Short title

Revelation and Theology - the Barth-Harnack letters of 1923.

REVELATION AND THEOLOGY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE HARNACK-BARTH CORRESPONDENCE OF 1923

by

H. - Martin Rumscheidt

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of Divinity,
McGill University,
Montreal.

March 1967

© H.-Martin Rumscheidt 1967

PREFACE

The Church of the middle and second half of the twentieth century is the heir and guardian of an immensely rich theological activity the roots of which go back to the years after the First World War. That period of Church-history may be described as a time of tension between 'the Word of God and the word of man', a period of intense 'theological questions and answers', a period of dialectical theologising. The men involved in that activity felt compelled to restate the whole range of theological knowledge because they could not think and say the same thoughts and sentences about God, Christ and the Holy Spirit which their own teachers had taught them.

One may rightly call that period one of reconsideration and reconstruction. Its impetus, or to say at least its echo is still strongly felt, for in that period questions were asked with such vigour that even to-day they evoke still a variety of answers. The present generation of theologians is engaged in the evaluation, in the drawing out of implications and perhaps even in the attempt to continue the direction of that period of theology.

Such activity is not possible if one has not answered oneself the question as to whether that which was done then is genuinely theological work, whether it is to be built upon and continued, whether it was perhaps merely an episode 'between the times' of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This thesis is concerned with one of the documents of that period, with the record of one of the many public discussions between one of the teachers, Harnack, and of one who belonged to those whose theologising was dialectical, Barth. That discussion is analysed with a view to the question whether there is in it something which may give guidance to the theological activity of to-day.

The writer was stimulated to undertake such an analysis by Prof. Barth himself. I had the privilege of attending the University of Basel at the time of Barth's last semester there as full professor. In the weekly Sozietät on the Bruderholz the students learned well the instruction 'Prüfet die Geister' and the original idea of studying some aspect of the early work of Barth suggested

itself at that time. In numerous discussions with Professors Barth, Max Geiger and Karl Löwith, who was a guest-lecturer at Basel that year, the scope of this thesis took shape. In 1964, enabled to go once again to Basel by a generous fellowship of the Rockefeller Foundation, I had further discussions with Prof. Barth at Basel, with Prof. Walter Kreck of Bonn, with the late Prof. Otto Weber and with Prof. Jakobs of Münster, to all of whom I owe a deep gratitude. Professors R.G. Smith of Glasgow and T.F.Torrance of Edinburgh, both of whom I met at the Congress of the Presbyterian World Alliance at Frankfurt in Aug. 1964 gave me invaluable advice in terms of bibliography and outline. My discussions with Mr. Eberhard Busch, with whom I shared the hospitality of the Alumneum at Basel, and my subsequent correspondence with him have perhaps been the most decisive factor in the development of this thesis. Through him I made what so far is still an acquaitance by mail with Dr. Dietrich Braun of Berlin. To both these gentlemen I would like to express here my profound indebtedness.

On this continent I would like to name four gentlemen whose help to me was significant. Prof. H.W.Frei of Yale University and Prof. G.W.Glick of Franklin and Marshall College granted their permission to quote from their theses and other papers on Barth and Harnack respectively. The third gentleman I cannot name; he is the patient and incisive critic of another attempt on my part to illuminate the relation of Harnack and Barth. His remarks more than anyone else's have helped me to see the implication of the study of that relation. To the Rev. Prof. Dr. J.C.McLelland of McGill University, who with patience and encouragement has been my research-director since 1959 for the B.D., S.T.M., and now the Ph.D. theses, I would like to express an especial thanks. On many occasions his suggestions have helped me see aspects of this study which I had overlooked or neglected.

I should also mention the valuable help given me by Miss T. Maag, a post-graduate student of German Literature at the University of Toronto, and Mrs. R.Rice, also a post-graduate student of German Literature at the University of New Brunswick, both of whom have spent much time with me on the translation of the text

of the Harnack-Barth correspondence.

By far the largest number of books used and consulted in this thesis is in German. Almost all quotations from these sources I translated into English. At times, when an English translation was available, as in the case of the first collection of essays by Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, translated by Dr. D. Horton, I have changed the English text when it appeared that the meaning of the German was not as precise as it should be. Such changes were however not often necessary. I am therefore responsible for the style and meaning of the translated quotations.

Finally I would like to say that I am very grateful to the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research of McGill University, Prof. Dr.S.B.Frost, for the permission to resubmit the thesis to the University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface page I

Section I : Barth and Harnack - An Encounter of Different Worlds. page 1

Section II: The Barth-Harnack Correspondence of 1923. page 30

Part I : The Text page 30
Fifteen Questions to the Despisers of Scientific Theology. page 30
Fifteen Answers to Prof.von Harnack. page 32
Open Letter to Prof. Karl Barth. page 35
An Answer to Prof. von Harnack's Open Letter. page 38
A Postscript to my Open Letter to Prof. Karl Barth. page 47

Part II : An Analysis of the Text page 49
A : Introduction. page 49
1 : The Dialogue Begins. page 49
2 : Harnack's Critique of Barth. page 59
B ; Harnack page 64
1 : Theology, the Historical Science of grasping the Gospel. page 65
2 : What is the Simple Gospel, the Essence of Christianity? page 71
3 : The Second Form of the Gospel - the First Step in its Disfigurement page 81
4 : Marcion - Paul's successor, Speculative Preacher and Transformer of the Gospel. page 83
5 : Marcion and Barth - a Historical Parallelism for Harnack. page 93
6 : The Study of History and its Significance for Faith. page 98
7 : The Harnack of the Correspondence page 108
C : Barth page 121
1 : Barth's objection to 'Scientific Theology'. page 122
2 : Barth's affirmation and Use of Critical-Historical Analysis. page 126
3 : The Gospel as Man's Witness to God page 134
4 : The Possibility of Knowledge of God, page 146
5 : How is Man to Speak of the Reality of the Testimony? page 152
6 : The Dialectical Relation between Revelation and Man's Speech concerning it. page 162

7: Theologia Crucis and Theologia Viatorum. page 172

Section III : An Evaluation of the Correspondence. page 176

1 : The Issue of the Correspondence and its Larger Context. page 176

2 : Objectivity, Subjectivity and Cognition. page 182

3 : The Correspondence - What is its Meaning for Church-History? page 195

Appendix : page 204

Bibliography page 204

SECTION I

BARTH AND HARNACK - AN ENCOUNTER OF DIFFERENT WORLDS

In the early months of 1923 the journal Christliche Welt published an exchange of letters between Adolf von Harnack and Karl Barth. It consists of five letters, three by the former, two by the latter. This correspondence is the basic document of this study.

The journal, founded and edited for many years by Martin Rade, reflected the theological orientation of Albrecht Ritschl insofar as it intended to "reconcile culture and the gospel as it had been made known to and become loved by the people of Germany through Dr. Martin Luther." [1] Harnack had a great influence on the programme of this journal, indeed he was at one time one of its publishers. In view of its intention the journal cannot be labelled 'liberal' offhand. The variety of contributors, among whom are Barth and Gogarten, as well as the variety of items published indicate that it was meant to be a journal for ' the man in the pew ' and not the mouthpiece of one tradition or theological school.

Nonetheless, the theological reorientation which began with the men whose thought was called 'dialectical theology' caused a break between this group of men and those who were responsible for the continuation of the journal's intention. The break caused the journal to become what it had never wanted to be: identified with and expressive of the 'liberal' wing of theology.

The public discussion between Harnack and Barth in this 'liberal' paper lasted a little longer than four months. [2] It was a confrontation which we may call an encounter of different worlds. How those worlds differed should become evident in the following chapters. Now we are to answer what caused them to differ.

1:W. Schneemelcher, Christliche Welt und Freunde der Christlichen Welt, in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 3. ed. vol. I, col. 1737.

2: Harnack's Fifteen Questions appeared in vol. 37,no.1/2,cols. 6-8, Jan. 11; Barth's Fifteen Replies in vol.37,no.5/6,cols. 89-91,Feb. 8; Harnack's Open Letter in vol. 37,no.9/10,cols.142-144, Mar. 8; Barth's Answer to it in vol. 37, no.16/17,cols.242-252, April 26; Harnack's Postscript in vol. 37, no.20/21,cols. 305-306, May 24.

In order to answer this we must go back to the year 1906, when Barth enrolled as a student in the faculty of theology of the University of Berlin. At that time the faculty was what might easily be labelled an 'all - star' faculty. There was Karl Holl, the Church - historian, Julius Kaftan, the dogmatician, Herrmann Gunkel, the Old Testament scholar, Otto Pfleiderer, the New Testament scholar, and Adolf von Harnack, the Dogmengeschichtler and at that time surely the most famous among them. He was an aristocrat among the great minds of his time, among historians someone whose work still commands attention.

To this scholar Barth was attracted. He requested and obtained permission to participate as a regular member in Harnack's seminars. Barth was the youngest student ever to share in those colloquia, an indication that Harnack himself must have been impressed by the student. " With great devotion and single-mindedness Barth attended Harnack's lectures and seminars."[3] He once confessed to Father Willems, a Dutch Dominican, " that he followed Harnack's lectures with growing enthusiasm. Harnack's attempt to bring religion and culture into harmony scientifically impressed him so much that he wholly neglected the rich cultural opportunities Berlin offered. ... He was chained to Harnack ... in a kind of stupor so that even the Berlin Philharmonic could not lure him from his studies."[4]

But in addition to his intellectual brilliance Harnack was a man endowed with a very high moral sense; he stood up for the irreplaceable value of the human person.[5]

Two years later, in 1908, Barth went to Marburg in order to study under Wilhelm Herrmann. And here we must begin to trace the development that led Barth away from Harnack, for it was Herrmann and not Harnack who became Barth's most revered and influential teacher.

3: Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, Adolf von Harnack, p.414 f. (This work shall be cited as AZH from now on.)
4: B.A.Willems, Karl Barth, p. 16.
5: Walther von Loewenich illuminates this side of Harnack's character in an essay entitled Adolf von Harnack in a book called Glaube, Kirche, Theologie, which is a collection of Loewenich's essays, p.151ff.

From him, whom Barth later called "the most pious of liberal theologians of his day",[6] Barth learned the concept or doctrine of the autopistia of faith. Its basic factors are the absolute transcendence of God and the impossibility of proving his existence scientifically. Faith is in no need of an ancillary science for its legitimization. In Barth's theology this teaching became of fundamental importance for, as he is reported to have said, it is "the rat-poison against all sophistry (Spitzfindigkeiten) in theology."[7] It is probably this teaching which Barth has in mind when he remarked that "Herrmann is the one from whom I have learned something most basic, something which, once I followed it to its consequences, caused me to say everything else in a wholly different way, even to interpret that most basic matter quite differently from him."[8]

It appears therefore that at Herrmann's feet Barth learned something which led him to a change in direction, something which caused him to stop and to reconsider his theological thinking. In other words, here is the beginning of Barth's differences with his previous teacher Harnack. Here begins the course which led Barth from being an enthusiastic pupil of Harnack's to that position which the latter called 'a despiser of scientific theology'.

Herrmann opposed what he called the intellectual interpretation of religion. What he has in mind is the cognition of God through the traditional proofs of his existence or through any other means of scientific cognition of objects. In an address to the Studentenkonferenz at Aarau in 1908 he said:"A God who has been proven to exist is of the world and a God of the world is an idol."[9] Fifteen years later Barth wrote these words to Harnack: " One must not have any delusions that faith is an unprecedented event, that one must speak of the Holy Spirit here, if not all the objections Herrmann crammed into us against ' mere credence of historical factors' apart from this basis of cognition are justified."[10] The reference is to Herrmann's view that

6: Quoted without citation in Willems, Op.Cit.,p.18.
7: Ibid.,p.18. Again no citation given.
8: Barth, Die Theologie und die Kirche, p. 241.
10: Quoted in Barth, Op.Cit.,p. 247.

the God of faith is not a demonstrable reality or even a demonstrable possibility because God is God and not an object or subject like those of the world.

If this polemic of Herrmann's is directed against the proofs of God's existence, it is equally directed against the cognition of God in historicism. For it, the historicity of a phenomenon affords the means of comprehending its essence and reality. Historical knowledge and critical reflection are the basic tools with which the philosopher or theologian grasps the object to be analysed.

Harnack makes frequent reference to these tools in his letters to Barth and, as we shall see later, with their application to the data of religion he believes that he has given theology a scientific, an objective method of speaking about God. On account of its scientific nature this method can command respect, speak persuasively and thus can convince the 'cultured despisers' of religion.

Herrmann's teaching about the autopistia of faith is a challenge to the historicism of Harnack. By making that particular concept his own Barth begins to differ with Harnack's position.

Upon his graduation in 1909 Barth became a member of the journal Christliche Welt; he was its Redaktionshelfer at Marburg. But somewhat later during that same year he left for Geneva to assume pastoral responsibilities in a German-speaking congregation there. Yet he continued to contribute articles and reviews to that journal.

Then two years later Barth was called to the congregation of the Swiss Reformed Church at Safenwil in the Aargau. It may be said that his real work as preacher and theologian began here. Eduard Thurneysen writes that" it all began with the fact that Karl Barth was minister in a rural community. He took his office seriously, he fulfilled it with the involvement and all-

---

10: Barth, Theologische Fragen und Antworten, p.25.

inclusiveness so characteristic of him. ... Every day of the week he studied the Bible so that he might carry out his commission to preach. He ploughed through it in his new way like a farmer who goes out early in the morning to his fields and ploughs furrow after furrow. ... Already then Barth stands before us as one who reads and interprets; the tables of the Holy Scriptures are before him. ... The Bible is the source to-day as it was at that time from which his theology draws. It has grown on the labour spent on the sermon and it serves the proclamation of the Church. ... It was exactly this concentration on the Scriptures and on proclamation which led him even in Safenwil to a very thorough discussion with the theology of the time. ... Out of this discussion grew the new perspective and the beginning (Neuansatz) associated with the name of Karl Barth. " [11]

Here we must stop in our consideration of Barth's course away from Harnack. It was this occupation with the Bible which brought Barth into a pronounced disagreement with the type of biblical study carried out by Harnack.

In 1916 Barth delivered an address entitled Die neue Welt in der Bibel. [12] He said in it that the concern of the Bible is the message of God's holiness, righteousness and mercy. This message states that God does not need to be defended, for he speaks his Word sovereignly and with authority. Above all, God wishes to be found only in his Word,indeed the Scriptures say that only in it can God be found.God's Word is Jesus Christ. He is the centre of time, around him revolve the ages. He brings the kingdom of God which comes upon us through him in the midst of time. The Bible speaks of that kingdom as the new world of God, not as the new world of man. And yet God does not bring his kingdom merely to save men's souls for it from the kingdom of man which is left to itself. The message of the Bible rather asserts that God loves the world of man which is apparent in

---

11: Thurneysen, Karl Barth's Theologie der Frühzeit, in Karl Barth - Eduard Thurneysen : Ein Briefwechsel,ed. by E. Busch,p. 18 f.

12: Translated as The Strange New World Within the Bible, in The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 28 ff.

his judging the world in the cross and the resurrection.

In his preoccupation with the Scriptures and its testimony Barth became familiar with and captivated by the work of Johann Christoph Blumhardt and his son Christoph Blumhardt. They helped Barth sharpen his eyes for all forms of pious security and satisfaction, for all false ecclesiastical 'busy-ness' and for the dangers of overestimating man-sponsored renewals of society, Church and world.

Twice during the period with which we are concerned, namely Safenwil and the early years at Göttingen, Barth published articles in which he acknowledges his favourable predisposition toward the Blumhardts. He stated in them why " he felt at home " [13] with them. The first of these was a review of Christoph Blumhardt's book of meditations for home use; the second a comparison between Friedrich Naumann and the younger Blumhardt on the occasion of their deaths. [14]

What made him 'feel at home' in the work of these men? Barth answers :" The unhappy word 'religion', in which is contained the immovability of the 'real' world, the word with which man, tired of life, directs himself to the distant unknown was no longer used at Möttlingen and Boll. The 'God' whom these men were seeking and to whom they witnessed was the living God in a twofold sense. Firstly, they wanted to understand him again as the Bible understands him, namely as the one who lives, from whom are to be expected new deeds, powers and instructions. Secondly, they wanted to seek and expect his kingdom not only in the souls of individual men or in the distant heavens, but above all and first of all in life, precisely in the 'real' life of men on earth. To them the relation of God to the world appeared again as a mighty historical process, a movement, a victorious battle which must come to an end with the renewal of all things."[15] Something new,

---

13 : Barth, Die christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf, p.vl.
14 : Auf das Reich Gottes warten, publ. in Sept. 1916, now in Suchet Gott, so werdet ihr leben, 2.ed., which is a collection of sermons by Barth and Thurneysen. The other is Vergangenheit und Zukunft, publ. in Aug.1919, now in Anfänge der dialektischen Theologie, ed. by J. Moltmann, vol.I, p. 37ff.
15 : Vergangenheit und Zukunft, in Moltmann, Op.Cit., p.44 f.

something that was in accordance with the New Testament was being said,lived and confessed by these men. " It was, to put it into one word, hope. The hope for a visible and touchable appearance of God's sovereignty over the world,(in contrast to the mere, often so blasphemous talk of God's omnipotence); the hope for a help and salvation from the past condition of the world, (in contrast to that comforting and assuaging,which in every instance comes to a halt before the 'inevitable circumatances'); the hope for all things, for mankind,(in contrast to the selfish concern for the welfare of one's own soul and to all the attempts to breed religious supermen and aristocrats);the hope for the physical side of life as well as for the spiritual one in the sense that not only sin and sadness but also poverty, sickness and death shall once be done away with,(in contrast to the purely spiritual ideal of the so-called 'religious-ethical life). And to believe in God meant ... to take this all-embracing hope seriously." [16]

Here lies the second point where we must stop in tracing Barth's 'estrangement' from Harnack. As Barth worked on his sermons and studied and interpreted, as he tried to fulfill his commission to preach the gospel he came under the influence of the two Blumhardts.

What caught Barth's attention in these men was their zeal in the attempt to understand what was really being said in the books of the Bible.They did not try to systematise, "set up theses or produce historical and psychological deductions. They neither philosophised or politicised. No 'problems' are dug up and no lines drawn."[17] When asked about the meaning of their utterances they would say:" I mean it as it is written there," pointing to the Bible. [18] And this wrestling with the message of the Scriptures made Barth feel at home with them.

Thurneysen's characterization of the younger Blumhardt is equally true for the older man." He wants to draw attention to God. ... He was a man who lived in a sphere in which people

16: Ibid.,p.45. 17: Barth - Thurneysen, Suchet Gott,so werdet ihr leben,p.175 f.
18: Quoted in Thurneysen, Christoph Blumhardt, p. 16.

long and look for the kingdom that is to come and rule in solitary majesty over all spheres. ... He was a man of astounding and unheard of faithfulness and objectivity in the matters of God." [19] In this characterization we may seek what influenced Barth so deeply and set him apart so much from Harnack.

Faithfulness and objectivity towards anything is to accept any phenomenon as it does in fact confront man, that is to say its dignity and uniqueness are honoured. These two factors in theology will allow a proper interpretation of God's revelation which is what the Bible speaks of.

The message the Blumhardts found in the Scriptures was this: God is a free and sovereign God. Man is powerless without him. In order to find him man cannot rely on his attempts to bring God to man.Nonetheless, God does not wish to remain separated from man, indeed he came on his own to man in his son. Yet in so doing he remained wholly God and in this he redeems us from our powerlessness. [20]

On the whole this message is not new. Indeed the Church had taught all along that God is person, that he does not desire solitude but rather community with man and that in Jesus Christ he had found man. But the Blumhardts found that this message had become a matter of pious feeling, of religious contemplation. They therefore proclaimed it as something that had to become an event again, since our feelings and contemplations are not the event of God's communing with us. Our feelings and contemplations do not take us to God but only to the boundaries of ourselves.

God must enter the world in order to establish that <u>real</u> relationship between himself and us. Man is of the world so that God must come to the world, become temporal, become flesh, become history.[21] But Jesus Christ is God having come to the world,having become temporal,flesh, history. The incarnation

---

19: <u>Ibid</u>.,p.20 f. 20: Cf. the chapter on Johann Christoph Blumhardt in Barth's <u>Die protestantischeTheologie im 19. Jahrhundert</u>,p. 588 ff.,passim.

21: Ch. Blumhardt, <u>Sterbet, so wird Jesus leben</u>, Sermon on Luke 17: 20 f.,p.383 ff.

shows how vast God's mercy is to man and also how far man is away from God. Man's existence is in sin, death and transitoriness, not on"some pinnacle of culture and religion" in the words of Barth's letter to Harnack.[22] For Blumhardt God's entry into that existence establishes the relation between God and man, nothing else does.[23] Over and against idealistic and spiritualistic interpretations of God's community with man he maintains the view that " it is the objective aspect of God which makes history and causes man to experience it until the day (of God) comes."[24]

God remains God however even when incarnate.Thus he who experiences a history of God experiences something wholly different from himself and sovereign over him. God is not an object among others, he is the one who questions and judges all objects. He is the ground of all objects, as Tillich would say; he is the end of time appearing in the midst of time, in Cullmann's phrase.

The Blumhardts never tired of emphasising this. God enters time as its crisis and this becoming temporal makes for a history which leads to the day of Christ, to the eschaton. Contrary to Rothe and the Hegelian wing of theology, Blumhardt maintained that the eschaton was not a new age of man but rather the very end of all ages. It was God's new age with man, but not the age of a new humanity brought about by man. God brings in the kingdom of God. So he spoke about it in terms of hope and Christ's resurrection."It must come to the point where we do not merely hold on to an old confession of faith but in new experiences call out one to another 'he is risen indeed!' and 'he lives among us!'." Or just before that sentence,"Precisely what is the centre, the actual centre of gravity in the kingdom of God ? The resurrection! The revelation of God in the resurrection! ... Jesus lives and lives, as it is written, as the risen one. ... Only the power of the resurrection, in which we shall see him coming on the clouds of his father's glory, will achieve things. Only the one who rose and who will come again takes the world into his hands from above and shakes it so that in the end it can do

22: Barth, Theologische Fragen und Antworten, p.11.
23: Blumhardt, Op.Cit.,Sermon on Phil.4:4 f., p. 255 ff.
24: Quoted by Thurneysen in Op.Cit.,p.38, (the underlining is mine).
25: Blumhardt, Op.Cit., Sermon on Luke 17:11 f.,p.288 ff.

nothing but surrender and give him praise."[26]

When Blumhardt speaks of the cross and resurrection he witnesses above all to the living God in our midst, to the living God who is to come at the end of time, to the living God whose kingdom which is to come has already come. It is a witness to the living God who is radically different from the world and who is beyond the world, who yet became flesh and therefore is in the world.

In this insistence on God's otherness and in the double emphasis-God on earth and on earth God-is to be sought the element that influenced Barth and that was so distasteful to Harnack, namely eschatology.

But even the insistence on God's otherness and the emphasis that God is God even when on earth are an empty ideology unless God himself makes them become real. Only he can bring about a real encounter between himself and man. Through his son that event becomes reality on earth. Here the Blumhardts speak of the Holy Spirit, for through him that reality obtains actuality.[27] "Revelation occurs through the Spirit. ... Even St.Peter could not recognise Jesus as God's son and as the Christ without a revelation from the father through the Spirit."[28]

Thurneysen calls this aspect of the Blumhardts' preaching the nucleus of their thought. " What does it mean that both Blumhardts put all their thinking under the proviso of the Holy Spirit? It is the test as to whether they took the 'God himself' and the 'God only' really seriously even to the last. It means that they did not think: we believe in God , believe and hope that he will come and do great things to us and because we believe that,it shall come to pass; no,this proviso,which alone allows full understanding of God, enters here and says: God comes not because you hope and believe, he comes and helps (when in fact he does come and help) only because he wants to do that. Even our faith and hope are worth nothing, are flesh, are senseless grasping and calling out into emptiness if it does not please God to redeem us.

26: Ibid,Sermons on psalm 34:7 and Mark 16:1f.,p.112ff.and p.349ff.
27: Even a hurried reading of the chapter Über den Heiligen Geist in J.Chr. Blumhardt's Schriftauslegung,ed. by O.Bruder,p.1ff. will

But has not God promised redemption? Can our faith not base itself on this word of promise? That may well be,but only as a word of promise is it his word. That means that it helps us only because God has committed himself to it in his free decision. When God comes and we experience his help, when he really appears among us and is recognised for what he is then a miracle has happened, the miracle namely of his mercy for which we can only wait."[29]

Man is in need of a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit,or as the younger Blumhardt put it ,a continuous revelation, an ever new, ever recurring revelation. "Under the weight of preaching without preceding revelation even that which revelation had already given can be smothered completely.Thus we cannot avoid saying that, when there is no revelation, the sermon is no longer the gospel but a spiritual art of talking in the service of human systems."[30] But, and this is the point of these remarks, man does not have or possess the Holy Spirit, does not have or possess revelation,although that was what the accepted theology of the day maintained. Man must rather wait for the Holy Spirit, wait for revelation in reliance on and in hope for God's word and faithfulness which through the Spirit will ever renew his promise.[31]

In these views Blumhardt opposed the concepts and the consequences of the word 'religion', which in view of its great philosophical significance had assumed an immensely important position in theology.Against it Blumhardt put what he called the kingdom of God. We noticed that for him the eschaton was the very end of all ages. Similarly, the kingdom of the eschaton, of God, is the power of God, the government of God, the revelation of the life of God."The whole kingdom is a heavenly,an eternal kingdom.It is contrary to our earthly nature.The boundary is precise, it cannot be

---

lead to this conclusion.
28: Ibid.,p.30 & 37.
29: Thurneysen, Op.Cit.,p.50f.
30: Chr. Blumhardt quoted in Thurneysen, Op.Cit.,p.52.
31: Compare Barth's answer no. 10 in his reply to Harnack's fifteen questions.That answer challenges so-called 'scientific theology' on this very point. Barth writes in it: "If the knowledge that God is love is our highest and final one,how can we pretend to be in po-

altered or mixed in with other things. ... It does not please everyone that God's kingdom does not come with external gestures. There are many who would rather have it with violence, externally, so that they might shout 'Look here, look there, we have it, we can do it, ... look how much blessing we bring to mankind.' ... Beloved, let your flesh die, your spiritual flesh, let it die! God will surely not be embarrassed if you do not blow the trumpet, if you give up your campaigning. He has trumpets, too, he won't need yours. He has voices, too, he won't need yours. And when you are quiet, he will sound his trumpet, raise his voice and then he will create his kingdom and not we poor humans." [32]

The kingdom is God's, yes , but it is also a kingdom, not merely a realm of inwardness, a sphere where God rules souls. The emphasis is on God's sovereignty over the whole creation now just as it is on the futuristic aspect of that kingdom which has already begun to come upon us. In another sermon Blumhardt said: " The aim of all intercession is ... connected with the coming of the son of man. The presence of the saviour is therefore not yet salvation. ... The last thing in the coming of salvation is the return of the saviour. Thus far everything is just the beginning, the foundation. The actual fulfillment is tied to his coming, to his appearance, to his becoming revealed in the world, it is tied to the fact that God comes with him ... and then we are saved." [33]

What are the characteristic features in the thought of the Blumhardts that influenced Barth? These men were witnesses for God insofar as they wanted above all to call men's attention to God. Exactly for this reason they saw themselves compelled to attack the Christianity of their day. The tools, so to speak, of their witness to God were faithfulness to the message of the Bible and objectivity towards the 'object' of their proclamation : God as revealed in Christ and testified to us in the biblical witness. Thus, we see them invdved in an eschatological dialec-

---

ssession of it? ... Is our faith not also always unfaith? ... Does faith not live by being faith in God's promise? Are we saved in a way other than in hope?"- Barth, Op.Cit.,p.12.
32: Blumhardt, Op.Cit., sermon on Luke 17:20 f.,p.91 ff.
33: Ibid., sermon on Luke 18:1 f.,p.227 ff.

tics which speaks of God in the flesh, of God present in the world and in history, of God who is to come, who is radically different from the world, who nevertheless entered into the world in an earthly form. It is a dialectics which states that God is understood and even found only through himself; his revelation in fact creates the ears and eyes with which he is heard and seen.

There is in this dialectics an objectivity which allows no pre-understanding to impose itself on the event of God's confrontation with man. But since the reality of God is taken seriously, there is also a very serious questioning for the real powers of God's kingdom. Precisely because God lives man must arise from his slumber of inwardness and pious otherworldliness, for the presence of God in the world demands a change of man and the world. But these men knew that sermons, protests and moral instructions do not bring about that kind of change. They did not therefore dismiss the ability of man to become converted, no, they had confidence in the real reality and the natural nature of man and in the emergence into visibility of what is hidden still in man. They trusted in a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They believed in man solely because they believed in God. And thus they also believed that the world was renewable.

Yet this confidence made every form of religious subjectivism, of otherworldly inwardness impossible. That sleep had to come to an end. The world's salvation is God's return to it, his actual coming into it again. In this expectation of God's return there arises an eschatology and an eschatological dialectics which allow man to speak of God in such a way that his uniqueness and dignity are honoured. Barth admits that this influenced him profoundly.

One may see this influence in the sermons published in the little volume entitled Suchet Gott, so werdet ihr leben. It would be false to assume that Barth discovered eschatology and dialectics in the Blumhardts.Rather he saw in them kindred spirits, who in their confrontation with the Scriptures preached that the king-

dom was coming and that we can only wait for it. Yet this did not prevent them from upholding an ethics in which we are urged to hasten towards the kingdom. Warten und eilen, wait and hasten, were keywords in Möttlingen and Boll. Barth's address, The Christian's place in Society, delivered at Tambach in Sept. 1919 leaves no doubt that for him ethics may not become lost in eschatology. The latter leads to the former. Barth rather guides us through the middle between mythical views of the end and the resigned denial of hope, we are guided past the idea of the parousia which failed to come. Or, in different words, we are led past the idea which brought about the renunciation of hope and the consequent shift from God to man as the one who brings in or creates the kingdom to come.

We see Barth here as a man deeply concerned about the preaching of the gospel. His real, his primary aim is that the depth of the Scriptures become visible again, that the springs of the Bible become unplugged again, that the message of the biblical writers become again concrete in man's life and existence. We may say indeed that Barth wanted the Scriptures to become 'political', involved in the events of community, nation and world. Hence his interpretation of God's judgment as a judgment which corrects, Gottes Richten ist ein Zurechtrichten, in the phrase borrowed from the Blumhardts.[34]

The minister from Safenwil therefore actually worked with his congregation through Ephesians and II Corinthians as well as through Romans, the fruit of which was published as a commentary on that epistle. The book was meant to do one thing: to call for an intensification of the study of the Scriptures for the sake of the Church's preaching. It was an attempt " to stand materially involved on the side of Paul and not non-chalantly vis-à-vis him."[35] The eventual consequence of the book was an invitation to Barth to accept the newly created chair of reformed dogmatics at Göttingen.

The content of that work need not concern us here. We shall see later, however, why the exegetical method of it and of its next

34: Quoted by Thurneysen in Busch, Op.Cit., p.21.
35: Barth, Der Römerbrief, 1. ed., p.VI.

edition was to lead Barth into the position which in the opinion of his teacher, Harnack, deserved to be called ' a despiser of scientific theology'.

It is difficult to know whether Harnack and Barth had met or been in contact with each other since Barth's days in Berlin and Marburg. In 1920 they did meet; once at the Studentenkonferenz at Aarau, where both had been asked to deliver an address and a second time at the home of Eberhard Vischer.

At Aarau Harnack spoke on Was hat die Historie an fester Erkenntnis zur Deutung des Weltgeschehens zu bieten ? [36] In comparison to Barth's lecture which was entitled Biblische Fragen, Einsichten und Ausblicke, [37] Harnack's address was not the one that was remembered.

Harnack approached Aarau with a certain degree of hesitancy. His daughter and biographer, Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, writes that for a good number of years Harnack had been quite worried about the way in which theology was proceeding. "He feared that the generation of younger theologians was moving in a dangerous direction. He was concerned over the decline in the respect for historical research. What he found was rather a romantic leaning towards the primitive, a tendency to draw all knowledge from the depth of one's soul. This all merely supplanted a methodical analysis of the sources. But this tendency seemed to be controllable, partially due to Harnack's own work. ... On the whole a shift in emphasis was noticeable in the world of theological endeavour, yet one was still able at least to understand one another's language, one could assume that all strove for the same end." [38]

Then Harnack went to Aarau. When it was over he confessed to Eberhard Vischer that " the effect of Barth's lecture was just staggering. Not one word, not one sentence I could have said or thought.I saw the sincerity of Barth's speech, but its

36: Originally in Erforschtes und Erlebtes, now in the anthology of Harnack essays Ausgewählte Reden und Aufsätze,p.181 ff.
37: Translated as Biblical Questions,Insights and Vistas,in Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man,p.51 ff.
38: AZH, p.412 f.

theology frightened me. ... The severity of the charges made in that address is still very vivid in my mind. Instead of losing any of its force, it appears to me more and more hazardous, yes in a way even scandalous.This impression is in no way softened by the consideration that this sort of religion is incapable of being translated into real life, so that it must soar above life as a meteor rushing toward its disintegration. So I ask myself again and again how he as a minister who is charged with the cure of souls can judge in such a fashion."[39]

Did Harnack not know Barth's Römerbrief before he went to Aarau? There is no indication in his own writings or in his biography that would allow an answer in either the affirmative or the negative. It is beyond question that he knew Jülicher's famous review of that work . But it did not appear until July 1920, three months after Aarau. The reason for such a long delay in its review is due to the fact that even though the book had been published in 1919 by Bäschlin in Bern it became known to a wider circle of readers in Germany only after Kaiser in München took over and sold the copies which Bäschlin still had on hand in 1920. We would conclude therefore that Harnack became fully aware of Barth's decisive departure from his own theological position only during the conference at Aarau. His remark to Vischer supports this conclusion.

We must try to imagine Harnack's feelings during Barths lecture.His devoted and now somewhat famous pupil saying things such as these right in Harnack's presence:"We are inside and not outside;... the knowledge of God and of the last things,of which the Bible speaks, is the premise of all our life and thought. ... But this is apparently contradicted by our dark,enigmatical, inexplicable sense of being outside and of lacking a premise."[40] What Barth gave with one hand he took away with the other, since the first part of that statement reflects the religious certainty of the Christian and the second part throws him into confusion and uncertainty. The former describes the assured possession

39: Ibid.,p.415. 40: Barth, Biblical Questions, Insights, and Vistas, in The Word of God and the Word of Man,p.53.

of the believer , a possession that is undergirded by the results of scientific theology; the latter crushes it and leaves the believer in the position of the gnostic or of someone who does not yet know what he believes.

Then Barth says:"Our quest for God cannot be due to the influence of theology and the Church, for theology and Church from the beginning of the world have done more in this particular to narcotize than to stimulate. (Theologie und Kirche haben mehr für das Einschlafen als für das Wachwerden der Gottesfrage getan.)" [41] But who raises the question of God if not the community of believers, the Church and its scientific relative, theology ? Where else but in theology can this question be raised and expected to be answered with precision and with the proper tools ? Barth is in fact cutting off the branch on which he as a theologian sits and speaks. That statement is a contradiction in terms. " Religion and thought concerning God (Sinn für Gott) have never meant the same thing."[42] This also is a contradiction because religion is by definition the sense for God. The listener must have wondered what kind of logic was operative in Barth.

" When we admit our knowledge of God, we apparently admit something else besides. When we hold to our partly inside position, we are apparently at the same time establishing a position partly outside. We set up for ourselves a duality, a dualism. We admit our knowledge of God only as an antithesis to other knowledge."[43] Is this some kind of Hegelian dialectics, a metaphysics of which theology had just recently and justifiedly rid itself? Harnack had striven endlessly to synthesize the knowledge of the world, of the universitas litterarum and the knowledge of God. What is this duality, this dualism ? Is it not the gnosticism the Church had anathematised ? Is Barth not aware of this ? Did he not say himself that " when the human soul becomes actually conscious of its autonomy and freedom, the gravity of the question about unity, the question about God, is not lessened but increased."[44]? The Enlightenment had made plain the freedom and autonomy of the soul and ever since then the " way of grasping the

41: Ibid.,p. 54. 42: Ibid.,p. 54. 43: Ibid.,p. 55
44: Ibid.,p. 56.

object, who is God, epistemologically has attained to greater clarity and maturity."[45] How can anyone deny this maturity by reverting to a pre-Enlightenment position ?

" When we ask the Bible what it has to offer, it answers by putting to us the fact of election.What we call religion and culture may be available to everybody, but the belief, simple and comprehensive, which is offered in the Bible, is not available to everybody: not at any time or in any respect can any one who will reach out and take it."[46] This removes from the believer's grasp the confidence and reliability of his having overcome the world and the material forces. Rather " every link between faith and what is human is severed."[47] Then the reference to the doctrine of election recalls orthodox dogmaticism which relegated faith to an intellectual assent to authoritatively defined propositions. Had not the Reformation spent endless energy on overcoming the very similar authoritarianism of scholasticism ? Why is that heritage disregarded then ?

And then there is Barth's characterisation of the content of the Bible. "... always there is the same seeing of the invisible, the same hearing of the inaudible, the same incomprehensible but no less undeniable epidemic of standing still and looking up. ... We think of John the Baptist in Grünewald's painting of the crucifixion, with his strangely pointing hand. It is this hand which is in evidence in the Bible."[48] But how is this to be reconciled with the undeniable conclusions of biblical research which has established that " the Bible is the literary monument of an ancient racial religion and of a Hellenistic cultus religion of the Near East," which Barth himself admits?[49] Why grant validity on the one hand to the tested results of literary and historical criticism and then on the other take them away by saying that only when these results are granted and put behind us do we come to the actual content of the Bible ? By what avenue do we come to know that content then ?

45: Harnack in a letter to Barth. See Barth, Theologische Fragen und Antworten, p.14. 46: Barth, Biblical Questions, etc. in The Word of God etc.,p.58. 47: Harnack to Barth, in Barth, Theologische Fragen etc.,p.15. 48: Barth, Biblical Questions, etc., in The Word of God etc.,p.64f. 49: Ibid.,p.60.

And finally this statement: " In the Biblical experience there is a final element to which nothing in psychology corresponds, which cannot be reproduced in feeling, which cannot be demonstrated in experience. ... Biblical religious history has the distinction of being in its essence, in its inmost character, neither religion nor history - not religion but reality, not history but truth."[50] Can this be anything more than rhetorical language? How can reality be contrasted with the data of psychology and history? Even a special history, even Heilsgeschichte must be historical datum or else we are using language equivocally and not helpfully.

One could continue and show how question after question would arise for Harnack in response to Barth's remarks. Suffice it to say that that lecture left him with a sense of bewilderment. He saw clearly that Barth was not only breaking with the theological position in which Harnack stood but that he was also challenging it.

Two elements may be distinguished in that sense of bewilderment. On the one hand there is the realization of what this kind of thinking means for the established theological position. On the other there is a feeling of not really understanding what that thinking wants to express.

Harnack spoke about that feeling several times. On Jan. 16, 1923 he wrote to Barth about reading a " half incomprehensible expectoration by Gogarten;"[51] on March 8, the same year he states that Barth's " concept of revelation is completely incomprehensible to me; much else stays under the cover of a heavy fog. Other things remain totally obscure for me."[52] On Jan. 20, 1929 he wrote to Martin Rade his concern over this " speculation for which I have no antenna."[53]

The element referred to first may be seen in the kind of reaction made by Harnack and other colleagues of his to that ' new'

50: Ibid.,p.66. 51: Quoted in Busch, Op.Cit.,p.112.
52: Barth, Theologische Fragen etc.,p.14. 53: AZH.,p.416.

thinking. " I am filled with anxiety for the future of scientific theology " Harnack wrote to Barth.[54] He had it because he feared that the solid ground on which theology stood on account of the possession of final knowledge, assured by the critical-historical method, would be shaken. He feared for the good conscience theology had finally achieved in its successful struggle to establish harmony between faith and the world, between the teaching of Jesus and the wisdom of Goethe and Kant, between the kingdom of God and the policies of Kaiser Wilhelm II.[55] So he said that " these views may not claim general validity, exclusive validity. They represent a stage which can and must be overcome.... There are melancholy and easy-going Christians (not thoughtless or careless Christians). The former are always those who give us dogmatics; (Die Dogmatik wird zu allen Zeiten von Jenen gemacht); at the same time they hold a gun into the latters' faces and interpret their God-given temper as nothing but an enduring state of sinnerhood. ... Yet I can understand that most melancholy Christians are unable to judge differently and that therefore they must condemn."[56]

According to Harnack Barth is one of those melancholy Christians, for his theological ancestry alone would show that. There is the melancholy Dane, Kierkegaard, the Russian mystic,Dostoyevsky, the pessimist from Basel,Overbeck and the man so concerned about the eschaton, Blumhardt. And how roundly Barth condemns. In a ' holy egoism ' (a phrase coined by Jülicher) he walks past the fruits of earlier research and what men before him had thought of as holy. He questions not only individual conclusions but the whole presupposition and foundation of the thought of his teachers. He says No where neo-protestant theology emphasized the uniqueness and difference of the Christian religion over and against all other matters of human and spiritual concern. No also to the barriers which were raised by this emphasis, claiming that they make what is unique to God into something unique

54: In Busch, Op.Cit.,p.112.
55: We refer for example to the proclamation in support of the Emperor's war policy, published in Aug. 1914 by ninety-three German intellectuals among whom were many of Barth's former teachers.
56: In Busch, Op.Cit.,p.126f.

to man. No, where Protestant thinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries said there was a significance of Christianity for human and spiritual matters, where they stressed its influence on culture, society and science. Barth went so far as to say that certain boundaries had been disregarded causing God's revelation to become regarded as a transfiguration of the world, as something inherent in the world. And how Barth protested against the union of Church and culture, asking whether in the midst of it neo-Protestantism was still speaking of God.

Yet, Harnack acknowledged the No's, acknowledged the questions and called them 'a ferment' which prevents "our easy-going temper from changing into carelessness, our child-like attitude (Kindersinn) from changing into spiritual foolishness and our openness to the world from changing into worldliness."[57] At the same time he could not help wondering why in this theological ferment "Ritschl is the most despised of all to-day, although he has much to offer. ... But the sons of to-day are more hostile to their fathers than to their grand-fathers."[58]

Ritschl and those fathers, of whom Harnack was one, had given precise and scientific answers to the question of how the Church and theology are to speak the Word of Christ. That answer might not be the final one, but it was good enough for Barth to agree that the faith of the Church and theology comes about "through the preaching of the Word of Christ."[59] Then, why challenge the fathers, why turn against them and their conclusions with the critical question:'how can we preach the Word of Christ?'? As if the theology of the last century had not shown that that Word is the simple gospel which can and must be preached. But the hostility goes deeper than that. Stating the obvious, namely that the preacher's and the theologian's concern is not their feelings or their heuristic knowledge, Barth introduces an epistemology of the

---

57: Ibid., p. 127.

58: AZH,p. 417.

59: In Barth, Theologische Fragen und Antworten, p. 10.

word which is gnostic in character.[60] This speculative, metaphysical element with its use of dualism, non-historical reality and the 'wholly other' is a clear breach with the work of 'the fathers.'

Thus it is not merely a ferment, this new thinking. If it were that only, then it would pass once its aims had been achieved. But why the attack, why the rejection and condemnation, why the speculation ? When one leaves the ground of the reality of history, the confidence of faith becomes illusory, science is exchanged for suitable fantasies and the real Jesus Christ and his word is made into imaginary figures. The result can only be an occultism which the Church must reject. But why all this then ? Harnack therefore formulated this anxiety and the questions arising out of it into that series of fifteen questions which in January 1923 he put before the melancholic, gnostic and dogmatic despisers of scientific theology.

We have for the sake of discussion distinguished the two elements in Harnack's sense of bewilderment. But it is apparent that the realization of the meaning of the new thinking for the established theological position and the feeling of not really understanding what this thinking wants to express cannot be separated in actual fact. Both become manifest in the questions Harnack asks.

What of Barth's published work did Harnack actually know ? It is not possible to determine this accurately. Using Miss von Kirschbaum's Bibliographia Barthiana in the Festschrift Antwort one may select those works with which Harnack might have been familiar.

Barth had contributed eleven times to Christliche Welt prior to the correspondence with Harnack in it. Seven of these contributions were reviews, one a sermon. Only three were independent studies from which one might deduce a personal point of view, a theological position. Two of them were published in 1922 just prior to the correspondence. Barth's participation as a writer in Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche amounts to three articles

60: This was also the conclusion of Jülicher who accused Barth of Marcionitism in his review of the first edition of the Römerbrief. A reprint of it is in Moltmann, Op.Cit., vol.I.,p.87 ff.

all of which appeared before 1915. None of them could have done more than to confirm Harnack in his general suspicion referred to above, (Supra.,p.15). Then there are some fifty-one publications in various local, congregational and ecclesiastical newspapers and journals, very few, if any of which would have come to Harnack's attention even if the War had not been on. Two articles were written for the first edition of Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart,vol.5. As they are about Swiss thinkers,they would not allow much deduction as to their author's theological position. Whether Harnack knew and read the Schweizerische Theologische Zeitschrift or the Reformierte Kirchenzeitung is not sure. Since the two items in them are an article and a sermon resp. they would not really be decisive for a knowledge of Barth.Harnack may have read the two essays Der Christ in der Gesellschaft and Zur inneren Lage des Christentums, which like Biblische Fragen,Einsichten und Ausblicke,delivered in Harnack's presence,were published by Kaiser, München and would be of interest to Harnack after the experience in Aarau. But this does not mean that he in fact read them. He probably was aware of Zwischen den Zeiten in which Barth prior to the correspondence had published only Not und Verheissung der christlichen Verkündigung. Of the seventy-six titles listed by Miss von Kirschbaum before the Harnack-Barth discussion there remain the three books published up to that time: the first collection of sermons by Thurneysen and Barth and the two editions of the Römerbrief.

It would appear that Harnack might have been familiar with the following of Barth's published works prior to their discussion: the two editions of the Römerbrief, Der Christ in der Gesellschaft, Zur inneren Lage des Christentums, (an article now reprinted as Unerledigte Anfragen an die heutige Theologie in the second anthology of essays by Barth: Die Theologie und die Kirche), Biblische Fragen, Einsichten und Ausblicke, Immer noch unerledigte Anfragen, Das Wort Gottes als Aufgabe der Theologie and Not und Verheissung der christlichen Verkündigung.[61] These

61: It must be stressed here that this conclusion is no more than an opinion of the author. On Oct.20 last Prof. Barth wrote me

works constitute the major publications of Barth's up to that time and give sufficient insight into his position then.

Nonetheless that position was puzzling and shocking to Harnack. Why? For what reason would a man of world-renown say that neither his nor anyone else's theology really matters and then in the very next breath go on that if his opponent's way of teaching the gospel came into predominance the gospel would not even be taught any more.[62]

Even though Harnack may have been emotionally involved in this confrontation and even though he may have felt that he did not have an antenna for the message of Barth, he had definite reasons nevertheless why he was opposed to the 'new look' in theology.

Two things specifically estranged Harnack from his one-time pupil. There is first of all the apparent disdain for critical-historical analysis, for the scientific evaluation of the source material. Secondly, there is what he called the tendency to draw one's understanding of the material from one's soul which for Harnack meant the free creation for oneself of the truth.

He once characterized Barth's position like this: " We live in a time which, dominated by certain vital questions, is in danger of devaluating the critical question of truth. Strictly methodical work in relation to those questions is dispensed with and even rejected under the label of historicism. It is true that history does not speak the last word anywhere, but in the science of religion, especially of the Christian religion, it certainly has the first word."[63] Harnack was an historian as a scientist and in his methodology an historicist. For him the patient tracing of the existence of an object or truth in the

---

that in his opinion Harnack did not have an intimate knowledge of his writings, especially not prior to the correspondence in Christliche Welt. - That Harnack knew the Overbeck article Immer noch unerledigte Anfragen we know from Harnack's postcard to Barth, written on Jan.16,1923. Prof. Barth drew my attention to it, it is published in Busch, Op.Cit.,p.112. But then Prof. Barth also believes that Harnack " wird gewiss in den Romerbrief geschaut haben", which to me suggests that Barth does not believe Harnack to have had thorough knowledge even of that work. - In that card to Barth Harnack says that he wrote his fifteen questions on the spur of the moment without 'literary'preparation. It was on the basis of a complex of ideas and impressions gained during the previous year from books, essays and conversations. " If I am not mistaken"

course of history was the key to the understanding of it. This involves the critical appraisal of the object or truth in its environment so that one clears away what is accidental to it at any particular time. Thus, one comes to know the object or truth gradually. The critical rejection of methodical, historical analysis amounted to the desire to know an object or truth fully 'in a twinkling of an eye'. But that had been exactly the desire and method of gnosticism. " The most unbearable feature of gnostic theology was its view of God as the wholly other, the totally unknowable and as the abyss. So also its view of man. As long as man is one of the pneumatikoi he is in essence related to, yes, even a part of God. Both these views replaced the Christian understanding of God. They put into its place a foreign understanding which leads to epistemological absurdities, which is what we see happening again to-day. Again we hear of knowledge that cannot be known and of experiences which cannot be had," [64]

The gnostic pneumatikos, claiming to be a bearer of revelation, believed he had full knowledge of God in a sudden revelation. He therefore did not need discussions with others of his own or preceding times in order to find that knowledge. His opponents charged that in that belief he harboured an arbitrariness and a dualistic onesidedness in which he rejects logic and becomes irrational. Only what emerged from his soul he regarded as being of the truth, but this only means that he creates truth freely on his own. He is a man filled with 'holy egoism'.

For Harnack science was a sphere of methodical, unprejudiced, stately and well-thought-through approach to the cognition of an object or truth. Whatever entered that sphere with a passionate invdvement in the object or truth was foreign to him. Such an approach might serve as a ferment in an otherwise too slow

---

Harnack writes in that card,"I have read only one article by you during the last year." Therefore, he was definitely not familiar with Das Wort Gottes als Aufgabe etc and Not und Verheissung etc. What Harnack had read of Barth is thus quite impossible to state accurately, but we must remember that he asked his fifteen questions on the basis of a general impression and that he addressed them to no one particular thinker.

62:In Barth, Theologische Fragen etc.,p.17. 63: Harnack, Die Entstehung der Christlichen Theologie und des kirchlichen Dogmas,p.I. 64: Ibid.,p.61.

process.But in that case the approach is not scientific and if it claims to be scientific but rejects or denies history, showing thereby that it has no reverence for what is great in history, then it cannot really appreciate the achievements of the gospel in its two millenia of history. This would however not only be irreverence toward greatness, not only a total lack of interest in the development of the gospel in the course of history, it would also be real " ignorance of what is going on. (Such an approach) will only pour water into its own wine and depart from the field of scientific theology."[65]

But can such an approach be called science? How could it? It is not interested in establishing proofs, it rather creates its own theology, theory, dogma, morality and also science in order to achieve its goal which is to edify and to win souls. The existentialist-pietist emphasis on sheer faith, the attitude that if something seems doubtful, try believing harder, is not scientific. And how much Harnack abhors the tendency toward the primitive is apparent in his remark to Barth:" This point of view, known to the point of nausea from recent, second-rate Church history, opens the gates to every suitable fantasy and theological dictatorship which dissolves the historical of our religion and seeks to torment the conscience of others with one's own knowledge derived from actual observations of facts or events."[66]

The rejection of critical-historical study, the irreverence toward the great moments and personalities of the past and the claim to full, instantaneous knowledge are the objections Harnack raises in the name of science to Barth's position, to the method of the Römerbrief. But in addition to them he sees three other factors in Barth to which he is opposed.

In his lifelong attempt to relate religion to culture and science, Harnack had insisted that science and human cognition had to be seen in their relation to the divine. He shared Goethe's

65: Harnack in an editorial of Theologische Literaturzeitung, vol. 50, no.1, col.2.
66: in Barth, Op.Cit., p. 17.

view that it would not be worth living as long as seventy years if all man's wisdom were to be no more than foolishness before God.[67] It was incomprehensible for him how anyone could say that human cognition, experience, self-knowledge, that psychology and historical reflection are possible in questions not concerned with God and that these 'faculties' are said to be the loss of the reverence on which rests man's righteousness before God. But precisely this is what Barth seemed to maintain. The result of such an outlook is the separation of reason and science from the divine[68] which Harnack could interpret only as a victory of the irrational and demonic over man.

Secondly, Harnack did not regard culture and morality as non-divine. Surely, culture is not religion nor is morality identical with religion. But a culture and a morality deeply indebted to and influenced by religion is - if not divine - then certainly transparent to the divine. Barth, however, believes that the divine has as much and as little to do with either the civilized and the religious as with the barbaric and the non-religious.[69]

And thirdly, Harnack was deeply suspicious of everything metaphysical or speculative. For him the teaching of Christ was simple, unequivocal, yes, even of childlike straightforwardness. The apparently speculative philosophy of dialectical theology seemed to him a real falsification of the gospel. He was unhappy about terminologies drawn from sources other than the gospel and then used in its explication.[70] The easy comprehensibility of Christ's

---

67: AZH.,p.415. 68: Is it out of the question to interpret a statement as the following the way we suggest Harnack did? "Jesus as the Christ is that wholly unknown plane which intersects vertically from above the plane we know. Within the historical perceptibility Jesus as the Christ can be understood only as a myth. As the Christ, Jesus brings to us the world of the father of which we cannot and never will know anything within this plane of historical perceptibility." Barth, Römerbrief, 2.ed.,p.6. (Underlining mine.

69: Theologische Fragen etc.,p.11.Elsewhere he said that "the materialisation and humanisation of the divine in some specific religious or redemptive history are in no relation to God, because thereby God is abandonned as God." Römerbrief,2.ed.,p.53.

70: As an example for this we quote the following, also from the Römerbrief."What God is and does is and remains different from man's being and action. The 'here' is separated unalterably from

teachings was for him the supreme proof of their divinity. Agnes von Zahn-Harnack tells about a principle to which her father adhered to his life's end,a principle honoured by him especially in the field of religion: do not express what is commonplace in uncommon terms, rather express what is not common in common words.[71]

Harnack believed that these three points, in which he felt himself separated from Barth, are essential in the establishment of a religiously, morally and scientifically unified community. As far as he was concerned the thinking of the author of the Römerbrief tore apart what he, Harnack, had endeavoured to unite, namely religion,the divine and culture,morality and science, the human. It made difficult and obscure what to Harnack looked simple and lucid.And such thinking cannot lead men together, neither in the Church nor in the universitas litterarum or much less in both of these spheres together. How could anyone, in the name of theology, in the name of religion, as a minister!,think and judge in that fashion ?

Harnack faced the point of view of Barth with bewildered and shocked lack of understanding. In this frame of mind and desirous to find understanding and communication he wrote the fifteen questions. But his desire " to reach clarity vis-à-vis a theologian-friend" [72] was not to be fulfilled. For, nearly six years after the public discussion,he wrote to Rade: " It is encouraging to see the seriousness of intention in our contemporary theology and its desire to address itself to the main issues of theology. But how weak it is as a science, how narrow and sectarian its horizon, how expressionistic its logic and how shortsighted its view of history. ... What seems to be lost completely is the link between theology and the universitas litterarum and culture. There are rather new links between this evange-

---

the 'there'by the line which has been drawn between them, the line of death, which is also the line of life.It is the end which is the beginning, the No which is the Yes."p.86. It is to this kind of language to which Harnack reacts like this:"How many will be able just to understand you, seeing that you are submerged wholly in a highly sublime metaphysics?" This is in Barth, Theologische Fragen etc.,p.16.

71: AZH.,p.416 72: In Barth, Op.Cit.,p.31

lical theology and Catholicism and Romanticism. But let us hope that we have here no more than the cocoon-stage of something that some day will turn out to be a genuinely evangelical butterfly."[73]

The verdict about this encounter of Harnack and Barth of 1923 is that it was and remained an encounter of different theological worlds. The participants, although fully aware of this, nevertheless continued their cordial personal relationship right to the end of Harnack's life.[74]

73: AZH.,p. 417f.

74: An example of this is Barth's letter to Harnack, dated 16. April 1924. It is cited and parts of it are quoted in AZH.,p.416f. Harnack himself continued to send his former pupil his own publications. But the difference of outlook remained, their worlds never really met.- In his letter to me last Oct.,„Prof Barth writes that Harnack visited him while he,Barth, was at Munster. Harnack was rather horrified to find Barth studying a commentary by John Cocceius.

SECTION II

THE BARTH * HARNACK CORRESPONDENCE OF 1923

PART I - THE TEXT

FIFTEEN QUESTIONS TO THE DESPISERS OF SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY

1) Is the religion of the Bible or its revelations so completely a unity that in relation to faith, worship and life one may simply speak of 'the Bible'? If this is not so may one leave the understanding of the content of the gospel solely to the individual's heuristic knowledge, to his subjective 'experience', or does one not rather need historical knowledge here and critical reflection?

2) Is the religion of the Bible or its revelations so completely a unity and so clear that historical knowledge and critical reflection are not needed for a correct understanding of their meaning? Or are they the converse, namely so incomprehensible and indescribable that one must simply wait until they radiate out in man's heart because no faculty of man's soul or mind can grasp them? Are not both these assumptions false? Do we not need for an understanding of the Bible next to an inner openness historical knowledge and critical reflection?

3) Is the experience of God different from the awakening of faith or identical with it? If it is different, what distinguishes it from uncontrollable fanaticism? If it is identical, how can it come about other than through the preaching of the gospel? And how can there be such preaching without historical knowledge and critical reflection?

4) If the experience of God is contrary to or disparate from all other experience how is the necessity of a radical withdrawal from the world to be avoided or how is one to escape the sophism that one has to remain in the world since even the withdrawal from it is based on a decision of the will and is thus something worldly?

5) If God and the world (life in God and life in the world) are complete opposites, what is one to make of the close union, indeed the equivalence of the love of God and the love of one's fellow man which comprises the core of the gospel? How is this equivalence possible without the highest valuation of morality?

6) If God and the world (life in God and life in the world) are complete opposites, how does education in godliness, that is in goodness become possible? But how is education possible without historical knowledge and the highest valuation of morality?

PART I - THE TEXT

FIFTEEN QUESTIONS TO THE DESPISERS OF SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY

1) Is the religion of the Bible or its revelations so completely a unity that in relation to faith, worship and life one may simply speak of 'the Bible'? If this is not so may one leave the understanding of the content of the gospel solely to the individual's heuristic knowledge, to his subjective 'experience', or does one not rather need historical knowledge here and critical reflection?

2) Is the religion of the Bible or its revelations so completely a unity and so clear that historical knowledge and critical reflection are not needed for a correct understanding of their meaning? Or are they the converse, namely so incomprehensible and indescribable that one must simply wait until they radiate out in man's heart because no faculty of man's soul or mind can grasp them? Are not both these assumptions false? Do we not need for an understanding of the Bible next to an inner openness historical knowledge and critical reflection?

3) Is the experience of God different from the awakening of faith or identical with it? If it is different, what distinguishes it from uncontrollable fanaticism? If it is identical, how can it come about other than through the preaching of the gospel? And how can there be such preaching without historical knowledge and critical reflection?

4) If the experience of God is contrary to or disparate from all other experience how is the necessity of a radical withdrawal from the world to be avoided or how is one to escape the sophism that one has to remain in the world since even the withdrawal from it is based on a decision of the will and is thus something worldly?

5) If God and the world (life in God and life in the world) are complete opposites, what is one to make of the close union, indeed the equivalence of the love of God and the love of one's fellow man which comprises the core of the gospel? How is this equivalence possible without the highest valuation of morality?

6) If God and the world (life in God and life in the world) are complete opposites, how does education in godliness, that is in goodness become possible? But how is education possible without historical knowledge and the highest valuation of morality?

7) If God is simply unlike anything said about him on the basis of the development of culture, on the basis of the knowledge gathered by culture, and on the basis of ethics, how can this culture and in the long run one's own existence be protected against atheism?

8) If Goethe's pantheism, Kant's conception of God or related points of view are merely opposites of the real statements of God, how can it be avoided that these statements are given over to barbarism?

9) But if the converse is true, namely that here as in all physical and spiritual development opposites are at one and the same time steps and steps are opposites, how can this basic knowledge be grasped and developed without historical knowledge and critical reflection?

10) If the knowledge that God is love is the highest and final knowledge of God and if love, joy and peace are his sphere, how may one forever remain between door and hinge, how may one give autonomous standing to what are transition points in Christian experience and thus perpetuate their dread?

11) 'Whatever is true, honourable, just, gracious, if there is any excellence, anything worthy of praise, think on these things' - if this liberating admonition still stands, how can one erect barriers between the experience of God and the good, the true and the beautiful, instead of relating them with the experience of God by means of historical knowledge and critical reflection?

12) If all sin is nothing other than the lack of reverence and love, how can this lack be checked other than by the preaching of God's holy majesty and love? How dare one introduce here all kinds of paradoxes and whims?

13) If it is certain that whatever subconscious, sensorial, numinous, fascinative, etc. remains sub-human as long as reason has not taken hold of, comprehended, purified and protected it in its unique essence, how can one rebuke this reason, yes even wish to eradicate it? And what has one to offer once this Herostratean deed is done? Is not even now gnostic occultism rising up out of the rubble?

14) If the person of Christ Jesus stands at the centre of the gospel, how else can the basis for a reliable and communal knowledge of this person be gained but through critical-historical study so that an imagined Christ is not put in place of the real one? What else besides scientific theology is able to undertake this study?

15) Granted that there are inertness, short-sightedness and numerous ills, yet is there any other theology than that which has strong ties and is in blood-relationship with science in general? Should there be one, what persuasiveness and value belong to it?

Berlin - Grunewald. Adolf von Harnack

FIFTEEN ANSWERS TO PROFESSOR VON HARNACK

In reference to the title (of your questions): someone objecting to that form of Protestant theology which has become determinative since Pietism and the Enlightenment, especially during the last fifty years of German history, is not necessarily a 'despiser of scientific theology'. The point of the objection is that this particular theology might have moved further away from its theme than is good. (The Reformation was the last instance where it was stated clearly).

1) The one revelation of God might be considered as the theme of theology and this beyond the 'religion' and the 'revelations' of the Bible. 'Historical knowledge' could tell us that the communication of the 'content of the gospel' can be accomplished, according to the assertion of the gospel itself, only through an act of this 'content' itself. But 'critical reflection' could lead to the conclusion that ~~that~~ this assertion is founded in the essence of the matter (the relation of God and man) and is therefore to be seriously respected. The 'scientific character' of theology would then be its adherence to the recollection that its object was once subject and must become that again and again, which has nothing to do whatever with 'one's heuristic knowledge' and 'experience' per se.

2) 'Inner openness, heuristic knowledge, experience, heart' and the like on the one hand and 'historical knowledge and critical reflection' on the other are possibilities which can be equally helpful, irrelevant or obstructive to the 'understanding' of the Bible. It is understood through neither this nor that 'function of the soul or mind' but through that spirit which is identical with the content of the Bible and that by faith!

3) The so-called 'experience of God' is therefore as different as heaven and earth from the faith awakened by God and is indeed indistinguishable from 'uncontrolled fanaticism'. But why could it not be a more distinct or more confused symptom of and a testimony to the awakening of faith? Faith does indeed come about through preaching, but preaching comes about through 'the Word of the Christ' (no matter in what state the preacher's historical knowledge and critical reflection are). The task of theology is at one with the task of preaching. It consists in the reception and transmission of the Word of the Christ. Why should 'historical knowledge and critical reflection' not be of preparatory service in this?

4) The faith awakened by God will never be able to avoid completely the necessity of a more or less radical protest against this world as surely as it is a hope for the promised but invisible gift. A theology, should it lose the understanding of the basic distance which faith posits between itself and this world would in the same measure have to lose from sight the knowledge of God the creator. For the 'utter contrast' of God and the world, the cross, is the only way in which we as human beings can consider the original and final unity of creator and creature. Sophistry is not the realisation that even our protest against the world

cannot justify us before God. It is rather the common attempt to bypass the cross by means of a shallow doctrine of creation.

5) The coordination of the love of God and the love of man which the gospel makes is precisely the most forceful reference to the fact that the relation between our 'life in the world' and our 'life in God' is one of an 'utter contrast' which is overcome only through the miracle of the eternal God himself. Or is there a stranger, more incomprehensible factor in this world, one more in need of God's revelation than 'one's fellow-man'? 'Highest valuation of morality' - gladly, but do we love our neighbour? Are we capable of it? And if we do not love him, what about our love of God? What shows more plainly than this 'core' (not of the gospel, but of the law) that God does not give life unless he takes it first?

6) " No one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day."

7) Statements about God derived from 'the development of culture, from the knowledge gathered by culture and from ethics' may as expressions of special 'experiences of God' (eg. the experiences of the War) have their significance and value in comparison with the experiences of primitive peoples who do not yet know such great treasures. (Consider for example the significance and value of the statements of the War-theologians of all countries.) These statements can definitely not be considered as the 'preaching of the gospel' (3). Whether they protect culture and the individual 'against atheism' or whether they sow atheism, since they come out of polytheism, would remain an open question in each individual case.

8) 'Real statements about God' are made in any way only where one is aware of being confronted by revelation and therefore of being placed under judgment instead of believing oneself to be on a pinnacle of culture or religion. Under this judgment stand with all other statements about this subject also those of Goethe and Kant. Schleiermacher's alarm about 'barbarism' is to be rejected as non-essential and irrelevant because the gospel has as much and as little to do with 'barbarism' as with culture.

9) It may be that in the sphere of human statements about God 'opposites are at one and the same time steps and steps are opposites, as in all physical and spiritual development', yet it is still true that between God's truth (which may be expressed in human terms also) and our truth there is only contrast, only an either - or. (It is more urgent, for theology in any case, to 'grasp' and to 'develop' this knowledge!) Humility, yearning and supplication will always be the first and also the last thing for us. The way from the old to the new world is not a stairway, not a development in any sense whatsoever; it is a being born anew.

10) If the knowledge that 'God is love' is the highest and final knowledge about God, how can one consistently pretend to be in possession of it? Is not the 'transition point' just as long in duration as time? Is not our faith also always unfaith? Or should

we believe in our faith? Does not faith live by being faith in God's promise? Are we saved in a way other than in hope?

11) "The peace of God which is higher than our understanding", Phil. 4:7. The 'barrier' of this 'higher' is a basic and insurmountable one. If he does'keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus' and thus makes possible the admonition of Phil. 4:8 (Whatever is true ...), then as the one who as such is higher than our understanding. There is a relation between him and what we call good, true and beautiful, but this relation is precisely the 'barrier', the divine crisis, on the basis of which only one may first speak seriously about the good, the true and the beautiful.

12) If sin should perhaps be more than a 'lack of reverence and love', namely man's fall from God and man's being lost in a godlikeness the end of which is death, then the preaching of God's holy majesty and love is a task which does not seem to spare our human thinking and speaking from wandering on curioue ways. A spectator-theology may then speak of 'all kinds of paradoxes and whims'. He who is in a position of solving this - but this same - task more easily let him show howit is done. Historical knowledge tells us that Paul and Luther were not in that position.

13) Which theological tradition isit that, having begun with the apotheosis of feeling, has apparently landed happily in the swamp of the psychology of the unconscious? Who thought that a special 'religious' source of knowledge could be opened up apart from critical reason? And ad vocem 'gnostic occultism': which theology is at every moment notoriously close to the danger of losing its ablest devotees to Dr. Steiner?

14) The reliability and communalty of the knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ as the centre of the gospel can be none other than that of the God-awakened faith. Critical-historical study stands for the necessary end of those 'foundations' of this knowledge which are no foundations at all since they have not been laid by God himself. Whoever should not yet know (and still we all do not yet know it) that we no longer know Christ according to the flesh might let the critical study of the Bible tell him so. The more radically he is frightened the better for him and the matter involved. This might then turn out to be the service which 'historical knowledge' can render to the actual task of theology.

15) If theology were again to take the courage for objectivity, the courage to be the witness to the Word of revelation, of judgment and of God's love, the outcome could be that'science in general' would have to seek 'strong ties and a blood-relationship' with theology instead of the other way around; for it would be better perhaps also for jurists, medical people and philosophers if they knew what theologians ought to know. Or should the present fortuitous opinio communis of others really be the instance through which we have to let our work be judged as to its 'persuasiveness and value'?

Göttingen

Karl Barth

OPEN LETTER TO PROFESSOR KARL BARTH

Honoured Colleague,

I thank you for replying to my 'fifteen questions'.They were addressed to you also,yes to you especially.

Your answers have made a few things clearer to me but exactly because of that the opposition between us has become the more apparent to me.I shall try to show this in what follows. Other things have remained totally obscure for me or perhaps they have become so, especially your answer to my first question. Despite much hard effort it is wholly incomprehensible to me. Since very much depends on this basic question, one of the main issues, namely your concept of revelation stays under the cover of a heavy fog.

Concerning the title of my questions and question 15: you see in contemporary scientific theology an unstable and transitory product which has been in the making since Pietism and the Enlightenment and that has the value of an opinio communis only. I see in it the only possible way of grasping the object epistemologically. This way is new and old at the same time, new because it has attained to greater clarity and maturity only since the 18. century and old because it began when man started thinking. You say that 'the task of theology is at one with the task of preaching'; I reply that the task of theology is at one with the task of science in general. The task of preaching is the pure presentation of the Christian's task as a witness to Christ. You transform the theological professorship into the pulpit-ministry (and desire to hand over to secular disciplines what is known as 'theology'). On the basis of the whole course of Church-history I predict that this undertaking will not lead to edification but to dissolution. Or is what you have to say meant to act only as a 'ferment'?No one could make this his intention and surely it is not part of your plan. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the ferment: the courage to be objective, the courage to be a witness.

Concerning questions 2 and 3: I cannot see what, in your opinion, is to remain when one is obliged in principle to make 'tabula rasa' with 'inner openness, heuristic knowledge, experience, heart, historical knowledge and critical reflection' in connection with the understanding of the religion of the Bible. It is true, you say the ' religion of the Bible is understood through that spirit which is identical with the content of the Bible and that by faith' but since you continue 'the so-called experience of God is thus as different as heaven and earth from the awakening of faith by God and is indeed not distinguishable from uncontrolled fanaticism' your 'thus' is as incomprehensible to me as the justification of your illustration or your determination of the relation between the experience of God and faith. I am unable to speak

about things incomprehensible. To my joy you subscribe to the thesis 'faith comes from the preaching of the word of the Christ', but just as your 'the Christ' in place of 'Jesus Christ' looks unfortunate to me in view of Church-historical considerations, my suspicions are heightened because of the context in which you use the Pauline "we know Christ no longer according to the flesh". So we do not know the historical Jesus Christ of the gospels any more? How am I to understand that? By the theory of the exclusive inner word? Or by which of the many other subjectivistic theories?

Concerning question 4: it grieves me that you gave it a very devious answer only; 'the faith awakened by God will never be able to avoid fully (!) the necessity of a more or less (!) radical protest against this world as surely as it is a hope for the promised but invisible gift'. Are you by any chance not quite sure about this point? It would have been better then to postpone the answer. But since it looks half-baked it lacks either understanding or the courage to witness.

Concerning question 5: you answer my question about the love of God and the love of one's neighbour in terms of a problematical conceptuality (Problematik der Begriffe) of ' the neighbour' and 'the love of the neighbour' which is especially characteristic of your theology, yes, but not of the gospel which knows of no problems here at all. I see in your presentation a very great separation from the simple gospel.

Concerning question 6 (about the possibility of education in godliness): you simply answer with John 6:44. If that is all you have to say here, then you condemn all Christian pedagogy and sever, like Marcion, every link between faith and the human. In my view you have the example of Jesus against you.

Concerning questions 7 to 9: you assert that in each individual case it is an open question whether the cognition of God, evolved in the history of man, excepting revelation, protects against or sows atheism. This is only half an answer to my question as to whether God is not at all whatever is said about him on the basis of the development of culture, on the basis of the knowledge gathered by culture and on the basis of ethics. Or may I assume that you reject such an assertion with me? Hardly! For your sentence 'the gospel has as much and as little to do with barbarism as with culture' can be understood only as a radical denial of every valuable understanding of God within the history of man's thought and ethics. Your point of view becomes completely plain when you say that 'between God's truth and our truth there is only contrast, only an either - or. The way from the old to the new world is not a stairway, not a development in any sense whatsoever, but rather a being born anew'. Does this not exclude the belief that one's own being a Christian happened precisely in that way, while at the same time one admits that God let this state grow on this (kind of) stairway on which eternal values had already been given? Remember Augustine's account of his becoming a Christian!

Concerning questions 10 and 11: your answers to them are in my view those which move away the furthest from the Christianity of the gospel on account of the problematical aspects (Problematik) into which you draw the Christian faith. You said that the transition point from godlessness to God lasts for every Christian as long as time; our faith, you said, is also always unfaith; we are saved only in hope; there is a relation between what we call good, true and beautiful and the peace of God only insofar as a barrier is also a relation, etc. By answering that way you shatter our very possession with what Christianity still lacks and what we all know. (Indem Sie diese Antworten auf meine Fragen geben, sprengen Sie mit dem, was dem Christentum noch mangelt und was wir alle kennen, den Besitz selbst ...). You make the Christian's confidence, in which he is allowed to live, an illusion and his joy which is to fill his life you turn into frivolity. You will dispute this , but what you put into their place is the description of a state of mind which in the best of cases only a handful may know as the peace of God, a state of mind which is in no case the necessary presupposition for all Christian humility.

From this vantage point your answer to question 12 becomes understandable. The simple gospel out of which Jesus told his understandable and comforting parables for the salvation of souls does not suit you; Christian preaching rather can 'not spare man's thinking and speaking from wandering on curious paths'. How many will be able just to understand you, seeing that you are wholly submerged in highly sublime psychology and metaphysics? Then you turn surprisingly to Paul and Luther. But even here I have no doubt that also to-day every Christian will find it easier to live according to their teaching and example than to yours. But are Paul and Luther examples to be emulated? Can we slip on their armour? Must we smaller one's torment ourselves in order to experience what they did? It is - and now let me be problematical for once (lassen Sie mich auch einmal in Problematik reden) - our strength and at the same time our fate to have experienced Paul and Luther. Against this fate will work only the comforting word which precisely they call out to us: I believe in the forgiveness of sins.

You did not answer question 13 but merely left it with the remark that that prevalent theology or one of its parts has led into the swamp of the psychology of the unconscious and into occultism. Since that question was not directed to you but to another address , I can remain silent here although I must say that occultism is by divine decree the punishment for every form of contempt of reason and science and that every period of time has only one science.

For question 14 I also miss a succinct answer. Does the awakening of faith, insofar as it includes the knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ as the centre of the gospel, take place without regard for his historical person? If this is to be answered negatively, can faith dispense with historical knowledge of this person? If this is to be answered affirmatively, can critical-historical study of this person with regard to faith be something irrelevant or is it rather not absolutely necessary? What you say

à propos this in relation to biblical science may be formulated like this; the most radical biblical science is always right and thank heaven for this for now we may be rid of it. This point of view, known to the point of nausea from recent second-rate Church-history, opens the gates to every suitable fantasy and to every theological dictatorship which dissolves the historical of our religion and seeks to torment the consciences of the others with one's own heuristic knowledge.

I do sincerely regret that the answers to my questions only point out the magnitude of the gap that divides us. But then neither my nor your theology matter. What does matter is that the gospel is correctly taught. Should however your way of doing this become predominant it will not be taught any more; it will rather be given over into the hands of the preachers of edification who freely create their own understanding of the Bible and who set up their dominion.

Yours respectfully

von Harnack.

AN ANSWER TO PROFESSOR VON HARNACK'S OPEN LETTER

Esteemed Dr. von Harnack,

It is not necessary to state particularly that your extensive discussion of my answers to your questions is an honour for which I am most grateful to you. Nevertheless I enter with hesitation upon the task of giving more information to you about my theological thoughts. The editor thought it a task which in view of your letter was the natural thing to do. But you yourself have stated that my answers have shown you only the gap that divides us. Is it not pointless and annoying to pose further riddles to you now and more than likely to most of the readers of Christliche Welt? My position is unpleasant in yet another way: you have really raised questions for the first time which I, as one of those to whom they were addressed, had to answer and could answer as well or as badly as I was able. I have no intention of challenging your right in this, you who are one of my revered teachers of former times, but you confront me in your letter as someone who has accomplished his tasks, has obtained knowledge and who, because of the experience and the reflections of a rich life, has no time and ear not only for answers different from those he would give himself but also for questions other than his own. Is there anything else to be answered to your questions? Is the discussion not over? But since you wanted to tell me that it was not my answers you had in mind when you raised your original questions - something I never doubted - I think that I owe it to you and to our listeners to confess that I consider my answers quite disputable, but that for the time being and until I am shown a better

way I reserve all else to myself. Nonetheless your objections cannot deter me from continuing to ask in the same direction of those answers. Allow me therefore to touch again on every point this time with some degree of condensation. For a real understanding of my continued opposition I would refer to my publications as well as to those of my friends Gogarten and Thurneysen, something you would do also were you in a similar situation. (For the other group of those to whom you addressed yourself I assume no responsibility). More to the general public than to you I would like to say that an effective repudiation of our views is in the long run not possible without a serious study of our point of view.

You see in what you call 'scientific theology' 'the only possible way of grasping the object epistemologically' and you call it 'new because it has attained to greater clarity and maturity only since the 18. century, old since it began when man started to think! I hope that I am not reading anything into your position when on the basis of that explicit statement made in reference to the 18. century I assume that (together with that unfortunate generation of 'edificatory preachers') the reformers Luther and Calvin would fail to classify as 'scientific theologians', whereas Zwingli and Melanchthon might not. I would also assume that for you the idea of considering the apostle Paul (in addition to whatever else he was) as one of those theologians is totally foreign. However that may be I think I know 'thinking men' in old and new centuries who as theologians pursued wholly different ways from those which since the 18. century are regarded as the normal ones, men whose scientific quality (should 'scientific quality' mean objectivity) it would in my opinion be hazardous to question. The appeal to Paul's or Luther's theology is for you nothing but a presumptuous attempt at imitation. On this side of the 'gap' the process looks relatively simple. We have been irresistibly impressed by the material superiority of those and other older theologians, however little they may fit into the present scheme of the guild. We therefore cannot feel ourselves relieved by the protest of the spirit of modern times (which perhaps has to learn to understand itself first!) nor by the faith in the forgiveness of sins(!) which you invoked of our duty to consider the fundamental point of departure of those theologians more seriously in regard to its total justification than was done especially in recent theology in spite of all the Paul-research and the Luther-enthusiasm. There can be no question of repristination in this whatsoever. I am of the opinion that the exercise in repristinating a classical theological train of thought, which in the days of medieval and protestant scholasticism was known as theology, is probably more instructive than the chaotic business of to-day's faculties [illegible] more instructive for which the idea of a determinative <u>object</u> has become more monstrous and strange over all the authoritativeness of the <u>method</u>. But then I also think I know that <u>this same sort of thing</u> cannot and should not return and that we <u>in</u> our time must think <u>for</u> our time. But the point really is not to keep the historical-critical method of biblical and historical research developed in the last centuries away from the work of theology. It is rather to fit it and the consequent intensification of the way questions are asked into that work sensibly. I

think I said so in my answers 2,3 and 14 and may thus be allowed some astonishment that you still accuse me of regarding critical biblical science as something 'devious', of wishing 'to be rid' of it and must therefore be threatened with the punishment of occultism which is decreed by 'divine order' for despisers of reason and science. The thing against which I defend myself is not historical criticism but rather the foregone conclusiveness with which - and this is characteristic also of your present statements - the task of theology is emptied.(It is emptied when) this or that simple gospel, discovered by historical criticism beyond the 'Scriptures' and apart from the 'Spirit',is placed into that which the fathers called 'the Word' (the correlation of 'Scripture' and 'Spirit'). The so-called 'simple gospel' is one which can be called 'God's Word' only metaphorically because it is at best a human impression of it. The sentence so repugnant to you and others, namely that the task of theology is at one with the task of preaching is for me an inevitable statement of the programme (the accomplishment of which still demands much thought indeed). I presuppose as accepted that the preacher must by right proclaim 'the Word' and not perhaps his own heuristic knowledge, experiences, maxims and reflections. You have said that the truth of preaching and faith come about 'through the word of the Christ'.(That word 'the' before Christ is of no consequence to me whatever.) If the transmission of this 'Word' is the preacher's task then it is also that of the theologian (who is at least in a virtual personal union with the former). The tactical-practical differences in accomplishing this are taken for granted as is the realisation that some of the things which belong into the lectern are to be left out in the pulpit and vice versa. The theme, however, which the theologian must pursue in history and for the expression of which, appropriate to his own situation, he must struggle cannot be a second truth next to that which he is obliged to present as a preacher. That was self-evident in the beginnings of protestant theology (and I think here especially of Zürich and Geneva). But then I cannot see how the abstract division made since then between 'educated' and 'edifying' thought and speech can be derived from the essence of the matter. What is, however, ruled out completely as the theme for theologian and preacher , should the unity of their tasks be a correct assumption, is a 'simple gospel' which, as all that is merely a human impression and not God's Word, remains in the Bible as apparent 'revelation' after the sufficient basis of cognition of all revelation, given in the correlation of 'Scripture' and'Spirit', has been totally eliminated.

But at this point appears your categorical statement that my 'concept of revelation' is 'totally'(the underlining is yours!) 'incomprehensible' to you. In question 1 you asked how one might come to find out what the content of the gospel is without historical knowledge and critical reflection. I answered in the first instance that this understanding occurs exclusively through an action (through deed and word) of this 'content' itself (of God or Christ or the Spirit). Surely you will not demand individual citations for this thesis. In the second instance I said concer-

ning critical reflection that it cannot be good to reverse the order and to turn 'Thus says the lord' into 'Thus hears man'. If there is a way to this 'content', then the content must be the way; the speaking voice must be the listening ear. All other ways do not lead to this goal, all other ears do not hear this voice. That God is himself the goal as well as the way is something - and I gladly concede this - which for me as for you is totally incomprehensible, not only 'fog', but darkness, as Luther said. If you were to tell me that one cannot believe in a way from God to us to which corresponds apparently no way from us to God (for it is always most exclusively God's way to us), I could only say to you that I think exactly the same deep down in my heart. But then does it not already lie in the concept of revelation (and really not only in my concept!), quite apart from what the Bible says about it on every page, that one cannot 'believe' it? Would it not be better to renounce this full-sounding word if revelation were only the designation of a very sublime or a very deep but yet a possible human discovery? Or if we were not willing to do this, should we theologians not get up the courage to let our theology begin with the perhaps thoroughly sceptical but nevertheless clear reminder of the indeed 'totally incomprehensible', inaudible and unbelievable, the indeed scandalous testimony that God himself has said and done something, something new in fact outside of the correlation of all human words and things, yet as this new thing has put it into that correlation, one word and thing next to others but this word and this thing? I am not talking now of the possibility of accepting this testimony. I only ask whether we should not for once reckon more soberly with the fact that what is called Christianity made its first and for us recogniseable beginning with this testimony? I call this testimony in its totality 'the Scriptures', a testimony which cannot be analysed enough by historical criticism. But it shall not cease being this testimony when thus analysed. The delineation of 'the Scriptures' against other scriptures appears to me a secondary question. Should an extra-canonical writing contain in a noteable fashion this (but really this) testimony, there can be no a priori impossibility of letting this testimony speak through it also, no, quite on the contrary. From this observation, however, to the canonization of 'Faust' for example is a long way which a sensible Church just will not travel.

The Scriptures then witness to revelation. One does not have to believe it; one cannot do it. But one should not deny that it witnesses to revelation, genuine revelation that is, and not a more or less concealed religious possibility of man, but rather the possibility of God, namely that he has acted in the form of a human possibility and this as reality. This testimony states that the Word became flesh, that God himself became a human-historical reality and this in the person of Jesus Christ. But for me it does not follow from that that this event can be the object of human-historical cognition; this is excluded because and insofar as this reality is involved. The existence of a Jesus of Nazareth, for example, which in any case can be discovered by historical methods, is not this reality. A historically discernible 'simple gospel', discernible because it is humanly plausible, a 'simple gospel' which causes no scandal, a

'simple gospel' that is in your sense, a word or a deed of this Jesus which would really be nothing other than the realisation of a human possibility - would not be this reality. I doubt that it is possible at any cogent point to separate one word or one deed of Jesus from the background of this reality when it is regarded only historically, to separate it from the Scripture which testifies to revelation and therefore to the scandal and then proceed to interpret it as the 'simple gospel' in your sense. I did indicate in answer 5 why I think this to be impossible for example in regard to the commandment of love for God and for the neighbour; you have admonished but not refuted me. I can object only en passant now to your description of the parables of Jesus (die Gleichnisse Jesu) as'understandable and comforting' parables (Parabeln)* and I hope to have at least some historians on my side in both cases. But even if you could succeed in claiming some point or other for your position it would merely follow that that point is not, or only in relation to other points, object of the kerygma, which surely in your judgment also is the sole issue for the New Testament writings. The apostles and evangelists have made the object of the testimony known as revelation.As God's action it has been shrouded by them with an unsearchable hiddenness and protected against every desire to comprehend it directly, so much so in fact that not only all statements which obviously refer to this 'centre of the gospel', found for example in that rather threatening bundle in the second article of the Creed and indeed also in the 'Sermon on the Mount', in the parabolic and polemical words of Jesus and in the account of his passion, leave the circumspect reader with the conclusion that there can be no question of speaking of a direct historical comprehensibility of this historical reality (of revelation!) alleged here. What is comprehensible is always only the other, namely that which makes up the historical environment of the alleged revelation. Beyond this other the barrier goes up and the scandal, the fable or - the miracle threaten.The historical reality of Christ (as revelation, as 'centre of the gospel') is not the 'historical Jesus' which an all too eager historical research wanted to discern in disregard of those warnings which are made in the sources themselves, (coming upon a banality which has been and shall be proclaimed in vain as a pearl of great price). Nor is it as you said an imagined Christ but rather the risen one, or let us say with more restraint in view of our little faith: the Christ who is witnessed to us as the risen one. That is the 'historical Jesus Christ of the gospel' and 'we now know him no longer' in other ways, that is apart from this testimony to him, apart from revelation which has to be believed. It is in this sense that I think I may legitimately appeal to II Cor. 5:16. At the decisive point, when the answer to the question: what makes Jesus to be Christ? is given in terms of the reference to the resurrection there

* The word Parabeln carries a somewhat negative sound in this context. It does not convey the same as the word Gleichnis, used for the parables of the New Testament. Parabel might be used for the word 'tale' in a sentence like ' fishermen tell tales of their exploits'.

remains indeed from man's point of view what you called 'totally' incomprehensible. And I gladly confess that I will go along one hundred times more readily with the 'No', with the refusal to believe which you proclaim on the basis of this fact than with the talents of a'positive' theology which end up making what is incomprehensible self-evident once again and comprehensible, for that is an emptying and a denying of revelation which with its apparent confession is worse than the angriest refusal to believe which at least has the advantage of being objective. The declaration of my sympathy for the 'most radical' biblical science was meant in this sense. The theology of the Reformers did not need this negative discipline because it still had the courage not to go around the scandal of revelation. It thus never raised the question of a historically discernible core of the gospel. We do need it because we have fallen into this impossible question on the flight from the scandal. I see the theological function of historical criticism especially in the task of making it plain to ourselves a posteriori that it can not go on this way, that rather we are dealing with testimonies in the Bible and only with testimonies. I notice that this is the function it has in fact fulfilled among us since David Friedrich Strauss, that it has done so excellently in its way even if it is not widely understood and that above all it has done so without knowing what it was doing.

I call the acceptance of this unbelievable testimony of the Scriptures faith. Again I am not saying that this is a discovery of my theology. I do however ask what else faith could be - disregarding sentimentalities - but the obedience I give to a human word which, as if it were itself God's Word, witnesses to me the Word of God as a word addressed to me? One must not have any delusions here that this is an unprecedented event, that now one must speak of the Holy Spirit if not all the objections Herrmann crammed into our heads against a 'mere credence' of historical facts apart from this basis of cognition are justified. Therefore I distinguish faith as God's working on us (for only he can say to us audibly what we cannot hear, I. Cor. 2:9) from all known and unknown human organs and functions, even our so-called 'experiences of God'. Is that such a shocking novelty? Must I, as one of the Reformed tradition, ask whether Luther's explication of the third article of the Small Catechism is valid or not? Do you really not see that by the unconsidered abandonment of this concept of faith in favour of the lentil-pottage of a less paradoxical one the doors have been opened to the anthroposophical chaos of faith and occult 'capabilities' of man confronted with which official theology is simply at a loss? It has to be thus: whatever may be said against the possibility of revelation can also be said with equal strength against the possibility of faith. What must remain as the second excluded possibility is this: God who according to the witness of the Scriptures has spoken 'the word of Christ' speaks that word also to me through the witness of the Scriptures empowered through the testimonium spiritus sancti internum, so that I hear that word and by hearing it believe. Is this the 'theory of the exclusive inner word' or one of the many 'other subjectivistic theories'? In your third question

you yourself spoke of the awakening of faith. I agree but in the opinion that the point here as also in the 'understandable and comforting parable' of the prodigal son, Luke 15:32, is the awakening of someone dead, that is the miracle of God just as in revelation. Indeed I have no confidence in any objectivity other than the one described in this way or in terms of the correlated concepts of 'Scripture' and 'Spirit', least of all in the pontifications of a science which would have to demonstrate its absolute superiority over the subjectivistic activities of the 'preachers of edification' by means of actions.

But then, honoured Sir, you also have evoked the shadow of Marcion against me with the assertion that I 'sever the link between faith and the human'. May I ask how you derive that from my answers 2 and 3? Have I really made tabula rasa with those human organs, functions and experiences? I certainly do not intend to. I think really that man goes on living whether he believes or not, that he goes on as a man in time, in the world of things, dependent from his point of view always exclusively on his own human possibilities. I think I also know that man's faith can at every moment completely be described as 'inner openness, heuristic knowledge, experience, religion, critical reflection, historical knowledge, etc., just as the testimony of revelation also can, yes must be interpreted as a piece of unpleasantly dark history of man's spirit and culture (unless God himself intervenes!). But I would not sever at all here or there (that would only be a completely senseless undertaking); I would rather say that the human is the relative, the testimony, the parable and thus not the absolute itself on some pinnacles or heights of evolution as one would certainly conclude from your statements. It is rather the (understood or not understood) reference to the absolute. In view of this the historically-psychologically discernible, that which we know in ourselves and others as 'faith' would be a witness to and a symptom of that action and miracle of God on us, of that faith in other words which, created through the 'Word' and 'steeped in the Word' is, as Luther said, our righteousness before God himself. The religions of the Bible, with which you began your first question, would in the same way be witness to and symptom of the historical reality of God's becoming man. But the basis of cognition of both justifying faith and revelation would be God's action on us through his Word. Does my point of view really not become clear to you? - However, and now I think that I am coming to the essence of all your objections: I am indeed content with the testimonial character (ich lasse es mir nun allerdings genugen am Zeugnischarakter ...) of all that which occurs here or there in time and as a result of man. I explicitly deny the possibility of positing anything relative as absolute anywhere and in any fashion, be it in history or ourselves, to say it in Kierkegaardian terms: to go from testimony to 'direct statement',which is and must remain in the most exclusive sense God's concern, (if I do not wholly misunderstand the Bible and the Reformation). The fact that eternity becomes time, that the absolute becomes relative, that God becomes man (and with that - and only with that - every time the reverse also!), in other words the fact that the matter involved coincides with the sign pointing to it and with that the coincidence of the sign with the matter

to which it points, as Luther asserted with final insight in his doctrine of the Last Supper, yet touching on the natural-titanic presumptuousness of the homo religiosus, is true only as 'the Word and work of God', as the act of the trinity itself. This act can only be witnessed to and believed because it is revealed. It is never a historical-psychological reality which becomes directly recogniseable for example in our religious experience, in the denouments of our consciences, in the relations between man and man, even in the purest of them, in the thoughts of Goethe or Kant about God or in whatever towers of god-likeness you may mention. When this reality becomes recogniseable here or there then the miracle has occured which we cannot deny, with which however we cannot reckon as with any other possibility or even with a general truth. We must adore it when it is present, (present as the miracle of God!). My counter-objection to your charge that I 'sever' (which I cannot acknowledge as justified), is that you empty faith by the continuity you assert between 'the human' and faith in the same way that revelation is emptied by the continuity you say exists between history and revelation. I do not sever; I repudiate every continuity between hither and yon. I speak of a dialectical relation which refers to an identity which cannot be accomplished and therefore also not be presumed. Parabolic value only is therefore to be given to the images of those stairways which 'Christian' biography of all ages is in the habit of unfolding before us, (an undertaking which depite of or precisely in view of Augustine is just as promising as it is ambiguous). Parabolic value only is to be given to the efforts also and successes of 'Christian' pedagogy which has indeed and for good reasons never been able to be rid of paganism. We honour and not dishonour this pedagogy when we put it under the hope and judgment of John 6:44. Parabolic value is, however, also to be given to all 'Christian' protest against the world which - (why do you demand the consequences of madness from me? I shall repeat my 'devious' answer in its full form): as a human undertaking is really a more or less 'radical' protest only, a 'half-baked', a small protest (ein Protestlein), a demonstration, a gesture which can never, never anticipate and realise the end of this world and the coming of the kingdom. Parable, parable only can be all 'evolution' in view of the birth from death to life through which alone, but only on the way on which God walks and on which he is, we come from the truth of man to God's.

(Still in connection with the charge of Marcionism) you demand from me a full answer to the question 'whether God is simply unlike anything said about him on the basis of the development of culture, on the basis of the knowledge gathered by culture and on the basis of ethics'. Very well then, but may I ask you really to listen to my whole answer. NO, God is 'absolutely not at all that', as surely as the creator is not the creature or even the creation of the creature. But precisely in this NO, which can be uttered in its full severity only in the faith in revelation, the creature recognises itself as the work and property of the creator. Precisely in this NO is God recognised as God, as the origin and goal of also the thoughts man is in the habit of forming about God in the darkness of his culture or his decadence (Unkultur). For this NO, posted with finality by revela-

tion is not without 'the deep, secret YES under and over the NO' which we should 'grasp and hold with a steady faith in God's Word' and 'agree with God's judgment against us, for thus we have won'. This is how it stands with that NO: 'nothing but YES in it, but always deep and secretly and it looks to be nothing but NO'. What lover of contradictoriness ('Kontrastlüstling') might have said that? Kierkegaard or Dostoyevsky? No, Martin Luther! (E.A. 11, 120) Is Luther then to be suspected of Marcionism too? According to Zwingli yes, but I think that you and I understand him better than that. So why should you not understand me a little better at the same time? Does the human really become insignificant when in the faith in revelation its crisis occurs which makes forever impossible all identifications between here and the beyond, excepting always the one which it does not befit us to pronounce (about the predicted end of all things, I Cor. 15:28)? Should it not become full of significance and promise, really serious and possible precisely through being moved out of the twilight of supposed fulfillment into the light of real hope? Should it really not be enough for us to have and to behold in the transitory the parable of the intransitory, to live in it and to work for it, to be glad as humans that we have at least the parable and to suffer as humans that it is only the parable, without however anticipating 'death being swallowed up in victory' in an unreal consciousness of eternity exactly because the great temporal significat is aimed at the greater eternal est and nothing else? Have I really made tabula rasa?

Yes, honoured Sir, you say so and must know why although you cannot deduce that from my statements. I am afraid that you must really misunderstand me right here at this point even if we could agree about revelation and faith. Why is it that right here, where of all things the existential question of our relation to God and the world, where the preservation of the revelatory faith in hope is involved, you exchange unambiguously the part of the defender of science for that of the defender of the so-called 'Christian'possession? Why the lament about the 'sublimity' of my metaphysics and psychology, as if all of a sudden popular intelligibility were for you the standard of right theology? What is the point of listing the distances which separate me here more, there less from the 'Christianity of the gospels', as if the topic of our discussion were all of a sudden the Christian nature of my theology? What does the charge of 'extolling' a 'state of mind', unpalatable to you, mean when the point of your scientific hesitations was that neither revelation nor faith was made understandable by me in the familiar, 'simple' fashion as a state of mind, when in other words 'the state of mind' was introduced by you into the discussion? Why all those strong words about 'illusion, frivolity, lover of contradictoriness', etc., when you have certainly not demonstrated the right to derive such tumultuous deductions and charges from my perhaps unsatisfying, but nevertheless circumspect answers? How am I to explain the transition from instruction to admonition and how am I to answer it? You surely can guess that I too have my angry thoughts about the relation of the scientific character of your theology, which makes you repudiate what I (and not only I) call revelation and faith, and your own Christian position (Christlichkeit) which shows itself in a point of

tion is not without 'the deep, secret YES under and over the NO' which we should 'grasp and hold with a steady faith in God's Word' and 'agree with God's judgment against us, for thus we have won'. This is how it stands with that NO: 'nothing but YES in it, but always deep and secretly and it looks to be nothing but NO'. What lover of contradictoriness ('Kontrastlüstling') might have said that? Kierkegaard or Dostoyevsky? No, Martin Luther! (E.A. 11, 120) Is Luther then to be suspected of Marcionism too? According to Zwingli yes, but I think that you and I understand him better than that. So why should you not understand me a little better at the same time? Does the human really become insignificant when in the faith in revelation its crisis occurs which makes forever impossible all identifications between here and the beyond, excepting always the one which it does not befit us to pronounce (about the predicted end of all things, I Cor. 15:28)? Should it not become full of significance and promise, really serious and possible precisely through being moved out of the twilight of supposed fulfillment into the light of real hope? Should it really not be enough for us to have and to behold in the transitory the parable of the intransitory, to live in it and to work for it, to be glad as humans that we have at least the parable and to suffer as humans that it is only the parable, without however anticipating 'death being swallowed up in victory' in an unreal consciousness of eternity exactly because the great temporal significat is aimed at the greater eternal est and nothing else? Have I really made tabula rasa?

Yes, honoured Sir, you say so and must know why although you cannot deduce that from my statements. I am afraid that you must really misunderstand me right here at this point even if we could agree about revelation and faith. Why is it that right here, where of all things the existential question of our relation to God and the world, where the preservation of the revelatory faith in hope is involved, you exchange unambiguously the part of the defender of science for that of the defender of the so-called 'Christian'possession? Why the lament about the 'sublimity' of my metaphysics and psychology, as if all of a sudden popular intelligibility were for you the standard of right theology? What is the point of listing the distances which separate me here more, there less from the 'Christianity of the gospels', as if the topic of our discussion were all of a sudden the Christian nature of my theology? What does the charge of 'extolling' a 'state of mind', unpalatable to you, mean when the point of your scientific hesitations was that neither revelation nor faith was made understandable by me in the familiar, 'simple' fashion as a state of mind, when in other words 'the state of mind' was introduced by you into the discussion? Why all those strong words about 'illusion, frivolity, lover of contradictoriness', etc., when you have certainly not demonstrated the right to derive such tumultuous deductions and charges from my perhaps unsatisfying, but nevertheless circumspect answers? How am I to explain the transition from instruction to admonition and how am I to answer it? You surely can guess that I too have my angry thoughts about the relation of the scientific character of your theology, which makes you repudiate what I (and not only I) call revelation and faith, and your own Christian position (Christlichkeit) which shows itself in a point of

view which suspects Paul's 'saved in hope' of being problematical. I too would be in a position of registering strongest hesitations and of speaking very sharp words exactly where the misunderstanding between us seems so hopeless. Yet what else would I do then but to seal this hopelessness on my part too, something that must not be done. It is better in every respect to break off here.

Yet once again: I do not intend to entrench myself in those positions in which you, honoured Sir, and our voluntary-involuntary audience in these talks have seen me, simply because I know how frighteningly relative everything is that one can say about the great subject which occupies you and me. I know that it will be necessary to speak of it in a way quite different from that of my present insight. I would like to be able to listen attentively in the future to whatever you also will have to say. But I cannot concede at this time that you have driven me off the field with your questions and answers, something that I will gladly surfer when it really takes place.

Respectfully yours

Karl Barth

A POSTSCRIPT TO MY OPEN LETTER TO PROFESSOR KARL BARTH

Prof. Barth has replied to my open letter very extensively. I would like to thank him for his full presentation. To my disappointment I cannot continue the discussion now and in this journal. The number and weight of the problems are simply too great to be dealt with here and with brevity. Yet two things which I would not like to leave unsaid. 1) Paul and Luther are for me indeed not primarily subjects but objects of scientific theology as is Prof. Barth and all those who express their Christianity as prophets or witnesses like preachers, whether they do it in biblical commentaries or in books of dogmatics etc. Scientific theology and witness are often enough mixed together in life, but neither can remain healthy when the demand to keep them separate is invalidated. Both are objective, not only the witness, as one may conclude from Professor Barth's statements, but the kind of objectivity is a very different one in each case. A scientific-theological presentation can also set afire and edify, thanks to its object, but the scientific theologian whose aim it is to set afire and to edify brings a foreign flame to his altar; For as there is only one scientific method there is also only one scientific task: the pure cognition of its object. Whatever other fruit falls to science as a reward is an unexpected gift. 2) the concept of revelation is no scientific concept; science can neither draw together under one generic concept nor explain in terms of 'revelation' the God-consciousness and the paradoxical preaching of founders of religion and prophets (and religious experiences in general). Completely without prospects, however, is the attempt

to grasp a 'word' of this kind as something so purely 'objective' that human speaking, hearing, grasping and understanding can be eliminated in the impression of this word. I have the feeling that Prof. Barth tries something like that and calls in a dialectics in this attempt which leads to an invisible ridge between absolute religious scepticism and naive biblicism - the most tortuous interpretation of Christian experience and faith.! But since it has been presented for centuries again and again and the only thing to change is its background, it may be justifiable individually, for which reason it must be accepted with respect. But can it create community and are the blows justified with which it beats down whatever presents itself as Christian experience? Will there be any room left on that glacial bridge for the children and friends of him who, interpreting the Christian faith in this and never any other way, has been able to find a foothold on it? Would it not be better for him to admit that he is playing his instrument only and that God has still other instruments, instead of erecting a rigid either-or?

In Barth's answers there becomes apparent in several places a certain sensitiveness which is intensified to the point where my replies are said to sound like an 'admonition'. I cannot be judge in my own matters for which reason I say gladly that no other desire moved me in my letter than to reach clarity vis-a-vis a theologian friend.

Berlin

Adolf von Harnack

PART II - AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

- A - Introduction -

1) The Dialogue Begins

The initial questions of Harnack, the point of departure of the whole correspondence, were not at first an attempt "to reach clarity vis-à-vis a friend", as Harnack said at the conclusion of his postscript, (Supra.,p. 48).They were rather the expression of a sense of concern for the future of scientific theology. That concern prompted him one day to sit down and on the spur of the moment, without any extensive analysis, write his impressions of and reactions to the new thinking in academic theology.

What was that concern? What caused Harnack to be alarmed? He believed that in this new thinking theology would no longer retain its status at the university, its status of being a scientific discipline. On the one hand it appeared to avoid the genuinely scientific analysis of the source-materials of theology, leaving this to "the secular disciplines", (Supra.,p. 35) and to uphold a treatment of those sources which is appropriate in the pulpit only. On the other hand it is "profane because it trespasses on the secret of God and because it makes its understanding of God an export-article".[1] This alarmed Harnack and he feared that on account of it theology would cease to edify, would rather lead to dissolution and the gospel would no longer be taught correctly. Instead there would be a theological dictatorship, guided by second-rate men who would only torment others.

What began, however, as a general confrontation between Harnack and the new 'wave' in theology developed after Barth's first answers into a dialogue between these two men. Specific points were raised, clarified and refuted. But in the final analysis, the confrontation, the dialogue came to an end without having achieved more than to have Barth " continue to ask questions in the same direction" as before and to have Harnack unable "to his disappointment to continue the discussion because the weight of the problems was too great".

1: A remark by Harnack to Barth in April 1920, cited in Busch, Op.Cit.,p. 52f.

Yet between the first question and the final note of disappointment, between Jan.11 and May 24.1923, there lies an encounter rich in challenges, declarations and clarifications. For in it one of the greatest historians of the Church and, from the vantage-point of the mid-century, one of her greatest theologians meet and lay open to each other their own and their criticisms of each others' position.

The fifteen questions can be reduced to a few points in which Harnack's position becomes apparent, along with what he believes to be that of 'the despisers'. But before we make this reduction every question shall first be given again (in different words however), so that those few points may be more easily perceived.

1) Is the Bible so plain in what it says that everyone can understand it clearly, simply on account of his experiences? Would it not rather require science to give the understanding?
2) Can the Bible be understood without help of any kind? Or is it so obscure that inspiration alone can give the understanding? Are not rather science and inner openness required for it?
3) Is the experience of God identical with that of faith? If not, what is fanaticism in religion? If yes , does it not need the proclamation of the gospel, which requires science as a means of correct interpretation?
4) If the experience of God is different from any other kind of experience, how can one remain in the world and have that experience (for it is beyond question that many <u>in the world</u> have had that experience), or better, how can one remain honest, since the withdrawal from the world is a worldly decision (and thus is no real withdrawal, without which apparently that experience is not possible, but nevertheless an undeniable fact)?
5) The gospel makes the love of God equivalent to the love of man. How then can God and the world be conceived of as opposites? How can one affirm that equivalence without the highest valuation of morality?
6) (On account of the equivalence in the gospel of the love of God and the love of man) godliness is equivalent to goodness. How can one educate man in goodness without scientific knowledge of what goodness (ie. godliness) is and without a high estimation of morality?
7) If God is not what the various aspects of (Christian)

culture and morality say about him, how can that culture and morality be protected against its decline and fall into atheism?

8) If similarly the treasures of that culture are not related to God, how can those treasures be saved from barbarism?

9) In every development, be it of culture, cultural treasures or values, be it of morality, opposites, things called unrelated to other facts or factors, are really steps to a higher stage. Is this conclusion not impossible to reach without the tools of science?

10) God is love; love, joy and peace are his sphere. If this is so, how can one say that the Christian is never fully in that sphere and thus perpetuate what the Christian seeks to overcome: the frightening aspects of the ungodly sphere?

11) If Paul's admonition to virtue, honour and dignity is valid, how can one separate the experience of God from what is good, true and beautiful - ie. virtuous, honourable and dignified - instead of relating the two by means of scientific insights?

12) If sin is a lack in reverence (of God) and love (of man), then it must be overcome. But what other than the proclamation of God's holy majesty, (which we know through science) can overcome sin? Surely not paradoxes and whims - (such as the doctrines of original sin, predestination and election).

13) If reason is that power which grasps, comprehends, purifies and protects what is the primary data of our experiences, ie. the subconscious, the sensorial, the numinous, etc., how can one want to rid oneself of its powers? What else is this desire than to destroy like Herostrates what is excellent and praiseworthy and thus create what is occult?

14) How is the real person of Christ, the centre of the gospel, to be known in such a way that he and not an imaginary Christ is preached by the Church, if critical-historical study, if scientific theology is despised?

15) Can there be any other theology than that which, even though it is not perfect, has close ties with science in general? Is theology even theology without such ties? If yes, what value and persuasiveness does it have?

What then is the position Harnack upholds in these questions?

Historical knowledge and critical reflection are required for an understanding of the religion of and the revelations in the Bible. Yet not those two tools only but also inner openness. Without them, especially without the two former, the awakening of

faith as the experience of God is not possible. (Questions 1 - 3).

Life in God and life in the world are united in the life of religion. This is attested to by the life of love for one's fellow man which is equivalent to the love of God. This means that the life in God is a life of high morality. (Questions 4 - 6).

Culture and morality show us through their development what God is. They are the deposits, so to speak, of the history of the Christian faith in the world. We need historical knowledge and a high moral disposition in order to recognise what God really is in that stair-way like development. (Questions 7 - 9).

Love, joy and peace are there where God is; they show us conclusively what God is. The good, the true and the beautiful, wherever they are experienced show us or let us experience him when we recognise them as such through historical knowledge and critical reflection. (Questions 10 and 11).

The tools of historical knowledge and critical reflection are necessary for the proclamation of God's holy majesty with which one may overcome the sphere of ungodliness, evil and sin. Education in godliness, in the life in God and in high morality is hindered and defeated when those tools and the criteria of high morality are abandonned. (Question 12).

Reason is necessary for the clear description of what is divine. It is needed also to protect the divine against profanisation. Reason alone can show us the true person of Christ whom we experience. That is to say science alone grasps the historical Jesus whom to know it is absolutely necessary for our religion. Only it can do this objectively and persuasively. (Questions 13 - 15).

What position does Harnack think the despisers of scientific theology to hold? Again his questions can give us the answer.

Historical knowledge and critical reflection are unnecessary for an understanding of the Bible. A simple reference to it suffices because it is so completely a unity. Even if this unity is not perceived, the subjective experiences of man are enough anyway because all man can do is to let the meaning of the Bible radiate out in his heart simply because no other 'faculty' of man can

grasp that meaning. (Questions 1 and 2).

Harnack interprets such a view as naive biblicism and religious fanaticism.

The experience of God is different from the awakening of faith, just as it is different and even contrary to all other experiences of man. It follows from the latter that God and the world are complete opposites. (Questions 3 - 6).

Here Harnack sees a recurrence of a dualism which, like the ancient gnostics, tears apart God and the world.

God is totally unlike anything said about him on the basis of cultural and ethical insights.So that Goethe's and Kant's wisdom are void of real statements about God. One cannot even regard what they say as opposites on the basis of which one might make deductions instrumental in the formulation of real statements. (Questions 7 - 9)

This was for Harnack an outright abrogation on the part of theology of its cultural task; theology has to mediate between the divine and the worldly. But that point of view, that kind of theology "has lost its connection with the universitas litterarum and with culture", as Harnack wrote to Rade.[2]

The Christian may know what God's sphere is, what God is, but he himself is not in that sphere but rather always 'between door and hinge', in a stage of transition,which stage has its own autonomy. (Question 10).

This is pure gnosticism, as far as Harnack is concerned. God's sphere is God's and man's sphere is man's and 'ne'er the twain shall meet'; both have their autonomy. This is the outcome of the dualism that had already been pointed out.

Between the good,true and beautiful and man's experience of God is no relation. Sin is therefore more than the absence of love, goodness and beauty. But what is said about sin is paradoxical and whimsical. (Questions 11 and 12).

The ugly head of a theology which the Church had condemned raises itself in this view-point: Dualism and speculativeness. One might even say that it is not theology but ideology which appears here, for such notions as "the Fall, Original Sin and the like ... do not stay within the reality of history".[3]

Reason is belittled, yes repudiated. With it, of course, goes the historical-critical study of the gospels. Theology has in fact given up its relationship to science, its persuasiveness, its value. (Questions 13 - 15).

Harnack was indeed alarmed to see that the locus of theology was shifted from reason to the dark sphere of subjectivity, for it meant the end of theology as the objective science of the Christian religion, of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. The docetism of that position is a threat to the worship of the Church and has been rightly rejected by the Church as heresy.

Harnack therefore asks quite rightly: how valuable and how persuasive is a theology, when it is burdened with biblicism, fanaticism, dualism, docetism, gnostic speculations and paradoxes? Is it really theology, really science when it is subjective? How can it be persuasive when it puts itself above its duty to culture and the universitas litterarum?

Our sketch of the fifteen questions has shown in summary form what position Harnack upholds and what position he attacks, what he rejects and why he does so. But not until Barth had answered him did his criticisms become specific or his own position clearly stated.

We shall therefore turn now, again in outline, to Barth's replies.

1) The theme of theology is the one revelation of God of which the Bible speaks, to which it refers. This content, which is he who reveals himself as subject, must make itself known to us. What the gospel tells us is that the relation between God and man is the sphere where the content or datum of revelation is founded, where it does in fact make itself known. But this sphere is simply not man's experiences or his heuristic knowledge.

2) The understanding of the Bible, of what it says may be furthered, hindered or not effected at all by man's experiences, his soul's and mind's functions, his knowledge

---

2: AZH,p. 418.
3: Harnack in a letter to Barth, quoted in Busch, Op.Cit.,p.127.

and reflections. The actual understanding of the Bible comes through him or that, of whom or which the Bible speaks. Faith alone will understand it, not any function of the soul or mind.

3) Man's experience of God and the faith awakened by him are thus two radically different things. But this does not mean that that experience cannot in its own way testify to the awakening of faith. Faith however comes about through the proclamation of the Word of Christ. Theology is committed to receive and transmit that Word - and so is preaching. In the preparation for the carrying out of the commitment reflection and one's knowledge may very well be helpful.

4) Faith is the hope for a promised but invisible gift. It thus cannot avoid in some way or other to go against the visible world. To forget the separation between the invisible and the visible is to blur the distinction between God the creator, the origin and man the creature, the derivative. There is a unity, aloneness between these two worlds, namely the cross, but in it the utter contrast between them is also most clearly apparent. A theology which cannot hold still before that cross, which seeks to bypass it in finding the relation between God and man cannot hold still before God because it bypasses him the creator.

5) By coordinating man's life in the world and his life in God, in other words his life in the visible and the invisible worlds, the gospel points out the utter contrast between them which is overcome only by God himself. By overcoming it God showed us the neighbour. Even if we were highly moral, what if we do not love God? Can we then love our fellow-man? Or the converse, if we do not love the fellow-man, can we love God? Not until God overcomes that contrast, not until he takes life - in the cross namely - does he give life and thus open up the possibility of our loving him and our fellow-man with heart, soul and mind.

6) Education in goodness, yes gladly. But it will not lead to a life in God. Only God alone will draw us to that life, through death and resurrection.

7) The various cultural and ethical concepts of God are interesting for comparative anthropology. They are not the 'concepts' of the gospel, they do not comprise what the gospel preaches. Whether the former concepts are helpful for culture in its opposition to the challenges of atheism is quite a different matter.

8) Real statements about God, on the other hand, derive from revelation, from one's awareness of being under judgment rather than on the heights of culture and religion. Under this judgment stand all cultural and religious, all barbaric and atheistic expressions which the gospel is equally little or equally much concerned with.

9) In the sphere of human expressions there may be a stairway like development, which allows a classification of them into primitive or advanced. In theology, however, where God is

spoken of ,the rule is: either God's truth or our's. Even though God's truth may be expressed in human speech, we can still not go beyond humility and supplication. If we are beyond them in the life of God, then it is because we are born anew, because the miracle of God's overcoming the contrast, the barrier over which we cannot climb,has occured.

10) How can man pretend to have final knowledge of God when man's existence in time, in the visible world, is in transition toward eternity, toward the invisible world, when faith is a hope for a promised, yet still invisible gift? Even this faith is always also unfaith because it is man's faith in something hoped for and thus not at all final and certain.

11) The barrier between God and us is insurmountable. If, however, we are in Christ and live in God then we are enabled to follow Paul's admonition to virtue. Yet God is still beyond our understanding even then because the relation between him and what we call virtuous, etc. is the divine judgment of the world, the cross in which God related himself and the world and showed us what is good, true and beautiful.

12) Sin is also a lack of love but above all a fall away from God into a being lost in a godlikeness which ends in death. The proclamation of God's love cannot avoid following curious avenues - see Paul and Luther for example. Outsiders only will call that proclamation paradoxical, burdened with whims.

13) (This is a typically Barthian reply to an accusation, for all he does is this:) I am only asking, but I am asking! (Ich frage nur, aber ich frage!)

14) Only faith shows us Jesus Christ reliably as the centre of the gospel. Critical science and study are therefore the end of that knowledge which is not faith, that is which has not been awakened by God himself. We do not know Christ kata sarka any more, yet do we really know that? Historical knowledge might be of great help in our really coming to know that.

15) Theology needs the courage to witness to revelation, judgment and God's love in order to be an objective science with which other disciplines would then perhaps seek stronger relations. For they would then know what theologians ought to know. But the persuasiveness and value of theology is measured by an instance other than the opinion of those disciplines and vocations about it.

Barth's answers in fact constitute the beginning of the dialogue. On the one hand the position of one of the 'despisers' is more explicitely stated, so that one can determine whether Harnack's

estimate is a fair one, and on the other hand Harnack's own position is being attacked, so that in fact both positions are challenged into a defense.

But we should establish first what Barth upholds.

Theology is concerned with the one revelation of God, Jesus Christ, who is revealed only through himself. The subject and object of revelation is always God himself. That means that the object of theology is solely the subject Jesus Christ whom we understand, yes even find only through the Spirit which again is God himself. This understanding is possible through faith. But God awakens it through preaching, which is nothing other than the Word of Christ. (Answers 1 - 3).

A God-awkened faith, being the hope for a promised but invisible gift, is also a protest against the visible world. This faith perceives the unity of God and man in their utter contrast, the cross. The coordination of the love of God and of man shows this contrast, insofar as the love of one's heighbour as one's neighbour is not possible without God. The cross, death is needed in order for man to perceive and then to love the neighbour and thus to love God, which is to have life. That means that the life in God is established in and through Christ only. (Answers 4 - 6)!

Culture and morality do not show what the gospel proclaims. Knowledge of God is only there where revelation places us under the NO of God's judgment, the cross; there is no other alternative. Thus our knowing God is a being born anew, not a gradual scientific comprehension. (Answers 7 - 9).

Knowledge of God is faith which, however, is also always unfaith because it lives of a promise and not a fulfillment. So, the love of God, his joy and peace are 'higher' than our understanding. What we know as good, true and beautiful is not identical with the good, true and beautiful of God as such, for only the divine crisis, the utter contrast of God and the world in which their relatedness is seen, shows us the relation of earthly and divine goodness, truth and beauty. (Answers 10 and 11).

Sin, man's desertion of God, is in need of the proclamation of God's love and majesty, but this means the preaching of the crisis, of God's YES in his NO. (Answer 12).

By lifting the numinous into the pure light of ratio, reason does not achieve anything in terms of man's coming to know God. Only faith sees Jesus Christ as the centre of the gospel. But this is not the historical Jesus, Christ kata sarka, but the Christ whom God alone can reveal to us in faith, for which reason theology can only be the witness to that Word of the Christ given in faith. This testimony gives theology its objectivity, persuasiveness and value. (Answers 13 - 15).

Barth's answers make it plain that he too has certain objections about his discussion-partner's position.

Harnack's scientific method of biblical interpretation, that is to say his view of how man comes to understand what the Bible proclaims, is based on a historical positivism in which theology and history are identified. But this fails to see that the Bible is basically a document of testimonies. And here is the reason why Harnack rejects the identification of the tasks of theology and preaching. Barth defends this viewpoint because the understanding of what the Bible proclaims, which is the task of theology, occurs in an event of God's self-disclosure which is precisely the event at which both the biblical witness and the sermon aim.

This event takes place through Jesus Christ, but not simply the man known by that name but Jesus as the crucified and resurrected Christ. The cross as the skandalon of the biblical witness must not be avoided, nor must the message of the resurrection be made innocuous. But just this Barth sees occuring in Harnack's teaching. Here is "the impressive philosophical stucture which had been built up by the idea of the progressive advance of the divine into the world",[4] an idealism with an ontology of culture. But what has been lost is the knowledge of the basic distance posited by faith between itself and the world. The loss of that knowledge results in a weak doctrine of creation, a cheapening of God's grace and of man's justification by God.

4: Douglas Horton in his foreword th Barth's The Word Of God and the Word of Man, p.2.

But the message of the resurrection is equally 'perverted', insofar as the question of the historical Jesus is regarded as leading to a full understanding of the Christ of the kerygma. The answer to that question leads in fact to 'an imagined instead to the real' Christ. The real matter of the gospel is neglected because the historically-psychologically determined view of Jesus is Ebionite in nature.

When theology attempts to grasp its object by means of the tools of critical-historical study instead of letting it come to man through faith, and when furthermore it attempts to speak of that object as being comparable to the objects of the other disciplines of science, since it also has the character of a general truth, then theology may indeed have earned a place in the chorus of science, of the universitas litterarum, but it is no longer theology. It has lost sight of its object.

The lines for discussion have been drawn. Harnack no longer faces merely a 'complex of impressions' but precise formulations and indeed quite specific criticisms. The dialogue in other words begins and Harnack can go about 'finding clarity vis-à-vis a theologian friend!

2) Harnack's Critique of Barth

Harnack's Open Letter to Barth has a note of regret about it. 'The opposition between us has become more apparent. ... Things remain totally obscure ... wholly incomprehensible ... under the cover of a heavy fog.' (Supra.,p.35). But even though this is apparent to Harnack he proceeds to take up each one of Barth's answers point by point and to state what he sees to be their opposition. In each case there is a critique of Barth's position.

'You regard contemporary theology as an unstable product, which has no more value than that of an opinio communis.I regard it as the only means of grasping the object, the divine, epistemologically. For me it has attained to a degree of clarity and maturity never reached before.

'You regard theology and preaching as identical in their task. I separate them; theology has the same task as science in general - the search for truth. Preaching must inform the Christian of his duties as a witness to Christ. Your point of view makes academic theology into a preacher's platform and gives what is divine to the profane, which will destroy theology. Or do you merely wish to stir up lazy theologians and call them back to their real work? If so, good, but does this have to be done in a way such as yours?

'You make tabula rasa with everything in connection with the understanding of the Bible. What have you left with which to seek that understanding? I am glad you speak of faith, but what do you mean by it when it is not the experience of God, when it is indistinguishable from uncontrolled fanaticism? You say faith comes from the preaching of the Word of the Christ. Your use of 'the Christ' and your Paulinism - 'we know Christ no longer according to the flesh' - fill me with suspicion. Who is 'the Christ' in your opinion and how do we come to know him? (The Open Letter on Barth's answers to questions 1 -3, 15 and the original title).

Thus far the basic critique is this: Barth maintains a biblicism which leads the believer into gnosticism, because it avoids the systematic and critical analysis of the Bible. Harnack is only too well aware of the Paulinism of Marcion. That man also knew Christ no longer 'according to the flesh' and taught a docetic Christ because of it. Marcionite gnosticism, however, was also an uncontrolled fanaticism - eine Schwärmerei - which presented all kinds of speculative ideas. Harnack's keen perception of history led him to see in Barth's identification of the theologian's and the preacher's task an invitation to bypass the groundwork of theology, the analytical work in the Bible. He saw in it the abrogation of the responsibility of theology.

It is really not surprising therefore that he considered this point of view as a depising of scientific theology.

'Some of your answers show a lack of understanding or else a problematical terminology. Therefore, they are on the one hand useless as a witness to Christ and on the other inappropriate to the gospel which he preached. Indeed, you go so far in some in-

stances as to oppose the very example of Jesus. This is because you involve yourself in a Marcionite and problematical conceptuality'. (The Open Letter on Barth's answers to questions 4 - 6).

Harnack was no 'depiser' of those whose witness to Christ was in the ministry of preaching. 'The task of preaching is the pure presentation of the Christian's task as a witness to Christ' (Supra.,p.35), and because 'faith comes through the preaching of the Word of the Christ',(Supra.,p.36), preaching is evidently indispensable.

The evidence for this is Jesus himself. He preached the gospel simply, he preached the simple gospel. But Barth's preaching is not simple; it is paradoxical and full of penchants. Nor does he proclaim the gospel; there is rather a speculative conceptuality which unlike that of Jesus, who spoke of human things in order to show the divine, cuts the human from the divine.

All this is tantamount to a loss of the gospel itself.

'You assert that whatever is said about God on the basis of culture and ethics misses the truth of God as proclaimed in the Bible. Indeed, for you there is only contrast between the truth of God and ours. Instead of a gradual growth into that truth, you propose - contrary to what many have confessed in relation to this matter - an instantaneous perception of that truth, a new birth, as you put it. And you speak of it in this way because for you the link between these truths is a barrier.

'But then you take back with the other hand what you just gave. The new birth as the transition point from godlessness to God lasts as long as every Christian's lifetime, because faith is also always unfaith, that is to say that it is not a certainty but only a hope.' (The Open Letter on Barth's answers to questions 7 - 11).

Not only is there a dualism apparent in this, that Marcionite speculation, but there is also a radical separation of the godly and the worldly. This is a falsification of the gospel. By speaking of a contrast between God and man, between God's and man's truth, between time and eternity, by denying every evolution of the mind toward the divine, every stairway-like ascent to him and by repudiating every valuable insight into the divine in the history of man's intellect and morality Barth destroys what the

believer possesses, robs him of his certainties, shakes his confidence and transforms his faith into an illusion and his joy into frivolity. How many will understand why a minister does that? How many will learn humility, the presupposition of faith, from that? This sort of thing is no longer witnessing to Christ. Barth has moved far away from the Christianity of the gospels.

'You are so far removed from the gospels that you are unable to see the simplicity of Jesus' message. His kind of preaching does not suit you, instead there are curious paths in your preaching, metaphysical and psychological obscurities which very few will be able to grasp. Even Paul and Luther do better than you with their message of the forgiveness of sins.

'That kind of metaphysics and psychology results from the repudiation of scientific and reasoned analysis of the source materials. Only occultism, gnostic speculations, yes, sectarianism will come of it.[5]

'There is no doubt that you rid yourself of science and reason in regard to the search for a genuine picture of Jesus Christ. Historical knowledge, critical-historical study and critical reflection are essential in that search. But you repudiate that. History, even of recent decades, shows that such a point of view leads to fanaticism, fantasies and dreams and even to an intolerant exclusivism. Instead of religious openess there is a narrow outlook, instead of love there will be suspicion.' (The Open Letter on Barth's answers to questions 12 - 14).

Harnack sees the root of this anti-scientific, this speculative or metaphysical theology of Barth's in the historical scepticism Barth had inherited from Overbeck. "I am in no way inclined to become involved in anything regarding Overbeck," he wrote to Barth on Jan. 16. 1923.[6] What Overbeck denied was what Harnack had spent a lifetime on demonstrating: that historical events as such contain in themselves a reference to a final and all-embracing reality, the divine namely. He also repudiated the harmony

---

5: As early as April 1920 Harnack made this charge against Barth; cf. Busch, Op.Cit.,p.53.
6: Ibid.,p.112.

Harnack sought to prove between Christianity and culture. So Overbeck writes that "Christianity must now make clear how seriously is to be taken its own affirmation that it is not of this world. ... One can indeed not live a life with Christianity in this world; whoever tries it, to give himself equally to the world and to Christianity and believes that he can belong to the latter while being in the former, must become lost."[7] Then there were several attacks on Harnack in Overbeck's Christentum und Kultur which, even though they were made in a diary never meant for publication, went beyond the bounds of scholarly criticism.

Harnack therefore reacts with special vigour to Barth's Overbeckian historical scepticism. His eyes were very keen for a turning away from the study of the historical Jesus, for that is the outward appearance of this scepticism.

If critical-historical study of the Jesus of history does not give us the understanding of the real Jesus of the gospels, if we know the real Jesus no longer kata sarka, how do we know him other than through subjectivistic fantasies? History shows that that is the only alternative and the Church, as history also shows, has rejected those fantasies as heresies.

Harnack perceives in Barth's endeavours a prophetic and fanatical threat to the freedom of the Church, the freedom which Luther and later the Enlightenment gave to the Church.

He thus concludes his critique with the prediction that if Barth's theology comes to predominance, the gospel will no longer be taught, it will rather be given over into the hands of fanatics who preach the Bible edited to their fancies and who will set up their dominion.

What a confrontation then this is! One man accusing the other that in his theology the gospel is lost, the other man accusing him of not being a theologian at all.

Our task is to analyse the two positions as they are outlined in the 1923 correspondence of these two men.

7: Overbeck, Christentum und Kultur, p. 67 and 69.

- B - Harnack -

The key question Harnack asks is this: how can we obtain a reliable understanding of Christ? As a superb historian and expert in the history of the teaching of the Church he answers: not through subjective processes but through a critical analysis of man's testimonies to Christ. The religion of the Christian is Christocentric, nothing can alter that. The way to grasp the correct picture of Christ cannot be metaphysical, for this introduces categories of judgment which are inapplicable to religion. Such categories are of value in one's quest for a correct picture of nature and the world, but not for man's relation to the supernatural, to the divine. If therefore this relation to the divine is based on a correct understanding of Jesus Christ, that understanding is to be gained by a critical study and a historical evaluation of Jesus. Religion surely is not a matter of the mind only, but reason and reflection are indispensable in giving religion its focus. Given the inner predisposition toward the divine, theology must give to the person thus predisposed a true image of Christ, of his words and deeds and of their significance. That is to say that theology must reproduce for each generation the gospel of Christ. In the contemporary world this must be done scientifically, which means, in terms of historical knowledge of the Bible, of the beginnings of the Christian religion and of the course of it in history. This method will permit the Church to relate the gospel to the society, the culture and the Weltanschauung in which she lives at any particular time and place.

Harnack as a theologian is therefore concerned with the ever necessary reformation of the Church, the ever necessary recollection of her to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If in this concern one may speak of one fundamental principle on which Harnack rests it is this: faith in God comes through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such faith includes as an indispensable factor the cognition of Jesus Christ as the very centre of the gospel. Without knowledge of Christ's person faith is directed towards false, imaginary ends. Faith needs historical understanding of 'the Christ of history', for

which reason the critical-historical study of the historical Jesus is fundamental. In other words, history is the basis for man's religious knowledge. The historical method of analysis is therefore of immense significance for the creation of faith. Theology as the study of God depends in its endeavours to grasp its object epistemologically on the method of critical- historical analysis.

1) Theology, the historical science of grasping the gospel.

'The task of theology is at one with the task of science in general', Harnack said, (Supra.,p.35). In the terminology of what we called Harnack's principle it means that theology as a science is a historical science. It is the science of critical-historical analysis of the sources. The task of theology is, in other words, to study critically- historically the various sources of the Christian religion. By maintaining a close contact, yes, blood- relationship with science in general, theology will be enabled to pursue its task in which its scientific nature is upheld, namely the pure cognition of its object.

'How do we come to know Jesus Christ and proclaim him correctly, so that the faith evoked in him is in fact directed to him and not a false God'? Harnack's answer is unequivocally : through the principles of historical analysis, through 'historical knowledge and critical reflection'.

In 1874, when Harnack defended his Habilitationsschrift in Leipzig, he maintained that no other method of exegesis will allow us to find out the real meaning of the Bible than the literary-historical method.[8] This statement reflects his opposition on the one hand to the dogmatic approach of Orthodoxy to the Bible and on the other to the mystical or subjectivistic approach of Pietism to it. Harnack was concerned with the reformation of the Church and when he writes to Barth that scientific theology, which has attained to a high degree of clarity and maturity only since the 18. century, is for him the only possible way of grasping the

---

8: AZH, p.46.

the gospel epistemologically and thus of bringing about the reformation of the Church, then he refers to that particular theology which repudiates the method of orthodox and pietistic theology.

The Enlightenment, for that is what the 18. century means in this context, had raised the question of how the accidental occurences in a small corner of the Roman Empire in the first century A.D. could be of influence and of necessary standing for man nearly two millenia later. In Lessing's own words: how can the gap between an accidental truth of history and the necessary truth of reason be bridged? The answer is twofold according to Harnack. First of all one must really understand what that accidental truth of history is. Historical knowledge and critical reflection achieve this end. Once this has been done one can go on and show that in the case of Christianity what was first taken to be an accidental truth of history is in fact the necessary truth of reason. As Harnack was to put it later in his lectures on the essence of Christianity: the essence of Christianity, of that accidental truth, is in fact religion per se which corresponds to what history shows to be man's highest, his purest form of being related to the divine. As such the essence of Christianity is the necessary truth of reason.

But this has become clear only since the Enlightenment, supremely through Ritschl. He and his pupils, of whom Harnack is one, criticized Orthodoxy because they believed that it spoke of revelation and faith without really grasping that man's encounter with God's revelation in Christ is not in terms of abstract things such as the preexistence of Christ, a duality of natures, a triune personality but rather in terms of "a person who appeared in space and time" as Harnack put it.[9] Orthodox theologians speak of comprehending God's being per se.But do we know God per se? Do we not rather encounter God pro nobis?Is it not God as he acts on us through his revelation in Christ? Thus Harnack writes: "Theology is concerned with religion and within it with the greatest historical event mankind has ever experienced: Jesus Christ and the effects he caused. - We abhor metaphysics, which only gives a metaphysical significance to a historical fact; it draws

9: What is Christianity?,p.204. (This work is to be cited as Christianity from now on.)

into the domain of cosmology and religious philosophy a person who appeared in space and time."[10] This method or approach to the Bible, the religion and revelations in it cannot give us an understanding of the real meaning of the gospel. The faith of Orthodoxy is misdirected to a divinity other than that of the gospels.

Harnack is similarly opposed to the a-historical understanding of the gospel found in Pietism. Here the gap between the first and our present centuries does not need to be bridged since it does not exist. A contemporaneity of Jesus and the individual is established in the latter's subjective experience of Christ. The meaning of the religion of the Bible and its revelations is so clear that 'one may simply speak of the Bible'. And even though the events described in the gospel are regarded as having occured in that corner of Rome at that time, historical knowledge and critical reflection are not required for their understanding, since Jesus comes alive really only as he 'radiates out in man's heart',in which moment the 'religion of the Bible and its revelations are something so completely a unity and so clear' that 'one may leave the understanding of the content of the gospel to the individual's heuristic knowledge and experiences'.

But if religion and theology are concerned with the gospel of Jesus Christ and if Jesus is a person who appeared at a certain time and at a certain place, if in other words he is a fact of history, then the gap between his life and our's simply cannot be ignored. The meaning therefore of the gospels needs historical knowledge and critical reflection for their correct understanding.

Already at the age of eighteen Harnack confessed to a friend what was to be most characteristic of his mature theological position. His biographer describes this as "the inward need to understand Christianity historically and to set it into a living relation to all historical events, the decision to push through the dogmatic and the traditional to the innermost content of the Christian truths."[11] Then again in 1888, three years after the appearance of his Dogmengeschichte,he writes to a government

10: Die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten, in Reden und Aufsätze,p. 130 and in Christianity,p.204.
11: AZH, p. 24.

official:"I am convinced that we shall not be led into a healthy progress and into an increasingly purer knowledge of what is original and valuable by exegesis and dogmatics only but by a better comprehension of history. Not exegesis and dogmatics but the results of Church-historical research and their acceptance generally shall break the chains of burdensome and confusing traditions. ... We are confident that with this method we shall not demolish but build up."[12]

In 1916 he maintains the same insistence on the historical approach to the gospel. Writing to Friedrich Loofs he stated that the thesis put forth by Loofs: 'the life of Jesus was not a purely human one' is not tenable in that way. "Your thesis ... can mean only this: there are in that life aspects for which we can find no analogies in history. A scientist can and may not use any other formulation. Only this one is possible: here was a truly human life and yet faith draws divine power and wisdom from it. Any other way of putting it draws you hopelessly into the docetism of the two-nature doctrine. If Jesus was conscious of being God's son in a unique way ... then he was so in a completely humanly conscious way. Thus says history, not to say common sense and faith does too. If you declare that Jesus' life was not a purely human one then you take away what is unique to faith, for you make an assertion, even if it is only negative, which even an unbeliever is supposed to accept. You ask in this something which for history and the historian is simply a horrendum."[13]

There is no change in this view-point in the 1923 correspondence with Barth. 'Historical knowledge and critical reflection, I see in them the only possible way of grasping the object epistemologically. But in your answers you shatter every possession of the Christian; your description of the Christian's state of mind- only very few will know as the peace of God'. What Harnack had warned Loofs against seven years earlier had apparently come true in Barth - a theology had arisen which asked that the horrendum be in fact acknowledged.

12: AZH.,p.130 f. 13: Ibid.,p. 187.

Three years later Harnack reiterates what he had maintained for nearly fifty years: "History surely does not have the final word anywhere, but in the science of religions and of the Christian religion especially it has the first word everywhere."[14]

The answer to the question which lurked behind the whole correspondence with Barth: how can we obtain a reliable understanding of Jesus Christ and the gospel? finds this one answer from Harnack throughout his life: through historical knowledge and historical reflection.

Therefore: the theologian must be a historian, because theology is a historical science. This judgment is supported by Harnack's own understanding of the task of the history of dogma. "The history of dogma, in that it sets forth the process of the origin and the development of dogma, offers the very best means and methods of freeing the Church of dogmatic Christianity, and of hastening the inevitable process of emancipation. ... But the history of dogma also testifies to the unity and continuity of the Christian faith in the progress of its history, insofar as it proves that certain fundamental ideas of the Gospel have never been lost and have defied all attacks."[15]

Harnack sees in the task of Dogmengeschichte the solution to the tension between the essential of the Christian religion and the relativity of all human statements about that essence. "All knowledge is relative; and yet religion essays to bring her absolute truth into the sphere of relative knowledge and to reduce it to statement there. ... (This is to help religion) to maintain itself before every possible theory of nature or of history."[16] This attempt of religion to express its truth in terms of propositions leads to dogmatic Christianity.

Harnack deplores this development insofar as it has created the above tension. "Religion is a practical affair with mankind, since it has to do with our highest happiness and with those faculties which pertain to a holy life. But in every religion those faculties are closely connected with some definite faith or with some definite cult, which are referred back to Divine Revelation.

14: Die Entstehung der christlichen Theologie und des kirchlichen Dogmas, p. I
15: Harnack, Outlines of the History of Dogma, p. 7f.
16: Ibid., p.2.

Christianity is that religion in which the impulse and power to a blessed and holy life is bound up with faith in God as the father of Jesus Christ."[17] The interpretation of the knowledge of Christianity, of man's knowledge of God as revealed in Christ which is based on the documents pertaining to that revelation, in terms of dogmas is not a true interpretation of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God. Investigation of the relative statements about the absolute truth of the Christian religion will show that these statements are not simply the exposition of the gospel but rather the superimposition of the intellectual medium of the hellenistic mind on the gospel. These two truths, that of the gospel and that upheld in dogmas, are not identical. They are in tension which can be resolved only if one goes beyond the dogmatic to the essential, to the 'essence of Christianity'.

The historian of Christian dogma must push through the various historical developments of the dogma to the absolute which the dogma supposedly states. In other words he must ask about the essential which does not change and distinguish it from the particular form which changes with the changing knowledge of man. Having answered this question about 'the fundamental ideas of the gospel which have never been lost' in the maze of dogma, he must ask further: what caused the many and decisive alterations in the simple and 'practical affair' which the Christian religion is? Why has the simple teaching of Jesus, the founder of the kingdom of God on earth, become so confused?

History of dogma is in fact the phenomenology of dogma. It asks the following questions: 'what have Christians believed ever since the dawn of the Church?' and 'how is this belief related to the essence of the Christian religion?'. Because of these questions and because of the view that "this religion teaches that God can be truly known only in Jesus Christ, (for which reason) it is inseparable from historical knowledge",[18] the task of history of dogma is primarily theological. It is in the last analysis concerned with the absolute truth of Christianity and with its freedom from false accretions. This means that theology grasps that truth historically.

17: Ibid.,p. 2. 18: Ibid.,p. 1

The object of faith is grasped historically instead of theologically; the task of dogmatics is taken over by the history of dogma. Harnack turns critically against dogma, against the intrusion of temporary metaphysical notions into the heart of the gospel and "substitutes the question of the essence of Christianity in terms of a metaphysics with a negative sign."[19]

2) What is the simple gospel, the essence of Christianity?

"What is Christianity? It is solely in its historical sense that we shall try to answer that question here; that is to say, we shall employ the methods of historical science, and the experience of life gained by studying the actual course of history. ... Where are we to look for our materials? ... Jesus Christ and his Gospel. But ... we must not be content to stop here, because every great and powerful personality reveals a part of what it is only when seen in those whom it influences. ... The more powerful the personality which a man possesses, and the more he takes hold of the inner life of others, the less can the sum-total of what he is be known only by what he himself says and does. ... But even this does not exhaust our materials. If Christianity is an example of a great power valid not for one particular epoch alone; if in it and through it not once only, but again and again, great forces have been disengaged, we must include all the later products of its spirit. ... We may also add that Christ himself and the apostles were convinced that the religion they were planting would in the ages to come have a greater destiny and a deeper meaning than it possessed at the time of its institution."[20]

Harnack reflects in this what since the beginnings of historical theology had become more and more widely accepted: "the perfect cannot be found at the origine of a thing." This was said in 1771 by the originator of the critical-historical method, Semler [21], a leading theologian of the 18. century and the Enlightenment, that period in other words, which according to Harnack gave clarity and maturity to scientific theology. Jesus

19: Ernst Wolf, Kerygma und Dogma?, in Antwort, Festschrift for Barth, p. 794.
20: Harnack, Christianity, p.6 & 10f.

himself and the apostles "trusted to its spirit (ie. the spirit of the religion they had founded) leading from one point of light to another and developing higher forces."[22] This is the stair-way like development mentioned by Harnack in his letters to Barth.

This method which Harnack adopts in answering the question what Christianity, what the simple gospel really is, shows his historical positivism, his historicism. He does not share the Hegelian concept of history as the unfolding of mind or reason; that is a metaphysical construction of reality. What, however, he does share with it is that history, when studied critically, will reflect the essence of man's spirit and its most supreme relationship, namely that to God. The interest in the historicity, in the historical appearance and development of a phenomenon is kept alive and made the force behind the scientific investigation of it on account of the conviction of the actual inter-esse of the essence of the phenomenon in history. When Harnack writes that "we cannot form any right estimate of the Christian religion unless we take our stand upon a comprehensive induction that covers all the facts of its history"[23], he suggests that our knowledge of the fundamental, unchanging ideas of the gospel derives from an imaginative retracing of those ideas as they appear in history. Through that retracing one does in fact grasp what is fundamental or essential, what is accidental and what is supplementary, what is kernel and what is husk.

"The gospel contains something which, under differing historical forms, is of permanent validity. ... We shall see that the gospel in the gospel is something so simple, something that speaks to us with so much power, that it cannot easily be mistaken. ... No one who possesses a fresh eye for what is alive, and a true feeling for what is really great, can fail to see it and distinguish it from its contemporary integument".[24]

We recapitulate: if it is the task of theology to grasp its object as fully as possible, if this object is the focal point of the Christian's religion, namely God as revealed by Jesus Christ, and if therefore theology is the science of the Christian religion

21: Abhandlung von der freien Untersuchung des Kanons, vol.1,p.161, quoted in Wolf, Op.Cit.,p.785.
22: Harnack, Op.Cit.,p.11. 23: Ibid.,p.11. 24: Ibid.,p.14.

then theology is a science which analyses the course of the Christian religion from its inception up to the present day with the tools of history and psychology in order to portray as precisely as possible what the gospel as the focal point of the Christian's religion really is.

But what really is Christianity? It is 'the simple gospel, out of which Jesus himself told his understandable and comforting parables for the salvation of souls', as Harnack wrote to Barth, (Supra.,p.37). Harnack's popular lectures on Das Wesen des Christentums answer that question.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the primary material to be analysed for that question. Harnack, however, makes a distinction at this point between the gospel of Jesus and the gospel about Jesus. Das Evangelium Jesu and das Evangelium von Jesus. The distinction is outlined in an essay entitled Das doppelte Evangelium in dem Neuen Testament.[25] The gospel of Jesus is "the joyous news to the poor, the peaceable, the meek and the pure in heart, the news that God's kingdom is near, that it will soothe sorrow and anxiety, bring justice and establish man's childhood in God in addition to giving all good things. It is a new order of life above the world and politics." The gospel about Jesus is "the proclamation of the incarnation, death and resurrection, redemption from sin, death and devil - in a word the realisation of God's redemptive plan. It includes the news of the kingdom, yes, but only within the faith in Jesus Christ as having died and risen. - Christ's own preaching together with the messianic conceptions of Judaism at that time and Paul's theology plus certain pagan myths have led to the expansion and solidification of the second form of the gospel. The first gospel, however, is about the values of the kingdom and its ethical demands."[26]

This distinction is important for us, for as we shall see later, the second form of the gospel led to Marcionism, dogmatic Christianity and sectarianism, all of which Harnack rejects and all of which he finds in Barth. The first form of the gospel is according to Harnack that which Jesus preaches and which he thinks is what the Church must proclaim and scientific theology grasp

25: The essay is in vol. II of Harnack's Aus Wissenschaft und Leben p.213ff.

26: Ibid.,p.215.

epistemologically.

This gospel is "simple and also so rich". Jesus gave it "calm, simple and fearless expression, as though it were a truth which grew on every tree.It was just this which stamped his peculiar genius, that he gave perfectly simple expression to profound and all important truths, as though they could not be otherwise; as though he were uttering something that was self-evident; as though he were only reminding men of what they all know already, because it lives in the innermost parts of their souls."[27]

What then is this first gospel? Harnack conceives of it under three headings, although he speaks of the whole under each one. The first is the kingdom of God and its coming. The second is God the father and the infinite value of the human soul. The third is the higher righteousness and the commandment of love.[28]

When Harnack speaks of the kingdom of God he speaks of it in idealistic terms rather than in those of eschatology. He abhorred the eschatological. But he did not pretend that it did not exist. He knew that Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom was an eschatological proclamation. Jesus knew and spoke of two opposing kingdoms, that of God which is to come and that of evil which is to be overcome.[29] In this struggle Jesus speaks of the last hour - "the last hour has come"[30], but, as Bultmann points out in his preface to the 1950 edition of What is Christianity?,Harnack seems not to have seen the import of that utterance.[31]

To the question 'which of these two aspects of the kingdom of God: the eschatological or the ideal is of greatest prominence in Jesus' gospel?' Harnack answers unequivocally: the latter."The other view ... that the kingdom of God 'cometh not with observation', that it is already here, was Jesus' own."[32]

We called this view an idealistic view of the kingdom. This is because for Harnack the coming of it does not constitute the end of history. The parousia is not taken to be the cataclasmic change of the world into the world of God. "The kingdom of God comes by coming to the individual,by entering into his soul and by being grasped by him. True, the kingdom of God is the rule of

---

27: Christianity,p.51 & 68. 28: Ibid.,p.51.
29: Ibid.,p. 52f. 30: Ibid.,p. 122.
31: Ibid.,p.X. 32: Ibid.,p.54.

God, but it is also the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals; it is God himself in his power. From this point of view everything that is dramatic in the external and historical sense has vanished; and gone, too, are all the external hopes for the future. ...God himself is the kingdom. It is not a question of angels and devils, thrones and principalities, but of God and the soul, the soul and its God."[33] The kingdom is something supernatural, a gift from above, beyond nature, but for us in nature. "It is ... not a product of ordinary life. It is a purely religious blessing, the inner link with the living God. - It is in the nature of spiritual force, a power which sinks into a man within, and can be understood only from within. 'It is not here or there, it is within you'."[34] In other words, the kingdom is not of the future, but of the present; it is equally close to all men in every age since Jesus. He, therefore, who wishes to be a part of it must "lay hold of it"[35] as a religious blessing, as a supernatural gift to his soul.

(Barth objects to this. He speaks of hope and a promise of God in relation to man's 'appropriation' of the kingdom. "Are we saved in a way other than in hope? Does not faith live by being faith in God's promise?" (Supra.,p. 34). He reintroduces the eschatological aspect Harnack had rejected. The point why this is mentioned now is for us to see precisely how Harnack interprets man's laying hold of the kingdom. It is at hand, he said, not a futuristic aeon, a gift, not something yet to be given although already promised.) Thus Harnack says:" Those of us who possess more delicate and therefore more prophetic perceptions (what he means is 'inner openness') no longer regard the kingdom ... as a mere Utopia."[36] This means that God's kingdom, this idealistically interpreted spiritual gift and religious blessing is grasped by man in a way identical or at least analogous to the way we grasp such gifts and blessings as Goethe's Faust or Beethoven's Ninth.

33: Ibid.,p.56.Please, read note 35, part of which deals with the translation of a phrase in this quotation.
34: Ibid.,p.61 f. 35: Ibid.,p.56. The German text is rendered ambiguously in the Saunders translation.'Das Reich Gottes kommt indem es zu den einzelnen kommt, Einzug in ihre Seele hält, und sie es ergreifen.' In Englishthat should be 'The kingdom of God comes by coming to individuals,by entering their souls and by being grasped by them.' This would suggest that man grasps the kingdom and not,as

The gospel from the second vantage point is the fatherhood of God and the infinite value of the human soul. Jesus"proclaimed the living God and the nobility of the soul,"[37] a nobility which consists in the fact that the soul "can and does unite with God."[38]

One must not underestimate the great affirmation Harnack makes about the individual and his irreplaceable value. In an age of political, economic or scientific ideologies and positivism, in which man is seen only as a part of evolving nature, in which majorities are the measure of evaluating truth, in which man is sacrificed for all kinds of ends - this affirmation, couched in the dominical saying 'what shall it profit a man when he gains the world but loses his own soul' must only be applauded.
Yet, how is this nobility conceived of? How does the gospel, in Harnack's view, speak of this nobility?

"The value of a truly great man ... consists in his increasing the value of mankind ... in (having) given progressively effect to human value, to the value of that race of men which has risen out of the dull ground of nature. But Jesus Christ was the first to bring the value of every human soul to light. ... It was he who raised humanity to this level."[39]

The soul's nobility, first brought to light by Jesus, is inseparable from its relation to God the father. This means that Jesus made us see that in view of God's fatherhood every single person is of value. If everyone is to pray to God as a father, then God himself gives to everyone that high value of being someone personally regarded by God.
This value 'comes to light ' through the gospel of Jesus. In other words, the gospel has the declaratory purpose of showing man the intrinsic value of every soul. Even before Christ's coming, the soul had this value because God is really a father.

We see here that for Harnack the gospel is a message of "es-

the translation of Saunders suggests, that the kingdom lays hold of the soul. His translation reads:"The kingdom of God comes by coming to the individual, by entering into his spul and laying hold of it."

36: Ibid.,p.114. (Material added in parentheses is mine).

37: Ibid.,p. 51. 38: Ibid.,p. 63. 39: Ibid.,p. 67f.

The gospel from the second vantage point is the fatherhood of God and the infinite value of the human soul. Jesus"proclaimed the living God and the nobility of the soul,"[37] a nobility which consists in the fact that the soul "can and does unite with God."[38]

One must not underestimate the great affirmation Harnack makes about the individual and his irreplaceable value. In an age of political, economic or scientific ideologies and positivism, in which man is seen only as a part of evolving nature, in which majorities are the measure of evaluating truth, in which man is sacrificed for all kinds of ends - this affirmation, couched in the dominical saying 'what shall it profit a man when he gains the world but loses his own soul' must only be applauded.
Yet, how is this nobility conceived of? How does the gospel, in Harnack's view, speak of this nobility?

"The value of a truly great man ... consists in his increasing the value of mankind ... in (having) given progressively effect to human value, to the value of that race of men which has risen out of the dull ground of nature. But Jesus Christ was the first to bring the value of every human soul to light. ... It was he who raised humanity to this level."[39]

The soul's nobility, first brought to light by Jesus, is inseparable from its relation to God the father. This means that Jesus made us see that in view of God's fatherhood every single person is of value. If everyone is to pray to God as a father, then God himself gives to everyone that high value of being someone personally regarded by God.
This value 'comes to light ' through the gospel of Jesus. In other words, the gospel has the declaratory purpose of showing man the intrinsic value of every soul. Even before Christ's coming, the soul had this value because God is really a father.
We see here that for Harnack the gospel is a message of "es-

---

the translation of Saunders suggests, that the kingdom lays hold of the soul. His translation reads:"The kingdom of God comes by coming to the individual, by entering into his spul and laying hold of it."

36: Ibid.,p.114. (Material added in parentheses is mine).

37: Ibid.,p. 51. 38: Ibid.,p. 63. 39: Ibid.,p. 67f.

sential elements which are timeless".[40] One of the essentials is that God loves, that he is love. He is like the prodigal's father for he waits in unchanging love for the lost child. Another is that through this love for man the soul of man is of infinite worth. "This was certainly Jesus' meaning (of the gospel): the Eternal appears; time becomes a means to an end; man is seen to be on the side of the eternal."[41]

Yet the gospel may also be summarised as 'the higher righteousness and the commandment of love'. One may speak of the gospel as of "an ethical message without depreciating its value".[42] Earlier we saw the emphasis Harnack put on the kingdom of God as being 'within' man. The sphere of faith, of religion is "the sphere of pure inwardness".[43] Jesus himself is the example, for he severed ethics and the external forms of religious worship, the pursuit of good works for an ulterior motive. Rather he goes to the root, to man's intentions, to "the depths of the heart".[44] And ethics becomes love. Love is the only motive for man's actions in the ethics of Jesus. But again, this love does not come with programmes or platforms for the external transformation of the world, "its object is to transform the socialism which rests on the basis of conflicting interests into the socialism which rests on the consciousness of a spiritual unity".[45]

Several times in this particular section of What is Christianity? Harnack declares that this aspect of the gospel is new in religion since Jesus. "It was said of old ... but I say to you'. ...The truth was something new ;he was aware that it had never yet been expressed in such a consistent form. ... In thus expressing his message ... Jesus defined the sphere of the ethical in a way in which no one before him had ever defined it".[46] The new element is the combination of religion and morality in such a way that the former is the soul of the latter which on its part is the body of the former.

Yet I think it unfair to label this aspect of Harnack's thinking a sophisticated moralism. He unites religion and morality at the decisive point of the love of God and the love of man. In-

---

40: Ibid.,p.149. 41: Ibid.,p.69. 42: Ibid.p,70.
43: Ibid.,p.187. 44: Ibid.,p.71. 45: Ibid.p,100.
46: Ibid.,p.72 & 73f.

deed this is for him' the heart of the gospel, this close union, yes, equivalance of these twp loves' as he wrote in his fifteen questions, (Supra.,p. 30). "In exercising this virtue men are imitating God".[47] Here we must simply point out that this may mean two things for Harnack. We may either be called by Jesus to take God as our example of merciful relations with others and like he love others as ourselves. Then this love and mercy are powers of our own.Or it may be that our love of the neighbour is not merely analogous to God's love for us, but that the latter is in fact the cause of the former.For how does Harnack say it: "Jesus made love and humility one. Humility is not a virtue by itself; but it is pure receptivity, the expression of inner need, the prayer of God's grace and forgiveness, in a word the opening up of the heart for God". 48/Does he then mean that humility, the hunger and thirst for righteousness, the poverty in spirit are pure receptivity, the expression of an inner need and the prayer for God's grace and forgiveness? Does this not suggest that this ethics of Jesus is not one that speaks solely of man's achievements? Is it not then an ethics of good works? Or does he make faith itself into a work when he writes that " this humility ... is the love of God of which we are capable?"[49] Is the openess of God in our love for him, like mercy, a virtue? - Harnack is a pupil of Ritschl for which reason I would tend to opt for an affirmative answer to the last questions. But the quotation itself is not simply a testimony to an ethicisation of the gospel.

Under those three aspects: 1) the kingdom of God and its coming, 2) God the father and the infinite value of the human soul, 3) the higher righteousness and the commandment of love, Harnack describes the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is for him the simple gospel, the first form of the gospel found in the New Testament; this is das Evangelium Jesu. In summary it is this: the content of the gospel is the bringing to light of the unity between God and man. Even though this unity is not fully apparent, even though it is often threatened or broken, it is there nonetheless. Its origin is God, for he is the father. Jesus Christ did not make him the father but showed us that God is the father. Through Jesus' actions,

47: Ibid.,p. 75f. 48: Ibid.,p.73. 49: Ibid.,p.73. Underlining is mine.

words and his passion shines the timeless truth that God is a loving father. The unity, however, comes also from man. It is not simply a natural, perhaps pantheistically conceived unity, it is the outcome of a struggle. Man must strive to free himself from all that would hinder him from entering into that unity with the eternal, the spiritual, the superhuman.

A short excursus is needed here on Harnack's understanding of religion.

Religion is man's endeavour to overcome with the help of a superhuman being or force which man worships the contradiction in which man finds himself. This contradiction arises out of man's participation in nature, his dependence on it and even his subjection to it. But as a spiritual being, man seeks to remain independent from it and subject it to himself. In this tension religion arises as the faith in a spiritual power greater than nature which will aid man's powers in attaining to the independence from and the dominion over nature. "Religion is an instinct concerned not as much with the empirical ego or earthly life as with the innermost core of the ego and its true home, the other world, the world of freedom and the good."[50] Religion directs man to God in worship because God upholds man's spiritual self-confidence against those forces in nature which draw man from the world of freedom and the good to the merely physical and material. "The gospel", writes Harnack," is based on the antithesis between spirit and flesh, God and the world, good and evil. ... We have to do with a dualism which arose we do not know how; but as moral beings we are convinced that, as it has been given us in order that we may overcome it in ourselves and bring it to a unity, so also it goes back to an original unity, and will at last find its reconciliation in the great far-off event, the realised dominion of the Good."[51] No matter whether this dualism or antithesis is described in terms of God and world, the visible and invisible, matter and spirit, physics and ethics, man knows by experience of a unity underlying them. He also knows that the one can be subordinated to the other and that a unity at least proximate in nature can be

50: From Harnack's address to the world congress of sciences, meeting at St. Louis in Sept. 1904, The Relation between Ecclesiastical and General History. Contemporary Review, vol. LXXXVI,p.846ff.

achieved.

We return to our main discussion again. Freedom from the physical and unity with the spiritual are the fruit of a struggle. Von der Gewalt die alle Wesen bindet befreit der Mensch sich der sich überwindet, says Goethe and Harnack quotes it with approval.[52] Man's self-conquest through the higher righteousness and the commandment of love overcomes the antithesis in which he lives and leads him to the unity which is in the kingdom of God, where God is the father and every human soul has infinite value. In other words the gospel speaks of the homoûsion of God and man. "The forces of the gospel appeal (beziehen sich) to the deepest foundation of human existence and to them only; it is there alone that their leverage is applied. If a man is unable, then, to go down to the root of humanity, and has no feeling for it and no knowledge of it, he will fail to understand the gospel, and then will try to profane it ...".[53] (This is what Harnack accuses Barth of, a misunderstanding and a profanisation of the gospel).

If the gospel is about the homoûsion of God and man, the metaphysical concepts, ie. doctrines or dogmatic Christianity are superfluous and even dangerous. On the one hand they cannot reveal the God who blesses man with his love and fatherhood and on the other they give rise to 'a state of mind which is no longer the necessary presupposition for all Christian humility' - which is man's receptivity, expression of inner need, the imploring of God's grace and forgiveness, man's opening of himself to God. Dogmatic Christianity is really irreligious since it misses the goal of man's spiritual longings. The certainty of the goal which is that final unity "is in no way propositional, it can therefore not unite our space-time knowledge and our achieved inner unity into a philosophically unified theory of the world."[54] But dogmatic Christianity does this and is thus to be rejected. The simple gospel of Jesus on the other hand shows this unity to be an inward, living reality for which reason "it is ... religion itself".[55]

51: Christianity, p.150f. 52: Ibid., p.150. 53: Ibid., p.124.
54: Wayne Glick, Adolf Harnack as Historian and Theologian, p.258.
55: Harnack: Op.Cit., p. 63.

3) The second form of the gospel - the first step in its disfigurement.

What however is the second form of the gospel in the New Testament? In the essay about the twofold form of the gospel cited above (Supra.,p.73) Harnack had maintained that the second form was about the incarnation, redemption, death and resurrection, etc. It is the gospel about Jesus, the gospel about the realisation of God's redemptive plan. What is significant in that essay for us now is how Harnack continues, for he leads us on to Paul and through him to the beginning of dogmatic Christianity and Marcionism - of which he accuses Barth.

"The second form of the gospel is untenable in the categories of the doctrine of the two natures, for it contradicts historical, yes, every possible kind of knowledge. Every statement about Jesus Christ which does not remain within those limits, which denies anything to him other than his humanity, must be rejected since it is in opposition to the historical picture of Jesus. This admission does not negate what is affirmed in the second form of the gospel. But just as it is certain that no god appeared, died and rose again, so it is equally certain that our senses and our knowledge of nature do not inform us about God in any way. The personal, higher life and morality are the sole areas in which we may be able to encounter God. God is holiness and love. If this is in fact so, then he becomes revealed to us in personal lives, that is through people; God then acts, redeems and perfects through people. ... The first form of the gospel contains the truth, the second the way, and both together, life. It is, however, in no way necessary that everyone be fully conscious that Jesus Christ is the way by which he came to the truth. Christ is also Christ when a brother becomes a Christian to another brother. It is always personal life in God which is mediated to the knowledge of another through which new life is created.- But behind it stands Jesus Christ. He who has found God belongs to him. He who has found him will - as he progresses - surely progress also in the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ."56

56: Harnack, Das doppelte Evangelium im Neuen Testament, p.223f.

The gospel about Jesus is clearly secondary in importance as a source for man's encounter with God. It may even be a dangerous form of the gospel since it uses categories of speech which refer to events which certainly never happened; the incarnation - but no god appeared, death and resurrection - no god died and rose again, the redemption of the world by faith in Christ as having died and risen - but God acts,redeems and perfects through people.

Paul is associated with the second form of the gospel and he is therefore the root of the disfigurement of it as it spread throughout the ancient world.

Harnack's discussion of Paul begins with the assertion that "Paul was the one who understood the master and continued his work".[57] He is the missionary of Christ, who showed more than anyone else that the gospel was in fact religion itself. It was he who removed every particularistic element from the gospel so that it could and did become "the universal religion".[58]

Paul conceives of the gospel as the message of the world's redemption which has already been effected and of mankind's salvation which is already present. Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen lord, has given us access to God and through that we have righteousness and peace. He furthermore placed this message into the scheme of spirit and flesh, of inwardness and outward existence. Lastly he gave that message a language which made it generally intelligible and thus united the gospel with the wisdom of all ages.

"Without doing any violence to the inner and essential features of the Gospel ... Paul transformed it into the universal religion and laid the ground for the great church. But while the original limitations fell away, new ones of necessity made their appearance; and they modified the simplicity and the power of a movement which was from within."[59]

Paul proclaimed the message of the suprasensible community of Christ, the heavenly unity that comes from within but he also founded the Church which took visible shape wherever people lived and believed that message.For Jesus the outward appearance of a community bearing his name created no problem, he could be "care-

57: Christianity, p.176. 58: Ibid.,p.180. 59:Ibid.,p.180.

less of all externals and devote himself to the all important point; the question of how and what forms the seed would grow did not occupy his mind."[60] But Paul had to answer that question; the seed he planted could not remain in a bodiless condition as it began to grow. There had to be forms of worship and life which embodied the values proclaimed. And this does not happen without the danger of the forms assuming what belongs solely to the values. "One reason for this is that the observance of the forms can always be controlled or enforced, as the case may be; while for the inner life there is no control that cannot be evaded."[61]

Here arises the need for doctrine; the community now growing needs to maintain itself in its uniqueness over and against every other Weltanschauung or ideology. Paul showed the absolute character of the Christian religion clearly in his christology, in the way he speaks of Christ's death and resurrection, yet his formulations had of necessity a logic of their own. In them lurks danger, for they may conceal the real, the true meaning of religion. Once a doctrine is taken out of the sphere of personal experience and inner reformation, it is simply a metaphysical proposition and no longer saving truth.

Why is this so? If the formation of a correct theory and formulation of the truth of the gospel assumes importance - and in view of the attacks of other religions and theories on Christianity such formations are necessary - then it can easily happen that the right knowledge of the truth displaces the right relation of the soul to God.

Christ's gospel directed everyone to the all important point, it summarily confronted every man with God. The gospel about Jesus as Paul taught it exercised an influence in the wrong direction in the way the religious conceptions are ordered, Harnack attributes that order and conceptuality to "Paul's speculative ideas" and goes on to say that "it is a perverse proceeding to make Christology the fundamental substance of the Gospel."[62] Paul himself has moved in that direction because he was the author of the speculative idea that Christ had some heavenly nature. From this notion others developed the idea that the redemption of the

60: Ibid.,p. 181. 61: Ibid.,p. 181f. 62: Ibid.,p.184.

world is the appearance of Christ, of the divine being in the world. Paul himself still saw the incarnation from the ethical point of view, but this peculiar Paulinism soon overtook what was once the real value of this conception and led to perversions of the gospel. If Paul held such views, what is to restrain his successors to do likewise in the circumstances they find themselves in?[63]

Nonetheless Paul is one of the spiritual giants among men. "He worked with the most living of all messages and kindled a fire."[64] But what of the lesser spirits who also worked with this message? Harnack's verdict is that they allowed 'an original element to evaporate' and 'Hellenism, the Greek spirit' to become united with the gospel.[65] The latter Harnack believes could happen because of the former and did in fact begin in about 130 A.D.[66]

4) Marcion - Paul's successor, speculative preacher and transformer of the gospel.

The date 130 A.D. draws our attention to Marcion, the Christian who taught 'the gospel of the strange God'. This phrase is the subtitle to Harnack's book on Marcion. We shall turn to it now in order to see how the proclamation of a speculative dualism leads to results Harnack thinks occur also when scientific theology is transformed into the pulpit-ministry.

At the time of the correspondence in 1923 Harnack was working on a second edition of that book, which had appeared originally in 1920. By comparing certain sentences in it with other sentences in the correspondence it becomes obvious why Harnack thought Barth to be a Marcionite.

Marcion was a "founder of a religion", (Religionsstifter). However, he was not aware of this since he wished to preach, like Paul, the god who had appeared in the crucified.[67] Again and again Harnack emphasises that it was Marcion's firm intention to follow Paul's aim and teaching. "There can be no doubt that Paul would have perceived with sorrow and indignation the growth of Christian syncretism. It is equally unquestionable that he would have appro-

63: cf. Ibid., p.187. 64: Ibid., p.188. 65: Ibid., p.199f.
66: Ibid., p.201. 67: Harnack, Marcion, p. 1.

ved the more important aspects of Marcionite criticism of Christianity. He also would have regarded it (ie. Christianity) as a misled and lost flock. He would have seen a genuine disciple of himself in this man who arose here as a reformer."[68] But Paul would without doubt have also recoiled in horror from this blasphemous teacher who rejected the Old Testament, denied the birth and reality of the carnal existence of Jesus Christ. "It would surely never have occured in any way to Paul to ask whether he himself was responsible or not for these earthshaking errors of Marcion."[69]

But it was Paul who had brought together the conception of the unknown God or the strange God of Greek philosophy, the God who cannot be named and who is not one of the dii patrii, and the God who created and now upholds the world, the God who, in other words, was known by his revelation in the world, in history and in Jesus Christ. This is the syncretism of Paul: the unknown, nameless God became known and his name was 'the father of Jesus Christ',[70]

This is the place where Marcion begins. This is the God he wishes to proclaim, only him and in an appropriate way, so that the Church might really worship him. But then it was justas impossible for him as for other Christian gnostics to uphold a connection between the father of Jesus Christ and the God who created and now upholds the world. The concept of God's unknowability became very prominent again with him. "On the basis of experiences and their observations, which impressed themselves on these men more and more forcefully, they were less and less able to relate the pure, good and exalted God found in their hearts to the external, corrupt world. In the end the link broke completely. The unknown God was now said not to be the creator of the world. That is why he is unknown. The attributes: spirit, holiness, goodness, drawn from the sphere of inwardness, raised God so much above the world that he was no longer to be thought of as its creator and ruler. At this instant, however, the world lost all its positive value since not only the valuable, but also the real is to be found with the unknown God. The world is the prison, it is hell, it has no sense, it is a mere appearance - a disgusting one at that -

68: Ibid.,p.199. Underlining is mine. 69:Ibid.,p.199f.
70: Ibid.,p. 2f.

indeed the world is das Nichts."[71]

Harnack thinks that this point of view derives from Paul's preaching, as a further step in the syncretisation of the gospel, a further hellenisation of the gospel. But the dualism is the outcome of the way the Greeks interpreted Paul's gospel. Even if Paul left himself open to such an interpretation, it is important to see how Marcion fits what is the essential gospel to him into this cosmologically and anthropologically negative Pauline dualism.

Marcion wants to teach that even though the father of Jesus Christ is unknown, even if he cannot be grasped from worldly or human data, even if he is strange to us because nothing links him to us and the world, he is nevertheless the good redeemer. "As the strange guest and lord, strange in every sense, he enters into this world."[72] Here is the negative world-view of gnosticism and the positive belief that ~~that~~ the unknown God does become involved with the world he did not create. "This is the fantastic paradox; religion itself must be regarded as a paradox if it is to be the genuine religion and not a false one."[73]

If this religion preaches the grace of an unknown God who redeems the world, which is not his and leads man, who does not belong to him except for some spark of light, to a new, an unknown homeland out of his real home which is the present evil and wicked world, then this is a religion of inwardness. And Harnack says that "Marcion has taken this inward religion to its utmost consequences."[74]

Herein lies the reformatory aspect of Marcion's work. When the gospel entered the hellenistic world it was forced to confront and engage in dialogue with that world's wealth of thought. But it was also concerned to maintain its identity, and by attempting to communicate its absolute truth in the relative conceptuality of man's thought-systems, it fell victim to a logic which made its religion into a philosophy of religion. "Whatever was divine revelation was given a logical unity and validity."[75] The result was that the gospel became a complexio oppositorum. This must be purified, the real gospel must be peeled out of this ideology. This is done by returning to the 'definitive Paul'. Showing the

71: Ibid., p.3. 72: Ibid., p.4. 73: Ibid., p.4. 74: Ibid., p.5.
75: Ibid., p.8.

same "noble seriousness and holy enthusiasm"[76] as Paul, Marcion set out to proclaim the good redeemer as the unknown God. What Paul had preached on Mars Hill, Marcion did now; he taught that the redeemer of the world is the God beyond the creator. But his gospel is bedded in the dualism which denied any link between the creator and the redeemer. "The justification for combining the view of the unknown God as the good redeemer and the dualistic world view seemed to be given by Paul himself. In his epistles are many references to God, the soul, the spirit and the flesh, the God of this world, mysteries of the world and of history, etc., which a Greek would hardly regard in a different way from that dualistic system. But there were also speculations in them not very different from his own speculations about aeons."[77]

Yet this combination gave no clear, no transparent religion or theology. Paul's concept of God is still burdened with Old Testament ideas. That is to say that at least the epistles attributed to Paul are thus burdened and in Marcion's opinion most of them had been tampered with by the pseudoapostolici et Judaici evangelizatores.[78] Harnack himself is convinced that for Paul "the father of Jesus Christ is in no way simply identical with Christ the redeemer. He(Christ's father) is not only the father of mercy and the God of all comfort, but he is also the unsearchable, who lives in unapproachable light, the creator of the world, the author of the Mosaic law, the sovereign ruler of history, especially that of the Old Testament, and finally the angry and punishing judge, who waits outside the door with the day of judgment."[79] Still, Paul's central concept, both Marcion and Harnack agree, is redeeming love. On it and on it only Marcion builds his gospel. He eradicates every trace of Old Testament thinking and imagery, so that in the end his clear and transparent systematic theology is about the gospel of the amazing, yet incomprehensible because unknowable God of love who redeems man. The Pauline antithesis of gospel and law is gone, Marcion rather forges a principle which unites all higher truth in the opposition of gospel and law, a principle which then dictates one's ontology of being. The key factor is gratia gratis data, a paradox beyond solution. Religion must

76:Ibid.,p.16. 77:Ibid.,p.16. 78:Ibid.,p.196. 79:Ibid.,p.78.

therefore also be paradoxical, namely one's total devotion to him whom one does not know, cannot know. This devotion is flight from the ugly, repulsive world; it is the hope for one's redemption and entry into the alien, unknowable world of the redeemer.

Marcion rejects the Old Testament in its entirety, rewrites Paul's epistles and the gospel accounts in order to have a document of the genuine gospel of the redeeming God. One of his works, The Antitheses, shows what the gospel of this God looks like in comparison with the gospel which claims that the father of Jesus Christ is the creator of the world. Marcion points us to a gospel burdened with the concept of law and with a iustitia ex operibus. Both these he eradicates from 'his' gospel. The work begins with the elated exclamation: 'O wonder beyond wonders, rejoicing, power and amazement that one can say nothing about the gospel, neither think about it nor compare it to anything'.[80] Then follow thirty statements in which the antithetical nature of the two gospels is shown. Marcion's theology may be deduced from it.

Harnack cites four items which as he says "inform us excellently about Marcion's basic Christianity."[81] It would appear from the opening phrase that for Marcion the gospel is something totally new in content and in form. Tertullian quotes such sentences as these: nova et hospita dispositio, nova patientia, forma sermonis nova.[82] Obviously Marcion was aware of a great mysterium tremendum et fascinosum, Harnack states, even though all elated feelings resulting from the contemplation of the world and its history are irreligious. Marcion thinks of the gospel as something light and dark at the same time; he stands before the only really new in the world and its history with trembling and silent devotion.[83]

Another quotation given is : ' sufficit unum hoc opus deo nostro, quod hominem liberavit summa et praecipua bonitate sua et omnibus locustis anteponenda'.[84] Here Marcion states the exclusiveness of the gospel as object of religion. The gospel brings redemption, nothing can touch its immeasurable goodness, nothing must be made part of it for its sheer goodness. The God who accomplished this gospel, this redemption must therefore not be re-

80: Ibid.,p.*256. 81: Ibid.,p.94f. 82: Ibid.,p.94.
83: Ibid.,p.95. 84: Ibid.,p.94.

garded as author of other deeds, especially of the creation of the world. Redemption is new creation, nothing remains of the old.

Thirdly Marcion held the experience of transformation (metabolé) of the believer in the crucified Christ to be the basic notion of Paul's Romans and Galatians. In this faith the justified person receives redemption and eternal life ex delictione dei.[85] In this understanding is seen how Marcion conceived of the historical facticity and appropriation of redemption. One grasps Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection by faith, which is the inward transformation. Within redemption and the new, the eternal life, Christ is all in all, therefore the beginning and the perfection of faith.

Lastly, Marcion referred to Christ's Beatitudes as the ordinariae sententiae Christi per quas proprietam doctrinae suae inducit.[86] They are the edictum Christi. Redemption is already accomplished, but the believer must know that it is his only as a certain hope through the Holy Spirit. As long as he is in this world, the redeemed must be poor, must weep, mourn and be persecuted. He must not become involved with this world. That will make him a hated man. He will know the blessedness of salvation only by faith, own it in hope only. "No greater contrast is thinkable than the one in which the Marcionite believer lives; on the one hand he knows himself redeemed not only of sin and guilt, of death and the devil, but also of the evil creator-god of this world; on the other hand he still lives in that world as one hated and persecuted by the God of that world."[87]

It therefore became necessary to bridge the hated involvement in the world and the blessedness of faith. Like Paul, Marcion makes use of a peculiar and dialectical method of education for the redeemed in terms of the Adam-Christ antithesis. It was a dialectics of sin and grace, sin and law, guilt and redemption and life and death.[88] (This dialectics is not to be interpreted, however, as a dialectics of dualism for Paul. There is no contradiction in principle for him between the God of the law and the God of the gospel. It is there for Marcion who mistakenly believed that Paul had drawn a distinction between them and that later in-

85: Ibid.,p.94. 86:Ibid.,p.94f. 87:Ibid.,p.96f. 88:Ibid., p. 201.

terpolations had blurred this distinction.)

The pronounced features of Marcion's position seem to be these: a dualism of an evil world from which one must withdraw and a good redeeming God who comes to draw man to himself. 2)The gospel of this God is absolutely new; it could not have occured to anyone before Christ, who brought the gospel. It is an unknowable gospel because the loving God enters this world from a sphere unknown to us, he enters a sphere strange to him in order to bring us into a world unknowable to us. 3) Because of its otherness in origin and goal we may understand it inwardly only, it is open to our understanding through the sphere of inwardness. There we comprehend the gospel of redemption as our new creation and transformation. 4) It is a gospel, however, inseparable from Christ, in whose crucifixion the redeeming love of God became apparent. As God's son and self-revelation Christ must not be regarded as a part of this world; he was not like we a creature of the creator God. We therefore know him only through faith and not from any data of the world, of man or of the world's or man's history. 5) In this faith is the hope of man and the Holy Spirit's assurance to man of redemption. Hope is thus the link between the hated world in which the redeemed lives as a persecuted outsider and the new, unknown home of the father of Christ. This hope requires a dialectical education and knowledge, because relational knowledge is not possible here simply because there are no links from the world to God. Our speech regarding God can therefore be only paradoxical and dialectical.

Marcion was a man who preached a gospel which rejects the claims of the Judaici evangelizatores, which rejects the Old Testament as a canonical document of the Church, which rejects the Mosaic law and the iustitia ex operibus - in a word a gospel which rejects completely the God of law. But such a rejection leads to a dualism. In the world there are two kingdoms, one of matter and flesh, the other of spirit, morality and justice. They are opposed to each other but still inseparably intertwined. This demonstrates how weak the creator-God really is. Even though he is spirit and moral power, he could do no better than to create the world and use matter in the process, which by nature he is

opposed to. In that world there is man, driven by carnal desires, offspring of a despicable act of man and woman, bound to his flesh and thus dragged down to egoism and the heathen level of the material. But the creator does not desire him that way. He gave him a sense of goodness and justice. But what is their aim, their ideal? On the one hand strict and meticulous righteousness which seeks to permeate the physical and moral spheres by adopting prohibitions, rewards and punishments and tries in this way to overcome what is base and merely natural. On the other hand there is the spirit of the ten commandments, a spirit of authority, of the demand of obedience. But here is only servile goodness, a struggling order which is apparently moral. But it is so burdened with harshness, terror and often senselessness that the ideal it upholds is a sad one. And what is more, righteousness here, especially where it appears in its purest form and seems to have overcome the physical, is really immoral because it is void of love. It places all under compulsion and thus leads to sin which means that it does not liberate at all.

Man thus must chose; either he refuses to obey the God of that law and lapses into libertinism, invoking his wrath; or he obeys him and becomes a man of righteousness and lawfulness which means that he has mastered what is base, yes, but is really no further ahead since he is immoral. Evil is basically not the enemy of good. The two are incommensurable and the former can be healed. The real enemy, however, is a forced, self-righteous morality, which knows neither love nor the freedom of real salvation.

This leads to the dualism mentioned above. The God of the law, the creator-God is not the saviour proclaimed in the gospel. The unknown God is the saviour. Lex non potest nobis monstrare verum deum; these words of Luther could well have been Marcion's. Only Jesus Christ shows us the true God, ONLY Christ and nothing else of or in this world. "The Christian religion is thus nothing but faith in the revelation of God in Christ. Every recourse to religious capabilities is rejected, man is really truncus et lapis before the news of salvation,"[89] Harnack comments. This news is the gospel of the strange God.

89: Ibid.,p.224.

Marcion's religion is completely un-Jewish and un-hellenistic. He rejects Judaism and the cosmological, metaphysical and aesthetical judgments which were characteristic of Hellenism. "Void of all links with higher humanity, with the sphere of geniality, with the prophetic and speculative, void of all links with moralism, legalism and authoritarianism - what a transformation of values and what a dissolution of culture this brought."[90] The concept of God as pure love is combined with an understanding of him as the wholly other, as someone totally strange, someone subjectively and objectively new. Marcion preached this divinity with a nova dispositio; he had experienced him in Christ. Therefore he elevated the historical realism of the Christian experience to the level of a transcendental realism. He found the sphere of a new deity, a sphere thus of new reality.[91]

(Here Harnack adds a most significant footnote. "When contemporary philosophy of religion again defines the object of religion - the 'holy' - fundamentally as the 'wholly other', as the 'alien' (das Fremde) and the like, and when this definition is made by theologians coming from the camps of Pietism, Reformed Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism or of criticism (der Kritizismus) and when they tell us to avoid all proofs and let the phenomenon speak for itself, then they have every reason to remember the only predecessor in the history of the ancient Church who knew this strange God, called him by name and refuted all proofs and testimonies by which one might come to know him and believe in him."[92])

Harnack now proceeds to his objections to Marcion's teachings. For reasons of accuracy the whole paragraph of that criticism must be given. "First of all there is the expressionistic element in Marcion's orientation about God and the world; it is marked, one might well say, by a kind of withdrawal from thought. It is difficult for a precise thinker today as in ancient times to find satisfaction about that orientation. In addition to this his interpretation of reality is in danger of becoming a mythology, because on account of the predisposition of our reason it is possible for us thinkers to be monistic and pluralistic. It is, however, not possible to be dualistic without becoming mythologists,

90: Ibid.,p.225. 91: Ibid.,p.228. 92: Ibid.,p.228f.The reference to Reformed Orthodoxy and Kritizismus is Harnack's way of saying Barth and Overbeck.That footnote, in other words, shows the

Marcion's religion is completely un-Jewish and un-hellenistic. He rejects Judaism and the cosmological, metaphysical and aesthetical judgments which were characteristic of Hellenism. "Void of all links with higher humanity, with the sphere of geniality, with the prophetic and speculative, void of all links with moralism, legalism and authoritarianism - what a transformation of values and what a dissolution of culture this brought."[90] The concept of God as pure love is combined with an understanding of him as the wholly other, as someone totally strange, someone subjectively and objectively new. Marcion preached this divinity with a nova dispositio; he had experienced him in Christ. Therefore he elevated the historical realism of the Christian experience to the level of a transcendental realism. He found the sphere of a new deity, a sphere thus of new reality.[91]

(Here Harnack adds a most significant footnote. "When contemporary philosophy of religion again defines the object of religion - the 'holy' - fundamentally as the 'wholly other', as the 'alien' (das Fremde) and the like, and when this definition is made by theologians coming from the camps of Pietism, Reformed Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism or of criticism (der Kritizismus) and when they tell us to avoid all proofs and let the phenomenon speak for itself, then they have every reason to remember the only predecessor in the history of the ancient Church who knew this strange God, called him by name and refuted all proofs and testimonies by which one might come to know him and believe in him."[92])

Harnack now proceeds to his objections to Marcion's teachings. For reasons of accuracy the whole paragraph of that criticism must be given. "First of all thereis the expressionistic element in Marcion's orientation about God and the world; it is marked,one might well say,by a kind of withdrawal from thought. It is difficult for a precise thinker today as in ancient times to find satisfaction about that orientation. In addition to this his interpretation of reality is in danger of becoming a mythology, because on account of the predisposition of our reason it is possible for us thinkers to be monistic and pluralistic. It is, however, not possible to be dualistic without becoming mythologists,

90: Ibid.,p.225. 91: Ibid.,p.228. 92: Ibid.,p.228f.The reference to Reformed Orthodoxy and Kritizismus is Harnack's way of saying Barth and Overbeck.That footnote, in other words, shows the

that is to say without losing ourselves in fantasies. Then there is his decisive judgment about the world; with all its justifiable indignation about the way the world lives it still strikes one as being boldly presumptuous. Is it given to man to condemn the totality of reality in nature and history when it is not grace and freedom? Are 'morality' and freedom in the sphere of the goodness granted to us really only opposites and not also steps? Then, one cannot accuse Marcion of not knowing providence, he only denies its applicability to the course of the world. Yet, he is certain that nothing will separate the redeemed from the love of God, so that he calls for an unshakeable patience. But he curtails the life of piety in a most drastic fashion when he refuses to regard cross and suffering as being sent by the same God who gives salvation. Furthermore, is it not a false inwardness, yes, lovelessness to instruct others to renounce the whole world as beyond redemption, to limit oneself to the preaching of the gospel and not to try anything in terms of action? Does not every action presuppose the reformability of reality and in it something basically, originally good? Lastly, and this is closely related to the previous matter, a conception of God and the world cannot be the right one if, when having balanced all evidence, it must push asceticism so far that it prohibits everyone to continue the propagation of mankind. It only abrogates the fundamental presupposition of all thinking, namely that somehow life must be something valuable. If love not only suffers, but also hopes everything, may one give up the hope that its secret and power, even if it goes against all appearance, nevertheless spans the world and history a profundis with all its misery and sin in order to reform it in melius?"[93]

The application of these critical objections would purge Marcion's teachings of their heretical content and give a solid basis to his credo: I believe in God the almighty father of love. The doctrine of God's fatherhood, of his nature as love, of redemption and man's salvation into the kingdom of God and the accompanying life of higher righteousness would salvage religion from

---

historical parallelism Harnack maintains exists between Barth and Marcion.

93: Ibid.,p.234f.

its being lost in the dogmatic structures the Church has encased it in.[94]

5) Marcion and Barth - a historical parallelism for Harnack

What exactly are Harnack's objections to Marcion?

1) Marcion's views are stated in a conceptually inexact, a philosophically and scientifically improper manner; Harnack calls that manner expressionistic and says that for a thinker this is unacceptable, that it is a horrendum for a scientist.

Writing to a friend about Barth, Harnack evaluated "our contemporary theology ... how weak it is as a science ... how expressionistic its method is ..."[95]

2) Marcion's interpretation of reality leads into fantasy and mythology because of its dualism. The real becomes confused in it with what is the product of fantasy.

We do not know the real, the historical Jesus any more? Then how can we prevent the substitution of the real Christ by an imaginary one? Harnack asks Barth, (Supra.,p.31).

3) Is man permitted to condemn the world? Even though much in the world is evil, an affirmative answer, which is how Marcion answered, is presumptuous. If this answer is given, if the world and God are in fact totally opposed to each other as are good and evil, "how is one to escape the sophism that one has to remain in the world since even a withdrawal from it (as evil) is based on a decision of the will and is therefore something worldly, (ie. something evil)?" (Supra.,p.30).

4) Marcion regards morality and man's freedom, which man has already obtained even though he is still in the world, as opposites and not as steps to the real good.

'Between God's truth and ours there is only contrast. The way from the old to the new world is not a stairway-like process'. This is how Harnack interprets Barth's view on the relation between God and the world.

5) Marcion's view of providence is restricted to God's love and to those whom it seeks out, namely the redeemed. Providence

94: Ibid.,p. 235. 95: AZH, p. 417.

is not concerned with the world and its course. The redeemed must therefore have great patience in the world and wait for God's love and their redemption which are the only gifts they have from him; all else comes from the creator-God. This is for Harnack a most restricted view of religion and the religious life.

This objection to Marcion is certainly parallel, if not identical with the objection to Barth: 'If the knowledge of God as love is our highest and final knowledge of him, and if we know that where there is joy, love and peace there is his sphere, how can one give autonomous standing to what are transition-points only and by doing so perpetuate what makes them to be dreaded? This only destroys the Christian's confidence and joy and substitutes a religious state of mind which only a few will be able to accept as religion'. (Supra.,p. 31 and p.37.)

6) Marcion's renunciation of the world as evil and his restriction of himself to the proclamatory work of the gospel is a sign of an inwardness and lovelessnass which denies the reformability of the world and its inherent goodness.

Harnack sees Barth moving along similar lines. Barth maintained that faith in God cannot avoid protesting against this world, because faith is aware of the basic distance and the utter contrast between God and the world. But Barth is a Calvinist, who shows the same lovelessness as Marcion on account of the opposition to the world he inherited from Calvin. So writes Harnack's biographer.[96] Harnack himself believes Barth to think that even if reality were reformable, the good, true and beautiful in this world are not related to the good of God in any other way than through the barrier which separates them, namely God's judgment of the world.

7) Marcion's asceticism denies all value to life; as such it is a negative thing. It destroys the power and secret of love which, since it suffers and hopes all things, believes in its ability to span and thus to reform the world, its misery and sin. Such asceticism does not understand the full meaning of the commandment of love given by Christ.

96: AZH,p. 413.

Barth also introduces a problematical conceptuality into the discussion of that commandment, which similarly separates him from the gospel. (Supra.,p.36).

8) Marcion avoids all use of what makes for higher humanity and geniality. Thus he dissolves culture. By calling God the wholly other, even though it is for him a Christocentric conception, he uses a transcendental rather than a historical realism and a sphere of reality which is not that of history.

Barth's point of view 'can be understood only as a radical denial of every valuable understanding of God within the history of man's thought and ethics'. (Supra.,p.36). He does exactly what Marcion did,'sever every link between faith and the human', (Supra. p. 36).

It is clear for Harnack that a religion, the truth of which is fraught with so many objectionable features, does not lend itself to a scientific theology. On account of its inwardness out of which its truths are drawn it can only be a religion which seeks to edify and thus belongs into the pulpit. The concepts drawn out of that unhistorical sphere of reality: revelation, consciousness of God, election, etc., are not scientific concepts; "science can neither draw together under one generic concept nor explain in terms of revelation ... the paradoxical preaching of founders of religion and prophets (and religious experiences in general)". (Supra.,p.47).

Harnack's conclusion is this: in order to grasp scientifically what Marcion and Barth wish to preach, namely that God is love and that he is revealed in Jesus Christ, that, thus, our faith comes through the preaching of the Word of Christ one must stay within the reality of history.[97]

Marcion's gospel is heartily applauded by Harnack, for that preacher wanted to proclaim only the love which is not of this world.It is a love, seen in Jesus Christ as the love of God, a love which does not judge but helps. It is Christ the beginning and fulfillment of the new, liberating power of God, through which man ascends to the aeterna veritas and the vera aeternitas given

97: Busch, Op.Cit.,p.127.

in the love of God and in the love for one's fellow.[98]

Thus Marcion has in fact led religion through the heart of the gospel , the close union, indeed the equivalence of the love of God and the love of one's fellow-man, to the very object of religion, the Holy. Augustine had preached this liberating love also, so did Luther. Thus Harnack does not hesitate to follow Neander in calling Marcion the 'first protestant'.[99]

Before the section on Marcion is concluded, an excursus is to be added on Harnack's own views on that book which Marcion so roundly rejected: the Old Testament and its retention as a canonical book in the Church. The actual thesis of Harnack's on this issue is of no import to our discussion, but it allows us a glimpse at what he considers his own ancestral line of scientific theology, that line in other words which since the 18. century attained to greater clarity and maturity.

Harnack's thesis states that "the rejection of the Old Testament during the second century A.D. would have been a mistake, which the great (the established) Church rightly refused to make. Its retention in the sixteenth century was a fate from which the Reformation was not yet able to extricate itself. Its conservation as a canonical document for Protestantism is since the nineteenth century the consequence of a religious and ecclesiastical paralysis."[100]

Marcion had diametrically opposed its canonicity.[101] It is quite fruitful to read and historically important, but of no consequence to the religion of the unknown God. Its use of law, its depiction of the horrible acts and demands of the creator-God are dangerous to the understanding of the God who as redeemer has shown himself in Jesus Christ. Gospel and law cannot be united in this religion. The unholy must not be given the veneration due to the holy. Hence Marcion's rejection. The Church did not follow him in this, it rather regarded that book as a step of religion toward the higher religion of the new covenant, the religion of Christ.

Augustine, but especially Luther upheld the Pauline-Marcionite

98: Harnack: Op.Cit.,p.231. 99: Ibid.,p.198. 100: Ibid.,p.217.
101: For the following see Ibid.,p. 218 ff.

difference between gospel and law; lex non potest nobis verum deum monstrare, he said. The law is part of a phase of religion now overcome. Even though he saw this clearly and even made a very similar step in regard to the sacraments in his De captivitate Babilonica, still he was not able to remove the canonical status from the Old Testament and give it its real due - an honoured and high place in history.

Tradition was too strong for him. He was still bound religiously at this point. The law is helpful in awakening man's conscience. For him, unlike Marcion, it maintained a place in the ordo salutis. The fate from which he could not extricate himself was that the Bible occupied a position much stronger than that of doctrine. Biblicism was gaining strength and even though one may be sure that Luther was not lacking in courage and in strength to oppose it, his own position was not clear enough for him to take that step.

This ambivalence gave biblicism a strong boost, especially in Anabaptist and Calvinistic Churches. "Here the Old Testament, given an equal status with the New Testament, had a disastrous effect on dogmatics, piety and Christian life, ... it produced a new kind of Judaism and promoted legalism consistently. These effects were made worse by the gradual disappearance of the allegorical method of exegesis, which had at least softened the most inferior and worrisome features of the Old Testament. Had Marcion come back in the days of the Huguenots and Cromwell, he would have encountered again in the very midst of Christianity the warlike God of Israel, whom he despised. The reaction could not but set in and it did so in the very same part of Christendom in which one had given room to the Old Testament spirit so unthinkingly : in Calvinism."[102]

In the early 18. century, English deists again raised the question of the Old Testament's place in the Church. Tindal and Thomas Morgan showed by means of historical-philosophical conceptions that the God of the Old Teatament is to be rejected, its law is a disfiguration of natural law, its people, clinging to this God and law doomed to atrophy. Christ taught mankind the na-

---

102: Ibid.,p.220.

tural law as it is purified through revelation.

In these men Harnack sees the beginning of a universal and positive-critical philosophy of history. This philosophy developed and corrected the insights of the English Enlightenment. Early the next century Hegel and Schleiermacher made a religio-historical clarification and analysis of the meaning and uniqueness of the Christian religion. The manifold data was studied and the conclusion reached was that formally, ideas are immanent in reality and the truth develops in the course of history. Materially it was the cognition of the uniqueness of the Christian conception of God sub specie Christi. It became quite obvious that the Old Testament is good and useful for the believer's perusal, but it cannot claim canonical authority. Jesus himself declared that from now on all knowledge of God goes through him. Once these conclusions are understood it is a profanisation of religion to continue to regard the document of the pre-history of Christianity and the document of Christ's religion as being equal in standing.

Christianity since Hegel and Schleiermacher must therefore know that its knowledge of God is Christocentric knowledge, the truth or content of which is to be seen in the course of history, since truth is immanent in reality in which it develops itself. The Christian theologian must be a historian in order to grasp epistemologically what the gospel of Jesus Christ really is. As a scientist he must keep to the truth of history.

6) The study of history and its significance for faith.

Does history offer certain knowledge? Is keeping to the truth of history sufficient for religion? How must history be studied if an affirmative answer is given to these questions?

These questions are now to be put to Harnack. We turn to the last of them first. - The basic prerequisite of any scientific method is that it be objective. This does not only mean the absence of subjectivity, which Harnack defines as 'the bringing to bear of one's powers of mind and soul upon the object studied in order to recreate it artfully',[103] it also means the absence

103: Was hat die Historie an fester Erkenntnis zur Deutung des Weltgeschehens zu bieten? in Ausgewählte Reden und Aufsätze, p. 183.

of outside interference. Yet in his aim, the pure representation of the object with strictest objectivity, the scientific theologian faces a dilemma. The object, the gospel of God in Christ, is one to which man's faith witnesses. It is an object of great importance to man's existence. And faith has a twofold form as history shows. "On the one hand faith is ecclesiastically bound, on the other it is personal and free. Bondage represents a stage of religion in which obedience is demanded, which as such makes a relationship with God impossible or at least questionable. Only complete freedom permits such a relationship; the desires of the soul are satisfied only through freedom. On its highest stage religion affords highest freedom. An authoritarian faith and highest religion are incompatible. For this reason the science of theology and the Church must agree to a modus vivendi, to a compromise. The spirit of dogma contradicts the spirit of theology even though dogma comprises innumerable objects of history, philosophy and ethics, which theology must consider, which it cannot afford to neglect."[104]

Yet, even though the theologian strives and must be objective, he cannot as a theologian be unconcerned with the bound, the subjective aspect of faith. He must go to it in order to determine what the object really is to which that faith in its subjectivity testifies so that in turn he may go beyond it and contribute to the higher form of religion. This is behind Harnack's remark to Barth in his 'concluding postscript'." Paul and Luther are for me indeed not primarily subjects but objects of scientific theology as is Prof. Barth and all those who express their Christianity as prophets and witnesses like preachers, whether they do it in biblical commentaries or books of dogmatics etc.". (Supra.,p. 47). Here are expressions of faith indeed and therefore to be studied as historical manifestations of Christianity, but the scientific theologian must see only what is witnessed to in them, and relate it to the gospel of Jesus so that theology might in fact show the pure gospel.

This is then the theologian's dilemma: if he is to be the intellectual analyst and interpreter of the object of religion he

104: Harnack, Religiöser Glaube und freie Forschung, in Aus Wissenschaft und Leben, vol. I, p. 270.

must subject himself to the subjective experiences and the heuristic knowledge of those who profess that object. These experiences arise in the context of man's search for the life in God. This is as such a subjective matter which is analysable in terms of an inner openess, a kind of subjectivity in other words which allows the object to be recreated for objective study. Harnack had pointed this out when he asked whether on the one hand it was enough to have historical knowledge of dogma in order to understand the religion of the Bible (a question addressed to Orthodoxy) or whether on the other hand mere inner openess, mere subjectivity was enough for that understanding (a question addressed to biblicism and Pietism). Harnack's own view is that one needs both and must face the dilemma, which when kept in mind will lead to a correct view of the gospel. His method therefore draws on both of these 'tools'.

But it is a historical method, one which "lets the history of Christianity define those questions whose very formulations, in the first instance and most completely, disclose the nature of its origins". [105]

We asked how history was to be studied so that a sufficient answer regarding the truth of religion might be given. Harnack never answers this systematically. But a study of the following essays of his will allow us to show fairly precisely what steps Harnack himself followed in his scientific study of the gospel. They are: Über wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis, Über die Sicherheit und die Grenzen geschichtlicher Erkenntnis, Was hat die Historie an fester Erkenntnis zur Deutung des Weltgeschehens zu bieten? and Stufen wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis. [106]

All science is the knowledge of reality but knowledge with the intent of acting purposively. Knowledge for its own sake is empty, for which reason Harnack prefaces this proviso to all scientific study. [107]

Scientific knowledge is reached in four stages. It begins with

105: Bultmann in his preface to the 2.ed. of Christianity, p.XIII.
106: They are published in 1: Aus der Frieden- und Kriegsarbeit, p. 173ff; 2: Erforschtes und Erlebtes,p. 3ff.; 3 and 4: Ausgewählte Reden und Aufsätze, p. 181 ff. and p. 177 ff. resp..
107: Cited in AZH.,p.427.

the identification, analysis and organisation of the phenomena of reality. Then it proceeds to the determination of their interrelation. This is followed by the study of the architectonic, ideas and purposes of life. The last and highest stage is the cognition of man and his spirit.[108]

But even though the last stage is really the only one where the spirit meets with the Spirit, the Unum of all reality, so that there history really comes into its own, the historian is nevertheless always bound to the facts, the truth of reality, which is established in the lower stages.

Those facts are distinguished into three categories. The first one includes the elemental setting of the phenomena studied, the geographical and climatic conditions surrounding it and the natural as well as the given physical and mental conditions impinging on it. The second includes cultural factors such as the state, the Church, schools and the institutions society creates for itself. Examples of these are legislations, constitutions, declarations, treaties, liturgies and economic structures. All these influence the phenomena of history. The third category is about those factors which relate to individuality, to the talent and genius of great men. Great ideas and institutions are the reflection of great men.

To these three categories corresponds what history can establishas certain knowledge. There are first of all the events, the great events of history, such as the Persian Wars, Napoleon's conquests, etc. Then there are the monuments of various epochs. Monuments are all remains of bygone ages, buildings,inscriptions, coins, manuscripts. From them the historian reaps rich knowledge of religious, cultural and private life, public actions or private feelings. Thirdly, there are the fruits of the development of history, the residuum of man's spirit. Harnack thinks here of laws, standards of conduct, authorities and the expressions of men's perception of reality.

On the basis of all this material which the historian must gather, he then is to deduce from them the direction, strength and achievement of an epoch. He is to establish standards of value

108: Cf. Stufen wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis, passim.

valid for his own time, establish what is positively and what is negatively influential to life. This is the fourth stage of the historian's task. Here he is to make a cross-section of the epoch studied. Once he has done this he can proceed to a longitudinal section of history to determine its development. These sections then help the mass of verified and categorised facts to be used for purposeful action.

As soon as one determines the spirit of an epoch and observes the development of the spiritual in history, Geschichte becomes Geistesgeschichte. If it is accepted that the spirit is one, as Harnack does, then it is clear that it is one and the same spirit which is operative in all historical phenomena and in us. Obviously the facts of the first category mentioned above are to be excluded here, but all cultural, individual and spiritual factors are caused by or can be traced back to ideas, for ideas are spirit. Through the spirit a deep unity between all events and our own essence, our spiritual life is established. "Homo sum, nihil historicum a me alienum puto. ... All that has taken place in history, all that still takes place in it is you yourself. It all depends only on whether you grasp it consciously. This is why the historical is not only more comprehensible to us than nature and its processes, but it can also become our inmost possession and perfectly fuse with our higher, personal life. Because of this we may illuminate history with our own experiences and with what we have learned from life, convinced that we shall be able to understand it from this basis more and more since the spirit unveils itself to spirit in this way. ... We must - like Faust - enlarge our own ego into the ego of the world. This is done by appropriating with noble appetite the whole course of history and all its great and good personalities and by making them a part of the organs of one's essence."[109]

This method offers reliable knowledge because history deals with man and the effects of his higher life. Now the purposive action intended by science must follow. The spirit has been seen, its direction determined. According to Harnack that direction is the preservation and enhancement of life as something valuable.

109: Was hat die Historie an fester Erkenntnis zur Deutung des Weltgeschehens zu bieten?, p. 196f.

"History teaches unmistakeably that life is preserved only by that direction and power which frees man and mankind 'from the power which puts all beings into bondage' (Goethe) or, as the Bible puts it, 'from the service of what is transitory', that is from the servitude of the natural and one's own empirical ego. ... No statement is confirmed more definitely by the course of history than the word of Jesus that he who wants to save only his life shall lose it."[110]

The direction and power for the liberation of man from the merely natural has the tendency to comprehend and unify the various aspects of life it touches. This unity is culture which, once it loses its tendency to comprehend and unify all, becomes mere civilization which leads to the decay of its dying members until barbarism takes over. The more fossils it contains of what once was a treasure of culture the more terrible barbarism is.

Yet in the power to rise above the natural the historian perceives the paradoxical fact that all valuable events in history, in other words all things which preserve and enhance life, are determined by a mysterious One who is sought by that power. "There is no doubt, mankind operates in history 'as if God existed', as if it, coming originally from a higher source, had to return to it through purposive action and draw all its members into a unity in the process of it. Religion interprets that action as the love of God and the love of one's fellow-man."[111]

Not only does history show us the trend of the spirit, the signs of cultural enhancement or decay, it also shows in great individuals the devotion to the good, the true and the beautiful. "By introducing us to people who stand higher than we, people whose cognition goes deeper, whose purposes go deeper and whose striving is more forceful, history in its biographical work brings us together with them by means of a secret bond and lifts us up to them and fills us with respect and reverence for them. ... Upon closer examination, however, it becomes plain that there are only few from whom all mankind as a growing unity has received imperishable gifts."[112]

110: Ibid.,p. 199. 111: Ibid.,p.201. 112: Ibid.,p.201f.

When man faces such an individual of beneficial influence on mankind as a whole and when thereupon his reverence for him is kindled, he is enabled to lift himself above the material.With purposive action , with love for God and man, he can become free and live the higher life.

Let us summarise briefly in a systematic way the scientific method followed by Harnack.

1) The first step is the pre-condition for historical study. It is the practical wisdom of the historian. It is the "experience of life gained by studying the actual course of history"[113] with which the historian can set all things into a living relationship. Without that wisdom he will be an analyst, a categorizer and perhaps an interpreter, but not a scientific historian for whom knowledge leads to purposive action.

2) The actual work begins with the systematic study of the sources. This invdves textual criticism, philological analysis, verification of their genuineness, establishing their dates, place of origin, etc.

3) The historian then studies and categorises the environmental, cultural and personality factors involved in his analysed sources.

4) This is followed by the identification of the spirit of the epoch from which the sources derive. The direction, purpose, power and values of that epoch are to be established here.

5) Then an overall interpretation of the period into which one's sources fall is to be made so that its meaning and actual significance can be determined.

6) The historian may not delete this next step if he wishes to be true to his craft. For now he must propose purposive action. Having learned from his study what history teaches about the overall value, namely life and its enhancement, he must propose ways in which that value will be upheld and the embodiment of it, culture, be protected against its decline. The purpose of the proposed actions must be to assist the striving of history itself toward the life of the spirit, the life of superiority over matter. This striving is the essence of religion. The task of the historian

---

113: Harnack, Christianity, p.6.

When man faces such an individual of beneficial influence on mankind as a whole and when thereupon his reverence for him is kindled, he is enabled to lift himself above the material.With purposive action , with love for God and man, he can become free and live the higher life.

Let us summarise briefly in a systematic way the scientific method followed by Harnack.

1) The first step is the pre-condition for historical study. It is the practical wisdom of the historian. It is the "experience of life gained by studying the actual course of history"[113] with which the historian can set all things into a living relationship. Without that wisdom he will be an analyst, a categorizer and perhaps an interpreter, but not a scientific historian for whom knowledge leads to purposive action.

2) The actual work begins with the systematic study of the sources. This invdves textual criticism, philological analysis, verification of their genuineness, establishing their dates, place of origin, etc.

3) The historian then studies and categorises the environmental, cultural and personality factors involved in his analysed sources.

4) This is followed by the identification of the spirit of the epoch from which the sources derive. The direction, purpose, power and values of that epoch are to be established here.

5) Then an overall interpretation of the period into which one's sources fall is to be made so that its meaning and actual significance can be determined.

6) The historian may not delete this next step if he wishes to be true to his craft. For now he must propose purposive action. Having learned from his study what history teaches about the overall value, namely life and its enhancement, he must propose ways in which that value will be upheld and the embodiment of it, culture, be protected against its decline. The purpose of the proposed actions must be to assist the striving of history itself toward the life of the spirit, the life of superiority over matter. This striving is the essence of religion. The task of the historian

---

113: Harnack, Christianity, p.6.

is to show how mankind is to live the higher life of the spirit, how to defend culture against barbarism, how to prevent the life of religion from deteriorating into a life of atheism.

This last step is really the historian's value judgment about the process of history and his communication of that value to us so that we might also share in that value and thus live with, not just in history. He fulfills this task by confronting us with the impressive, valuable and noble aspects in which he sees the greatness to be reverenced and emulated. If we do so we shall be lifted above the material and attain to the higher life. The historian really educates us in goodness, that is in godliness through his historical knowledge and critical reflection.

The meaning of history is therefore its value to its children. They then have to incorporate that value into themselves and make it one of their inner organs. "'He who does not know what the last three thousand years mean to him remains in darkness, ignorant; let him live just one day at a time. ... If anyone restricts himself to his own experiences only to live by, he is like an animal on meagre pastures led by an evil spirit in a circle, so that it cannot see the rich, green meadows around him.' (Goethe) ... It is not only a part of education to enlarge oneself inwardly through history, no, this is education which unites itself harmonically with the inner life of our spirit. We shall remain beggars and slaves if we do not go beyond ourselves; we shall become rich and free if we enter every door of history and make ourselves at home in its spacious rooms."[114]

Enlarge ourselves! How? By looking for the valuable. The meaning of the great is its value. In relation to Jesus Harnack can say therefore that "the community of Christian believers ... bore witness to the impression which the person of Jesus had made on it. ... The image of Jesus and the power which proceeded from it were the things (this community) really possessed. ... It is, thus, the historian's first duty to signalise the overpowering impression made by the person of Jesus on the disciples, which is the basis of all further development."[115] But "the enquiry about Jesus

114: Harnack, Was hat die Historie etc., p. 197.
115: Harnack, History of Dogma, vol. I, p. 77f.

can take only this form: ask what we and the world would be without him."[116] Or again, in a letter to Ritschl, dated January 6. 1882, Harnack writes that the correct position in Christology is that Christ has the value of God for us, a position which is based on historical examination.[117]

The Christological question, the 'who is Jesus Christ?' leads the historian, once he has grasped the impression Jesus made on his followers, to ask: how can I become his follower, since Jesus has the value of God for us? What would the direction and power of the higher life be to-day without Jesus?

How is this answered in the terms of the six steps outlined above? There is to be the practical wisdom, the knowledge and experience of life, the ability to reflect critically. With them the historian approaches the sources which in this case are the gospels and any other document in which is recorded the impression he has made on men. The historian must now establish with critical-historical analysis the date, setting and genuineness of the sources. Then he categorises the environmental, cultural and personal factors involved. When he proceeds to the fourth step, to the enquiry into the spirit of the time he is studying, he must be aware that - if he is dealing with the gospels - some of the factors established thus far do not have an immediate bearing on his further study. "Concepts such as God, revelation, sin, redemption, eternal life, etc., ... are research hypotheses for pure science, but pure science cannot comprehend the fullness of reality. The researcher must therefore know precisely where pure knowledge ends and the wisdom of life begins."[118] Without such knowledge, without an awareness of this distinction, the historian will not be able to grasp life, its purpose, direction and value. Only now can the fourth step actually be taken. Harnack suggests the following rule for it: "Anyone who wants to determine the real value and significance of any great phenomenon or mighty product of history must first and foremost inquire into the work it accomplished."[119] Christ accomplished man's redemption; the gospel he preached shows us

116: Harnack quoted in AZH.,p.65. 117: Quoted in W. Glick, Adolf von Harnack as Historian and Theologian, p.58.
118: Harnack, Die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten, in Ausgewählte Reden und Aufsatze,p.129. 119: Christianity, p. 194.

the love of the father as the power which overcomes the antispiritual, a power available for us so that we might also overcome matter.

Now the next step can be made, the meaning and value of the gospel can now be declared. The value and significance of it is upheld by the image of Jesus Christ. "There has never been progress in history without the marvellous intervention of a person. It was not what he said which was new ... it was rather how he said it, how his words became in him the power and strength of new life and how he made it grow in his disciples. Mankind looks up reverently to all great spirits, which have been given to it, the explorers, artists and heroes, but it venerates only its prophets and founders of religion, for it senses that a power was active in them, a power which sets free from the world and lifts up above the base course of events. ... But the spiritual content of a life, of a person, is a historical fact the certainty of which is in the effects it creates. It is here where we are bound to Jesus Christ. He is bound up with piety itself, and about the content of his life it is said rightly that even if one were unable to refute all objections to the Bible, religion would nevertheless remain unshaken and intact in the hearts of those Christians who have obtained an inner feeling of the essential truths of that religion."[120]

In this step then the accidental truths of history are bridged with the essential truths of reason. The significance of the gospel, made powerful by the person of Jesus Christ, is seen and our reverence for him is kindled.

And now must follow purposeful action as the last step, now life must be enhanced. Here we become disciples of Christ, through the power of his personality. "Where do the strength of the strong and the action of the active come from? Why is it that a helpful insight, a saving thought is passed on from generation to generation as if it were a useless and barren rock until someone picks it up and makes it spark? Where does the procreation of a higher order, that marriage of a thought and a soul come from, in which they become one, belong to each other for ever and master

120: Harnack, Das Christentum und die Geschichte, p. 9 and p. 18.

the will? From where is the courage that conquers the dumb resistance of the world? Or from where is the creative power which convinces?"[121] From the person of Christ himself. What is great in history, what has led to goodness, truth and beauty, what has given us culture comes from the impression he has made. He has the value of God for us. His gospel is pure religion, religion itself. It is the higher life, is that which enhances life and creates the noblest embodiment of it, namely culture.[122]

Through history then the theologian arrives at the nature and meaning of the gospel. The Bible is for him the source for his formulations of the Christian position. It is evaluated historically, critical reflection and historical knowledge establish what is the heart of the gospel and what is merely husk.

6) The Harnack of the Correspondence.

Our analysis so far has shown us Harnack's theological method and what he believes the object to be which this method is to study. We have illuminated briefly what he considers to be the actual gospel the Church must preach and how that gospel became falsified through Paul's concepts and Marcion's speculatism. We saw also that Harnack believes Barth to be a modern Marcion in the sense that he is equally speculative and dualistic as that ancient heretic who really did not want to be one.

This examination allows us to determine why Harnack asks his questions, what he affirms and what he rejects in the despisers of scientific theology.

The religious question of contemporary man is 'how do I come to know God?'. It is no longer Luther's question of how one might find a gracious God. The former question and questioner go further. The answer to both questions, however, is basically 'through faith in Jesus Christ'. But here the answers become different.'The Bible

121: Ibid.,p.8. 122: We saw above (Supra.,p.103)that Harnack distinguishes between civilization and culture. The latter is inseparable for him from the significance of the gospel."(In the Christian communities throughout the Roman Empire)there were to be found few that were mighty after the flesh or of noble degree and yet they were as lights in the world and on them the progress of the world's history rested.... The Gospel tells us of the real work which humanity

says' is an insufficient and indeed deficient answer as is'leave it to your experience'. The Bible is not so plain in its meaning that one may forego all ancillary methods for its understanding. A certain openess of mind is needed and scientific tools so that its true affirmations may be clearly grasped. Given these tools the gospel of Jesus can be taught in such a way that faith in him is awakened and God is experienced.[123] This experience confronts man with the love of God for man and elicits a reciprocal love for God on man's part. This love is channeled in purposive action toward other men. The gospel makes these two loves equivalent so that man's experience of God is the experience of that power by which men are united in a life of love one for the other. United in such a way they uphold whatever is good, true and beautiful, whatever is virtuous because in doing so men in fact foster that unity one with another and in it the higher life which is theirs on account of their experience of God.

The question of how one might come to know God is answered thus far 'through the participation in the higher life which is created by God's love for man, a love which founded man's desire to seek unity with mankind.'

The higher life is the life of culture and must therefore be protected against irreligion, atheism and cultural atrophy, barbarism. Whatever will enhance the cultural values will strengthen the experience of God because he is wherever there is love and peace and joy. And in the development of culture one may see a continuous deepening of man's perception of God. The deeper therefore one's knowledge of the true values of culture, the deeper one's experience and thus knowledge of God.

But critical-historical reason is required to give us a clear grasp of the religion of the higher life, the religion of the Bible. It is not enough to leave the object of faith as a mysterium tremendum et fascinosum, to define the holy merely as the numinous. In order to comprehend it, even as the numinous, and to uphold it

---

is to accomplish and we ought not to meet its message by entrenching ourselves behind the miserable'work of civilization.'The image of Christ remains the sole basis of all moral culture and in the measure in which it succeeds in making its light penetrate is the moral culture of the nations increased or diminished." Christianity,p.188f. and p.123.Underlining mine. 123: Harnack means by faith the fides historica and the fiducia in the revelation of God in Christ,

in its uniqueness the action of reason is essential. Otherwise occultism and gnosticism result, as history shows. They are caused by a mistaken picture of Christ, a picture not firmly bound to the historical person of Jesus. It was through Jesus' personality that the disciples had access to God. It is thus of the utmost importance that we know him as the disciples did and recapture for ourselves what impressed them in him. We need this knowledge lest we venerate an imaginary Christ.Scientific theology, using the critical-historical apparatus of Geistesgeschichte,is able to give us precise knowledge of him who has the value of God for us. This theology which studies Christianity as a part of the whole history of man's spirit, applies laws which are valid in the analysis of every endeavour of the spirit, to the theology of the gospel.[124] But theology must maintain its close ties with all sciences in order to be able to depict adequately the object of man's faith.

---

cf. Marcion, p.224f. 124: This assertion is cited in AZH,p.56f.- "Whenever a higher religion develops a theology, it is usually a theology in a twofold form: a theology from within and one from without. The former presents the ideational content of religion from the point of view of the faithful and relies on the inner power of persuasion in the content that it will uphold its truth. A theologian of this kind knows that his is a charismatic theology.... The latter considers religion to be a part of the circle comprising all objects of cognition and decides about the veracity on the basis of generally valid historical, psychological and theoretical principles of knowledge. ... Christian theology began with Paul and was charismatic theology. ... But from the earliest times of the Church the theology which based itself on objective revelation and on contemporary idealistic philosophy, in which reason was apparent, has been victorious because it promised a generally valid exposition of the Christian religion. If it is granted that the particular idealistic philosophy is die Vernunft itself and if objective revelation has in fact been correctly determined, then this theology has a right to exist. If these two points are not granted then this theology breaks down and must be replaced,but not only by such however valuable complementary efforts as those of Irenaeus and Origen. This does not answer the question whether Christian theology must shun all ties with idealistic philosophy, but then the oldest development of Christian theology denies this anyway. Theologies which have not entered into a relationship with such a philosophy have never become a theology of the Church.Brittle charismatic theologies were never more than ferments of some effectiveness. A theology from within is never scientific theology ..., it is rather something else, something higher, is confession. Only theology from without can create community. We may lament that the insufficiency of such a theology is so plainly visible, but no one

Barth's answers to the initial questions aroused specific criticisms and further questions which Harnack expressed in his open letter. At the same time he admits that he had had Barth in mind especially when those initial questions were raised.

One of the main issues in their public discussion, the concept of revelation as Barth speaks of it, is wholly incomprehensible to me, says Harnack. Revelation is not a scientific concept because religious experiences are not something so completely a unity that they can be drawn together under one generic concept. At best revelation is a research hypothesis and a hypothesis cannot claim to comprehend the fulness of what it refers to. But Barth speaks of it as something so objective that the processes of human understanding are not needed for its understanding. Either Barth understands revelation as something which communicates itself totally and is thus beyond misinterpretation or as something which cannot be grasped by any faculty of man so that he is forced to wait until it radiates in man's heart. Both these views are to be rejected by scientific theologians.

Once again then we shall turn to the open letter he wrote to Barth and, drawing on the results of our analysis of those works which illuminate Harnack's 'scientific theology', outline in detail the Harnack of the correspondence.

Re the title of the questions and question 15: The scientific theology of the present time appears to Barth as unstable, transitory and as having moved too far away from its actual object. It has for him no greater value than an opinion. Harnack counters that it uses scientific epistemology which has been sharpened and proven by the last two centuries of theology. It is the critical historical method. It is based on the ontology of history and because it strives for complete objectivity and puts aside all subjective influence it believes itself to be in a position to comprehend positively the facts of history as the natural sciences do in relation to their particular objects of study. The realm of theological cognition is man as he appears objectively in the his-

---

can change that. Should anyone try it nevertheless he will fail and create confusion for theology. Let him rather stick to his task - preaching". Harnack, Die Entstehung des christlichen Glaubens und des kirchlichen Dogmas, p. 54 and p. 87f.

tory of the spirit and its effects and objective embodiments. This is the result of the insights of idealistic philosophy since the Enlightenment.[125] But Harnack adds also the insight of Herder, that pure science cannot grasp the fulness of reality. There is a point where pure knowledge ends and inner wisdom of life begins, where spirit confronts Spirit. One therefore must add to the categories of historical knowledge those of psychological analysis, which are experience, inner openess, etc. Yet these two disciplines, history and psychology, have been strengthened since the Enlightenment and have given theology tools which assure it a scientific character. Now it can operate with generally valid historical, psychological and theoretical principles of knowledge.

But Barth holds to an identity of the task of theology and of preaching. The two are, however, not identical. Theology has a twofold form, each one of which has a different purpose and thus a different task. One is charismatic and must edify; it has to confess Christ and show how we are to be his disciples in that confession. Its task depends on the other form, which like any other science has only this task: the pure cognition of its object. This calls for an objectivity which excludes the kind of 'objectivity' found in the inwardness pertinent to the experience of God. The objectivity of theology as science is critical, analytical, an objectivity the intention of which must not be to edify. If it were to do so it would only lead to confusion since it derives from a confusion itself, namely about the revelation of God in Christ. The aim of theology is the correct determination of objective revelation.

Those who have denied this have led the Church to dissolution. History shows that. Some have used that approach to call the Church back to her task; they have meant their work to act as a ferment. But such work has never become the theology of the Church because it is really a complementary effort which, even though it is valuable, has not much effectiveness. But one must not intend one's

125:Karl Löwith's Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen and Joseph Vogt's Wege zum historischen Universum trace the growth of historicism as the epistemology and ontology of reality. Both show that and how this position became predominant in the 18. century.

work to be a mere ferment. The courage to be objective and to be a witness must know that this involves the separation of the spheres of theology and preaching.

Concerning questions 2 and 3: Barth's answer to them suggests that no faculty of man whatever is to be applied to the understanding of biblical religion. That understanding is left to faith and faith is not identical to one's experience of God. This opens faith to the transformation into uncontrollable fanaticism, since no amount of reason is able to determine it. It is incomprehensible for Harnack how anyone can return to the kind of inwardness which allows only the proclamatory aspect of religion, which has often turned into the fanaticism that condemns the world and man. But that does not enhance life and stengthen culture. Even though faith is said to be that through which the gospel is understood and even though faith derives from the preaching of the Word of Christ, the use of 'the Christ' in this context is reminiscent of the dogmatic interpretations of Jesus Christ which have caused severe misrepresentations of him and have side-tracked the real issues of the gospel. Harnack sees in this a re-emergence of metaphysical orthodoxy, the intrusion of transhistorical objects, the dogmatism which is concerned with the relation of Christ to God, the a priori confession of Jesus as the Christ.[126] Harnack rejects that Christology as docetic. Metaphysics is for him not able to speak about reality. "We abhor metaphysics since it gives a metaphysical significance to a historical fact; it draws into the domain of cosmology and religious philosophy a person who appeared in time and space."[127] Such metaphysics necessarily leads to an imaginary Christ and we are not confronted with the Jesus of the gospels. Paul himself was responsible for the development of a Christology in which that Jesus was lost to view. The two-natures doctrine replaced our knowledge of Christ according to the flesh; the historical Christ is no longer knowable according to it. Our understanding of Christ derives from subjective, inward experiences, not from generally valid histrical, psychological and theoretical principles of knowledge? Is this Marcionite modalism, gnostic do-

126: These phrases are from Harnack's letter to Ritschl, dated Jan 6. 1882, quoted in Glick, Op.Cit.,p.58. 127: Christianity,p.204.

cetism or Overbeckian Kritizismus?

Concerning question 4: Barth's answer is devious, but speaks of the protest of faith against the world, a protest made necessary because faith is hope for the invisible. - It is true that faith overcomes the world, that the spiritual is set free by it and related to God in the higher life. This means that precisely in faith lies the struggle against the world if it is merely material or barbaric, yet faith is also the hope and conviction of the redeemability of the world. Faith is the power of culture. To protest against the world is justified in the first instance, but false in the second, unless one has that absolute inwardness and lovelessness which denies the world any relation to God. Harnack thus demands that Barth be specific on this issue.

Concerning question 5: The gospel proclaims the redemption of the world through Jesus Christ, through God's love. By speaking of this love in coordination with the love for one's fellow, it shows us how this redemption - the freedom from the material, the barbaric - is accomplished. Culture is the concrete embodiment in the world of this power of religion, the love of God and of man, to transform the enslaved world into one free from the material. Barth tears the two loves apart and declares that their coordination in the gospel signalises their separateness which only God can bridge. This view is not in accordance with the gospel.

Concerning question 6: Harnack sees in Barth's answer the same dualism which led Marcion to sever the human from faith. Faith was the knowledge of man's redemption of the world and of his eventual presence in the home of the unknown, the strange God, of whom one knew nothing on the basis of the human. Even the highest morality is of no value, since reality and value are both to be found in the unknowable. If the world is das Nichts and if religion is inwardness to the absolute degree no link can exist between even the highest of morality and goodness in the world and the godliness of the alien unknown sphere of God which is open to faith only. This standpoint, however, is not that of the gospel. Faith is the fides historica and fiducia in God and his redemption

of the world through love. Since however the higher life of the love of God and man, that is in other words of morality, is what religion teaches and what history itself strives for, the education in culture, in the higher life is directly related to, yes based in faith.

Concerning questions 7 to 9: Can culture give us any correct understanding of God? Can ethics? Are Goethe's pantheism, Kant's conceptions helpful? Barth apparently does not think so. His insistence that the gospel is neither helped nor hindered by those valuable insights results from his Marcionite understanding of God as the wholly other.

The person of Jesus Christ, the revelation of God is the fountain of life of all culture. The purer the knowledge and veneration of him, the closer is our culture to the ideal he upheld in the gospel. The higher the culture, therefore, the deeper is its insight into Christ, into God. Its conceptions of God will thus approximate those of the gospel, if not even become identical to them. The gospel is inseparable from its fruit, the higher life of culture. Cultural treasures uphold the godly, protect against the ungodly. To deny this is to sow the seed of cultural decline and of barbarism, just as Schleiermacher had maintained.

This understanding of culture implies that with the heightening of the cultural life and in its development, there occurs a development in the understanding of God. In human life there is a parallel deepening of one's understanding of God. The life of the spirit is attained through the various advances and setbacks experienced in one's attempts to become free from the material. In this is excluded the notion of a contrast between God's and our truth as well as an immediate, total understanding of it because the unknowability of God on the part of man and his perceptive faculties is rejected.

Concerning questions 10 and 11: God is love. This is the central affirmation of the gospel. It is the essence of the Christian religion, of religion per se. This knowledge allows us to see the redeeming love of God grasping the whole world, its misery and evil, his love working in the world for its reform and ultimate

redemption. The attainment of that final insight gives man a joy and confidence and peace in which the blessedness of the victory over the world is real. The task of the ministry is to hasten this realisation and the life corresponding to it in everyone.

This peace is the peace of God, so that the joy and the love experienced in the life of godliness are indications of his present kingdom. But where these are embodied there is the power which leads men on to the higher life. The treasures of culture, the good, the true and the beautiful, are therefore related to the peace of God and are to be pursued most actively exactly because of that relation.

If this is denied, what 'solid joys and lasting treasures' does the Christian possess? His joy becomes a make-belief joy, his confidence in his and the world's redemption is illusory, his hope subject to frustration. How can a state of suspension between godlessness and final insight into the love of God be regarded as a foundation for the humility and gratitude of the Christian on which his responding love to God and his outgoing love to man rests?

Concerning question 12: Barth's return to the doctrines of the fall, of original sin and the corresponding doctrine of man's salvation sola fide et sola gratia appears to Harnack as a falsification of the gospel. He rather applauded Marcion's affirmation that the Sermon on the Mount was the ordinariae sententiae Christi per quas proprietam doctrinae suae inducit. That document is simple, staightforward, to the point, free of ambiguities and dialectics. Above all it does not involve one in a departure from the truth of history, whereas those doctrines involve one in paradoxes which necessitate a confusing method.

The gospel is about redemption through love, about the forgiveness of sins. Both describe the same - man's freedom from the antigodly, his freedom for the godly life. Paul and Luther knew that and in very mighty words proclaimed that very freedom. They preached the love that helps because they rejected the concept of a God who condemns. Barth on the other hand reintroduces judgment, obedience and those other doctrines which are detrimental to the conviction and practical demonstration of the Christian's freedom.

Concerning question 13: Harnack does not really reply to what Barth had said in relation to the subject raised in the original question. He merely states that it can be shown that the despisers of reason will erect a 'theology' that leads to sectarianism and from there to a complete decay, namely occultism. He reiterates here what he had once warned Barth against, the dangers of a speculative religion.[128] "Toward the end of the conversation Harnack said that I was a Calvinist and an intellectualist. Then I was dismissed by him with the prophecy that according to all experiences of Church-history I would found a sect and receive inspirations,"[129] Barth wrote to Thurneysen about his meeting with Harnack at Eberhard Vischer's in Basel, April 1920. Harnack now sees that prophecy fulfilled in Barth's thought.

Concerning question 14: There is no question for Harnack that faith in God cannot do without knowledge of the historical Jesus. This knowledge cannot be gained without the critical-historical method of exegesis. Harnack sees Barth doing away with it and fears that because of it the Church will once again be plunged into an era of fanaticism and theological tyranny, from which the Reformation and the Enlightenment had freed it.

Harnack is aware of Barth's dependence on Overbeck whose radical biblical science and accompanying historical criticism challenged Harnack's own historicism. Here is an emphasis on something other than historical efforts to establish real knowledge of Christ which strikes Harnack as a blow to theology as a science. This is because he is convinced that the moment theology ceases to investigate its object historically it also begins doing something other than what is meant for it to do. Faith then opens itself to the charge that it is based on an illusion and that its truth is imaginary.

Harnack suspects a spiritualism or gnostic occultism which is out of touch with reality. It simply is unable to grasp reality epistemologically and have a true knowledge of reality. Its transcendental reality is not the reality of the gospel. It is mythology.

Theology is science. But how can science be what it is meant

128: Busch, Op.Cit.,p.58.
129: Busch, loc.cit.

to when it is built up on fantasies? Science can be built up only on man's certainty that he is in fact building on the truth and on his real knowledge of the truth. Therefore the knowledge of man's sin, of his 'being lost in a god-likeness which ends in death' cannot be the basis of theology. Theology must be rid of paradoxes and whims. Critical-historical knowledge assures this. Its results furnish a reliable basis of certain, assured facts. In view of the possession of such knowledge, in view of the communalty and reliability of our knowledge of the gospel, the task of theology as the science of the Christian religion is, as Harnack said in 1901: to safeguard the highest good which mankind possesses, to protect it in its purity against misunderstandings and to bring its historically knowable features into an ever growing understanding which is to be put into action.[130]

The objectivity of theology is upheld and guaranteed by the method employed by the theologian. For Harnack only the critical-historical method does this.

Harnack concludes his open letter with a note of regret and of fear that, should Barth's way of theologising become predominant, the gospel will again be falsified and theology lose its status as a science. The highest good of mankind would again be disregarded by the cultured despisers of religion.

What actually does he mean by the phrase 'despiser of scientific theology'?

Harnack's open letter answers this insofar as it shows the point where Harnack's sensitivity and subsequent criticism are aroused. It is the perhaps primarily rhetorical question: 'We do not know the historical Jesus of the gospels any more? How am I to understand that? According to the theory of the exclusive inner word? Or according to one of the many other subjectivistic theories?' This was Harnack's reply to what Barth had said in relation to radical biblical science and its assertion regarding our knowledge of Christ 'after the flesh'. Harnack perceives in this an application of Overbeck's radical biblical criticism and

130: Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten und die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte, in Reden und Aufsätze, vol.II, p.172f.

of his historical scepticism. And Harnack's expert knowledge of history led him to draw historical parallels here. What Barth calls the knowledge of Christ kata pneuma is a Paulinism which in Harnack's estimation had given rise to the speculations of gnosticism and the docetism of Marcion. These positions had always neglected a precise study of the historical Jesus and eventually aroused fanaticism. By definition, however, fanaticism is the opposite of science.

Furthermore, Barth had spoken of the identity of the tasks of preaching and theology. This point of view Harnack regarded as the actual objection to his own conception of theology as critical-historical science. "Scientific theology and the witness to Christ (preaching) cannot remain healthy when the demand to keep them separate is invalidated," he writes in his postscript (Supra.,p.47). Barth does invalidate it and by doing so neglects the very responsibility of science, the pure cognition of its object. What else can one conclude from that than that Barth is not concerned with the legitimatization of science in the faculty of theology at the university? "What you say in regard to biblical science may be formulated like this: the most radical biblical science is always right and thank heaven for that, because now we may be rid of it", Harnack writes to Barth, (Supra.,p.38). This pushes theology as a science aside and opens the door to theological dictatorships which are wild fantasies.

This Harnack meant to oppose. The objectivity of theology is threatened when its scientific method is thus challenged and its sphere is shifted into subjectivity. Those, therefore, who in conjunction with historical scepticism seek a source of religious knowledge apart from reason, apart from history and who reject the critical-historical method, thus basing themselves on speculative ideas, derived from a gnostically falsified Paulinism, must be regarded as sectarians who by the very definition of science cannot be taken for scientists. Indeed, Harnack sees in the works of Barth and others like him 'all kinds of paradoxes and whims' and 'sublime metaphysical and psychological' speculations which are in no way in keeping with the free enterprise of science which, void of presuppositions, pursues its task objectively. These specu-

lations contradict reality, yes even constitute a false view of reality.

Harnack is a part of that reformation of the Church which, beginning with Luther, but constituted primarily by the Enlightenment, had sought to anchor man's knowledge of God in Christ. This Christocentrism of theology was determined by a concern for the Jesus of history. Harnack knew that this reformation would come to an end if Barth's theology were to become predominant. For him this would be the end of the pure presentation of the gospel, which with its Christocentrism depended on the critical-historical theology as Harnack exercised it.

The questioning of Harnack's idealistic- scientific theology and the transformation of theology into something subjectively anchored - into a theology from within, a charismatic theology - is what Harnack calls contempt or scorn of theology as a science and those who do so are despisers of scientific theology.

- C - Barth -

Karl Barth's answers to Harnack's questions begin with a statement which in summary form expresses the charge which those so-called 'despisers of scientific theology' were making against their teachers: your theology has moved away from its theme more than is good. The great sixteenth century Reformers were the last to state that theme clearly, whereas the theology deriving from Pietism and the Enlightenment, which has predominated the last half-century or so, has served to narcotize, to lull to sleep.[131] Later, in his reply to Harnack's open letter, Barth states clearly what the charge against Harnack and his kind of theology actually involves. It is 'the foregone conclusiveness with which the task of theology is emptied, that is to say the manner with which one puts this or that so-called simple gospel, discovered by historical criticism beyond the Scriptures and apart from the Spirit, into the place of that which the Reformers called the Word, the correlation of Scripture and Spirit. The so-called simple gospel is a gospel that can be called God's Word only metaphorically because it is at best a human impression of it'. Or again, the meaning of the charge may be expressed in terms of two opposing concepts which Barth (following Luther) used in an address given just six months before he first answered Harnack: theologia gloriae and theologia crucis. The former is a theology which knows itself to have arrived at its ultimate destination; it is a theology free from temptation (Anfechtung) because it is a theology possessing "Eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God".[132] This theology must guard its possession since it holds in its hands religion per se, the essential religion, religion free of any particularistic elements.[133] Barth calls this theology liberal theology because it desires to be free from the need, the Anfechtung which arises when the question of God is really asked. Liberal theology flees "from the question which God demands in order to be able to give his answer."[134] Theologia

131: The Christian's Place in Society, in The Word of God and the Word of Man, p281.(This book is to be cited as Word from now on). See also another address of 1920, Biblical Questions, Insights, and Vistas, in Word, p. 54. 132: Christianity,p.8. 133:Ibid.,p.63. 134: The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching, in Word,p.129f.

gloriae has salvation, possesses final insight, it no longer needs hope. Barth protests against it in the name of theologia crucis. This is a theologia viatorum, it is on the way to fulfillment which it may lay hold of only in hope because it is not given to man to possess. Fulfillment is man's as a promise. This theology lives between Not and Verheissung, between need (Anfechtung) and promise because it has nothing in its hands to possess. It "arises at the point where man has sacrificed his highest and his best ..., where he has delivered it up to be judged and so has laid hold of the promise; and this he does on the strength of his faith and on the strength of his faith alone, because he has been laid hold of himself by the unsubstantiated, self-substantiated mercy of God, because Christ the crucified is ... the bearer of the promise".[135] It is a theology which in its poverty can only pray for the creator Spirit to come.

Yet the description of the two opposing positions in the correspondence in terms of these two concepts of theologia is too broad to be really adequate to both Harnack's and Barth's positions. Harnack had asked specific questions to which he received specific answers along which the discussion then continued.

1) Barth's objection to 'scientific theology'.

The theology of the Enlightenment and of the late nineteenth century can no longer be regarded as being appropriate to the actual theme of theology. This theme is the one revelation of God to man, namely that God himself became man. This revelation can be known to man only through God himself and not through specific methods of study or clearly outlined experiences. Indeed these human 'faculties' are of no import to an understanding of revelation. The Spirit gives that understanding through faith; it comes by the self-communication of God to faith which God himself must awaken in man.

What are outlined by Harnack as scientific methods of theology are essential in man's transmission to others what this revelation is, but in themselves the methods cannot bring about God's

135: Ibid.,p. 130.

self-communication. Between that communication and those methods is a barrier which is insurmountable from man's side. The repudiation of the existence of such a barrier is symptomatic of the loss of the knowledge of God as creator. But that barrier is the cross in which God and man's oneness is established. This means that for man there is no other way to consider that oneness than through the cross and remain appropriate to God the creator. But in the cross God has surmounted the barrier; in the cross, in death begins the life of the final oneness of God and man. God gives that life through Christ; through him man is born anew, namely to 'the life in God.'

Because the new life begins with death, with the cross, which is also the barrier between God and man, it is not possible to speak of our attainment of that life as gradual growth into it. It also means that statements about God, based on considerations of culture (including the statements which define culture as does Harnack) cannot be equated with the statements the gospel makes about him since the former statements ignore the barrier. Real statements are rather made when one is aware of being confronted with the barrier, in confrontation with death and with judgment. Here and only here arises true speaking about God - as the Bible speaks of him.

Since all comes under judgment, since we must give up all to it, can we assume that we have in fact final knowledge, final possession even now? Is not our knowledge a knowledge born in and borne by hope because our possession is one given to us as a promise? Barth answers 'no', because we all must pass through the insurmountable barrier, through man's crisis, through death. The barrier was said to be insurmountable because on the one hand God is the creator from whom man derives and on the other man's sin, his being lost in a god-likeness, virtually pushes him to death and judgment. The barrier cannot be bypassed by a higher morality, reverence and love because of that 'ontology' of man as sinner, his being lost in a deadly god-likeness. The unsubstantiated and self-substantiating mercy of God alone, which becomes apparent in the cross, in the barrier can help.

The knowledge of the meaning of the barrier as God's mercy, the proclamation of which may have to follow ways which are not

'simple', is based solely on God-awakened faith. Our critical-historical methods of study are helpful in establishing this fact. They are of great service in ridding us of bases of knowledge of God which, because they bypass the one revelation of God, Jesus Christ, are no bases of knowledge of God. We no longer know Christ any more according to the flesh, we know him through the Spirit which is identical with Christ. But Christ as God's one revelation is on the other side of the barrier, for which reason theology will be satisfied with witnessing to Christ. In this witness lies its appropriateness, its task, its raison d'être.

What exactly does Barth affirm and repudiate in this?

The first affirmation is this: 'The reliability and communalty of the knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ can be none other than that of the God-awakened faith.' This Jesus Christ is the one whom we no longer know according to the flesh. The corresponding repudiation is this: the Jesus shown to us as the fruit of critical-historical and psychological research, the historical Jesus of the gospels, is 'a banality which is proclaimed in vain as a pearl of great price'. What those 'scientific' methods will establish is (using Harnack's words) 'an imaginary Christ' and not the real one. The real Jesus Christ is the one revelation of God and the actual theme of theology.

The second affirmation is found in this statement: 'the task of theology is at one with the task of preaching. It consists in the reception and transmission of the Word of Christ'. This does not mean for Barth a rejection of scientific methods, it means rather a different interpretation of their place in the understanding and proclamation of the gospel. Those methods, 'especially the historical-critical method of biblical and historical research' are to be fitted into theology and its work 'in a sensible way'. Barth affirms the critical-historical method but also distinguishes it from the way by which revelation is understood. 'It may be of preparatory service' for the task of theology but it cannot lead to or create the understanding of revelation. This is then the corresponding repudiation: the historical method is not exclusively the avenue toward man's understanding of God's Word, theology is not identical with history. Since theology is

not able to grasp (the full meaning of that word is intended here-laying hold of or on the object) revelation, and since it only receives and transmits revelation its task is basically proclamatory, preaching.

In this lies also Barth's third affirmation: theology is the witness to revelation. Its objectivity to God's Word is its'courage to let itself be reminded that Christianity began with testimony'. Theology is objective when it knows itself to be en route, to be a theologia viatorum. It is not objective when it assumes that it can speak from a fixed stand-point (in the terminology of two of Barth's earlier addresses, The Christian's Place in Society and The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching). This is exactly what makes up the corresponding repudiation here: the gospel is not something, an object, knowledge of which is derived in the manner attempted by the positivists of science or history, in strict objectivity namely. One cannot assume an analytic position vis-à-vis the gospel in the belief that one can understand it in this way. Theology is concerned with 'an object which once was subject and which it must become again and again'. Because this object is a subject we cannot have it at our disposal nor know it directly. The subject is namely the transcendent God.

This has brought us to the fourth affirmation made by Barth: theology is a science which operates from within its object. Its knowledge of the object to be known is in fact the presupposition on the basis of which it proceeds to ask its relevant questions. The premise of man's knowledge of God is that man does not stand outside or over and against God, but that he is inside, grasped comprehended, addressed by God. Barth repudiates the claim that this position constitutes the denial of science, that it is unscientific and sectarian and that it makes tabula rasa with human reason and man's other cognitive faculties.

Within these four positive-negative guidelines we may discern and discuss Barth's position as it is developed in response to Harnack's questions and subsequent answers. Barth expands his position in his lengthy reply to Harnack's open letter.

2) Barth's affirmation and use of critical-historical analysis.

The 'tone' of Barth's position in that reply is set by the reference to the fathers of the Reformation. The fundamental point of departure of their theological thinking represents a material superiority over the theology prevalent since the Enlightenment, says Barth, because it was still aware of a determinative object of theology, whereas the latter theology is preoccupied with the authority of method. For this reason the Reformers could speak of the theme of theology clearly, something that has not been done since.

It is not the intention of this juxtaposition of the Reformers and recent theologians to discredit the latters' methods. Such methods, however, need to be fitted into the actual work of theology, which is the study of the determinative object. The objection is thus not against the methods used but against the way in which they become the instrument with which that determinative object is bypassed and substituted by something that is not the actual theme of this science. For Barth the theme of theology is the Word of God. He distinctly rules out everything that is no more than a human impression of it, for such impressions, if they are taken to be the object to be studied, empty theology, bypass the Word. There can be no second truth beside the truth of the determinative object; the preacher must speak of it and not of his experiences or reflections; the theologian must seek it and not what remains in his sources after the appropriate basis of cognition of that truth, which is given in that very truth itself, has been eliminated. Because of this demand of the Word of God, Barth says that the task of theology and preaching is the same, although in the execution of that task there arise differences, but that does not alter the fact that the truth they seek and proclaim is the same truth.

Harnack had objected to this. Barth on his part now objects to Harnack's identification of theology and history; it empties theology of its actual task. The critical-historical study of the Bible is involved in these objections. Harnack had maintained that side-stepping the analysis of the Bible by means of this method

leads to sectarianism, edificatory-subjective views of the truth of God. Barth maintains that the analysis of the Bible by this method leads to an understanding of the words used by the biblical authors but not of the Word of God which they seek to proclaim.

Harnack's objection misses Barth's point. Barth is not interested in separating the scientific study of the Bible from the work of theology nor in opening the door to biblicism.

We must glance now at Barth's exegetical work. - In view of Harnack's objections to Barth on this issue it is difficult to say conclusively that Harnack knew Barth's Römerbrief. It is much more likely that, because he did at first not have Barth in particular in mind when asking his fifteen questions, he had not gone deeply into Barth's exegetical work.[136] Most significantly, however, Harnack's colleague Jülicher had written an extensive review of Barth's major work in this area, on which Harnack probably relied.

In August 1918 Barth wrote that the historical-critical method of biblical study was a method which has a rightful place in that study because it points us to a very necessary (!) preparation for the understanding of the Bible. This says - with a less provocative flair than the preface to the second edition of this work , the Römerbrief, - that this method assuredly has a place in the study of the Bible but it cannot give us understanding of what the Bible does in fact say. The method alone will not lead us beyond the place of a spectator, it cannot lead us to participate in what is being said.

Three years later Barth made this even clearer.[137] The explication of what is written in a biblical text in terms of translation from one language into another and the subsequent philological, archeological, historical and linguistic analysis is proper and necessary. But that is not the same as the attempt to get through the document to the meaning of the author's language, to an understanding of what it is he wants to communicate. The men using the critical-historical method should be more critical. A critical approach to a document cannot stop at the end of what it must do first, namely determine what words are actually written

136: Cf. the discussion of what works of Barth Harnack might have known prior to the correspondence, supra.,p. 28f.
137:For the following see Römerbrief, 2. ed.,p.Xff. Also the historical summary of J. Robinson in Robinson and Cobb,vol. I of New

in the document. It must rather proceed from there and seek the Word in the words, it must pass on to the point where the riddle of the document is solved and left behind and one confronts the riddle of the substance of the document. Barth respects the critical-historical analysts, yet he feels compelled to ask them whether they are aware of the cardinal question which the exegete must answer, the question about the Word in the words. It would not seem so, Barth thinks, for apparently the question of explaining biblical texts is left to the department of Prof. Niebergall, to practical theology, so that he might teach how to go about the 'pure presentation of the Christian's task as a witness'.

Barth recognizes and acknowledges the need of critical-historical methods, but he insists on its distinction from the theological exegesis of the Scriptures.

This distinction, however, leads us exactly to the point where Harnack says: what you are saying, Prof. Barth, is totally incomprehensible to me. I cannot understand what you say in connection with 'your concept of revelation', namely that no method, critical-historical or theological can establish what the Word in the words is.

Barth said that man cannot have this Word at his disposal, since it "is a series of free divine acts ... (which) never hardens either in the thesis or in the antithesis; it never stiffens into positive or negative finalities."[138] To Harnack this appeared to be the end of theology as a science, since 'human speaking, hearing, grasping and understanding are eliminated in our comprehension of this Word,' (Supra.,p.48). Barth's point, however, is that even though exegesis cannot do without that method, its introduction as 'the only (!) way of grasping the object epistemologically' has led to the consideration as the actual object of theology of something which can be called God's Word only metaphorically.

Barth said that the Word is the correlation of Scripture and Spirit and that it is communicated by God himself. This communication is revelation, it is the content of the gospel, which means that the object of theology is that Word which is comprehended by

---

Directions in Theology, 'Hermeneutic since Barth'.
138: Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas, in Word,p. 72f.

a God-awakened faith only.

For Harnack this was no more than a pious platitude; 'believe a little harder' seemed to be the advice Barth gave. If the task of theology was to get intellectual control of its object then the particular dialectics which Barth calls in is clearly an attempt to cover up the weakness which arises when he is asked how that Word is comprehended. All that dialectics does is 'lead to an invisible ridge between absolute religious scepticism and naive biblicism - the most torturous interpretation of Christian experience and Christian faith', (Supra.,p.48). By keeping us constantly 'between door and hinge', constantly in motion,the weakness might not become apparent. Harnack's own method, the historical approach and the emphasis that theology is history do not know such a weakness; theology rather has a stand-point which is in the interpretation of culture and in the belief that history is able to give certain knowledge for our understanding of the world and its course.

For Barth, however, there was a noticeable discrepancy between the fruits of the research done in the name of 'scientific theology' and the dimension of truth in which man lives.

The first objection of a theologia crucis, of a theologia viatorum to a Harnackian theologia gloriae is that it believes its method to be able to give it final insight into the truth of God, to be able with its 'scientific' tools to transcend the barrier which stands between creator and creature, between God the lord and man the sinner. The objection states that in that belief the actual object of theology has become lost.

The second objection is to the cultural analysis and the 'historical pantheism'[139] which precede Harnack's exegesis of the gospel and thus profoundly affect his view of the gospel. In his second answer to Harnack Barth had indicated why he thought these two factors affected the understanding of the gospel. 'Real statements about God are made only where one is aware of being placed under judgement instead of believing oneself to be on some pinnacle of culture or religion'. The objection is that the simple gospel avoids this spot of judgement, this skandalon, that it seeks to bypass it or to narcotize it.

139: This term is taken from Bultmann's essay Die liberale Theologie in his Glauben und Verstehen, vol. 1, p.1ff.

The objection to this pantheism of history is that its representatives believed the results of critical-historical study to have absolute validity so that they can lead us to a vision of the real Jesus on which our faith may then build up. But such validity cannot be imputed to historical conclusions because all historical factors are relative insofar as they all are a part of a larger interrelated, and therefore contingent, whole. This is the reason why Barth contrasts reality with the data of history. This is why he says that 'the existence of a Jesus of Nazareth which in any case can be discovered by historical study is not this reality (the reality of which the gospel speaks). A historically discernible simple gospel, discernible because it is humanly plausible, a simple gospel which causes no scandal, ... a word or deed of this Jesus which would really be nothing other than the realisation of a human possibility would not be this reality'. The simple gospel is assumed to speak of this reality because it is believed that God's revelation may be perceived in that larger interrelated whole, in history by humanly plausible methods.

But then we saw that this is what Harnack in fact believed. He maintained that the religious forces in man enable man to rise above nature to culture and that in the persons who were and are the leaders in this process the divine may be perceived. This process is a spiritual one; history as a staircase-like process toward culture - in Harnack's sense - is thus regarded as a unity, as a continuum of nature and culture. Since the forces of religion - the love of God and of one's neighbour - lead from one to the other, those who exemplify these forces are the revelations of God. One may therefore make direct statements about God on the basis of these religious people.

Here God is spoken of in terms of an elated discussion of man, a pantheism of history is proposed. Historical study purveys certain impressions of persons who are religious, that is to say history shows us certain acts done in the name of the love of God and of man, it shows us people's faith in God or their consciousness of the love and 'holy majesty' of God. The error made in historicism is that these phenomena are taken to be acts of God;

the consciousness of forgiveness on the part of those people is taken to be an indication that God loves and forgives also me. Mere credence of historical facts is no basis of faith in God, Barth counters. Herrmann had 'beaten this into the skulls of his students'. The basis of faith is rather 'the obedience a man gives to a human word which - as if it were God's Word itself - testifies to him the Word of God as one that is in fact spoken to him'.

The point of Barth's objection is that historical pantheism proposes direct knowledge of God from history. This pantheism speaks of a oneness of the spirit which is manifest in history.

Harnack's own argument went like this: all institutions of history are born out of ideas. Ideas precede all historical achievements. Ideas, however, are Geist, spirit. Thus all history is in essence history of the spirit and the spirit is one. This spirit is active in all the results of historical processes and in us. Here we see the unity of all events and our own spiritual essence.[140] The immanence of ideas in reality (which is the reality of history for Harnack, as could be seen in his critique of Marcion) and the development of truth in the course of history were the formal results of the philosophy of the Enlightenment.[141] The higher life of man, his life in God and his life in the world are a continuum because the spirit is one and the same in both spheres. The divine is immanent in history. God and man are correlated.

For this reason Harnack's historicism may be called a pantheism of history. But it bypasses the scandal of judgement, for the otherness of God and his transcendence are ignored or repudiated. Because of this Harnack cannot understand why Barth maintains that God's confrontation with the world means his NO to man and man's history, that it means crisis.

Barth raises a similar objection to Harnack's cultural analysis. It, too, bypasses the skandalon. That argument was that religion interprets the forces of culture, those forces which lead man from the lower to the higher life as the love of God and of man.[142] The 'cultured' Christian is he who makes the ideals upheld in Christian ethics determinative for his everyday activities. As

140: See his address Was hat die Historie etc., in Aus gewählte Reden und Aufsatze, p.196. 141: Harnack: Marcion, p.221f.
142: Harnack: Was hat die Historie etc., p.201.

such this ethical standard of the Christian must not be denied, 'highest valuation of morality - gladly', Barth said, but 'can we love our neighbour, can we love God?'. The objection is against the view that worldly aims - such as pacifism, Christian socialism, Brot für Brüder,[143] - are in fact identical with the kingdom of God. This is probably behind the perhaps somewhat cryptic answer 13 in Barth's first replies. 'Which theological tradition is it that, beginning with the apotheosis of feeling, has apparently landed happily in the horrid swamp of the psychology of the unconscious? Who thought that a special religious source of knowledge could be opened apart from reason? And - talking about gnostic occultism - which theological tradition is every instant notoriously close to the danger of losing its ablest devotees to Dr. Steiner?' The answer might be: that theology which believes that our worldly actions of love toward the neighbour, that highest morality and culture are in fact our service of God. It is the theology which - unaware of the transcendence of God - believes that what we do within the world can justify us before God.

Such actions, however, do not bring us to God but rather at best to the boundaries of the laws operative in the spere of immanence, of the sphere of human-practical life, of the sphere of what is humanly good, true and beautiful. The assumption that highest moral action is the work of the kingdom of God is a denial of the scandal of the Word of God, of the crisis which links that kingdom and the sphere of man. Every valuable insight into ethics and culture and each corresponding action stands under God's judgment - including Goethe's Faust.[144] The point is that even our cultural analysis does not grant direct cognition of God, that our life of highest morality is no direct service of God. Neither a world-affirming attitude,which seeks to reform the world, nor a world-denying attitude, which leads to protests against the world and a withdrawal from it, can establish the kingdom of God. It rather precedes both, it is the big NO preceding our little no, the big YES, preceding our little yes. It is the synthesis out of which our thesis and antithesis arise. The transcendent is the origin of all these immanent movements.[145]

143: Cf. lectures V to VII in Christianity.
144: the annual performances of which at Dr. Steiner's 'temple' at Dornach are a highpoint in the life of anthroposophy.
145: Barth: The Christians Place etc., in Word,p. 298f.

The cultural analysis and the historical pantheism are a precondition, a preunderstanding to theology which, according to Barth, cause the substitution of the real object of theology - God's one revelation - by a simple gospel which really cannot claim to be appropriate to the matter of which the Bible speaks. The task of theology is emptied through this preunderstanding, indeed Barth says that Christ and man are betrayed by this theology.[146] The betrayal consists in the fact that theology has taken a position, a standpoint from which it has come to dispose over the content of the gospel.

Against this Barth holds that theology may not properly be considered a standpoint, but rather a viewpoint, a mathematical point on which one cannot stand.[147] "Our position is really an instant in a movement and any view of it is comparable to the momentary view of a bird in flight. Aside from the movement it is absolutely meaningless, incomprehensible, and impossible. By movement ... I mean a movement from above, a movement from a third dimension, so to speak, which transcends and yet penetrates all (other) movements and gives them their inner meaning and motive; a movement which has neither its origin nor its aim in space, in time, or in the contingency of things, and yet it is not a movement apart from others: I mean the movement of God in history ... the movement whose power and import are revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."[148]

Theology cannot depict what its object is; it cannot depict this movement. All attempts to do so are as ridiculous as 'to draw the bird in flight'. Barth admits that at "this all important point is the weakest part of my exposition",[149] But because he continues that "our concern is God, the movement originating in God, the motion which he lends us - and not religion",[150] he shows that the absence of a standpoint is not a weakness at all because theology is itself in motion, is life, is testimony.

Here we recall the distinction between the experience of God and the awakening of faith. The two are as different as are

146: Ibid., p. 281. 147: The Need and Promise etc., in Word, p.98.
148: The Christian's Place etc., in Op.Cit., p.282f.
149: Ibid., p. 283. 150: Ibid., p. 285.

form and content. The concern with religion and its experiences is occupied with the derived and fragmentary form of the divine, with the'more distinct or more confused symptom of and testimony to the awakening of faith'. The immediate and original is never experienced as form, it is not a type of godliness. But the form may very well be a reference to the content and even though the two, form as the experience of God and content as that which is known by faith through the action of the content, are not the same, the former which man sees and may analyse historically and psychologically may distinctly or confusedly point away from itself to the latter. It can help us well to become aware of something other than man but the analysis of that awareness alone cannot determine what it is which in fact man is aware of. This is because the object of that awareness is God, or at least this is claimed by the believer, and God is not correlated with experience.

The content is not "a new form of godliness ... (It is Christ the) absolutely new from above, the way, the truth, and the life of God among men; the Son of Man, in whom humanity becomes aware of its immediacy to God. ... The way from there to here ... (is) the miracle of the revelation of God."[151]

3) The gospel as man's witness to God.

'But at this point appears your categorical statement that my concept of revelation is totally incomprehensible to you. You had asked how one might come to find out what the content of the gospel is. ... I answered that ~~that~~ the gospel itself tells that this understanding occurs exclusively through an action of this content itself,'(Supra.,p.40). Barth then proceeds and specifies what he means by this. According to the gospel its proclamation is about something that man cannot hear,see and perceive unaided. Indeed the gospel itself cannot communicate its message, the content of that message must make itself known, must come to man and create in him the eyes and ears to perceive what is being said and shown. The way to that content is created for us by the content itself, for all other ways which we might explore do not

151 : Ibid.,p.285f.

lead to it. The way to the content and the content itself are identical; God proclaims himself.

That this is so is indeed puzzling, incomprehensible, for we cannot imagine that to God's way to us, which is our only way to him, there should be no corresponding way that originates with us and leads to God. But then, asks Barth, is it not already the very meaning of revelation that the way from man to God is always most exclusively God's way to us? That revelation is something one cannot believe? That one may acknowledge it, yes, but not comprehend it? That revelation involves something which in fact is not a most sublime or very deep but nonetheless possible human discovery?

What is this so-called content of the gospel, what is its message? 'It is the indeed totally incomprehensible, inaudible and unbelievable, the indeed scandalous testimony that God himself has said and done something, something new in fact, outside of the correlation of all human words and things, that nonetheless he has placed what he has done as the new thing that it is right into that correlation, so that it is one word and one thing next to others but still this word and this thing'.

How this testimony might be accepted is another matter; what is at stake now is that theology be aware that this is the testimony with which the Church began its historical existence.

This testimony Barth calls the Scriptures. Whatever scientific technique is available to help us discern that testimony must be brought to bear on it, but this will not alter the fact that the Scriptures are testimony to the incomprehensible, inaudible etc. new fact of God's Word and deed.

The Scripture witnesses and proclaims as do theology and preaching. For Harnack the Scriptures were rather a source-book. He readily acknowledges this. A reviewer of his History of Dogma suggested that Harnack used Christianity and the biblical texts as sources for the historical study of religion. From such sources one may glean what is really behind them: das Wesen des Christentums. Harnack's reply was that this was exactly what he meant to do.[152]

152: The review, written by A. Lasson, appeared in Preussische Jahrbücher, vol. 58 and is cited together with Harnack's reply in AZM.,p. 104.

This view of the Scriptures either ignores or is unaware of the testimonial aspect of the Scriptures. Barth maintains that with such ignorance or unawareness goes ignorance or unawareness of what is testified to, which is the very content of the gospel. But since this content, as the revelation of God 'perpendicularly from above', not only confronts all events, words and deeds of history as a unique truth, word and deed in history but is also placed as such into the correlation of historically discernible words and deeds, it is as this truth also a truth of history beside all other truths of history. This the historian Harnack ignores or is unaware of.

The matter of the testimonial character of the Scriptures was foreign to Harnack. "It was a weakness of Harnack ... that he failed to realise the importance of the so-called religious-historical school, and never truly became sympathetic to it. ... Harnack somehow never clearly saw nor understood the eschatological character of the appearance of Jesus and of his preaching of the imminent advent of the kingdom of God. Moreover, Harnack never gave due consideration to the eschatological consciousness with which the early Christian communities and Paul were suffused. In fact, Harnack never even caught a glimpse of the utter strangeness of the image of primitive Christianity disclosed by the religious-historical school. ... Can the paradoxical situation of primitive Christianity hovering 'between the times' ... be at all viewed as valid after the eschatological expectations of the first Christian generations were extinguished? Is Christian life, perceived and prescribed in the New Testament as a 'transcendental' life, viable? The author of What is Christianity? was never worried by such questions ... and it is characteristic of him that the Pauline 'as though not' played no role in his thought."[153]

This weakness, as Bultmann calls it, is due to Harnack's conviction of the ability of history to give final insight. Related to this conviction is another matter of interest to us now: the failure to distinguish between source and testimony.

The question about the essence of Christianity is to be ans-

153: Bultmann in the Preface to Christianity, p.Xf.

wered historically, Harnack had maintained. "That is to say he let the history of Christianity define those questions whose very formulations, in the first instance and most completely, disclose the nature of its origins."[154] The question is preceded, as we saw above, by an analysis of culture and a pantheism of history, by a definite world-view. The answer to that question is thus moulded by a definite world-view, indeed in the case of Harnack Christianity becomes "an Enlightenment doctrine or an ethical appeal."[155] This is precisely what held Harnack's eyes so that what is testimonial in character was taken to be an historical expression of a particular world-view and thus a source to be probed for the reality behind it.

And yet it may be justifiable to ask whether it was a blindness in Harnack or his aversion to Overbeck which held his eyes from seeing this kerygmatic character of the gospel. Harnack knew that what Barth had called critical-historical study in his 14. answer was the biblical scepticism exercised by Overbeck. This study, said Barth, 'signifies the deserved and necessary end of those foundations of our knowledge (of Christ) which are no foundations at all since they have not been laid by God. Whoever does not yet know that we know Christ no longer according to the flesh should be told this by the critical study of the Bible and the more this frightens him the better it is for him and for the matter involved.' Harnack's reply to this made it clear that such scepticism in the study of theology endangered the scientific nature of theology. The reason for this is that on the one hand Harnack is convinced that faith is dependent on the knowledge of the real, historical Jesus,so that our faith in God through Christ may have a solid, because historically real, foundation. It had been the merit of the Enlightenment to show that our knowledge of God, that the Christian knowledge of God is irrevocably sub specie Christi. Once this was grasped it became naturally imperative to establish precise knowledge of Christ; the Church depends on it. Troeltsch made this point very clearly in his statement that for the Church "There is indeed a dependence on scholars and professors, or better, on a general sense of histori-

154: Ibid.,p. XIII. 155: Ibid.,p. XV.

cal reliability which is created by the impression scientific research makes."[156] Anyone who does not care for the exact determination of the historical Jesus of the gospels seems also not to care for the scientific nature of theology.

But then there is another reason for this fear of Harnack's. He considers the Bible to be a condensation of a near-Eastern (lower)religion and later the (higher) Christian religion. How can one understand what the religion in the Bible is? he asked the depisers of scientific theology. Religion for Harnack was Weltanschauung insofar as it was the force which helps man to 'free himself from that force which enslaves all beings' (Goethe), the force with which man strives away from the lower life in the world to the higher life in God.

Here arises Overbeck's critique: the gospel is neither religion nor world-view. Christianity is not a historical entity, for "neither Christ nor the faith he found have had historical existence under what is called Christianity."[157] How can one want then to give Christianity a historical basis? Yet exactly this attempt "has given rise to the question whether Christianity is and can be more than a puzzle, a problem namely of fundamentally mysterious nature which questions everything in history."[158]

"Christianity began by denying a history to itself, which then, however, it suffered against its own, originally stated will. ... It shows us that there is no chance for it to allow itself to be defended on the basis of historical knowledge. If one subsumes Christianity under the category of the historical, one admits that Christianity is of this world and that it has lived in the world - like all life - only to run its course to its end."[159] The locus of Christianity is thus not history. Because of its uniqueness and particularity Overbeck calls its locus Urgeschichte. "Christianity means nothing but Christ and the faith in him; it is something supra-temporal (überzeitliches). ... I believe that no attempt of recent times to show historically what primitive Christianity really was has proved the opposite. After Jesus' death Christianity withdrew from every historical com-

156:Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben,p.34f.
157:Christentum und Kultur,p.9f.
158: Ibid.,p.7. 159:Ibid.,p.7.

prehension of it, since Christ's followers became something wholly incomprehensible, something which scintillates ambiguously between being and non-being. ... Only a clouded mind will let Christianity begin with the historical person of Jesus."[160]

Christianity in this sense can be understood only in terms of non-historical concepts,can be comprehended only through non-historical means of cognition. "History and Urgeschichte are to be distinguished on principle formally and materially. Formally, because they are passed on differently, materially, because their content is different. The objects dealt with in both belong to different worlds or to different series of development."[161] Overbeck's distinction refers to a qualitative difference. Urgeschichte is not merely primordial history, it is a history which is temporally different from history, but it is a history. The conclusion Overbeck drew is that 'Christianity not mysterious', that Christianity 'the centre of which is the historical person of Jesus' is an illusion and self-deceit.[162]

"Long before the religious-historical school moved primitive Christianity out of the bourgeois familiarity of pious ideas into a distant and fantastic world Overbeck saw and pointed out this phenomenon in its frightening otherness originally. Religious-historical research has confirmed his view. Overbeck did not minimize this phenomenon by a clever distinction of suprahistorical meaning and historical form, of temporal appearance and eternal content with which the essence of Christianity could be determined and grasped; he rather allowed primitive Christianity to say what Christianity is."[163]

It is important to note that Overbeck came to his conclusions regarding Urgeschichte on the bases of historical analyses. These were made through his secular methodology which allowed him to see more clearly than his contemporaries that one would neutralize Christianity if one were anxious not to 'hand over to the secular sciences' what is holy. His method made quite clear that faith in Christ and faith in the historical person of Jesus are two different matters, that the latter is in fact against the self-

160: Ibid.,p. 28: 161: This is quoted in Ph. Vielhauer's article Franz Overbeck und die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft in Evangelische Theologie, vol.X,no.5, p205.
162: Overbeck, Op.Cit.,p. 265f. 163: Vielhauer, Op.Cit.,p.206.

interpretation of Christianity as found in the gospels and that the synthesis of Christianity and culture is a betrayal of Christianity. He made plain that the 'close ties and the blood-relationship of Christianity and science in general', the aim of which is to make faith acceptable to its cultured despisers and theology to its fellow-disciplines in the university are to be cut since they only serve an apologetic purpose which deceives everyone about Christianity.

According to its own declaration Christianity is not of this world, said Overbeck. It is otherwordly.[164] There is a difference between its world and the world as such. This difference becomes apparent when we see that Christianity "in all seriousness refers us to the last things (auf die letzten Dinge), that is to say it refers us beyond ourselves."[165] It never envisioned any effects of Jesus in history.[166]

This Christianity cannot be represented by a theology which does not "rid itself of all historical or scientific claims on Christianity."[167] Rather, any such "representation cannot be based on anything other than the very heart of the matter which is non-historical Christianity."[168] (This is the point Barth made when he wrote Harnack that 'historical knowledge could tell us that the communication of the gospel can be accomplished, according to the assertion of the gospel itself, only through an act of the content of the gospel. But critical reflection could lead to the conclusion that this assertion is founded in the essence of the matter and is thus to be taken seriously!) Precisely this heart of the matter, "the eternal aspect of Christianity can be spoken of only sub specie aeterni, that is from a point of view which knows nothing of time."[169] The reason for this is that "religion does not give us knowledge of God -(where do we have such knowledge?) - it rather wishes to assure us that God knows us. Our knowledge of God could as such not help us if we were in need of help, everything would rather depend on his knowledge of us."[170]

This so-called radical biblical science or the historical scepticism of Overbeck had demonstrated the otherness of the gos-

---

164:Overbeck, Op.Cit.,p.67. 165:Ibid.,p.279. 166:Ibid.,p.68.
167:Ibid.,p.8. 168: Ibid.,p.10. 169:Ibid.,p.70.
170:Ibid.,p. 266.

pels, of primitive Christianity, an otherness which, because it pointed beyond the horizon of history, did not allow the merely historical approach to the gospel to be a sufficient method for its understanding.

Barth based himself on this insight of Overbeck's when he addressed the Studentenkonferenz at Aarau (Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas) in 1920, just a short time after he published his review of Overbeck's Christentum und Kultur.

The Bible speaks to us of the knowledge of God and the last things, Barth said there.[171] Yet this knowledge of God and of the last things is a knowledge for which we are not wholly qualified nor wholly equal to, because our quest for it is not due to our natural strength, our religious emotion, our religion. Knowledge of God is the antithesis rather to other knowledge. The Bible makes this clear by confronting us with 'the fact of election'. "What we call religion and culture may be available to everybody, but the faith which the Bible offers is not available to everybody: not at any time nor in any respect can anyone who will reach out and take it."[172]

So far Barth has been quite Overbeckian; the element of the eschatological is very present in the Bible, an element which because of its avowed origin in another world is not open directly to our comprehension.

What is this special object, the faith'offered'in the Bible? This literary monument of an ancient racial religion and of a hellenistic cultus religion is a collection of writings about or by men who are spellbound by what they hear and see. They hear the inaudible, see the invisible, say the unspeakable - something astonishing which cannot be interpreted as religion or worship or experience. Indeed, these men do not interpret it themselves; they point to it, witness to it. It is the turning of God to man.[173]

At this point Barth shows emphatically the other-worldliness of the object of the Bible, this characteristic on account of which man can no more than witness to it. "Its true interpretation is found in the very fact that the categories of the science of religion cannot exhaustively describe the turning of man to

171: Word, p.53. 172: Ibid.,p.58. 173: Ibid.,p.66.

God, much less contribute anything toward an understanding of it. In the Biblical experience there is a final element to which nothing in psychology corresponds, which cannot be reproduced in feeling, which cannot be demonstrated in experience. ... Biblical religious history has the distinction of being in its essence, in its inmost character, neither religion nor history - not religion but reality, not history but truth."[174]

Overbeck could and would not have said anything like this. He would recognise his own emphasis only , namely that the gospel insisted on its other-worldly nature and that the attempt to grasp that nature through historical categories would be to misunderstand it. Yet exactly this emphasis opened Barth's eyes to the nature of biblical statements, to their kerygmatic or testimonial nature. The radical biblical science of Overbeck which refused to regard anything as sacred and thus as untouchable for scientific analysis showed that "biblical piety ... points beyond the world, and points at the same time and above all beyond itself, that it lives absolutely by virtue of its object and for its object."[175]

This is the point Barth makes in replying to Harnack that the Bible witnesses to revelation, that it proclaims God's turning to man, that God has said and done something new outside the correlation of human words and deeds and that he has put this new word and deed of his - perpendicularly from above - into the correlation of human words and deeds.

That testimony is indeed maddening to listen to (unanhörbar), incomprehensible and scandalous, but theology must be courageous enough to begin with it. One may wish to soften or bypass the scandalous and use the methods of history and psychology instead in the search for the historical Jesus. But this misses the 'content of the gospel' and produces what Barth calls a spectator-theology. The point is that one cannot ignore the eschatological aspect of biblical 'religion', (the matter which the Blumhardts had emphasised), fail to consider seriously the kerygmatic aspect of biblical statements, overlook its emphasis on the otherworldliness of its essence (to both of which Overbeck had drawn

174: Ibid.,p. 66. 175: Ibid.,p. 69.

attention) and remain an objective theologian, if objectivity means to accept a phenomenon as it does in fact confront man, if to be scientific means above all to honour the dignity and uniqueness of the phenomenon to be studied. The objection is that the theology coming from the Enlightenment has moved dangerously far away from its object because it has entered into a blood-relationship with idealism (the formal and material findings of which Harnack applauded, cf. Marcion,p. 221f.) and has made historicism its methodological framework. In its hands theology became history and made 'by its talents what is incomprehensible once again self-evident and comprehensible', (Supra.,p.43). This theology is removed from the kerygmatic character of the gospels and of its own essence. It therefore distinguishes between scientific theology and preaching, between educated and edifying thought and speech.

In the place of what the fathers called the Word - the correlation of Scripture and Spirit - there appears the simple gospel, das Wesen des Christentums, the authority of which is by no means derived from what might be called the authority of Scripture but rather from its "inner content of eternal matters".[176] Theology must, according to this point of view, find that content and thus close the gap between accidental truths of history and eternal truths of reason.

The simple gospel is one, says Barth, which may be called the Word of God only metaphorically because it is at best a human impression of it only. The real object of that theology is religion, the so-called experience of God. But this experience "is a wholly derived,secondary, fragmented form of the divine. Even in its highest and purest examples it is form and not content. ... Experience is only a reference to the Original,to God. ... No mental apprehension of the form of this truth, however subtle that apprehension may be, may replace or obscure the true transcendence of this content."[177] Barth charges that for Harnack the experience has become identical with the content, that what is witness in fact coincides with the actual matter involved. Society has been betrayed because Christ is not brought to it nor it to Christ through this theology. Here is rather a man-made

176: Harnack, Die Entstehung der christl. Theologie etc.,p. 89.
177: Barth: The Christian's Place etc., in Op.Cit.,p.285f.

coincidence of form and content, of the matter involved with the sign pointing to it. This coincidence does occur, says Barth, but only as the Word and work of God.

The Scriptures witness to revelation. They witness to the possibility of God, that he has acted in the form of a human possibility. In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, God became human-historical reality. Barth then continues and says that because it is this reality to which the Scriptures witness, to the reality of God in the flesh, human-historical cognition may well be able to depict exactly what kind of man Jeus was, what he said and did, what he meant to those who knew him, all those things, in other words, which Harnack so ably said about him, but that still faith only can see God incarnate in this man from Nazareth. And what faith can see in him is precisely that to which the gospel witnesses.

It is said here, however, that if God became man then as man he is open to human-historical cognition. Barth himself came to speak in later years of the humanity of God and of a secondary objectivity posited by revelation. Where there was diastasis in the'early' period there was analogy in the'later'one. It is obviously true that there can be no separation between the human-historical reality of God and his revelation. But is the point of the affirmation that the event of God's becoming human-historical reality is not also object of human-historical cognition in fact the separation of revelation and the human, as Harnack charged? Is not Barth's point here rather that even if one affirms vere deus et vere homo there must be no correlational theology here in which again with foregone conclusiveness the human and the divine are mixed together? Is not the point here that Christ as God's Word is the theme of theology in which context only man is to be considered? Again, is not the point here that the humanity of God, the very human-historical reality to which the Scriptures testify, is just as much credendum as is the vere deus in the incarnation? It would seem to me that Barth here denies on the one hand that that human-historical cognition can grasp God in the human-historical person of Jesus because, and this is what on the other hand Barth affirms, that very humanity of God is as much a

matter of faith as is his divinity. - I believe this to be Barth's meaning here in view also of how he continues.

The apostles are interested in the person of Jesus only as it is related to the reality, namely God as human-historical reality, to which they point. They speak of this reality as revelation. And they do so in such a way that it is apparent that they rule out a direct, human-historical understanding of it. In their accounts one sees again and again that the Word and deed of God is hidden from direct comprehension. The centre of the gospel is the risen Christ. We know him only through this testimony, this indirect reference to him. Human-historical means of cognition can determine precisely the message of their testimony but that does not thereby mean that the content of that message is then reality for us. It is still testimony. Only through God-given faith does it become reality to which one then can also only witness. Otherwise the testimony is incomprehensible. This makes it scandalous; any attempt, however, to get around the scandal and ascertain the matter of the testimony goes astray. One must hold still before the scandal, believe it or refuse to believe it. Any other alternative carries no objectivity for the object of this testimony. The merit of biblical science, of historical criticism is that it can show us the kerygmatic character of the Bible.

However, must one 'forever remain between door and hinge', in the words of Harnack, and hold still before the scandalous, before the paradox that God became man? Can belief not win through to a vision of that to which the scandalous refers and thus resolve the paradox? If not, how can a man judge between 'rival' scandals which claim him?

The answer must first of all be that it is surely not a matter of paradoxical statements with which the biblical witness is concerned. The scandal, the paradox is the event to which is testified. The statement 'God became man' is as a statement not a paradox. It is rather the event spoken of, the event which is inaudible, invisible, unspeakable, etc. The fact that this statement ' God became man' is reality for man is the paradox. But the content of revelation, namely that God became man, is not paradoxical, else there would be no revelation. The point is that if revelation <u>as an event which is true for man</u> were not paradoxical

then there would be no revelation, then the Bible would indeed be a source-book for one's Weltanschauung. One therefore must hold still before the scandal which, however, is not paradoxical when it becomes reality for man. There can be no 'outside' criterion which can dissolve the paradox and allow an independent judgment about such rivalling scandals; the logic of the event asserts itself and gives the understanding in which the scandal is overcome.

Faith is the acceptance of the unbelievable testimony of the Scriptures, of the scandal that God became man. It is an obedience toward a human word which proclaims to me God's Word as addressed to me. But human words have no authority to do so on their own, for which reason this word spoken to me, even though it appears to be God's Word itself, is really a testimony only. It becomes God's Word and ceases to be mere testimony through the Holy Spirit; it becomes reality through an action of the content of the gospel, to be precise, it becomes reality for me and thus ceases to be something to which previously one could only point. The transformation from testimony into reality for me, the scandal which is a paradox, can take place only through an action of God himself. Faith is different from all other human functions of cognition. Apart from faith, the God-awakened acceptance of the testimony, the human word which tells me of God's Word must remain an incomprehensible, rather dark and confused human utterance.

The process - if one may speak of it as such - is this: God has spoken the Word of Christ. It is the object of theology and of preaching. The Scriptures witness to that Word. Through that witness the Word is also addressed to me, namely through the Holy Spirit's own testimony by which I hear that Word - not just the words uttered by apostles - and by hearing it through the Spirit also believe it. This is a miracle, nothing less; it is a new birth, a being raised from the dead, since the Word is that of Christ who is the crisis of man and the world.

4) The possibility of knowledge of God.

The objectivity described in the concept of the correlation of Scripture and Spirit is turned critically against the objecti-

vity alleged to be in the scientific theology of Harnack.

It opposes the assumption, made in the belief of a direct knowability of God, that God is a given 'entity' which may be known through direct observation. Against this Barth states that God is knowable only when he acts and reveals himself; our knowledge of him is not identical with the knowledge we have of his creatures. It is not a knowledge comparable to that derived through experience, inner openness, heart or feeling. Such 'faculties' establish a direct grasp of the object, make man someone who has or possesses knowledge. But man cannot have or possess God. God is not known through man's intellectual control, that is possession of him. The God whom man seeks to know through that kind of possessing, whether he is 'had' in man's experience or conscience, or in the pinnacles of cultural creativity, or in the development of the spirit in history, or in the 'life-force', or in the abyss of being, in the crisis of man or the world - in all these he is too much like the projection of man himself which Feuerbach denounced as illusion. Barth, however, is equally aware that God is not to be 'had' in the critique of this intellectual control over God, in the critical protest against this possession of him. He is not grasped epistemologically in the No, the irrational; man can indeed not have God, but he can witness to him. This witness is said to be objective since it acknowledges the distance between creator and creature, the vis-à-vis of God to man.

Real knowledge of God is said to arise where man is confronted by God in revelation and is thus placed under judgment. The only unity of God and the creature is the cross, man's crisis and death and his new birth. Revelation is thus man's being radically called into question.

"The forces of the gospel appeal to the deepest foundations of human existence and to them only; it is there alone that their leverage is applied. If a man is unable then to go down to the root of humanity, and has no feeling for it and no knowledge of it, he will fail to understand the gospel."[178] No, answers Barth, we come from the truth of man to God's only through a new birth, from death to life, (Supra.,p.33). "Who can fail to feel an under-

178: Christianity,p. 124.

lying fear in speaking and hearing of him who, as the men of the Bible see and perhaps we also distantly see, must increase? When we turn our backs upon the gay fête of the history of religion, we find ourselves in something of the sheer, oppressive, awe-inspiring stillness and solitude of the wilderness, where for good reasons much of the action of the Bible takes place. It can in truth be no less than a mysterium tremendum that draws the men of the Bible before our eyes out and onto the edge of all experience, thought and action to the edge of time and history, and impels them to attempt to leap off into the air, where obviously no one can stand. Would it not be better for us and for our peace of mind to turn back here? Shall we dare turn our eyes in the direction of the pointing hand of Grünewald's John? We know where it points. It points to Christ. But to Christ the crucified,we must immediately add. That is your direction, says the hand. ... The only source for the real,the immediate revelation of God is death. Christ unlocked its gates. He brought life to light out of death."[179]

Man's knowledge of God means facing judgment. Harnack regarded this view as first of all a denial of every valuable insight culture believed itself to have about God and secondly as a scepticism of the world which is characteristic of sectarianism. It also meant for him a doubt in the the cognitive powers of human reason. But Barth speaks of this crisis in revelation in relation to man's sin. Sin is more than a lack of reverence and love, it is an ontological structure of man: his being lost in a god-likeness which leads to and ends in death. Sin is man's self-assertion over and against God in which man in fact raises himself to the level of god-likeness.

The reemergence of the notion of God's wrath and judgement annoyed Harnack. He really seems to be enthusiastic when he discussed Marcion's conception of that wholly other god's love. If we remember that Harnack was preparing the second edition of his book on Marcion during his public discussion with Barth, the parallelism in his formulations becomes more meaningful.

The sphere of Marcion's divinity is love which drives out all fear. Humility alone can receive this love.This concept of

179: Barth, Biblical Questions, etc., in Word,p. 76f.

God as love is the supreme, the final concept of our understanding of God. For Marcion such understanding is not speculative but rather the result of Christian experience; one experiences love in the person of Jesus Christ who is the embodied reality of almighty love.

Jesus Christ is the beginner and perfecter of this new liberating power of God, of almighty love. Marcion preached with magnificent assurance that Jesus' will to love (der Liebeswille Jesu), that is to say therefore God's will to love, does not judge but help.[180] Every motive of fear is excluded from the gospel; the only reaction to sin can be disgust which leads to the renunciation of sin.

Harnack concluded this section with the affirmation that Marcion's way of preaching the gospel meets the situation of to-day. It answers to-day's questions. Those among the despisers of organised Christianity who know the soul of the people (die Volksseele) best, assure us that only a proclamation of love which does not judge but help has any chances for a hearing. Marcion stands thus right next to Tolstoy and Gorki. And this kind of Marcionism has a great deal more to offer than those who come to us with their quid pro quo opinions.[181]

But Barth again spoke of judgement and God's wrath which introduced all kinds of paradoxes and perpetuated that situation which is detrimental to the humility of the Christian - his assurance of God's love which can help him to live the life in God. How can a minister talk this way when that sort of talk will not be given a hearing, asked Harnack. Barth makes faith an illusion when he speaks of the cross and man's crisis as the point of man's contact with God. In the person of Jesus Christ man becomes aware of his childhood in God, the cross only shows how great that love for man was. As such the cross is not at all necessary as a factor in our faith. God is love, this knowledge makes Christianity religion per se. Whoever is reconciled with God knows that for those who have not yet found God to be that way, he appears to be angry. But this idea of God's wrath is a deception which through Christ is done away with. Thus, we must alter our disposition to God and the

180: Harnack, Marcion, p.231. (Underlining is his).
181: Ibid., p.228ff.

gospel helps us in this. The loving father has been waiting for us always with love; the parable of the prodigal makes this helpful and comforting truth plain.

Barth's understanding of sin and of the cross, of man's being lost in a god-likeness which ends in death and judgment, which is made plain in the cross, speaks not of an eternal truth which Marcion, Luther, Tolstoy, Gorki and then scientific theology since Schleiermacher have discovered, but of a revolutionary fact, of an event. Christ not only preaches the Word of God, he is the Word. The gospel is not that the eternal truth is now 'out' and made public, it is the event of God's love in space and time. To overlook the event-character is to overlook the wrath of God and vice versa. To speak of the gospel as the becoming known of an eternal truth is to rule out as deception everything but the love of God. It is equally a cheapening of God's mercy and grace. Luther, who had 'rediscovered' the truth of God's love, also said that man always stands before that loving God with empty hands, depending wholly on God's grace. To overlook the event-character of the gospel is to overlook its kerygmatic nature, is to overlook that it is a testimony to God's action in man's space and time. Therefore one may rightly speak of the gospel as Heilsgeschehen, as the event - das Geschehen - of salvation - das Heil.

God's confrontation of man is man's judgment, it is man's standing before revelation, said Barth. That revelation is Jesus Christ, God become man, crucified and now risen.

To know this is to have faith.'Faith comes through the preaching of the word of Christ', the word of man's justification in his crisis and man's obedience to the testimony of Christ. The knowledge of faith is one of ac-knowledgement, cognition is re-cognition.

This knowledge or cognition, this faith is not a matter of man's consciousness insofar as one must admit that the statements of faith are assertions which man could not make on the basis of his self-knowledge or cognition of the world. This impossibility causes faith always to be also unfaith. Faith is not a once-and-for-all, not a stand-point but a movement, the testimonium spiritus sancti internum. It is the action of the content of the testi-

mony which Barth calls the miracle of revelation. The miracle is not, however, that a gap between an accidental truth of history and the essential truth of reason has been bridged 'vertically from above', but that God himself acts through his Spirit to-day in us who hear the witness of the apostles just as he acted in them at the time when they witnessed to his revelation in Christ; the miracle is that God acts in us to-day in the midst of 'the darkness of our spirit and culture',(Supra.,p.45), just as he did at the time of those witnesses who spoke of that 'unpleasantly dark history',(Ibid.), of the particular event to which they testify. The miracle is, in other words, the simultaneity of God's act, of what is 'the essence of the whole matter: his relation to man', (Supra.,p.32).

But Harnack replies that Barth cuts faith from the human, since he speaks of the Word of God as something so objective that human 'faculties' can be eliminated in the understanding of that Word. Barth's denial that the Word of God cannot be grasped epistemologically amounts to a tabula rasa with reason, critical reflection, etc. in the methodology of theology.

This is a misrepresentation, Barth says. The intent is to dispute the continuity of faith and the human, not to sever them. The human is not to be discredited but to let it appear for what it really is and that means the repudiation of every attempt to divinise it.

Barth emphasises the discontinuity of revelation and the human. Yet the stress on diastasis is not to be interpreted as a severing of faith and the human. Still, the insistence on the latter is only half convincing. It is clear that the 'natural-titanic presumptuousness of the homo religiosus' (Supra.,p.45), which had identified the 'matter involved with the sign pointing to it', (Supra.,p.44), must be repudiated. However, the insistence on discontinuity raises the question of how man is a part of or in revelation, a question which in view of the overstressing of this point is not satisfactorily answered. Eventually, Barth rectified this issue.

Man's faith may be described as inner openess, experience, religion and the like, but one must not believe that this describes the divine. Those things are in their way,their actuality the cre-

ated realities which testify only, but testify to the uncreated absolute. Faith is therefore also a psychologically-historically discernible symptom of the miracle of God. The religion in the Bible is a witness to the historical but still only believable reality of God's revelation.

Barth denies explicitly the possibility of positing something relative as the absolute. He asks not 'how do we speak of the absolute?' but rather 'can we speak of it at all?' and answers that because we are human we cannot do that.[182]

But exactly with this impossibility Barth's theology begins. In his review article of Overbeck's Christentum und Kultur he said that it was Overbeck's merit to have shown that only the impossible can help us out of the impossible.[183] This impossible which can help is the reality of God's self-revelation which as such is the event in which is posited what theology acknowledges. The impossible possibility, namely the coincidence of time and eternity, of the absolute and the relative, of God and man, of revelation and history, occurs as God's deed in which the opposition between each of the poles mentioned is not abrogated so that a continuity between them results. No, but if this coincidence posits itself and precedes our speaking of God then our question of God is, as Overbeck put it, in fact our already having been answered by him. We ourselves cannot give that answer. Indeed, in our question for God he must first of all be the wholly other since there is no continuity but only either-or. By giving this answer to the question 'can we speak at all of God?', by saying a loud No, Barth attempts to point to the reality, to the truth which posits itself and speaks to us in the correlation of Scripture and Spirit, of the testimony to it on the part of man and its own self-communicating activity.

5) How is man to speak of the reality of the testimony?

This question leads to the actual concern of Barths early theology. It was expressed in the identification of the tasks of theology and preaching and is dealt with explicitely in the address

182: The Word of God and the task of the Ministry, in Word, p.186.
183: Unerledigte Anfragen an die heutige Theologie, in Die Theologie und die Kirche, p. 25.

The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching.

For Barth the concrete responsibility of theology is the reception and the transmission of the Word of God, that is,to say that the question regarding the understanding of the Bible and its proclamation, that the horizon marked by the text of the Scripture and by the sermon is the origin and the goal of theology,is indeed to characterize Barth's 'theological existence' and the premise of his whole theology.

Barth contrasts the 'chaotic business of the faculties of to-day for which the authoritativeness of the method' has become the all-absorbing task with the 'idea of a determinative object' (which has become strange and monstrous to Harnack and other scientific theologians). He confronts Harnack with his criticism of the 'how do we do this?' question. For Barth the sphere is for theology on the road between text and preaching, between witness to God and proclamation of what is witnessed to.

The problem for theology is this: as theologians we are to speak of God. But we are human and as such we cannot speak of God. We are to know both our obligation and our inability and by that knowledge give God the glory.[184] The problem arises since the theologian is to speak of God and not of something intermediate or penultimate but of something final. He is to proclaim the truth which is of God. Because of this, the situation of the theologian "is eschatological. ... That is to say, when this situation arises, history, further history is done away with, and the ultimate desire of man for an ultimate event now becomes authoritative."[185] However, this desire for an ultimate event, this questioning on the part of man is answered by the Bible,from which the theologian comes on his way to proclamation, in terms of an even more radical question put to man. "The Bible responds without ado to the man who has awakened to a consciousness of his condition and to whom certainty has everywhere begun to waver; and its way of answering him is to ask with him, in its own way ...Is it true? Is it true that there is in all things a meaning,a goal, and a God? In two respects the Bible's question differs from and alters that of the awakened man. In the first place, it gives his question

184: Barth, The Word of God and the Task etc., in Word,p. 186.
185: Barth, The Need and Promise etc.,p. 110 in Op.Cit.

its first real depth and meaning - and in a way that leads even the most frightened, the most humbled, and the most despairing man on to the edge of a worse abyss than he has dreamed of; ... in a way that shows us that all our previous questioning has really been a preparation and practice for the question of questions which now arises: Are we asking in dead earnest? Are we asking after God?"[186]

With his desire for the ultimate event, with his question for the final truth man is, however, already in that event even though the event confronts man in terms of the question for it. Man cannot give himself the answer, cannot bring about the event, he is at best suspended between recollection and expectation of it.

This is why the situation of the theologian, commissioned but also unable to speak of God, is a situation of need and promise. God's answering is not at man's disposal, it rather takes place between the need and the promise of Christian preaching. The event is God's speaking in human words between the Scriptures and the congregation, between text and sermon, between testimony and theology.

"Speaking the Word of God is the promise of Christian preaching. Promise is not fulfillment. Promise means that fulfillment is guaranteed to us. Promise does not do away with the necessity of believing but establishes it. Promise is man's part, fulfillment is God's."[187] Man's part is his expectation of fulfillment. Fulfillment on the other hand is more than expectation insofar as it is the event itself which goes beyond what we ask or expect, so that the answer God gives really elicits our question for him.

This is characteristic of Barth's thought. It is not our existential questions only which are answered by God so that the important thing is really to ask the right questions, to have the right Fragestellung and then look for the answer. It would appear that even then - 1922 - Barth refused to make man's question normative. Man might perhaps never want or even dare to ask the question which, when answered, meant his crisis. In his Elgersburg address, Oct. 1922, he put it this way:"When people come for help (to the minister) they do not ask regarding their existence, but the beyond of their existence, God's existence. ... Man as man cries for God, not for a truth, but for truth, not for something

good but for the good, not for answers but for that answer which is identical with his question. For he, man himself, is the question and so the answer must be the question, he himself must be it but now as the answer, as a question which has been answered. Man cries not for solutions (Lösungen) but for ab-solution (salvation, Erlösung). ... But this answer, this reality, (which is the subject of all the predicates, the origin of all the abortive beginnings in which man finds himself) this subject, this meaning, the origin is not here, but beyond. The answer is not the question. He who is beyond is not he who is here. When man asks for God he asks for the answer, which as such is his question, he asks for the infinite, which as such is the finite, he asks for him who is what he is beyond also here, he asks for God who is also man."[188]

The answer is God's to give and man's to point to.But precisely this questioning, this situation between Scripture and and congregation is an ontological situation because it is a question for truth. What Harnack relegated to scientific theology, the question namely for ultimate truth about God, Barth regards as the final concern for both preaching and theology.[189] It is Barth's understanding of revelation as an act solely of God which makes him relate the ontological question to the situation of proclamation. If the question is answered (and only God can do so) then it is in the situation between Scripture and sermon. Hence the definition of God's Word as the correlation of Scripture and Spirit. But the answer is promised to us; we do not possess it, we grasp it in faith, in the hope that God's promise to fulfill it will come true. 'Yearning and supplication will always be the first and the last thing for us' writes Barth to Harnack, (Supra., p.33), and the meaning of that is that man's prayer for that fulfillment is the closest he can come on his own to the event in which fulfillment is given by God. Similarly Barth described his theology as the sigh Veni Creator Spiritus, the sigh which points to the situation of theology between Scripture and Spirit.[190]

Yet, since theology is to speak of God but is unable to answer the ontological question, how are we to speak of God? How are we 'to give God the glory in the knowledge of our obligation

186: Ibid.,p. 117f. 187: Ibid.,p. 124. 188: Barth, The Word of God and the Task etc., in Op.Cit.,p. 189ff.
189: Ibid.,p.191f. 190: The Need and Promise etc,.in Word,p.134.

and our inability?' Or how can we speak of God appropriately when the objectivity of our theology is determined by the act of God which set in motion our very question and search for him but which is an act over which we cannot dispose? How can we speak of the truth, of reality, when the Word of God, as that truth and reality, cannot be subsumed under a general epistemology? Given this kind of ontological premise, what hermeneutics does one develop? How is theology to speak of that history, that event which, as God's actual speaking to man, as his Word, is promised to man's proclamation but not given over to it, that event which occurs as an act of God in but not of man's preaching? Harnack answered that it is a 'kind of dialectics which leads us to an invisible ridge between absolute religious scepticism and naive biblicism ... unable to create community and destructive of whatever presents itself as Christian experience', (Supra.,p.48). But then he had already conceded that Barth's concept of revelation was totally incomprehensible to him and that he could not discuss things he did not understand. His estimation of Barth's hermeneutics, his dialectics rests in his confessed inability to understand Barth's point of view. That alleged inability is however inability to accept and not incomprehension, it is disagreement with that point of view. Harnack cannot accept that an understanding of God's Word is possible only within the event of God's addressing man, within the act of the 'content' only. That concept of revelation is one of pronounced actualism, as the emphatic NO to Harnack's questions 5 to 11 shows. Harnack's own replies indicate that he regards actualism as speculative dualism. By repudiating any extension of revelation in history or culture, Barth leaves nothing but 'a vacuum, a crater created by the impact of revelation,(ein Hohlraum, ein Einschlagstrichter), as he said elsewhere.[191]

The actualism of this period must now be looked at before we pass on to a consideration of Barth's dialectics.

God is totaliter aliter, he is the wholly other.[192] Harnack had correctly interpreted this emphasis of Barth's thought, except that he considered it to be Marcionite.[193] God and man are not on

191: Der Römerbrief, II.ed.,p.5. 192: Ibid.,p. XIII.
193: Marcion, p. 228, ftnte.

the same level and every attempt to overcome this separation apart from God's event of speaking his Word is rejected. Hence the sharp renunciation of religion. "Religion, as we know it in ourselves and others is a human possibility which as such is the religion of the highly problematical attempt to depict the bird in flight. Religion in every conceptual (anschaulich), comprehensible (fasslich) and historical sense must be regarded and rejected as an appearance of the world of man."[193]

If the Word of God is understood in terms of the event of its self-communication, theology can speak of an intersection where the different levels of God and man meet. This point has no extension on our level of existence.[194] The resurrection from the dead is the point of intersection. "The resurrection is revelation, the discovery of Jesus as the Christ, the appearance of God and the cognition of God in him. ... In the resurrection the new world of the Holy Spirit touches the old world of the flesh. But it touches it as a tangent touches a circle, without touching the latter world. Precisely because it does not touch it, the world of the Holy Spirit touches the world of the flesh as its boundary, as a new world."[195] This geometrical figure shows Barth's concern to depict the either-or character of God's truth vis-à-vis man's. It indicates the critical rejection of every assumed continuum between God and man on the basis of which one might speak directly of God. (I explicitly deny the possibility ... of going from testimony to direct statement, which is and must remain most exclusively God's concern, Barth wrote to Harnack. Supra.,p.44).

Revelation is dialogical, it is God's addressing man; this is a sequence which is irreversible. "The 'instant' is and remains something unique in comparison to what preceded and what followed it, it is different, strange, does not extend itself in what follows nor does it have its roots in what went before. It stands in no temporal, causal or logical relation, it is always and everywhere the absolutely new, always the being, having and doing of God. ... Life comes always out of death only, beginning only out of the end, Yes only out of the No. ... Between us and God there stands and will always stand the cross, uniting but also separating, full of promise but also full of warning. The paradox of faith can

193:Barth, Op.Cit.,p.163. 194:Ibid.,p.5. 195:Ibid.,p.6.

never be bypassed and is never removed. Sola Fide, through faith alone man stands before God, ... the faithfulness of God can only be believed because it is God's faithfulness."[196]

Even if we describe Barth's concept of revelation as the event of God's Word being spoken and say that it is an actualistic concept, even if we show that in it Barth's criticism of every attempt to speak the truth of God on the basis of what is possible for man manifests itself, it is important also to state that Barth himself does not want to use the categories of actus purissimus, futurum aeternum, event as adequate or appropriate terms with which revelation can in fact be described. This would only be establishing a new kind of continuum in which the free Word of God is again 'at our disposal'.[197] These terms as much as our method of speaking -

196: Ibid.,p. 86f. 197: This actualism in Barth's position was eventually to lead to Bonhoeffer's charge of positivism of revelation. Thirteen years earlier, much closer to 'the early Barth', he pointed to what appeared to him to be an unresolved tension in Barth's theology, the problems created by this stress on diastasis. In his Akt und Sein he says the following in relation to this matter: "Die ganze Sachlage weist auf die Frage hin, ob das formalistisch-aktualistische Verständnis der Freiheit und Kontingenz Gottes in der Offenbarung theologischem Denken zugrunde zu legen ist. Es handelt sich doch in der Offenbarung nicht so sehr um die Freiheit Gottes jenseits ihrer, d.h. um das ewige Beisichselbstbleiben und um die Aseität Gottes, sondern vielmehr um das Aussichheraustreten Gottes in der Offenbarung, um sein gegebenes Wort, um seinen Bund, in dem er sich gebunden hat, um seine Freiheit, die gerade in dem Frei-sich-gebunden-Haben an den geschichtlichen Menschen, in dem Sich-dem-Menschen-zur-Verfügung-Geben ihren stärksten Erweis findet. Gott ist nicht frei vom Menschen, sondern für den Menschen. Christus ist das Wort der Freiheit Gottes. Gott ist da, d.h. nicht in ewiger Nichtgegenständlichkeit, sondern - mit aller Vorläufigkeit ausgedrückt - 'habbar', fassbar in seinem Wort in der Kirche". (p. 67f.) (Bonhoeffer is obviously right in emphasising God's election of man and God's grace in the statement that God has bound himself to man and that nonetheless in that election God's freedom is revealed. But how can the statement be made, on the basis of what can it be said that 'God is not free from man', even if one takes it to be a sentence which is used to strengthen the affirmation that follows, namely that 'God is free for man'? Does revelation indicate both these 'freedoms'? Revelation indicates that God has given himself to man; does that say anything about his freedom from man?)

"Ist aber Offenbarung nichtgegenständlich, so heisst das theologisch, dass Gott immer Subjekt bleibt und sich jedem erkennenden Zugriff des Menschen entzieht. Soll anderseits aber wirklich von Offenbarung die Rede sein, so muss sie dem Menschen irgendwie erkennbar, offenbar werden; und tatsächlich ist ja die Offenbarung Gottes in Christus irgendwie erkennbar geworden. Wie ist das zu

even the dialectical method - fail in the end for neither can do what only God can do, namely speak his Word. Both are testimony

---

verstehen? Gott kann ja nie Objekt des Bewusstseins werden. Offenbarung ist nur so verständlich, dass Gott dabei als Subjekt im Auge behalten wird; das aber ist nur möglich dadurch, dass Gott auch das Subjekt des Erkennens der Offenbarung ist, da, wenn der Mensch erkennte, dieser eben nicht Gott erkennte. Dieses Erkennen der Offenbarung aber heisst 'glauben', das Offenbarte heisst Christus, das Subjekt des Verstehens ist Gott als Heiliger Geist. Gott ist nur im Akte des Sich-selbst-Verstehens in der Offenbarung. Für eine Reflexion auf diesen Akt ist er in meinem Bewusstsein nie vorfindlich. Die Gottesvorstellung meines Bewusstseins ist wesentlich nicht Gott selbst. Gott ist nur im Glaubensakt. In 'meinem' Glauben beglaubigt sich der Heilige Geist. Das das so ist, ist keine konstatierbare Tatsächlichkeit, sondern eben nur im Glaubensakt, der im übrigen ein psychischer Akt wie jeder andere auch bleibt, 'existentiell', d.h. in der Betroffenheit wahr. Danach ist meine Erkenntnis Gottes je daran gebunden, ob Gott mich in Christus erkannt hat ..., ob er in mir den Glauben an Christus wirkt. Für Gotteserkenntnis gibt es mithin keine Methode, der Mensch kann sich in die existentielle Situation, aus der heraus er von Gott reden könnte, nicht selbst versetzen, denn er vermag sich selbst nicht in die Wahrheit zu stellen. Er kann versuchen, mit Bezug auf diese Situation zu denken, aber solange er 'über' Gott redet, wird sein Denken ausserhalb der Wahrheit in sich geschlossen bleiben."(p.69f).

So far Bonhoeffer's interpretation of Barth. But then he continues: "Gott 'ist' zwar nur im Glauben, aber Subjekt des Glaubens ist Er selbst. Darum ist Glaube etwas wesentlich anderes als Religion. Wie aber religiöser Akt des Menschen und Glaubensakt Gottes gedacht werden können, ohne in zwei wesensverschiedene Sphären auseinanderzubrechen oder ohne entweder die Subjektivität Gottes oder die Existenzbetroffenheit des Menschen aufzuheben, bleibt ungeklärt (auch bei Barth)."(p. 70).

"Von Gott zu reden, von Gott zu wissen, eine Theologie als Wissenschaft wäre mithin nur möglich, wenn die Offenbarung nicht als reiner Akt zu verstehen wäre, sondern wenn es irgendwie ein Sein der Offenbarung gäbe ausserhalb des existentiellen Wissens von ihr, ausserhalb meines Glaubens, auf dem mein Glaube, mein Denken, mein Wissen 'ruhen' könnte." (p. 73).

Bonhoeffer asks: how is the existence of man before or after revelation related to the existence of the man 'born anew in revelation'? He interprets Barth, saying that for him "als Negation des alten Menschen kann der neue Mensch tatsächlich in Kontinuität des Ich verstanden werden". (p.77). Bonhoeffer himself suggests that the Church is to be seen as the '<u>Akt-Seinseinheit</u>', the place where the act of revelation (as the subjectivity of God) and the being of revelation apart from man's faith (revelation as the <u>Existenzbetroffenheit</u> of man) are one. Cf.p 88ff.

Without this 'being' of revelation, one makes the concept of revelation a positivism of revelation, as Bonhoeffer said on April 30. 1944 and once or twice again after that,(<u>Widerstand und Ergebung</u>,p.133f).

Barth's rigorous actualism is behind this critique. <u>Actus purus</u>, either God's truth or ours, contrast only, discontinuity -

only, both are parabolic, neither is standpoint, but 'a pinch of spice in the food'. Neither our concepts, the form of the divine, nor our method of speaking can bring the transcendent to us.

ALL these terms are evidence for a pronounced actualism. Bonhoeffer sees in them a Beziehungslosigkeit, as he said in those late letters, which causes the 'content of revelation' to be placed into a 'take it or leave it' alternative.

Barth had maintained that revelation is something radically apart from the correlation of human words and deeds, yet something occuring in that correlation. It is not a human word, yet God speaks his Word in the language of man. Still, that correlation of human words and deeds cannot express revelation unless used by God for that purpose. One must indeed ask: how is one related to the other? Is our knowledge of the content of revelation like that vertical intersection of one plain by another, so that we merely accept it on a 'take it or leave it' basis? Harnack himself wanted to know this and because he thought Barth to answer affirmatively, he called him unscientific and his thought charismatic theology.

But then does the actualism of Barth lead him to propose a concept of revelation which is to be labelled a positivism of revelation? Does it make a science of theology impossible? When he speaks of the content of revelation does he speak of individual truths to which he adheres as if they were final insights? In order to answer this one would not merely have to climb up, so to speak, the way to the 'whence' of revelation but one would also have to descend on that way to the place where revelation, that vertical plane, intersects 'afresh each time, je und je', as Barth qualifies it. We would have to look at the Church and the life of the Christian.

God's sovereignty was a primary concern for Barth in the formulation of his concept of revelation. Thus such expressions as: there is no human basis for revelation, which is an event based wholly on God; totally incomprehensible, believable only; it is no object at all of human knowledge, Christ is part of human history, but unlike anything else in history which itself is in need of fulfillment, which drives toward a goal. Christ is rather the eschaton, the fulfillment and therefore not open to historical analysis. Thus, when we ascend to the 'whence' of revelation we find these rigorously actualistic statements which cut out anything on which our hands and feet might find a hold and thus again establish a continuum between God and man.

At the same time Barth did not forget to speak of the place where self-revelation of God, where God's Word affirms itself, namely the situation between sermon and text, the congregation, the Church where the existence of the Christian is touched by the self-proclaiming Word of God. Does Barth do this as clearly now in his confrontation with 'liberalism' as he did this later in the Dogmatics? No, but there is evidence sufficient to make the application of 'positivism of revelation' highly questionable.

The Word of God makes history. Barth knew that from the Blumhardts, (Supra.,p.9). The response of the congregation, its humility in living obedience to that Word - the correlation of Scripture and Spirit - is the evidence of the impact, of the concretisation of revelation. The actualism remains, but this

Such actualism, restrictive as it is vis-à-vis Harnack, is to safe-guard the sovereignty and freedom of God and his grace towards man. That which is promised to Christian preaching cannot be fulfilled by man; actualism is meant to show that and is thus negative. But it is positive also insofar as it leaves our understanding of God's Word open for the reality promised in the testimony to God's Word, namely salvation, the good itself, that reality which, in other words, is beyond our possibilities.

---

obedience of the Church - this penultimate matter - is done out of the ultimate, in the power of the ultimate, for the sake of the ultimate. The Church is the place where man is drawn by God's Word into the reality of the Word of God. (The classical definition of the Church: 'Wherever the Word of God is truly spoken and truly heard' is surely behind this). The Church is the place where man in his historical existence has an ear for God's Word, where he has faith and because of that also the capability of being genuinely attentive to and concerned with that world. "In the course of history there have always been those peculiarities, those impressions of revelation, those opportunities and open doors which, from God's view-point, call us to our senses and lead us to an understanding. Wherever there are people who wait on God there remains a commission, a character indelibis, even if it were shrouded in darkest incomprehensibility for them and others, ... God has never and at no place revealed himself in vain." Römerbrief, II.ed.,p.54. The indelible character of revelation stands, however, not in a direct but a dialectical relation to revelation when seen from the point of view of the way to the 'whence' of revelation.

"In the Church man knows and has all manner of things of God which, consequently he does not have or know. It is the place where somehow or other he is taken out of the unknown beginning and end into the well-known centre, where ... he really possesses faith, hope and love, he really is God's child and really waits and works for God's kingdom - as if they were things for him to possess, to be, to wait and work for." Ibid.,p. 316. Barth underscores here the dialectical relation referred to. What man has is parable, testimony only. "However ambiguous and questionable the position of righteous men, searching and waiting for God, may be as a human position, it performs nevertheless a distinct and necessary function as a symptom of God's will and action. ... Compelled by their own and others' 'experiences' to become still in the face of the unknown they demonstrate that this as such may become the object of cognition. By remembering the impossible, they show that the impossible - God - is in the realm of the possible, not of course as one possibility among others, but rather as the impossible possibility, which becomes apparent through them". Ibid.,p.53.

Through the congregation, through the Church revelation is in fact communicated to the world; here man, drawn by God into the reality of God, is able to witness and act appropriately in the world with an understanding of the world, with a concentration on the real world, on the historical world to which he belongs.

6) The dialectical relation between revelation and man's speech concerning it.

But how then does one speak of God's revelation? "To speak of God seriously would mean to speak in the realm of revelation and faith. To speak of God would be to speak God's Word, the Word which can only come from him, the word that God becomes man. We may say these words, but this is not to speak the Word of God, the truth for which these words stand. ... Our task is to say that God becomes man, but to say it as God's Word, as God himself says it."[198]

Barth sees three ways in which the attempt to say that word can be made. All three will, however, end up by seeing that they failed. These ways are: dogmatism, self-criticism and dialectics.

The first way leans in its attempts to speak of God on the Bible and develops the ideas embodied in the christological, soteriological and eschatological dogmas. Such dogmas show a great deal of objectivity in their basic treatment of the conception on which they rest, namely that God became man. But the difficulty with dogmas arises at the point where the descriptions given in these dogmas are taken to be in fact the very things described. A christological truth is not Christ, a soteriological dogma is not salvation and an eschatological concept is not the kingdom of God; these descriptions are an objective witness at best to God,

---

If the Church is really the place where the Word of God communicates itself to the world, that is to say if the Church is the medium of the communication of God's Word as it is accepted through faith by the community, if in the congregation there occurs the translation of the Word (and the congregation is obedient to it) into a word addressed also to the world in its concrete existence - can one really call this concept of revelation a positivism? If positivism is an insistence on and an adherence to individual truths, their presentation for mere acceptance without showing how they are related to man, can this charge really be applied to Barth's view? Even if one upholds with Barth an actualism of his description, even if one says with him that the possibility of the Church speaking to the world and that the form and content of that speaking is something which is in the hands of God, the lord of the Church, who lets the Church participate in his confrontation of the world, so that the measure for the concreteness and quality of that speech is not derived from the exigencies of the world - does that mean that one is involved in a positivism? Does it also mean that the witness of the congregation, its action, that the being of the Church under promise of her and the world's lord, that his preservation of the Church's substance for the sake

but are not identical with revelation. This way does not speak of God as it was defined.

The second way is a radical abnegatio sui: all of man is surrendered so that he becomes sheer receptivity to the being of God. Man as man is overcome by placing himself under the judgment, all titanism is done away with, man dies to himself so that every obstacle is removed. It is asserted that the utter negation before which man stands, the abyss he falls into here is God. God, in other words, is spoken of here in terms of a very loud negation of man, or in terms of the description of man's radical criticism. But this way does not proceed to the question of the final positivity beyond the negative. God, however, cannot be spoken of when man is denied. God's Word is addressed to man in his concrete existence. "The cross is erected, but the resurrection is not preached; and therefore it is not really the cross of Christ. It is some other cross."[199] When God enters with his fulness into our emptiness, with his Yes to us into our No - then we may speak of God.

The third way is the way of dialectics. Barth says that he travels on this way, since it 'repudiates every continuity between hither and yon. It refers to an identity which cannot be established nor presumed by us,' (Supra.,p.45).

On this way then the question of our obligation and commission to speak God's Word is to be answered. Here we are to explore what is involved in the promise that God's Word shall be proclaimed in man's words. This obligation brings theology to the event between testiminy and proclamation. The hermeneutical question is determined by the event-character of the Word of God, so that right from the beginning the question 'what does the text say?, What is the meaning of Scripture? ' is led through the critical-historical method of exegesis to the movement from God to man which, like the bird in flight, cannot be depicted. The task of hermeneutics is thus not only to verify human expressions, human

---

of the Church's commission and that man's freedom given him in his obedience are not a concretisation, a being of revelation apart from the event of the Word? Are all these factors of so little significance that one must conclude that God has revealed himself in vain? I cannot agree that Bonhoeffer's charge is valid.
198:Barth, The Word of God and the Task etc.,in Word,p.198f.
199: Ibid.,p.205.

testimony, but also and above all to question the text so that the answer promised in the text may in fact elicit the right kind of questions - namely for truth, reality and salvation. But this cannot be done when the text is taken away or abstracted from the event of God's Word. Barth said this to Harnack when he remarked that for the understanding of revelation, occuring through the Spirit, critical reflection, historical knowledge, etc. are of preparatory value and thus necessary. But they cannot bring about the event. Similarly, the real Jesus Christ cannot be depicted by historical analyses; they rather come across 'an imaginary Christ', not the one to whom the New Testament witnesses.

Harnack had then asked: how is scientific theology possible if its object is not open to scientific methods and cognition? His question actually is: how can one have a science if its object is not open to direct insight.

(Agnes von Zahn-Harnack writes in her biography of Harnack that philosophers would not be able to regard Harnack as a philosopher. Even Harnack's friend, Dilthey, knew that his ideas and Harnack's were worlds apart. She writes that Harnack thought differently, not in the sense of dis-agreement but rather in the sense of moving in a different sphere. It means that Harnack did not really follow what Dilthey and others really had to say. In our context it would indicate that he did not ask the question of the presuppositions of human cognition, of human thought in the way Dilthey and others, such as Troeltsch, did. Harnack's late essays about human understanding reveal that he did not see the same problems as Troeltsch, for example, in his Der Historismus und seine Probleme. Because Harnack did not raise such questions he could not see the distinction between a science that claims direct insight and one which sees the need for dialectical speech in order to express its insights. In the natural sciences the concept of complementarity became necessary shortly after Harnack and Barth had this discussion.)

In that 'staggering' address at Aarau, Barth said in Harnack's hearing that "it is abundantly clear that intelligent and fruitful discussion of the Bible begins beyond the insights in its human, historical-psychological character."[200] Later in their cor--

200: Biblical Questions, Insights etc., in Op.Cit.,p. 60f.

testimony, but also and above all to question the text so that the answer promised in the text may in fact elicit the right kind of questions - namely for truth, reality and salvation. But this cannot be done when the text is taken away or abstracted from the event of God's Word. Barth said this to Harnack when he remarked that for the understanding of revelation, occuring through the Spirit, critical reflection, historical knowledge, etc. are of preparatory value and thus necessary. But they cannot bring about the event. Similarly, the real Jesus Christ cannot be depicted by historical analyses; they rather come across 'an imaginary Christ', not the one to whom the New Testament witnesses.

Harnack had then asked: how is scientific theology possible if its object is not open to scientific methods and cognition? His question actually is: how can one have a science if its object is not open to direct insight.

(Agnes von Zahn-Harnack writes in her biography of Harnack that philosophers would not be able to regard Harnack as a philosopher. Even Harnack's friend, Dilthey, knew that his ideas and Harnack's were worlds apart. She writes that Harnack thought differently, not in the sense of dis-agreement but rather in the sense of moving in a different sphere. It means that Harnack did not really follow what Dilthey and others really had to say. In our context it would indicate that he did not ask the question of the presuppositions of human cognition, of human thought in the way Dilthey and others, such as Troeltsch, did. Harnack's late essays about human understanding reveal that he did not see the same problems as Troeltsch, for example, in his Der Historismus und seine Probleme. Because Harnack did not raise such questions he could not see the distinction between a science that claims direct insight and one which sees the need for dialectical speech in order to express its insights. In the natural sciences the concept of complementarity became necessary shortly after Harnack and Barth had this discussion.)

In that 'staggering' address at Aarau, Barth said in Harnack's hearing that "it is abundantly clear that intelligent and fruitful discussion of the Bible begins beyond the insights in its human, historical-psychological character."[200] Later in their cor-

200: Biblical Questions, Insights etc., in Op.Cit.,p. 60f.

respondence Barth charges that Harnack's historical analysis of the gospel, wishing to base itself on nothing but historical facts, is predetermined by his ontology of culture and his 'historical pantheism' (Bultmann) which are in fact ontological constructs preceding and therefore determining that analysis of the gospel.

But criticism does not answer the question of how one speaks of God between one's obligation and inability to do so. The point of the criticism, however, is to show that that speech cannot come from any assumed relationalism [201] but that it comes from the event of God's self-revelation in the testimony of men to him. This event makes our speaking possible.

Barth's presupposition for theology is this event of revelation, is the history which God's Word makes for itself. But exactly that which goes before the hermeneutics, that which is indicated in the pre - namely the event of the Word, God's free self-communication, is emphasised by this method. For this reason it is aware that it cannot on its own capture or bring about the event nor that it can be related to cultural, personal or historical factors with which one then might dispose over it or reproduce it.

Theology is therefore obliged to follow the movement of the event. It lies somewhere between the text and the proclamation, between Scripture and theology. Thus, one must follow the thinking of the text, of the Scripture. "It is the peculiarity of biblical thought and speech that they flow from a source which is above religious antinomies such as creation and redemption, grace and judgment, nature and spirit, earth and heaven, promise and fulfillment. To be sure, it enters now upon this and now upon that side of the antitheses, but it never brings them pedantically to an end, never stands still in the consequences, hardens neither in thesis or antithesis, nowhere stiffens into final negations or affirmations. It has no sense for what our ponderous age calls an 'honest either-or'. It is concerned with the Yes just as much and as little as with the No, for the truth lies not in the Yes and not in the No, but in the knowledge of the beginning from which the Yes and the No arise. It is a thought and speech which are original, a thought and a speech coming from and going to the whole.

201: I owe this term to Dr.H.W.Frei's The Doctrine of Revelation in the Thought of Karl Barth 1909 - 1922.

... It is a thought and speech that wants to be taken seriously but never on its word. ... It is through and through dialectical. ... The Bible has only one theological interest and that is purely objective: the interest in God himself."[202] Theological speech must correspond to biblical speech.

Thus, we return to consider the way of dialectics. "This way from the outset undertakes seriously and positively to develop the idea of God on the one hand and the criticism of man and all things human on the other; but they are not now considered independently but are both referred to their common presupposition, the living truth which, to be sure, may not be named, but which lies between them and gives to both - the affirmed and the negated - their meaning and interpretation. Here is an unwavering insight into the fact that the living truth, as the decisive content of any real utterance concerning God, is that God (but really God!) becomes man (but really man!). - But how shall the necessary dependence of both sides of the truth upon this living centre be established? The genuine dialectician knows that this centre cannot be apprehended or beheld and he will not if he can help it allow himself to be drawn into giving direct information about it, knowing that all such information, whether it be positive or negative, is not really information, but always either dogma or criticism."[203]

For Barth this centre is the 'centre of the gospel', is the 'essence of the matter (namely the relation between God and man)' it is the oneness of God and man in Jesus Christ. This centre is not at man's disposal, it can only be witnessed to by a process of continuous affirmation and negation. Neither side of this process can claim finality because they are parabolic only.

But parabolic statements are based on the presupposition that somewhere between question and answer there lies the promised living truth as reality. "The positive assertion sounds unambiguous and so does the negative, but the further assertion that both ... in the last analysis assert the same thing is ambiguous in the highest degree."[204] - How can such ambiguous speech carry meaning and bear witness? When it does succeed in this it is be-

202:Barth, Op.Cit.,p.72f. 203:Barth,The Word of God and the Task etc., in Word,p.206f. 204: Ibid.,p.210.

cause the living centre asserts itself and creates both the right question and the right answer. This the dialectician cannot do; God speaks not as a part of the dialectical process but when it breaks off. The method cannot bring about the event on which it is based and to which it points.

On the one hand this dialectics is critical insofar as it repudiates every continuity between the world of man and that of God. This third way makes it most plain that the truth is painfully absent from all ways because here everything is said in reference to God only. But on the other hand it is constructive insofar as it does indeed refer to the event of God's presence, of the miracle of God's addressing man. It points to the synthesis which precedes thesis and antithesis in the dialectics. But that thetical-antithetical way of speech is all we have. "God is one, the God of Jacob in eternity who reveals himself as God to man. But we can understand that we cannot understand God other than in a duality, in the duality of dialectics, in which one must become two so that two is really one."[205]

With this inadequate way we, who are obliged but unable to speak of God, are to give him glory, precisely because in it God remains God and not a dogmatic dictum or an imaginary God.

This dialectical thought and speech corresponds to biblical thought and speech, to the need and promise of Christian preaching. The locus of real speech and thought concerning God is between Scripture and preaching, thesis and antithesis, and since it is the event of revelation which, as the synthesis, sets in motion the dialectical way, one cannot speak on it as a spectator who from the outside makes his observations and comments but as insiders who have been addressed, claimed and laid hold of. Or, in Barth's words, our questions are not answered until the answer, given in revelation, has re-made our questions and thus opened the door to the real answer. "How could we find out and understand the answer in any other way? But the answer is the primary. It would be no question if it were not the answer."[206] The fact that we go to the Scripture with the question for the Word of God, which the Scripture claims to be in its witness, presupposes that the Word has been spoken in it; the Word testified to in it leads to

205:Barth, Römerbrief II,p.342. 206:Barth, The Need and Promise etc. in Op.Cit.,p.120.

the question for that Word and in correlation with the Spirit becomes event between Scripture and testimony. "We are not outside, but inside; the knowledge of God and the last things of which the Bible speaks, is the premise of all our life and thought. ... The question about God is a last inevitability, it contains its own answer, we are caught and taken captive by a presupposed and original Yes ... ."[207]

'In many and diverse ways' Barth had expressed this to Harnack in their correspondence. 'The gospel is communicated through an action of its own content - the one revelation of God in Christ. The content of the gospel is God become man, subject, and this is really understood as an utterance of God only in the event when he becomes subject again and thus confronts us. This event cannot be reproduced through critical-historical study or methods nor is it an experience which can be analysed psychologically. Whatever we study critically-historically and psychologically is symptomatic only of the event. Direct statements about God are not possible since there is an utter contrast between God and man which only the cross of Christ, man's judgment bridges. Yet this contrast, this either-or is also the unity of God and man, the overcoming of the contrast and the salvation of man from judgment. The No to man in the cross is also the Yes to him. But the knowledge of this content and thus of man's salvation is knowledge of things promised in the Bible, the fulfillment comes from God only in the event of his speaking in fact this Word to me. Outside of the sphere of this event, outside God's judgment and his No one will speak as a spectator and thus not make real statements about the Word addressed to man. Such statements would rather empty faith; they do not speak of God, replace the Word with something which is at best only symptomatic of it.

'The event itself cannot be brought about by man. If there is a way to it then the content of it must be that way, the speaking voice must also be the listening ear. God alone is the way to it and the goal of that way. Revelation as a concept already implies that one cannot go from here to the beyond. The Bible itself indicates this since it speaks of God, of the beyond, of

207: Barth, Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas, in Word, p.53f.

salvation, etc. in a testimonial or kerygmatic fashion. It speaks of it as something new outside the correlation of human words and deeds but exactly as such placed into that correlation, so that it came as the new, incomprehensible thing of God clothed in human words and deeds.

'This testimony is the Scriptures through which by the action of the Spirit, of God himself, God's Word speaks to me and this the Scriptures claim may occur when it is proclaimed to-day.

'The Scripture witnesses to revelation, to the incarnation of God's Word in Christ. It does this, however, by hiding this reality from every desire to speak of it directly. There can be no direct historical comprehension of the historical reality of revelation witnessed to. This witness refers to the resurrection, to the risen Christ. He is the Word of God which we cannot pronounce as God pronounces it.

'This Word can only be believed. This unbelievable testimony is known by faith only insofar as one accepts it by obedience to the testimony, which declares - as if it were God himself speaking - that it does in fact testify to his Word and that this Word is addressed to me. Through the Holy Spirit the miracle of transformation takes place and the testimony, when proclaimed, becomes in fact God's own Word addressing me. Faith is thus God working on us.

'But faith, our saying yes to the testimony does not produce that miracle. Faith, the acceptance of the testimony, needs to be correlated to the Holy Spirit, the testimonium spiritus sancti internum, in order to confront us with the Word. Yet, the fulfillment of this correlation is not a human possibility. When it does happen that the correlation is fulfilled and the miracle takes place, we who cannot hear God's Word are given to hear it, we who cannot believe it are given to do just that, we who cannot find God are given to find him, awakened from death to life. The miracle of revelation confronts us with God's Word and we hear it, we are confronted with Jesus Christ, the risen Christ, so that we in fact stand before judgment and grace, death and resurrection, our own judgment and death and God's grace and his gift of life.

'However, since this event and its content cannot be produ-

ced or expressed by us, we can only point to it. Our human faculties are indeed incapable of understanding the gospel so that there is no link between them and it. But this statement is not meant to discard those faculties. The human may move between the memory and the expectation of revelation. It may indeed be symptomatic or parabolic of the gospel, of faith, of revelation. The human may and thus does testify to the divine.[208] And because human faculties, words and deeds as the relative may witness to God they are very much involved in our communicating the gospel, in theology. So that our witness may be a witness to God's Word and not to something else, those faculties are essential. Otherwise one might land in the 'horrid swamp of the psychology of the subconscious', represent a 'gnostic occultism', end up with an 'anthroposophical chaos of faith and occult possibilities' against which theology may well be helpless.

'Theology must be satisfied with its testimonial character. It cannot link the human and faith, history and revelation. It can point to their identity by dialectical speech but cannot establish or presume that identity.

'The human must be made free from its false sacredness. If we see it in its true secularity we can honour it in its kerygmatic possibilities.'

208: "All that which is and occurs in man and on account of his actions is brought into relation to God in Jesus. God then judges its worth according to his pleasure. Everything must pass through this test, must be weighed on this scale; nothing can escape the action of this balance-wheel. This critical position ~~position~~ signifies an understanding of the worldly, a comprehension of the human and an interpretation of the historical in their secular, relative and finally meaningless context as well as in their parabolic and witnessing aspect, through which they are a testimony to and a reminder of the wholly other world, the wholly other man and the wholly other history - of God. ... Jesus Christ is shown forth and accredited as God's son, because in his sonship man's flesh, being under the dominion of sin, becomes a parable. In his sonship there is to be seen what the human, the worldly, the historical and the natural really are: only transparent things, only images, only signs, only relative things in relation to God, the creator. ... Speaking in temporal language or expressing it in comprehensive terms we may say that we are 'related' to Christ insofar as our existence, as existence under tribulation, is through no effort of our own a likeness or an analogue of his death. His death is, however, that by which men are led to apprehend themselves in God: namely in their decline lies their rise, in their weakness their strength, in their death their life. Christ's death is significant for us in that it is the

(Here is the point where the extension of the historical interest of neo-protestantism to its ultimate conclusion by Overbeck comes in. It was the merit of liberal theology not only to have given depth and greater clarity to our knowledge of history but also to have sharpened our critical outlook. Bultmann writes that "it was an education for freedom and truthfulness".[209] The concern for radical truthfulness, for freedom from traditions and thus from dogmatic determinations is apparent in Overbeck's work. For him the point of historical criticism is to bring about that freedom for scientific cognition and to make clear that the sphere which faith seeks to grasp cannot be grasped by scientific methods. His own method, the 'radical biblical science' to which Harnack refers, was thus a secular one. It is obvious why Harnack feared that Barth or anyone else who adopted Overbeck's method would 'hand over to the secular sciences what is known as theology'.)

'If we regard human statements as being in fact testimony, if we see that 'Christian biographies, pedagogy, and protests against the world' are parabolic only of the divine, if in other words this radical biblical, this 'negative science' has shown us a posteriori that the relative cannot be posited as the absolute, theology will avoid ideologizing the object of its study. If theology were again to begin by reminding itself that its own beginning was as the testimony to God's Word and if it were again to have the courage to witness to that Word of judgment, of revelation, of God's love it would again be objective and scientific.

'Thus, Barth goes on, God is absolutely not like anything said about him on the basis of culture or ethics. Goethe's pantheism and Kant's conception of God, resting on the moral argument, are not statements about God. This No can be said only in the faith in revelation, for this No, stripping the relative of all pretensions to absoluteness, allows the recognition of the true absolute. But that means that the No, posited by revelation and uttered by theology - if it is objective - can be comprehended in its affirmative character. For the No, pronounced by revelation

---

threshold from judgment to the judge, from tribulation to him who is and makes free, from despair to hope. It is the event in which we apprehend ourselves in God." Barth, Römerbrief II,p.82,p.263,p.176.
209: Die liberale Theologie etc., in Glauben und Verstehen I,p.2.

over all that is relative, is also the Yes, secretly and deeply.

'Thus, revelation is the crisis of the human. In this sense it is a negative concept inasmuch as it forbids all identifications between here and beyond, only God can make them. But it is also a positive concept as it gives to what is here significance and promise, significance namely by making it parabolic for the beyond, open, in other words, really to point to the divine and not to idols, promise by freeing it from an unreal consciousness of absoluteness, of living in God, in eternity. This No frees theology really from metaphysics, from illusions, from frivolity in faith.'

7) Theologia crucis and theologia viatorum.

Barth had said that he regarded his theological statements as a theologia crucis. It is also a theologia viatorum because it has no fixed standpoint on which it rests. It is a theology which claims that it 'does not pretend consistently to be in possession' of final knowledge of God. It is rather a science bound by its object insofar as its activity begins not with man's search for and discovery of God by means of an appropriate method but rather with man's being confronted, addressed and instructed by God, for which reason its cognition is re-cognition, its knowledge ac-knowledge-ment, its thought re-flections. Its cogitare derives from the cogere of revelation, as Barth was to say later in his Christian Dogmatics.

Its task is to testify to God's Word. That is to say its life is the ever new reception and subsequent transmission of that Word, so that it really consists not in being a particular methodology appropriate to its object or a particular ontology of the world and man - all these may be 'fruits that fall into its hands later as a reward', (as Harnack put it, Supra.,p.47), - it consists rather in its prayer for the Holy Spirit as it points like Grünewald's Baptist to Christ.

Instead of saying that theology is a bound science one may say that its stance toward its object is obedience. This is because God's Word, as the object, must again and again be heard anew, for man cannot comprehend it on his own, Theology is ad-

dressed by this Word and through this confrontation it is placed into the motion that moves it from testimony to proclamation. The theologian is therefore not a spectator but a witness, he is not outside the event, but inside it, drawn into it by the Word.

In this sense it is theologia viatorum: being addressed it obeys, hearing it speaks, speaking it witnesses, witnessing it prays for the Spirit - it is always in motion; it cannot stand still and attempt by a prescribed method to depict what is in motion, it cannot attempt to become a theologia perennis. Theology cannot accomplish what only God can do - reveal himself. Thus its activity, the testimony to God, keeps it constantly on the road only toward 'final and highest knowledge of God'.

But this means that theology has no possession of its object nor any assurance of its findings. It has no more than the promise of God's Word that theology will in fact hear and proclaim that Word. It hopes and waits for that fulfillment. The fulfillment itself is in the hands of God because it is the answer he gives to man in the situation of being addressed by God, in the Word-event. (Barth never ceases to emphasise that God's Word is not an object, but a subject acting in confronting man. The Word is never separated from God who speaks it so that the object - the Word - is always the subject - God - and vice versa.) In other words, theology must expect to receive from God and from nothing else what it cannot give itself or take from somewhere.

Why is this theology en route a theologia crucis? In his Aarau address Barth depicted eloquently the source of theological speech. Using the illustration of John the Baptist in the Isenheim Altar, he says: "The only source for the real, the immediate, revelation of God is death. Christ unlocked its gates. He brought life to light out of death. ... After this it is natural that the Prince of Peace of the last day, the Servant of God among the peoples, the heaven-descended Son of Man of the Old Testament, who comes to occupy the central place of the New Testament, should be the crucified. ... Out of death life. Thence comes the knowledge of God as father, as the origin, as the creator of heaven and earth. Thence comes its grace as the first and the last word, the decisive, the thoroughgoing, the inexpressible word for the sove-

reign, kingly relation of God to estranged humanity."[210] Its wisdom is wisdom of death, Todesweisheit, according to Overbeck,[211] a wisdom which, because man has sacrificed his wisdom to God's judgment so that he may lay hold of God's promise, has been given to man through the bearer of that promise, Christ the crucified. As a theology without possessions but with great hope, without fulfillment but with the promise of fulfillment, without the contentment of having arrived at its final destiny but with the expectation 'of death being swallowed up in victory',(Supra.,p.46), it is a theology in Anfechtung, a theologia crucis.

We may stop here and close the circle. Harnack accused Barth of a docetism which, because it avoided the critical-historical study of the gospel, preached an imaginary Christ. Therefore it was not theology that Barth was engaged in but preaching, a 'theology from within' which in its testimony acted as a ferment but went about it as if it were genuinely scientific theology, theologia gloriae. Barth replies that the so-called 'theology from without', based on an idealism which perceived Reason in history and culture, thus speaking of objectified revelation (these phrases are all Harnack's, Supra.,p.110, ftnte.),in fact empties theology because it bypasses the cross. It is a theologia gloriae, not the theology which Barth would like to see taught. Real theology would rather have to be theologia crucis, not an assured speaking from - yes - an arduously won, scientific point of view but rather an impassioned prayer for the creator Spirit, which, as Barth says, is for us always the first and the last thing,(Supra.,p.33).

Barth now breaks off his exposition of 'his theology'. And the few pointed questions he poses to Harnack show that he feels that there really was no discussion with understanding between them. Barth says that he knows of the relativity of all theological utterances as well as of the need for him to rethink and restate his own views. But he cannot allow that Harnack's charges against him are taken to be correct; his own study is therefore to continue in the same direction as before.

Harnack replied briefly to Barth and also suggests that the

210:Barth, Biblical Questions,Insights and Vistas, in Word,p. 77f.
211: Ibid.,p. 83.

discussion be discontinued. What he was to express systematically four years later at Bonn in his lectures Die Entstehung der christlichen Theologie und des kirchlichen Dogmas he states thetically now. Theology is one thing, preaching another. For this reason those who witness are in themselves objects of theological study. Their work acts as a ferment, as a guideline to scientific theology. But because it aims basically at edification its objectivity is not scientific objectivity the aim of which is only the pure cognition of its object. 'Educated' and 'edifying' thinking must not be mixed together for both suffer from such a commixture.

And again Harnack the historian, drawing on his immense knowledge of history, judges Barth's theology to be destructive for the community of Christians because of its dialectics and its concept of revelation. They push the believer into the dilemma between scepticism and naive biblicism and allow no alternative views.

Harnack's view, based on historical studies, is this: Barth's theology is a "very strong and clear expression of a kind of Christian experience not unknown to me, to which experience however I cannot give general validity exclusively. I must rather confess that it is a stage which can and must be overcome. ... One must keep to the reality of History."[212]

The discussion ended, never to be entered upon again by these two men. Yet even in its incompleteness, does it not have profound significance for the history of theology?

212: Harnack in a letter to Barth, cited in Busch, Op.Cit.,p. 126f.

SECTION III

AN EVALUATION OF THE CORRESPONDENCE

1) The issue of the correspondence and its larger context.

The issue in the correspondence between Harnack and Barth is the modus loquendi de Deo. The question asked by both men is: how do we speak appropriately and adequately of God? What is the ontology and the hermeneutics in our speech concerning God? What is the science of theology? In the course of their discussion the questions were answered. We looked at them and at the answers in the previous section. We saw that both men reject each other's answers. Harnack accused Barth of not being scientific; Barth accused Harnack of emptying theology of its real task.

Which of the two ways of speaking about God is the right one is a question which we need not answer here. The history of theology since then has not declared itself unequivocally in favour of either. Indeed, the very men whom Harnack addressed as despisers of scientific theology parted ways some years after this public discussion precisely because they differed in their views about the appropriate way of speaking about God.

Our question, however, is somewhat different. Modus loquendi de Deo - the way of speaking of God. But to speak of him cannot mean in this context an interior monologue of pious self-reflection. It is the public speech concerning God on the part of theology and Church. It is the audible conversation between people, it is a speaking which has distinct intentions and expectations. - On the one hand it is a speaking which seeks to be understood by him to whom it is addressed so that he is in the position either to agree with what was said or to disagree with it. But to be understood is the intention. On the other hand it is a speaking which expects that understanding to result, because the creation of that understanding is actually not within the powers of that speaking. My speech can facilitate or hinder the occurence of understanding, but it cannot create it. In the case of man's speech about God the intention is, of course, to be understood in such a way that agreement results. The expectation of it is the awakening of faith. The creation of faith is not within the powers of man's speaking of God. The actual understanding of God and faith in him derive from a source outside of man's way of speaking about God.

Harnack and Barth are both aware of this. The former speaks of the experience of God, the latter of faith as that source. And here arises the need for appropriate speaking. It is not enough merely to retreat into atheism or agnosticism and not speak at all of God just because that source is not at man's disposal. Theology must rather move on systematically and scientifically, based on the question: how do we speak and think of God if understanding and faith are our aims and hoped-for results? Or negatively: how must we not speak and think of God when we affirm that the source of those hoped-for results is not at our disposal?

The answers here cannot be a theologia perennis. The theologian and the Church must always 'in every period of time think for that period of time', (Barth, Supra.,p.39). But the period of time into which the correspondence falls is a time which from the point of view of the history of theology is highly noteworthy. In it there arose a group of young theologians whose speech concerning God came to be labelled 'dialectical theology' on account of their speaking and thinking theologically. Their work caused a far-reaching questioning of theological thought and speech.

Our question may therefore be put as follows: what kind of theological thinking and speaking is manifest in the correspondence which may be said to have brought about changes in theology and Church?

The aim of every theology in the Church is the pure docendi evangelii. It is also Harnack's. So much so indeed that for fear this aim would not be realised by the younger theologians he approached them with his questions. His concern was, in other words, reformatory in intention. Only an ecclesia semper reformanda will fulfill that aim. Barth's aim and concern is precisely the same, so that both refute the other's position for the identical reason, thinking that the gospel is not taught nor is the Church called back to its true destiny or led forward to it by the other's way of speaking about God.

But what is a reformation of the Church? Basically it is a new establishing of the Church. It is an attempt to give the Church a foundation on which she can stand and carry out her intention: the worship of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. The foundation

itself is not man's to lay but he can and must see to it that he does in fact stand on it when he speaks of God, worships and obeys him. In this sense man can give the Church the foundation for her true worship and teaching. But in order to do this he cannot avoid raising the question about the truths of which or in which the Church speaks and lives, such as the authority of the Scriptures, the sovereignty of God, the validity of Jesus Christ as God's self-revelation, the redemption of man and the meaning of faith. The point of raising these questions is two-fold; one must see whether they are in fact proclaimed without error and secondly, if they are taught that way, whether the response to them is genuine Christian life and obedience. The question about the condition of the Church in relation to her destiny is a theological and a practical one. It is a question for both the theologian and the preacher, using here Harnack's distinction, it is one involving both the academic and the practical spheres of theology in Barth's sense.

But it means that the question leads to a decision. One must agree or disagree, that is decide for or against revelation in the sense of deciding to seek God and our source of knowledge of him where he has given himself to be found by us: in his revelation in Jesus Christ. Since both Harnack and Barth insist that our knowledge of God is knowledge <u>sub specie Christi</u> the question becomes: whose decision for Christ as God's revelation is genuine not only in intention but also in its execution?

The Barth-Harnack correspondence is too short a document, too specific in its scope that one can answer that question based on it alone. It addressed itself to the matter of scientific theology and what scientific theology was concerned with. It is obvious, therefore, that an answer to that question would have to consider the other writings of these men. We cannot do that here. Yet even though one cannot determine Luther's position as a reformer (to take a historic example) from a study of his disputation with Dr. Eck at Leipzig in July 1519, there is still emerging in that discussion what is indicative of the recall of the Church to her lord. Similarly, the full theological position of Harnack and Barth cannot be determined from a study of their

exchange of letters, those letters are still indicative of a new reformation in the Church. It is reflected in the discussion of the scientific character of theology.

The concern with an adequate way of speaking about God brought theology in the nineteenth century into a confrontation with two different opponents. Facing inward, it had to contend with Orthodoxy and Pietism. The former spoke of God in terms of metaphysical categories and was accused of thinking about "revelation and faith without having clearly understood how the reality of salvation encounters man and is understood by him. Orthodoxy has almost completely forgotten that whatever the Church teaches about God, the Trinity, the natures and preexistence of Christ does not refer to things in themselves (Ansichsein), but rather to a history of God's revelation and his dealing with man. Orthodoxy hardly knows any more that faith does not comprehend God's being per se but his being for us. Our comprehension of him can thus be nothing other than our acknowledgement of Christ as lord, it can be only the obedience of faith. ... God is unveiled in his effects, (Wirkungen) only. We can partake of salvation only as we experience these effects, only as we are personally grasped by them, which means that we are saved in the active relation of faith in Christ and in the appropriation of God's will by our own will."[1] Melanchthon's statement - hoc est Christum cognoscere beneficia eius cognoscere (non quod isti - scholastici - docent, eius naturas, modos incarnationis contueri), from his Loci Communes, 1521, - became the guideline in Christology at the time of this confrontation. If we however speak of God per se, we do not really speak of him as revealed in Jesus Christ because apart from that revelation we do not know God. Pietism, on the other hand, spoke very much of Jesus, but in such a manner that his historical existence in the first decades of our era was abrogated. The objection against it was that the Jesus Christ confessed here is more an imaginary than the real Christ since both critical reflection and historical knowledge were repudiated and the Bible left to speak for itself. That means however that he who is worshipped is not really the Christ whom the gospel proclaims to us. It rather is the Jesus

1: Christoph Senft, Wahrhaftigkeit und Wahrheit, p.129.

which the particular individual reads into the Bible. Here one does not go beyond the biblicist view of Christ and since that Christ is one who is at man's disposal it is not the lord who in complete freedom gave himself to man.

Facing outward, theology confronted various forms of positivism, especially that of the natutal sciences. It challenged theology to propose a method in which it could speak of God with the same assuredness as the sciences believed they could speak of the objects of their investigation.

Science demands that the object of experience be in fact experienced and that it can be portrayed in its truth and reality by means of a correct method. This would be possible only if the object of religious experience could be studied through the repetition of this experience at any time and at any place. Otherwise one could not speak of a strict scientific method in the strict sense of that word. Even if one could make the demands of the scientific method less stringent, one would still insist that this experience is capable of being verified by anyone, otherwise the deductions made about the object are of no account. The question arising for the theologian in this situation is this: how can one continue one's allegiance to the Bible in this confrontation with science so that justice is indeed done to science and one's heritage of Church and religion? Obviously one must allow science to observe theology in its determination to remove the nimbus from the Bible and thus also remove the scandal which the sciences see in theology: the technical impossibility of demonstrating and proving the existence of its object. Precisely by entering into a very close relationship with science in general and by professing the one scientific task, the pure cognition of its object, theology will overcome this scandal and uphold the relative divinity of the Bible through its very content. This is done by using history and by applying the critical-historical method to the divine in history.

The appropriate method of operation became the paramount concern. It rested on two assumptions:" The first basic assumption of theological thought lies precisely in a methodological consideration, in the balance between an objective, scientific method and a purely non-theoretical, inward directness to God. And

secondly, this method rests on the assumption that between 'faith' and 'faith-experience' and revelation there exists a perfect correlation or symmetrical relationship."[2]

Over and against this stand those to whom the results of that method are impressive neither to science nor to faith because what emerges from it is neither a purely human nor a purely divine phenomenon. It is suggested by these critics that the very search for such unified knowledge is basically mistaken because it fails to grasp the unbridgeable distance between the divine and the human. The demands of the scientific method which challenged theology, namely the portrayal of the object of experience in its truth and reality and the verifiability of the experience at any time and place, do not correspond to the nature of faith, of the Christian's encounter with God. It is mistaken to attempt the isolation of a condition in the Christian's life which has transcended the ever-remaining distance mentioned and then to make this condition comprehensible directly to human cognition.

In the final analysis, a science the task of which is the pure cognition of its object becomes a positivism if it assumes that its noetic ratio is expressive of its ontic ratio univocally. The formal relations established by our ontological concepts and constructs are again and again broken through by that which those concepts and constructs describe as reality, truth, being.

The objectivity of theology as a science derives therefore not primarily from the answer it gives to the question: how can I grasp and present the object - God?, but rather from the answer to this question: what is the reality - God - of which I am to speak? Its appropriateness or adequacy would be "the assimilation of the mind to the object of its own systematic or scientific search. It is a certain obedience and loyalty to the object of investigation. It is objective in the sense that the method of investigation is a secondary concern compared to the actual understanding of the object. The understanding of the nature of the object actually moulds the method which will be appropriate for investigation."[3]

But what does objectivity, what does being scientific mean

2: H.-W. Frei, Op.Cit.,p.512. 3: Ibid.,p.205.

in relation to an object which is claimed to be separated from man by an unbridgeable distance? How is a science of God possible when he is said not to be open to scientific cognition? Unless one becomes positivistic, what noetic ratio is necessary which does not identify itself with its ontic ratio?

2) Objectivity, subjectivity and cognition.

The experience of modern physics may serve as an example here because it asked those same questions in regard to its object of investigation.

The ideal of classical physics was a strict objectivity which, if the scientist adhered to it consistently, would allow in conjunction with experimental investigation a pure cognition of the object. That this belief was not illusory was demonstrably clear. The ideal of cognition seemed assured when one's subjectivity was totally suppressed and one proceeded without presuppositions to the objectifying, positive cognition of facts. Such cognition would require constant reappraisal with the advance of knowledge.

This method operated with the subject-object dichotomy in relation to reality. It was challenged, however, by the quantum-theory of Planck, the principle of relativity of Einstein, Bohr's concept of complementarity and Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy. Modern physics finds itself unable to speak of reality in an objectifying manner and uphold the subject-object dichotomy. The Kantian forms of cognition, space and time, and the categories of thought, substance and causality, appear in an essentially different light to physics to-day. The conclusions of its research no longer permit the conception of the world as the object of physical or materialistic thinking and of the will of man to manipulate it at his pleasure since it is a machine, as Descartes proposed.

The step from the various fragments of knowledge gained by experimental study to a comprehensive picture of reality per se, which was the aim of that physical or materialistic thinking, can no longer be made. Reality is simply no longer objectifiable in the view of modern physics. " Non-objectifiability means that the axiom of Western epistemology, the division namely of the areas of

in relation to an object which is claimed to be separated from man by an unbridgeable distance? How is a science of God possible when he is said not to be open to scientific cognition? Unless one becomes positivistic, what noetic ratio is necessary which does not identify itself with its ontic ratio?

2) Objectivity, subjectivity and cognition.

The experience of modern physics may serve as an example here because it asked those same questions in regard to its object of investigation.

The ideal of classical physics was a strict objectivity which, if the scientist adhered to it consistently, would allow in conjunction with experimental investigation a pure cognition of the object. That this belief was not illusory was demonstrably clear. The ideal of cognition seemed assured when one's subjectivity was totally suppressed and one proceeded without presuppositions to the objectifying, positive cognition of facts. Such cognition would require constant reappraisal with the advance of knowledge.

This method operated with the subject-object dichotomy in relation to reality. It was challenged, however, by the quantum-theory of Planck, the principle of relativity of Einstein, Bohr's concept of complementarity and Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy. Modern physics finds itself unable to speak of reality in an objectifying manner and uphold the subject-object dichotomy. The Kantian forms of cognition, space and time, and the categories of thought, substance and causality, appear in an essentially different light to physics to-day. The conclusions of its research no longer permit the conception of the world as the object of physical or materialistic thinking and of the will of man to manipulate it at his pleasure since it is a machine, as Descartes proposed.

The step from the various fragments of knowledge gained by experimental study to a comprehensive picture of reality per se, which was the aim of that physical or materialistic thinking, can no longer be made. Reality is simply no longer objectifiable in the view of modern physics. " Non-objectifiability means that the axiom of Western epistemology, the division namely of the areas of

being, action and cognition can no longer be upheld as clearly as before. 'The aim of research is no longer the pure cognition of the atoms and their movements per se, that is distinct from our epistemological ways of posing the questions; we are rather right from the start in the very centre of the encounter between nature and man. The natural sciences are only a part of that encounter so that the usual divisions of the world into subject and object, the world within and the world without, body and soul no longer fit but rather lead to difficulties.' The cosmological picture of classical physics, which had become a Weltanschauung with its view of the infinity of space, the eternity of matter and the uninterrupted predictability of every course of events is gone. So is the faith that the world is an object over which man may dispose. Gone is the faith in the spiritual omnipresence of man in the world."[4]

The total effect of those discoveries and theories of modern physics is - at least for the scientist - the end of the kind of positivism for which the ontic and noetic ratio coincide. The epistemological picture of reality since then looks somewhat as follows: The primary zone of reality is nuclear reality. Then there is the zone of classical physics in which nuclear reality manifests itself and in which the scientist objectifies the former, primary zone. (It is obvious that modern physics cannot simply neglect classical physics because it is still in need of solid objects in its experiments. Consequently it works with objectified concepts as means of speaking of reality.) The third zone of reality is the physicist himself as the zone in which conclusions are drawn about the primary zone on the basis of the objectifications made in the second. In the last zone, the physicist himself, one speaks of his cognition and his experimental actions, but that division - cognition and experimental action - is a conceptual one only since in practice it cannot be made. The physicist can no longer be excluded from the process of cognition.

In other words the ideal of cognition held by positivists has undergone a radical change. The pure cognition in a totally objective way, a way on which the researchers' person is wholly

4: G. Howe, Parallelen zwischen der Theologie Karl Barths und der heutigen Physik, in Antwort, Festschrift for Barth 1956, p.413. This excerpt includes a quotation from Heisenberg.

excluded is no longer the way the scientist approaches reality. Man's cognition is now regarded as indirect cognition. On account of the experimental action to which reality is submitted our statements of reality are never statements about reality per se, but reality as objectified by us through that action. That means, as Bohr pointed out, that reality per se lies somewhere between our statements about it; our speech about reality must be complementary speech.

Complementary speech of reality as our noetic ratio is the conceptual representation of the scientist's objectivity vis-à-vis the superiority of the object, the ontic ratio, to which the complementary statements refer. The understanding of reality is a dialectical one. We must speak of thesis and antithesis when speaking about the synthesis which we cannot accomplish, which is not at our disposal.

This means that the supposed continuum of man and reality, on the basis of which direct statements about reality were assumed possible, is discarded. An autonomous construction of reality is, according to Heidegger, not a picture of reality but rather an anthropology. "The more completely and pervasively the world becomes an object at the disposal of man, the more objective that object appears and the more subjective, that is presumptuous, the subject becomes the more irresistibly cosmology and the study of the world become a teaching of man, an anthropology. Small wonder then that humanism arises only where the world becomes a picture. ... Humanism here means that philosophical interpretation of man which explains and evaluates being as a whole preceding from man to man."[5]

Modern physics has called a halt to that kind of epistemology and ontology in the realm of science. - It appears to me that the theology of Karl Barth does the same for theology for which reason I call it a reformatory theology.

The exact sciences do not make as sciences a Weltanschauung part of their system. Nor do they attempt anymore to establish an ontology of the universe. Through its methodology science now regards the world and analyses and describes it as a world of man,

5) Heidegger, Holzwege, p. 85f.

a world in which the hypothesis of God is no longer needed for its explication, as Laplace said. Furthermore the sciences also separate the area of the knowable from that of the unknowable.

Through Overbeck it became clear to Barth that theology has to speak of God in terms of 'secular' language. There is no 'holy' method for the study of the holy. God's revelation in Jesus Christ is revelation in history, in a human-historical possibility, as Barth said. Theology therefore has no choice but to describe that reality of revelation in terms of the epistemological means available to it. Surely, this was also Harnack's point; God's revelation is historical revelation and historical knowledge must be used to fathom it.

Where then is the difference? Melanchthon's statement cited above makes plain that God per se is not knowable to man. God is known when he reveals himself. Thus hoc est Christum cognoscere beneficia eius cognoscere. Kant's distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal parallels the distinction Melanchthon made. Kant argued that things-in-themselves are not knowable to us;specifically in relation to God we cannot use what is phenomenal to give us knowledge of him. Instead of cosmological proofs the argument of morality is to be used in the attempt to gain knowledge of him. But since morality is that life of man in or through which he has access to the divine - and this access is surely the point or meaning of the beneficia Christi - morality and thus theology are an aspect of the self-knowledge and self-confidence of the man who has benefitted from the gifts of Christ. This view of Kant's, knowledge of God proceeding from man through self-knowledge, has led to the view that theology is just as much as physics a part of a well ordered sphere of human possibilities. Theology has therefore the same basic task: the pure cognition of its object.

But Kant's epistemology, even though it distinguished between the noumenal and the phenomenal, still held that real knowledge of the real world is possible. The imposition on sense-data of the forms of cognition and the categories of thought made this possible. That means, however, a knowledge of the world proceeding from man, not in the sense of self-knowledge but in the sense of

an assimilation of the object to the mind. The method of understanding actually moulds the object of investigation.

In both cases, physical and theological knowledge, Kant's epistemology establishes knowledge which is humanistic in the Heideggerian sense, (Supra.,p. 184). Modern physics, however, finds itself unable to continue using the Kantian forms and categories and call its knowledge of the world and reality direct knowledge. The objection is exactly as Heidegger put it: the belief that an increasingly growing objectivity in man's epistemological control of the world leads to final insights does in fact lead to a confusion between anthropology and cosmology. This is because of the superimposition of the mind on the world. Modern physics for that reason goes beyond Kant and the classical physics he helped to shape with his theory of knowledge and speaks of those three zones of cognition mentioned above in which the mind is moulded by the object of investigation.

Theology, says Barth, is in a similar situation. When it states that its method cannot dispose over God's revelation, then it means that it has no knowledge of God unless he moulds the mind of man to become appropriate to the knowledge of him. It means that there is no continuum between man and God, that there is no direct insight into him. Such insight is the result rather of an objectification, as is the insight into reality which the scientific positivism prior to modern physics believed itself to have obtained. Barth labels such objectifications in theology 'impressions at best of the object of the gospel'. These objectifications were made on the basis of that method which, distinguishing between the noumenal (God per se) and the phenomenal (God's historical revelation) and thus proposing the method of obtaining knowledge of God through morality in its wider sense,spoke about God in terms of the anthropology of the man under the beneficia Christi. In this method the relative divinity of the Bible - as a source of religious insights - was upheld and the scandal of theology - the existence of its object in the sphere of the noumenal,its inaccessibility therefore to controlled investigation and subsequent inability of proof - was removed.

It is not permissible for theology as a science to bypass

the being of God and consider merely his action in the beneficia Christi just as it cannot derive knowledge of his being from a general conception of being without considering those benefits. Theology must therefore not proceed in its knowledge of God from man and consider itself a part of a well ordered sphere of human possibilities, namely an anthropology. It requires an approach to its object in which in fact its mind is moulded by God himself; theology must, in other words, become objective, learn again to speak appropriately about God.

Barth appears to be doing just that in his exchange of letters with Harnack. - The revelation of God is not a revelation of propositions but of God himself. He, God the wholly other to whom man has no access through the correlation of human words and deeds, unveils himself by entering into that correlation and revealing himself as he is. This entering into the correlation which, because it is the human correlation, is separated by an unbridgeable gulf from the divine is therefore also God's veiling himself. Human speech of God must correspondingly refer to his veiling and his unveiling of himself. It must be complementary, dialectical speech which admits the limits of human cognition and the very present need for supplementation. But on the other hand this speech admits the superiority of the object spoken of over our cognition, so that dialectical utterances about God are really the expression of man's obedience to that object, namely the subject God to whom the thetical and antithetical statements refer.

The dialectical method, unable really to speak of God, admits that its noetic ratio is not identical with its ontic ratio. But by referring everything to the ontic ratio and by clearly insisting on its inability to do more than that it creates the situation in which our speaking of God is at least appropriate speaking.

Our speech concerning reality is ideological if we speak of reality and man as in a continuum. Direct utterances about reality are to be rejected as positivism. Dialectical, complementary or indirect utterances concerning reality are appropriate insofar as they acknowledge the indeterminacy of reality per se in terms of human concepts. Somewhere "between" our statements about reality, about God is the truth.

The epistemological picture of Barth's dialectical way of speaking about God looks as follows: the primary zone of reality, of God, is the being of God, deus absconditus, God in his aseity. God is known through his self-revelation which is an event in history, in creation. This event is the one revelation of God, Jesus Christ,who is the second zone of reality, of God. Christ is the Word of God, the Word which is addressed to man. Man as the hearer of that Word is the third zone of this reality. But it is not man on his own but as the one to whom God has said and given to understand what man cannot hear and understand, namely God himself in the primary zone. The man of faith is thus this third zone of reality.

Using the terms ontic and noetic ratio, we may describe the dialectical situation like this: God is the ontic ratio or corresponds to it. It is twofold in form; there is the ontic ratio of God per se and the ontic ratio of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. These represent the first and second zone of God's reality respectively. Man as addressed by revelation corresponds to the noetic ratio, the third zone.[6]

This tripartite division is a theoretical division for theology as much as for modern physics. But it shows that the object-subject dichotomy of cognition is overcome. Object and subject are rather complementary terms; man is seen to be drawn into the act of cognition, into revelation. He no longer stands outside of it looking in or on as a spectator.

The exclusion of the subject in the one scientific task: the pure cognition of the object, was the ideal for which Harnack strove as a theologian. The one scientific method corresponding to that task demanded that kind of objectivity. When Barth confronted Harnack with a dialectical method of theology in which object and subject have become complementary terms and the subject is said to be inseparably involved in the reality which the subject seeks to understand, the question to be put to Barth is certainly this: how is man part of this reality? Harnack found that Barth had put his case in such a way that it appeared as if man's understanding, hearing, speaking and grasping could be eliminated. This was the

6: In Barth's discussion of Anselm's proof of God's existence (Fides Quaerens Intellectum) these terms, ontic and noetic ratio, are

impression he had of Barth's dialectics. Indeed the answers Barth gave to questions five to eleven make one ask whether the relation of the phenomena of human life, of history, of culture and of the Church to God's Word is only negative. Is man's continuing existence in history, nature, culture and Church insignificant in view of the event of revelation which puts the truth of that existence into an either-or relation only to the truth of God's existence? How is one to understand the inclusion of man in the event of revelation, which in fact happens according to the dialectics of Barth, if the hermeneutics of that method speaks of diastasis, of a vacuum, of crisis only? How convincing is the refutation of the charge that the link between the human and faith is cut in a Marcionite fashion when the reply is 'I do not cut, but repudiate every continuity between hither and yon, I speak of a dialectical relation which refers to an identity which we cannot accomplish and therefore also not presume'? How is man part of the event of God's Word when experience, faith are signs (the significat) to something only, signs which are not identical with the matter (the est) and when the attempt to identify them is refuted as the titanism of a homo religiosus? Is the remark 'this is totally incomprehensible to me' so unjustified?

Barth himself asked these questions and came to answer them clearly later. He was aware, however, even during the correspondence that his present position was disputable, that it demanded much more thought still, that even if it was circumspect it might perhaps be unsatisfying. [7]

But then Barth was also aware that he was raising the ontolo-

---

used in the delineation of the ratio of revelation and faith. The problematic of the diastasis is overcome there by the use of this tripartite view of ratio in the concept of analogy which replaces the sheer either-or relation of God and man.

7: It is interesting to pursue this awareness on Barth's part in his correspondence with Thurneysen. These two ministers, aware of what is involved in the vocation of verbi divini minister, felt helpless in that task on account of their theological training. So they began to ask questions about the meaning of the Bible the answers to which led them away from their teachers. They were quite conscious of this and soon began to evaluate their own situation and preaching vis-à-vis contemporary thinking and preaching.

Barth knew that eventually there had to be a clear explanation of what he and Thurneysen wanted to their teachers. But "a mighty blow against the theologians had to be dealt eventually", (cf. the

gical question of theology, the question for God in a way other than Harnack. The concepts of God's Word, faith, obedience indicate the difference from Harnack just as much as the actualism of revelation with which the position of Harnack is critically rejected. Even if man's participation in God is denied, the concepts of

---

letter of Jan.1.1916 in Smart, ed., Revolutionary Theology in the Making), indeed Barth states that it can come in about ten years from then, (July 27. '16). In the meantime it will be good to "tip our hats to the much greater knowledge of these savants, even if their knowledge looks like idols", (July 14. '20).

But even then there occured the question and insight that not all which was thought necessary was said adequately. On the one hand one sees in those letters an ever-recurring sense of frustration about the inadequacy of their own proclamation of the biblical witness. On the other hand, and more apropos to our discussion, there is the admission that all should be said more clearly and sharply. "The Word from the cross must be said by us in such a way that it goes beyond a mere presentation of the absolute paradox, beyond the declaration of the general necessity of death, beyond the delineation of God and man, time and eternity and given a meaning which does not yet come to its rightful place in our utterances", (Dec.6. '20.). Yet, this realisation, although it must be kept in mind firmly, must not prevent the 'drilling', as the two country-parsons called their questioning, from being continued. "In necessariis don't budge an inch, in dubiis don't let it show, in omnibus keep your pipe burning", (Jan.22.'22). Among themselves the doubts were raised openly. "There is so much understanding and misunderstanding of Yes and No, of dialectics, resurrection, God is God and what else this stuff is called... Eduard, Eduard, oh, I invoked these ghosts", (July,7,'22). Or, three months later, even more dejected perhaps "I am more and more aware of the fact that I too am not able to do the great thing which three years ago Adolf Preiswerk told me he could not do", (Oct.7. '22). Therefore "would it not be better to leave our little boat for a while to itself and to the waves, for a few years at least,so that people could have a good rest from the hidden God, come to know that they are on earth and learn what that means?", (May 18.'23).

"In our theology, 'subject' and 'object', 'the other' and 'I', to know and being known appear in a not very clear fashion", writes Barth,(Ibid.), and Thurneysen answers "will we succeed? I am worried about the harvest which will grow from our work. ... So many simpletons, who have subscribed to Zwischen den Zeiten, just wait from one issue to the next to see what new, loudly sounding strikes against the barricaded doors will be dealt this time. ... Really, if Zwischen den Zeiten does not soon become a wide field, worked by all kinds of serious labourers,we will have to let it die in a short time. ... But then, our own language is not without blame in this matter," (June 21.'23). It became increasingly obvious to the two that a revision of what they had said so far was needed, even though neither felt that the criticism of their position justified the discontinuation of their 'drilling'. "We shall do well to work out the position of obedience quite differently yet in order to stand up better to (certain critics)",

obedience, faith, testimonium spiritus sancti internum refer to the event of God's Word and through it - and only it - man confronts the reality of God. When, therefore, Barth's dialectical or theological method repudiates the continuum of God and man, denies the identity of the ontic and noetic ratio, it does not mean that there is no relation between God and man. Participation in Truth, in Being, in Life is denied, yes, but through faith and obedience man is drawn into the Word-event and thus becomes a part of the reality of God's revelation. Or, in other words, God becomes real to man through the event of the Word into which by faith and obedience man is drawn.

How is this set out in the correspondence? Our answer is that Barth speaks of the Trinity as the tripartite area of the reality to which the dialectical method testifies. The hiddenness of God, the revelation of God in Christ as true God and true man and the revealedness of God in the Holy Spirit's testimony to man - this is how Barth speaks of God. Here we see the significance of the correspondence as a document of the new reformation of the Church. The dialectical method, as the scientific modus loquendi de Deo is appropriate for the pure evangelii docendi.

The primary zone of reality is God per se, deus absconditus, the hidden God. This zone man cannot know, could not even speak of it if it had not been for God's self-unveiling to man.

(Thurneysen, Oct. 30.'23). "Bultmann thinks that I do not have a 'clean' system of concepts, about which something may indeed be said", (Barth, Feb. 15.'25).

But then a little more than half a year after the discussion with Harnack in Christliche Welt Barth says these remarkable words (remarkable only for him in the early twenties): "There is a 'natural theology', even the proofs of God's existence are not to be despised wholly, exactly on the basis of revelation a relative and naturally imperfect cognition of God through reason must be postulated. But don't tell this to anyone; I must sleep on this for a while yet before it is ripe for promulgation," (Dec. 20.'23). Then later, "The problem of 'natural' revelation and religion causes me much sorrow. The old reformed theologians relied on it a great deal. I do not yet know definitively where and how to fit it in. Here the paternitas of God comes in and this from several angles: logos, creation, providence. The incarnation has to be handled with care so that one does not run into that exclusive 'Jesus-Christ'-hole of the Lutherans," (March 20.'24).

Throughout his discussion with Harnack Barth knew well that the time would come to say what he meant better, in different, more precise terms. But it was still the same matter which he wanted to say. It was said better later but the beginning of it is here.

In his replies to Harnack Barth continues his emphasis on the hiddenness of God. There is no way from man to God; God alone can be the goal and the way to the goal of our enquiries about him. God is not at all anything like the things said about him on the basis of humanity or history. We cannot say anything about him on our own and then have the assurance that we are in fact speaking about him. Per se God is simply not knowable to man, he is not something we can express. Not only is he the wholly other, but also the wholly hidden. We cannot find God.

The expression: the hiddenness of God does not appear in the letters. But throughout them Barth speaks of the superiority of God to our thought. Exactly the reference to this superiority shows that God is hidden to us. Even God's revelation is incomprehensible to us. Why? Because God is the wholly other, his reality not an object of human-historical cognition. Man's cognition of this reality occurs when this reality acts to unveil itself to man.

This act of unveiling is the revelation of God in his incarnation. It is Jesus Christ, the second zone of God's reality. Barth describes it like this: God himself has said and done something new outside of the correlation of all human words and deeds, yet as this new thing he has put it into that correlation, one word and deed next to others, but this word and this deed. It is the possibility of God acting in the possibilities of man. The Word became flesh, God himself a human-historical reality in the person of Christ.

Without speaking of <u>vere deus - vere homo</u>, the meaning of the above is indeed identical with the meaning of the truth expressed in that concept.

To this truth the Scriptures testify. But we have knowledge of the objective truth of the incarnation only when the content of the biblical testimony acts and awakens our faith. Nothing other than the action of the 'content of the gospel' can give us reliable knowledge of God who is that content.

Barth speaks of the biblical witness as a witness to God's Word. The Word is 'the correlation of Scripture and Spirit'. Apart from this correlation the Bible is man's word only, but when this

correlation becomes event, the testimony becomes transparent to the reality and rationality of God. Human words and deeds remain inadequate in relation to God's reality, yes, but through this testimony to God in inadequate concepts reliable knowledge of God is possible.

In the witness to revelation it is asserted that God became man. Vere Deus - vere homo, this in the person of Jesus Christ. What makes Jesus to be the Christ? The answer is in terms of the testimony to his resurrection, said Barth. There is no way to this content of the gospel, the content must not only be God's way to us but also the way by which man is brought to God's reality. All other ways lead to other realities. But the point is that in witnessing to Christ, who is the possibility of God acting in the form of a human possibility, who is God's Word in the correlation of human words and deeds, man's words not only become transparent to but indeed capable of witnessing to the Word of God. Man's noetic ratio does not become identical with the ontic ratio, but by witnessing to the ontic ratio the noetic ratio finds reliable knowledge of God. 'The fact that eternity becomes time, the absolute relative and God becomes man, the fact that the matter involved and the sign pointing to it coincide and with that the the coincidence also of the sign with the matter to which it points is true only as the Word and deed of God, as an act of the Trinity itself. This act can only be witnessed to and believed in'.

Without using the concept of homoousion Barth nevertheless asserts its affirmation namely that in man's witness to Christ as God's incarnate Word we do indeed - through God's grace - speak of God's reality, that through this witness we obtain real knowledge of God, Surely, this witness is dialectical, it speaks indirectly, it only points, but in that witness God may in fact reveal himself.

When he does reveal himself through such testimony it is an unprecedented event and one must speak of the Holy Spirit. God is working on us. The acceptance of this testimony is faith. When man hears the Word to which testimony is given in the Scriptures and believes it then it is the testimonium spiritus sancti internum which makes the Word to be addressed to and heard by man. Through

the Holy Spirit man becomes the man of faith, the man who gives 'obedience to a human word which - as if it were in fact God's Word - proclaims to him that Word as a word addressed to him.' This man is the third zone of God's reality. His understanding of the Word of God is not by this or that function of the soul or mind, but through the Spirit, which is identical with the Word of God and that by faith.

Through the Holy Spirit's testimony, therefore, God communicates himself to man, he establishes the relation between himself and man and founds man's knowledge of him. This means that when man speaks of God and this speaking moves within the sphere of the homoousion, the sphere of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ, then man is inextricably involved in that speaking since without God's revelation of himself to this man through the Spirit's testimony to Christ, man would not speak of God at all. Only the man of faith can really speak of God but only through God does he become the man of faith. Thus our knowledge of God is moulded by God himself. Hence the necessity of obedience; man's knowledge is ac-knowledge-ment, his thought re-collection, Erkenntnis is An-erkenntnis, his Denken is Nach-denken. Man is required to yield his understanding and let the object of enquiry mould the method appropriate for its understanding. Theology is a bound science in the sense that it must let itself be assimilated by the object. It cannot allow itself to have any prior understanding impinge on the reality to which it can no more than testify. For if it does not testify that its object is the subject of God, if it does not begin by reminding itself that its object is one to which man can only testify since it is an otherwise totally incomprehensible object, it is not an objective science. Objectivity in theology is the courage to witness to God, is the obedience to the witness through which obedience theology attains to persuasiveness and value. The point is that this obedience is the obedience of faith, through which man is enabled to speak of God.

At this point arises the necessary decision against all human preconceptions, prejudgments, pre-understanding. Unless it is made the doors are flung open to all kinds of occult capabilities and anthroposophical chaos. The natural sciences and Harnack were

right in demanding that such subjectivity be banned from our pursuit of knowledge, that special sources of religious knowledge apart from reason,(Supra.,p.34), be left untapped, because they only distort that knowledge. The total absence of preconceptions is for theology its complete obedience to its object, says Barth. God's revelation only makes theology possible. The epistemology of such a theology is determined however by an objectivity other than that to which Harnack adhered, for it has again understood Luther's insight that theology as a science is not based on questions posed by religion but rather on something which is given to it in faith prior to its enquiry. It begins with the Reformation conviction that "I believe that I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my lord nor come to him on the basis of my own reason or strength", as it is put in Luther's small catechism.[8] The categories of a theology which begins with the questions of religion are not only insufficient for the reality of theological enquiry, but they also distort and obscure it. They do not allow us to go beyond ourselves and the this-wordly sphere.[9]

3) The correspondence - what is its meaning for Church-history?

But then what is the real significance of this dialectical way of speaking about God? What is the meaning of it as we see it developed or at least expressed by Barth in this exchange of letters of 1923? Why is the theology speaking in that way called 'a Copernican redirection of Protestant theology' (Berkhof), 'a new foundation of evangelical theology' (Moltmann), 'a revolutionary theology' (Smart)? "What was the real concern of the school known as dialectical theology? It was anxious that theology should once again have the orientation in which alone it is justified, an orientation like that of the finger of John the Baptist in Mathias Grünewald's impressive painting. This was its concern, so that it was again a theology which points beyond man to the God revealed in the crucified, in other words a theology which lives completely in but not through that witness but rather through him to whom it witnesses."[10]

8:Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche,p.511f.
9:Heidegger makes this point in Sein und Zeit,p.11. Prof. Torrance makes the same observation in his Theology in Reconstruction,p.35.
10: Busch, Op.Cit.,p.10.

But surely no theology wants anything other than to be appropriate speech and thought about God. Harnack specifically said that every statement of God must be sub specie Christi in order to be appropriate. Surely no theology wants to do anything other than to recall the Church constantly to its very origin and in this sense be a reforming theology. Every theology is concerned with the pure docendi evangelii.

It was claimed above that the exchange of letters is indicative of a new reformation of the Church.

On the one hand Barth was as anxious as every theologian to speak adequately of God. He said clearly that a reformation of the Church was no less necessary to-day than it was in the early sixteenth century. The aims of a reformation, however, are not something obvious in or to man; they are alive only insofar as they are made alive in us. This occurs where there is a recollection of what confronts the Church as her object. "If to-day you feel the longing for reformation more as a bitter anxiety than as anything else, remember that it may not be otherwise. According to the eighth chapter of Romans, there is more hope when one sighs Veni Creator Spiritus, than when he exalts as if the spirit were already his. You have been introduced to 'my theology' if you have heard this sigh".[11] This desire to be part of the ecclesia semper reformanda is there, but more as well.

If we recall that for Barth the question regarding the appropriateness of theology and the proper orientation of it arose in the situation of the preacher, we shall see why this new way of speaking of God is the more appropriate. The question was not 'how do I speak of God?' but rather 'can I speak of God?'. "This critical situation itself became to me an explanation of the character of all theology. What else can theology be but the truest possible expression of this quest and questioning on the part of the minister ...?"[12] Theology cannot, must not lead out of the need, the Anfechtung of the preacher who is to say what he cannot say. He is to say what God says to man and not what man thinks about God. It is not good to reverse the order and turn 'Thus says the Lord' into 'Thus hears man', Barth said to Harnack. And by

11: Barth, The Need and Promise etc., in Word, p.134. 12: Ibid., p.101.

persisting on this order the situation of the preacher is like that of the theologian; their task is identical, namely to receive and transmit the Word of God.

This Word being the theme of theology, it means first of all that theology is concerned with something which man does not and never can possess. Here arises the criticism and the polemics so characteristic for Barth of that period. Here arises the repudiation of every attempt to see God in a continuum with the human or history. Here arises the criticism of the Church who sees her task in the salvation of souls and thus leaves the physical world void of the hope in God who will renew his kingdom and the world in it.

God cannot be possessed by man either in his conscience, in the pinnacles of culture or for that matter in the critical protest against the world, the Church, the experience of God. Neither possesses God, they do not go beyond the human and thus can only point to him. Therefore, theology may look at the world in a radically secular fashion and thus come to see in it parables of the divine or sacred.

When man does in fact confront God then it is when God reveals himself. God's revelation is the precondition of theology and this precondition is there when it pleases God to give himself through the action of the Holy Spirit. This means that revelation is neither something for theology to prove or demonstrate nor something that is needful of such proof or demonstration. It is the event of God's confrontation with man. Exactly because this event cannot be presumed theology is freed from speaking of an imagined God and freed for speaking of the real, living God. "When he reveals himself God becomes revealed as God - a statement which is a tautology only on the surface. It does in fact describe the freedom of God for and in the encounter with man as well as the freedom of theology from illusion and for objectivity."[13]

And exactly here we see the desire to reform fulfilled. Dialectical theology is a theology free to speak of God, the living, the real God, of the free God who remains free in our speaking of him.

13: Busch, Op. Cit., p.12.

persisting on this order the situation of the preacher is like that of the theologian; their task is identical, namely to receive and transmit the Word of God.

This Word being the theme of theology, it means first of all that theology is concerned with something which man does not and never can possess. Here arises the criticism and the polemics so characteristic for Barth of that period. Here arises the repudiation of every attempt to see God in a continuum with the human or history. Here arises the criticism of the Church who sees her task in the salvation of souls and thus leaves the physical world void of the hope in God who will renew his kingdom and the world in it.

God cannot be possessed by man either in his conscience, in the pinnacles of culture or for that matter in the critical protest against the world, the Church, the experience of God. Neither possesses God, they do not go beyond the human and thus can only point to him. Therefore, theology may look at the world in a radically secular fashion and thus come to see in it parables of the divine or sacred.

When man does in fact confront God then it is when God reveals himself. God's revelation is the precondition of theology and this precondition is there when it pleases God to give himself through the action of the Holy Spirit. This means that revelation is neither something for theology to prove or demonstrate nor something that is needful of such proof or demonstration. It is the event of God's confrontation with man. Exactly because this event cannot be presumed theology is freed from speaking of an imagined God and freed for speaking of the real, living God. "When he reveals himself God becomes revealed as God - a statement which is a tautology only on the surface. It does in fact describe the freedom of God for and in the encounter with man as well as the freedom of theology from illusion and for objectivity."[13]

And exactly here we see the desire to reform fulfilled. Dialectical theology is a theology free to speak of God, the living, the real God, of the free God who remains free in our speaking of him.

13: Busch, Op. Cit., p.12.

Here one goes beyond the preliminaries of a confirmative science. The great heritage of this science was its systematisation of the nearly unlimited amount of knowledge gathered through its historical, philological and religio-historical studies. But this new theology goes on, using all these insights and the corresponding scientific apparatus, to the claim that the Bible speaks of God's Word as addressed to us.

The old discussion of Orthodoxy vs. Liberalism was left behind here. An attack was made on cultural Protestantism and the theological positivism of it so that man, no matter in what situation he was, could be confronted and claimed by that Word. "Dialectical theology did not try to separate men from science, as perhaps older apologetics had attempted, (stuffing the joints and cracks developing in this effort with edificatory phrases). It rather insisted with annoying persistence that their science was an expression of the total situation of humanity, that it was able to raise questions which God's Word, spoken to man, had already asked and answered. ... This theology did not defend a partial bastion of faith, it opened the attack on man who was buried under the rubble of this world."[14]

The beginnings of the 'New Reformation' are here, in the Harnack-Barth correspondence of 1923. Every reformation begins with correctives,with the 'pinch of spice'; but it cannot remain in that stage and be a reformation. It must begin a reconstruction. Two of Barth's addresses of 1922: Not und Verheissung der christlichen Verkündigung, delivered at Schulpforta in July, and Das Wort Gottes als Aufgabe der Theologie, delivered on the Elgersburg in October, along with these letters to Harnack, form the initial attempts to rebuild.

What is revelation? and How do we speak of God?, in other words, what ontology and what hermeneutics does an appropriate theology demand? were the questions Barth asked. The answers he gave may not have been entirely satisfactory. Certainly they were not final in the sense that what was said could not be said more effectively within the framework of that preliminary character which all our statements of God have because of their object.

14:M.Storch, Exegesen und Meditationen zu Karl Barths Kirchlicher Dogmatik, p. 187.

Nevertheless the way had been opened up, the direction determined, the reformation begun.[15]

But one may ask: is it a reformation ad hoc or one really in the semper reformanda tradition?

One may speak of ad hoc reformation perhaps (but only perhaps) in the case of Barth's work in the Barmen Declaration and its larger context, the Church struggle in the Third Reich (and its related appearances in Czechoslovakia and Hungary). Here was distinctly a call to the Church to remember her foundation vis-à-vis a specific threat.

The same may perhaps (but only perhaps) be true in relation to the now vigorous ecumenical dialogue with Rome. But then the now famous awareness and genuine understanding and appreciation of Barth's work by Roman Catholic thinkers - von Balthasar, Küng, Söhngen, Peterson, Bouillard, Willems, Przywara, Rahner to name a few - is not an appearance of recent years. In 1923 (!) the Rhein-Mainzer Volkszeitung called Barth and his friends 'serious partners for discussion', (Thurneysen in a letter to Barth, dated 2. Jan. '24). In Feb. '25 Barth makes reference to an article by a Roman Catholic scholar who said that "the protestant theologian, Karl Barth, (was raising certain) objections which catholic theology too would overlook at its peril".[16] This ecumenical discussion between Barth and Roman scholars has now been going on since forty years, especially since Barth's well-known attack on the analogia entis, an attack which Rome considered a real challenge to its very theological foundation. A common frontier between the two has developed, and a centuries-old monological and narrow confessional polemic has given way to a common theological encounter, so that where there were once political, tactical or cultural considerations there is now genuine theological enquiry.

Again it may perhaps (and only perhaps) be ad hoc when to-day the discussion between theology and the sciences has entered a new and fruitful stage. Both have become aware of the categorical difference of their statements about nature. The norm for theology is the Bible, for the sciences the controlled experiment. A theo-

15: We cannot pursue in detail the course of that direction which was determined there. But its highpoints should be indicated. In 1927 Barth defined the significance and authority of the Scripture, a 'principle' from which he never departed. In 1931 he outlined

logy which, unconcerned with relational points of contact, with possible remainders of the image of God of Genesis 1, pursues its course and does not attempt discussions with non-theologians of their objects of enquiry on the stand-point of non-theology, becomes on account of this singlemindedness a discipline which these non-theologians can respect. They are confronted here with a theology which wants to be nothing but that and not also a nature-philosophy or theology. The captivity of theology in that apparent need to have a natural theology vis-à-vis science prevented the kind of dialogue among scientists and theologians which are now going on regularly in Göttingen since 1949 and in Utrecht since the early fifties. The impetus for them is said to be the work of Barth who again spoke of the normative position of the Scriptures for theology, who refused to pact with relationalisms, who issued the call to theology to come out of its captivity.

And finally, it might perhaps (and only perhaps) be ad hoc that now theologians meet officially with official representatives of dialectical materialism in discussions of religion and ideology. This is the case in Czechoslovakia where Hromadka is on 'the threshold of dialogue' (as he calls his latest book). Or one thinks of the recent visit of the Marxist philosopher Milan Machovec of the University of Prague to Barth. Where there was opposition there is now opposition and dialogue. But this dialogue became possible only after theology repudiated its positivism and subsequent ideologising interpretation of God and thus began to constitute a questioning of the materialism's own view of theology and religion. Marxism is now in discussion with dialectical theology and its contemporary successors.

Whether such encounters, resulting from Barth's redirection of theology, are to be called ad hoc reformations or whether they are in the tradition of semper reformanda cannot really be answered with conclusiveness since we are still too close in time to the originating event. They do, however, definitely point us to a new and fruitful beginning in a situation which too long was either stagnant or impossible.

---

the analogia fidei in which the nature of theological activity was depicted. Here through conformity to the economic condescension

The answer to that question is also made difficult by the fact that the present time in the history of theology is - in my opinion - erroneously called post-Barthian. It is generally believed that we have now passed the era of dialectical theology. It is a time in which the problematic of that era seems to be what must be emphasised. Barth is accused of having made the break with the theology before him so radically that the legitimate concern with the orientation of the gospel in the human was pushed aside by him. He has no answer to the question of the positive significance of the gospel for culture. Furthermore, it is said that his historical scepticism prevents him from considering the problem of the inseparability of Christianity from history. Then it is said frequently that his protest against neo-protestantism with its affirmation of culture was conditioned by the general cultural pessimism of the post-War years, that his biblicism resulted from the current hunger for authoritative guidance.

To such criticisms, which in essence do not go beyond what Harnack, Troeltsch, Jülicher, Holl and others at that time had to say, is added the realisation that those who promulgated that theology themselves separated because they could not see eye to eye on the kind of theology which was to grow out of the corrective they had uttered together. They were at one in the understanding that the knowledge of the impossibility of possessing God was to be proclaimed again. They also knew that this raised questions which eventually had to be answered. At one in their difference from the subjectivism of neo-protestantism they parted company when it came to answer the positive questions arising out of their negative answers. Gogarten thus spoke of the autonomy of the worldly and of a new secularism. Bultmann said that because the Word is not at our disposal we must not speak of God as such but rather of the man who is confronted by the ever new event of revelation. Barth maintained that although man cannot speak of God, God speaks himself to us through himself in his Word which he gives to us by assimilating it to man and that therefore that Word is the concern of theology.

---

of his Word and through following the incarnate Word in its advance to God we know God. The divine truth is apprehended in accordance with its own mode of activity and articulated with its own interior logic. This analogy is the Christological corner-stone of Barth's

But the question now is this: if the meaning of theology is in fact the business of theo - logos, have we, in this so-called 'post-Barthian' period really proceeded beyond the preliminary enquiries necessary for theology in that sense? Is our whole concern with hermeneutics and the existential clarification of what it means to be addressed by revelation and what human structures that event elicits and the search for that situation in history through which again we may discover a key to the mystery of the incarnation (the attempt is now being made by the Pannenberg-school) not an indication that we might perhaps be in a situation which has really not gone on from dialectical theology but has fallen behind it? Is it really certain that our criticism of dialectical theology is not an anaesthetisation of the critical questions which the early Barth posed? Is the suggestion that the finger of John the Baptist be given a rest not also an invitation to look in perhaps the wrong direction, to the God-consciousness perhaps of man? Is it out of the question that the progress from the dialectics to the new hermeneutics is an indication that we perhaps face the protest against the authoritativeness of the method with an even greater lack of understanding than Harnack? Perhaps the 'post-Barthian' generation is really post Barthian because it has learned from him how one may really be immune against the quest of dialectical theology how theology can really be about the Word of God. It is not impossible that the discovery of those 'neo-Kantian egg-shells', of that too rigorous actualism, of the very seriousness of God's becoming man and the consequent religionlessness of the gospel has in fact turned our eyes once again away from the question of God to a renewed speaking of man in a higher key. Our 'post-Barthianism' with its critical going-beyond-Barth may perhaps be the expression of the possibility that our theology will lead us to a point where dialectical theology thought it had to begin, to another loss of theology at the hands of theologians, as it was called recently.[17] The contemporary criticism of the early Barth, coinciding as it does with the criticisms made in the 'twenties', would support this question - and it is no more

thought. Then in 1956 Barth defined the notion of the humanity of God, a concept which grew out of the implications of the analogia fidei. Between these two works is the Church Dogmatics, that reconstruction of the affirmations made on behalf of the truth the Bible witnesses to, that reconstruction which must follow every

than a question - of what is done in the name of 'post-Barthian' theology.

For this reason it is quite possible to ask whether the dialectical theology is in the semper reformanda tradition if our present theological endeavour is really a continuation of the spirit of neo-protestantism. For if the early Barth and his renewed question for God does not really call us back to the Church's one foundation then we cannot claim that he is a reformer. But there is another alternative. If he does not seem to move us by his call, is it not possible that we have not perceived the danger of neo-protestantism? The ever recurring demand for a 'Barthian' apologetics is an indication that the danger of such a venture is not at all clear. If we do not understand the 'need and promise of theology' of which Barth spoke, could that not be because we ourselves, in our attempt to overcome the problematic of the early Barth, have not even begun there where he began, namely with the daring question - which indeed dialectical theology can well teach us - of what must be meant when we say God?

Perhaps one can say neither a clear yes nor a clear no to either the reformation ad hoc or the semper reformanda tradition in regard to the dialectical theology of the early Barth, to the new orientation which is apparent in and behind the correspondence with Harnack. Karl Barth's stimulation on the other hand on theology cannot be denied. No theologian since has been able to leave him aside. If, however, we speak seriously of a new reformation in the Church in this century, there can be no doubt that Barth and his dialectical theology of the early years of his work originated it. If this is so, the systematic question and answer-exchange with Harnack about the appropriate way of speaking about God is a document, one of the very first documents of that reformation.

---

corrective. It is that work in which the continuing participation of Barth's own theology in the Church throughout the ages becomes apparent, for without that participation no theology is a theology of the Church of Christ.

16: Cited in Busch, Op.Cit., p. 182.

17: Moltmann, Anfänge der dialektischen Theologie, vol.1, p.XI.

Bibliography.

Balthasar, Hans-Urs, Karl Barth , Hegner, Köln, 1962.

Barth, Karl, Der Römerbrief, 1.ed., EVZ Verlag, Zürich, 1963.

Der Römerbrief, 2.ed., EVZ Verlag, Zürich, 1957.

The Word of God and the Word of Man, transl. by D.Horton, Harper & Bros., New York, 1957.

Theologie und Kirche, Kaiser, München, 1928.

Die christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf, Kaiser, München, 1927.

Theologische Fragen und Antworten, EVZ Verlag, Zürich, 1957.

Fides Quaerens Intellectum, EVZ Verlag, Zürich, 1958.

Kirchliche Dogmatik, EVZ Verlag, Zürich, 1932 f.

Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert, EVZ Verlag, Zürich, 1960.

Der Götze wackelt, ed. by K.Kupisch, Vogt, Berlin, 1961.

Antwort, Festschrift for Barth 1956, ed. by Ch. von Kirschbaum, E.Wolf and R.Frey, EVZ Verlag, Zürich, 1956.

G.C.Berkouwer, Der Triumph der Gnade in der Theologie Karl Barths, Verlag des Erziehungsvereins Neukirchen, 1957.

Bonhoeffer, D., Akt und Sein, Kaiser, München, 1956.

Widerstand und Ergebung, Siebenstern, München, 1964.

Bouillard, Henry, Karl Barth, 3 vols., Aubier, no place given, 1957.

Bultmann, Rudolf, Glauben und Verstehen, 4 vols., Mohr, Tübingen, 1961 f.

Burckhardt, Paul, Was sagt uns die Theologie Karl Barths und seiner Freunde?, Riehm, Basel, 1927.

Busch, Eberhard, ed., Karl Barth-Eduard Thurneysen, ein Briefwechsel, Siebenstern, München, 1966.

Caldecott, A. and Mackintosh,H.R., Selections from the Literature of Theism, Clark, Edinburgh,1931.

Casalis, George, Karl Barth, Stimme Verlag, Darmstadt, 1960.

Dörries, Bernhard, Am Scheidewege, Klotz, Gotha, 1928.

Fangmeier, Jürgen, Erziehung in Zeugenschaft, EVZ Verlag, Zürich, 1964.

Frei,Hans W., The Doctrine of Revelation in the Thought of Karl Barth 1909 - 1922, unpubl. thesis, Yale University, New Haven, 1956.

Fuchs, Ernst, Hermeneutik, Müllerschön, Bad Canstatt, 1958.

Garvie, Alfred, The Ritschlian Theology, Clark, Edinburgh, 1902.

Glick, Wayne, Adolf Harnack as Historian and Theologian, unpubl. thesis, University of Chicago, 1957.

Harnack, Adolf von, History of Dogma, transl. by N.Buchanan, 4 vols. Dover, New York, 1961.

Das apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis, Haack, Berlin, 1892.

What is Christianity?, transl. by T. Saunders, Harper & Bros, New York, 1957.

Das Christentum und die Geschichte, Hinrichsche Buchhandlung, Leipzig, 1904.

Reden und Aufsätze, 2 vols., Töpelmann, Giessen, 1906.

Aus der Frieden- und Kriegsarbeit, Töpelmann, Giessen, 1916.

Erforschtes und Erlebtes, Töpelmann, Giessen, 1923.

Outlines of the History of Dogma, transl. by E. Mitchell, Beacon Press, Boston, 1959.

Marcion, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1960.

Die Entstehung der christlichen Theologie und des kirchlichen Dogmas, Klotz, Gotha, 1927.

Aus der Werkstatt des Vollendeten, Töpelmann, Giessen, 1930.

Ausgewählte Reden und Aufsätze, deGruyter, Berlin, 1951.

Heidegger, Martin, Holzwege, Klostermann, Frankfurt a. Main, 1957.

Sein und Zeit, Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1960.

Heim, Karl, The Transformation of the Scientific Worldview, transl. by W.Whitehouse, SCM, London, 1953.

Herrmann, Wilhelm, Die Metaphysik in der Theologie, Niemeyer Halle, 1876.

Kaehler, Martin, Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik im 19. Jahrhundert, Kaiser, München, 1961.

Leitch, James, A Theology of Transition, Nisbet, London, 1952.

Lohse, Bernhard, Epochen der Dogmengeschichte, Kreuzverlag, Stuttgart, 1963.

Mackintosh, H.R., Types of Modern Theology, Nisbet, London, 1956.

Mackintosh, Robert, Albrecht Ritschl, Chapman and Hall, London, 1915.

Merz, Georg, Wege und Wandlungen, Kaiser, München, 1961.

Moltmann, Jürgen, ed., Anfänge der Dialektischen Theologie, 2 vols., Kaiser, München, 1962

Overbeck, Franz, Christentum und Kultur, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1963.

Über die Christlichkeit unserer heutigen Theologie,

Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt,1963.

Selbstbekenntnisse, Insel Verlag, Frankfurt,1966.

Ritschl, Albrecht, Theologie und Metaphysik, Marcus, Bonn, 1881.

Robinson, James M.,ed., The New Hermeneutic, Harper & Rowe, New York, 1964.

Schindler, Hans, Barth und Overbeck, Klotz, Gotha, 1936.

Schmid,Friedrich, Verkündigung und Dogmatik in der Theologie Karl Barths, Kaiser, München, 1964.

Senft, Christoph, Wahrhaftigkeit und Wahrheit, Mohr, Tübingen, 1956.

Siegfried, Th., Die Theologie des Wortes bei Karl Barth, Klotz, Gotha, 1930.

Storch, Martin, Exegesen und Meditationen zu Karl Barths Kirchlicher Dogmatik, München, 1964.

Swing, A.T., The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl, Longman,Green & Co., New York, 1901.

Torrance, T.F., Karl Barth - An Introduction to his Early Theology, SCM, London, 1962.

Theology in Reconstruction, SCM, London, 1965.

Voigt, Gottfried, Gespräch mit Harnack, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin, 1954.

Walther, Christian, Typen des Reich-Gottes-Verständnisses, Kaiser, München, 1961.

Weber, Otto, Grundlagen der Dogmatik, Verlag des Erziehungsvereins Neukirchen, 1964.

Willems,B.A., Karl Barth, EVZ Verlag, Zürich, 1964.

Zahn-Harnack, Agnes von, Adolf von Harnack, deGruyter, Berlin, 1951.

Die Bekenntnisschriften der Eveangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche, no editors mentioned, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1959.

Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 3.ed., edited by Kurt Galling et al., Mohr, Tübingen, 1957 f.

Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe, ed. by J.Hoffmann, Meiner, Hamburg, 1955.

Asmussen, Hans, Finitum Capax Infiniti, in Vol.5 of Zwischen den Zeiten, 1927, p.70ff.

Barth, Karl, Moderne Theologie und Reichsgottesarbeit, in Vol.19 of Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche,1909,p.317ff.

Religion und Leben, in Vol.11 of Evangelische Theologie, 1952/53, p.437 ff.

Immer noch unerledigte Anfragen, in Vol.36 of Christliche Welt, 1922, cols. 249 ff.

Vollrath 'Das Problem des Wortes', a review in Vol. 50 of Theologische Literaturzeitung, 1925, cols. 523 f.

Bohlin, Torsten, Luther, Kierkegaard und die dialektische Theologie, in Vol. 7 n.f. of Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, 1926 , p.163 ff and p. 268 ff.

Bruhn, W., Das Problem des Irrationalen und seine Beziehung zur Theologie, in Vol.5 n.f. of Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, 1924, p.323 ff and p. 407 ff.

Colpe, Carsten, Bemerkungen zu Adolf von Harnacks Einschätzung der Disziplin 'Allgemeine Religionsgeschichte', in Vol. 6 of Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie, 1964 , p. 51 ff.

Deegan,D.L., The Ritschlian Scool - The Essence of Christianity and Karl Barth, in Vol.16 of Scottish Journal of Theology, 1963, p.390 ff.

Foley,Grover, Interpretation in Contemporary Theology, inVol.18 of Interpretation, 1964, p.463 ff.

Foerster,E., Marcionitisches Christentum, in Vol. 35 of Christliche Welt, 1921, cols. 809 ff.

Howe, Günter, Vorbemerkungen zum Gespräch zwischen Theologie und Physik, in Vol.7 of Evangelische Theologie, 1947/1948, p.64 ff.

Zu den Äusserungen von Niels Bohr über religiöse Fragen, in Vol.4 of Kerygma und Dogma, 1958,p.20 ff.

Lehmann-Issel, Kurt, Das Wort Gottes als Aufgabe der Theologie; zur Krisis der Theologie und zur Theologie der Krisis, in Vol.39 of Christliche Welt, 1925, cols. 338 ff.

Merz, Georg, Die Begegnung Karl Barths mit der deutschen Theologie, in Vol.2 of Kerygma und Dogma, 1956, p.157 ff.

Peters, Albrecht, Betrachtungen zum sittlich-personal geprägten Gottes- und Christusbild des 19. Jahrhunderts, in Vol.9 of Kerygma und Dogma, 1963,p.122 ff.

Prenter, Regin, Glaube und Erkennen bei Karl Barth, in Vol.2 of Kerygma und Dogma, 1956, p.176 ff.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer und Karl Barths Offenbarungs-positivismus, in Vol.3 of Die Mündige Welt, ed.by E.Bethge, p.11 ff. Kaiser, München, 1960.

Schrey,H.-H.,Der Begriff der Komplementarität und seine Bedeutung für Erkenntnistheorie und Theologie,in Vol.19 of Evangelische Theologie, 1959,p.391 ff.

Stammler,G., Vom Erkenntnis-charakter der theologischen Aussagen, in Vol.9 of Kerygma und Dogma, 1963,p.259 ff.

Vischer, E. Overbeck Redivivus, in Vol.36 of Christliche Welt,1922, cols. 109 ff.

Windisch,H. Karl Barths Römerbrief, in Vol.45 of Theologische Literaturzeitung, 1920, cols. 200 ff.

Vielhauer, Philipp, Franz Overbeck und die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, in Vol.10 of Evangelische Theologie, 1950/1951, p.193 ff.

Wolf, Ernst, Glauben und Erkennen, in Vol.21 of Evangelische Theologie, 1961, p.209 ff.

Wrzecionko, Paul, Der geistesgeschichtliche Horizont der Theologie Albrecht Ritschls, in Vol.5 of Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie, 1962, p. 214 ff.