebrate in words his own 'elevated humanity' becomes all too easily confusing and incredible to himself. 'All patterns are too stiff for me and all speech is too tedious and cold.' How fortunate that when we are disturbed and oppressed by the problem of words we can flee to the realm of music, to Christian music and a musical Christianity! Exactly because of its lack of concepts, music is the true and legitimate bearer of the message of Christmas...." (1)

Barth's rejection of the reduction of theology to a Cartesian rationalism, to a non-conceptual subjectivism or to a mixture of both is clear also in Die Christliche Dogmatik, where he explicitly speaks of the Word of God, God's act of speech to man, as pointing to the rationality of revelation, in sharp contrast to the irrationality of such concepts of revelation as those involved in "the numinous" or in "life", (2) but it was not until his study on Anselm that he articulated fully his understanding of the rationality of theology.

In the second edition of Romans he was still prepared to make use of the Extra Calvinisticum (finitum non capax infiniti) to support the assertion that man cannot understand the truth of God, because of the metaphysical assertion that since man is by definition finite and God infinite, man cannot understand God. (3) By 1923, however, he saw the

(1) Ibid, p.157; cf p.202. When he wrote The Christian Faith, Schleiermacher abandoned his original plan to place the Christological-Soteriological section at the beginning, and replaced it with the section that was to have been at the end, concerning universal religious assumptions, in order not to contribute to "the forcing out of our church community of those worthy men who are called rationalists" (cited by Barth TC, p.166 from Muler's edition of Schleiermacher's Sendschreiben an Locke, p.31f) by appearing as "one of the privileged few who possessed the 'precious jewel' of the 'idea' of God and man and who enjoyed therefore a secure basis for their faith..." (R.R.Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion, p.242). Barth comments ironically: "Schleiermacher was very right when he warned against driving away from the church 'the estimable men who are called 'rationalists'; for he himself would have had to leave!" (TC, p.203). Schleiermacher was to Barth a rationalist, inasmuch as he adopted the rationalist's anti-revelation stance, but irrationalist in his romanticism and his non-conceptual approach to the divine.

(2) Chr.D, p.63

(3) 2R, p.212

Extra Calvinisticum not so much as a metaphysical assertion but as a formulation of the truth that revelation is always a concealment; that is to say, God's revelation remains God's act and is never under human control. (1) In Die Christliche Dogmatik and Church Dogmatics, it is used not with reference to any human capacity for revelation, but only in its original context in the discussion of Christology. (2) Instead of speaking of man's finitude as the reason for his inability to know God, he speaks of man's sin as the reason. He replaces the formula finitum non capax infiniti with the formula homo peccator non capax verbi Dei. (3) It would, however, have been better if he had spoken simply of sinful man as not knowing God, since there is no question of discussing man's capacities. Sinful man is deprived not of a capacity to know God, but of actual knowledge of God, and this is so because knowledge of God is primarily personal in character and therefore cannot exist where communion is lacking.

At the same time, it is true that within faith man's knowledge of God has certain limits: it is man's knowledge of God, not God's knowledge of himself, even though it comes about through the activity of the Holy Spirit. God's truth is adapted to man's understanding, but at the same time, man's understanding is constantly being broadened. His status as a created being does have some implications for the extent of his understanding. His language has its origin in his relation to created reality and therefore is not of itself adequate to the truth of God. Knowledge of God, strictly speaking, is an eschatological concept, genuinely present, but awaiting fulfilment.

The account which Barth gives of the rationality of theology in Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum is applicable in principle not only to theology but to every scientific discipline. Even in the complex argument

(1) W.G.W.M., p.257

(2) Chr.D., pp.269ff, CD,I:2:168f

(3) CD,I:1:252

of the book, it can be reduced to the comparatively simple statement that human reason seeks to conform itself to the rationality of the object it wishes to understand. Not only does it seek to select the most appropriate method of approach to the object, which can be dictated only by the characteristics of the object itself, whether it be a concrete object, or a non-concrete force, a series of events or anything else, but it also seeks to understand and lay bare the intelligibility of the object itself. The theologian is as much committed to the intelligibility of the object of his study as is the physicist to that of the object of his study. The theologian is committed to the intelligibility of the object of his study because revelation is, as the Word of God, both speech and intelligible action.⁽¹⁾ These correspond, then, to the noetic rationality of the subject, that is, to the rational thought of man as he knows the object of his study, an ontic rationality in the object. In the case of the objective world of nature, there is conferred upon it in the act of creation a rationality, which even Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy cannot undermine, and man has an ontic ratio as has every other object of study in the created world. But man also possesses a noetic ratio, active in the knowledge of objects outside itself, although both the ontic and noetic rationes are created.⁽²⁾

God, however, is not a part of the created order, but the Creator himself, and is therefore the ultimate ratio or ratio veritatis or ratio summae naturae. While, therefore, the ontic ratio and its corresponding necessitas, the necessity of its being what it is and not something else, precede the noetic ratio and its necessitas, both the ontic and the noetic ratio are preceded by the divine ratio, and are dependent upon it. The noetic ratio cannot, in consequence, be regarded as creative or normative, but rather strives to understand the ontic ratio of the natural order and also to understand the ratio fidei, the truth conferred upon the Credo and

(1) Barth argues, similarly, that theological anthropology establishes that man is a rational being because he is addressed as such by and because it is thus presupposed that he was created a rational being by God, CD, III: 2: 422

(2) F.Q.I., p. 44f

the Bible as witnesses to the truth of God. If the recognition of the ontic ratio of the created world is "a matter of decision that has to be made from time to time" that is, the noetic ratio does not of necessity grasp and hold the noetic ratio, but the recognition of it is an act - it is especially true of the recognition of the ratio fidei, and that because God, who is the object of faith, is subject and not merely object: man never has the truth of God in his grasp in such a way that he can ignore the God whose truth it is, by withdrawing his obedience.

"In the Credo and in the Bible [the ratio veritatis] is hidden and must reveal itself in order to make itself known to us. It does this, however, only if and insofar as the Truth, God himself, does it. Thus: from time to time, in the event of knowing, it happens that the noetic ratio of the veritas conforms to the ontic and to that extent is or is not vera ratio - or (and this is nominally the case in praxi) is to some extent (aliquatenus). (1)

There must be, in all disciplines, an attitude which may be described as faith, a commitment to both the existence and the rationality of the object. (2) Theology does not exist to prove the existence of God from a position of faith - or for a position of scepticism - but to understand. So, when Anselm announces his proposal to undertake his Christological investigations "remoto Christo...quasi nihil sciatur de Christo" Barth is bound to argue that Anselm does not mean that he proposes a rationalistic proof and solution of Christology, suspending Scripture completely "as source and norm of his thinking" and so

"to reconstruct the Credo, apart from the contents of Scripture, tabula rasa, from elements of knowledge obtained elsewhere." (3)

In all its enterprise theology seeks a deeper understanding of that to which it is committed by seeking to penetrate the inner rationality of the object of faith.

Clearly, an analogy may be drawn between theology and other

(1) FQI, p.47 (2) cf Torrance, God and Rationality, p.8

(3) FQI, p.43, Barth admits however in CD, I:1:17 that the phrase is "not quite unobjectionable" and we may wonder, without prejudice to Barth's own case, whether Anselm was in fact as certain of his own purpose and method as is Barth. Barth argues that we must understand Anselm's idea of proof on the basis of Anselm's own theological scheme: hence proof is not a demonstration (continued at the foot of the next page)

disciplines in respect of this attitude of faith. But equally clearly, a distinction must be drawn, for the faith of theology is not the same as the "faith" of natural science. It has a personal character. It must, therefore, also be admitted that the distinctive mark of theological knowledge is its personal character; it is, as we have said, not only savoir but connaître.

A further distinction must also be drawn. The objectivity enjoyed by theology is entirely different from that of other disciplines, not only because it deals with an object who is personal, but because its object remains "indissolubly subject". Our knowledge of God is therefore dependent not simply upon our determination to discover the truth, but upon the activity of the Holy Spirit in opening the mind to receive the truth. For this reason theological investigation is to be understood as prayer. Even the discovery of the non-objectifiability of the physicist's knowledge, its inseparability from the human observer, cannot alter the distinction that must be made in comparing the faith of the theologian with respect to his object with the faith of the scientist with respect to his, for it remains true that they work with very different kinds of objectivity.

Following the lead of Anselm, Barth distinguishes between the ontic ratio on the one hand, and the noetic ratio on the other. In order to understand the object of his investigation, the scientist seeks to develop those means and methods available to him by which he is to conform his own ratio to that of the object. The same is true of the historian, and of the theologian. The ontic ratio to which the theologian seeks to conform his ratio is the ratio fidei, which is not itself the truth of God, but the truth conferred by God upon the Credo and upon the Bible. It is only in these

(continued from previous page) (3) of the existence of God but the exposition of the nature of God. To support this, he points out that Gaunilo is not an unbeliever but a monk. Bouillard, however replies that the monks for whom Anselm writes "have been bitten by a taste for dialectic; they demand rigorous proofs, valid in the eyes of one who, through ignorance, does not believe." (Knowledge of God, p.82). That however is a position which only the fool could hold, according to Barth.

created forms, and so through their ontic ratio that truth is mediated to us, and then only "from time to time", that is, by the continuous action of the grace of God.

While Barth does not wish to deny that God himself is the ultimate object of faith, neither revelation nor faith exists without conceptuality, a conceptuality which comes to fruit primarily in the Bible and in the Creed.⁽¹⁾ Just as we know God as he is in himself not immediately but mediately, through his revelation of himself in Jesus Christ, neither do we grasp the rationality of God immediately, but mediately, by means of the human language and concepts through which he has, in his grace, permitted himself to be known and adopted for use with reference to himself. Hence the ratio of the object of faith is conferred upon it, being that which is contained in the Bible and the Creeds. So he says:

"... it has been said about the ontic ratio that truth is conferred upon it, with the creation of the object of which it is the ratio. This is of course specially true of the ratio fidei, with which Anselm deals. For him, it is without question identical in the proper and strict sense with the ratio veritatis. And even here decision enters into it, not as to whether it is ratio veritatis, but whether it can be recognised as such. In the Credo and in the Bible it is hidden and must reveal itself in order to make itself known to us." (2)

This last passage also brings us back again to the status of God as subject in theological knowledge, for the "decision" character of knowledge, in the case of theology, is not simply a matter of acknowledgment of the truth of the object by man, but of God's revealing himself, making himself known in the "object of faith". Although Hamer charges Barth with occasionalism,⁽³⁾ and indeed the extent to which Barth emphasises that it is because God enables man to know him that there is a knowledge of God seems to

(1) We have already argued that Barth has in mind primarily the Apostles Creed, although he recognises that 'Credo' for Anselm may refer to any of the Creeds of the Church (FQI, p.23f)

(2) Ibid, p.47

(3) J. Hamer, Karl Barth, p. vi

give substance to the accusation, nevertheless the problem is that which Augustine articulated in speaking of faith itself as God's gift and not as man's contribution. Not only does man know nothing of God, apart from God's own revelation of himself; it is by God's own grace that man is able to acknowledge the truth and recognise its inner rationality.

"Only God Himself can be the subject of the knowledge of God: the Spirit which God gives, and which, as the Spirit of God, searcheth the 'deep things' of God, which it alone can know.... As those who have received the Spirit of God we know what is sent us from God in Christ the crucified." (1)

Barth's sense of the grace of God, of the relevance of the Holy Spirit and of the logic of revelation is so strong that his insistence that faith is a genuinely human act seems to some critics to be unconvincing, if not hollow, so that he is accused on the one hand of fideism (2) or on the other hand of reducing everything to grace. (3) Man's lack of knowledge of God is due to the sin which separates him from God and his actual knowledge of God is controlled by the revelation of God and the peculiar character of the objectivity of God. Since the understanding that Barth has of the Word of God comes to be concentrated increasingly on the revelation of God in Christ, it is fair to speak of Christ, in O'Grady's words, as both the sole noetic basis and the sole ontic content of theology. (4) In this sense theology is christology, an exposition of the revelation of God in Christ, by which all of the Bible is to be understood. Since God has chosen to reveal himself in word and act,

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- (1) The Resurrection of the Dead, p.26. Bouillard is quite right to stress that although knowledge of God is due to God's act of grace, it is nevertheless man who knows God, but it is difficult to see how it is that he is able, on this foundation, to assert that there is a natural knowledge of God capable of being demonstrated in a "proof". (Knowledge of God, p.127; cf Torrance, "Natural Theology in the Thought of Karl Barth", R.S. vol. 6 (1970) p.134f.
- (2) M.J.Charlesworth: St. Anselm's Proslogion (Oxford University Press 1965), pp.41 ff.
- (3) C. O'Grady, The Church in Catholic Theology (hereafter CCT), p.11f.
- (4) CCT, p.51; The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth (hereafter CTKB) p. 75

and in act interpreted by and also interpreting word, it is for theology to seek to understand the rationality, the rational content, of the Word. Reason, presented with the rational revelation of God, must seek to grasp its content.

2. The Sources of Theology

We have repeatedly asserted that from early in the period after the signing of the declaration of support for the Kaiser by the 93 intellectuals, Barth came to see the task of the preacher as the declaration of the Word of God, and that that task was first seen as the declaring of the message concerning God's righteousness and man's unrighteousness. His early work is primarily concerned with an attempt to rediscover the "veritable gospel", the core of the message. God's Word, however, is not simply a message, as becomes increasingly clear in Barth's work, but a revelation of Himself, a revelation which comes as Word, not as propositional revelation, nor yet solely in the form of a "thus says the Lord", but pre-eminently in the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ. In his interpretation of Christ as the Word of God, Barth opts for the Hebrew conception of Word, as God's speech and his declarative act, as the controlling factor, rather than the Greek understanding of "Word" as expressed in the concept of the Logos. If Logos is to be used, it is interpreted by Christ, rather than Christ being interpreted by Logos. We have observed, too, the increasing concentration of the idea of the Word of God on the Incarnation.

We must add to this, however, some qualifying remarks. In the first place it is important that we recall that in his later works, in particular, Barth emphasises that it is impossible to drive a wedge between word and act;⁽¹⁾ the act of incarnation and the act of reconciliation are

(1) In response to Goethe's attempt, by the mouth of Faust, to rewrite the opening words of the fourth gospel as "In the beginning was the Deed", Barth comments "... in contrast to all mere words and all empty deeds, revelation in the Christian sense is both Word and Deed at one and the same time". The Christian Understanding of Revelation, "Against the Stream", p.215

themselves revelation, revealing God's love for his creation. They are not irrational but acts with their own rationality, and therefore secondly, "Word" refers not simply to God's revelation as speech, but as rational speech addressed to man. Thirdly, God's Word is God's adaptation of himself to human reception, his adoption for the purpose of revelation of human language, or rather his permitting of human language to apply to him. In order to become the object of human knowledge, God expresses himself in terms of human conceptuality, but that is not to say that God is contained by human conceptuality. God is, in any case, known only mediately, not directly, for the language used does not cease to be human language, even though it is used under the impact of divine self-revelation, and by divine permission.

The divine self-revelation is for Barth very specifically the revelation of God in Christ: he views the incarnation quite literally as God's becoming man:

" [The] content [of the Gospel] ... is God's grace. It means and is Jesus Christ. For God's grace is just this: that the eternal Word of God became flesh."

"This means that, without ceasing to be God, it added our humanity to its divinity and received it into union with itself - a union which is not an intermixture but which is indissoluble." (1)

If the one indivisible God reveals himself decisively in Christ, then theology can be content to find its material in the person of Christ: indeed to do anything else is to accept a worthless substitute for the real thing. Other so-called sources of revelation are of no interest, or if they can be discussed, it is only in the light of Christ himself.

At this point, however, theology has its own problem of sources, since it cannot make a direct appeal to the revelation of God in Christ; it must therefore approach the Bible for its testimony to Christ, as the testimony of primary witnesses. (2) Several points must be made on this topic.

(1) "Gospel and Law" in God Grace and Gospel, p.4f

(2) cf Ev.Theol. pp. 26ff, 37

First, as we have already seen, Barth does indeed speak of the Bible as the Word of God, but only in a mediate and indirect sense. It is the Word of God, not the words of God, not the ipissima verba, but God's revelation, in the sense that it is the means which God chooses to reveal himself to those who are not primary witnesses of the events of revelation. The Bible is not identical with revelation.

"Even the old formula, 'Thus saith the Lord...', was not intended to imply that the prophet was about to utter words he had received from God verbatim, but rather that he was commanded to speak these words by God." (1)

Secondly, therefore, the Bible is and remains a human document, not verbally inspired, but the product of human agency:

"The Bible contains the human but authoritative, the authoritative but human, documents of the fact...." (2)

The problematical nature of the Bible compels this conclusion, but it does not remove the authority with which it speaks. Barth is therefore able to recognise not only the fallibility of the human agency but also the flexibility of language. The Bible was written under the impact of divine revelation but is nevertheless a product of human conceptuality. Theology must, therefore, investigate the conceptuality of the Bible in order to be able to examine its own language in the modern age.

Thirdly, it is not simply the Gospels, not yet the whole of the New Testament but the whole of the Bible that is testimony to Christ, since Christ is God incarnate. Barth rejects the view that the Old Testament should be treated as distinct from the New Testament, to be understood solely on its own context. On the contrary, it is to be regarded as a witness to the one indivisible God and therefore to Christ who as God incarnate is the self-revelation of God and therefore the goal and

(1) Against the Stream, p.217

(2) Ibid, p.218

fulfilment of the Old Testament.⁽¹⁾ The whole Bible, therefore, is to be understood in the light of the revelation of God in Christ. To treat it simply as an historical document or as a document on which historical criticism can make final judgements, is to fail to take it seriously, to fail to take it as it intends itself to be taken. To treat the revelation of God simply on a chronological basis is equally mistaken, since the Christian Church cannot ignore the fact that it has the revelation of Christ presented to it: we are not to treat law and Gospel in their chronological order, but in their theological order, as Gospel and law;⁽²⁾ we are not to treat Jesus in his chronological progress, from the rabbi of Nazareth to the risen Lord, but as the risen Lord who is also the rabbi of Nazareth.

Fourthly, the Bible is not simply testimony, an objective account of revelation, but reflection on revelation: it is, therefore, also theology, as reflection about the content of the revelation, as the Church's measuring of its language against the reality of revelation. As reflection the Bible is similar to the Creeds and the writings of the Fathers, and the Creeds and Fathers can, therefore, together with the rest of the theological thinking of the Church, be treated as relevant for the continuing theological task, but as primary witnesses the Biblical writers must be given precedence.

Not unnaturally, Barth's view of Scripture has its problems. In the first place, the assertion that Scripture furnishes the data of theology by pointing back to events in which God has revealed himself appears to gloss over the critical questions raised by the Bible. We must know how to penetrate beyond the records to the events that lie behind them. We must know how to disentangle the witness from the later accretions or distortions. Doubtless this is part of the work of exegesis: Barth does not wish to discount the work of biblical criticism. What Barth is concerned with, however, is

(1) e.g. Ev.Theol. p.28

(2) cf "Gospel and Law" God Grace and Gospel, pp.3-27 Wingren displays a lamentable failure to grasp the point when he criticises Barth for his reversal of the two concepts (Theology in Conflict, p.115 passim)

not exegesis but dogmatics, and dogmatics cannot await the final results of exegesis before beginning its own work. It must proceed about its work with caution, engaging in a continuing dialogue with exegesis.

But secondly there is a tension between the Bible as God's Word and as a human document which is reflected in the language of the Bible. Because it is a human record, it is liable to certain infelicities of expression over and above the natural inadequacy of the language to its object. To this must be added the textual corruptions due to the process of transmission. At the same time, however, the Bible is said to become the Word of God by God's grace.

Again, we have referred to the Bible as both testimony and reflection, both record and theology, but it is difficult to be sure whether Barth acknowledges this, or indeed, whether he acknowledges the great complexity of the Bible at all. He is apt to describe it somewhat vaguely as "what the prophets and apostles have said", without making any further distinctions. Thus, instead of suggesting how we are to approach those large portions of the Old Testament, especially in the poetical books, which seem to make no special claim to be witness to the Word of God, he assumes that the whole of the Bible may be treated as testimony to the Word of God. It seems therefore, that there is no room to regard the Bible both as testimony and as theology, beyond the perfectly simple assertion that it is theology to the extent that it is human language used with reference to God. In short, by simplifying his conception of the nature of the Bible, he is able to invest it with just that degree of authority that is essential to his theology.

There is, of course, no external guarantee of the authority of the Bible: it cannot appeal to rationalist argument, because to do so would be to replace the absolute authority which stands behind the Bible with a relative authority established apart from the self-authentication of the Bible itself. The statement that the Bible is the Word of God cannot

therefore, be regarded as synthetic, but analytic.⁽¹⁾

If the Bible is the source of the data of theology, the place at which theology must listen for the Word of God, the Creeds and the writings of the Church Fathers, hold a secondary, but nevertheless important place for theology. They are not primary sources of data, but sources of theological reflection which are indispensable to theology because they are part of activity of the Church in reflecting upon the Word of God. The Creeds and Fathers are of particular importance, Barth believes, because they are the product of the Church prior to its division between east and west, and set certain boundary posts within which theological investigation may develop. Of lesser authority, though still of great interest, because they also reflect the dogmatic thinking of the church, are the later Fathers and indeed all the doctors of the Church, including Aquinas, Luther and Calvin.

But theology cannot be a simple repristination, repeating the formulae and expositions of past generations. It must work out for itself the fundamental insights of the faith in dialogue with the Bible. No amount of appeal to the dogmatics of the past can substitute for this one task.

(1) CD, I:2:537, Barth has it seems no answer for a criticism such as that made by Hans Conzelmann: "What the Gospels want to be does not finally determine how I should employ them today. The question is not whether they were intended to be source material but whether ... they are" (Z.Th.K., vol. 54 (1959), quoted by Joseph C. Weber, "Karl Barth and the Historical Jesus" JBR, vol. 32 (1964) p.352)

3. Some Specific Considerations

(a) The Early Period

In his account of Barth's theological development, von Balthasar describes his work as consisting of three periods which he entitled "dialectical theology", "shift to analogy" and "analogy in full bloom." (1) The first covers the period surrounding the production of the commentary on Romans, the second the period surrounding Die Christliche Dogmatik and the third the period from the beginning of Church Dogmatics. He views the second period as transitional between what he regards as two very different methods, characterised respectively by dialectics and by analogy: indeed, he regards them as antithetical.

Another critic, however, while distinguishing the same three periods finds that there is a fundamental continuity between them. He regards the limitation of the impact of the dialectical method to "only a small segment of [Barth's] work" as wholly mistaken.

"... the interpretation of Hans Urs von Balthasar is dictated by the desire to synthesise Barth's theology with the general Roman Catholic theology and philosophy that is ruled by the principle of analogia entis. Such an attempt must fail ... It is not a 'misunderstanding' on the side of Karl Barth when he considers the principle of analogia entis as the 'invention of the Antichrist' which stands as a stumbling block between him and Roman Catholic philosophy and theology ... The difference between the principle of analogia entis and the method of dialectics is neither in the realm of doctrine nor in the domain of method. It reaches much deeper into the foundation of schematism". (2)

Taubes' division of the corpus of Barth's writings is made on the basis of his thesis that a dialectic may be traced throughout his work: (i) the period of a "liberal", synthetic dialectic (up until the first edition of Romans in 1919), (ii) the period of negative antithetic dialectic (from the second edition of Romans to the first edition of the Dogmatics - 1923-1928), and (iii) the period of an "orthodox" synthetic dialectic from the beginning of the Church Dogmatics (3)

(1) H.U. von Balthasar, Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie (E.T. The Theology of Karl Barth). Other Catholic critics follow him, e.g. O'Grady (CTKB, CCT) and King (Justification) but not, according to Grover Foley ("The Catholic Critics of Karl Barth" SJT, vol. 14 (1961), p.149), Emanuele Riviero (La Teologia Esistenzialistica di Karl Barth), Naples, 1955)

Notes (2) and (3) at the foot of the next page.

It is perhaps, somewhat ironical that Barth's early theology should have been described as dialectical. He did not, so far as I am aware, use the word to describe his own theology, but preferred to speak of it as a theology of crisis, or better, a theology of the Word. Pannenberg, indeed, suggests that the description was fortuitous: it was, he says, "attached by some spectator or other"⁽¹⁾ to the circle associated with the journal Zwischen den Zeiten, of which Barth was a founder member. Nevertheless the description has often been used, and has ^{been}disputed almost as frequently, and it is, therefore, our task to seek to know in what way the term may justifiably be used. The task however, is not made any easier by the bewildering variety of ways in which it is used, and it may help, therefore, if at the outset, we attempt some classification of the possible uses of the term.

The Socratic dialectic was a didactic method employed to uncover false assumptions and so to lead a pupil towards the truth. To the monks of Anselm's time dialectic meant simply the process of rational argument, leading to proof, as opposed to mere dogmatic assertion. Kant used the term to stand for that branch of philosophy which refuted the sophistries and removed the illusions to which philosophers were most addicted.⁽²⁾ Hegel used it to describe both the process of thought by which contradictions are seen to merge in a higher truth that comprehends them, and also to describe

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(2) Jacob Taubes, "Theodicy and Theology: A Philosophical Analysis of Karl Barth's Dialectical Theology," JR, vol. 34 (1954), p.234

(3) Ibid, p235

(1) W. Pannenberg, art, "Dialektische Theologie", R.G.G. (3rd edition), vol. 2 col. 169. The description is in the form of a quotation, but Pannenberg does not cite his source.

(2) A.C.Ewing, A Short Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (University of Chicago Press, 1938,) p.200

the world process which is the objective side of the thought process. Kierkegaard took it to refer only to the antitheses which resist synthesis either in thought or in reality. (1)

On the basis of this far from exhaustive list, we may discern several different concepts of dialectic which we may classify as follows:

1. a didactic tool
2. rational argument or criticism (2)
3. a "real" dialectic, resolving itself in synthesis or remaining antithetical
4. a process of thought designed either to resolve antitheses or to sustain them.

When we examine the commentary on Romans we find that in the second and subsequent editions it is used in two ways, as a concept to describe a "real" dialectic and as the method employed by theology to speak of God in response to the real dialectic. This is not to say, however, that dialectic is entirely absent from the first edition. Indeed, Taubes maintains that it is characterised by a synthetic dialectic, which is represented, chiefly, we may suppose, by the platonic flavour of his exposition of reconciliation, with its talk of man's memory or recollection of what he is supposed to be, and of his yearning for his lost origin. But if it is justifiable to speak of a synthetic dialectic, it is so because of Barth's awareness of the main thrust of the epistle as an exposition of reconciliation. Even if it is admitted that Barth's exposition does have a strong platonic flavour, it must also be admitted that he does not lose sight of divine activity which is responsible for reconciliation. (3)

(1) H. Diem distinguishes four uses of "dialectic" in Kierkegaard's writing (Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1959), pp. 7-10; cf review by J. Heywood ^{Thomas} SJT, vol. 13 (1960) pp. 315ff)

(2) Brand Blanshard's criticism of Barth's dialectical method appears to turn on a concept of dialectic which is a variant of this second type. Dialectic, he says, is a process of thought which "takes us slowly nearer the goal through a series of zig-zag steps" (Faith and the Philosophers, p.180) He therefore concludes that since Barth's dialectic does not conform to this pattern his theology is not dialectical.

(3) cf, for example, 1R, pp.18, 26, 60, 190, 290, 343.

Certainly the atmosphere of the second edition of Romans is very different. It is characterised by the use of Kierkegaard's "infinite qualitative distinction" to mark the contrast between man and God. Barth shares Kierkegaard's opposition to Hegel, insisting that there is no continuity between man and God but that man is set over against God. This is the real, antithetical dialectic of man and God in which the "Yes" of God to man is not simply the obverse of his "No".

"I have heard that crisis is a dialectical conception which not only allows but calls for its opposite - that this negation, which removes from human conduct all false values may restore it to a new value, may return it to its original value - that the question may be its own answer, and the argument against man may be the argument for him." (1)

The opposition between man and God, however, is not resolved into synthesis by a process either in reality or in thought, nor is the negative paradox transcended by the greater truth of a positive paradox, in which it appeared that God's "No" is, after all, preceded by and therefore also superceded by his "Yes". (2) There remains always, the dialectic of God and man and of judgement and justification. (3)

In response to this dialectic, theology must adopt a dialectical method in the way in which it speaks about God. This dialectic is not that of Hegel:

"I...warn you against taking refuge in dialectic, for all that it would seem to make for logical symmetry and completeness. I simply ask whether the process actually corresponds with reality." (4)

Theological method is dialectical not simply because the ideas which it uses are incomplete and raise further questions, but because they involve

(1) W.G.W.M., p.151

(2) As Tillich suggested in "Kritisches und Positives Paradox" GW, VII, pp. 216-225 (E.T. in Beginnings, vol. I, pp. 133-141)

(3) But cf. Bouillard, Karl Barth, vol. I, p.93f: "We hesitate ... to oppose the first and second editions to each other as a theology of identity to a theology of contradiction. It is an idea common to both works that the original and final condition of man is an 'immediacy with God'".

(4) W.G.W.M., p.151

contradictions and antitheses which are not to be held in tension or comprehended in one word, but which are to be recognised as irreconcilable and mutually exclusive and yet still to be held at the same time.

"To take the revelation seriously in the sphere of conceptual thinking means to walk with entire definiteness and determination on the double path marked out for us by the necessity we are under to speak as men, but about God. We must, for example, in order to recognise realistically the essential relation between God and man which is made known in revelation, speak of God's judgement and God's grace. In order to define God's relation to all that is not himself, we must speak of creation and providence; to state fully what the Church is, of its visibility and invisibility. To speak rightly of grace we must talk of justification and salvation, of faith and obedience on man's side." (1)

What is remarkable is Barth's insistence that these antitheses are irreconcilable and, apparently as contradictory to the believer as they are to the unbeliever. But the dialectical method, more suitable as it may be than any other way of speaking about God, can itself offer no guarantee that it is about God that it speaks. There is no reason that it

"should be specialy capable of leading on up to a gate which can be opened only from within." (2)

The words of the dialectical theologian can only become the Word of God and therefore be genuinely about God as God himself claims them and speaks through them to man.

The essential point, however, concerning the dialectical method is that it arises from the real dialectic of the antithesis of man and God and the reconciliation of man and God through divine grace.

Before we move on to the period associated with the writing of Die Christliche Dogmatik, it will be in order to make some comments on Barth's treatment of Scripture during his early period. This is so because of the very heavy criticism which he suffered, which focusses chiefly around the accusation that it is "pneumatic exegesis."

The description originates in Jülicher's critical review of the first edition of Romans (3) where it was intended to classify Barth among the

(1) T.C., p.300

(2) W.G.W.M., p.212

(3) at foot of next page

gnostics who laid claim to estoeric knowledge concerning the understanding of revelation and despised culture:

"Marcion ... held the same position as Karl Barth in his exegesis of Paul. He proceeded with the same sovereign arbitrariness and assurance of victory, with the same one-sided dualistic approach of enmity to all that comes from the world, culture, or tradition, and never tired of tossing a few pet ideas in front of us." (1)

Jülicher grudgingly admitted that Barth was right to engage in practical exegesis, but objected strongly to his claim to have understood Paul, which was, clearly, not at all the way in which Jülicher himself would have understood him. Because Barth's understanding was so different from that of Jülicher and the mainstream of liberal theology, Jülicher felt at liberty to describe it as "pneumatic".

The description was taken up and used again of the second edition: indeed, it is normally of the second that it is still used, but it is, at best, a rather vague description and therefore rather unhelpful. Cullmann is more explicit when he observes that the danger of the exegetical method of Romans is not so much that it is in itself false, but that it may lead to allegorisation. (2) At times it is very difficult to see the connection between the text and Barth's commentary and Barth consequently invites the accusation of arbitrariness.

Clearly, what Barth wished to do was to speak the Word of God to his generation and saw, as the only means of discovering that Word, that a new engagement with Scripture was necessary, in order to allow the Holy Spirit to apply it. There were, however, two mistakes in his method. In the first place, despite his affirmation of the value of historical criticism, there was inadequate use of it or of the other tools of biblical exegesis. Secondly,

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(3) "He does not oppose the historical, but passes through it to the Spirit. This is exactly the standpoint of Origen, except that Barth declares the former's spirit to be unspirit; it is exactly the standpoint of the Gnostics, except that they, to be sure, were not concerned at all with the historical" (E.T. Beginnings, vol. I, p.78). "When has a pneumatic ever let himself be instructed by a psychic or a hylie?" (Ibid, p.79)

(1) Ibid, p.78

(2) O.Cullmann "Les Problèmes posées par la méthode exégétique de l'école de Karl Barth" Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses vol. 8(1928), p.83,

he appears to aim at short-circuiting the theological process, moving directly from the text to practical exegesis via a critical assessment of his own age. In short, he neglects the work both of exegesis and of dogmatics and consequently uses the text for purposes which appear to have no immediate justification.

Nevertheless, in spite of the criticism made of his method both by others and by Barth himself, the foundation stone of his method is as firmly laid in Romans as it is in Church Dogmatics. We may describe it as the a priori character of theological method, but in doing so we are clearly using the term in a different sense from that given to it by Barth. He denies that theology can be conducted a priori, contending that it can be conducted only a posteriori. By this he means that it is not a deductive science, arguing from principles and concepts conceived a priori but that it is inductive, proceeding on the basis of the data of revelation. Our description, however, refers to the assumption of his theology that God has spoken and revealed himself and ^{to} its procedure in the light of this, as it goes on to attempt to understand the content of revelation. It does not work towards a concept of revelation but from the actuality of the revelation in Christ. The impact of the encounter of God with man compels man to undertake a descriptive examination of the phenomenon of the Word of God. But if we describe this as a phenomenological method, we must be clear that we are not doing so in the sense of Husserl's phenomenology which seeks, by a suspension of judgement on the actual existence of an object of thought, to determine what is necessary and essential to the concept, but to describe the process of analysing the concept of the Word of God, at the heart of which lies the actuality of the phenomenon, concerning the existence of which there can be no suspension of judgement.

(b) Die Christliche Dogmatik

While there is no great emphasis in Die Christliche Dogmatik on the need for theology to attempt to walk the tightrope of the "Yes" and the "No" it is nevertheless clear that Barth still considers that it is necessary for theology to attempt to do justice to the dialectic of its subject matter. It must recognise the existential or real dialectic of life, consisting in the fact that man before God is in question, and that the distance of man from God, whatever the contribution of man's createdness, is also man's fault.⁽¹⁾ Further it must recognise the existence of what appear to be logical contradictions in the content of divine revelation. Its task must be to trace out the dialectic of life and of its own subject matter, without reducing them to syntheses which are purely the products of logic.

Only three forms of dialectic are mentioned specifically, the first of which is the real dialectic of God and man to which we have referred above. The second is contained in the point which he also made in his discussion of Peterson, namely that theology is dialectical in a sense in which revelation is not, in the sense that it is incomplete, temporal and fallible truth - it is theologia viatorum - while at the same time being God's eternal, unalterable, infallible, complete truth in that it is related to God's truth.⁽²⁾ In other words, theology has a double aspect: inasmuch as it genuinely seeks to express God's truth it partakes of the nature of God's truth, but inasmuch as it is man's language it is subject to the fallibility of human language.

This dialectical concept of dogma leads to the third use of dialectic in Die Christliche Dogmatik, which is genuinely concerned with method.⁽³⁾ Barth brings us close to a Socratic concept of dialectic at this point, for he speaks of the dialogical nature of theology. It is dialectical or

(1) Chr.D., p.71ff

(2) Ibid., p.122 f

(3) Ibid., pp.453ff

dialogical in the sense that it is a conversation and it is a conversation for two reasons. In the first place theology seeks to think about God, but whereas thinking is customarily thinking about objects, God is indissolubly subject. Theology is therefore a conversation conducted with God, a putting of questions to God and an attempting to articulate the answers. Secondly, it is dialectical because we are men and must constantly strive for a more precise understanding of God: it is therefore a continuing conversation.

"Dialectical thinking is a thinking in speech and reply, in question and answer, so that the conversation does not break off, that the answer is always also question, which then finds its answer precisely in the form of the first question put more exactly and so that there is at base no last word, that would eliminate this movement of question and answer." (1)

Friedrich Traub objects that this dialogical form is not essential to theology: it has only a didactic and not an objective meaning, and therefore, while it may be used, there is no necessity for theology to take this form:

"It can also be undertaken in a monological form, and in scientific theology that is the rule." (2)

For Barth, however, it is precisely when theology is dialogical that it is genuinely theology and not otherwise. The form of theology is dictated by its object. Form is itself a part of method.

In practice the dialogical method of theology means that it is an attempt undertaken in prayer, to confront again God's self-revelation by means of a listening to the Bible and to the past theology of the Church, in order to understand more precisely the truth of the faith.

There is still the unresolved question, however, of the reason for the inadequacy of human language to express the truth of God. Is it due to the sinfulness of man, to his createdness or to both? It is easy to confuse two questions when we attempt to offer an answer, namely, the question of the adequacy of human language and that of the reality of man's knowledge of God. It should be clear, however, that man's lack of knowledge of God is due to

(1) Ibid, p.456

(2) "Zum Begriff des Dialektischen", Z.Th.K. vol. 37 (1929), p.387

his sinfulness. As we have already suggested, it is because the primary characteristic of knowledge of God is its personal nature, that knowledge is absent where the relationship is broken by sin. Revelation does not yield knowledge purely in the form of savoir, for ^{if} it is not accompanied by the establishment of communion, it is not knowledge at all. The inadequacy of human language, however, is a different matter altogether. While it may be that man's knowledge of God is articulated poorly because of the marring of his communion with God by sin, the permanent inadequacy of language is due solely to man's created status: it is because he is surrounded by a reality which is so different from the reality of God that when he comes to use the language that takes its origin in his encounter with the reality of the created world, that it inevitably falls short of the goal of expressing divine truth. There is, moreover, one further factor, which does not relate to man's being at all: man's language is inadequate because it can never claim to have captured the divine truth. God is not under human control and cannot therefore be subjected to the kind of questioning which is involved in scientific experimentation.⁽¹⁾ He is concealed as well as revealed and language about him is therefore adequate only to the extent that God himself allows his truth to be mediated through it.

In view of this, the only method which, it appears, theology can adopt, is the dialogical method, coupled with the kind of phenomenology that we have already described, so that the method adopted by theology is a re-examination of its own understanding of the phenomena of the revelation of God in Christ, characterised by prayer, and carried out with constant reference to the Bible as supplying the data of revelation and to the theological reflection of the church in the pages of its dogmatics and its creeds and confessions.

It is our contention that in 1927 Barth already had a firm grasp of the major elements of his theological method, and we have already seen that in Die Christliche Dogmatik he displays an understanding of the main contribution

(1) cf Torrance, Theological Science, p.98

to his work of his reading of Anselm. That is not to say, however, that Fides Quaerens Intellectum is not significant, for as has already been pointed out, it sets out in a complete form his understanding of Anselm and his conclusions concerning theological method on the basis of that understanding. Furthermore, it expounds more fully than any of his previous writings the nature of theological rationality.

There remained, however, one problem which Barth had to attempt to solve before he re-wrote the first volume of his Dogmatics: he still had to make clear the relationship of philosophy to theology. It was already clear that he regarded the method of theology as more akin to that of natural science - with the reservations regarding the character of the divine objectivity which we have already spoken of - than to that of philosophy.⁽¹⁾ Philosophy to Barth meant essentially a process of speculative reasoning, entirely unable to lead the thinker to the reality of God, but substituting for the free, active personal God of the Bible either a postulate required only for the purposes of a moral philosophy (Kant) or an impersonal, naturalistic force (romanticism) or the absolute idea to resolve the antinomies of spirit and matter (Hegel); It is true that in some respects he has much in common with Hegel. Hegel placed the Trinity at the foundation of his thinking; he laid great emphasis on the assertion that God is God only in actu; he roundly contradicted Lessing's dictum that accidental truths of history can never become necessary truths of reason by breaking down the dualism between reason and history through his doctrine of history as the self-objectification of spirit. Nevertheless, Barth finds Hegel's view, sub specie aeterni,⁽²⁾ as repugnant as did Kierkegaard. The theologian views his object as a man and from a man's point of view, as the recipient of grace. He does not view his object as though he were himself God. He does not, therefore, seek to dispense with

(1) cf Torrance, Introduction, p.178; TC, (Introduction by Torrance) p.39

(2) Hegel's phrase was sub specie aeternitatis; Kierkegaard ~~sugg~~ always substituted for it sub specie aeterni. "Kierkegaard suggests in fact that the metaphysician is really claiming to be in the same situation as God." J. Heywood Thomas, Subjectivity and Paradox, p. 68n

revelation,⁽¹⁾ for his business is with revelation, not to seek by bypass it and to achieve the same results by a process of reasoning. Even if reason claims that it is necessary to postulate a concept of God, it cannot prove his existence, nor is the God to whom it leads the God who reveals himself as trinitarian.

"... Christian theology can and must differ from a general philosophy of God and the world in the fact that to Christian theology the factor upon which everything depends, the activity of God which becomes event, is not an unknown but a known factor...." (2)

The first edition of the Dogmatics had given the impression that Barth proposed to employ a philosophical method in order to analyse the concept of the word of God - indeed to built his whole dogmatics on that existential method.⁽³⁾ Now, even though the endeavour ought to have been seen to be false, both by the failure of the endeavour itself and by its entirely superfluous character in a work in which he otherwise pursued a phenomenological method, yet he set himself to make quite clear that theology can never be subject to philosophy.

That is not, however, to say that theology can afford to ignore philosophy, or that it can dispense with it, for every kind of language of which theology may make use is imbued with a certain outlook on life and the world. Secretly or openly it professes a Weltanschauung. Barth does not make the mistake, as Tillich wishes us to believe he does, or supposing that a return to the language of the Bible guarantees freedom from a Weltanschauung.⁽⁴⁾ The aim of theology is not to resuscitate the language of the Bible as though it were a celestial language, but to understand it, since in it is contained the primary witness to God's revelation. Thus, at a later date, Barth is able to say:

(1) Not that Hegel did, but Hegel's concept of revelation was very different from Barth's; Barth complains that Hegel makes it impossible for revelation to be a free act of God or for God to reveal any new Word.
cf From Rousseau to Ritschl, p.303f

(2) CD, III:3:141

(3) It is important to note that the method is existential, not existentialist.

(4) In fairness to Tillich it must be admitted that he recognises that Barth is aware of the inevitability of using philosophical language and methods in some degree. (Era, p.84)

"A free theologian does not deny, nor is ashamed of, his indebtedness to a particular philosophy or ontology, to ways of thought and speech. These may be traditional or a bit original, old or new, coherent or incoherent. No one speaks exclusively in Biblical terms. At least the combination of these terms, if not the meaning they assume in his mind and in his mouth, are, willingly or not, of his own making. The Biblical authors ... far from speaking a celestial language, spoke in many earthly languages." (1)

But because ^{the} theologian is free,

"... he stands ready to submit the coherence of his concepts and formulations to the coherence of the divine revelation and not conversely."

"... he is a philosopher 'as though he were not', and he has his ontology 'as though he had it not'. A free theologian will not be hindered by traditional conceptions from thinking and speaking in the direction from God to man ... His ontology will be subject to criticism and control by his theology and not conversely. He will not necessarily feel obligated to the philosophical kairos, the latest prevailing philosophy." (2)

The freedom of theology means in the first place that it is able to make use of any language, any human capacity for perception, and any human judgement "without being bound to any presupposed epistemology." It can never be the slave to any particular philosophy, but can use current ideas, concepts, images and expressions. (3) But in the second place theology enjoys - or suffers - a certain isolation: it cannot be integrated with the other sciences or "with culture as represented by philosophy" (the programme which Barth believes Tillich to have undertaken), for

"This and similar attempts to do away with the solitude of theology cannot possibly ... be carried to completion, for they are based on impossible presuppositions. Every such attempt supposes that it can understand and comport itself as either paradisiac, or perfected, or divine theology. It considers itself to be paradisiac in a bold resumption of the state before the fall; perfected in a bold presumption that transcends the time still remaining between the first and second coming of Jesus Christ; or divine and archetypal in a bold assumption (4) rejecting the distinction between Creator and creature. A theology that was still sinless or already perfected, not to speak of God's very own theology, could self evidently only be the philosophy and the

(1) "The Gift of Freedom" (1953), Humanity p.92, cf also CD, III:3:99 "Every terminology is a possible source of error. From this truth not even terminologies based on the vocabulary of the Bible are absolutely exempt."

(2) Humanity, p.92f

(3) Ev.Theol., p.91f, Barth's employment of the term "epistemology" leaves something to be desired, for what he evidently means is not a theory of knowledge, an attempt to explain how we know what we know, but a doctrinaire insistence that every science must use the same method.

(4) The Words used by Barth for "presumption" and "assumption" are "Rückgriff" and "Vorgriff" both of which appear to be his own invention.

science. It could not be a special science distinct from philosophy or the rest of the sciences, and still less could it be relegated to a dusty corner by these. It would be the philosophy either because the light of God illuminates it or because it is identical with the light. However, all that men may here and now know and undertake is human theology. As such, it can be neither paradisiac ... nor perfected ... nor by any means divine." (1)

In view of all this, theology cannot undertake a translation of its material into another language: it cannot, for example, be translated into the terms of existentialist philosophy, or of idealist philosophy, because, in the first place, no philosophy can be sufficiently comprehensive to embrace the whole scope of theology, and in the second place, its concepts and terms must be allowed to expand if they are used for theological purposes, so that the philosophy may be transformed beyond recognition. If philosophy is used by theology - and it must be - its language must be controlled by the object to which it is applied. Likewise, if philosophical methods are adopted by theology they too must be adapted so that they are appropriate for the purposes of theology. Furthermore, not only must ~~they~~ it be recognised that it may be necessary to adapt them, but that no one method on its own can be adequate.

This last point was worked out by Barth in the essay "Schicksal und Idee" (2) in which he saw the two methods basic to philosophy as realism and idealism. Theology can commit itself to neither position, but at the same time must draw on the resources and acknowledge the truth of both. However, while realism recognises the importance of experience, both of the external world and the inner experience, theology cannot submit to the realism which produces rationalism from the experience of the external world, or Pietism from the inner experience. It is not that they fail to reckon with revelation, but that they treat revelation as given instead of being that which God gives and of which he is always in control. Offenbarung must not be reduced to Offenbarkeit. (3) Theology concerns itself not so much with

(1) Ev.Theol., p.113. The German is difficult and the translation not altogether satisfactory.

(2) FuA, pp. 54-92

(3) Ibid, p.70

reality, which makes God our fate, but with actuality - the actuality of God's dealings with man. It is therefore - and remained for Barth throughout the rest of his career - a fundamental axiom of theology that God's Being is known in his act. (1)

Idealism on the other hand, has as its merit the recognition that the "naive confidence" of realism is unjustified, and the raising of the question of something not given over against the given object and subject. It recognises the hiddenness and otherness of God, but none the less may fall into the same trap as realism, that of supposing that it has a way to God which is open to all men at all time. Once again, it must recognise that the criterion of truth is the self-revelation of God, that the revelation of God is always in God's own control and that it cannot be separated from his act.

"Genuine idealism describes an hyperbola: although it moves from reality into the sphere of the truth which does not necessarily coincide with it, yet it also leads back from there into reality which is now understood as the sphere of truth." (2)

Philosophy is necessary to theology inasmuch as it furnishes concepts and to some extent methods, but theology is always on its own inasmuch as the concepts it uses are referred to God; not to God in himself (an sich) but to God as he is for us, acting in reconciliation towards us who are therefore "begraced malefactors". (3)

Theology is not the practice of the art of synthesis, the resolution of the tension of opposites, if by that is meant that it presupposes the logical possibility of the resolution of the tension. That kind of dialectic is not open to theology, because the resolution of the polarity between God and man is not achieved by thinking away the tension in a synthesis, but of resolving opposing wills, of restoring communion. Thus:

"Whether it is good theology depends on the sense, in which it accomplishes the [dialectical] reconciliation [of the respective opposites,] not in the fact itself." (4)

(1) Ibid, p.66 of CD, II:1:81ff

(2) FuA, p.76

(3) Ibid, p.55, 71, of "Offenbarung, Kirche, Theologie" FuA, pp.164ff

(4) FuA, p.83

(c) Church Dogmatics

We are brought, then, back to the problem of dialectics in theology, and therefore to his understanding of dialectics in the Church Dogmatics. We discover, however, that he abandons the use of the term and are hard pressed to find examples of the word or its cognates.⁽¹⁾ The reason is not hard to guess: it is, in the words of Torrance, due to his seeking to expunge every trace of a Kierkegaardian vocabulary that might suggest, as it had done to some, that he intended to build his theology on a philosophy. Nevertheless, a suppression of certain words or phrases does not imply that the reality to which they refer are absent. Indeed we may still speak of a dialectic in the Church Dogmatics, although the term will again require careful definition.

In the first place there is the kind of dialectic suggested by the passage just quoted from the essay "Schicksal und Idee", "the dialectical reconciliation of opposites". In the Church Dogmatics as in his earlier works, Barth emphasises the opposition of God and man. Even though he does not use the phrase "the infinite qualitative distinction between time and eternity" it is quite clear that God and man are in opposition. The point however, is not that Barth wishes to maintain the axiom finitum non capax infiniti but that he wishes to dwell on the fact that sinful man does not enjoy communion with, and therefore true knowledge of, God. What is at stake is not whether the finite is or is not capable of receiving the infinite, nor the overcoming of the subject-object structure of reality and of man's relationship to God, but the restoration of communion between God and man. Consequently Hegel's solution of the dialectic cannot be entertained; the suggestion that the material world is the self-objectification of the Spirit, necessary for God (Spirit) to know himself, which will therefore resolve itself into a synthesis is not viable for theology, for what is to be established with God is not union but communion. Man is created not as an act of self-objectification by God, but as a free act of his love: he is

(1) "Dialectician" is used in CD, I:2:817, but evidently with disapproval.

therefore different from God, and communion is only possible where there is a difference. Man has his existence only from God, but in that existence he possesses autonomy, an autonomy which has issued in a break in communion occasioned by his sin. Restoration of communion is brought about not by a dialectical dissolution of the opposition between God and man, but by the reconciling act of God in Christ, in whom he adopted humanity. If therefore we find in the Church Dogmatics a new synthetic dialectic, (1) it must at once be recognised as a dialectic which is the sovereign act of God, the pattern of which it is the task of theology to trace out. It may still be said that theology is dialectical in this sense. (2)

Secondly there is the dialectic of the situation in which the work of theology is done, which means that theology is provisional in its results. This kind of dialectic, again, is carried over from his earlier work. On the one hand there is the quite undialectical certainty "of the realisation of the true knowledge of God," which rests on God's good-pleasure to be among men and to be known by them. On the other hand there is the "dialectic of certainty and uncertainty" on the human side - the dialectic involved in the see-saw of certainty and uncertainty as to whether we really know God.

"When we are really unsettled by the dialectic of certainty and uncertainty which is our part in this event, we are really summoned and compelled to look out to its other side. And then we always stand before the good pleasure which is its divine side. In this good pleasure the decision as to God's knowability has already been taken before and beyond the decision of our faith and cognition. It has not been taken only in a being and nature of God which could perhaps be closed to us. In virtue of that encroachment it has been

(1) J. Taubes "Theodicy and Theology" p.239ff. We can agree with Taubes' description of a movement from synthetic (1R) to antithetic (2R) to synthetic (CD) dialectic only in terms of Barth's early emphasis on reconciliation, followed by an emphasis on crisis and in Chr.D & CD a renewed emphasis on reconciliation. These may to some extent be linked with the external circumstances of the times in which they were written, but it is difficult to trace any deep or lasting influence on his work, except perhaps for a few significant events.

(2) Tillich objected that Barth's method was not dialectical because he maintained dialectics means that "yes" and "no" are held "inseparably together", whereas Barth he believes, holds them "irreconcilably separated". The only true dialectic therefore in Tillich's view is a synthetic dialectic in which every concept requires its opposite for its completion. He appears however to object more strongly to what he regards as the "supernatural" character of Barth's theology than its false dialectic ("What is Wrong with the Dialectic Theology?" JR, vol. 15 (1935), p.127ff)

taken among us and for us. The result is that the truth of the being and nature of God stands actually and perceptibly before us in all its divine certainty and it can genuinely be apprehended by us. The dialectic still remains on our part: yet not in such a way that we are still in the grip of the dialectic, rather in such a way that the dialectic is directed and controlled from the side of the event which is God's part. For us the event of our knowledge of God shows itself to be a continual winning and losing winning again and losing again. But through it all the will of God is there as the preponderant force, so that we are not lost in that ascending and descending movement, but held as by the mercy of God, but for that reason really held." (1)

Finally, we find a continuation of the concept of dialectic as dialogic, even though Barth ceases to use the word in this way and makes some modifications to the position he adopted in 1927. The "formal task" of dogmatics is to recall the Church to be a hearing Church. Hence dogmatics itself seeks to listen to the Word of God as it questions itself about the language used in Church proclamation. It does so in the confidence that the Church is not forsaken by the Holy Spirit but is genuinely

"the society which already belongs to Jesus Christ and which will listen to Him when it is addressed in His name." (2)

Dogmatics is therefore carried out in obedience and in prayer, and to that extent dialogically. It does so not in order to proscribe heresy, but that it should not itself fall into heresy, which is itself a lapse from obedience. Its task is always an examination of the language of the Church which is accomplished by an analysis and closer understanding of the phenomena of revelation as centred in Christ.

The method of theology involves a kind of linguistic analysis, or to be more exact, an analysis of the language of the Church and an attempt to improve upon it. It is one of Barth's most insistent assertions that dogmatics is necessary because the language of proclamation is human language, and that as human language, it is inadequate. It is therefore, necessary that dogmatics should constantly re-investigate the meaning of the language it uses. But this programme raises two questions; first, what is the

(1) CD, II:1:74 f

(2) CD, I :2:810

relationship between the language and the object to which it refers; secondly how are we to go about an examination of the language?

1. Barth answers the first question by means of the doctrine of analogy,⁽¹⁾ but he does not wish to resurrect the scholastic debate on its nature. He certainly does not wish to invoke Aquinas, Suarez or Cajetan; indeed to discuss his notion of analogy, with reference to theirs, is not an altogether helpful exercise, for Barth uses the concept in a minimal way. What he wishes to point to is that human language is neither univocal nor yet equivocal when used with reference to the divine truth, but analogous in the sense that it is in part able to represent it, but incapable of containing or controlling it. It is always, in the first place, dependent upon the adoption by God of human language as a vehicle for his revelation of himself. It is therefore possible for the content of the revelation to be absent from the words themselves. They must be constantly reinvested with God's own power. Secondly, the words cannot express the full scope of the divine truth since it is itself beyond human comprehension. Thirdly, the words themselves are human words with their original reference to the world of external experience.

Granted even that there may be a partial correspondence between human language and divine truth, still Barth finds it necessary to part company with Quenstedt, as well as with Aquinas and the Catholic Scholastics. He does so on account of what he perceives to be a false understanding of the nature of the knowledge of God, namely the belief that it can be founded on the basis of a common order of being to which both divine and human reality belong. This theory, he believes, suggests that the common order of being involves the possibility of a reversal of the relationship of divine and human truth and so a reading back into the realm of divine truth from the realm of human truth. In consequence he rejects the idea of the intrinsic analogy, which finds that the attributes of God are to be found

(1) CE, II:1:237ff

properly not only in God but also in man, in favour of the idea of extrinsic analogy, where the attribute is found properly only in God and only by analogy in man through God's grace. He fears that the assertion of an analogia attributionis intrinsecae involves not only the assertion of an analogia entis but with this a dispensing with revelation.

"We added at once that God's truth is not our truth, and we had to do so, because from the very outset we understood God's truth as the truth of his grace. But in this context at any rate, Quenstedt understands by God's truth God's being, and by God's being the absolute being to which ours can be related only as relative being. On the basis of this material definition the statement in Quenstedt is clearly to be understood as reversible. Our truth, i.e. our being, which as ours can certainly be only relative, is God's truth in so far as God is absolutely what we are relatively. But relatively we are the same as God is absolutely. Thus God's truth is also our truth. If being and not grace is the criterion of truth, this reversal is inevitable. In Quenstedt revelation is not necessary to make us participants in the truth of God. We are so already, to the extent that we are, if only relatively, what God is absolutely." (1)

The assertion of an analogia attributionis intrinsecae, then, appears to make revelation irrelevant by removing the need for it. But it is precisely because God has made known his truth to us in Christ that all other claims to a route to knowledge of God are made redundant. Barth bars the way to the drawing of theological conclusions on the basis of ontological assumptions.

2. Nevertheless, words are applied to God and their meaning requires therefore to be understood. How then are we to go about an investigation of the language of proclamation?

It is important to grasp the fact that when a word is used in proclamation its meaning is to be determined by the object itself to which it refers in the particular instance, not on the basis of a general discussion of the meaning of the word in its normal use. In the first place the normal use, i.e. the way in which it is used to describe the phenomena of human experience, may be so varied as to make such an exercise impossible and,

(1) CD, II:1:24 of

in the second place, it reduces the meaning of a word to the common factor in the various usages, instead of explicating the peculiar features of the particular objects to which it is applied.

We may recognise here a fundamental canon of linguistic analysis, namely that words are understood not by their meaning but by their context, that is by the way that they are used. In his later works, Wittgenstein conceived of language as a collection of word-games instead of a picture of facts and postulates that knowing the names in a language is less than learning how to speak it, just as learning the names of chess pieces is not learning how to play chess. In the same way, a name without a criterion for its proper use (i.e. for which there are no rules) has no meaning unless it has a context. The meaning of a sentence depends on the way in which it is used, rather than on what it refers to. It is misleading to talk of words "standing for things" or "having meanings", since everything depends, not on the words themselves, but on the way in which we use them.

Now it is clear that Barth subscribes to the view that words cannot be treated as counters, as it were, each with a definite content. Nor would he sympathise with a view of language that seeks, by a phenomenological analysis, to discover the essence of an idea or concept. He recognises the flexibility of language and the consequent importance of acknowledging the need to work on the basis of a recognition of the type of language with which we are faced. It is, for Barth, especially important that we recognise the uniqueness of the referent of theological language. However, it is doubtful whether he would be prepared to go so far as to suggest that theological language could be described as a language game in which everything depends not on what the words refer to but on the way in which they are used. Nor is Barth concerned to make the point which Wittgenstein does, namely, that, in contrast to the assertions of logical positivism, a word can have a meaning even if there is some dispute about the existence of the object. But both represent an advance on logical positivism inasmuch as they both recognise the

possibility of the meaningfulness of non-empirically verifiable assertions, and inasmuch as they recognise that the logic of an assertion must be understood from the way in which it is used, and not from the presupposition that there is only one kind of logic to which all meaningful statements may be reduced.

The language of proclamation is examined and understood not on the basis of treating the words as counters and thereby attempting to construct some kind of meaning, but by a closer examination of the reality and the events to which they refer. Thus it is that we do not understand an assertion such as "God is father" on the basis of an analysis of the concept of a father, for that could lead to all kinds of misapprehensions, not least in respect of the possible connotations of progenitorship. Rather we must seek to analyse more closely the nature and activity of God, and understand "father" as applied to God, from God himself.

What Barth is concerned to deny here is the possibility of conceiving of God as a collection of human ideals or as conceivable as characterised by a series of human concepts raised to an infinite degree.⁽¹⁾ So he says:

"We possess no analogy on the basis of which the nature and being of God as the Lord can be accessible to us. We certainly think we are acquainted with other lords and lordships. But it is not the case that we only have to extend our idea of lord and lordship into the infinite and absolute and we will finally arrive at God the Lord and his Lordship." (2)

No analysis of the concept of lordship will yield a doctrine of God apart from God's own revelation of himself.

"No idea that we can have of 'lord' or 'lordship' will ever lead us to this idea, even though we extend it infinitely. Outside the ideas that we can have, there is a lordship over our soul, a lordship even over our being in death, a genuinely effective lordship. Only as we

(1) We find repeated echoes in Barth's work of his early struggles with Feuerbach's assertions, that theology is merely anthropology collecting the ideals of humanity and projecting them upon an imaginary deity.

(2) CD, II:1:75

know God's lordship will our own ideas of lordship have content, and within their limits, existence. But if an analogy of God fails at this decisive point, if God himself has to be added to give content and substance to what is supposed to be analogous to Him, it is obviously useless as an analogy of God. Can the idea of lords and lordships even help us to know God? Of themselves they can only hinder." (1)

Barth goes on to argue that, in a similar way, we can have no analogy on the basis of which the being of God as creator, as reconciler or as redeemer can be known to us. However we must recognise that two separate points are at issue here. The main point that Barth appears to be making at this juncture, is that speculative thought working on the basis of human concepts, does not yield a doctrine of God. It is another form of the natural theology/revelation argument; what we genuinely know about God, we know on account of his revelation of himself to us:

"... the relationship must not be reversed. In themselves and as such the expectations of redemption that we can cherish will always obscure and cover up the expectation of Jesus Christ, or resurrection and eternal life, just as definitely as in themselves and as such the supposed analogies of God the Creator and the Reconciler will always obscure and cover up the truth of these concepts. Again, therefore, if this does not happen, if we know about God the Redeemer, neither wholly nor partially is it from what we know elsewhere about redemption. It is only through the revelation of His future." (2)

The secondary point, however, which is made implicitly, is that the content of words such as Creator, when used with reference to God, can only be grasped by an investigation of the reality to which they refer, and not on the basis of an etymological analysis of the word itself or of an analysis of its general use.

Barth's position does, however, raise certain problems, just as Wittgenstein's does. If the language of theology has its own rules, which are dictated by the context of the language, are not its rules therefore opaque to the outsider? Does not theology therefore run the risk of being charged with a Wittgensteinian fideism?⁽³⁾ Certainly Barth believes that

(1) Ibid, p. 75f

(2) Ibid, p. 78f

(3) cf. T. Penelhum, Problems of Religious Knowledge (London Macmillan, 1971), p p. 3ff

the truth of theological language is, strictly speaking, accessible only to the believer, but he is not necessarily committed thereby to a denial that it has any meaning at all to the unbeliever. Clearly there must be some connection with other "language-games" since they have a common factor in language itself. Rather, what appears to be in Barth's mind is that theological language is language about God only because God has chosen it and permitted it to carry his truth. But this fact does not permit the removal of the language from its context. Believer and unbeliever alike are obliged, if they wish to understand it, to return to an examination of the context in which it is used.

There is, then, some analogy or point of comparison between the notion of lordship as applied to God, as there is also between the use of "cause" with reference to man and to God.⁽¹⁾ There is in this case what he calls an ánalogia operationis between the two; but human causality does not provide an understanding of divine causality.

"If the causal concept is to be applied legitimately, its content and interpretation must be determined by the fact that what it describes is the operation of the Father of Jesus Christ in relation to that of the creature." (2)

Our understanding of the divine causality can only be achieved on the basis of the divine activity itself and therefore "only by revelation and in faith."⁽³⁾ But Barth goes further to argue that a true understanding of such concepts as causality, Fatherhood and so on can only be grasped by an understanding of the words as applied to God, for in God they have their original truth. The creaturely causa owes its character not to itself but to God and is therefore cause only in a secondary sense. In revelation God claims our words for his own, so that:

"the use to which they are put is not ... an improper and merely pictorial one, but their proper use." (4)

(1) CD, III:3:98ff

(2) Ibid, 105

(3) Ibid, p.107

(4) CD, II:1:229

Thus, when applied to God, our words are not alienated from their original object, and so from their truth, but on the contrary, restored to it.

"For example, the words "father" and "son" do not first and properly have their truth at the point of reference to the underlying views and concepts in our thought and language, i.e. in their application to the two nearest male members in the succession of physical generation of man or of animal creation generally. They have it first and properly at a point to which, as our words, they cannot refer at all, but to which, on the basis of the grace of the revelation of God, they may refer, and on the basis of the lawful claim of God the Creator they even must refer, and therefore, on the basis of this permission and compulsion, they can actually refer...." (1)

Barth has taken a quite startling step, because he denies quite categorically the possibility of moving forward to a provisional meaning and understanding of the use of words with reference to God on the basis of the classification of their meaning in human usage. A proper understanding of their human usage is only to be gained, he asserts, on the basis of their divine usage. But we are, of ourselves, quite unable to restore them to their "proper" use: that can only be achieved by God himself in his revelation. (2)

The implication for the proclamation of the church would seem to be, then, that in its preaching it cannot be permitted to adopt a technique that relies on a "repetition of the story" until "the penny drops" when a disclosure takes place and the "characteristically different situation" unfolds itself, for true proclamation focusses on the contrast between human and divine reality and must therefore present the distinctive qualities of the divine nature in contrast to all human analogies. At first sight this seems to make all talk of analogy meaningless. It is as though Barth wishes to have it both ways. Nevertheless, the point may well be that the "analogy" may conjure up the "characteristically different situation" but it must not then be allowed to be the interpretative tool. Thus, for example, we have to see the prologue to the fourth gospel not as an attempt to interpret Christ to Hellenistic readers by means of the Logos,

(1) Ibid

(2) Ibid, p.230

but to interpret the Logos by means of the Christ. The point is not that Christ is the Logos but that the Logos is Christ and therefore it is not possible to understand Christ by an analysis of the concept of the Logos.

We detect, however, a certain ambiguity in Barth's understanding of the language of theology, for, although it is quite clear that he regards the method of theology as an analysis of the language of theology in relation to its object, yet, in his use of "analogy" to designate the relationship between the object of the language and the language itself, it is not entirely clear how he understands the word analogy. He does, indeed, express dissatisfaction with it, but nevertheless continues to use it. At times, however, he seems to ascribe the inadequacy, and so the analogical nature, of human language to the fact that it is human language, but at other times to the fact that it is partial because God's self-revelation is a veiling as well as an unveiling.

"That God also veils Himself in His revelation certainly excludes the concept of parity as a designation of the relationship between our word and God's being. And that God also unveils Himself in His revelation excludes the concept of disparity. We are therefore forced to avail ourselves of the concept of analogy by the fact that in God's revelation both His veiling and His unveiling are true." (1)

We may suppose that, since Barth's major emphasis in his discussion of the knowability of God lies on our dependence upon God's decision to make himself known, the task of theology is not so much to improve on the language of the Church, but to reach out towards its content. The words themselves do not express the divine truth - theology must, in faith and prayer, allow the Holy Spirit to reveal God through the words as they are brought again into contact, as it were, with the events to which they are witness. Here again we find ourselves brought back to the dialectic element in theological method: the dialectic of the event of knowing God, which is our dependence upon God's decision.

(1) CD, II:1:235f

What we have called Barth's a priori method, and his view of theological language, are very closely related ~~in~~ the structure of his dogmatic writing. He does not work towards a doctrine of revelation, but commences with it, and specifically with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The task of theology with respect to the language used with reference to this revelation, is to unfold the logic and meaning of the revelation of God in Christ, to call the Church to listen to God's own Word in the event of the Incarnation, so that it should then become again the teaching Church. The theologian cannot himself restore to the word "revelation" its proper meaning, but he can draw it back into contact with the witness of the events of revelation. Similarly, he cannot restore the word "covenant" to its proper meaning, but he can attempt to explicate and investigate the logic of the divine covenant made with man in Christ. He can also examine the meaning of evil in the light of the revelation of God: it becomes the possibility which God bypassed, and so "Nothingness". A genuinely theological understanding of all these things cannot proceed unless preceded by a knowledge of God in his self-revelation. All theology is therefore Christology since it places at the centre the divine revelation in Christ, as its presupposition, norm and source of illumination.

4. The Structure of Dogmatics

Barth displays what may seem to some an almost pathological fear of systems. What, ~~in~~ fact, he does fear, is the subjection of the material of dogmatics to a system imported from outside. It would be possible for example, for an attempt to be made to structure dogmatics in accord with an Hegelian dialectic; but even if it were possible to avoid subjecting it to the presuppositions of the dialectic itself, so obscuring the character of the divine revelation as a free act of grace,⁽¹⁾ there would remain the danger of the structure becoming fixed and so dominating the content, instead of allowing the content to be the controlling factor.

Nevertheless, it has been charged that Barth, having rejected all systems, does ultimately produce a systematic theology. The charge, however, may ignore the meaning which Barth attaches to system. "System" is not a synonym for "structure" but means

"... a structure of principles and their consequences, founded on the presupposition of a basic view of things, constructed with the help of various sources of knowledge and axioms, and self-contained and complete in itself." (2)

It is an architectonic, relating the whole structure together by means of basic principles. But more than this, system for Barth means something which does not spring directly from theology itself and consequently is a violation of the sui generis character of theology, resulting in a

μεταβασις εις ἄλλο γενος

"The subject of this dogmatic exercise will have to attend to this analysis and so in that way build up the system, thus being relieved of the duty of obedience in other respects. Will this be the obedience which corresponds to the Word of God? The intrusion of the type of law by which alone a dogmatic system of this kind is possible will clearly contradict the objectivity (Sachlichkeit) required of dogmatics by the mere fact that in consequence the autonomy of dogmatic work will be eliminated and therefore the completeness of the obedience owed will be imperilled." (3)

(1) of From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 304

(2) CD, I:2:861

(3) Ibid

Barth's fear is that the Word of God as the norm of theology will be replaced by the system - and indeed, he even suggests that the system will become the object of dogmatics, whether the system be an idealist philosophy or a conception of the "essence of Christianity". A system affords an a priori principle or basic view which becomes a secure platform for thinking or speaking, and which therefore usurps the place that can be occupied solely by the Word of God, on which man is dependent and to which he can only listen, never having it in his control.

It may be thought that Barth's contentions about the lack of room for system undercut his own a priori method, that his "presupposition" of the revelation of God in Christ assumes the role of a systematic principle. To that, however, he might give the same answer as Socrates gave to Hegel in Kierkegaard's Journal entry.⁽¹⁾ In other words, it is impossible to attempt an investigation of the content of revelation without first assuming the existence of revelation. Indeed Barth goes on to add that the Word of God cannot itself be a system, in the sense of a presupposed view point, since it is to be submitted to by the theologian: it cannot be wielded by him. Thus he concludes:

"... the unfolding and presentation of the content of the Word of God must take place fundamentally in such a way that the Word of God is understood as the centre and foundation of dogmatics and of Church proclamation, like a circle whose periphery forms the starting point for a limited number of lines which in dogmatics are drawn to a certain distance in all directions. The fundamental lack of principle in the dogmatic method is clear from the fact that it does not proceed from the centre but from the periphery of the circle or, metaphor apart, it will refrain from presenting the whole as a whole." (2)

There can, then, be no attempt to present dogmatics as an architectonic and Barth would claim that his presentation is not architectonic,

(1) "Socrates: With what assumptions do you begin
Hegel: From none at all
Socrates: That is quite possible; perhaps you do not begin at all"
(Quoted by J. Heywood Thomas, Subjectivity and Paradox, p.91n)

(2) CD, I:2:869

for all the alleged beauty of its structure. His reply, for example, to von Balthasar's charge of "Christological constriction"⁽¹⁾ reveals that for him a Christological stance does not represent a constriction at all, but rather the very opposite, for to be genuinely theological is precisely to be Christological.⁽²⁾

Dogmatics is Christological, and must run the risk of being accused of making Christology a systematic principle, because it is in Christ that God makes himself known. That revelation is the norm for all other theological thinking and for the understanding of the rest of the Bible. Christological thinking is not a matter of deduction from a given principle; like an Hegelian secret of the universe

"It is ... quite out of the question of start with certain prior decisions (e.g. concerning God, man, sin, grace, etc.) and then to support these christologically.

"The only decisions which can have any place are those which follow after, which are consistent with thinking which follows Him, which arises in the course of christological thinking and the related investigations, definitions and conclusions. The obligation to give to christological thinking this unconditional precedence, this function of a basis in the strict sense, seems to me to be imposed quite simply by the character of the living person Jesus Christ as the almighty Mediator whom it must follow."⁽³⁾

Christological thinking as a principle for dogmatic investigation, and therefore for the structure of dogmatic writing, means Christology in a broad sense rather than a narrow one.⁽⁴⁾ Even though Barth presents revelation as identical in some sense with the act of reconciliation, it is not exhausted by the concept of reconciliation or atonement and Barth consequently rejects the Reformation tendency to subordinate all other

(1) Karl Barth: Darstellend und Deutung seiner Theologie, pp.201ff. Von Balthasar does concede that while it is a Denkform, it is not a philosophical Denkform.

(2) cf CD, IV:1:768

(3) CD, IV:3:175

(4) Although von Balthasar prefers to use the word "Christocentric" to "Christological", de Senerclens points out that it "seems to indicate that the theologian, established on the ground of a given Christian thought, be it catholic, protestant or whatever, strives to centre his thought on Christ." This however is not the meaning of "Christological" which is rather that the theologian opens himself to the revelation of the Word of God incarnate in

insights to the account of reconciliation as submission to a system. We might say that it is a constantly recurring theme of dogmatics, but it is not its organising principle; for theology has no other organising principle than the Word of God itself, God's freedom to speak through the events of revelation in the person of Jesus Christ.

It is this affirmation which leads critics to continue to speak of Barth as engaging in pneumatic exegesis. The theologian can rely solely on the Holy Spirit as he seeks to "listen" again to the Word of God, but this seems to open the gates to pure subjectivism with no interpretative standard. This, however, is to misread Barth, to fail to recognise, in the first place, the position occupied by the Church,⁽¹⁾ and, secondly, to read "subjectivism" for the Holy Spirit. Even though appeal to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit may have frequently been camouflage for subjectivism, that fact alone does not authorise the exclusion from dogmatics of the Holy Spirit.

None of the traditional loci of dogmatics can be permitted to become an organising principle, whether it be the doctrine of reconciliation, or of creation, or redemption, or of God. For Barth all must be subordinated to the one indispensable factor - the revelation of God as the Word of God. Hence there is no special order required for the structure of dogmatics. Indeed, any order is liable to give the impression that it is the product of the adoption of a "key position" rather than of purely didactic intentions.

(continued from previous page) (3) Jesus Christ. De Senerclens therefore prefers the word christological, because it establishes a link with the narrower sense of the Word ("La Concentration Christologique" Antwort, p.191)

(1) Barth appears to believe that the difference between himself and Kierkegaard is to be found in their respective views of the Church with respect to theology. He speaks of Kierkegaard's "pronounced holy individualism" (Fragments Grave and Gay, p.99) but while it is true that Barth diminished his own stress on subjectivity (cf J. Heywood Thomas "The Christology of Søren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth" Hibbert Journal, vol.53 (1954-55), p.281) it is not necessarily the case that for Kierkegaard a stress on subjectivity means a corresponding absence of room for the Church. Indeed, Kierkegaard had a lively doctrine of the Church and this may be another case of Barth freeing himself from the influence not of the real, but of the "phantom" Kierkegaard. (cf P. Sponheim Kierkegaard on Christ and Christian Coherence (London, S.C.M. Press, 1968), p.208ff; A. McKinnon, art.cit.)

So he concludes:

"... to begin with the doctrine of God can easily arouse the suspicion that the characterisation of the subject of the divine work and activity involves the construction of a kind of key-position, whereas, if this doctrine forms the aim and end of the whole, gathering up the results of the three other parts, it will have a position which is unpretentious but at the same time significant. But the danger of systematising one of the other three, which will have to be given the precedence, is greater than the danger of systematising the doctrine of God, because the really pressing temptations to make dogmatics the development of a basic view find far stronger weapons of attack in the various aspects of the concrete work and activity of God." (1)

The least pretentious way to start dogmatics, then, is to commence with the doctrine of God, for that will arouse least suspicion. Moreover,

"... it is easier to speak about creation, atonement and redemption if there is an existing understanding concerning the One about whom it has all to be said...." (2)

The actual arrangement of dogmatics, once the prolegomena have been stated, is a matter of practical convenience, but the loci themselves are intended to reflect the loci of revelation, that is to say, the points on which revelation focusses. The one principle which is supreme is that the whole dogmatic enterprise takes its cue from the belief that God has revealed himself: this principle controls the whole of the work of dogmatics.

(1) CD, I: 2:880

(2) Ibid

P A R T I V

CHAPTER SIX

EVALUATION

1. Introduction

In the course of a discussion with Daniel Day Williams and others, Tillich is reported to have made the following observation :

"After [Karl Barth's] daughter-in-law heard my lecture in Chicago she said: 'Now I understand what the difference is between Barth and you. You start from below, namely, from the human situation and go up; and he starts from above, he starts with the Trinity immediately in the first volume [of Church Dogmatics] and then goes down as much as possible.' I was very much impressed by this description because I felt there was a basic truth in it. When I told this to Karl Barth he was equally struck. He was absolutely excited about it and said, 'Yes, I start from above, I have a vision as if a light came from above and there I start' ... I think its unsound theology but certainly its religiously possible." (1)

It is a pity that Tillich did not go on to relate whether Barth thought his daughter-in-law's assessment of Tillich was as accurate as that of his own approach. There can be little doubt, however, that Barth's reaction to Tillich's approach would have been much the same as Tillich's to Barth's, namely that it is "unsound theology". It might be added that it would be unlikely that he would have added any comment about it being "religiously possible" !

Doubtless there is truth in this assessment, and we shall take up the point again later, but it is too facile to be accepted as any more than an outline statement and certainly cannot be thought of as an exhaustive account of the difference in methodology between Barth and Tillich. It is by no means the case that a simple comparison may be made between them. Not only must we take into consideration a degree of development in both (a far greater degree in Barth than in Tillich) but also the peculiar

(1) H.R.Landon (ed), Reinhold Niebuhr : a Prophetic Voice in Our Time, p.49
 cf also P. Tillich Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology, p.242

obscurities of each. Both are apt to make undefended assertions, but whereas Barth displays a passion for precision which leads, at times, to such extensive definition that it is difficult to determine exactly what he has said, Tillich tends to be deliberately ambiguous and to exploit this ambiguity.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless, it is our belief that the preceding chapters have exposed the outlines and the principle motifs of their respective views on theological method. In this final chapter we shall attempt some evaluation, in the course of which we shall seek to relate them to their Kantian heritage.

At the outset, however, it may be helpful to clarify the ways in which the concept of methodology may be used, in order to draw certain important distinctions. It may be used, first, much in the way that it would be used, for example, in the discipline of physics, that is to say, it may be used to describe the series of operations in which the subject engages with his material. These operations may, indeed, be reduced to the pattern of what may be described as a transcendental method, a series of operations which are common to all disciplines.⁽²⁾ In each discipline they take on forms appropriate to the material at hand. Thus, in the case of theology, the operations will refer to the material available in the form of biblical literature and of the documents of church history and theology.

(1) of Howard W. Hintz who remarks that Tillich's weakness centres in the "vagueness and circularity of the definition of the original terms", an assertion he illustrates by demonstrating the circularity of Tillich's argument in "The Religious Symbol". He maintains that Tillich's concept of God and of concern are empty of meaning since no precise definition can be given to either. ("On Defining the Term God", Religious Experience and Truth, ed. S. Hook p.260) cf also the account by Nels Ferré of a conversation between himself, Frederick Ferré and Tillich (SJT, vol. 21 (1968) p.159f)

(2) of Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology: Lonergan finds that there are four activities which together make up the transcendental method. They are attending, understanding, judging and deciding.

However, at just this point, theology meets a formidable problem, for an attempt to describe the series of operations it performs with respect to the materials available to it necessarily requires that certain assumptions should be made about the nature of the object of theology. Whereas the Reformers displayed no uncertainty at all on this question, it became a matter of increasing concern to theology in later generations, and it is clear that there is no general concensus of opinion. Indeed, it has been a fundamental aim of our study to illustrate the way in which the different conclusions of Barth and Tillich on this question lead them to very different conclusions on other aspects of theological method. Differing conclusions concerning the nature of the object of theology are reflected in differing conclusions about the way in which the material should be treated and indeed, about the range of material relevant to theology.

Our chief concern, therefore, is not to produce a purely descriptive account of the technical processes by which theologians engage with the material of the Bible or of systematic theology, even though the point is relevant to our study. It is, rather, to give an account of the principle features of theological method in a second sense, at the point at which theologians seek to accomplish a constructive task on the basis of the data furnished by the technical processes. Here he must decide what is the precise object of theology and seek to show what methods are relevant to approach it. Is the object of theology a divine referent, or the religious activity of man, or something yet unnamed? It is insufficient to assert that the object of theology is the truth of the documents, because the assertion does nothing to tell us what documents are relevant to the search for the truth, nor does it tell us what methods are appropriate for the search. The second sense, therefore, in which we must speak of method is the sense in which theology seeks its ultimate object; we may, perhaps describe this as the vertical direction of theological method.

In addition theological method has a third aspect which derives from

its role as a function of the church, directed towards proclamation. We may describe this third sense as the horizontal direction of theological method, by which we mean the intention of theology to serve the concrete needs of the church as it engages upon its task of proclamation.

It may well be that theology must exist in a state of permanent tension between the horizontal and the vertical directions, between the ultimate goal and the proper object. We must, therefore, consider the relationship between the two factors and in particular, consider the extent to which the procedures involved in achieving the goal must influence those involved in approaching the object.

2. The Concept of God

When Kant sought to show that the arguments for the existence of God were untenable, it was not his intention to create a case for the sceptic or for the atheist. On the contrary, he believed that his criticism of the arguments strengthened the case of the theist by removing unnecessary and confusing encumbrances. He argued that the mode characteristic of metaphysics is not knowledge but faith and so concluded

"I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith." (1)

To deny knowledge, however, was not to deny the existence of God nor yet to cast doubt on it. Indeed, he argued that the concept of God is necessary to pure reason, not as a constitutive but as a regulative principle, required in order that reason should extend, as far as it is able, a systematic unity to all experience. On the other hand, practical reason requires the concept as a necessary postulate of ethical thinking.

(1) Critique of Pure Reason, Bxxx

So much Kant will allow: for pure reason God is a regulative principle, for practical reason a necessary postulate. An investigation of the concept must therefore restrict itself to the limits prescribed by these two. The outcome was the reduction of theology by liberalism to ethics. But liberalism was not the only response to Kant. Schleiermacher, for example, rejected Kant's rationalism and substituted for it a romanticism which sought to reverse the trend towards a sharp dichotomy between science and culture which Kant's views encouraged.

Both Barth and Tillich are in conscious opposition to the liberal tradition and seek to find another way for theology, which involves a fundamental decision about the concept of God which they espouse. But the conclusions to which they come are very different.

On the one hand, Tillich appears to accept the challenge of Kant's rejection of the classical arguments, of the Cartesian type of rationalism, and of the Reformation tradition, and attempts to find a viable alternative to Kant's concept of God. In so doing he draws heavily on Schelling and Schleiermacher and, indeed on the whole of what he describes as the classical tradition of ontology. "God" is therefore conceived in ontological terms, but Tillich seeks to avoid falling into naturalism or pantheism by means of what he calls a "self-transcending naturalism". The natural order points beyond itself, not to a supernatural being but to the ground or depth or power of its own being.

Barth on the other hand, rejects not only the Kantian concept of God, but also the ontological interpretation which Tillich adopts. Defying all accusations of reprobation, he insists that the only possible concept of God is the personal conception demanded by the revelation of God himself in Christ. If theology is involved in a "supernaturalistic" concept of God, it must accept it as a consequence of its dependence upon revelation, however uncongenial it may be to contemporary attitudes, for "God" is the name of the divine person who has revealed himself in Christ.

When we turn to the question of faith and knowledge, we find that Tillich rejects the sharp distinction made by Kant, as restricting too greatly the scope of the concept of knowledge and creating unnecessary barriers between disciplines. He argues that the basic element of knowledge is union: Knowledge, therefore, ^{is} appropriate not only to science but also to theology, because the knowledge of God is a kind of mystical union, involving both intuition of, and apprehension by, the Unconditional. It is union with the ground of being. But the concept of union which Tillich expounds is itself ambiguous. Without adequate definition and explanation it blurs the distinctions that have to be made between different disciplines.

Like Tillich, Barth rejects the sharp distinction between faith and knowledge, but he understands the knowledge of God in a different way from Tillich. It is, rather, the kind of knowledge that is commensurate with a personal relationship: it is communion rather than union.

While Tillich's view can only with difficulty be construed as orthodox, the more obviously orthodox view of Barth scarcely seems to display an understanding of theology as a discipline which is constantly pushing forward. If we find that the categories of Scholasticism are inadequate or inappropriate, may we not also find that elements which had been thought to be fundamental to the concept of God may also be inappropriate or inadequate? Is there any reason why an ontological concept of God should not be the most adequate yet constructed? Or are there certain fixed points for theology? Clearly, Barth believes that there are such fixed points, one of which is the fundamentally personal character of the divine self-revelation in Christ. For Barth, to abandon this point would be to abandon theology to existence upon a quicksand.

Equally clearly, Tillich is uncertain. While on the one hand he wishes to affirm his allegiance to traditional Christian theology, he also wishes to maintain that theology should consider the religious experience

not simply of Christians but of mankind in general. But this is not to say that he believes there are no fixed points. He would regard the divine revelation in Christ as personal (albeit in a very different sense from Barth) but he is inconsistent about its precise place. Similarly, the kerygma is a fixed point, in respect of its content, but its form will change according to the situation.

Thus the concept of God which each produces is controlled by the kind of framework within which they think - in Barth's case this framework is a traditional biblical one, while Tillich's is an equally traditional, but ontological framework.

3. The Object of Theology

As we have seen, Kant denied the possibility of knowledge of God because, as he argued, God has no phenomenon. The object of theology, therefore, is not the revelation of God or the Word of God, but the concept required by pure reason or the postulate of practical reason. Thus in his Opus Postumum he defined God in terms of the moral law:

"God is not a being outside me, but merely a thought in me.
God is the morally practical reason legislating for itself.
Therefore there is only one God in me, about me, above me". (1)

Now whether theology takes as its object the concept of God required by pure or practical reason or whether it takes the Christian religious soul-states, as Schleiermacher supposed, it seems to fall under the accusation of Feuerbach that it is in fact not concerned with God at all, but with

(1) Kant's Opus Postumum ed Erich Adickes (Berlin, Reuther and Reichard, 1920) p.819, cited by Lewis White Beck in his introduction to Kant's Critique of Practical Reason (University of Chicago Press, 1949), p.48

man and is therefore nothing but a thinly disguised anthropology.

There can be no doubt that Barth felt the force of Feuerbach's critique and its application to the mainstream of nineteenth century theology and felt keenly the need for theology to take God as its object or perish. For this reason he felt himself compelled to press back behind Kant to re-discover the true nature of divine objectivity.

In his conclusions there is one point at least at which he is in agreement with Tillich, albeit a negative point. They agree that if objectivity is to be predicated of God, it cannot be of the kind that treats God as one object among others, as a member of the natural order: God must be distinguished from all other objects of human perception.

For Barth, this means, in the first place, that there is no question of objectification with respect to God. It is for this reason, we have argued, that he uses the word Gegenstand of God, rather than Objekt. God cannot be subjected to the kind of scrutiny to which objects in the natural world may be subjected. Some other approach must be adopted because although God gives himself in revelation to be known by man, he does not put himself at man's disposal or under man's control. Knowledge of God is the product of the active communion of man with God. The hallmark, therefore, of theological method is faith and obedience.

It means, secondly, then, that knowledge of God is ultimately dependent upon God himself and his will to be known by man. It is God himself who initiates knowledge of himself, and always remains active in the process by which man comes to know him: he is, in Barth's own words, "indissolubly subject."

It means, finally, that the kind of knowledge which is involved in theology is markedly different from that, for example, of physics, since the kind of interchange which takes place between the theologian and his object is quite different from the interchange between the physicist and the object

of his investigation. We have attempted to point to the difference by drawing attention to the difference between savoir and connaître. Theological knowledge involves a personal relationship: indeed, that is its primary characteristic.

Tillich agrees with Barth to the extent that he, too, rejects the possibility of predicating of God the kind of objectivity that is predicated of the objects of the natural or the physical sciences. He is, however, undecided as to whether it is in fact possible to predicate objectivity of God at all. He argues that God is beyond the cleavage of the subject-object view of the world proposed by Kant. Consequently, if God is brought into the subject-object structure of being, he ceases to be the Ground of being and becomes one being among others.⁽¹⁾ However, this view appears to assume that only one kind of objectivity can be predicated of anything. He does admit that the theologian cannot avoid making God an object "in the logical sense of the word", but adds that the danger of logical objectification is that it is never merely logical. To think of God or to speak of him, it seems automatically involves the mistake of treating him as one object among others.

There is a distinct difference of emphasis between Barth and Tillich: whereas Tillich places greater emphasis upon the activity of the subject in making God an object of his cognition, Barth stresses the primacy of the activity of God in becoming an object for man. Moreover, there is a difference in the kind of knowledge which they conceive as appropriate to theology. Whereas Barth stresses its personal nature, Tillich thinks in terms of a mystical and romantic view of knowledge as union, adding the very Hegelian-sounding assertion that by knowledge of God we should understand that God knows himself through man.⁽²⁾

(1) ST, I, p. 191

(2) Ibid

Part of the difficulty felt by Tillich is due, no doubt, to his adoption of a position similar to that of Nicholaus Cusanus and Giordano Bruno with respect to the problem of the split between subject and object in the relationship of knowledge. Their fear of a dualistic conception of reality drove them to hold that there is no final antithesis between subject and object, finite and infinite, God and man, but a basic identity which is due to the common ground of all things.⁽¹⁾ Tillich, similarly, fears a dualistic view of reality but the monistic view which he adopts appears to prevent him from acknowledging any real diversity within reality and any real distinction, therefore, between subject and object. Moreover, his fear lest God should be viewed as less than the whole of reality means that it is difficult for him to avoid some kind of pantheism.

In addition, we must challenge Tillich's assertion that making an object of God "in the logical sense of the word" is never merely logical. To think or speak about God by no means implies that he is one object among others, for it is surely possible in the thinking process to hold firmly the understanding that this object is unique. Tillich appears to allow a very narrow range of meaning to the word "object". At best he will allow himself to speak of God being made a logical object; his primarily ontological conception of God prevents him from speaking as Barth does, of God becoming an object for man.⁽²⁾

When Barth speaks in this way, of God becoming an object for man, he makes a careful distinction between what he calls "primary" and "secondary" objectivity, a distinction which may be very useful for theology. By primary objectivity he means God's objectivity for himself, the kind of objectivity which is involved in God's knowledge of himself within the

(1) of A.J. McKelway, op cit, p.62

(2) Hartshorne comments: "To be aware of a subject is to have it as an 'object' but this has in principle nothing to do with changing it into an inferior mode of mere 'thing', or with rendering it relative to oneself. 'Being-known' (by a particular subject) is only verbally a relation. It is knowing that relates, and subjects that are relative." (TPT, p.185)

triune life of the Godhead. In contrast, the objectivity which God has for us in his revelation is secondary objectivity:

"That is to say, [God] is not objective directly but indirectly, not in the naked sense but clothed under the sign and veil of other objects different from Himself." (1)

God makes himself known in his works and, supremely, in the person of Jesus Christ, but even in Christ we are still presented only with secondary objectivity, since in Christ God appears not as he is in himself, but as man, "the Word made flesh." (2)

There is, however, a certain difficulty inherent in speaking of God as made known in his works and Barth has to guard against possible mis-interpretation. He makes it abundantly clear that he does not think that the assertion makes possible any kind of natural theology. If God is made known in his works, it is to the eye of faith. Moreover, while it may be argued that the eye of faith may recognise God's self-revelation in any of his works (used in the widest possible sense) it is clearly not Barth's intention that he should be understood in this way. There are specific objects (which may include events, visions, etc.) which are chosen by God for the purpose of his self-revelation and when Barth describes them as chosen by God, it is clear that he does not think that it is simply another way of saying that man tends to recognise some objects, but not others, as revelatory media; his sense of the divine initiative is too powerful to admit any equation between the two.

Kant began with the contention that God has no phenomenon and cannot therefore be an object. Barth rejects the assertion roundly, for God has indeed a phenomenon: he is Deus pro nobis in his secondary objectivity. Theology has therefore an object, namely God's phenomenon. It is therefore, phenomenological in its method to the extent that it concerns itself with the phenomena of the divine self-revelation. But it must never lose sight

(1) CD, II:1:16

(2) Ibid, pp.16ff

of the secondary nature of the objectivity of God's revelation and ascribe to God's works a primary character. At the same time it knows that it cannot know God as he is in himself. It is therefore an attempt to understand the faith to which it is committed on the basis of the phenomena of secondary objectivity.

While Barth insists, in opposition to Kant, that God does have a phenomenon, it must be admitted that his usage is new. It was the notion that God is known through revelation that led Kant to reject the idea that he has a phenomenon. In other words, God is not a part of the phenomenal world. Barth would not challenge this assertion, but he wishes to underline the fact that God uses the phenomenal world in order to make himself known.

Tillich is rather less certain than Barth, although he is far more orthodox than he appears at first sight. His denial that God is an object is somewhat trivial, and says little about the task and method of theology, which is to explicate the symbols used by religious tradition. Thus the object of theology is not so much an engagement with God, as with the symbols produced by the Christian faith. These symbols are the spontaneous product of a response to the impact of the Unconditional, and are therefore to be treated phenomenologically in order that their essence may be perceived. Thus Christ, considered phenomenologically, is the uniting effect of the impact of the New Being, and the Spirit is its transforming power. But the purpose of the exercise is to unlock the symbols so that the power of the ground of being may pour forth.

4. Subject and Object

The chief question to which Kant addressed himself in the Critique of Pure Reason was the question "how is a priori knowledge possible?" There is no doubt, it seemed, that all knowledge begins with experience. Knowledge of supersensible objects cannot be said to spring out of empirical experience; therefore if metaphysics can lay claim to knowledge of supersensible objects it must be explained how such knowledge is possible. To Kant the clue seemed to lie in the procedure adopted by Copernicus in his attempt to solve the problems presented by astronomical observation: just as Copernicus adopted a different way of looking at the universe, so Kant thought it necessary to adopt a different way of looking at the process of knowing. He proposed that in metaphysics we should suppose that objects conform to our knowledge rather than that knowledge conforms to objects. He argued that if our empirical knowledge conforms to objects as things in themselves, it is impossible to think the Unconditioned without contradiction. The contradiction vanishes, however, when we suppose not that our representation of things conforms to things as they are in themselves, but that the objects as appearances conform to our mode of representation. On this basis, he believed, a priori knowledge is possible. (1)

It is difficult to say how Kant envisaged the extent of the application of his thesis, (2) but he does bring to our attention the question of the relationship between subject and object in the act of knowing. It draws attention to the active participation of the knowing subject in every act of perception. Thus whereas it was once possible to attribute to natural or physical science or even to historical studies, an objectivity absent from such subjects as philosophy or theology, Kant's discovery of the interpretative

(1) Critique of Pure Reason, B xvi ff

(2) i.e. Whether it is applicable simply to the categories of time and space, or whether it has a wider application.

activity of the subject makes it necessary to acknowledge that this activity is also present in the empirical sciences. (1)

The great value of this thesis is that it breaks down some of the rigid distinctions between various disciplines and reveals common ground between them. (2) At the same time, however, it raises the question as to how far the subjective factor may distort the results of investigation, and may perhaps lead to despair at the apparent impossibility of reaching beyond subjective impressions to the true nature of the object.

With respect to theology, both Barth and Tillich are aware of the role of the subject. Both recognise that it is impossible to practice theology without presuppositions, (3) or to engage upon it from outside the theological circle. But that is not to say that they are in agreement: as we have already sought to show, their appreciation of the theological circle is by no means the same. They differ, moreover, in their evaluation of the extent of the influence of the subjective factor.

In his early work, Tillich laid great emphasis upon the "individual standpoint" and, even in Systematic Theology draws attention to what he calls subjective reason, by which he means the structure of the mind which enables it to "grasp and shape" reality, penetrating to its depth and transforming the given material into a Gestalt. (4) In the case of theology, however, knowledge is less an interaction between subject and object and more a mystical union, in which conceptual knowledge plays a minimal role. Symbols are the product of the religious group unconscious, but they are nevertheless thrown up as the responsive action of the "group subject" as we may call it. It is this stress on the subject, an aspect of his idealist

(1) cf. T. F. Torrance, Theological Science, pp. 92ff

(2) cf. the discussion by Torrance of the need for a re-integration of the concepts of Verstehen and Erklären, rigid distinction between which has contributed towards a "split culture" (God and Rationality, pp.104ff)

(3) CD, I:2:728 ST, I, pp.83ff

(4) ST, I, p.84 f

epistemology, which compels him to adopt the position he does on the concrete religious traditions. Theology is concerned with the symbols of religion and so may be seen as related more to the subject in his response than to the object to which he responds. Even though Tillich is not content with an account of the concrete religious traditions, nor yet with a philosophy of religion (in the sense used in the System of Sciences or Religions-philosophie) yet the normative concept builds on the philosophy of religion and is still marked as an individual standpoint.

Barth, on the other hand, shifts the focus of emphasis from the subject to the object. That is not to say that he is unaware of Kant's insight into the interpretative activity of the mind nor that he is unaware of the possibility that human subjectivity may distort the appreciation of the object to which it is directed. It is, rather, to affirm the sovereignty of God ^{over} ~~of~~ the way in which he is perceived by man and the reality of the divine revelation. It is, moreover, to affirm the normative character of the divine revelation in Christ. In this peculiar sense then, God is an object of man's knowledge and has, therefore, a phenomenon, a form of secondary objectivity by which he chooses to make himself known to man. It is, therefore, the task of theology to conform itself ever more closely to this object, to the revelation of God in Christ. Knowledge of God is the product of the interaction of the obedient subject, man, with the object, God, and theology seeks constantly to question whether it has understood its object correctly, or whether it has distorted it. Accordingly, he can accept neither pure realism nor pure idealism as the method of theology: both must play their part as aspects of the total obedience of theological method.

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5. Christology

A God who is pre-eminently person may be thought of more readily as becoming incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, but a God who is conceived primarily in ontological terms does not permit the idea without great difficulty, for it appears to require that the infinite should become finite, which is taken to be a contradiction in terms. Consequently, when theology opts for an ontological foundation, it can do little more than, as in the case of Tillich, treat Christ as simply one man among man. It is true that he treats Christ as the paradox, but he means by that not the paradoxical, apparently contradictory, appearance of God in the form of man, but the paradoxical (contrary to opinion) appearance of New Being under the conditions of existence. Christ possesses to a remarkable degree an openness to the Ground of Being and, on account of the perspicuity of the fact, makes possible the vision of the Ground of Being to others, effecting in them the reunion of the person with the Ground of Being. This re-united status is, as the overcoming of the conditions of existence, the New Being.

For Barth the central point of Christology is the belief in the genuine incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, although there is good reason to believe that his understanding of the paradox differs in his later writings from that of Romans. In Romans he seems to view it as that which is actually contradictory, whereas later he came closer to Kierkegaard's view, namely, that it appears contradictory to the non-believer, but logical to the believer. Barth, however, goes further than the statement of an orthodox belief in Christ as the incarnate Son of God, to give Christology a certain methodological significance, which has led to descriptions of his work as "Christomonist", "Christocentric" and "Christofugal". Barth himself recognises the danger that Christology may be elevated to the position of a systematic or organising principle, and urges strongly that this should not be permitted to happen, but rather that the only organising principle should be the Word of God, by which he means the freedom of God

to speak through the events~~of~~ revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. However, if the revelation of God in the person of Christ is given a normative status, there will always be the danger that Christology will become an Hegelian secret of the universe. Certainly Barth's insistence on seeing the doctrine of man in the light of Christology, with his strong emphasis on a Hebrew notion of corporate solidarity, appears to bear marks of a process of this sort.

The problem, however, for orthodox Christian belief, is that having declared a conviction that in Christ God is incarnate and manifest to man, it is faced with the question as to how it is possible to recognise this fact. What kind of evidence is there to warrant such a conclusion? Theology may have a difficult time in explaining its answer. It may never provide evidence of the kind required by the empiricist. But this is not to say that it is involved in an irrational commitment, even though it may find difficulty in seeking to trace out the path, post eventu, by which the conclusion was reached and the commitment made. Evasion of the question by abandoning what has been called the "scandal of particularity" and shifting ground to a belief in the universal, although paradoxical, immanence of the transcendent is scarcely a solution to the problem, since it still retains the problem of recognising the transcendent, as well as requiring widespread redefinition of the sort we have already indicated if any claim to be conducting Christian theology is to be sustained.

6. Objectivity and History

As soon as theology claims for itself the kind of objectivity that involves concrete objects, historical events and records, it is exposed to attack not only from rival theologies but also from historical research. Although it is necessary to remember that history is not itself immune from the distortions caused by the presuppositions which affect interpretative activity, it still remains true that there is a possibility that research might undermine the supposed historical foundation of theology. In view of this possibility it may seem necessary for theology to take refuge in some position that will guarantee its validity in the face of every attack. But there seems little likelihood of such a secure position being found and the very spectacle of the discipline constantly changing ground in search of invulnerability ought to be sufficient to discredit it. The alternative, however, is not necessarily a refusal to change ground at all, since it may become clear that one position is false and another at least an improvement. Nevertheless, the task of theology is not to seek invulnerability, but to take the risks its tenets require. Clearly, it is with respect to its historical foundation that theology is most likely to be vulnerable.

In Romans, Barth adopted an ambiguous position which is susceptible of interpretation in such a way that the events of Urgeschichte are made to appear entirely separate from historical reality and invulnerable from attack. We have contended, however, that the position he wished to maintain was not in fact this, but another. He wished to claim, first, that the events of the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus are not products of ordinary historical causality but special acts of God. Moreover, he was challenging the canons of positivistic historiography, with its preconceived notion of the possible. It is clear from his later work, with its gradual abandonment of the distinction between Geschichte and Urgeschichte, that he is committed to taking the risk involved in opting for a real incarnation by God among men as a means of revelation, rejecting

not only the view that concrete events can have only a contingent and relative significance, but also the romanticism that wishes to view all things as revelatory.

Barth's position is not without its difficulties, for it introduces a distinction between events which may be spoken of as chosen by God on the one hand and the rest of historical actuality on the other. It poses the question how such events are to be recognised. It introduces the apparently questionable procedure of ascribing special significance to some events without accounting for the significance of others. At the same time, however, it places a question mark against the view that historical events can have only contingent status and so challenges historical science to a re-appraisal of its understanding of causality.⁽¹⁾

As might be expected, Tillich stands in stark contrast to Barth. We have noticed that from an early point in his career he came to the conclusion that it was necessary to ask how Christianity might be understood if the non-existence of the historical Jesus were to become historically probable. This gave added impetus to the drive to find an ontological interpretation of Christian doctrine, which in turn seems to preclude the possibility of a reconsideration of the historical problem, except to the extent that it may allow a highly symbolical sense to the idea of incarnation, and regards all events and all objects as potentially transparent to the Ground of Being. For Tillich the truth of Christianity exists apart from historical events, although he is also firmly convinced that the truth could not have been perceived except through events of the sort reflected by the New Testament.

If Christian theology is to be true to its historical character,

(1) While Barth is committed to the importance of history, he stops short of describing historical events or persons as revelation, since that would remove them from God's control.

then it appears that it must be willing to take the risk involved in committing itself to certain historical events. Certainly it may be true that the authors of the New Testament place false interpretations on the events they record, but it is irresponsible to dismiss them without very careful scrutiny. Moreover, to introduce not only a new interpretation but also to set aside the historical foundation of Christian theology would appear to necessitate a re-definition of the Church, or at least a new understanding of its continuity.

7. Authority and the Bible.

A further key area of discussion for theological method is to be located in the question of authority in theology. At the one extreme there has been the rationalist insistence on the essentially rational nature of the Christian faith. It has borne fruit in the Deists' emphasis on natural religion as well as in the Kantian interpretation of ethics as the self-legislating activity of the autonomous reason. At the other extreme, we find the fundamentalist insistence upon the verbal inerrancy of Scripture, and its absolute authority. Between the two extremes, however, lies a vast area of variation of emphasis.

Nevertheless, it is clear that for Christian theology, the Bible must figure largely in the question of authority, since it has traditionally furnished the data of theology. But while neither Barth nor Tillich wish to discard the Bible they hold widely differing views on its place in theological authority.

Tillich displays considerable sympathy with Kant, which is connected with his view of the relationship between God and the world. Thus he observes

"Rationalism and Enlightenment emphasise human autonomy. 'Autonomy' is not used in the sense of arbitrariness, of man making himself or deciding about himself in terms of his individual desires and arbitrary wilfulness. Autonomy is derived from autos and nomos (self-law) in Greek. It does not say 'I am a law unto myself' but that the universal law of reason which is the structure of reality, is within me. This concept of autonomy is often falsified by theologians who say this is the misery of man, that he wants to be autonomous rather than dependent on God. This is poor theology and poor philosophy. Autonomy is the natural law given by God, present in the human mind and in the structure of the world. Natural law usually means in classical philosophy and theology the law of reason, and this is the divine law. Autonomy is following this law as we find it in ourselves. It is always connected with a strong obedience to the laws of reason, stronger than any religious idea that seems to be arbitrary. The adherents of autonomy in the Enlightenment were opposed to anything so arbitrary as divine grace. They wanted to emphasise man's obedience to the law of his own nature and the nature of the world.

"The opposite of autonomy is the concept of heteronomy. Heteronomy is precisely arbitrariness. Arbitrariness shows up as soon as fear or desire determines our actions, whether this fear be produced by God or society or our own weakness. For Kant the authoritarian attitude of the churches, or even of God if he is seen in a heteronomous light, is arbitrariness. Arbitrariness is subjection to authority if this authority is not confirmed by reason itself, for otherwise one is subjecting oneself on the basis of fear, anxiety or desire." (1)

Thus the authority of the Bible or whatever other authority theology may profess to acknowledge, must be confirmed by reason. But "reason" itself, is a highly ambiguous term, for the reason of the empiricist or the radical sceptic conflicts violently with the reason of the mystic, for example. It is this conflict which has driven Tillich to seek to unite the very proper autonomous reason of man with its ground and so to re-establish a theonomy. Reason is reunited with its ground or depth, from which it has become estranged, by revelation; or, rather, when reason becomes ecstatic reason, grasped by an ultimate concern, revelation has taken place. Thus Tillich proposes his solution to the "reason or revelation" debate in theology.

(1) A History of Christian Thought, p.289

Theonomy is not established by proclaiming the authority of a divinely inspired revelation, for revelation is not a divine depositum but the "convulsion and re-orientation" of all things including reason. (1)

What, then, is the authority of theology and what part is played by the Bible? Tillich is no simple rationalist. The mistake of the rationalists he argues, was their failure to recognise the estranged state of reason. Hence theology cannot be purely rationalistic. The authority of theology is "convulsed" reason, reason under the impact of the Unconditional. This means, in effect, that there can be no authoritative message from which theology takes its standards. Everything is subject to the "Protestant principle", which means that nothing is allowed a final or absolute authority, because final authority brings heteronomy in its train. The Protestant principle rebels against any form of imposed authority, submitting only to that authority which is the spontaneous product of "convulsed" reason. Thus any concrete religion may have insights to offer, but none, Christianity included, can claim exclusive authority. Similarly, the Bible is to be viewed as one example among others of a response to the encounter with the Unconditional. It has no definitive authority.

Nevertheless, at the same time, Tillich does speak of the appearance of the New Being in Jesus Christ as the final revelation, and, in spite of his principles, does select Christianity as, in some sense, a critical norm. He is, in short, very much more orthodox than at first sight would appear to be the case. It is evident that he has a very deep attachment to Christianity and to the Bible.

There is, however, another problem for theology concerning authority. There is not only the authority under which it operates in selecting and treating its material but also the authority it exercises in what we have

(1) Twentieth Century Theology in the Making, vol. 2, pp. 46-56

described as the horizontal direction. If theology works with an authoritative message proclaimed by an authoritative book - that is to say, if it recognises the authority of the message and the book - then it cannot ignore that authority in proclaiming its message to the Church and to those who are outside the Church. Yet if theology is to come to terms with the "situation" of secular society, it finds an increasing rejection of authority. Thus, to theology, as to other disciplines, appeal to some indisputable authority for final decisions is barred, because every authority may be suspect. Indeed, authority is permitted to reside in any one place, be it legal, judicial, moral or theological authority, only by common consent. When common consent is withdrawn, the authority collapses.⁽¹⁾ This is not to say that there may not be any final and objective authority at all, but only to say that without the corresponding element of common consent, it cannot exercise effective control. It is the "heteronomy", as it is seen, of the appeal to an external authority which Tillich's "theonomous" thinking is designed to overcome, but it ignores certain aspects of the question of authority.

In the first place, it must be admitted that past ages also disputed authority; nor was Judaism in the New Testament era free from such disputes. Besides the rift between the rabbinic schools of Hillel and Shammai, and between the Pharisees and Sadducees, there were also various other factions and sects. Jesus was recognised by some as speaking with authority, but others questioned or rejected it. It could equally be argued that the contemporary mood is as much a matter of the dispute of authority as of its rejection. The absence of general consent does not invalidate authority.

But secondly, even granting that the "present age" rejects authority, there is no reason for theology to hasten after the current fashion, since

(1) cf. A. MacIntyre, Secularisation and Moral Change (London, O.U.P., 1967), for an account of the process in morals.

this amounts to the recognition of the very bad authority of fashion.

Vox populi is not necessarily vox Dei. Theology can scarcely abandon its authority or alter radically the focus of its authority, without making other equally radical changes, even to the point of leaving Christianity as an historical faith behind.

A further aspect, however, of the problem of authority in dogmatic theology arises from the very complexity of the theological discipline, which leads to a breakdown in communication among those who are engaged and upon the critical and exegetical tasks of biblical research/upon the historical and the systematic tasks of dogmatics. Increasing specialisation produces divisions not solely between the biblical and dogmatic disciplines, but even within the separate disciplines themselves, cutting off the historical researcher from the systematic theologian within the field of dogmatics. Furthermore, it undermines the overall authority of the Church. It is understandable, but far from flattering, to find it said of Tillich that he evaded issues of historical theology for fear of being judged by the strict canons of scientific historiography⁽¹⁾ or that he displayed a disregard for, or ignorance of, modern research on the Chalcedonian formula.⁽²⁾

Barth holds very different views from Tillich on the question of authority. Their origin can be traced to the influence upon him of Herrmann and of the revolution in his thinking during the First World War, when he determined to come to grips with the Bible. It seemed to him impossible to do theology without basing it firmly on God's revelation of himself. But theology is not a repetition, parrot-fashion, of the words and phrases of the Bible. Even though he goes back behind Kant and the Enlightenment to reinstate the Bible in a position similar to that given to

(1) cf C. E. Braaten's Introduction to Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology, p. xvi

(2) cf K. Osborne, New Being, pp. 147 ff

it by the Reformation, Barth nevertheless makes some concessions to the Enlightenment. It should be remembered that at the time of writing the first edition of Romans he asserted that if he were forced to choose between the historical-critical method and the doctrine of inspiration, he would unhesitatingly choose the latter, but that he did not believe that any such choice was necessary. It is his insistent claim that while the Bible can and must be subjected to critical examination, it nevertheless remains the written Word of God, authoritative for theology. This admission of the propriety of critical research, however, amounts to an important concession, for it recognises not only the inescapable demands of textual criticism, but also of other forms of criticism which may impugn the reliability of certain passages or radically alter their interpretation. Thus there should be a constant interchange between the critical, exegetical and dogmatic functions of theology. It is true that some of the discoveries concerning biblical reliability have been made by sceptics rather than by believers, but there is nothing, in principle, to prevent the believer from adopting an honestly critical attitude together with an urgent desire to understand the Word of God for his own age. The process, however, is complex and Barth's appreciation of this seems to deepen with time; for whereas, in Romans, he appears to seek to short-circuit the process, passing directly from exegesis to preaching, in his later work he introduces the intermediate and, for him, most important, stage of dogmatic enquiry.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless even Barth is unequal to the task of maintaining a grasp on the whole field of theological research.

The authority of theology resides and remains with the Word of God. Consequently, the theologian cannot adopt a disinterested attitude towards

(1) A commendable feature of Lonergan's Method in Theology is his attempt to trace the pattern of functions or operations in theology. Even if his list of eight functions appears rather too highly schematised, it nevertheless illustrates the complexity of the process involved in the attempt by theology to bring together the data of theology and the Church's task of preaching.

the material he handles. He is, and remains, a committed member of the Church and his work, therefore, is characterised by faith and obedience.

Nevertheless, there remains a degree of ambiguity in Barth's understanding of the place of the Bible in theology. It is not clear to what extent he regards it as datum for theology and to what extent as itself theology. Nor is it clear how this question reflects on the authority of theology. Perhaps no final answer is possible, in the nature of the case, but as we suggested earlier, Barth would have done well to have examined the question more thoroughly. He is very far from suggesting that we ought to believe "because the Bible says so". The Bible is not itself the Word of God, except in a derivative sense. It is a human response to the divine Word already heard and, therefore, subject to the distortions involved in the process of human understanding. The Word of God is heard within the Bible by the understanding enlightened theologically by the Holy Spirit.

It is true that Barth adopts Kantian terminology,⁽¹⁾ speaking of theonomy in theology, but the resemblance with Tillich, or indeed with Kant, is superficial. In the first place he argues, the theonomy of theology quite properly takes heteronomous forms, which are represented by the biblical, confessional and ecclesiastical character of dogmatics. These forms are not bad, since they are, like God's secondary objectivity, forms appropriate to the situation. But, secondly, theonomy has as its pre-supposition a prior commitment to God specifically in and through Jesus Christ. It is not a generalised commitment to "truth". Consequently theology cannot interpret itself as a

"finely detached enquiry into the ontic and noetic suggestions opened up by the Bible and dogma." (2)

(1) CD, I:2:815 ff

(2) Ibid, p. 844

Dogmatics is not concerned with the question of the ultimate relations of God, man and the world, however legitimate the issue may be. It is, rather, concerned with the divine reconciliation wrought in Christ and must, therefore, seek its authority through the record of the event of reconciliation.

Similarly, when theology directs itself to the communication of its conclusions to the Church and to those outside, through the proclamation of the Word, it cannot abandon the authority on which it is dependent for its existence. A general failure among listeners to acknowledge the authority lying behind the message does not undermine the truth of the message.

8. Theology as a Science

How, then, shall we understand the method of theology? It has been remarked that Barth shows little real interest in the question of whether theology should be classified among the sciences or with philosophy⁽¹⁾ and this judgement is true to the extent that he is not preoccupied with the question. At the same time, however, he does insist, at the beginning of Church Dogmatics that theology has certain points in common with natural science, in that it is, first, a human endeavour after a definite object of knowledge; secondly, in that it follows a "definite, self-consistent path

(1) C. Brown, A Critical Examination of Karl Barth's Theological Method with Special Reference to His Doctrine of the Word of God, p.11

knowledge"; finally, in that it is accountable for this path to everyone who is capable of following it.⁽¹⁾ But when all this has been said, theology cannot be integrated with the other sciences by submission to the canons which are valid for them: it must always remain in a certain isolation, being allowed to pursue its own path.⁽²⁾

Barth's greatest concern is to deny that theology is akin to philosophy. He has nothing but scorn for attempts to make theology academically respectable by including it within the framework of a unified view of knowledge. Such attempts normally involve the classification of theology, methodologically, with philosophy.⁽³⁾ While there is no reason to suppose that Barth would later have retracted his assertion that theology makes use of the methods of both realism and idealism, this is not to say that there is a fundamental similarity of method between philosophy and theology which enables them to be classified together. Theology makes use of these methods in developing the method which is peculiar and appropriate to its own object. The two disciplines differ radically because philosophy attempts to develop a world view independent of divine revelation, and seeks to reach the unknown and the absolute solely by rational means. Theology by contrast, works towards that which is known, working through the given data of revelation. The task of theology is therefore to understand the data, not to develop a world view. Its method, therefore, is more akin to that of natural science. The sheer fact of the given-ness of revelation, then, means for Barth that his theology can begin at no other point than at revelation, in order to achieve a deeper understanding of it. The method of his theology is, therefore, essentially a prioristic in the sense which

(1) CD: I:1:7

(2) Ibid, p.9; also Ev.Theol p.112

(3) Lonergan however appears to envisage a pattern of operations common to all disciplines which he summarises under the four axioms "Be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible". This he calls the transcendental method (Method in Theology pp. 6ff, passim.)

we have suggested earlier. It does not work towards a concept of God, revelation or the Trinity, but from the givenness of these data.

This kind of procedure Tillich opposes vigorously, describing it as in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, as "religiously possible" but as "unsound theology". He says of Barth's doctrine of the Trinity, for example:

"It was a mistake of Barth to start his Prolegomena with what, so to speak, are the Postlegomena, the doctrine of the Trinity. It could be said that in his system this doctrine falls from heaven, the heaven of an unmediated biblical and ecclesiastical authority." (1)

In complete contrast to Barth's view that the Trinity and, indeed, all Christian doctrine, is fundamentally analytic in character, Tillich defends the view that the doctrine of the Trinity, at least, is synthetic. We may suppose that it is his opinion that Christian theology has a generally synthetic character. We have already defended the view that his method may be described as a posteriori on the basis of the way in which he moves towards a normative account of religion. It is entirely in keeping with such an approach that the doctrine of the Trinity should be regarded as synthetic.

It is our belief, however, that theological method is rather more complex in character than either Barth or Tillich is prepared to admit. The doctrine of the Trinity, for example, is both analytic and synthetic; it is indeed a fundamental aspect of divine revelation, for, as Barth himself asserts, God in his revelation is trinitarian. At the same time, however, as the theologian approaches his data he is compelled to conclude that a doctrine of the Trinity is required to draw together those aspects of Christian theology which are expounded under the titles of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Similarly, Barth treats the assertion

(1) ST, III, p. 303f

"God is Lord" as a purely analytic judgement, because the revelation of God is a revelation of his lordship. But the very word "Lord" is used in other contexts; when it is applied to God, therefore, it is to some extent at least, part of a synthetic judgement. Not only does the theologian recognise that a concept of God which excludes his lordship is no concept of God at all, but also that the assertion that God is Lord is a confession of faith, a recognition of the lordship of God, elements of the understanding of which, in making the judgement, are drawn from elsewhere in human experience. Ultimately, to understand the concept of divine lordship we must examine the concept in its context, but in the original judgement at least, there is a synthetic element involved.

We may ask again, then, whether theological method has more in common with natural science, or with philosophy. Clearly, some of the distinctions once made between theology and natural science can no longer be made. We have already referred to the discovery that the method of natural science is not immune to subjective factors. That, however, does not break down entirely the distinction between the two. Neither is the distinction removed by insisting on the givenness of the data in both, for the kind of givenness is very different.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, the empirical method of natural science, employing what Torrance describes as "coercive" questioning, is not relevant to theology. It remains true that both operate with data and seek to understand their data and that both are, or should be, characterised by a passionate pursuit of the truth, but these are slender grounds on which to compare the two methods. It may equally be said that philosophy also engages upon a passionate search for the truth.

The point at issue between Barth and Tillich is the mode of approach to the truth. It is this question that makes Tillich conclude that

(1) As Torrance admits, in his discussion of the question
(Theological Science, p. 37)

theology is more akin to philosophy than to natural science, for the data philosophy treats are no different^{from} those of theology in their non-empirical character. The truth is intuited by a process which is different from the evidential, inductive reasoning of the natural sciences. It is characterised by conviction and by what we have called the mystical approach. Whereas philosophy seeks to bring to light the structure of reality, theology seeks to reach and realise the power of being in the dimension that gives meaning and purpose to human activity by effecting in him an awareness of his essential relatedness to the whole of reality. In other words, theological method differs from philosophical method chiefly in its existential reference and in its attachment to a concrete religious tradition. This leaves it free to be like philosophy in its synthetic dialectic, as it seeks to reconcile or to hold in tension the antitheses of human existence. It is just this synthetic dialectic, however, which seems to involve the assumption that God is not known and that we must therefore, work towards a concept of God which will satisfy the questions raised.

Mediaeval theology was assimilated to philosophy by the method it adopted to achieve its apologetic purposes. It placed first in the theological treatise the question of the existence of the object of theology. It sought to establish the existence of God and that it is God that is known. Now, while Tillich does not think that it is possible to discuss the existence of God, since God is not a supreme being and since existence, in his view, cannot be predicated of God, yet he does think that it is possible to demonstrate the reality of the Ground of Being on the basis of man's awareness of an Ultimate Concern. Barth, on the other hand, sweeps this away altogether, not so much because it is in his view, an impossible procedure, but rather because it is entirely unnecessary. Moreover, it is itself a token of human pride because it scorns the plain fact of God's actual self-revelation. Thus he argues that theology should not concern itself with questions such as "Is God known?" or "Is God knowable?" but

with such questions as "How far is God known?" and "How far is God knowable?" (1)

9. Theology and the Proclamation of the Church

There still remains, however, the insistent question of how far the concern of the Church to make known its message, must affect its method, which brings us back to our starting point, namely, the relation of proclamation to theology, and to the question of the method of theology with respect to its goal (i.e. its "horizontal" direction). The question still remains as to whether Barth and Tillich's respective positions are mutually exclusive of each other.

Tillich expresses the view in several places that kerygmatic theology and apologetic theology should be regarded as complementary. In kerygmatic theology, one may suppose, the theologian turns, as it were, to face God, and in apologetic theology he turns towards the enquirer or the sceptic in the attempt to address to him the content of his kerygmatic exercise. However, he uses the term kerygmatic theology to describe Barth's theology, and makes it clear that he regards Barth's approach as unsound because it is supernaturalistic. This view appears to be in

(1) CD, II:1:4f Torrance draws attention to Calvin's precedent for Barth's approach, in his reversal of the questions of mediaeval science, quid sit? an sit?, quale sit?, making primary in theological activity the question qualis est? (Theological Science, p. xiii) It should be added that Barth's mode of operation is not entirely different from that of philosophy, for we have already drawn attention to the similarity between his work and that of linguistic analysis.

complete contradiction to the view that kerygmatic theology has a complementary and even a necessary role to fulfil. Elsewhere he describes kerygmatic theology as reproducing, interpreting and organising "the message" in predominantly biblical terms⁽¹⁾ and as seeking to preserve the ~~unchangeable~~ truth of the message,⁽²⁾ but if this suggests that he thinks that it is possible to do kerygmatic theology in some way other than Barth's, he gives little indication of where that way may be sought. We are left to suppose that it may be a ~~viable~~ undertaking provided it can dispose of its supernaturalistic element, to express the message in biblical terms instead of in those of modern man. Nevertheless, it seems that Tillich has considerably less sympathy for kerygmatic theology than appeared to be the case at first sight. Not only does it appear to be forbidden because of the intolerable arrogance it is thought to display, but also because of its inability to connect with "the situation". Furthermore, the ontological outlook which Tillich adopts in order to further the proclamation of the Church appears to preclude the kind of encounter presupposed by Barth and, indeed, to cut off the Church from the very roots from which it received its message. At the same time, however, it must be said that Tillich does not wish to do that.

On the other side, it is quite clear that Barth regards Tillich's method as illegitimate, for the same basic reason as he regards Schleiermacher's as illegitimate. Despite their common concern for the message of the Church, their method ignores God's revelation of himself in Christ and turns instead to anthropological considerations. This is not to say that Barth is not concerned about proclamation; on the contrary, he takes very seriously the responsibility of the Church to make known its message. Dogmatic theology exists precisely in order to inform the thinking of the preacher, whether his preaching is done in the form of the Sunday

(1) "The Problem of Theological Method", JR, vol. 27 (1947), p. 24

(2) ST, I, p. 4f

sermon or in some other way. Indeed dogmatic theology exists to inform the thinking of the whole Church, to deepen its faith and understanding, so that it should understand what it proclaims. But he is unwilling to believe that the problems of proclamation are as severe as they are painted. It is unjust to dismiss Barth as thinking that the message must simply be tossed like a stone to the outsider,⁽¹⁾ for the preacher, in all humility knows himself to be a sinner too, and that he, too, may have once stood outside the Church and, therefore, sympathises with the outsider, while yet being unable to agree with him.

It is easy, however, to gain the impression that Barth believes the message should be tossed like a stone to the unbeliever, and that he holds that there is no place in proclamation for "apologetics". But he does, in fact, engage upon his own type of apologetic, which seeks, not to disguise his Christian assumptions, but to demonstrate their own internal rationality. He recognises that there is no rationality without assumptions, and that it is the task of the preacher both to expose his assumptions, and also to defend their rationality, not by subjecting them to the canons of rationalism but by exposing their own self-justifying nature. Thus he speaks to the atheist Max Bense, not as an opponent to be refuted, but as one whose impression of the Christian faith is mistaken.⁽²⁾

There is no doubt that both Barth and Tillich are concerned to further the proclamation of the Church, but it is also clear that they differ widely in their understanding of the nature and scope of the task. On the one hand, Barth believes that it can be achieved only by a radical reassertion of the truth of the Gospel, very much in its traditional terms, placed within the exclusive framework of the Christian revelation. From this will spring, through the deeper understanding of the gospel and through the work of the Holy Spirit, the transformation of society and of scientific thinking. Tillich, on the other hand, seeks to reconnect culture with its

(1) cf ST, I, p. 7; A.G.N. Flew, God and Philosophy (London, Hutchinson, 1955), 1:1

(2) Fragments Grave and Gay, pp. 40-47

spiritual roots and sees it as the task of proclamation to speak directly to the situation, to connect with man's self-understanding as it is expressed in cultural forms. Thus a part of its task is to contribute to the construction of a unified view of science. In other respects it is an adjunct to psychotherapy. Indeed it can be argued that the role of theology closely resembles that of psychotherapy: as psychotherapy seeks to effect the reintegration of personality, so theology seeks the reintegration of culture as well as of the individual.

However, even when we recognise the profound differences of approach between Barth and Tillich, there remain other factors which make it difficult to come to a final decision on the extent to which they may be compatible with one another. One factor is related to the difficulty involved in deciding upon the precise purpose of apologetics, for in spite of his unceasing championship of the cause of apologetics, it is not easy to decide exactly what Tillich means by the term. When we ask what is the goal of apologetics, we find it difficult to know whether he sees it as a tool of proselytising or not. We have already drawn attention to his preference for dialogue rather than proselytisation, but his conviction that theology is related to matters of ultimate concern indicates that he desires that the apologetic exercise should issue in some form of commitment. Because of his own commitment, culturally, to the Christian symbolism of ultimate concern, he expounds that form, but there seems to be no reason to suppose that the Christian symbolism alone is acceptable. He may wish to assert that it is superior, because it is more adequate, but he cannot and does not claim exclusiveness for it.

Again, in the preface to the first volume of Systematic Theology, he describes as the purpose of the system that it should be "a help in answering questions",⁽¹⁾ but we have discovered that he uses the word

(1) ST, I, p.x

"question" in a very ambiguous way. It appears from this preface that he is content that apologetic theology should fulfil the office he described in 1947 as answering the questions asked of, and the criticisms directed against, a concrete religion.⁽¹⁾ A wider view of his work, however, makes it clear that he has a far more ambitious purpose. We have already commented on his tendency to transform question and answer into quest and fulfilment. In his view, every question or criticism directed to religious faith is prompted by a quest within the critic himself. It is, then, reasonable to suppose that what the critic needs is not simply an answer to his question, but an answer which will at the same time be the fulfilment of his quest.

Even now, however, we have by no means exhausted the scope of Tillich's intention, for while he does wish to address himself to the vocal critics of religion, yet he also wishes to address himself to the non-vocal critics, or rather to those critics who do not address themselves directly to religion, but who express their questions and so their quest in every kind of cultural form. Inasmuch as these cultural forms are the product of contemporary society, they are the expression of the quest of the whole of society. Thus his "apology" is directed to the general cultural situation, but it is by no means obvious that this is so. It is at times very difficult to judge what its purpose or its target is.

The ambiguity of his use of the terms question and answer is paralleled by the ambiguity of his use of the terms philosophy and theology. Both words have a considerable range of meaning and reflect the difficulty that we have in deciding whether apologetic theology should be regarded as an attempt to reply to the criticisms made by philosophers, whether idealists or logical positivists or linguistic analysts, who do not claim allegiance to a concrete faith, or whether it should be regarded as an

(1) "The Problem of Theological Method", JR, vol. 27 (1947), p.24

attempt to provide the solution to the passionate search ("the philosophical question") of human existence articulated in part by cultural forms and implicit in the very fact of human "existence".⁽¹⁾

One of the problems of apologetics is that it has to identify its audience. Having done so, however, it is likely to produce forms of an extremely transitory nature. Thus an apologetic system is in danger of being out of date almost before it is completed. Tillich counters this by producing his own assessment of the human situation, which draws upon the material provided by the broad spectrum of culture,⁽²⁾ increasingly influenced from about 1930 by what he regards as the good fortune of theology, namely, existentialist philosophy. He does so, however, at the risk of failing to meet his audience at all. Moreover, while it may be the good fortune of theology in one age to discover in cultural forms a measure of agreement in the assessment of man, in other ages there may be violent disagreement. In itself, this is no objection to apologetic theology, but it does mean that it is beset with difficulties.

While Tillich gives the impression of a broader understanding of, and sympathy with, contemporary cultural forms, yet it would be wrong to suggest that Barth is without understanding. Indeed, there is much evidence, not least from his published sermons, of a deep understanding of his audience. But, struck as he is by the otherness of the gospel and of the revelation of God, he refuses to yield to the demands of apologetic theology, preferring that the approach to an audience should be determined by the occasion itself.

"If modern man is earnestly interested in the Bible, he certainly does not wish for its translation into transitory jargon. Instead, he himself would like to participate in the effort to draw nearer to what stands there." ⁽³⁾

(1) cf Tillich's assertion that apologetic theology "answers the questions implied in the 'situation' in the power of the eternal message."
(ST, I, p.6)

(2) cf The Religious Situation

(3) Ev. Theol. p.35

The question however, that Barth begs is whether modern man is interested in the Bible as such. It is just this belief, that the Bible as such does not interest modern man, that has seemed to many to make the need for effective apologetic so urgent.

Nevertheless, whether or not there is a need for apologetic, there is certainly no reason for the requirements of apologetic to dictate to theology its method of approach to its own proper object, since to be honest science, theology must allow its method to be dictated by its object, as in any other field of enquiry. It is not entirely true to say that Tillich allows his apologetic interests to dictate his message, since he has deeply held ontological convictions which are closely related to his conception of theology. At the same time, however, it does appear that those convictions are themselves, in part, influenced by his beliefs about the kind of theology that is demanded by the contemporary situation. It is, to him, no longer possible to do theology in the way adopted by the Reformation, since nineteenth and twentieth century man thinks in ontological rather than theological terms. It is necessary, therefore, that theology should work towards an ontological study of religious symbols. Whether this is, in fact, a viable undertaking, is questionable, as we have suggested, and appears to involve importing into theology assumptions and methods which are foreign to the object of theology, without drastic changes in the conception of God. In this case, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that theology must forfeit the name Christian and also its association with the Christian Church.

It is always the danger of apologetic theology that it appears to produce answers as though from a magician's hat, and for that reason, it must be constantly on guard. Moreover, theology must be on constant guard against the tendency of apologetic interests to dictate the method of approach to its proper object. Interesting as a question such as "Is theism a viable option?" may be, it is not a question for theology which springs from an

encounter with God, for Christian theology rests upon the conviction, not that theism is possible, but that in Jesus Christ, God has made himself known. While the Church seeks to understand its audience better, it cannot divorce itself from this its fundamental conviction.

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