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**EMIL BRUNNER'S CRITICISMS OF THE EPISTEMOLOGY  
OF FRIEDRICH SCHLEIERMACHER**

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
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Bachelor of Divinity

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by  
**Hubert Riedel**  
June 1950

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## PREFACE

The man who lays claim to religious truth is continually faced with this paradox: religion is a real knowledge of, and a personal communion with, a God whose nature is above knowledge, and who transcends personality. The desire to give meaningful expression to the truth of this paradox has, in the history of the church, prompted varying degrees of emphasis or overemphasis of one or the other of its two elements. The attempt to give a just representation of the objective character of divine truth, that is, of its unqualifiedly real existence independent of any apprehension of it, has led to a type of scholastic objectivism in which truth was inevitably lost. Similarly, the wish to do justice to the human apprehension of divine truth has resulted in a type of subjectivity in which the religious experience was so overemphasized as to leave God, the object of experience, out of account. Friedrich Schleiermacher, one of the best known theologians of the nineteenth century, was very vitally interested in the development of a theological solution to this problem, and in the course of his life as a pastor and professor, did develop what he thought to be an adequate solution to it. His solution has, however, received serious criticism in many quarters of the church, of which one of the most recent has been that of the contemporary

Swiss theologian, Emil Brunner. This essay will address itself as its title indicates, to "Brunner's criticisms of the epistemology of Schleiermacher." It will, therefore, deal with Schleiermacher chiefly in terms of Brunner's criticisms of him, and particularly, in terms of the Reden, against which the chief criticisms are directed.

Both theologians are, however, inescapably the heirs of the many generations which devoted much thought to this problem. Since the roots of the problem are imbedded so deeply in the history of the church, this paper will begin by pointing out its presence in the Reformation, and the solution which Luther offered to it. Thereafter, Schleiermachers' solution to it will be presented, followed by Emil Brunner's critique of that solution. In the final chapters of this paper an attempt will be made to test the validity of Brunner's critique in the light of his understanding of Schleiermacher, and of the alternative solution which he offers.

## CHAPTER I

### BACKGROUNDS OF THE PROBLEM IN THE REFORMATION

The Christian church has, in the course of its history, ever sought to give a vital affirmation of the truth of God's revelation of Himself to men. In order to do this, it has employed all the devices possible, from the humble witness of the daily life of its members to involved and weighty dissertations on theology. Whenever men have sought to articulate the truth of revelation, however, difficulty as to modes of thought and expression have been experienced. The problem of how revelation comes to be known has been a particular source of irritation. In order to be effectively communicated, revelation, like all things and events, must be communicated by means of words and symbols. From these words and symbols, in turn, concepts as to how knowledge of revelation takes place have been developed. One of these concepts has been the thought of revelation as an eternal fund of truth which stands above all human reality as an object of human contemplation and cognition. In this mode of thinking, the knowledge of divine truth was thought of as a subjective apprehension of that which was objectively true. Fundamentally, there were two alternatives as to

what the relation between the object of knowledge and the knowing subject was.<sup>1</sup> First of all, since the essential nature of man was thought to be his rational soul, man as a rational being could apply his reason to the physical universe with all its laws and functions. However, he could do more than that. He could also apply his reason to the realm of the divine, and could know both the existence of God, and his own contingency and finitude as a creature of that God. There was, however, much that man could not know about God. God had, therefore, to reveal, in a supernatural way, the information that man lacked. Without this information, man could not be saved. In order to be guaranteed salvation, man had but to accept intellectually this given quantum of saving information.<sup>2</sup> The reasoning which inevitably followed this view of revelation as a dispensing of saving information which was received by the intellect was that this revelation could then be taken and embodied in a rational system. The received revelation was translated into organized dogma, to which Christian faith became an intellectual assent.

With the advent of the Reformation, however, a different view again appeared. Knowledge of God became not an intel-

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<sup>1</sup>John Y. Mackinnon, The Protestant Doctrine of Inspiration (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1946), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

lectual assent to systematized doctrines, but a very vital fellowship of the Christian with God as a result of God's coming in revelation. God's purpose in revealing Himself was seen as His will to bring men into a transforming, divine fellowship with Him. The road to this new view was paved by Martin Luther in his emphasis on the fact of God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. He discovered this fact in the *Kerygma* of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. These Scriptures were not a catalogue of divinely dispensed information for Luther, as they were for the scholastic theologians. The Bible was the living witness of the Holy Spirit to the redemption in Jesus Christ. The Bible by itself was not enough. The Holy Spirit had to be related to it. As Luther said, "Das Wort Gottes wird nicht gehoert wenn der Geist nicht innerlich das Wachstum gibt."<sup>3</sup> Neither was the Holy Spirit by Himself enough. The living witness of the Spirit had to be seen in relation to the content of the Holy Scriptures. The two, Word and Spirit, had to be in inseparable relation.

However, Luther did not see the process of revelation only in terms of a duality of Word and Spirit. Man, the recipient of revelation also had a dual nature. He was an "outer" and an "inner" man. And, the important thing about

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<sup>3</sup>Heinrich Bornkamm, "Äusserer und Innerer Mensch bei Luther und den Spiritualisten", Imago Dei: Beiträge zur Theologischen Anthropologie, edited by Heinrich Bornkamm. (Gießen: Alfred Toepelmann, 1932), p. 86.



this dual nature of man for Luther was that both the inner and the outer man were seen in relation to God. Man is what God sees him to be, either totus sub ira, or totus sub gratia.<sup>4</sup> In relation to God, therefore, man was not only a duality of outer and inner man, but at the same time a unity of both. Man is at one time a mixture of flesh and spirit; and on the other hand, he is at once both entirely.<sup>5</sup> The Greeks had separated the nature of man into caro, animus, and spiritus, in which the soul was the "Mittelwesen" between flesh and spirit.<sup>6</sup> For Luther, the whole man, and especially the soul, is flesh and spirit.<sup>7</sup> This is so because man's new spiritual life does not belong to him. His new life is a vision over the barrier which still separates him from God. His life in the Word and in faith is not a life inside himself, but outside himself, in God. The process of revelation was then a relationship between the Spirit-Word and the outer and inner man, in which the Spirit-Word acted on the outer and inner man. For Luther, "Äusserlich heisst...alles sinnlich wahrnehmbar, wie das in Buchstaben gefasste Schriftwort, die muendliche Predigt, das Sakrament als aeuszeres Zeichen. Innerlich heisst das den Sinnen Ver-

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

borgene, wie das innere Zeugnis des Geistes, der Glaube und alle anderen Geistesgaben".<sup>8</sup> The word had always to perform a dual function on the dual man: 1) to knock on the ear from the outside, 2) to pour in the Spirit on the inside.<sup>9</sup> The inner man is then foreign to him, outside him, yet in him, in his person in its uniqueness. The inner man does not belong to him: he dare not rely on it as if it were his own possession. It is something which God has given him in the Gospel. Yet the inner man also belongs to him, and to describe this wonderful possession Luther can use the most mystical of language. He can speak of a wonderful "raptus mentis", but one that stems from the Word, where the Spirit must be awaited.<sup>10</sup> For this "raptus mentis" not the meditations of the mystic, but the sufferings of the cross, death and hell avail.<sup>11</sup>

The revelation of divine truth is then something which takes place within man, but is externally caused. But how does man become aware of, how does man know divine truth? Here Luther can speak of experience. "Empfindestu es nicht, so hast du den glauben nit, sondern das wort hanget dir an

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

den oren und schwebt dir auff der zungen wie den schaum auff dem wasser."<sup>12</sup> The certainty of our knowledge does not, however, lie in our experience, but in the "Verheissungswort Gottes."<sup>13</sup> We experience the truth of the Word when the outer Word enters into our inner self. But that Word never becomes identical with us. The righteousness which God creates enters into our inner selves, but never becomes a part of us. And the tension between these two antithetical concepts is described by the word faith.<sup>14</sup> The man of faith then waits patiently for his final consummation, when the inner man will become truly his own, and when the Image of God will have again been perfectly formed in him.<sup>15</sup>

There were, however, in Reformation times, also those who did not distinguish a dual nature of Word and Spirit, and of outer and inner man. These men insisted rather on the ability of man to receive a free, unmediated experience of the Spirit without reference to history or to the written word. Thomas Muenzer, for instance, was one of the most deep-feeling, honest men among the spiritualists, whose reform came from a real feeling of need.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, he

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>16</sup>Karl Holl, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1948), I, p. 424.

could say, in Holl's paraphrase, "Der echte Glaube musz ein selbstgewonnener sein; richtiger gesagt, er kann nur durch Gott selbst unmittelbar in dem Menschen geschaffen werden."<sup>17</sup> This was possible for Muenzer because he believed the Word to be very near man, in fact, hidden within him. As he says:

"Einmahl wird schliesslich, zum Erstaunen des Menschen selbst, ein Wort aus dem Abgrund des eigenen Herzens hervorquellen, bei dem der Mensch doch gleich sicher ist daz es von dem lebendigem Gott ausgeht."<sup>18</sup>

Sebastian Franck employed much the same idea. Although he recognized that the inner consciousness of divine truth could only be born through the mediation of an outer word, he did not recognize in it the paradoxical sense of Luther, as inner, yet not ours, as extra nos. Franck made the inner life "die Portz Gottes in uns."<sup>19</sup> It was not something outside man, but an inward possession given to him in the mystical birth.<sup>20</sup>

Just as Luther saw beyond the mysticism of Franck, he also saw beyond the naturalism of Paracelsus, and the perfectionism of Schwenkenfeld.<sup>21</sup> The three spiritualist views differed from Luther in that they saw "Innerlichkeit" as a

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 429.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 430.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 431.

<sup>20</sup>Heinrich Bornkamm, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

possession of man: Franck, as the mystical seed planted in him, Paracelsus, as his higher spirit-flesh nature, and Schwenkenfeld as his partially completed holiness.<sup>22</sup> Their confidence, therefore, rested on their own existentially experienced relation to God.<sup>23</sup> Luther's hope was based on the "nudissimum verbum",<sup>24</sup> not on a moment of mystical intuition.<sup>25</sup>

The true view of the nature of religious knowledge as Luther had presented it was, however, soon lost again. The emphasis this time, however, returned to the pre-Reformation scholastic type of thought. This return took place so imperceptibly that it was scarcely noticed. It was thought to be the logical development of the theology of the Reformers.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>As Karl Holl says; "Damit hat Luther in der Tat den Punkt beruehrt wo seine Froemigkeit sich grundsastzlich von allen Mystisch gearteten scheidet. Vom Gewissen an sich war auch bei den Schwaermern....viel die Rede: aber dort galt es als dasjenige vermoegen, das den Menschen unmittelbar mit Gott verbindet und ihm, wenn er Gottes erharret, die Kraft vermittelt sich vom Niedrigen und Sinnlichen zu befreien. Bei Luther spielt es eine andere Rolle, deshalb, weil er sowohl Gott als den Menschen anders sah. Ihm war Gott nicht nur eine Kraftquelle, ein Wunschziel, ein hoechstes Sein oder wie man es wohl heute ausdrueckt ein oberster Richtpunkt, von dem aus die Lebenswerte fuer den Menschen sich ordnen, sondern wirklich das 'ganz andere'. Er war die Macht, der der Menschen sein Dasein verdankte und die darum ein Recht auf ihn und all sein Handeln besasz." Op. cit., p. 447.

Yet the moment this took place, the vitality of the Reformation insight began to wane. As the need for a coherent, systematized statement of doctrine was felt, the living proclamation of the Word of God once more tended to become a statement of His truth in terms of intellectual assent to doctrines. Much of the responsibility for the early initiation of this situation must fall upon Melancton.<sup>26</sup> His humanistic heritage and his preoccupation with the building of an educational system, combined to produce a completely unLutheran emphasis on Christian knowledge of God as information. This information was apprehended by a mind "which is to all intents and purposes identical with the natural mind."<sup>27</sup> The Image of God was thought to be man's rational soul, and the natural law could provide an insight into God without revelation in the Word. The emphasis on information and on rational acceptance of it, and the theological attitude which usually accompanies this emphasis, soon became evident among the pastors trained in the Melanctonian mode. They were "equipped with the full panoply of philosophical education," and hence soon became a "learned and proud caste, and their theology, a proving ground for dialectical competition."<sup>28</sup> In any case, they lost the understanding of the

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<sup>26</sup>Richard Caemmerer, "The Melanctonian Blight", Concordia Theological Monthly, XVIII (May, 1947), page 322.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 336.

Holy Scriptures as the vehicle whereby the Holy Spirit brings God's redemption to men, and as the witness of redeemed men to the fact of their redemption. They understood God's revelation as more a static truth to be contemplated than a living fellowship between sinful men and the redeeming God. The holy apostles and prophets began to be thought of as "mechanical instruments and dead machines, mere amanuenses who set down on paper only what was dictated to them by the Spirit of God."<sup>29</sup> Such a view of the Holy Scriptures inevitably led to a loss of the Bible as the living history of God's revelation of himself to the people of the Old and New Covenants and made of it instead the source-book for countless tomes of dogmatic speculation. Paradoxically enough, the orthodox theologians thought that in this way they were guaranteed the possession of actual divine truth. They wanted to be sure of the truth they had in order to meet their theological opponents on their own ground. They wanted to have an authoritative system, and to assert the superiority of that system over all other systems. They thought that they could meet the challenges of the Roman church, of the Spiritualists, and even of the Rationalists successfully

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<sup>29</sup>M. Reu, Luther and the Scriptures (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, Copyright, 1944), p. 109.

with their systematized intellectual truth. In reality, however, their systems easily atrophied faith, and the very dogmas designed to preserve the truth became the means by which the church's truth was lost.

Ever since the Reformation, the problem of the relation between truth and faith has continued to trouble Protestant theology. At times, as in Orthodoxy, epistemology became the predominant concern of theologians. At other times, as in Pietism, the epistemological problem was shelved in favor of an emphasis upon the inner life. The very fact that Christian thought adopted first one, then the other of these alternatives indicated that by the end of the eighteenth century the time had come for a serious reconsideration of the entire problem. Such a consideration came in the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, to which our next chapter will be devoted.



## CHAPTER II

### FRIEDRICH SCHLEIERMACHER ON THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Friedrich Schleiermacher grew up during the Enlightenment, one of the most significant periods of German or even of world history. This period more than any other marked the rise of the "classic German philosophy,"<sup>1</sup> and the apex in the history of the life of the German spirit.<sup>2</sup> The life of culture became the ideal; the rational, scientific and artistic in life were glorified. The period was, however, sadly one-sided. The extreme accent on human capability and the over-emphasis of the importance of the individual made man's ego the measure both of himself, and of all knowledge. The age may be characterized as one in which an extreme rationalism permeated both secular and ecclesiastical institutions. The flowering of the period in Immanuel Kant, whose chief works the Critiques of the Pure and Practical Reason marked the zenith of philosophical speculation up to that time, caused man to be thought of mostly as a "being thinking according to the laws of intelligence and acting

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolph Otto, Religious Essays, translated by Brian Lunn (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>Carl Stange, "Die Geschichtliche Bedeutung Schleiermachers", Zeitschrift fuer Systematische Theologie, XI (1933), 692, "Der Deutsche Idealismus hat fuer die Geschichte unsers Volkes eine sehnliche Bedeutung wie die Reformation Luthers."

according to the laws of morality as the creature of theoretic and practical reason."<sup>3</sup> The period became one of arid intellectualism, in which the world, nature, history and God were reduced to practical syllogisms. Morality became a utilitarian reduction of the good to that which serves the interests of the greatest number. God became a "Great Watchmaker" whose identity was almost completely obscured by the mass of deistic proofs brought to affirm the reality of his existence.

What was true in the realm of science and philosophy was also true in the church. The church lost its theology, and with it its vitality. In its attempt to justify its existence to the world of reason, the church itself thought it had to become rational, and it did. In fact, so much so, that the pendulum's swing from the pole of superstitious supernaturalism to that of rationalism, and ever-present characteristic throughout the church's history,<sup>4</sup> deprived the church and religion of its real message to the hearts of men.

Movements in history and in thought, however, are rarely far removed from their opposites. A Romantic Idealism, which was at once the heritage and the first prophet of the down-

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<sup>3</sup>Rudolph Otto, Religious Essays, p. 70.

<sup>4</sup>Werner Elert, Der Kampf um das Christentum -- Geschichte der Beziehung zwischen dem Evangelischen Christentum und dem Allgemeinen Denken seit Schleiermacher und Hegel. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1921), p. 4.

fall of the Enlightenment, began to take root in it.<sup>5</sup> A group of young romanticists, including August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, Tieck, Schelling and Fichte, began to crack the tradition encrusted shell of the thinking of the day. Schleiermacher was initiated into this restless surge of storm and stress. He had already drunk deeply at the great spring of German philosophy. His occupation with, and affinity to the philosophy of Kant,<sup>6</sup> his study of the systems of Leibnitz, Wolff, Semler, and Eberhard at Halle, had stimulated his critical insight, and had left an indelible mark on him for all his future constructive work. Now, in contrast to the critical, philosophical side of his nature, the poetic in him was stimulated by the great romantic movement as it found expression in the German poets. Yet the romantic "longing for a fuller vision of life"<sup>7</sup>, the primarily poetic or aesthetic romantic nature could never

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<sup>5</sup>Carl Stange, "Die Geschichtliche Bedeutung Schleiermachers", p. 695.

<sup>6</sup>Wilhelm Dilthey, Leben Schleiermachers, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1922), p. 192. "Die erste von den beiden groszen geistigen Mächten die Schleiermacher und seine Generation bestimmten, die Philosophie Kants, hatten in der ersten Lebensperiode den Umkreis seiner Ideen und Arbeiten beherrscht, und ihr Einfluss auf ihm dauerte sein ganzes Leben hindurch." Although his criticism of Schleiermacher and Brunner is not entirely adequate on other counts, Cornelius van Til also has this valid insight when in his introduction to B. B. Warfield's book The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible. (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948), he sees the relation of both men to Kant.

<sup>7</sup>Rudolph Otto, Religious Essays, p. 72.

have come to a new and vital understanding of religion. The group of poets at war with convention and antagonistic to the traditional, orthodox formulations of both philosophy and theology, would never have precipitated a great religious or moral revival. At best, they could have "brought imagination to bear upon life, turned prose into poetry, and awakened the deeper hidden meaning of things."<sup>8</sup> The real task required a deeply religious personality, a religious and moral hero who was given to them in Schleiermacher. He too had been influenced by orthodoxy. In the devout world of the Moravian fraternity, however, and in his own deep religiosity, he had come to a profound piety, and to the existential and immediate experience of a personal relationship to God. That, far more than anything else, raised him head and shoulders above his witty and charming associates. And that is what made him the tremendous spiritual stimulus that he was to the viscid complacency of his times.

The stimulation to his poetic nature was however, undoubtedly also a stimulus to his religious side. For, it was mainly to his associates in the Herz Circle that he addressed the most important of his early works, Ueber die Religion, Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Veraechtern.<sup>9</sup> In

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<sup>8</sup>W.B.Selbie, quoted in J.L.Neve, A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946), p. 105ff.

<sup>9</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, Reden: Ueber die Religion (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1843).

spite of the close connection Schleiermacher had with this circle, and in spite of the sympathy he felt for the romantic spirit, as a theologian and preacher, he found something in them that was inimical to him. The Reden, however, were not written chiefly as a theological polemic against them, but were rather intended to arouse an understanding in his contemporaries of that very deep devotion which he had learned to know both among the Moravians, and during his early years as a minister. The Reden are then very much conditioned by those to whom he writes, by the unique and complicated intellectual situation of his time,<sup>10</sup> and by his own peculiar situation as a theologian among poets and philosophers. As a Paul on Mars Hill, he was eager to bring new depth and life to those who were not living in "heiliger Stille der Gottheit", but who recognized as sacred only the "kluegen Sprueche unsere Weisen, und die herrlichen Dichtungen unsere Kuenstler."<sup>11</sup> He feels responsible for them, and because he feels in every way their equal as a "modern man", he demands a hearing from them. Not pompously, but from "die reine Notwendigkeit meiner Natur," from the "goettlicher Beruf", and that which "meine Seele in der Welt bestimmt, und mich zu dem macht

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<sup>10</sup> Rudolph Otto, Religious Essays, p. 73.

<sup>11</sup> Reden, p. 1.

der ich bin."<sup>12</sup> He felt at home in the philosophy, science and art of his times, and wanted to imbue them with a new and deeper meaning. That meaning is the Religion of which the Reden speak so eloquently; and in the following pages we shall attempt to show what Schleiermacher thought this Religion is, what its value, and how it may be obtained and used by the devout person.

Important for an understanding of Schleiermacher's conception of the nature of Religion is the subsidiary question: what is his conception of the nature of the Universe? The Universe for Schleiermacher is something more than the mere astronomical phenomenon we usually think of when we use the word. It is more than a physical phenomenon which, with its orders and laws, can be made the object of our reason and our scientific application. Schleiermacher's Universum is the "totality of being and becoming, of nature and history in which we are partly links, and partly masters that forge the chain."<sup>13</sup> This harmonious and perfect, artistically organized system to which man is related is the object of Religion, and our relation to it in Religion is bound up with each of its great attributes. We are, however, never concerned with only one of them. That is, we do not have Religion when we, for instance, attune ourselves to the

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>13</sup>Rudolph Otto, Religious Essays, p. 74.

great moral laws of the Universe.<sup>14</sup> Nor do we have Religion when we through our reason arrive at the essential divinity of the Universe.<sup>15</sup> Even our contemplation of the beauty of nature is not Religion, although it may well be the "vestibule of the divine temple."<sup>16</sup> As he says, "eben so wenig aber glaubt das jene Freude an der Natur, welche so viele dafuer anpriesen, die wahre religioese sei."<sup>17</sup> Neither is that mere awe and majesty which we experience when we contemplate the Universe Religion.<sup>18</sup> It is true that this awe is one of Religion's first elements, but it is not itself Religion, nor does it have the power to awaken the religious consciousness.<sup>19</sup> These things are all a part of our rational scientific relation to the Universe, of our understanding of its nature and its laws.

Just as little as we find Religion in the scientific approach to the Universe as the object of our reason, so little do we find it when we make the Universe the object of our practical moral will. The moral philosophers who contemplate the moral order of the Universe do not have

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<sup>14</sup> Reden, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

Religion any more than the metaphysician who classifies, divides it into essences, and deduces the necessity of God from the reality of the world and its laws.<sup>20</sup> As he says: "so folgert mich nicht daraus, das die moralische Welt das Universum der Religion sei; vielmehr was nur diese in Eurem beschraenkten Sinne gilt, daraus wuerden sich gar wenig religioesen Regungen entwickeln."<sup>21</sup> The Universe, to be known at all, and this must be underscored for an understanding of Schleiermacher, must be known religiously. What he is trying to get at is a description of what Rudolph Otto calls the "faculty or capacity of deeply absorbed contemplation when confronted by the vast, living totality and reality of things as it is in nature and history."<sup>22</sup> Whenever a mind is exposed in a "spirit of absorbed submission"<sup>23</sup> to impressions of the Universe it experiences an immediate religious intuition of something that is, as it were, "a sheer overplus, in addition to empirical reality."<sup>24</sup> It is the intuition "Anschauung) of the "one in the all, and the all in the one." It is the experience of the temporal in

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>22</sup>Rudolph Otto, The Idea of the Holy, translated by J. W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 150.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.



the eternal and the eternal in every temporal thing. He says:

Die Betrachtung des frommen ist nur das unmittelbare Bewusstsein von dem allgemeinen Sein alles endlichen im unendlichen und durch das unendliche, alles zeitlichen im ewigen und durch das ewige. Dieses suchen und finden in allem was lebt und sich regt, und das Leben selbst in unmittelbaren Gefuehl nur haben und kennen als dieses Sein, das ist Religion<sup>25</sup>

True Religion is "Sinn und Geschmack fuer das Unendliche."<sup>26</sup>

It is the synthesis of the rational and moral elements of knowledge, plus a third, experience, which transcends them both. These three are different, but inseparable.

When we have said that Religion is intuition of the Universe, we have not completely reached its nature.

Schleiermacher deals with the problem of how we intuit the Universe by analogy to ordinary processes of knowledge. "When we say that we know something, there is a connection between the sense which perceives and its object. There is a moment when the two "flow together and become one in our consciousness before they separate and return to their original state."<sup>27</sup> This fact, or event of cognition, is then preserved in our consciousness. The moment we reflect on it, it becomes two elements, one forming a picture of the object, the other penetrating our consciousness and awakening a feeling. Our

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<sup>25</sup> Reden, p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>27</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey, Leben Schleiermachers, p. 340.

intuition of the Universe is analogous to this. As we contemplate the Universe, there is a moment when our consciousness "flows together" with it. As Schleiermacher says, in that moment, "Ich liege am Busen der Unendlichen Welt, Ich bin in diesem Augenblick ihre Seele, denn ich fuehle alle ihre Kraefte und ihr innerliches Leben." Inseparably joined with the intuited moment of consciousness is then the powerful "Gefuehl gegenueber dem unendlichen." Both the intuition and its concomitant feeling make Religion. Perception is the tool, and experience is the spontaneous side of knowledge in which finite man becomes a participant in the infinite eternal Universe.<sup>28</sup>

It would seem, then, that the passive mystic who contemplates the nature of the Universe in its unspeakable grandeur, and in its inexplicable moral order, will eventually arrive at the experience of the divine, or the mystic communion with the "One and the All". But this is not so. The religious experience of the nature of the Universe is not merely an experience of its being, nor does the being of the Universe produce the experience. Rather, the Universe reveals itself to the religious consciousness by its "handeln", its action upon the religious subject.

Euer Gefuehl in so fern es Euer und des All gemeinschaftliches Sein und Leben auf die beschriebene Weise ausdrueckt, in so fern Ihr die einzellen Momente desselben habt als ein Wirken Gottes in euch

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 405.

vermittelt durch die Wirkung der Welt auf Euch, dies ist Eure Frömmigkeit, und was einzeln als in diese Reihe gehörig hervortritt, das sind nicht Eure Erkenntnisse oder die Gegenstände Eurer Erkenntnis, auch nicht Eure Werke und Handlungen oder die verschiedenen Gebiete Eures Handelns, sondern lediglich Eure Empfindungen sind es, und die mit ihren zusammenhängenden und sie bedingenden Einwirkungen alles Lebendigen und Beweglichen um Euch her auf Euch.<sup>29</sup>

We see then, that our experience of the Universe does not take place as a result of our contemplation of it. Rather, "das Universum bildet sich selbst seine Betrachter und Bewunderer."<sup>30</sup> In this, the Reden are a polemic against the world-view which places man and his experiential world in the center of the Universe.

The problem with which Schleiermacher has to deal in his conception of the Universe is to keep the Eternal from being determined or limited by temporal things, and yet to make it possible to grasp the presence of the eternal in one temporal thing. The metaphysical basis of the Reden would seem to be the immanence of the endless, the eternal in the temporal. In that the temporal is received as a manifestation of the divine, and in that the eternal is present in individual things, Schleiermacher's philosophy is related to that of Spinoza and Shaftesbury.<sup>31</sup> God appears as the "benannte aber nicht definierte Grösze, als ein X, als das bloße

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<sup>29</sup>Reden, p. 54.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Wilhelm Dilthey, Leben Schleiermachers, p. 341.

'Woher',<sup>32</sup> as not differentiated from the "being" of the Universe. He seems to be an immanent life-principle. This, as Dilthey cautions, however, must not be understood in the sense of Spinoza's pantheistic immanence.<sup>33</sup> The temporal and the finite, stand in a space-time and reciprocal relationship to other finite things, and are determined and limited by them. The Eternal, the Infinite, however, is not only not determined in space and time, but is the negation of all determination and limit.<sup>34</sup> The real difference between Schleiermacher and Spinoza is seen more clearly in that Schleiermacher realizes that the essential nature of Religious truth can not be received through philosophical concepts, nor be completely contained in them. Spirit, love, and understanding are the things which really bring about true knowledge. Those who believe that they can attain to highest truth through metaphysical speculation are doomed to failure. Meaning and worth are present in the Universe because the Universe is spiritual, and works in a living spiritual way.

The next consideration is that of the function of theology in the nature and composition of Religion. As we

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<sup>32</sup>Ferdinand Kattenbusch, Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl (Giessen: F. Richer'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903), p. 10.

<sup>33</sup>Wilhelm Dilthey, op. cit., p. 342. See also Kattenbusch, op. cit., p. 9ff.

<sup>34</sup>Dilthey, op. cit., p. 343.

have seen, Religion as intuition and feeling is evoked by the operation of the totality of the Universe on man's religious consciousness. It must be said at the outset, however, that Schleiermacher believes that the desire to penetrate beyond the moment of intuition often leads us to something which is not pure Religion anymore, but wants somehow to become science.<sup>35</sup> The will to define, to expound and conceptualize Religion through our reflection on the religious intuition itself, inevitably leads to a quasi identification of Religion with our ex post facto conceptions and propositions. Such conceptualizing, as Schleiermacher maintains leads inevitably to quarreling over conceptions — "practical sometimes, theoretical always — when neither belongs to the essence of Religion."<sup>36</sup> We may reflect on our experience, but we should not forget that our reflection and its products are not themselves either Religion or experience. Nevertheless, our intuitions do "assume shape in definite propositions and statements, capable of a certain groping formulations," but are to be distinguished from scientific theological propositions by their "free and merely felt, not reasoned character."<sup>37</sup> They are groping "intimations of meanings

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. particularly the Second Discourse in the Reden.

<sup>36</sup> Reden, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> Rudolph Otto, The Idea of the Holy, p. 150.

figuratively apprehended."<sup>38</sup> They cannot be used as clear cut doctrinal propositions. Natural religion, Pantheism, and Deism make this mistake.<sup>39</sup> As an inevitable result of this mistake, Schleiermacher maintains that "die sogenannte natuerliche Religion ist gewoehnlich so abgeschliffen und hat so metaphysische und moralische Manieren, dasz sie wenig von dem eigentlichen Charakter der Religion durchschlimmern laeszt."<sup>40</sup> Or, as he says in another place, "denn alle diese Saetze sind nicht anders als das Resultat jener Betrachtung des Gefuehls, jener vergleichenden Reflexion darueber, von welchem wir schon geredet haben."<sup>41</sup> In the last analysis no "intellectual dissection or justification of such intuition is possible, nor indeed should it be attempted, for the essence most peculiar to it would be destroyed thereby."<sup>42</sup>

But, if the theologians cannot give us an adequate statement as to the true nature of Religion, how do we attain to the revelation of the spiritual nature of the Universe? Here Schleiermacher must again speak by analogy. He attempts to answer the question by giving examples of a

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Reden, p. 269.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>42</sup> Rudolph Otto, The Idea of the Holy, p. 152.

higher "tadog, and ultimate mysterious, cosmic purposiveness, of which we have a prescient intimation."<sup>43</sup> He maintains that we must be alert for revelation wherever and whenever it may choose to reveal itself, whether in the physical universe with its orders and laws,<sup>44</sup> or in history, in diesen Wanderungen durch das ganze Gebiet der Menschheit,<sup>45</sup> or in "die Menschheit,"<sup>46</sup> but particularly in history, for "gewisz hebt Religion mit Geschicht an, und endigt mit ihr."<sup>47</sup> Revelation is each primary and new sharing of the Universe and its inner life with that of man. It is the interaction between the "going in" of the world in to men through contemplation and feeling, and the "stepping in" of men into the world through "Handlung und Bildung." For this reason a written revelation in Holy Scriptures is not the primary thing. Prophecy and written propositions are not themselves revelation but are the subsequent expression in words and concepts of a religious intuition. And for this reason, "nicht jeder hat Religion der an eine Heilige Schrift glaubt, sondern nur der, welcher sie lebendig und unmittelbar versteht, und

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Reden, p. 81.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

ihrer daher fuer sich allein auch am leichtesten entbehren koennte."<sup>48</sup> It is in the historical process that we come to the full revelation of religious truth, and in one historical moment particularly.

Ich will Euch gleichsam zu dem Gott, der Fleisch geworden ist, hinfuehren; Ich will Euch die Religion zeigen wie sie sich ihrer Unendlichkeit entaeusert hat, und in oft querrtigger Gestalt unter dem Menschen erschienen ist; in den Religionen sollt Ihr die Religion entdecken.<sup>49</sup>

In the history of God became flesh we behold God's unique revelation of Himself to men.

Although Schleiermacher insisted that an adequate statement of the real nature of the religious intuition, and therefore of the nature of religion itself, could never be made, as a theologian and preacher he nevertheless did attempt to give and articulate solution to the problem. This became necessary and possible for him in his later years because of his actual attachment to the Christian congregation, as the regular preacher at the University of Halle, and of Trinity Church in Berlin. Theology, he felt, is inseparably bound to and grows out of the life of the church, out of the society or communion of believers who have as their common possession the piety of the Christian

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 245.



faith. In order to give expression to this common possession Schleiermacher had to undertake the problem of the possibility of a dogmatic theology. He had, however, to relate his dogmatics to his conception of Religion as intuition and feeling as he had expounded it in the Reden. The problem as it found restatement in his Der Christliche Glaube Nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche in Zusammenhang Dargestellt was then to give articulate expression to Christian propositions of faith, or comprehension of the Christian pious states of mind expressed in words,<sup>50</sup> and to relate that expression to the contemporary Christian congregation.<sup>51</sup> He viewed the Christian experience as something positively given, and the theological task as that of deriving from this experience whatever doctrinal content could be found in it.<sup>52</sup> As in the Reden, Schleiermacher again wished to show that Religion is not dependent on reason, ethical considerations, or on orthodox dogmatics as comprising propo-

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<sup>50</sup>Glaubenslehre, par. 54. This and the following citations from the Glaubenslehre are taken from the summary in excerpt form in R.H.Gruetzmacher's Textbuch zur Systematischen Theologie und Ihrer Geschichte (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923). In my presentation of Schleiermacher, I have purposely concentrated upon the Reden, and have used the Glaubenslehre only as a means of developing the problems raised by the Reden. I have therefore avoided many of the issues raised in Schleiermacher's later theological development.

<sup>51</sup>Glaubenslehre, par. 54.

<sup>52</sup>H.R. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology (Edinburgh: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), p. 62.

sitions not involved in Christian experience, for its validation.<sup>53</sup> As he says:

Die Froemigkeit, welche die Basis aller kirchlichen Gemeinschaft ausmacht, ist rein duer sich betrachtet weder ein Wissen noch ein Tun, sondern ein Bestimmtheit des Gefuehls oder das unmittelbaren selbst bewusstseins.<sup>54</sup>

But the essence of this feeling, its unique character is "dasz wir unser selbst als schlechthin abhaengig, oder was dasselbe sagen will, als in Beziehung mit Gott bewusst sind."<sup>55</sup> It would seem, as Rudolph Otto points out, that we come upon the very fact of God as the result of an inference, that is, by reasoning to a cause beyond ourselves to account for the feeling of dependence that we have.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, it is of great importance to know how Schleiermacher definitely equates this basic feeling of absolute dependence with being in relation to God. Implicitly, at least, this is an advance beyond his former view. In the Reden, he had insisted on the complete autonomy of the religious experience, even apart from any idea of God; but in the Glaubenslehre he says that God means the "whence of our receptive and active existence."<sup>57</sup> Or as Mackintosh affirms in another place, "in

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<sup>53</sup> Dilthey, op. cit., p. 502.

<sup>54</sup> Glaubenslehre, par. 40.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., par. 41.

<sup>56</sup> Rudolph Otto, The Idea of the Holy, p. 10.

<sup>57</sup> Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 64.

fundamental intention, he is not arguing from an empirically discovered feeling of absolute dependence on God to God its source and cause; in that feeling we grasp God directly as the 'Whence' of all things."<sup>58</sup>

The feeling of absolute dependence, however, becomes the principle on which the dogmatics is based. He treats this principle in three ways: 1) he reflects on the devout feeling itself in so far as it expresses the relationship of the World and God, 2) he reflects on God and those of his attributes which relate to the pious selfconsciousness in so far as it expresses the relationship of God to the world, 3) he reflects on the world and its createdness which is intimated in the pious selfconsciousness in so far as this expresses the common relation to God and the world.<sup>56</sup> Under these three reflections he treats the doctrines of creation and preservation, the omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence of God, and the original perfection of man and the world. Since all of the foregoing are treated on the basis of the feeling of absolute dependence, the person of Christ

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 65. Since Mackintosh presents only an overview of Schleiermacher's thought, he cannot be expected to go into all the issues raised by the Glaubenslehre. In spite of this inadequacy, however, his book is a useful introduction to Schleiermacher, especially to his significance for the development of modern theology.

<sup>56</sup>Werner Elert, Der Kampf um das Christentum, p. 21.

does not appear. The second major portion of the dogmatics deals with the knowledge of sin and grace. The second section of the second major portion of his work treats the doctrine of Christ, this is, however, not to be viewed as an indication of the emphasis, or lack of it, which he places on that doctrine.

The Dogmatics is then an exposition of Christian pious feelings expressed in words. Piety is not the function of the knowing faculty, for its seat is not in the intellect, nor in the will, but in feeling. This feeling is as we have seen the feeling of "absolute dependence on God." As such, it is not a feeling of freedom, or merely of relative dependence toward the world and finite things, but as he says:

In jedem Christlich-frommen Selbstbewusstsein wird immer schon vorausgesetzt, und ist also auch darum mit enthalten, das im unmittelbaren Selbstbewusstsein sich Schlechthin abhaengig finde, als die einzige Weise wie im allgemeinen das eigene Sein und das unendliche Sein Gottes im Selbstbewusstsein Eines sein kann.<sup>57</sup>

This principle is then related to the doctrine of creation. The origin of the world is dependent on God. God's creation of the world, however, is not in any sense comparable to the fashion in which men create, nor is it to be thought of with reference to time.<sup>58</sup> Further, the devout self-consciousness as absolute dependence coincides with the idea of divine pre-

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<sup>57</sup>Glaubenslehre, par. 144.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., par. 163.

servation.<sup>59</sup> Concerning the attributes of God, they are not to be used as describing his essence, but only as a description of the particular form in which the feeling of absolute dependence is related to Him.<sup>60</sup> The only attribute referable to God is his "Ursaechlichkeit,"<sup>61</sup> that is, He is the immanent cause of the world.

The unique character of Christian piety is that:

Das Christentum ist eine der teleologischen Richtungen der Frömmigkeit angehörig monotheistische Glaubensweise und unterscheidet sich von anderen solchen wesentlich dadurch, dass alles derselben bezogen wird auf die durch Jesum von Nazareth vollbrachte Erlösung.<sup>62</sup>

Christ as the Redeemer of all men is distinct from all men. Since He is in no way in need of redemption, He is to be distinguished from all men as possessing redemptive power from his birth.<sup>63</sup> Each Christian has in himself the certainty that there is no other form of participation in the Christian communion than through faith in Christ as the Redeemer, and that his piety could take no other form than that.<sup>64</sup> The Christian is conscious of sin as the separation

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., par. 190.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., par. 218.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., par. 223.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., par. 42.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., par. 63.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., par. 65.

of men from God. Sin is the predominance of the flesh over the Spirit, and is a condition common to men from the beginning.<sup>65</sup> The Christian views grace as his communion with God through the Savior. In so far as sin and grace oppose each other in the Christian consciousness, God cannot be viewed as the cause of sin. In that we never have a consciousness of grace without a consciousness of sin, however, we may say that this condition is so ordered by God.<sup>66</sup> The Redeemer from sin is comparable to men in his human nature, but differentiated from men in the "Kraeftigkeit" of his consciousness of God, which is an identity of the existence of God in him.<sup>67</sup> Christ redeems men by taking them up into the "Kraeftigkeit" of his consciousness of God, and into his "untroubled holiness."<sup>68</sup> His suffering is vicarious in that his "Mitgefuehl" of sin is complete, and in that he himself is under no obligation to suffer.<sup>69</sup> His theory of the stonement might therefore be called a "genuegende Stellvertretung" rather than "stellvertretende Genugtuung." When we are taken up into communion with his life, our altered

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., par. 310.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., par. 343.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., par. 34.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., par. 86.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., par. 120.

relation to God comprises our justification, and our altered way of life, our conversion.<sup>70</sup> That God justifies the converted man includes this, that he forgives his sin, and recognizes him as His child. This new status, however, follows only in so far as man has the true faith in the Redeemer.

Schleiermacher, then, finds the solution to the problem of the nature and revelation of Religion in the interaction between the living totality of the Universe and the religious subject, and that knowledge of this process takes place in the intuitive consciousness. As such, Religion admits of no type of accurate verbal description of its coming into being or of its content. Under this definition he can only say that Religion is objectively caused by the action of the Universe on man, and that knowledge of this action takes place in the Christian devout self-consciousness. As he attempts to expound the specific character of the Christian religion, however, this knowledge takes on objective content as the relation of the Christian devout self-consciousness to the redemption in Jesus Christ. From his early definition of knowledge of Religion in the "Selbst bewusstsein", he shifts to knowledge which is "Gottesbewusstsein." This was possible for him because his interests were first with the religious life, and with experience as the source of

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., par. 138.

of this life, and only secondarily with the dogmatic propositions which give expression to it.



### CHAPTER III

#### BRUNNER'S CRITICISMS OF SCHLEIERMACHER

Emil Brunner employs two phrases: one by Luther -- "Verbum est principium primum", and one by Goethe -- "Gefuehl ist alles, Name ist Schall und Rauch", to distinguish what he believes to be a true Christian epistemology from a false one. He takes up his task with the conviction that all theological epistemologies may be classed under the categories -- mysticism and the word. Schleiermacher, he believes, was the man who gave the classical expression of, and the most consistent presentation to, the idea that the way of mysticism is a superior means to the knowledge of divine truth. In order to demonstrate the truth of this thesis, he claims that Schleiermacher's theology must be viewed in terms of his philosophy, and that no identity of the religion that Schleiermacher presents with that of Christian faith may be posited.<sup>1</sup>

Brunner begins his discussion of the theology of Schleiermacher with the problem of the nature of religion. The word

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<sup>1</sup> Emil Brunner, Die Mystik und das Wort (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1928), p. 26.

'Religion' was born in paganism. Up to the time of the Reformation it was used mainly statistically and apologetically, rather than as an indication of the nature of religion. When it did acquire the latter meaning in Calvin and Zwingli, it meant the presence of a specific objective content which is received by the knowing subject. Religion became "that which" a Christian believes. Schleiermacher rightly rebelled against orthodoxy's understanding of Religion as an objectified intellectual system, but he reacted so extremely as to see in religion only a subjective anthropocentrism.<sup>2</sup> Schleiermacher's anthropocentrism was the product of the Enlightenment and of Romanticism, although he differed somewhat from both. He shared the Romantic-Idealist anti-intellectualism, and applied that attitude to religion in defining it not as knowledge or action, but as feeling. He insisted on this so strongly says Brunner, "dasz in der Religion der Inhalt, das Was, unerheblich, unwesentlich sei gegenueber dem Wie, ja das noch weitergehende: dasz Religion ueberhaupt keinen Inhalt habe."<sup>3</sup> Religion is not knowledge. The psychological investigation of the Enlightenment considered religion as one psychological manifestation among others. Schleiermacher did not go quite that far, but rather insisted on the unique-

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<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid., p. 40.

ness of the religious experience. To come to this conclusion, he did not use a genuinely psychological method of investigation. He dealt not with the religious phenomena as such, but with the "Idealerscheinungen"- the "Heroes of Religion".<sup>4</sup>

Religion is furthermore not action, not a moral ethic. The religious life and the life of action are two separate spheres. Religion is passivity. It is distinguished from knowledge and action just as thinking, willing and feeling are distinguished from one another as to their content although they function together in the same individual. Brunner agrees that Schleiermacher was correct in saying that moralism is not religion. God and moral good are not the same. But, he asks, does Schleiermacher deplore moralism because of the Gospel, or because of his mysticism? Certainly because of the latter since religion is feeling, not knowledge or action. Schleiermacher's passivity again appears as an illustration of his subjective mysticism.

Although Schleiermacher distinguishes two theories of religion, one in which knowledge and action are interrelated parts of feeling, and the other where the essence of religion is pure intuition and feeling, Brunner believes the second to be most representative of Schleiermacher's thought. To illustrate this, he takes up the Reden in their presenta-

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

tion of 'intuition' and 'instinct' for the universe. He says that Ritschl is correct in saying that these words indicate Schleiermacher's theory of religion as "Kunstgenusz am Universum".<sup>5</sup> He then goes on to say that this is what Schleiermacher meant when he compares the "Genius der Menschheit" to a "vollendetsen und universellen Kuenstler". Schleiermacher's religion is "cosmological aestheticism" or "Pan-aestheticism", and, mysticism and pan-aestheticism he says, are "Zwillingsgeschwister". They are "Kinder der Allmusik, und Musik, die Kunst des Gefuehls, ist auch diejenige, die in Schleiermacher's Schriften am häufigsten zur Verdeutlichung des Wesens der Religion herbeigezogen wird."<sup>6</sup> In regarding Schleiermacher as a mystic Brunner says:

"Es steht damit durchaus nicht in Widerspruch, dass alles unter dem Gesichtspunkt eines Werken der Gottheit oder des Universums auffasst. So hat der Mystiker sein Erleben immer empfunden, sogar da, wo er durch Haschisch, Wein, Tanz, oder sexueller Rausch selbst hineinfuehrte."<sup>7</sup>

He refers to the Confidential Letters on Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde as substantiation for applying the latter to Schleiermacher.

The major criticism which Brunner brings is that the theology of Schleiermacher does not give an adequate presen-

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

tation of Christian knowledge as dependent upon the Word. Shallow biologism and evolution made of the Word a by-product of natural growth or an attempt to express psychological states. Since Romanticism feared an arid intellectualism, it wholeheartedly endorsed this philosophy. Beginning with the idea that God must be more than a doctrine about God, the Romantists put the word in second place, or even dispensed with it entirely. Instead, they emphasized the intensity of experience, and Religion was robbed of its content.

Brunner next presents the view that Schleiermacher's Glaubenslehre deals with an "inhaltslosen dionyschen Mystik", and that his relation to Christ as Redeemer does not differentiate him from all ahistorical mystics.<sup>8</sup> To support the first view he says,

"Weil hinter dem Word 'Auffassung' die Romantische Reflexionslehre sich verbirgt, darum haben die Glaubenssaetze keinen Erkenntniswert. Sie haben, recht, d. h. im Sinn Schleiermacher verstanden, auch gar keinen Erkenntnisinhalt. Sie meinen nicht was sie sagen. Sie sagen 'Gottes Eigenschaften', aber sie meinen 'menschliche Zustände'... Sie haben nicht die Funktion, zu sagen was sie meinen, Erkenntnis zu vermitteln, sondern sie repraesentieren das religioese Gefuehl. Darum sind sie auch besonders gefaehrlich, wo sie in der 'dialektischen Form' auftreten, weil da ihr/ blossz subjektiven Wert am leichtesten uebersehen werde."<sup>9</sup>

The Word is no longer a word in the sense of truth. It is rather a form, a means of expressing an inner experience. It becomes an artistic symbol. Religion becomes the inner

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

part of art, and art, the outer form of religion.<sup>10</sup> As for Schleiermacher's relation to the ahistorical mystics, Brunner says that the Glaubenslehre speaks of the importance of the historical Christ in the sense of the medieval mystics who made of the Pauline doctrine of Christ in us, a Christ of phantasy.<sup>11</sup> The Glaubenslehre makes of the historical fact an immanent, eternal feeling which can be taken into consciousness through intuition.<sup>12</sup> Christ is brought into the second part of the dogmatics as entirely foreign to the sense of the first, in fact, it is impossible to harmonize these completely divergent views. Brunner says that Schleiermacher has suddenly become aware of the objective inability of man to attain to God, and so the feeling of absolute dependence, the causal consciousness, disappears. The mystical approach is dropped, and the word again comes into its own.<sup>13</sup> When Schleiermacher speaks about purity of doctrine, of the "Wirksamkeit des goettlichen Wort", the truth, etc., Brunner says that this reminds him of old Lutheran orthodoxy, in which the word was the criterion of faith and the antithesis to all mystically oriented philosophies.<sup>14</sup> When we ask how the Reden and the first half of the Glaubenslehre fit in with his new theology, Brunner answers, "absolut gar nicht".<sup>15</sup> The first is the true Schleier-

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 116ff.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

macher. Jesus is not the Word of God whom, and from whom faith knows its relationship to God; Jesus is not the revelation of the divine will, but only a factor, a power which arouses the God consciousness dwelling in man.<sup>16</sup>

Schleiermacher's religion can only be understood in relation to Idealism, and the doctrine in which the spirit becomes the principle of all reality and truth. He did see the danger of using a completely ego-idealistic thought however, and to avoid it, used the philosophy of Spinoza. He attempted to put a boundary of reality around the ideal. Spirit and reality then became a coordinated appearance of a third, the One. Schleiermacher also saw in Idealism a danger to the uniqueness of religion, a tendency to turn religion into a speculative philosophy. He was too much of a religious man to allow this, and sought the real basis for religion in the spirit and in feeling. This feeling was the objective correlation to the real universal unity. In doing this, however, he gave himself over to complete subjectivity.<sup>16</sup> The consequences of Schleiermacher's theology Brunner maintains, is that it has no strength or capacity for self-criticism, because, it recognizes only the self.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 174.

God is not the goal, the empirically transcendent, because we only grasp him in so far as he is in us. A further consequence is that religion becomes just one function of man alongside others, or one particularly valuable good among other values and goods. Although he admits that Schleiermacher fought against these consequences his entire life, he maintains that they are implicit in Schleiermacher's theology. "In dieser Religion besitzt man Gott, man hofft nicht auf ihn; man erlebt Erloesung, aber man glaubt nicht an eine Erloesung, die mehr waehre als das religioese Bewusstsein selbst."<sup>17</sup> This theology is a relation of man to his own "Seelengrund", not a relation to the self-revealing God.<sup>18</sup> Brunner is careful not to characterize Schleiermacher completely in these terms. He also recognizes Schleiermacher as a believing Christian, calling attention to the piety of his Moravian background. Schleiermacher was however, in his intellectual life a romantic "Identitaetsphilosoph", although in his personal life, a believing Christian.<sup>19</sup> He was, Brunner admits, the only great theologian of the nineteenth century who declared himself openly for Jesus Christ and who made the attempt at least to center his whole dogmatics in

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 196.



the history of the redemption through Jesus Christ. His conception of religion however can only be understood in relation to Idealism and the doctrine in which the spirit becomes the principle of all reality, and truth. The a priori of the thinging ego is the only point where knowledge and being meet.<sup>20</sup> The frequently recurring motif "Moment", "Augenblick", "Kam in der Zeit", "So sehr eilt er vorueber", "die Geburtstunde der Religion", clearly identifies his thought with the mystical philosophy of identity.

The characteristic of Schleiermacher's basic thought, however, is not pantheism, deification of the creature, but the unity over all antitheses, the undifferentiated unity, the undifferentiated nature and spirit, Ideal and Real in an unknown X, which is God.<sup>21</sup> All these are modes of one being. Philosophically, as Brunner says, he

"regards the immanent, historical world process as the universal transformation of nature into spirit, which attains its goal in religion - subjectively, as the consciousness of the unity of all contradictions, and objectively, in the final accomplishment of civilization."<sup>22</sup>

Theologically, he attempts to equate this religion of timeless mysticism with the Christian faith. He attempts to do this by

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 328.

<sup>22</sup>Eril Brunner Revelation and Reason, trans. by Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press; 1946), p. 398.

bringing his ahistorical mysticism into relation with the Historical Jesus. The nature of his understanding of religion is nevertheless the same. To mystical reflection of the ground of religion he adds the reflection on the historical fundamental principal which gives it its power. There is a difficulty in Schleiermacher's presentation, however, in that the Jesus of history imparts himself to us through an "Impulse". He grasps Christ historically, that is, as a historical power. Yet, He is a power that works eternally. The redemption is then a historical process to which Christ gives the impetus. The process then continues by itself, imparting itself to others so that each Christian shares in the redemption of Christ.<sup>24</sup> Jesus is the cause of the strengthened God-consciousness, but he is not the object on which the nature of faith is based.<sup>25</sup>

As a final consideration of the epistemology of Schleiermacher, Brunner seeks to find the common denominator of all mysticism, to compare that mysticism to Christian mysticism, and finally to Christian faith. He finds as the common denominator of all mysticism not content, doctrines, or functions, but rather something which he calls a "Fluesiges" or a "Tendenz-wohin".<sup>26</sup> Mysticism has as its most essential feature the tendency to strive after an unmediated union of the materially

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 354.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 368.

restricted spirit of man with the only reality, the immaterial, teleological being. It has these aspects: 1) It is a deification or perhaps even an absolutizing of the soul. (Absolutizing in the sense that a "godless" mysticism is possible.) 2) It believes this goal is attainable. 3) It prescribes ways in which this goal may be attained. 4) It knows a higher experience of the soul when this goal is reached. In the nature of mysticism in general, a God-world unity is conceived of as taking place either through emanation or by immanence. Both emanation and immanence indicate a continuity between God and world. An identity of a kind takes place in Christian faith, too, as the believer becomes one with Christ. This becoming one is, however, at the same time a realization of "non-identity", or "Gegensatzlichkeit",<sup>27</sup> the justification of the sinner through the offering of the Mediator. Christian faith is, therefore, anti-mystical because it firmly acknowledges God as personal will, as the sovereign, free Lord of creation. The world, as His creation, does not exist as his "alter-ego". No continuity between God and the world is possible.<sup>28</sup>

Whenever a Christian mysticism is attempted, it becomes

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 383.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 384.

a synthesis of two disparate elements, mysticism and faith. A combination of the two implies a weakening of both. Those who speak of a Johannine or Pauline mysticism, Brunner says, misunderstand the true nature of religion. John and Paul are in reality anti-mystical, because they speak not of a mystical identity, but of a unity of man with God through the Word from the Mediator, and faith in the Mediator.<sup>29</sup> Even though there seems to be an ecstatic element in Paul, he cannot be cited as an example of biblical mysticism. "Nicht der ist ein Mystiker der ein Erlebnis hat, sondern der, der sie sucht, der einen 'Weg' dazu kennt und geht, und in ihnen sein Gottesverhaeltnis begruendet."<sup>30</sup>

Schleiermacher is not a mystic in the real sense, but in the sense of the romantic cultural ideal --- a secular mysticism in which religion takes its place alongside of art, science, and philosophy. Schleiermacher, Brunner says, tries to effect this synthesis. Since he wants to be both a mystic and a man of culture, he makes a synthesis of the philosophy of identity and a dynamic-teleological concept of the spirit in which spirit is quantitatively determined and teleologically directed, that is, spirit as the power of a historical process, similar to nature. Such a synthesis of mysticism and culture

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 387.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 387.

can only result in a weakening of both.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, even mysticism can speak of a "Word of God", but it understands Word in the sense of the Greek logos philosophy -- as the pure inner Word which arises out of the depths of the soul as the witness to the unbroken continuity between God and man. That word does not create a relationship between God and man, but reveals that which always exists, the unity of God with the soul of man. Mysticism is, in the final analysis, the self-justification of man. Only faith can recognize the justification of the sinner by the holy, gracious God, and can expose the illusion of self-justification. There can be no synthesis of the two. "Either the self-justification of man out of the divine ground of his own soul, or the justification of the lost sinner who calls to the saving God from out of the depths. Either mysticism, or the Word."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 393.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 420.

## CHAPTER IV

### BRUNNER'S ALTERNATIVE THEORY

The type of mysticism which Schleiermacher proposes is not, in Brunner's opinion, the answer to the problem of a Christian theological epistemology. We have, however, not as yet arrived at a clear statement of the alternative theory which Brunner recommends. The mere statement that Christian knowledge, to be knowledge, must be knowledge of the Word, is not a complete answer to the problem. We must ask the further questions: What is the Word, and how is it apprehended and used by men? First of all, what is the Word? It is clear from his writings that Brunner wishes to be understood as presenting a doctrine of the Word in harmony with his understanding of the New Testament and the Reformation. In order to present his ideas in the clearest light, it will therefore, be helpful to restate the antitheses briefly. The Word which Brunner champions is not the word of Orthodoxy. It is not a word which is and remains objectively true apart from any use of it. It is not an objectively true doctrine which needs but be assented to. It is not even the Bible as such, as a written Word of God. Words, he says, are "not of ultimate consequence, not even divine words."<sup>1</sup> Neither the

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<sup>1</sup>Emil Brunner, The Divine Human Encounter, trans. by Amandus W. Loos. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1945), p. 110.

spoken or the written words, nor their conceptual content are the Word of God, but only its 'fame', the means of conveying it.<sup>2</sup> He says further, that there is only an "indirect identity" between the Bible and the Word of God.<sup>3</sup> The word of the Bible is only the means of the real Word of God, Jesus Christ. As such, the biblical testimony to Christ is "on the same level"<sup>4</sup> with that of the church. It has priority only in that it is the "original witness."<sup>5</sup> Neither is the word to be understood in the Idealist-mystic sense. Such a word is not a revelation, but a "perception of something which was always 'there', ready to be perceived."<sup>6</sup> Mysticism can not speak of the word in the sense of a revelation of it and its appropriation by faith. Mysticism can only point out the "path" a man must follow to attain an experience of the truth of the word.<sup>7</sup> Whenever mysticism tries to develop a doctrine of revelation, its doctrine becomes "cosmic or acosmic pantheism".<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Eril Brunner, Revelation and Reason, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Eril Brunner, The Divine Human Encounter, p. 50.

<sup>7</sup>Eril Brunner, Revelation and Reason, p. 224.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

Both the Orthodox, objective view, and the mystic-ideal-ist perception by intuition are then inadequate solutions to the problem. We may characterize Brunner's solution to the problem in the following way: the knowledge which we receive from God is 1) a given knowledge, 2) it is a truth which happens, 3) it is a personal encounter, 4) it is an act of personal surrender and decision. Brunner speaks of knowledge as "given" in three senses: 1) "given", as something which we do not possess of ourselves, 2) "given", as applied to us personally, and 3) "given" in time. We do not have such knowledge as an attribute of our being human. Knowledge of God is given to us as sinners, as not meriting the grace of God, and without which we would most certainly perish. That knowledge is not, however, given impersonally, as an eternal fund of truth to which all men may apply themselves, but, is in its very nature a personal relation of a personal God, a 'Thou', to the person addressed. Or as Brunner says, "The self-revelation of God is no object, but wholly the doing and self-giving of a subject -- or better expressed, a 'Person'..."<sup>9</sup> As historically given, Brunner distinguishes the unique event of Christ's once for all giving of himself from the significance of the eternal, timeless, 'now' of that giving. In order to bring out this distinction, he speaks of the historical act of the atonement as a "myth".<sup>10</sup> The Christian myth

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<sup>9</sup>The Divine Human Encounter, p. 75.

<sup>10</sup> Emil Brunner, The Mediator, trans. by Olive Wyon. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947), pp. 377ff.



is unique. It is concerned not with a static, abstract, eternal truth, but, with one actual, historical, unique and decisive event.<sup>11</sup> This uniqueness is not to be understood in the Romantic sense of individuality, (which is a natural conception, for individuality is the manner of being of all life,) or in the Idealistic sense of a historical process. It is the nature of the revelation in Jesus Christ that by its very nature it could take place only once for all.

Knowledge of divine truth as a truth "that happens", is distinct from "truth as the agreement of something thought with something that exists."<sup>12</sup> It is the truth that "Came by Jesus Christ". It is and remains truth only in happening - when a man enters into the "Event" which is Jesus Christ; it is a happening when God meets man in a personal encounter, and truth comes into being. It is the living God meeting man in history, and man's meeting God in an act of personal surrender and decision.

It is clear from the foregoing that Brunner wishes to be understood as presenting a doctrine of the Word and of epistemology which is a very vital, existential thing. He wants to rid theology of dead scholasticism and of egocentric spiritualism once for all. Nevertheless, we still do not

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<sup>11</sup>The Mediator, p. 379.

<sup>12</sup>Revelation and Reason, p. 369.

have his full answer to the problem. If the "word" is not the "thing" itself, what is the continuity between the word and the thing? Words and doctrines, he believes, point to God, that we may answer him in faith. Words and doctrines alone, without the presence of the Holy Spirit are not effective, yet this address and response can take place only by virtue of their presence. He says, "the relation between doctrine and Word of God... is in the last analysis incommensurable. It must suffice to recognize that an abyssal difference, and yet a necessary connection, lies between the two."<sup>14</sup> In another place, he speaks of this as a "principle of 'Scripture and the Spirit'".<sup>15</sup> He says further, however, "we have no system of truth, but only the light of Christ which falls like a flash of lightning upon our knowledge of the World."<sup>16</sup>

A further question we must ask, is: if human apprehension of God and of divine truth takes place in an existential event, and that it is an act of personal surrender and decision on the part of man, wherein lies the distinction between this view, and the personal confrontation of, and the

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<sup>13</sup>The Divine Human Encounter, p. 108.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>15</sup>Revelation and Reason, p. 181.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 188.

relation of the created soul to the eternal creator as Schleiermacher presents it? What is the distinction between his own statement:

"all that to the ordinary sight of man can be seen only as human and natural is visible to the eye of faith as the presence of God himself. This does not take place alongside of the human natural existence, but in it; here, and here alone, there occurs what by its very nature can occur only once for all: the complete revelation of God, his personal presence"<sup>17</sup>

and the statements of Luther which he quotes e. g. that faith makes "thee and Christ one person", that faith makes us "vitaly bound up with Him," "as to be one flesh with Him", or St. Paul's phrase "Christ liveth in me"<sup>18</sup> If we ask, "is not that mysticism?" he says, "let us call it what we will; there is no sense in arguing about words."<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, there is a difference. "The mystical experience", he says, "lies in the direction of knowledge, but it does not lie in the direction of faith. Faith should eventuate, not in union, but in fellowship...Union in the last analysis, is being alone and living for oneself, but fellowship is being with another and living for him."<sup>20</sup> Or, as he says in another place, "even a Christian can say with Kierkegaard that 'subjectivity

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<sup>17</sup>Revelation and Reason, p. 304.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>The Divine Human Encounter, p. 152.

is truth', but he knows that it is a subjectivity that is no longer his own."<sup>21</sup> The final answer is therefore, given in terms of itself. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit must be "the Christian answer to the doctrine of that inwardness which is not in the least our own."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>The Philosophy of Religion, p. 113.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### AN EVALUATION OF BRUNNER'S SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

In order to come to an understanding and evaluation of Brunner's criticisms of Schleiermacher, we must see them in the light of his major premise: that the theology of Schleiermacher must be seen apart from his preaching and the apologetic nature of his work, that is, from the unique historical situation which both caused it to be written, and which determined the form in which it was written. As he says,

"Man kann die Lehre Schleiermachers auf schärfste bekämpfen und sein Erbe als ein unheilvolles erkennen, und doch vor der geschlossenen Kraft seiner Persönlichkeit, dem Reichtum seines Geistes und der untadeligen Lauterkeit seiner Gesinnung ehrfurchtig sich beugen. Nicht dieser Schleiermacher, sondern der in seinem Werk gegenwärtige, ist unser Gegenstand, nur ihm gilt unser Kampf."<sup>1</sup>

In the opinion of this essayist, such a premise does not lend itself to an honest understanding either of the man, or of what he was trying to say to the people of his time. One cannot judge the Christianity of a theology only by its methodology. Even though the forms of expression are suspect, its Christian character may not be. Schleiermacher, with all his rich philosophical, philological and historical

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<sup>1</sup>Eril Brunner, Die Mystik und das Wort, p. 10.

gifts pledged himself to the office of preaching to his very troubled times. That he did this from his pulpit, in the Christian church, cannot be overlooked, even if we have doubts as to the validity of his arguments. This is especially so since his whole theology grew out of his preaching. He regarded his pulpit as his real calling. In fact, he regarded the whole office and work of the church as the "Predigtamt" and carried this out in actual uninterrupted practice during his life. He would not have done this had he not felt the urgency of his calling. His Reden and Glaubenslehre must not be seen as scientific documents which can be examined for their objective validity apart from the unique situation that gave them their birth. They must rather be viewed as what Karl Barth calls a "Selbstmitteilung des Predigers".<sup>2</sup> Schleiermacher tackled the theological problem where it must be tackled, on that which must be taught to contemporary life in connection with the Biblical norm and the historical church. He says the danger that his natural apologetical theology might turn into a system of philosophy, and labored in order to keep it from becoming that. Nevertheless, in order to speak to his age, he had to use the philosophical system they used, and

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<sup>2</sup>Karl Barth, Die Protestantische Theologie im 19 Jahrhundert. (Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, Ag. Zollikon; 1947), p. 384.

and "even though it angered him, he dared to use it."<sup>3</sup>

First of all, we must deal with Brunner's view of Schleiermacher as a mystic. Here again it is impossible to understand Schleiermacher apart from his life and preaching. Schleiermacher certainly was not in his life the embodiment of what Brunner calls the ahistorical, passive mysticism of his theology. His real theology is one of life and activity. His theology does not have as much affinity to a passive type of mysticism as it does to the wholehearted affirmation of the active religious life in the home, state and the church. As Barth says,

"Er muss durch das Mystische Sanktuarium hindurch, aber auch wirklich nur und zwar eilig und ohne Aufenthalt hindurchgehen. Gerade dort wo der echte Mystiker Halt und zwar am liebsten endgueltig Halt machen moechte, in dem reinen Gegenueber und Einssein von Gott und der Seele, gerade dort wird man by Schleiermacher unmissverstaendlich weitergetrieben, von der Verinnerlichung zur Gestaltung, von der Bessinung zum Aufbau."<sup>4</sup>

The fact that his theology is not dogmatic, even anti-dogmatic, and anti-intellectual is not only to be accounted for by his mysticism, but by his activism. Schleiermacher is also, as Dilthey and Stange<sup>5</sup> point out, the agitator for a unified ethical state, and for a free church. He is a preacher con-

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 386.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 390.

<sup>5</sup>Carl Stange, "Die Geschichtliche Bedeutung Schleiermachers", p. 391.

cerned with "die Probleme der Ehe und Familienlebens",<sup>6</sup> and social problems - freedom for the laborer, shorter working hours etc. These things do not seem compatible with a passive mysticism.

Brunner's further criticism is that Schleiermacher has made the self the sole arbiter of religious truth - that is, that there is no objectively determined content to religion, but only that which the subjective consciousness recognizes. His theology does speak both of man and of God, but not in such a way that man's feeling causes God to be its content. Schleiermacher's God is not a projection of his subjective consciousness nor an imagined sanction for empirical behavior and states of mind. That he clearly did not want to be understood in that way was seen above.<sup>7</sup> What Schleiermacher insists on is that the personal authority for faith lies not in written propositions or in a corpus of revealed information, but in the personal knowledge of God as it exists in the consciousness of the devout Christian. His religion is a "Christliche fremde Selbstbewusstsein" - self-consciousness, to be sure, but Christian self-consciousness. It is not man's consciousness of himself, but of that within him which points him outside himself, to God.

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<sup>6</sup>Barth, Die Protestantische Theologie, p. 391.

<sup>7</sup>Vide supra, Chap. II, p. 21 ff.



Schleiermacher's system is, however, subject to serious criticism which we dare not neglect. We have noted previously Schleiermacher's shift of emphasis in the Glaubenslehre, from what he held in the Reden. In the Glaubenslehre he dispenses with the purely psychological definition of religion as feeling by adding reflection on experience in which objective content is included. His psychological approach to Religion in the Reden was adequate as long as he confined himself to the autonomy of the Religious feeling. As soon as he began to speak about the Christian religion, however, objective content was also needed. He shifted his emphasis then, to the objective side, to a basic minimum in which the whole of objective Christian faith was seen in a central "relation to Jesus Christ." In the plan of the Glaubenslehre, however, he does not do justice to this discovery. It is obvious that he wants the reader to be thinking of Christ throughout the whole work. As Werner Elert says,

"Es ist ersichtlich, wie sehr Schleiermacher mit seinem in der Einleitung zur Glaubenslehre ausgesprochenen Grundsätzen ernst zu machen sucht dass in der Christlichen Religion nicht weniger denn alles auf die durch Jesum von Nazareth vollbrachte Erlösung bezogen sein müsse. Auch wo nicht ausdrücklich davon die Rede ist, soll diese Beziehung als selbstverstaendlich vorausgesetzt sein."<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, Christology still posed a great problem, and

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<sup>9</sup>Werner Elert, Der Kampf um das Christentum, p. 60.

the question is, whether he could fit Christology into his theological form. Christology is always the disturbing factor. As Barth says,

"Er (Jesus) macht dem Professor und dem Prediger Schleiermacher sichtlich viel muhe! Aber eben: er ist da. Und der Professor und Prediger macht sich diese Muhe, schwimmt unablaessig gegen seinen eigenen Strom, will unter allen Umstaenden, sei es auch um den Preis von gewissen Kuenstleien und Sophismen, Christocentrischer Theologe sein."<sup>10</sup>

When he speaks of how the redemption takes place, however; he must speak of it in terms of a God-consciousness. He is, shall we say, aware of, but not enough aware of the transcendent factor. "Er hat die Pistis in Gnosis verwandelt,"<sup>11</sup> as Barth says. He seriously wants to present a Christocentric theology but cannot do so from the central principle of the Glaubenslehre.

Further, there is more to the Christian feeling of dependence on God than Schleiermacher's "reference of finite phenomena to the necessary causality of God."<sup>12</sup> His view of sin too, as the predominance of the sense-consciousness over the God-consciousness is a laborious attempt to bring the vital Christian understanding of sin and salvation into

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<sup>10</sup>Barth, Die Protestantische Theologie, p. 585.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

Otto Pfleiderer, The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant (London: Unwin Brothers Ltd., The Gresham Press, 1923); p. 106.

line with a system too small to hold it. In general, the whole Glaubenslehre suffers in that it "does not present objective doctrines of God and Christology but only treats them as they are present or related to the Christian self-consciousness."<sup>13</sup>

Since his fault is not in his wish to be a Christian theologian but in his attempt to present a unified system of Christian philosophy, Brunner's criticisms of Schleiermacher are not apropos. When Brunner wishes to pose an alternative to Schleiermacher's "mysticism" in his conception of "Word", he must either be agnostic, or give a solution which can be distinguished from that of Schleiermacher only in its terminology.<sup>14</sup> The fact that he can say "Ein grosser Mann vereinigt -- auch wenn er ein Philosoph vom Range Schleiermacher's ist -- <sup>sachlich</sup> (sichtlich) unvereinbare Widersprueche in seiner Person,"<sup>15</sup> would seem to indicate that Brunner is not quite as sure of his ground against Schleiermacher as the biting rhetoric of his Die Mystik und das Wort, and his positing of the antithesis "entweder die Mystik oder das Wort" would seem to indicate. In the conclusion of this paper then, we will attempt to offer a solution which avoids the exaggerations of both.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>14</sup>vide Supra chapter IV, p. 53ff.

<sup>15</sup>Brunner, Die Mystik und das Wort, p. 365.

## CHAPTER VI

## A PROPOSED SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

In the course of this paper an attempt has been made to articulate the conceptions of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Emil Brunner as to how religious knowledge is received. Schleiermacher, it was seen, believed that in the interaction between the totality of the Universe and man, it becomes possible for man to intuit God and to know him in the feeling or the devout self-consciousness. Feeling or the "unmittelbare selbstbewusstsein" is for him the psychological seat of the knowledge of God. Since he believes that feeling is not conditioned by the reason or the moral will, doctrine can be true only in a derivative sense, that is, as it attempts to give conceptual expression to a truth which is in reality nonrational. Brunner, on the other hand, believes that Schleiermacher's theology is implicitly and explicitly an attempt to justify man from the divine ground of his own soul, and to make God and the Word immanent in the human spirit. As an alternative he poses a Word of God which is given to men and received by them in the event of revelation, in the personal encounter between God and man.

In the opinion of the essayist, Brunner's statement of

the question as involving only two possibilities — either a given knowledge caused by God, or a subjective perception of God by the human faculties — does not lend itself to a true understanding of the question. An either-or statement almost inevitably leads to an over-emphasis of one or the other of the alternatives. In Schleiermacher's case, his reaction against a view of faith as no more than an intellectual assent to a body of revealed information robbed him of the possibility of ever relating his faith to the whole body of Christian truth. In the same way, Brunner's view of the problem as having only these two possibilities makes him, in attempting to answer the problem, involve himself in aspects of the view he means to criticize. The correct thing that Schleiermacher wanted to affirm was that knowledge of God is most definitely a very personal thing, and inseparably connected with the work of the Holy Spirit. Brunner wants to affirm, and rightly so, that our knowledge of God is in no way dependent upon us but is solely God's revelation of Himself to us. But in the context of their systems, neither of the two insights is allowed to come to full flower.

A solution to the problem will, then, have to include the correct insights of both Schleiermacher and Brunner, without involving itself in their exaggerations. It will have to say in every case that the initiative lies solely in

God. It will have to say further, that God's revelation of Himself is in every case prior to human knowledge of Him, or, in other words, we do not know God, but are known by Him. The certainty of our knowledge does not lie in the fact that we have had an experience, but in the fact that God's Word has penetrated into our inner consciousness, and that His Holy Spirit has convinced us of its truth.

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