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Soteriology as a function of epistemology in the thought of Emil Brunner

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Rice University, 1989

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SOTERIOLOGY AS A FUNCTION OF EPISTEMOLOGY
IN THE THOUGHT OF EMIL BRUNNER

by

WENDELL GORDON JOHNSON

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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1989
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Abstract

Emil Brunner's theology is divided into three periods: pre-dialectical (1914-1920), dialectical (1921-1927), and eristic-dogmatic (1928-1960). Each period is characterized by a particular epistemological construct, describing the source and medium of religious knowledge. The epistemological construct determines the content of Brunner's theology during each respective period. This dissertation analyzes Brunner's epistemology and shows how it applies to his doctrine of the atonement.

Brunner's pre-dialectical theology grants an active epistemological role to the human religious subject. Abelard's exemplarist soteriology, which also emphasizes human initiative, best fits the mold of such an epistemology. Brunner's dialectical epistemology places the initiative entirely on the side of God. To coincide with this new epistemology, Brunner adopts Anselm's Cur Deus Homo as a soteriological model. Brunner refines his epistemology during his final period, granting a role to both God and humanity. His soteriology moves toward the type described by Gustav Aulén in Christus Victor.
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Introduction


Emil Brunner was born December 13, 1889 in Winterthur, Switzerland. He received his Doctor of Theology degree from the University of Zurich in 1913. Upon the completion of his doctorate he taught at Leeds, returning to Switzerland at the outbreak of the First World War. After a stint in the Swiss militia, Brunner accepted the position of pastor of the church in Obstalden in 1916. The following year he married Margit Lauterberg, the niece of Hermann Kutter. Shortly thereafter (1919 - 1920), he studied at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

In 1924 Brunner was named to the Chair of Systematic and Practical Theology at the University of Zurich, where he later served as rector (1942-1944).\(^1\) During his tenure at Zurich he was visiting professor at Princeton Theological Seminary (1938-1939), gave the Gifford Lectures (1947-1948) and helped found the International Christian University in Tokyo (1953-1955).\(^2\) Emil Brunner died April 6, 1966.\(^3\)

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\(^2\) Y. C. Furuya, "Apologetic or Kerygmatic Theology," *Theology Today* 16 (January 1960): 471-480 discusses Brunner's reception in Japan. Despite the fact that Brunner spent considerable time in Japan, he was considered a Barthian.

2. Review of the Literature.

Despite Brunner's fame as a theologian, there is not a great corpus of literature on his work. J. R. Nelson, a student of Brunner's, comments, "Brunner was increasingly concerned over what he saw to be the diminution of his influence in theological circles."¹ This diminution of influence is reflected in the paucity of secondary material on Brunner's thought.

There are two methodologies for studying the thought of Emil Brunner. A facile classification would be to term these the developmental and static methodologies. The developmental methodology divides Brunner's work into three (pre-dialectical, dialectical, dialogical) or four (pre-dialectical, dialectical, eristic, dogmatic) periods and examines the emphases and tensions within each period. The static methodology does not account for the changes within Brunner's thought during his career.² Each of these methodologies can be divided further. An author may focus on one particular topic on Brunner's thought or seek to explain Brunner's theology as a whole.

Hermann Volk wrote two of the earliest works on Brunner. Volk's dissertation, *Emil Brunners Lehre von der ursprünglichen Gottenbildlichkeit des Menschen*, describes one of the issues which

²Two examples are Paul King Jewett's *Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation* (London: James Clarke & Co., LTD., 1954) and Humphrey's *Emil Brunner*. Humphrey's book, unfortunately, is one of the few systematic treatments of Brunner's thought in English. The book is comprehensive in its breadth, discussing such diverse topics as epistemology and eschatology. However, it lacks depth and does not take into account the development within Brunner's thought. For example, the chapter on epistemology does not discuss *Das Symbolische*. The dialogue with secondary literature ignores German works.
arose between Brunner and Barth. The second work was his habilitationsschrift, Emil Brunners Lehre von dem Sünder. These books, written before the completion of Brunner's Dogmatics, show some awareness of the development of Brunner's theology, but they neglect his pre-dialectical stage.

There are four German works which describe the various stages of Brunner's thought. The ground-breaking book in this regard is Yrjö Salakka's Person und Offenbarung in der Theologie Emil Brunners während der Jahre 1914-1937. Salakka was one the first to divide Brunner's work into periods. He said that we need to take account of the development or tensions within Brunner's thought. Salakka describes three periods of Brunner's thought: vorkritische (1914-1920), dialektische (1921-1928) and eristische (1929-1937). Salakka's book was written before the completion of Brunner's Dogmatics. He anticipated that this would will form a new period of Brunner's thought.

The second book to appear was Roman Roessler's Person und Glaube, which divides Brunner's works into four periods. As the subtitle indicates (Der Personalismus der Gottesbeziehung bei Emil Brunner), this work particularly discusses the influence of the dialogical philosophy of Ebner and Buber on Brunner's understanding of faith. The book concentrates on the final two periods of Brunner's thought. Roessler uses the first two periods of Brunner's thought primarily as background material.

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1Emsdetten, 1939.  
2Münster, 1950.  
3Helsinki, 1960.  
When Heinrich Leipold's *Missionarische Theologie* appeared, it was the most comprehensive treatment of Brunner's theology to date.¹ His work is similar to Roessler's in that he divides Brunner's work into four periods. As did Roessler, he concentrates on the final two periods of Brunner's thought. He was among the first to extensively discuss Brunner's pre-dialectical period. Leipold devoted considerable discussion to Brunner's controversy with Barth over the question of the Anknüpfungspunkt.

The most comprehensive work on the theology of Emil Brunner is Stephan Scheld's *Die Christologie Emil Brunners*.² He divides Brunner's thought into three periods and examines Brunner's Christology within each of these periods. One of the strengths of Scheld's work is the attention he devotes to Brunner's *Das Symbolische in der religiösen Erkenntnis*.³

Scheld finds three distinct Christologies in Brunner's thought. The pre-dialectical Christology was similar to the Christology of the Kulturprotestantismus of the nineteenth century. The dialectical Christology, based on the creeds, was docetic. Brunner's final Christology, as seen in his *Dogmatics*, was dialogical, reflecting the influence of Ebner. Although Scheld analyzes Brunner's Christology during each of the three periods of his thought, he is unable to account for the changes from one period to another.

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¹Emil Brunners Weg zur theologischen Anthropologie, Göttingen, 1974.
³Beiträge zur einer Theorie des religiösen Erkennens (Tübingen: Mohr, 1914).
There are no English works comparable to those by Salakka, Roessler, Leipold and Scheld. P. G. Schrottenboer's *A New Apolgetics: An Analysis and Appraisal of the Eristic Theology of Emil Brunner* anticipated the work of Leipold in that he discusses the importance of dialogical philosophy upon Brunner's theology.¹ He considers Brunner's article "Die Andere Aufgabe der Theologie" (1929) to be a turning point in Brunner's thought.² According to Schrottenboer, Brunner's later writings are essentially a reaffirmation of his position in 1921.

John Akehurst's "The Christology of Emil Brunner and Its Role within his Wider Theological System" works on the premise that Christology is the determining factor of Brunner's theology.³ He notes that Jesus Christ is the ratio cognoscendi of all Christian doctrine. Akehurst recognizes that the relation between Christology and soteriology in *The Mediator* is deductive while it is inductive in Brunner's *Dogmatics*.

Although Akehurst's book recognizes the importance of the Person of Jesus Christ in Brunner's theology, it overlooks the fact that each of period Brunner's thought begins with an epistemological work. The epistemological work precedes Christological speculation. This is particularly true in Brunner's brief pre-dialectical period.

Brunner's soteriology has also received scant attention. The first major work on Brunner's soteriology was that of Hans Windisch and

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¹Kampen, 1955.
Maurik Broekman fifty years ago.¹ Recent works fail to account for the three stages of Brunner's soteriology,² concentrating instead on Brunner's Dogmatics and comparing this to other contemporary thinkers.³


This dissertation analyzes the relationship between epistemology and soteriology in the theology of Emil Brunner. Religious epistemology asks the question, "How does one arrive at knowledge of God?" The answer to this question must resolve the antithesis between the subject and object of religious knowledge. During his career, Brunner resolved this antithesis in three different ways. Each period of his thought has a different epistemological emphasis which is reflected in the way he describes the work of Christ. As there are three different epistemological emphases in Brunner's thought, there are also three different soteriological models in his thought.

4. A Description of the Argument of this Dissertation.

¹Brunner's Mittler, Assen, 1929.
²There are virtually no studies of Brunner's pre-dialectical period in English. An exception is James Kenneth Graby's "The Significance of Friedrich Schleiermacher in the Development of the Theology of Emil Brunner with Special Attention to the Early Period" (Ph. D. diss., Drew University, 1966).
The first period of Brunner's thought is the pre-dialectical period (1914-1920). During this period he was particularly influenced by the Kulturprotestantismus of Albrecht Ritschl and the Religious Socialism of Leonard Ragaz. Brunner's most important writing during this period was his dissertation, Das Symbolische in der religiösen Erkenntnis, which was written under Ragaz at Zurich. His primary epistemological category during this period of his thought was intuition, and he maintained that the source of religious knowledge is human experience. This epistemology, which equates revelation with human reason, results in a dependence on the doctrine of natural revelation at the expense of special revelation. Brunner's use of intuition relies on Friedrich Schleiermacher and Henri Bergson. His doctrines of the person and work of Jesus Christ also reflect the theology of the latter half of the nineteenth-century thought: the Christology is "from below" and the soteriology follows the exemplarist scheme of Peter Abelard.

During the second period of his thought, his dialectical period (1921-1927), Brunner actually abandons many of the views he previously held. Several factors led to this change, including the disastrous effects of the First World War on European society, the theology of Karl Barth, the dialogical philosophy of Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber and the transcendental idealism of the Marburg school of neo-Kantism.

This "new theology" is known by several names. The term "dialectical theology," borrowed from Kierkegaard's concept of the absolute qualitative distinction between God and humanity, refers to its structure. This theology holds that the paradox of eternity and
temporality finds its climactic moment in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. It also is known as "the theology of crisis," referring to the crises of European life in the period following the First World War. As an important aspect of European intellectual life, theology also experienced the endemic turmoil of this time and many theologians felt that they could no longer subscribe to the theology of the preceding century. The final term, "neo-orthodoxy," refers to the sources of the new theology. Many theologians of Kulturprotestantismus saw human culture as a continuation of divine activity. Accordingly, these theologians saw the revelation of God in human achievement. In contrast, the new theologians preferred to take the New Testament, the early Church Fathers and Reformation thought as the bases for its thought.

Karl Barth's commentary on Romans (1919) was the initial literary product of the new theology. Four years later (1923) Barth and Adolf von Harnack exchanged a series of letters which highlight the differences between the new theology and the protestant liberalism of the nineteenth-century. This dialogue shows that the new theologians actually repudiated many of the tenets of their theological mentors.

Brunner wrote two major epistemological works during the dialectical period of his thought. These works show that Brunner no longer uses intuition as his primary epistemological category, substituting the idea of faith as fides. Fides, which is particularly found in Calvins's Institutes, emphasizes the cognitive aspect of faith. Brunner no longer holds that religious knowledge is obtained by natural revelation, offering in its place a strong assertion of the
doctrine of special revelation. His idea of the person of Christ during this period reflects the creeds of the early Church, particularly those of Nicaea and Chalcedon. He has moved from a Christology "from below" to a christology "from above." In place of a moral influence theory of Abelard, Brunner substitutes the penal theory of the atonement derived from St. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*.

The final period of Brunner's thought (1929-1960) is best characterized as a "theology of dialogue." During this period he continued to reflect on the thought of Ebner and Buber. Further, the influence of Kierkegaard and Luther becomes increasingly evident in his theology. Brunner engaged in his famous controversy with Karl Barth over the question of "the point of contact" during this period.

We find a greater continuity between the dialectical and dialogical periods of Brunner's thought than between the pre-dialectical and dialectical periods. The source of religious knowledge during this final period is the "I-Thou" dialogue between God and man. His epistemology still uses the concept of faith as its primary category. However, in place of *fides*, he substitutes an understanding of faith as *fiducia*, which means a trusting, confident attitude towards God and has less cognitive emphasis than does *fides*. Brunner's interpretation of faith during this final period of his thought shows the influence of both Luther and dialogical philosophy on his theology. His dialogical soteriology no longer emphasizes the penal aspect of the atonement. Instead, his idea of the work of Christ is closer to that described by Gustav Aulén.
Chapter One: The Pre-Dialectical Theology of Emil Brunner

The first stage of Brunner's thought, his pre-dialectical period, is relatively short, extending from 1914 to the end of the First World War. The works of this period, which have not been translated into English, show the influences of the Religious Socialist Movement in Switzerland and the Kulturprotestantismus of Ritschl and Harnack on Brunner's early theology. The major work of Brunner's pre-dialectical stage is his doctoral thesis Das Symbolische in der religiösen Erkenntnis (Tübingen, 1914), written under Leonhard Ragaz at the University of Zurich. Under the tutelage of Ragaz, Brunner deals for the first time with the problematic which would concern his later theological thought: he seeks to describe an epistemology which will define the truth of religion.

Through the influence of Christoph Blumhardt\(^1\) and two of his pupils, Hermann Kutter\(^2\) and Leonhard Ragaz, Brunner was drawn into the Religious Socialist Movement.\(^3\) The Religious Socialist

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\(^1\) Christoph Blumhardt (1842-1919) took over the leadership of the Christian community at Boll in 1880 upon the death of his father. His faith in the comprehensive love of God led him to recognize the positive aspects of socialism. By virtue of his sympathy with the struggle of the workers, he joined the Social Democratic party. He taught that the Kingdom of God, although within the individual, is realized through divine work. It was the task of the Christian community to aid in the struggle for the Kingdom of God. Cf. E. Jakh, "Blumhardt," in Die Religion in der Geschichte und Gegenwart 3 and Vernard Eiler, Thy Kingdom Come: A Blumhardt Reader (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980).

\(^2\) Hermann Kutter (1869-1931) combined Blumhardt’s thought with German idealism to arrive at a dynamic conception of God. God penetrated the world and humanity in the person of Christ. This "unconditioned reality" is the "only reality." Cf. G. Borman, "Kutter," in Die Religion in der Geschichte und Gegenwart 3.

\(^3\) Claude Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth-Century, vol. 2: 1870-1914 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 245, points out that Protestant social Christianity in Switzerland was different from that in
Movement emphasized the nearness of the Kingdom of God and its importance for this earth. Ragaz studied at Jena and Berlin, and took his doctorate at Zurich, where he later became a profesor of theology. Early in his career he was influenced by the Hegelian theologian A. E. Biedermann, who had previously taught at Zurich.1

While serving as a minister in Chur (1895-1902), Ragaz read Albrecht Ritschl's works and moved away from the idealistic philosophy of Hegel and the speculative theology of Biedermann. After moving to Basel in 1902, Ragaz met Hermann Kutter and the

Germany in that it was not connected with nationalism. Particularly important was Kutter's book Sie Müssen (1903), an endorsement of the platform of the Social Democrats. Kutter wrote, "By their enthusiasm and mission to work for the renovation of social life, their energy for righteousness, Social Democrats are bringing about the fulfillment of God's promises," (cited in Welch, op. cit., p 248). In the same year that Kutter's book appeared, the bricklayers in Switzerland went on strike. Because of the influence of Kutter's book, Ragaz did not view the strike as merely a labor dispute, but an event of Heilsgeschichte. Ragaz thought that the Church and the Social Democrats needed each other. For a view of Religious Socialism in Germany see Paul Tillich, Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, edited with an Introduction by Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), pp. 234-239 and H. Holwein, "Religiöss-sozialistische Bewegung," in Die Religion in der Geschichte und Gegenwart 3.

1A. E. Biedermann (1819-1885) went to Berlin in 1839, where he studied Hegelian philosophy. In 1850 he became professor of theology at Zurich. His Die Freie Theologie oder Philosophie und Christentum in Streit und Frieden (1844) is an attempt to explain the comptatability of speculative philosophy and Christian theology. He considered philosophy as the relation of the universal or thinking Ego to the universal or to thought itself. Religion was concerned with the relation of the individual, practical Ego to its universal being. Cf. Biedermann, Christliche Dogmatik (Zürich: Orell, Füssli and Co., 1869). He later became rector at the Universitiy of Zurich. In his Rektoratsrede (1875), he particularly praised the influence of Strauss in his development as a theologian. He reacted against the theology of Schleiermacher, calling it "entirely too weak." Cf. Staehlin's article "Biedermann" in Realencyclopaedie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche. Rudolf Pfister says that the speculative theology of Biedermann was of decisive importance while Ragaz studied at Zurich. Cf. "Zürich," in Die Religion in der Geschichte und Gegenwart 3. See also Claude Welch, ed. and trans. God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century German Theology. G. Thomasius, I. A. Dorner, A. E. Biedermann. A Library of Protestant Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).
two men subsequently founded the Religious Socialist Movement. Ragaz's *The Gospel and the Social Programs*\(^1\) explains the leading idea of the movement.\(^2\)

What does 'the gospel of Jesus' have to do with economic conflict? A pietistic interpretation of the Bible can lead to conservatism. But a study of the Synoptic Gospels can lead to a more radical approach. The Kingdom of God is the central concept of the good news. Jesus teaches the worth of each child of God as well as the brotherhood of men under God. Jesus sees Mammon as the greatest enemy of man.

Ragaz considered capitalism to be the source of much of the economic injustice of his day. Accordingly, he did not want ministers to engage in activities which furthered capitalism, such as speculating in the stock market or accepting dividends from issues of stocks.\(^3\)

In 1907 Ragaz and his wife traveled to Boston, where they became acquainted with the work of Walter Rauschenbusch. Upon their return to Basel, Mrs. Ragaz translated Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis* into German. The following year Ragaz published *Thy Kingdom Come*. The main idea of the book is very similar to Rauschenbusch's thought.\(^4\)

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\(^1\)Basel, 1906.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 4.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 21. Rauschenbusch sounded many of the themes typical of liberal theology: confidence in the availability of the Synoptic Jesus for modern thought; belief in the immanence of God and the inherent worth of human nature; a definition of sin as selfishness and rejection of the righteousness of the Kingdom and of the best interests of humanity. Rauschenbusch thought that the redeeming work of Christ consisted in his battle against religious
Jesus had announced God's reign upon earth. This reign is to come about through the realization of God's will on earth as well as in heaven. God's life and God's love are to stream into the world. In this way redemption is to come. That is the central message of the good news. Redemption means liberation. We are to be freed from everything that holds us in its grip; we - that is mankind, and in it each one of us as an individual - are to become free children of God, free from guilt, free from hate, free from the tyranny of the world and of death, free from service to Mammon, from self-service; we are to breathe freely in the freedom, purity, justice and love. A liberated world, a world that belongs to God is Jesus's goal just as it is the goal of all men of God.

I. Das Symbolische in der religiösen Erkenntnis.

For all intents and purposes, the pre-dialectical period of Brunner's theology is set forth in Das Symbolische. In addition to the Religious Socialism of Ragaz, the context for interpreting this work is the Kulturprotestantismus of Ritschl and Harnack. After examining Brunner's dissertation and placing it in its larger context, we are then able to relate his doctrines of the person and work of Christ to his epistemology.

1. Influences on Das Symbolische.

Das Symbolische is a reaction against both Protestant Orthodoxy and the speculative theology of Hegel, represented by Brunner's rejection respectively of intellectualism and scholasticism. For


1 For a bibliography of Brunner's works during this period cf. Kegley, op. cit., p. 355.
Brunner, the terms "intellectualism" and "scholasticism" are interchangeable. In the preface of his dissertation, he contends that the selection of a symbol is neither coincidental nor arbitrary. Instead, this selection occurs because intellectualism is unable to explain the appearance of various phenomena. Intellectualism and scholasticism appear whenever unexamined views are built into axiomatic truths and dogmas.

Das Symbolische consists of three main sections. In the first section, the Prolegomena, Brunner begins with an analysis of the contributions Kant and Schleiermacher made to epistemology. According to Brunner, pre-Kantian philosophy knew only one type of knowledge: the objective-theoretical. This outlook led to a speculative philosophy of religion wherein the proofs for the existence of God found their most complete expression and the object of religion thus became the object of science. The situation changed with Kant, who separated the act of knowing (Wissen) from the act of believing (Glauben) and placed science and religion in two separate spheres of consciousness. A unfortunate result of Kant's work is that religion was often viewed as an appendage to ethics.

According to Brunner, Schleiermacher's psychological analysis also made religion independent from the act of knowing. By separating religious consciousness from all other psychic, mental, spiritual and ethical appearances, Schleiermacher went one step further than Kant. His basic thesis that the individual religious consciousness is independent from other psychic appearances provides the basis of

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Brunner's pre-dialectical epistemology.¹ For Brunner, the essence of religion is to be found in the individual religious consciousness.

In addition to Schleiermacher, the thought of Henri Bergson exercised an important influence on Brunner's pre-dialectical epistemology. In fact, his epistemology often appears to be a synthesis of these two thinkers. Brunner begins as did Schleiermacher, locating religious experience in the feeling (das Gefühl). As Brunner sees it, the individual who has this experience stands in nature as a part of nature, yet at the same time he is independent of nature. This experience, according to Brunner, is best explained by Bergson's "I-consciousness:" the "free I" (das freie Ich) analyzes his religious experience introspectively by use of intuition.²

Intuition is the primary epistemological category used by Brunner in Das Symbolische. Since his epistemology is heavily dependent on Schleiermacher and Bergson, we will examine the thought of these two men concerning intuition for a clue as to what Brunner intends by his use of intuition.

(i) Schleiermacher.

There are three similarities between Schleiermacher's use of intuition and that of Brunner. First, Schleiermacher takes a mystical view of intuition (Anschauung). He explains in his Speeches: "Intuition is and always remains something particular, unique, separate, the immediate perception and nothing further. Religion

knows nothing of deduction and logical reasoning."¹ In Schleiermacher's view, intuition, or the immediate perception of the infinite, proceeds from the finite to the infinite. Intuition, which is distinct from thought, reasoning and deduction, is immediate and passive. In other words, it leads to no necessary conclusion. Following Schleiermacher, Brunner also argues that our perception of the infinite is immediate. In his view, we are able to perceive the "spiritual personality" (Persönlichkeit) without mediation. However, we are unable to express this personality. It was the genius of Jesus that he was able to conceptualize clearly the idea of the spiritual personality.

Second, Schleiermacher's use of intuition demonstrates his inductive reasoning and explains the teleological whole which he believes the world to be. Intuition furnishes a hypothesis about the nature or behavior of the universe as a whole system. By our use of intuition we, as religious subjects, move from the particulars to the whole. We assume there is a regular order of the universe and discover the signs of this by intuition. As did Schleiermacher, Brunner also sees a unity arising out of multiplicity.²

Third, for Schleiermacher the real object of religion is the spirit because it is from the spirit that religion gets its intuitions of the world. Religion is a human activity which gives "meaning" for the individual person in his relation to the whole. It is a tendency of the

mind and represents the most perfect development of the affective side of humanity. In his intuition, the Christian sees the opposition of everything finite to the unity of the whole. Brunner also emphasizes the importance of the spirit. For Brunner, the spirit (Geist) or the spiritual (geistigen) is an indication of the immanence of God in the world and in individuals. This use of the concept "spirit" shows the anthropological thrust of Brunner's pre-dialectical theology in that he places the epistemological initiative regarding religious knowledge on the side of humanity.

Schleiermacher's idea of intuition helped changed the emphasis from objective doctrines to be believed to subjective religious experience. Orthodox literature emphasized sincere acceptance of certain fundamental articles of faith. The act of faith was accompanied by the divine act of justification. Schleiermacher, on the other hand, taught that dogma, which was based on special revelation, was an abstraction. Intuition was offered in place of intellectual assent as a serious interpretation of the meaning of an event.

Although the relationship of Brunner's pre-dialectical epistemology to Schleiermacher is evident (both see the significance that mysticism and a feeling of dependence hold for religious experience), we must not exaggerate the influence of Schleiermacher on Brunner. In Schleiermacher's thought religion remains a passive and subjective feeling. With his emphasis on universal spiritual reality, Brunner struggles against this subjectivism. His conception of
religion includes a stronger ethical emphasis than does Schleiermacher's.\(^1\)

(ii) Bergson.

Bergson claims that there are two ways of knowing a thing: by intelligence (or analysis) and intuition.\(^2\)

"The first implies that we move round the object; the second that we enter into it. The first depends on a point of view at which we are placed and on the symbols which we express ourselves. The second neither depends on a point of view nor relies on any symbol. The first kind of knowledge may be said to stop at the *relative*; the second, in those case where it is possible, to attain the *absolute*."\(^3\)

Bergson follows Schleiermacher when he contends that the absolute is given only in intuition, all else falling to the province of analysis. Intuition is intellectual sympathy "by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible."\(^4\) Analysis, on the other hand, reduces the object to known components by expressing it as a function of something else. In contrast to analysis, intuition is a simple act.

In Bergson's view, intuition and metaphysics are related concepts. "Metaphysics is the science which claims to dispense with symbols," he explains.\(^5\) Instead of knowing reality, metaphysics possesses it

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1 Cf. Salakka, op. cit., pp. 46f.
4 Ibid., p. 7.
5 Ibid., p. 7.
absolutely because it uses no symbolic representation. If it did so, it would cease to be a simple act. As opposed to analysis, which consists of a series of external points of view and builds systems, intuition allows for duration - which is the unity of multiple viewpoints. Intuition penetrates the unity and gives knowledge of the self by the self.\(^1\) An individual may proceed from intuition to analysis, but not from analysis to intuition. In contrast to analysis, which is a second-step process claiming objectivity, intuition is a subjective act.

Bergson’s story of "Paris" illustrates his point.\(^2\) He says that an individual can make sketches of scenes from the French capital and write the word "Paris" across the sketches. If that individual has seen Paris, he will be able, with the help of original intuition, to place the sketches together in some sort of a consistent whole. The converse does not hold true. If this individual has not seen Paris, the sketches will not give him an impression of what the city is like even if the word "Paris" is written across the top of the sketches.

Brunner also distinguishes between intuition and analysis, considering analysis to be a second step (after intuition) in acquiring religious knowledge. This distinction is reflected in his criticism of intellectualism and scholasticism. In his view, it is experience, rather than analysis, which gives meaning to the forms provided by intuition.

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 24-25.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 27-28.
Brunner's use of Bergson's "I-consciousness" led Salakka and Leipold to level the charge of idealism against him.\(^1\) Indeed, there are two characteristics of idealistic thought in *Das Symbolische*: the intuition of the conscious-I and the unity which arises out of multiplicity. Although Brunner sees unity arising out of multiplicity, he never identifies the religious subject and object. The "I" in Brunner's thought is consciousness of a "second I" standing outside of itself. This second "I," an ethical-moral predicate, is a basic presupposition in Brunner's thought. This presupposition strongly differentiates the subject and object in Brunner's epistemology.

Brunner observes that intuition is unable to express completely the experience of the free-I. The question naturally arises, "How does the religious subject express this experience?" The answer, for Brunner, is in a theory of symbol. He explains that the symbol is "the language of the inexpressible."\(^2\)

2. Brunner's Concept of Religion.

Brunner's concept of religion is closely related to his theory of symbol. In fact, he is unable to describe his theory of symbol until he discusses the concept of religion. He considers two methods for determining concepts: the naturalistic and the idealistic. The naturalistic method reduces the qualitative to the quantitative in that the "higher" spiritual functions are merely processes. Brunner prefers the idealistic method, which views the qualitative as something which can be neither shunted aside nor dissected. The

\(^1\)For a discussion cf. Salakka and Leipold, loc. cit.

\(^2\)Das *Symbolische*, p. 37.
idealistic method examines religious phenomena in their purest, most expressive and complete form.

There are likewise two concepts of religion. The naturalistic concept of religion seeks the most primitive elements out of the higher form of that religion. It finds the essence of religion in the beginning of the religion. The idealistic concept of religion is obtained through the analysis of religious consciousness. It examines what is characteristically recognized as a religious phenomenon.

In Brunner's opinion, the idealistic theory offers the best explanation of the concept of religion. Such a theory is not dependent on the appearance of religious phenomena. Rather, it is based on the quality of the religious consciousness. The use of this theory permits Brunner to examine the essence and quality of religion, and shows that the quality of a religion arises step by step (schrittweise Entstehung).

Brunner explains,¹

In the interest of scientific inquiry, we must maintain the unity of all things religious as a characteristic feature of consciousness. When history shows us a diversity of religions, we will explain the differences as varying degrees of purity and power of the religious element within the collective spiritual condition.

Therefore,²

In every individual religion, in every individual religious appearance, and in every individual religious act of consciousness it is therefore logical to distinguish the

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¹Ibid., p. 14.
"religious" in the religion or its "essence" from that which binds it from the individual empirical appearance.

For Brunner, the question of religious knowledge concerns the truth of religion; it is not a question about the truth of the Christian faith. In his endeavor to describe an epistemology which will define the truth of religion, Brunner follows two of the nineteenth century's great works on the philosophy of religion: Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* and Schleiermacher's *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*.

3. Brunner's Concept of Symbol.

"There can be no knowledge, unless at the same time a criterion of truth is given," insists Brunner.¹ Each particular branch of knowledge must be measured by its own criterion. Likewise, a particular branch of knowledge reaches only so far as its criterion permits. This also holds true for religious knowledge. The chief task of a religious epistemology is to answer the question, "How does a religious subject arrive at knowledge?"² *Das Symbolische* is Brunner's attempt to answer this question.

Brunner, following Husserl, examines two functions which a symbol performs: a sign-function (*die Zeichen-Funktion*) and an expression-function (*die Ausdrucks-Funktion*).³ By its sign-function, the symbol refers to something other than itself. This function of the symbol deals with a two-fold concrete consciousness: (a) it is considered to stand in relation to something other than itself and (b),

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¹Ibid., p. 5.
²Ibid., p. 8.
the actual relation between the two (the symbol and the symbolized) lies in the "consciousness of symbol."\textsuperscript{4}

In each case the union of sign and meaning must be created or learned. For example, the symbol \(\pi\) signifies a geometrical relation which requires a corresponding view. The corresponding relation between the expression and that which is meant by the expression must be learned. The expression is an aid to understanding certain relations. If the corresponding view is missing, we are left, in Husserl's terminology, with "mere unsatisfied intention of meaning."\textsuperscript{5} Since the symbol functions as a sign, it makes no difference whether the word "Sessel," "chaise" or "chair" is used to designate a particular piece of furniture. The three words all signify the same thing. Meaning is given by experience, which in turn fills out the corresponding view. When this view is missing, the intention is not fulfilled.

The expression-function, which analyzes the content of the symbol, arises because there is a similarity between the symbol and that which is symbolized. An object and the picture which represents that object are interchangeable. Since there is a corresponding view between the two, the intention is thus adequately fulfilled.

Brunner's example of "chair" (or \textit{Sessel} or \textit{chaise}) illustrates the use and relation of the two functions of symbol. Why is the object called a chair? Because it expresses the relation between the subject

\textsuperscript{4}Das Symbolische, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{5}schlechthin unbefriedigte Bedeutungsintention as opposed to Bedeutungsintention, ibid., p. 24. Brunner refers to Husserl's \textit{Logische Untersuchungen} II, (Halle, 1901), p. 506.
and the object (sitting). This relation is indicated by the sign-function of the symbol. What is the object? According to the expression-function of the symbol, it is a "chair."

According to Brunner, true symbolism is true relationship. This equation assumes a consciousness of congruence between intuition and the symbol. He calls this "correspondence of the areas of experience" (Korrespondenz der Erlebnisgebiete), and it serves to unite the various spheres of experience with the form of the symbol. This relationship between experience and form provides the basis for the symbolic act. Untrue symbolism, on the other hand, is mere similarity. He calls this "symbolism of example" (Beispiel-Symbolismus). Rather than create a symbol to express a relationship which is experienced, untrue symbolism borrows an already existing symbol which expresses a similar concept.


Brunner bases religious knowledge on two "primary" symbols: the "superworld" (Überwelt) and the "personality" (Persönlichkeit). Each primary symbol has special importance. The Überwelt indicates God's transcendency to us by showing us that we are separate from God. The Persönlichkeit tells us about God's immanence, which is the unmediated presence of the divine spirit in the human spirit. This second primary symbol indicates that we take part in the divine personality.

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1 Das Symbolische, p. 32.
2 Ibid., p. 33.
Part II of *Das Symbolische*. "Religious Knowledge", is an examination of how we obtain knowledge of these two primary symbols. In the second part of his book, Brunner wants to establish an epistemology consistent with the "idealistic" concept of religion of part I. This epistemology proceeds from a human subject and proceeds towards a trans-subjective spiritual personality. This procession is the departure point for religious epistemology.

The "spiritual" is one the of main epistemological concepts of *Das Symbolische*. Brunner claims that the individual "free-I" recognizes a universal spiritual being standing beside it. The individual who feels himself drawn to this being also feels bound by an ethical norm. This self-consciousness is also consciousness of the spiritual personality. On the basis of Bergson's "I-consciousness, Brunner claims that the individual religious subject shares the quality of "spirit" with God, and thus in turn forms a bridge from the temporal to the eternal, from the conditioned to the unconditioned.

The individual religious subject obtains knowledge of such a spiritual being by means of either intuition or emulation of a religious hero. Intuition proceeds from reverence (*Ehrfurcht*), which is the basis of religious consciousness. Reverence is the feeling (*Gefühl*) that the religious subject experiences when encountering the supernatural.¹

Brunner considers the feeling of reverence to be the basic religious experience. This, of course, is similar to Schleiermacher's thought in the *Speeches*. Brunner elaborates, "The reverent intuition

¹The classical expression of this is Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*. Cf. *Das Symbolische*, p. 98.
of belonging to and dependence on the supernatural spiritual world which the free I has is the basic experience of the religious spirit. Every internal or external experience is to be called religious only in so far as it takes part in this primal experience."¹ Thus the personal spirit comes to the religious subject through intuition.

The second manner of obtaining knowledge of the universal spiritual being is through the emulation of religious heroes.² Among these religious heroes, Brunner mentions only Jesus by name. By his preaching, Jesus demonstrated that he possessed a religious consciousness superior to ours. He had a clearer grasp of the religious world than that granted to us by our own experience.

Since we share the attribute of personality with God, we encounter no difficulty in expressing God's immanence. The question is rather, "How do we express the transcendent, the supernatural, the Absolute?"³ The degree to which we recognize God as supermundane and eternal marks the difference between our God-consciousness and our world-consciousness. Brunner explains, "We must not think of the divine merely as something which determines our ethics, but rather as every individual appearance of the same. The divine does not appear merely as the ethical God in general, but as the one righteous and true God."⁴ While God is immanent, he is also the negation of the temporal. In order to avoid the charge of mysticism, Brunner insists that the transcendence of God is more important than the immanence of God. However, he does not

¹Ibid., p. 14.
²Ibid., p. 15.
³Ibid., pp. 60f.
⁴Ibid., p. 64.
surrender completely the idea of the immanence of God. To do so would be to disrupt the relationship between God and the world.

For Brunner, the relationship of God and the world is best described by the categorical imperative, which has two parts. The first is the recognition of the norm which tells me that I am determined by another. The norm is generally valid and applicable to all. It does not apply only to myself as a unique religious subject in any specific or particular manner. Brunner adds the element of human experience to the recognition of the ethical norm. This second part of the categorical imperative states that by comparing nature and spirit, I experience worth. The feeling of worth is my personal, unmediated experience of God.

According to Brunner, we cannot know God - in - himself because we lack the necessary intuition to do so. However, what we do know about God (his personality) is provided to us by intuition, which in turn tells us about our own "spiritual being."\(^1\) Brunner does not describe the relationship between God and man as analogia entis, preferring the term "continuity of truth."\(^2\)

Brunner considers the concept of personality in tandem with the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative is not the reflection upon a specific individual ethical demand; rather, it is the consciousness that our life has a greater eternal significance than that which is merely natural. His use of the categorical imperative demonstrates the importance he attaches to ethics. In fact, he claims that morality is latent religion because it is through ethics or

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 58.  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 56.
morality that the spiritual being of man shares identity with spiritual
being itself. Brunner explains, "There is certainly no border between
the ethical feeling of a command and the religious feeling of
reverence."\(^1\) Through morality we see our participation in "a higher
life."\(^2\)

5. The Secondary Symbols of Religious Knowledge: *The Father and
The Kingdom of Heaven.*

As did Kant, Brunner moves from intuition to conceptualization to
ideation. In Brunner's thought "idea" is expressed by the term
"secondary symbolism." *Intuition* deals with an inner viewpoint. As
such, it is not expressible and must remain individual. A *concept* is
the expression of something general. The concept itself is not reality.
A *symbol* is the individual expression of something specific.

Brunner incorporates two "secondary symbols" into his
epistemology: the Father and the Kingdom of Heaven. In section III,
"The Secondary Symbolism", he describes the transition from the
intuitional stage to the conceptional stage. He then is able to describe
how the secondary symbols are expressed.

During his pre-dialectical period, Brunner emphasizes the
importance of general revelation. He insists that the *world* is the
working and revelation of God. God's activity in the world stimulates
the consciousness of the individual religious subject. However,
despite God's actions in the world, the subject does not possess a
distinct view of the primary symbols. Brunner calls this the

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 75.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 76.
"empathetic stage,"¹ which confines itself to immanence. As a result of this inability to express the primary symbols, the subject confuses the spiritual with the ethical.

Brunner contends that earlier, more primitive religions confused God and His work and hence, remained at the empathetic stage. As a result of our more fully-developed religious consciousness, we are able to differentiate immanence and transcendence and bring our inner experience into a relation with the external world. This ability, according to Brunner, represents an advance to the conceptual stage, which deals with the transcendence of God. The human experience of the transcendence of God provides the ethical norm and leads inexorably to monotheism through intellectual development and through the force of its ethical religious consciousness.²

Revelation is the consciousness of this unmediated transcendence. It says that God is not only immanent, he also lies outside of his appearances in the world. God's transcendence dictates that a person, who is a religious subject, cannot make himself into a religious object. Although there is a continuity between the human and the divine, the transcendence of God dictates that there is a distinction between the two.

Brunner places the symbols of transcendence in opposition to anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism, in his view, is the life-interest of all religion. For Brunner, the ground of religion is the

¹Ibid., pp. 98f.
²There are two paths to monotheism: "die intellektuelle Entwicklung und die Wucht des ethisch-religiösen Bewußtseins, - beide sehen wir in der Geschichte wirksam: im griechischen und im israelitischen Monotheismus," Das Symbolische, p. 107.
self-evaluation of an individual. He describes two ways in which the history of religions arbitrates the claims of the transcendent and the anthropomorphomorphic. First, it explains the primary symbol of personality, which satisfies the anthropomorphomorphic quest. Second, in opposition to anthropomorphism, it also de-temporalizes religion by explaining the other primary symbol, the super-world. For example, the history of religions expresses transcendence by placing something qualitative in a spatial relation. Christians use the expression "heaven" as the Greeks used "Olympus" and the Israelites used "Sinai" and "Zion" to designate a place to where God returns to earth. These symbols express things which we are not able to comprehend.

In Brunner's theory, the two primary symbols describe contrary tendencies. Christianity uses the term "Father" to express immanence or personality. The symbol "Father" does not refer to the relationship between God the Father and God the Son nor does it express a metaphysical or ontological relation between the two. This symbol, in other words, does not deal with the relation of Jesus and the creator.

The symbol "Kingdom of Heaven" expresses the transcendent element of religious knowledge. Brunner claims that Jesus was a religious genius because he used the term "Kingdom" rather than that of "Father" to explain the relation between God and humanity.¹ By using the term "Kingdom", the preaching of Jesus maintained an unmediated relation between the human and the divine.

¹Ibid., p. 122.
Jesus overcomes the cleft between immanence and transcendence, between personality and the super-world, with his expression "heavenly Father." This expression symbolises both the immanent and the transcendent aspects of religious knowledge: ¹

One expresses that I recognize the divine is essentially related to me, a spiritual being in which I take part. The other expresses that this divinity is something absolutely opposed, something absolutely transcendent to the temporal spirit. It is something incomprehensible and infinite which is not created through the sum of everything temporal.

In conclusion, we see that Brunner's epistemology, as described in *Das Symbolische*, maintains the continuity between the eternal and temporal planes. This continuity is seen in his contention that the individual religious subject shares with God the quality of the "spiritual personality." In consequence, by means of intuiting this personality and the ethical norm, the religious subject is able to enjoy unmediated experience of God.

II. Brunner's Pre-Dialectical Theology.

1. The Historical Context: the *Kulturprotestantismus* of Ritschl and Harnack.

*Das Symbolische* reflects the theological situation of European Protestantism in 1914. In Leipold's words, "It does not extend beyond the horizon of the theological interests of the period before the First World War."² Cultural Protestantism dominated the German-speaking theological scene at the end of the nineteenth century.

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¹Ibid., p. 132.
²Leipold, p. 22.
century. This influence extended to Leonard Ragaz at the University of Zürich.

The major figure of German Kulturprotestantismus was Albrecht Ritschl, who reacted against the Hegelianism of F. C. Bauer and reasserted the importance of Kant's thought for theology. Claude Welch says, "Ritschl is the thinker with whom one must first reckon in seeking to understand the theological directions and pathos of Protestant thought in the last third of the nineteenth-century."¹ Ritschl wanted to present a view of Christianity which was intelligible and persuasive to modern culture. This may be the essence of Kulturprotestantismus. Liberal cultural Protestantism sought to remove the barriers between the knowledge of God and human achievement. In the view of liberal Protestantism, there was no conflict between the Christian Church and human culture.

Ritschl's three-volume The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation (1870-1874) ranks among the most important works on soteriology and Christology in the nineteenth-century. In their preface to the English translation of volume three, Mackintosh and Macauley comment, "Not since Schleiermacher published his Christliche Glaube in 1821 has any dogmatic treatise left its mark so deeply upon theological thought in German and throughout the world."²

Ritschl's influence was extended by his pupil Adolph von Harnack. Harnack's What is Christianity? was one of the most influential

statements of liberal Protestant theology. "More than any other book it represented the spirit of Protestant Liberalism in the decades just prior to the First World War."¹

There are three theological currents of Kulturprotestantismus which are reflected in Das Symbolische. The first similarity deals with Christology. Both Ritschl and Harnack refused to engage in metaphysocal speculation regarding the person of Christ. Ritschl specifically rejected the Nicene-Chalcedonian Christology, complaining that his conservative opponents² require us to find the essential nature of Christ not in His world-conquering will, which marks Him as the God-man, but in His physical origin, which has never yet been reconciled with His historical appearance and never can be. If Christ is to be judged by categories that are applied to no other object than Himself, than he is rendered unintelligible.

Ritschl was convinced that his opponents, particularly Luther and Frank, adhered to an outmoded metaphysic which they confused with Christian faith. Ritschl's work "Theology and Metaphysics" rejects this metaphysic and describes what he regards as the foundation of dogmatic theology. Ritschl prefers Melanchthon's dictum Hoc est Christum cognoscere, beneficia eius cognoscere: "Therefore the substance and worth of Christ should be understood in the beneficient actions upon us Christians, in the gift of the

²Ritschl, op. cit., p. 468.
blessedness which we sought in vain under the law - not in the
previously held conceptions of his divinity.'

Harnack echoes Ritschl's judgment of the Nicene-Chalcedonian
Christology. According to Harnack, the most important step in the
history of Christian doctrine occurred at the beginning of the second-
century when the Christian apologists equated the Logos with Jesus
Christ. As a result, "it drew into the domain of cosmology and
religious philosophy a person who had appeared in time and space." This
represents a fusion of apostolic thought with Greek philosophy.
The later idea of the God-man, adopted by the councils, was
theologically correct but departed from the Gospel.

The second similarity concerns soteriology. Ritschl does not
separate the doctrines of the Person and the Work of Jesus Christ. He
approaches Christology from below, proceeding to the supra-
historical only from the historical. He explains, "We know God only
by revelation, and therefore also must understand the Godhead of
Christ, if it is to be understood at all, as an attribute revealed to us in
His saving influence upon ourselves." Ritschl's thought here also

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1°"Theology and Metaphysics," in Three Essays, translated and with an
2°What is Christianity?, translated by Thomas Bailey Saunders, third and
that the two-natures doctrine of Christ's person allows the historical Jesus to
transcend Kant's categories of time and space.
3°Harnack apparently confuses the Chalcedonian christology with the
divinization or deification theory of Clement of Alexandria. This is sub-
christian, he contends, because it treats morality as an appendix. It has no
connection with the Gospel (p. 235). It is better to side with Pelikan, who
points out at this time (Chalcedon) Jesus Christ could be conceived of in no
other way. The Chalcedonian confession is an admission that the person of
Christ is a mystery.
4°Ritschl, JR III, p. 398.
shows the preference for the exemplarist soteriology which is so characteristic of Kulturprotestantismus.

In Ritschl's view, the doctrine of Christ's prophetic office explains his work better than the doctrine of Christ's priestly office. The prophetic office emphasizes the love and lordship exercised by Christ. In his view, the doctrine of the priestly office contains unsatisfactory allusions to satisfaction theories of the atonement.

Harnack considers the idea of expiatory sacrifice significant within the history of religions. However, in his opinion, where the Christian message has been heard and received, the practice of bloody sacrifices has come to an end. The death of Jesus destroyed the validity of material sacrifices and indicates the importance of deeds over words. Jesus was faithful to his vocation, even to the point of his death on the cross. The self-surrender of his life forms the turning point of history by demonstrating that injustice and sin deserve to be punished.

The third similarity is the close connection between religion and ethics, which encompasses both the Christological and soteriological doctrines of Ritschl and Harnack. Particularly important in this regard is the concept of the "Kingdom of God." Ritschl interprets Jesus' vocation as the establishment of the Kingdom of God:¹

Since Jesus Himself, however, saw in the Kingdom of God the moral end of the religious fellowship He had to found, since He understood by it not the common exercise of worship, but the organization of humanity through action inspired by love, any conception of Christianity would be

¹Ibid., p. 12.
imperfect and therefore incorrect which did not institute this specifically teleological aspect.

Ritschel teaches that Jesus Christ is the primary object of God's love. The Christian community is the object of this love secondarily only in so far as it stands related to Christ as lord and head of the community. In his exercise of God's ethical lordship, Jesus was unfailingly loyal to this task, even to the point of death, which shows His triumph over the drive for self-preservation.

In Ritschel's theology, justification has both an objective and subjective pole. Objectively, justification (or forgiveness) is the divine act by which sinners are accepted back into fellowship with God. The subjective pole of justification takes place in our understanding of ourselves as sinners:¹

In so far as justification is effective, it must be conceived as reconciliation, of such a nature that while memory, indeed, preserves the pain felt at the sin which has been committed, yet at the same time the place of mistrust towards God is taken by the positive assent of the will to God and His saving purpose.

Justification determines the believer's attitude towards (and action in) the world, resulting in a changed relationship between man and God. This relationship is characterized by the Lebensideal, of which Jesus is the norm. His dedication to God and the Kingdom freed him from subservience to the world. The religious virtues which marked Jesus' dedication to and fulfillment of his vocation should serve as a paradigm for us.

¹Ibid., p. 85.
Ritschl lists three religious virtues: humility, patience and prayer. Humility is the "whole of religion as found in man." Patience must be added to humility as the feeling of submission to God. It is "religious feeling as lordship over a refractory world." We must pray according to God's will. If we do, "prayer is the expression of humility and patience, and the means of confirming oneself in these virtues."

The religious virtues are directed towards the Kingdom of God, which is our goal in life:

The universal ground of all moral conduct towards our fellow-men is that the Christian religion has for its end the Kingdom of God. This association of mankind, of the most comprehensive nature both extensively and intensively, cannot be realized otherwise than through works, concrete action, and speech. These works are good in so far as they are directed towards the universal end which guarantees the usefulness of all the members of the fellowship. Now, the moral law is the system of those ends, dispositions, and actions, which necessarily arise out of the universal end of the Kingdom of God. Love is the pervading motive of this organization of law-determined action; but it is also the impulse which leads to the knowledge of all those ends which are comprehended in the moral law.

Harnack groups the teaching of Jesus under three headings. The first is "The Kingdom of God and its Coming." According to Harnack, Jesus used apocalyptic language to emphasize the moral relationship between man and God. Harnack ascribes three meanings to the Kingdom. First, it is supernatural and not a product of ordinary

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1Ibid., p. 637.
2Ibid., p. 637.
3Ibid., p. 646.
4Ibid., p. 511.
human life. Second, the Kingdom is a purely religious blessing which deals with the relation between the living God and individuals. Third, since sin is forgiven and misery is banished in the Kingdom, the experience of it is the most important experience that an individual can have.

The second heading is "God the Father and the Infinite Value of the Human Soul." According to Harnack, Jesus brings to light the value of the human soul and proclaims the fact that we are God's children. He explains, "Religion gives us only a single experience, but one which presents the world in a new light: the Eternal appears, time becomes means to an end; man is seen to be on the side of the eternal." Harnack's statement shows that he thinks the relation between God and humanity is one of direct continuity.

The third group of Jesus's teachings concerns the "Higher Righteousness and the Commandment to Love." Harnack insists that the root of morality is in the disposition and intention. Four points ensue. First, by abolishing the selfish pursuit of good works, Jesus severs the external connection between ethics and religious worship. Second, morality goes back to the intention or disposition of the agent; good works are judged in light of the intention with which they are done. Third, the root of this intention must be love; no other motivation suffices. Fourth, in the combination of morality and love, "We can thus understand how it was that Jesus could place the love of God and the love of one's neighbor side by side; the love

1Ibid., pp. 63-70.
2Ibid., p. 69.
3Ibid., p. 70.
of one's neighbor is the only practical proof on earth of the love of God which is strong in humility."¹

Christology and ethics are closely connected in Harnack's book. Following Ritschl, he portrays Jesus as recognizing that the practical proof of religion consists in the exercise of neighborly love. Three enemies stand in the way of this love: mammon (money and worldly goods which make us tyrants over others), care (that which makes us slaves of material things) and selfishness (where desire gains the upper hand over selflessness). Since our wealth does not belong to us alone, we must use it in service to our neighbor.

2. Emil Brunner's Pre-Dialectical Christology.

By emphasizing intuition, Brunner proceeds epistemologically from the historical (the human religious subject) to the supra-historical. He presents no epistemological barrier to human knowledge of God. In other words, Brunner's pre-dialectical epistemology is "from below." As we shall note, he also arrives at his Christology from below.

Das Symbolische describes the relation of Jesus to religious knowledge. Its Christological themes reflect those of Ritschl and Harnack. In Brunner's pre-dialectical theology Jesus was a man who possessed especially deep religious knowledge which he communicated to other men through his teaching and practice. Jesus was a religious teacher and a prototype of the religious man.

Das Symbolische portrays Jesus as the expression of the essence of religion. He was not identical with the essence. The object of

¹Ibid., p. 73.
religion is God alone. By his use of intuition, Jesus acquired knowledge of the essence of religion. When Brunner speaks of historical-religious personalities, he mentions only Jesus by name.\footnote{Das Symbolische, pp. 12, 122.} He did not regard Jesus as the God-man. The life and teaching of Jesus signified his entire existence and his religious experience was unsurpassable. Further, his absoluteness was functional, not ontological. In Brunner's pre-dialectical Christology, Jesus is different in degree from humanity, he is not different in kind.

As did his predecessors, Brunner wanted to give full weight to the humanity of Jesus. His portrayal of Jesus was meant to guard against the danger of docetism. According to Brunner, Jesus's existence expresses the meaning of God for humanity. The crucifixion demonstrated the love of God for humanity.

For Brunner, the incarnation consisted of the fact that Jesus embodied the ideal of a religious man. Our imitation of Jesus prods us toward that ideal. In his preaching about God, Jesus incorporated the symbols of the spiritual super-world and the super-human personality. In Christianity, the consciousness of God as a super-human personality is especially distinct. Jesus was able to express this consciousness in terms of secondary symbols such as "Father." To put it in Schleiermacher's words, Jesus had an especially acute "God-consciousness."

As did Ritschl and Harnack, Brunner's pre-dialectical theology grants central importance to the ideal of the Kingdom of God and its ethical implications. For Brunner, the Kingdom is a symbol of divine
transcendence. Jesus' preaching emphasized the promise of the coming rule of God's Kingdom. According to this view, Jesus does not bring the Kingdom; he announces it. His preaching about the Kingdom clarifies our understanding about our relationship with God and expresses what God wants to be for mankind.

Jesus' preaching about the coming of the Kingdom is not merely a promise, it also bears the character of an ethical demand. The fulfillment of this demand marks the beginning of the lordship of God in humanity. Salvation consists in fulfilling Jesus' commands about the Kingdom. Hence, it is safe to say that for Brunner, Jesus occupies a middle position between the Father and the Kingdom.

It thus appears that Brunner's Christology is entirely consistent with his epistemology: in both cases he works "from below." Epistemologically, the religious subject obtains knowledge of the supra-historical object by means of intuition. The efficacy of intuition as a religious category is dependent upon the existence of a continuum between the religious subject and object. Since there is a epistemological continuum between God and humanity, there is no need for religious knowledge to be mediated. In other words, the assumption of a divine-human continuum essentially serves to obviate the need for a divine messenger who communicates religious knowledge. The task of Jesus, then, is to provide guidelines for assisting the religious subjects in their quest for knowledge of the divine. The deity of Jesus Christ is in no sense intrinsic to his ability to carry out this function.

Scheld has analyzed the Christology implicit in Das Symbolische, presenting the view "Jesus as the symbol of God" as the best
interpretation of Brunner's pre-dialectical Christology.\(^1\) According to Scheld, this description expresses the inner connection between Jesus and the symbols of religious knowledge. He believes that interpreting Jesus as the symbol of God serves two purposes. First, it maintains the distinction between the symbol and the symbolized, allowing Brunner to avoid the metaphysical Christology of Protestant scholasticism.\(^2\) Second, this interpretation maintains the importance of Jesus' religious consciousness. Jesus, with his clear intuition of the primary symbols (super-world, personality), is a man in whom the complete and full consciousness of God rules. However, Scheld contends the secondary symbols (Father, Kingdom) are the result of a long development in the history of religion.

Two criticisms of Scheld's interpretation of Brunner's pre-dialectical Christology need to be pointed out. First, Scheld incorrectly attempts to demonstrate Brunner's affinity to Chalcedon.\(^3\) In Scheld's interpretation, the Chalcedonian Creed implies the understanding of Jesus as the symbol of God. He identifies three "moments" in the existence of Jesus Christ which he finds both in the Christology of the Early Church and in Brunner's early theology: the human, the divine and the unity of the human and the divine in Jesus's person. While it is true that both the fifth-century framers of the Chalcedonian Creed and Brunner share the methodological similarity of interpreting the incarnation according to their respective experience, it is false to assume that this

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\(^1\)Ibid, p. 52.

\(^2\)Scheld, op. cit., p. 56, thinks Brunner was influenced by Sabatier on this point.

\(^3\)Scheld, op. cit., p. 87.
methodological similarity implies a similarity of content. Scheld himself concedes that Brunner's early Christology depends on the Christology of liberal protestantism: "Brunner regarded Jesus as a man possessing special religious knowledge, but not as a God-man who at the same time is identical with God as an object of religious knowledge."¹ This Christology denied the ontological emphasis of the early creeds.

The second criticism concerns Scheld's characterization of Jesus as the "symbol of God." In Das Symbolische, Brunner explained that the expression-function of a symbol arises because there is a similarity between the symbol and the symbolized. That is to say, the symbol and the symbolized are interchangeable. In Brunner's Christology, as re-constructed by Scheld, Jesus is not an expression of the symbol; rather, he expresses the symbol. The symbols exist independently of Jesus. The Christology implicit in Das Symbolische does not place the emphasis on the symbols of religious knowledge. Rather, it emphasizes the expression of religious knowledge in terms of the secondary symbols. Jesus is interchangeable with the rest of humanity, not with God.

2. Soteriology.

Although Das Symbolische contains very little explicit discussion about the work of Christ, it is easy to reconstruct its implicit soteriology. Brunner's pre-dialectical theology is basically anthropological. In his use of intuition as a primary epistemological category, he does not concede the superiority of the object of religion

¹Ibid., p. 50.
over the religious subject. For Brunner, since knowledge of the
divine is immediately obtainable, there is no epistemological barrier
between humanity and God. The implication of this epistemology is
that human knowledge "ascends" to the divine. In other words, there
exists an epistemological continuity between the object of religion
and the religious subject.

A second point to be kept in mind is the ethical emphasis of
Brunner's pre-dialectical theology. Brunner maintains that the
categorical imperative is an indication of human participation in the
"higher life."\(^1\) In his view, salvation consists in fulfilling the
commands of Jesus, who, because of his superior God-consciousness,
was able to conceptualize and state the demands of the categorical
imperative. In his use of the categorical imperative, Brunner placed
the soteriological emphasis on Jesus's prophetic work.

We thus need to find a soteriological scheme which allows for the
epistemological continuity between God and man and at the same
time allows for the ethical demands of the categorical imperative.
The soteriological scheme which bests fits these two criteria is the
exemplarist scheme of Abelard. Moral influence theories terminate
on man in order to bring inducements to action. These theories
transfer the atoning fact from the work of Christ to the response of
the human soul and to the influences or appeals proceeding from the
work of Christ.\(^2\) In this view, Jesus himself does not accomplish the
work of salvation nor is his divinity intrinsic to his work. In other

\(^1\) *Das Symbolische*, p. 70.

pp. 359-363.
words, moral influence theories originate from the religious subject. They relate to the supra-historical only in so far as the religious subject is able to align his will with the will of God as presented either by the categorical imperative or by the preaching of Jesus.

(i) The Model: Peter Abelard.

Abelard's Christology.

The doctrine of the Trinity was one of the chief questions of the middle ages. Abelard's Christology grew out of the trinitarian controversies of his time and centered around the meaning of "personality." Nominalism stated that the idea of "trinity" depended on human predication and existed in vocabulis. Its logic could not recognize the unity of persons in the single really existent divine substance. The result was that Nominalism regarded the attributes of divinity, goodness, wisdom etc. as personal properties proper to the individual person of the Trinity only in so far as that person is a member of the single undivided Godhead.

Influenced by his Platonism, Abelard responded that the Trinity existed in re. In De Unitate he explains, "God is of three persons in such a way as if we said that the divine substance is powerful, wise and good."1 Abelard believed in the separation of divine attributes: power pertains to the Father, wisdom pertains to the Son and goodness pertains to the Spirit.

Abelard elaborates further in his Christian Theology:2

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1 Cited in Sikes, op. cit., p. 166.
'The Word was made flesh and dwelt with us' (Jn. 1. 14). This is as much as to say, 'Wisdom was made incarnate so that by its illumination the knowledge of Wisdom might dwell with us.' In the flesh which He assumed He instructed and taught us perfectly by the converse of His life, by the passion of His death, and by the glory of His resurrection and ascension.

"Since then, in all that He did in the flesh, the Lord had the intention of our instruction, it is rightly said that only Wisdom became incarnate.

Abelard’s dialectical approach led him to regard Christ almost exclusively as the Wisdom of God. Jesus was the eternal Logos rather than the incarnate Jesus who died upon the cross. The divine Wisdom was called the Word because it is by man's speech that his wisdom is known. The man Jesus was a vehicle through which the eternal Word was made known to the world. For Abelard, the incarnation represented homo assumptus a Deo. This approach led to Abelard’s difficulties with William of St. Thierry and St. Bernard. With his doctrine of the separation of attributes, it is easy to see why Abelard was accused of Sabellianism.¹

*Abelard’s Idea of Sin.*

¹Sikes, op. cit., p. 166 thinks that any unorthodox views held by Abelard are the result of his desire to refute the tri-theism of Roscelin. Sikes discusses the Christology of Abelard on pp. 149-173. E. M. Buytaert points out that Abelard’s difficulties stem from three sources. The first is his over-reliance on logic. The use of logic in later scholasticism shows Abelard’s influence in this area. Abelard’s knowledge of Aristotle was mediated by Boethius and thus fragmentary. This makes it difficult to compare Abelard with later scholastic thinkers such as Aquinas. Abelard’s second difficulty was his reliance on pagan authors, particularly Plato. This led, finally, to a primitive biblical exegesis and a limited knowledge of older Christian literature. Cf. Buytaert, "The Trinitarian Doctrine of Abelard," in Buytaert, ed., *Peter Abelard, Proceedings of the International Conference, Louvain May 10-12, 1971, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, Series I/Studies II* (Leuven: University Press, 1974), pp. 127-152.
Rather than grant metaphysical stature to sin, Abelard defines it subjectively:\(^1\)

God cannot be set at enmity by injury, but by contempt. He is the highest power, and is not diminished by any injury, but he avenges contempt of Himself. Our sin, therefore, is contempt of the Creator. To sin is to despise the Creator; that is, not to do for Him what we believe we should do for Him, or, not to renounce what we think should be renounced on His behalf. We have defined sin negatively by saying that it means not doing or not renouncing what we ought to do or renounce. Clearly, then, we have shown that sin has no reality. It exists rather in not being than in being. Similarly, we could define shadows by saying: The absence of light where light usually is.

In Abelard's view, love is the constitutive element of God's relationship with his creation. Sin is anything which disrupts this loving relationship. Particularly disruptive is inner consent to sin. For example, it was not the overt act of eating the forbidden fruit which constituted Adam's and Eve's guilt. Rather, it was their inward consent to disobedience of God's command. Both fell when they gave their inward consent to a deed they knew should not be done. Three consequences followed: alienation from God (they began to seek fulfillment in themselves rather than in God); the integrity of their personal natures was shattered (their flesh and their spirit were set at odds with one another - as a result, their reason was weakened); and finally, they were alienated from nature.\(^2\)

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Abelard’s Soteriology.

According to Abelard, Romans 3. 20 describes the previous dispensation: "For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin" (RSV). "Works of the law" refers to outward appearances such as circumcision, sacrifices, keeping the Sabbath and other symbolic observances. These works fulfill the law according to the flesh and not according to the spirit. The flesh represents human judgment, which is able to judge only from these outward appearances. Fulfilling the works of the law does not justify an individual in the sight of God. On the contrary, the law renders a person without excuse before God for his or her sins.

Romans 3: 20-21 also describe the new dispensation: "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law" (RSV). The new dispensation is the dispensation of grace. The love of God which justifies has been manifested in Jesus Christ. It is no longer necessary to seek justification by means of observing the law. Love now lives in the soul and is not a matter of external works. The fact that God did not spare even his own Son ought to convince people about the strength of this love.

Peppermueller, Abelard emphasizes the existential aspect of the work of Christ and works from the center of the individual. He stresses the responsibility of individuals for their own deeds and for their own salvation or non-salvation. However, an individual cannot rely on his or her own power for salvation. Human activity which leads to salvation proceeds from grace. Ratio is grace because it gives to all people the possibility of proceeding along the path to God. Cf. Peppermueller, "Exegetische Traditionen und theologische Neuansätze in Abaelards Kommentar zum Romerbrief" in E. M. Buytaert, op. cit., pp. 121-126.
Abelard maintains that the question of justification centers on the question, "How is a person made righteous through the death of the son of God?" He responds:¹

Now it seems to us that we have been justified by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God in this way: through this unique act of grace manifested to us - in that his Son has taken upon himself our nature and persevered therein in teaching us by word and example even unto death - he has more fully bound us to himself by love; with the result that our hearts should be enkindled by such a gift of divine grace, and true charity should not now shrink from enduring anything for him.

He continues:²

Yet everyone becomes more righteous by which we mean a greater lover of the Lord - after the passion of Christ than before, since a realized gift inspires greater love than one which is only hoped for. Wherefore, our redemption through Christ's suffering is that deeper affection in us which not only frees from slavery from to sin, but also wins for us the true liberty of Sons of God, so that we do all things out of love rather than fear - love to him who has shown us such great grace that no greater can be found, as he himself asserts, saying, 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'

We see that Christ persevered in his obedience to God when he assumed a human nature. A person, by following Christ's example, can also persevere in obedience to God. When a person is free from fearing God, he can respond to God in love. This response takes the form of charitable activity.

(ii) Abelard's Reception by the theologians of Kulturprotestantismus.

²Ibid., p. 284.
Abelard's soteriological scheme enjoyed great popularity in Germany during the latter half of the nineteenth-century. In H. Richard Niebuhr's words, nineteenth-century theology took the view of "The Christ of Culture," which maintains there is no great tension between the church and the world.\(^1\) This view interprets culture through Christ and understands Christ through culture. It seeks to ease tensions between the Christian faith and the world. Pelikan confirms Niebuhr's judgment, explaining that the interest of Kulturprotestantismus lay in the human aspect of Christ's work.\(^2\)

According to Niebuhr, Peter Abelard also removed the conflict between Christ and culture. Niebuhr says, "But in stating the faith, its beliefs about God and Christ and its demands on conduct, he reduces it to what conforms with the best in culture."\(^3\) His exemplarist soteriology was an alternative to the once-for-all doctrine of the atonement.

Each of the two main influences on Brunner's pre-dialectical thought, Kulturprotestantismus and Religious Socialism, adopted the soteriological scheme of Peter Abelard. In part, the appeal of Abelard's thought was due to its ethical bent. This scheme fit in especially well with the ethical emphasis Ritschl placed on the Kingdom of God. Ritschl's explanation of the relation between soteriology and the Kingdom of God exercised an immense influence on subsequent theology. Especially significant is Ritschl's insistence

\(^{2}\) Pelikan, op. cit., p. 129.
\(^{3}\) Niebuhr, loc. cit., p. 90.
on the societal aspect of sin. This "kingdom of sin" is the result of human resistance to the Kingdom of God.¹

All these grades of habitual sin we include in the vast complexity of sinful action when we form the idea of the kingdom of sin. And indeed we can only regard ourselves as sharing its guilt when we not only attribute to ourselves our own sinful actions as such, but at the same time calculate how they produce sin in others also, although we may possess no complete or distinct idea of the extent of these effects. On the other hand, we also feel the reaction of this power of common sin, not only through example or the production in us of sinful opposition to the sins of others, but especially by the blunting of our moral vigilance and our moral judgment. For whereas the Kingdom of God as the supreme end rises above all that falls within the compass of the world, and is destined to regulate and embrace every relationship of life, a bondage and a false dependence on the world are the fruit of that friendship for the world which runs counter to that final end.

David Mueller notes,²

Some four decades after Ritschl wrote these words Walter Rauschenbusch and later Reinhold Niebuhr in the United States spoke of the corporate kingdom of evil which corrupts men and institutions. So did the Christian Socialists Leonhard Ragaz and Hermann Kutter in Europe before them at the beginning of the twentieth-century. But all of them surely learned much from Ritschl, who spoke with prophetic power at this point.

Ritschl follows Abelard in several respects. Both men emphasize the love of God over God's justice, resulting in a subjective view of sin. Guilt has no connection with sin; it is merely uncertainly about one's relationship with God. There are also Christological and

¹Ritschl, JR III, p. 338.
soteriological connections. Perhaps most significant is the adoptionist
tendency evident in the thought of each theologian.\footnote{Adoptionism says that the \textit{Logos} took up its abode in the man Jesus through the conferral of the Holy Spirit. Abelard's adoptionism goes back to Paul of Samosata. The union between Jesus and the Logos was not ontological; rather it was analogous to the union between Christ and the "inner man" or between the prophets of the Old Testament and the inspiring spirit. This is one of the precursors of Arianism. It teaches "Jesus Christ is from below." Cf. Eusebius, \textit{Ecclesiastical History}, 7. 30. 11. In its later forms it did not distinguish between the Father and the Son, isolating the Logos from the historical appearance of the Son. This type of adoptionism emphasizes the significance of human righteousness. Jesus imparts a pattern for men to follow. Those who strive to please God according to their ability on the basis of natural law would not be damned for their effort. Bernard's judgment of Abelard as Soisson shows the connection between natural revelation and exemplarist soteriology. Abelard's crime: "attempting to bring the merit of the Christian faith to naught because he supposes that by human reason he can comprehend all that is God." Cf. Pelikan, op. cit., p. 266. Pelikan says this is the same mistake made by "modern scholars" of the nineteenth-century, who substituted an anthropocentric emphasis in place of a theocentric emphasis (p. 129). Cf. Robert S. Franks, \textit{The Work of Christ}, A Historical Study of Christian Doctrine (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1962), p. 107.} Abelard and Ritschl both discuss Christ's work in terms of his prophetic office, generally ignoring the priestly office. Further, the soteriology in each case is exemplarist. Jesus represents a human will conformed to the will of God. By following Jesus, each individual has the ability to conform his will to God's will. Finally, both men have an ethical emphasis in their theology.


Accordingly the ultimate and deepest thought of Abelard is this, that reconciliation rests on personal fellowship with Christ. It is He who, by perfectly fulfilling the will of God as man, realized the divine destination of humanity, in this sense satisfied God, and thereby opened again to mankind
the closed gates of paradise. He who belongs to Him has through Him access to God, but at the same time also the power of the new life, in which he fulfills the commands of God from love; and so far as this fulfillment is still imperfect the righteousness of God comes in to complete it.

(iii) Emil Brunner's Pre-Dialectical Soteriology.

Brunner himself had designated Ritschl as one of his precursors (Vordenker).¹ Scheld's work correctly demonstrates the similarities of Brunner's pre-dialectical Christology and that of Ritschl's *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*. Both apparently prefer the ethical interpretation of the person of Christ to the ontological interpretation. As we shall see, Brunner's pre-dialectical soteriology is also similar to Ritschl's. This influence was mediated directly by Ragaz and indirectly by Rauschenbusch.

Ritschl and Brunner each stress the existential and functional absoluteness of Jesus in their consideration of soteriology. In Ritschl's thought, this absoluteness is reflected in the emphasis he placed on the prophetic office of Jesus in announcing the coming of the Kingdom. Brunner adopted a similar teleological approach by considering the earthly life and teaching of Jesus to be his entire existence. According to him, the terms "the Kingdom of God" and "the rule of God" are symbols for the divine reality in its transcendence and objectivity.

Brunner's remarks on the categorical imperative clarify his soteriological intent in *Das Symbolische*. He employs the categorical imperative to describe the relationship between God and the world. It is the means by which God as the norm encounters humanity.

Thus the categorical imperative is our conduit to the divine personality.

Jesus was able to describe this norm in terms of ethical commands. Our salvation consists in following these commands and emulating Jesus in conforming our will to the will of God. Through his preaching, Jesus awakens our understanding towards the rule of God. Jesus, as the prototype of the religious man, provided the example which awakens our ethical love.

This theology grants no ontological distinction to the person of Jesus. He bears the image of God as every individual bears the image of God. The difference consists in that the image borne by Jesus has not been muddled by sin. This lack of ontological distinction also has ramifications for soteriology. Jesus' work implies no ontological distinction between the humanity and divinity. He does not remove a barrier between humanity and God. Instead, his example encourages the members of the community to strive for moral development. Such a doctrine of the work of Christ assumes that the members of the community possess the ability to conform to the will of God. They only lack the requisite information to guide their actions.

In Brunner's pre-dialectical theology Jesus does not mediate knowledge of God nor does he mediate salvation. In both cases, epistemological and soteriological, Jesus' prophetic work consists of rendering clarifications. Epistemologically, the preaching of Jesus clarifies the primary symbols of religious knowledge in terms of secondary symbols, thus relating how individuals should interpret
the divine personality. Soteriologically, Jesus's preaching announces how individuals should act as to save themselves.

III. Conclusion.

Two main criticisms of Das Symbolische as a theological work stand out. First is the paucity of biblical citations included by Brunner. The few biblical citations used by him concern the understanding Jesus had of His mission. Jesus expressed this understanding in the parables.

Das Symbolische emphasizes the prophetic office of Christ, thus indicating the importance Brunner attaches to the teaching of Jesus. The picture of God presented by Jesus was purer and clearer than the picture of God presented by our experience. As a result, the implications of Jesus's messiahship and deity are not treated by Brunner. The emphasis is on the human Jesus, not on the divine Christ. Scheld concludes, "His (Brunner's) picture of Jesus as a Christ-free picture goes back to the so-called liberal theology. The impression arises, that for the young Brunner, Jesus is not more than a religious teacher, a prootypical man, and an image of God as every created person is an image of God."  

The second criticism concerns the lack of dialogue with other Protestant theologians. Indeed, this oversight is corrected with a vengeance in the subsequent period of his thought. We are able to note an apparent repudiation of early pre-Reformation Christology in Das Symbolische. Brunner considered the Christology of the fourth-

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1Cf. Scheld, op. cit., pp. 68ff and 83ff.
2Scheld, op. cit., p. 82.
3Brunner cites Kant, Schleiermacher and Bergson. In his discussion there are allusions to the work of Ritschl and Harnack.
and fifth-centuries to be intellectualized and therefore distorted because this early Christology analyzed the Sonship of Jesus from a metaphysical viewpoint. Brunner prefers an ethical viewpoint, acknowledging Jesus as a subject of religion, not as an object of religion.

In *Das Symbolische* Brunner is unable to apply his concept of symbol to the Jesus Christ. Karl Rahner has analyzed the relation between symbolic representation and Christology as follows. According to Rahner, all beings are symbolic by nature because they necessarily "express" themselves in order to attain their own nature. This interpretation, of course, would also apply to Jesus as the symbol of God. Rahner says, "That which is derivatively in agreement, and hence one with origin while distinct from it, must be considered as the 'expression of the origin'."¹ In other words, Jesus not only tells us about God, He shows God to us. The visible figure and the essence comprise one concept. The essence (the attribute of deity) is not separate from the appearance (the earthly life of Jesus Christ).

Rahner thinks his view of symbolic reality implies a Thomist ontology. Regarding the *causa formalis* he writes, "The 'form' gives itself away from itself by imparting itself to the material cause. It does not work on it subsequently and 'from outside' by bringing about in it something different from itself and alien to its essence."²

²Ibid., pp. 231-232.
Symbolic reality is the self-realization of one being in another which is constitutive of its essence.

The Father, enunciating Himself in the Son, utters the Word as his own image and expression. This enunciation is revelatory because the symbol renders present what is being revealed. This view implies a descending Christology - a metaphysical Christology as opposed to a Christology of saving-history. John 15. 9 records Jesus as saying "He that sees me sees the Father." According to Rahner's view of symbolic reality, Jesus, the incarnate Word, is the absolute symbol of God in the world. As the absolute symbol of God, Jesus is different in kind from the rest of humanity; He is not be different merely in degree. If Jesus symbolically represents God to the religious subject, he must somehow share that property (transcendence) which is being represented.

Rahner's description of symbolic reality differs from the view held by Protestant liberalism. Protestant liberalism denied the intrinsic relation of the symbol (Jesus) to the symbolized (God the Father), thus reducing it to adoptionism. The "revelation" brought by Christ becomes objective only because it closely approximates what God wants to say to humanity. In consequence, the connection between the symbol and the symbolized is merely extrinsic. The reality or truth of the symbol depends on the human response to it. This Christology of saving-history uses an exemplarist soteriology: Jesus exemplifies on earth what God wants to humanity to do and know. This knowledge consists in the recognition of the love of God for humanity and in the desire that individuals conduct themselves charitably towards one another.
We should take note of three factors which stand out in Brunner's pre-dialectical epistemology. Their interest lies in the fact that Brunner repudiates each of them in the subsequent period of his theology. First is the importance Brunner grants intuition, which bridges the gulf between the subject and object of religious knowledge. He uses the symbol "die Persönlichkeit", which emphasizes the experiential unity of God and the ego in the I-consciousness, to unite the subject and object. It appears that, as far as Brunner is concerned, human knowledge of the transcendent is not mediated. As a result of this epistemological unity, Brunner refuses to concede that the object of religious knowledge is in fact superior to the religious subject.

Second is Brunner's use of philosophy. During his pre-dialectical stage he is not a theological positivist in that he grants two important tasks to philosophy. First, a philosophy of religion must describe the two contrary tendencies of personality and super-world.\(^1\) Second, philosophy is given the task of distinguishing truth and untruth in religion.\(^2\)

Third is the relationship of faith and experience. For Brunner, the source of religious knowledge is the experience of the individual subject. He describes this experience as the consciousness of a power over us and over the world. "Viewing this, we experience the

\(^1\) *Das Symbolische*, op. cit., p. 123.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 133.
divinity."\(^3\) Faith comes to expression only through human experience and therefore cannot be proved.\(^4\)

Each of these three factors assumes a line of continuity between God and humanity. Philosophy, a human science, is given the task of arbitrating religious truth. Faith, experience and intuition all proceed from humanity to God. This vertical ascent of human knowledge places God and humanity on a horizontal epistemological plane.

Brunner describes this situation as a "continuity of truth." The human spirit encounters no barrier in its quest for knowledge of the spiritual personality. Despite human sin, our knowledge of God, or of the primary symbols, remains immediate. Jesus' mediation consists of interpreting the primary symbols in terms of secondary symbols. This view of soteriology maintains that the effects of human sin have merely muddled our reception of the primary symbols. Jesus' work consists in clarifying these symbols. There is neither an objective barrier to human knowledge of God nor any tension between God and humanity. The soteriological scheme consistent with this epistemology is Abelard's moral influence theory. The epistemological continuity between the human and the divine assumed by the utilization of intuition in \textit{Das Symbolische} is

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 130.
\(^4\)Brunner's pre-dialectical "philosophy of religion" as it were has much in common with Auguste Sabatier's \textit{Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion based on Psychology and History}, trans. by T. A. Seed (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1897). As does Brunner, Sabatier emphasizes the discontinuity between the object and the representation of that object by the symbol. He writes, "It would be an illusion to believe that a religious symbol represents God in Himself and that its value, therefore, depends on the exactitude with which it represents Him. The true content of this symbol is entirely subjective; it is the conscious relation of the subject to God, or rather, it is the way he feel himself affected by God" (p. 327).
carried over into soteriology by Brunner's implicit use of the moral influence theory of the atonement.
Chapter Two: Brunner's Transition to Dialectical Theology

Brunner's pre-dialectical theology, influenced by Schleiermacher and Ritschl, emphasized anthropological elements and the immanence of God. Epistemologically he identified revelation with human experience and maintained that religious knowledge was received by intuition. By 1921, Brunner had abandoned his anthropological orientation and replaced the immanent emphasis of his epistemology with a transcendent emphasis. His theology, no longer reflecting the influence of Kulturprotestantismus, moved towards the position articulated by Karl Barth.

This chapter has three concerns. First, we shall examine the larger theological context of Brunner's new epistemological orientation. Second, a discussion of the factors contributing to the re-orientation of Brunner's theology will explain his departure from the Kulturprotestantismus of his earlier period. Finally, we will look at Brunner's theology in the period following the First World War in order to determine what epistemological categories he uses to satisfy the demands for a) a source of religious knowledge, and b) the reception of this knowledge.

I. The New Theology.

The term "New Theology" has been applied to the post World War I theological movement represented by Karl Barth, Friedrich Gogarten, Rudolf Bultmann, Emil Brunner and others.1 Three terms frequently have been used to describe this theology: dialectical

theology, the theology of crisis, and "neo-orthodoxy." Each designation emphasizes a different aspect of this theology.

1. Dialectical Theology.

"Dialectical theology" emphasizes the complete otherness (Jenseitigkeit) of God and the sovereignty of his revelation.¹ This theology stands against everything that human beings have as their spiritual possession, including thought and experience, culture, philosophy and religion. The radicalism of dialectical theology has its basis in the post-war crisis of cultural consciousness. Dialectical theology posited that man as believer stands before God with empty hands, unable to offer his human achievement to God. In this regard, it's position is similar to the theology of the Reformation. Because of this similarity, dialectical theology has also been called "the theology of the Word."

Dialectical theologians saw themselves as struggling against liberal cultural Protestantism, romantic subjectivism and a religion based on human experience. Their intent was to unify the two sets of exclusionary terms: God-man and eternity-time. These theologians contended that the union took place in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, as he represented the vertical (from above) entrance of the eternal God into human time. This descent was placed in contrast to the vertical ascent of human knowledge; humanity and God do not

lie on a horizontal epistemological plane. The dialectical theologians took the position that there is no continuum between man and God. The main task of theology, in their view, is to answer the question, "Given the qualitative difference between God and man, how is revelation possible?" These theologians answered that man is the receiver of revelation.\textsuperscript{1} Revelation alone is the communication of the transcendent God. Since knowledge of God comes only from God, it cannot be obtained through human achievement. In other words, human experience is not the source of our knowledge of God.

The seminal journal of the movement, \textit{Zwischen den Zeiten} ("Between the Times"), was founded in 1922. Despite his numerous contributions to the journal, Brunner was never a member of the inner circle of the group which published \textit{Zwischen den Zeiten}. He comments, "The result of my absence in America was that I never became an intimate member of the circle publishing this magazine."\textsuperscript{2} The title \textit{Zwischen den Zeiten} comes from an essay written by Gogarten in \textit{Christliche Welt}.\textsuperscript{3} His charge was that liberalism found the solution to the human predicament in historical development. Gogarten responds, "We are in another circle and seek something

\textsuperscript{1}Roman Roessler, op. cit., pp. 20-23.
\textsuperscript{2}Kegley, op. cit., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Christliche Welt} was a journal of theological liberalism. The journal struggled for "a legitimate relationship between Christianity and culture (in the widest sense of the word)". Cf. W. Schneemelcher, "Christliche Welt," \textit{Die Religion in der Geschichte und Gegenwart} 3. For a more contemporary view of liberalism see Deane William Ferm, "Protestant Liberalism Reaffirmed," \textit{Christian Century} 93 (April, 28, 1976): 411-416. Ferm says that liberalism offers a critique of modern theological movements. He re-states many of the themes of liberalism: human experience as the authority for one's religious beliefs; the continuum of existence (all of life's experiences relate to one another); Christology as Jesus' "God-consciousness;" and the importance of the use of reason for theology.
other than progress. Culturally informed opportunism interests us no longer... We stand not before our own truth, but we stand before God. This hour is not our hour. *We* have, at the present, no time. *We* stand between the times."¹

Brunner considered *Der Mittler*, the subject of chapter three of this study, to be "the first presentation of the doctrine of Christ in terms of dialectical theology."² Its publication brought him the attention which led to his lecture tour in the United States. His lectures, found in *The Theology of Crisis*, introduced dialectical theology to the United States.³

2. The Theology of Crisis.

In the view of the "New Theologians," German idealism represented the attempt to synthesize religion and culture. The goal of this synthesis was, in Herder's words, "to humanize Christianity and to Christianize humanity."⁴ The result was that idealism viewed revealed religion as something originating in the inherent creative powers of the human soul. In the tradition of the Enlightenment, man was the measure of all things.

The belief was widespread that the devastation of the first world war showed the futility of attempting to reconcile modern civilization

³New York, Scribner, 1929.
with living religion. Gustav Krueger comments on the reaction to the war.\footnote{Ibid., p. 231.}

Consciously or unconsciously, they reacted from that mechanical civilization whose terrible excruciations they had constantly witnessed during the dolorous years of the war, and to whose disastrous effects they had been forced to contribute. Had they really gone to war for such a civilization? and in the name of religion? Could one preach war in Christ's name? - this war, that had achieved nothing but destruction and devastation, that had wrought the ruin of real culture, of all civilization worth the name, and had torn to shreds the 'lands of pious awe' in both morality and religion? The stock phrases, 'the suicide of Europe,' 'the decay of the West,' which were given a scientific rendering in that work of Oswald Spengler (\textit{Crisis in our Culture}) so eagerly read all over Germany, were not without their effect on our young students of theology.

In an early article, "Die Krisis unserer Kultur" (1920), Gogarten explains that religion is either the soul of culture or it is the crisis of culture. Religion is either immanent within culture or it passes judgment on culture. The decision is easy for Gogarten.\footnote{Friedrich Gogarten, "Die Krisis unserer Kultur" in \textit{Anfänge der dialectischen Theologie}, p. 110.}

God has no place in the world as long as man does not deny himself entirely. We now stand before the Other: where God's reality is known, there no longer remains a place for man in the world, there is the particular existence of man raised up. At that place man stands again as the creation of God in the origin of things, where they are once again with God, and where that word of God rings over them: 'And God looked at everything that he had made; and he saw it, and it was good.'
Liberal theology had adopted an anthropocentric starting point for theology. By contrast, the theology of crisis adopted a theocentric starting point. According to Gogarten, the efficacy of human wisdom does not extend beyond the borders of this world. The task of religion is not to grant divine valuation to the achievements of human culture. Instead, culture is a human achievement judged by human standards.\(^1\)

Brunner's *The Theology of Crisis* summarizes many of the issues arising between the new theology and liberalism. Brunner writes that theology experienced a crisis because theologians were discussing religion in general rather than central theological themes. He contends that Ritschl and Schleiermacher are particularly guilty of substituting philosophy and a religion of immanence for Christian faith.\(^2\)

Thus *religion* (human self-assertion) and the *Gospel* (the end of this assertion) are to be differentiated. Religion is man's approach to God; the Gospel is God's approach to humanity. We can know God either on the basis of divine immanence or on the basis of divine transcendence. A religion of immanence assumes the continuity of God and the world. God and the world of experience are thus not contradictory. In a religion of immanence, experience of the world and experience of the Ego are not different than experience of God.

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In criticism, Brunner raises several objections. His first objection is that a religion of immanence presents a God who is not really God. Since this type of religion places God and the world in such close proximity to one another, Brunner complains that God thus is no longer able to exercise his sovereignty over creation. Second, a religion of immanence operates under the mistaken presumption that an individual has the ability to know God through experience of the world. By confusing human experience of God with human experience of the world, a religion of immanence does not permit God to be viewed personally. Brunner's third complaint is that a religion of immanence is not based on faith. In his view, faith is an answer to a call; it is not the result of our experience of God's immanence. The final objection is that a religion of immanence does not concede the attribute of personality to individuals. According to Brunner, a personality is asked to choose between life and death - a decision which is missing in a religion of immanence.

Brunner's alternative to a religion of immanence is the doctrine of special revelation. His point is that the doctrine of special revelation makes clear the contradiction of God to the present world. Special revelation means that God addresses the world from a sphere outside that of human existence.

The theology of crisis has a different view of salvation than does liberalism. Liberalism views Jesus as a religious genius and an example to others. It knows Jesus only according to the flesh, and does not recognize special revelation. Brunner responds that if Jesus is an example or a genius, he is not the Saviour. Jesus is the revelation of God, and this entails incarnation: "To confess that Christ
is Lord one must see him not merely as a man but as God himself; not the teacher of a doctrine but the bearer of salvation."¹

Christ shows us the likeness of our first estate and how far we have fallen. Our original relationship with God was disrupted by sin, which results in guilt and necessitates repentance. Repentance is the recognition that self-trust is the basis of sin. Human activity can change relations between men, but it cannot affect a change in the relationship between God and man.

The evolution of the Kingdom of God is the final topic discussed by Brunner in his description of The Theology of Crisis.²

It (the liberal doctrine of the evolution of the Kingdom of God) confounds the gospel of Christ with the general rational ideas of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God which the Stoic philosophers taught; and it identifies the New Testament message of the Kingdom of God coming on earth with the rational idea of the natural historical process of ethical and social evolution.

Brunner holds that we cannot speak of the evolution of the Kingdom of God. This is because the doctrine of the evolution of the Kingdom is based on the immanence of God in man. It posits man's intrinsic goodness and autonomy and does not distinguish the will of God from the will of the self.

By 1927 Brunner adopted the concept of a transcendent Kingdom of God which comes upon the earth and is not a product of historical evolution. Brunner notes the ethical problems presented to those who interpret the Kingdom in terms of human progress: the conflict

¹Ibid., p. 66.
²Ibid., p. 71.
of labor and capital and the shock of the First World War. If nothing else, these two phenomenon show that human experience encounters contradictions rather than continuity between the human and the divine.¹

3. "Neo-Orthodoxy."

In order to rescue Christianity from the general cultural dissolution brought on by the catastrophe of the First World War, dialectical theology sought a reorientation of theology by appealing to the Reformation. The dialectical theologians claimed to be the the true heirs of Martin Luther and John Calvin in part because they considered the Bible to be the norm for theology. Tillich comments, "This repristination theology was a radical return to and rediscovery of the orthodox tradition. The theologians of this movement did not produce many new theological thoughts, but they did one valuable thing for us. They opened up the treasures of classical orthodoxy."²

Brunner's Religionsphilosophie Evangelischer Theologie expressed the conviction that the Bible is the source of theology: "Christian faith is Bible faith."³ We are not to measure God's word in scripture according to reason. Rather, "we measure reason and indeed all knowledge by God's word in Scripture."⁴ We cannot separate God's revelation from the Bible.

¹Ibid., p. 69.
⁴Ibid., p. 151.
Brunner judges that Reformation thought is consistent with the Bible. "As starting-point, as the pattern of a Christian knowledge of revelation, we may choose the Reformation confession of faith as being that expression of faith which, although outside the Bible, most clearly expresses the view that the faith founded on the Scriptures takes of itself."¹ The Reformation claimed that God's revelation is given "once for all." Revelation is not a general, timeless truth. The Reformation principle of Scripture identifies the word of God in Scripture with the word of God in the human soul. The Holy Spirit conjoins the two.

II. The Influences on Brunner's Transition to Dialectical Theology.

Several factors influenced Brunner's transition to dialectical theology from the Kulturprotestantismus of his pre-dialectical period. They include a sense of the problems which followed in the aftermath of the First World War as well as the philosophy of dialogue of Ferdinand Buber and the thought of Paul Natorp.²

1. The First World War.

It is difficult to overstate the predominant role played by the devastation of the First World War during this transition period in Brunner's thought. In fact, civilization was prepared to give up its traditional values. The results of the First World War, Brunner believed, called into question the cultural ideology of the preceding.

¹Ibid., p. 23.
²Other commentators, for example Roessler and Leipold, see the influence of Martin Luther and Soren Kierkegaard affecting this transition. The influence of these two thinkers is more pronounced in Brunner's later eristic-dogmatic period, and hence will be discussed in chapter four. Roessler and Scheld also think Barth's Römerbrief influenced Brunner's transition to dialectical theology. Brunner contends that he arrived at his position independently from the influence of Barth.
century. Revolution, false hopes and the exploitation of the situation by the victorious powers completed the disruption begun by the war. Overproduction, currency woes, unemployment and class struggle savaged organized life. Capitalistic economic laws and democratic government proved unable to remedy the situation. Marxism won new influence in the labor movement and the Soviet Union promised to show the way to a newer, more fruitful form of economy, society and statehood.¹

The nature of the theological situation after the outbreak of the war appeared to many to be an open question. Theology had subordinated revelation to cultural and ethical criteria, and the protest against this subordination took two forms. First, there was less optimism about human achievement and greater faith in the living God. Second, in the search for a more objective standard, the authority of the Bible was strengthened. In short, the theological protest demonstrated dissatisfaction with a theology which emphasized the continuity God and humanity. Schleiermacher had substituted pietism, idealism and romanticism for the Gospel. Ritschl had substituted ethics and historicism for revelation.

After the war, the relation of the Christian faith to culture and the world, which had occupied so many theologians since the time of Kant, appeared foreign to the theological enterprise. Further consideration of this relation was deemed suspect, if not theological dangerous. Brunner comments,²

²Kegley, op. cit., p. 7f.
I spent the first year of the war in the Swiss border defense as Soldier Brunner. For me, as well as for most of my educated comrades, the catastrophe of war in our time was at first something inconceivable. With this event my faith in progress was shattered and my religious socialism began to look suspiciously like a beautiful illusion. But my Christian faith itself was not thereby shaken. I came to see that the catastrophe resulting from those conditions in Europe which led to this collapse was a divine judgment upon the godlessness of the Christian peoples...The catastrophe of the First World War indicated clearly that the foundation and aims of Religious Socialism were due for a thorough reappraisal.

According to Horst Stephan, the transition from cultural optimism to cultural criticism was part of the revolutionary movements of the time. The new theology belonged to the era just as much as the outbreaks of social agitation. Concerning the periodical Zwischen den Zeiten he writes, "Here was the judgment over culture and history, also over empirical Christianity itself the sharpest; the preparation to give up all natural religion, every world and life-view of positivistic-ideological enervation the greatest."¹

Stephan points out that the dialectical theologians strengthened the relationship of theology to the center of life, to responsibility and decision, and to the actualization of the message of the Bible and the Reformation. Their theology emphasized the Bible and the Reformation rather than historicism, psychologism and ethicism. If the First World War was a product of civilization, one of the lessons to be learned from it was that human achievement is not continuous with divine creation.

2. The I-Thou Relation.

¹Stephan, op. cit., p. 326.
A second important influence which led to Brunner's transition to dialectical theology was the philosophy of dialogue of Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber. Ebner published his work *Das Wort und die geistigen Realitäten* in 1921.¹ The following year Martin Buber published his *Ich und Du.*² For Brunner, Ebner's work, in particular, was the catalyst in overcoming the I-speculation of idealism. As early as 1924 Brunner acknowledged the influence of Ebner on his thought, and it is impossible to understand the development of his theology without recourse to it.³

Ebner argued that there are two spiritual realities in life, the "I" and the "You." His thesis was that there is no "I" outside of the I-You relation. The "I" is given only in the possibility of saying "You," which shows that the "I" has no absolute existence. The "I" is not found in culture or philosophy or mythical religions, as these are concerned with the "I-aloneness" (*Icheinsamkeit*) of idealism.

Ebner claims that the term "man" (*Mensch*) assumes the existence of God. God has a personal existence and as such, his relation to man is personal. Human self-consciousness becomes concrete only in relation to God. Between man and God is the personal Word, the Word of address. Man has no existence outside of being addressed in the Word by God, which became historical in the life and words of Jesus Christ. Only Christ has the Word of address. Ebner finds that

the recognition of this claim represents a turn from general revelation to special revelation.\footnote{Ebner, op. cit., pp. 80-81.}

Ebner argues further that John the Evangelist was the first to recognize the inner connection of the spiritual life of man and the Word, whose divine origin he saw in the life of Jesus. The Logos of John 1 is called the "Word" because it is here that God speaks to man. It is a personal address, not impersonal reason. If it were impersonal reason, it would be anthropocentric.

John describes the Word as "the light." Many adherents of liberal theology maintained that Jesus possessed a superior intuition. Men could follow the intuition of Jesus and themselves shed light on the darkness. In John 1 Jesus is the light. This light came into the world. It is not a product of the world.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 124-173.}

According to Ebner, identification of the world with this light results in psychologism. Psychology is based on culture. He calls this the "dream of the spirit," insisting that it is fruitless and one which does not believe in God. It is nothing other than the closing-off (Abschließung) of the I from the You.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 177-183.}

Of course, the influence of Soren Kierkegaard, particularly his idea of the subjectivity of existence, was a major one in the development of Ebner's thought. Kierkegaard's claim was that personal existence cannot be objectified. For example, we use the terms "I am" (Ich bin) and "you are" (Du bist) as personal terms respective of the first and

\footnote{Ebner called Kierkegaard "one of the most powerful thinkers of all time." Ibid., p. 111.}
second persons. Both terms refer to personal subjectivity and are not third person terms. We do not use the term "I is" (Ich ist). That is to say, we do not "objectify" our personal existence by using a first- or second- person subject with a third person verb form.

Kierkegaard's second major contribution to Ebner's thought came through his concept of sin. Kierkegaard had identified three stages of existence: the ethical, aesthetic and religious. Ebner argues that the "I" is not determined in either the ethical or religious stage. It exists only when it leads to the "You." Kierkegaard's Sickness unto Death is "I-Aloneness" (Ich einsamkeit). For Ebner, the recognition of sin is the fruit of ethical reflection about one's self before God. This is the highest stage of human self-consciousness.¹

According to Ebner, the individual who engages in self-reflection before God does not obtain self-knowledge. Instead of self-knowledge, personal reflection leads only to a knowledge of sin. Self-knowledge, which leads to pride and knows nothing of grace, contains a description of the discrepancy between the ideal and real in ourselves.²

Ebner identifies idealism with anthropocentric theology. He argues that idealism seeks its own end in divine love. Because it finds this love in Christ's command to love one another and keep his commandments, it needs no grace. It views Jesus as a genius, like other men "who in their earthly existence dream the dream of the spirit."³ The situation, as Ebner sees it, is that men do not believe in

¹Ibid., pp. 187-229.  
²Ibid., pp. 306-315.  
³Ibid., p. 295.
the incarnation of God, but rather in the apotheosis of men. The religion of incarnation deals with God. The religion of apotheosis deals only with men. At this point, Ebner echoes Barth.\footnote{Ibid., p. 304.}

There is now only one religion and it is something divine and nothing human: Christianity. Only in Christianity can man obtain a real relation to God. All others are religions in name only, mere human attempts at religion. They are human and therefore in themselves errant attempts at the elevation of the spirit to God.

Ebner separates the human from the divine. They are never simply identified. Metaphysical speculation and mysticism seek to identify the two. However, in actuality the "I" remains human and is not divine. The divine is the "You."

In his own way, Buber expanded Ebner's thought by adding the concept "I-it" to the concept "I-You." The "You"-world is the world of true relation. The it-world is the world of objects and causality. The latter is the world of experience. The man who is forced to live in the it-world is truly no man.

Buber finds that there are three spheres in the world of relation: life with nature, life with men and life with spiritual beings. In the third sphere "We hear no You yet feel addressed."\footnote{Buber, \textit{I and Thou}, p. 57.} Modern theology, not hearing the You, confuses the spheres of relation. Such a theology thinks that the world of relation is a world of experience. That is to say, modern theologians either place the spiritual relation in the natural sphere (Romanticism) or in the human sphere (Ritschl).
Buber counters that the world of relation is a world of encounter, not a world of experience.

The philosophy of dialogue, as exemplified by Ebner and Buber, showed Brunner the importance of the transcendence of the Word. It also pointed out the perils that psychologism held for religious knowledge. We need to clarify the influence of Kierkegaard on Brunner's thought. Although Brunner uses Kierkegaard's thought in *Die Mystik*, Kierkegaard's influence becomes more pronounced in *Der Mensch im Widerspruch* (1937). In fact, it appears that Kierkegaard's influence on Brunner's thought was meditated in part by Ebner.


A third influence on Brunner's dialectical theology was neo-Kantianism.\footnote{Leipold, op. cit., p. 55 is one of the few commentators to recognize Natorp's influence on Brunner.} Neo-Kantianism takes it name from Otto Liebman's (d. 1912) cry, "Back to Kant."\footnote{For a survey of the development of neo-Kantianism see Hans-Ludwig Ollig, *Der Neukantianismus* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verschlagbuchhandlung, 1979), pp. 9-15.} The orientation of its *erkennniskritischer Idealismus* was in thought itself rather than in empirical reality. The neo-Kantians endeavored to construct a philosophy on the basis of a strictly "scientific" critique of knowledge, repudiating every psychologistic interpretation of thought. Psychologism was the method whereby experience and forms of
thought are determined largely by the psychical act. In this setting, psychology reduces judgments to psychic (seelische) sensations.¹

There were two main schools of neo-Kantianism, the Marburg School and the Southwestern School, and it was the former which was influential in Brunner's thought. Noteworthy thinkers in this school were Herman Cohen and Paul Natorp and Stammler.²

Neo-Kantian philosophy held that the laws of reason are not bound to a particular individual. Instead, such laws are independent of individual subjectivity. All cognitions are derived from the immanent logical laws of pure reason. In consequence, the Marburg school differentiated the "individual" from the "transcendental" subject.³ According to Thomas E. Willey, "(Marburg) Neo-Kantianism could be summed up as a campaign to prevent the subordination of consciousness to undifferentiated experience and to protect the integrity of the free individual from all forms of monism and determinism."⁴

The interpretation of Paul Natorp (d. 1921) is especially evident in the epistemological works of Brunner during his dialectical period. In his Philosophie. Ihr Problem und ihre Probleme, Natorp insists that we do not have the right to consider religion as the product of human culture. Culture is analyzed in a three-fold

³Ibid., p. 19.
manner: theoretical, ethical and aesthetic. This three-fold presentation of human culture does not give a view of religion. In religion there is a "something," a "something deeper."  

Natorp finds a transcendental element in religion which says "No" to human culture. There is something on the "other side" of human culture.

The religion of transcendence speaks sharply against the elevation of human culture, human science, morality and art to a consciousness of its own infinity. It is conscious of it as a sacreligious presumption, as a self-divinization of man. Human culture is not God. It is man. It must sink back in powerlessness and confess its own nothingness.

In other words, the temporal does not reach the unconditioned.

Natorp does not deny that religion also has an immanent aspect, but he wants to emphasize that there is a border or limit between the temporal and the transcendent. Accordingly, he differentiates between the quantitative and the qualitative. God is qualitatively different than man. God is "super-objective" (überobjective), not an object of human knowledge.

Natorp calls the recognition of the limit of human possibilities and culture "religion within the limits of humanity." In his view, both the subjective and objective elements of religion are combined. The world lies between these two elements; both man and God are

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2 Natorp, pp. 132-133.

3 Ibid., p. 136f.
related to the world. However, the world is also the border *between* man and God. Man does not reach God.

In Natorp's view, recognition of the borders between humanity and God represents a refinement of the concept of religion. He finds a less successful attempt to refine religion in Romanticism. According to Natorp, Schleiermacher "cleansed" religion of its transcendent character by removing the categories of space and time as determining factors of human knowledge.\(^1\) By removing these categories, Schleiermacher also removed the border between God and humanity.

For his part, Natorp places great emphasis on the categorical imperative as uniting the subject and object of religion. The Law expresses this unity and reflects the Good. Expression of the Good is the goal of man. Man receives the power to fulfill the demands of the Law by grace. "The should (*Das Sollen*) is itself a being, and thus the highest."\(^2\) Natorp grants ontological status to the categorical imperative.

The influence of Natorp is evident throughout *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube*.\(^3\) It was Natorp who showed Brunner the importance of sharply differentiating the transcendental and the immanental aspects of religious knowledge - for example, by his criticism of "psychologism." Psychologism, Natorp argued, has an anthropological basis. In his view, psychologism emphasizes undifferentiated experience as the source of religious knowledge. This means that

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 129.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 144.
\(^3\)Tübingen, 1921, e.g. 85-86, cf. pp. 73, 84.
knowledge of God is immanently grounded. Further, psychologism uses intuition as its primary epistemological category. The criticism of psychologism is also a criticism of Bergson's I-consciousness.

The distinction of the transcendent and immanent also appears in Natorp's separation of human culture and religion. For Natorp, religion was transcendent and not the extension of human culture. The same distinction is made by the new theologians in their criticism of Kulturprotestantismus. In fact, for Brunner, the thought of Natorp reinforced the judgment leveled on human culture by the First World War.

Neo-Kantianism also pointed to the lack of subjectivity and thus reinforced Brunner's idea of the pure objectivity of faith. Personal subjectivity, under the influence of Kierkegaard, reappears strongly in the third period of Brunner's thought.

The new theology follows neo-Kantianism in criticizing idealism. Both the new theology and neo-Kantianism held that the thesis does not lead through the antithesis to the synthesis. Between the thesis and antithesis there is "an empty space." Hence, there is a qualitative distinction between God and man. This outlook leads to a struggle against the anthropological assumptions of subjective theology which make religious experience the departure point and goal of theology.¹

III. Brunner's Thought, 1918-1920.

As we shall see below, there are profound differences between Brunner's pre-dialectical and dialectical epistemological positions.

¹Yrjo Salakka, op. cit., pp. 11-12. On this point see also Karl Barth, Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie, Gesamalte Vorträge I (München, 1925), p. 171.
The re-orientation of his theology took place over a period of three years. In this section we will begin to trace the evolution in Brunner's thought from Ritschlianism to dialectical theology.

After the publication of his dissertation in 1914, Brunner wrote very little for five years. Following his term of service in the Swiss militia, Brunner served as the pastor of the church in Obstalden. The articles he wrote reflect the practical concerns he had as a minister and show the influence of the Religious Socialism Movement on his thought during this early period.

Brunner expresses these practical concerns in a pair of articles published in Glarner Nachrichten. In "Die Kirche und die sozialen Forderungen der Gegenwart" (1918) Brunner notes, "Many people do not recognize that the Church, as the representative of the Christian faith, is principally occupied with the social question." He himself believed that the Church is called to be a guardian and leader in society. However, the Church had neglected its responsibility by sleeping through both the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution. As a result, the Church is responsible in part for the miserable social conditions prevalent in post-war Europe. If conditions do not improve, warns Brunner, Europe will find itself on the brink of revolution.

Brunner describes the situation further in "Worauf es ankommt. Ein Nachwort" (1919): "A cultural system, which has ruled Europe for two or three centuries, lies in ruin." The First World War

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1In Ein offenes Wort, eingeführt und ausgewählt von Rudolf Wehrli (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981), p. 68.
2Ibid., p. 72.
brought on a cultural crisis exacerbated by the abuses of capitalism. These abuses include eighteen-hour work-days, child labor and the deteriorating health of the labor force. He argues that Capitalism, concerned with interest and dividends, is too individualistic and contains no specific program for caring for the weak members of society.

Brunner observes that the program of the Religious Socialism Movement, which advocates the realm of God on earth, is the remedy for the ills of society. The Kingdom of God is not susceptible to the selfish abuses of capitalism. The Kingdom requires brotherhood, which means socialism. "This new time requires justice for the many," cries Brunner.\(^1\) In support of this demand he cites Mt. 24. 45: "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time?" (RSV) For Brunner, true socialism and the Gospel are inseparable. Shortly after the end of the First World War, Brunner still emphasizes the \textit{this} - worldly aspect of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom can be introduced through the program of the Religious Socialism Movement.

In the setting of post-war Europe, Brunner turned away from the optimism of liberal thought and religious socialism. Three works trace this transition: "Denken und Erleben",\(^2\) "Das Elend der

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 74.  
\(^2\)In: \textit{Vorträge an der Aarauer Studentenkonferenz, 1919}. Basel, Kober, 1919, s. 5-34.
Theologie"\textsuperscript{1} and a review he wrote of Karl Barth's commentary on Romans.\textsuperscript{2}

In \textit{Das Symbolische} Brunner had used a synthesis of mystical-subjective experience (Schleiermacher) and ethical objectivism (Kant). This synthesis begins to unravel in "Denken und Erleben." Although Brunner has not yet completely abandoned the concept of intuition, he is less concerned with the relationship of the individual subject to the super-individual Spirit than he had been before.\textsuperscript{3}

Brunner's criticism of intellectualism is as strong as it was in \textit{Das Symbolische}. He considers the intellect and conceptual thought to be enemies of life. Intellectualism leaves people cold and robs life of its beauty. Brunner compares it to Ahasueras, the wandering Jew, who never rests and never finds his goal. It is the eternal sceptic, a heathen, which leaves no room for faith. Intellectualism demands false conclusions and submerges the senses.

As in \textit{Das Symbolische}, personal experience is the alternative to intellectualism. Brunner says, "Only the personal bears fruit; out of personal experience comes all true art, ethics and religion."\textsuperscript{4} It is clear that Brunner's idea of the personality has changed. In his view, the core of the personality no longer lies in the feeling or in aesthetic experience. He believes instead that it arises when the "I" finds the

\textsuperscript{1}Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz 35, 1920, Nr. 50, 51.

\textsuperscript{2}"Rezension von Karl Barth, 'Der Römerbrief.'" In: Kirchenblatt für die ref. Schweiz 34, 1919, s. 5-34.

\textsuperscript{3}Cf. Salakka, op. cit., p. 53.

\textsuperscript{4}"Denken und Erleben," p. 28. Salakka comments, "This citation proves how strongly Brunner is bound to the Romantic-irrational thought of his time . . . of which Wilhelm Herrmann was the great authority." Op. cit., p. 54.
truth. The truth is not merely personal; it is super-personal. The "I" feels the demand of this super-personal truth.¹

Brunner's thought moves towards a spiritual Kingdom of God where God's absolute lordship places demands upon the individual. The question naturally arises about the relation of subjective personal experience to the objective super-personal conception of the spiritual Kingdom of God. At this time (1919), the expression "Kingdom of God" was not unknown in Brunner's circle. It was of course related to the teaching of Albrecht Ritschl, who had emphasized the relation of God's lordship to a moral community. In the moral community, the individual frees himself from the shackles of nature. In this manner, the individual becomes a personality. According to Brunner, it is necessary to be a personality in order to enter the Kingdom. Only as a spiritual personality can the individual see God as the origin and goal of existence. However, Brunner does not work out the implications of personality for theology. Indeed, he only does this in the final period of this thought.

At the root of Brunner's interpretation of the Kingdom is the practical nature of his work in Obstalden. The influence of the Religious Socialist Movement upon him is evident as late as 1919. In their preaching, the leaders of this movement (Kutter, Blumhardt and Ragaz) emphasized that all of the members of the community are bound together in pursuit of the goals of the Kingdom of God. The individual members of the community must be willing to sacrifice

¹Ibid., p. 30.
themselves and their particular interests for the sake of the Kingdom.\(^1\)

The leading figure ideologically in Brunner’s turn from cultural optimism to the critical thought of the New Theology was Karl Barth. His commentary on Romans (published in 1919) was part of the initial literary output of the New Theology. In the preface to the first edition Barth writes,\(^2\)

The historical critical method of Biblical investigation has its rightful place: it is concerned with the preparation of the intelligence - and this can never be superfluous. But were I driven to choose between it and the venerable doctrine of inspiration, I should without hesitation adopt the latter, which has a broader, deeper, more important justification.

In the preface to the second edition of the book, Barth denies that he is an enemy of historical criticism.\(^3\)

I have nothing whatever to say against historical criticism. I recognize, and once more state quite definitely that it is both necessary and justified. My complaint is that recent commentators confine themselves to an interpretation of the text which seems to me to be no commentary at all, but merely the first step towards a commentary. Recent commentaries contain no more than a reconstruction of the text, a rendering of the Greek words and phrases by their precise equivalents, a number of additional notes in which archaeological and philological material is gathered together, and a more or less plausible arrangement of the subject matter in such a manner that it may be made historically and psychologically intelligible from the standpoint of pure pragmatism.

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\(^1\) Salakka, op. cit., pp. 56-57.  
\(^2\) Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. from the sixth edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford: University Press, 1933), p. 1. This charge was leveled by Harnack.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 6.
Barth argues that previous writers have been too accommodating to modern thought. In place of this accommodation he adopts Kierkegaard's dialectic in his commentary. Throughout the commentary he maintains the "'infinite qualitative distinction' between time and eternity."¹ His main assumption is "Paul knows of God what most of us do not know."²

Brunner wrote a review of the first edition of Barth's commentary, which he hailed as "a forceful confirmation of my own thoughts."³

The unexpressed presupposition of the entire book and all of its individual thoughts is the knowledge that our developmental-historical 'scientific' thought - the pride of contemporary times and of the new theology - is of mere relative significance and its results of merely relative truth. The apparent 'supermundane standpoint' of the Church Fathers and Reformers, which emphasized the 'Word of God' as absolute truth through an absolute point of departure from the 'word of man,' contains more truth than the currently prominent historical-relativistic Bible commentary.

According to Brunner, Paul does not describe a cultural crisis arising out of tradition, experience or fantasy. Instead he describes the truth spoken by God. God's truth is separate from culture and human adaptation to the world. In this review, written shortly after the First World War, Brunner observes,⁴

¹Ibid., p. 10.
²Ibid., p. 11.
⁴Ibid., p. 30.
'The world is out of joint' not merely in a moral sense, but also in a cosmic sense. This entire space=time=world with its brutality, its chaotic undergrounds and beginnings, the human life with its animalistic origins and elements; this entire sad grit of the spirit in slavery to nature, this shameful fact, whereby the spirit is chained to the elements of this world so that it is hollow, obtuse and powerless, is not the norm which was created by God 'in the beginning.' It is rather a product of disintegration arising out of man's original turning away from God at the Fall.

Brunner has in mind Barth's comments on Romans 1: when we place man and God on a continuum, we attribute human achievements to God and divine achievements to man. The difficulty is that such a view fails to account for the Fall. As a result of human sin, we encounter God as wrath, and our relationship to Him is one of guilt, not cultural affirmation.

Brunner believed that Barth's achievement was to overcome the psychological subjectivism of nineteenth-century theology. Nineteenth-century theologians, such as Schleiermacher, reconstructed the content of faith out of the experience of the believer. By contrast, Barth recognized that Paul makes a metaphysical distinction between God and man. God remains God. "He does not let himself be interchanged with the world."¹ Justification and faith are a divine metaphysical and eschatological breakthrough into the relativity and arbitrariness of the natural human world.

Barth, for his part, defines sin as the interchanging of the humanity and divinity. The dilemma is one of either exalting

¹Ibid., p. 31.
individuals to God's level or depressing God to the level of humanity. Grace is not a human possibility; humanly speaking only sin is possible. Grace comes from God. It is faith in God which "renders inevitable a qualitative distinction between God and man: it renders necessary and unavoidable a perception of the contradiction between Him and the world of time and things and men."\(^1\)

Barth further insisted on the divine objectivity of faith. Brunner employs this concept to stress the transcendent character of faith. It replaces the subjectivity of the psychological religious experience of nineteenth-century thought.\(^2\) In this way, he differentiates the human spirit from the divine spirit.

In the year following the publication of Barth's Römerbrief, Brunner wrote "Das Elend der Theologie (1920)." In this article, Brunner places four demands on theology. First, he argued, theology must abandon causality because it includes a mechanical worldview which explains religious conceptions in terms of their biological or practical worth.\(^3\)

The second demand Brunner places on theology is the abandonment of the intuitive method of empathy, which, incidentally, Brunner himself employed in Das Symbolische. He now holds that truth is not a matter of empathy, but rather an object of knowledge. In consequence of this second demand, Brunner says that theology has to cut itself loose from psychologism. What is

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\(^1\)Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 202.

\(^2\)For a discussion of the influence of Barth's commentary on Brunner's dialectical thought see Leipold, op. cit., pp. 34-36.

\(^3\)Salakka thinks this first point stems from Brunner's study in New York, where he took a seminar on the psychology of religion from G. A. Coe.
implied is an attack on the empirical method used by historical theology. The empirical method thought it could describe a doctrine of God based on psychic and subjective religious experiences. Brunner says, "Where the spirit begins, there psychology has its borders."¹ We see here that Brunner has begun his criticism of irrationalism in theology and moved towards the objectification of faith.

Brunner's final demand is that theology abandon historicism. This is particularly directed against the Religionsgeschichteschule and its immanent evolutionism. According to Brunner, this school operates under the mistaken assumption that the answer to religious questions can be excerpted from historical research.

A difference between Brunner and Barth is already evident in this nascent period of the theologians' critical thought. Barth's criticism of "modern theology" is based on the contrast between the immanence of religious experience and the absolute transcendence of God. He employs Kierkegaard's qualitative difference between God and humanity. Brunner's criticism of modern theology is based on the contrast of the spirit and the psyche. The contrast between the spiritual and the psychical does not necessarily imply a contrast between God and humanity. For Brunner, the conflict of the spirit with the experience of the soul is an epistemological conflict rather than an ontological conflict. The Kingdom of God is the realm of the spirit where clarity dominates. The same cannot be said for the realm of subjective mystical experience. The conflict is between

¹"Das Elend der Theologie," cited in Salakka, op. cit., p. 60.
logical epistemology and irrational experience. Brunner analyzes the results of this conflict in the epistemology of his dialectical period.

IV. Brunner's Dialectical Epistemology: Erkenntnis, Erlebnis und Glaube and Die Mystik und Das Wort.

Brunner wrote two major epistemological works during the so-called dialectical period of his thought. Erkenntnis, Erlebnis, und Glaube, which he called his "inauguratory thesis," is a criticism of abstract systems which endeavor to combine experience and knowledge apart from faith. Die Mystik und das Wort was an attack on liberal theology in general and the theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher in particular. The publication of these two works led to Brunner's appointment to the chair of Systematic and Practical Theology at the University of Zurich.

In these works Brunner seeks to present the "Christian faith" as an alternative to the "modern conception of religion." Unfortunately, he uses generalizations in his description of "modern theology." In his judgment, modern theology encompasses German theology from the time of Kant through Harnack. "Romanticism" refers both to a literary movement and the theology of Schleiermacher. "Idealism" refers to any thought where the thesis leads through the antithesis to the synthesis. In his criticism of idealism, Brunner particularly singles out Fichte for discussion.

1Cf. Salakka, pp. 60ff.
2Kegley, op. cit., p. 9.
3Der Gegensatz zwischen moderner Religionsauffassung und christlichem Glaube, dargestellt an der Theologie Schleiermachers. Tübingen, Mohr, 1924.
4Die Mystik, p. 391.
The publication of *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube* finalized Brunner's break with the subjective anthropological theology of *kulturprotestantismus* and announced his transition to dialectical theology. This book is dedicated to Hermann Kutter. Brunner says that it could not have been written "without the personal influence of this prophetic man."\(^1\)

The forward of the book echoes Gogarten's "Zwischen den Zeiten." Brunner demands that theology must look forward. It should not be concerned with the work of the previous century. Brunner, however, fails to heed his own call and he remains concerned with the theology of the preceding century. It his clear that he is fighting in part against his own past.\(^2\)

Brunner previously had used human religious experience as the departure point for theology. At this point in his career, he had relativized Christianity by making it the highest expression of religion. *EEG* is a protest against this theology. In his book, Brunner says that the human psyche and history belong to the sphere of relativity. In place of these concepts of relativity Brunner posits God's revelation and faith. In short, relativity does not extend to the sphere of revelation and faith.

*EEG* is divided into three major parts. The first two parts deal with "previous half-truths" and their erroneous results. Here Brunner continues the critique of modern theology he began in "Das

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\(^1\) *EEG*, p. iv.

\(^2\) For a discussion of the role of *EEG* in Brunner's thought relative to his earlier pre-dialectical period and the following dialogical period cf. Scheid, op. cit., pp. 92-102 and Leipold, op. cit., pp. 36-40.
Elend Der Theologie." In the final part Brunner describes the concept of faith.

The first half-truth identified by Brunner is religious experience or mysticism. In his view, mysticism seeks to do away with factors mediating between the human and the divine. In mysticism we find that the I-You, the subject-object relation "are all sunk in the impenetrable depths of the one in all. Personal experience is the measure. The origin of this position in Christianity has roots in the concept 'God is spirit'."¹ Mysticism holds that since God is spirit, those who worship him must do so in spirit. Knowledge of God thus rests in the believing heart. The result is that the depths of the soul are placed on a higher plane than reason. Brunner maintains that this subjectivism was continued by both the pietists and the idealists. Fichte, for example, "placed the principle of subjectivity, the I, on the highest throne."²

Brunner's objection was that religion as experience leads to psychologism, which emphasizes how a person believes. In his mind, subjective religion (which includes mysticism, pietism and romanticism) seeks two things: (a) experience of the human soul and (b) the continuity of this experience with the divine spirit. Religious psychologism leads to a conception of Jesus as a religious genius. Brunner's complaint is that it robs religion of its transcendent element. It sees the whole rising as a synthesis out of the parts. As a result, it identifies the human with the divine and forgets that the immanence of God is grounded in God's transcendence. Brunner

¹EEG, p. 9.
²Ibid, p. 16.
labels this psychologism as "superstition and magic"\(^1\) because it attempts to arrive at "God" by its own means.

For Brunner, the struggle against psychologism is a struggle against self-redemption and natural religion. Psychologism overlooks the fact that faith is an imperative. Faith does not arise out of human experience. There is a cleft between faith and human experience which can be bridged only by God's forensic act of justification. Brunner's point is that justification lies outside of the individual. It is an external act. Psychologism falsely thinks that it is immanent.

Brunner also criticizes historicism, which he calls, "the twin brother of psychologism."\(^2\) He judges that their common element is "the one-dimensional characteristic of empiricism, and with this the causal-deterministic comprehension."\(^3\) The difficulty is that historicism places the life of the spirit within historical causality. It emphasizes development and robs the spirit of its freedom. Brunner describes development as the misconception that Christian revelation is identical with historical interests. These interests do not take a correct view of sin, misinterpreting it as a turning away from historical traditions. Consequently, repentance is thus viewed as consisting in the mere return to historical traditions. Forgiveness automatically follows repentance. This means that forgiveness is a human possibility, thereby obscuring the border between humanity and God.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 57.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 105.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 105.
In response Brunner says the borders between the relative and the non-relative are not fluid; rather, they are fixed.\(^1\) "Borders are border, not bridges," insists Brunner. Borders are confused with bridges when\(^2\) the consciousness of guilt includes within itself a consciousness of forgiveness. The forgiveness of guilt and redemption are postulates of the moral demand. But this is nothing more than the recognition that forgiveness would be 'necessary' in order to live ....A postulate in any case is no reality. It is a call for help, comparable with the signal SOS sent out by sailors in distress at sea. A postulate signals the arrival at the borders of human possibilities and the impossibility of the existing man to bring himself to this dialectical position.

The second half-truth identified by Brunner is religion as knowledge, which leads to the erroneous result of intellectualism. Human understanding has a tendency to quantify knowledge. Brunner concedes that experience uses intuition to unify the subject and object of religion. Knowledge uses the understanding to separate the subject and knowledge of religion. His question is, "How does the object come to expression?" Intellectualism is unable to answer this question, as it confuses the idea of the truth with the truth itself. Brunner cautions that the idea of God is not God: "The idea of God as God, the conceptual system as the truth itself, the teaching as an object of faith, the catechism, the mechanical teachability, the being-finished (Fertigsein), the dogma - that is the necessary result of every confusion (of the ideal with the truth) and rigid formulation."\(^3\)

\(^1\) Cf. *Philosophie und Offenbarung*, (Tübingen, Mohr, 1925), p. 19.
\(^2\) *EEG*, p. 121.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 75.
The idealists are particularly guilty of this error, Brunner believes. He argues that because we are human, we cannot elevate our thought to God. Instead, we only have the idea of God. When we confuse our thoughts about God with God himself, we are guilty of what he calls "intellectualism."

Such half-truths of experience and knowledge assume an epistemological continuity between God and humanity. Brunner discusses the alternative to these half-truths, faith, in the third part of the book. He describes faith as pure objectivity (reine Sachlichkeit), criticizing Ritschl for identifying faith and trust. Trust, according to Brunner, is a human achievement. It is something individuals add to God.

Describing faith Brunner writes, "Either faith is understood as the one and only relation to God, that is, one by all means postulates God, or else there is no faith...Faith is knowledge of God. The only proof of God is faith, the reference to God himself."¹ In Brunner's view, faith is oriented towards God. The emphasis is on hearing God speak and understanding what God means. "Faith means hearing, but truly hearing, what God says; understanding, but truly understanding what God means."²

The origin of faith does not lie in human experience, which, according to Brunner, is too subjective. Faith comes from the other side (Jenseits). Indeed, there is a gap between this side and the other side. This gap cannot be bridged by human experience. The gap is bridged by faith. Faith means that God bridges the gap and

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¹bid., p. 90.
²bid., p. 96.
This is not a human process. It does not ask how God does this. Instead, it merely says "Yes" or "No."

Brunner concludes EEG with an indictment of modern theology. "Psychologism and intellectualism, mysticism and gnosis, pietism and orthodoxy... are the attempts to go from man to God, to lay a bridge from humanity to the eternal, to secure a share for humanity in the work of redemption." Modern theology, he contends, is guilty of two errors: he insists it humanizes God and divinizes humanity.

According to Brunner, there is no possibility of a union between the philosophy of immanence and the Christianity of the Bible. He criticizes Schleiermacher for attempting such a union. Four aspects of Schleiermacher's thought are singled out for criticism by Brunner in Die Mystik. Interestingly enough, Brunner himself held each of these positions in Das Symbolische. The first is Schleiermacher's emphasis on the emotional aspect of religion. That is to say, he located religion in the feeling. This is evident from his description in paragraph three of The Christian Faith: "The piety which forms the basis of all ecclesiastical communions is considered purely in itself, neither a Knowing nor a Doing, but a modification of Feeling, of immediate self-consciousness." Brunner holds that Schleiermacher emphasized the form of religion (feeling) at the expense of the content of religion (specific doctrines).

Second, Schleiermacher did not distinguish between the finite and the infinite, between the temporal and the eternal. He places the eternal within finite individuals. Characteristically in his Romantic

1ibid., p. 129.
religion, the boundary between humanity and God is fluid and transparent. According to Brunner, Romantic religion arises when

An appearance, an occurrence develops itself quickly, and magically into a picture of the Universe. This is how the beloved and sought after form fashions itself. My soul flees to it in response. I embrace it not as a shadow, but as the holy essence (Wesen) itself. I lay at the breast of the infinite world. I am in this moment its soul because I feel all its power and unending life as my own. It is in this moment my body, because I penetrate its muscles and members as my own. Its innermost nerves move themselves according to my mind (Sinn) and my presentiment as if they were my own.

Brunner's remarks represent a blanket indictment of Schleiermacher's Speeches.

Brunner's third criticism is that Schleiermacher used idealistic philosophy to explicate his position. Brunner explains that in the Speeches we find "the idea that in the feeling the All comes to the experience of the I." Schleiermacher distinguished between sensation (Empfindung) and feeling (Gefühl), "but only in that in the feeling nothing individual affects us, but rather, the Universal (affects us)." On this basis, Brunner defines Schleiermacher as a mystic and describes the The Christian Faith as "mangled philosophy of the Ego" (verstummelte Ichphilosophie). Brunner's complaint is that Schleiermacher gave precedence to philosophy over theology and, as a result, he undervalued the role of faith in Christian theology.

1MyW, p. 54.
2Ibid., p. 54.
3Ibid., p. 65.
4Ibid., p. 72.
Brunner's final charge concerns Schleiermacher's Christology and soteriology. Brunner thinks Schleiermacher's Christology described the rise of a historical current rather than the incarnation of the Word. Paragraph 94 of *The Christian Faith* says,\(^1\)

Jesus was the ideal, that is, the ideal became completely historical in Him. Each historical moment of his experience carried the ideal. The Redeemer is like all other men in virtue of the identity of human nature, but distinguished from them all by the constant potency of his God-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of God in him.

Brunner claims that Schleiermacher's soteriology was exemplarist. In paragraph 88 of *The Christian Faith*, Schleiermacher wrote, "In this corporate life which goes back to the influence of Jesus, redemption is effected by Him through the communication of His sinless perfection." Brunner explains, "The scheme, under which Christ is here introduced, is that of the historical power, the vital force, or, in Schleiermacher's own words, of the impulses."\(^2\)

In Schleiermacher's thought Jesus was not a unique mediator between man and God. Schleiermacher argued only that Jesus had a clearer intuition of the infinite than we do. This permits him to be a mediator between God and ourselves. However, should we obtain a clearer intuition of the infinite, we would cease to be in need of a mediator. There is a direct pathway between man and God. Finite man needs only to see this path clearly in order to taste the infinite.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 209.
Brunner's contrast is between Romantic religion and the Word. He poses the choice: either mysticism or the Word. We must choose between the experience of mysticism and the Word described in the Bible (John 1. 1ff). Brunner identifies God's word as appellative: God speaks, man hears. An individual can put distance between himself and an idea, but the Word is a direct address: "God speaks, the individual hears, hears as the accused hears the speech of the judge who decides between life and death."¹

When we hear God speak we recognize that we are addressed from a point outside of ourselves. This speech does not originate in human experience or understanding. "Our I is grounded in the divine saying of Thou. It is an answer to this call. You are an individual as the person who is addressed, as the second person."²

At this stage, Brunner does not work out fully the Christological and soteriological implications of his critique of Schleiermacher. This task is left to The Mediator. In fact, in his epistemological critique of Schleiermacher, Brunner does not distinguish between Schleiermacher's thought in the Speeches (1799) and the final edition of The Christian Faith (1832). As a result, Brunner's criticism of the pantheistic elements of Romantic religion found in the Speeches is often carried over to his remarks on The Christian Faith.

Barth levels three criticisms of his own against Brunner's "Schleiermacherbuch." First, he bemoans Brunner's lack of a "positive contribution."³ Barth thinks the book is too polemical. It

¹Ibid., p. 102.
²Ibid., p. 97.
³Zwischen den Zeiten 8, p. 51.
was not written to describe Schleiermacher, but to fight against him. According to Barth, Brunner should have analyzed Schleiermacher's historical interest, rather than treated Schleiermacher as a contemporary.¹

Barth's second criticism concerns Brunner's use of the term "mystik." Barth says this term is simplistic and perhaps wrong. It overlooks Schleiermacher's apologetic purpose (cf. the first Speech). Barth thinks the term Kulturreligion is perhaps a better description.

Barth's final criticism concerns Brunner's use of Luther. Throughout Die Mystik und das Wort Brunner presents Luther's thought as a contrast to Schleiermacher's. Barth questions whether Luther is the best judge of the "modern catastrophe."² A more forceful objection, according to Barth, is Schleiermacher's lack of a doctrine of eschatology. Barth apparently had a greater appreciation for the contribution of Schleiermacher to theology than did Brunner. In the Vorrede to his lectures on Schleiermacher, Barth writes, "Wenn wir Schleiermacher kennen lernen, so lernen wir uns selbst kennen, die prinzipiellen Züge unserer heutigen theologischen Lage."³

V. Conclusion
1. An Interpretation of Brunner's Dialectical Epistemology.

The treatment given by commentators to Brunner's transition from Kulturprotestantismus to dialectical theology can be questioned

²Ibid., p. 59.
at a number of points. For example, Scheld uses EEG and Die Mystik und Das Wort as a bridge for his discussion of Brunner's pre-dialectical and dialectical Christologies.\(^1\) Roessler, whose excellent treatment concentrates on Brunner's eristic-dogmatic period, apparently assumes that Brunner's dialectical theology only furnishes background material for an understanding of his later writings. Leipold's book is more far-reaching, but his main concern is with Brunner's controversy with Karl Barth.

Salakka carries out a comprehensive discussion of this transition in Brunner's thought, concentrating on Brunner's use of the concepts the "spirit" (Geist) and the "spiritual" (geistige) to explain the transition.\(^2\) In Das Symbolische, Brunner wrote that the human spirit takes part in the divine spiritual personality. Evidently, Brunner did not clearly distinguish between the human and the divine spirit.

It needs to be pointed out that the term "spirit" has a two-fold significance in Brunner's dialectical epistemology. "Spirit" refers to both the individual, thinking spirit and to the universal, cosmic spirit. The spirit is included in the intellect and thought of the subject and this makes knowledge possible. When Brunner speaks of the "thinking spirit" he refers to the individual knowing subject. The universal spirit, or the Logos, is the background of concrete reality.

The two-fold aspect of the spirit in Brunner's thought is evident in his use of the concept "origin" (Ursprung). It refers to the transcendental origin and being of thought. This origin performs two tasks. It is the ground and goal of knowledge. As such, it also

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\(^1\)Scheld, op. cit., pp. 93-102.  
defines the limits of philosophy. Brunner argues that the task of philosophy is not to construct speculative systems. Such is the error of intellectualism. Philosophy, in his judgment, does not extend beyond the sphere of relative human knowledge.

Brunner uses the concept of "origin" as a critical principle in his theology to show the possibility and limit of human thought. Once again, this reference emphasizes the transcendent basis of religious knowledge. He combines the idea of the origin with that of the spirit in his struggle against a subjective, psychological conception of religion.1 Brunner also contrasts the spirit to the soul. In his view, the soul is the center of religion as experience. According to this presentation, the experience of the soul is an immanent event identical with the processes of nature. The spirit, on the other hand, is teleological.

The individual and universal spirit are indissolubly bound together in Brunner's epistemology, yet they are not identified. Salakka thinks the relation between the individual spirit, or the spiritual person, and the super-individual, transcendent spirit is the most difficult issue in Brunner's epistemology.2 Brunner resolves this problem when he says that the idea of the origin does not operate immanently, but is grounded transcendently. This solution, we will argue, appears unsatisfactory.

A solution is perhaps to be found in Brunner's use of the "spiritual I." Brunner retains his pre-dialectical idea of a super-individual spiritual "I." This "I" is both a subject and an object. It is not the

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1 Cf. FEG, pp. 58, 102.
2 Salakka, op. cit., p. 71.
all-encompassing "I" of idealism nor is it to be confused with Bergson's "I-consciousness." Here, in the dialectical period of Brunner's thought, the universal "I" addresses the individual "I" as a willful "Thou." Because of its transcendental ground, the universal "I" encounters the individual spirit as an ethical idea. There exists two "I"s - the temporal and the infinite and between the two is an ethical border.

Human beings are conscious of this border, which results in the ethical conflict of the "I". In Das Symbolische ethical consciousness was a "point of contact" between the universal and individual spirit. Here, during his dialectical period, ethical consciousness is a demand addressed to individuals from an exterior point. This demand constitutes human personality. Brunner explains, "Person sind wir erst durch den sittlichen Anspruch." Ethical consciousness is now a point of separation between God and man. We no longer partake in the divine spiritual personality.

The primary reason for the separation of the human and divine spirits is human sin. In his lecture "Die Grenzen der Humanität" (1921) Brunner introduced the theme of "the crisis of humanity." He argues that the crisis of human existence consists in the recognition that our relationship to the Absolute is grounded outside of ourselves. From this crisis of existence, Brunner deduces human responsibility and guilt. He finds that responsibility has a double significance. Subjectively, we are conscious of it; objectively we

1Die Mystik, p. 159.
2Die Grenzen, Habilitationsvorlesung an der Universität Zürich, Sammlung gemeinverständlich Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiete der Theologie und Religionsgeschichte, Tübingen, Mohr, 1922, s. 12.
recognize our responsibility as guilt. During this stage of his thought, Brunner does not regard responsibility existentially nor does he fully incorporate the ideas of responsibility and guilt into his understanding of human personality. Instead, he is more concerned with the theoretical aspect of responsibility.\(^1\)

As persons we are addressed by the law. The law is neither impersonal nor a timeless ideal. Rather, it is the personal address of God. God is both the norm and the law.\(^2\) Since we are unable to fulfill the law and properly respond to Him, we come into conflict with the law (MyW 223). Guilt follows as a result of our failure. This failure proves human relativity and hence there is no epistemological continuity between man and God.

Brunner believes that human relativity belies the efficacy of human reason for obtaining religious knowledge. This relativity is indicative of an epistemological void between God and man. This void cannot be filled by human endeavors. It can only be filled by God's special revelation.

Salakka finds Brunner's thought at this stage to be still Kantian.\(^3\) This is, perhaps, because of Brunner's use of Kant's ideas of the categorical imperative and radical evil. Brunner holds that man is free because he stands outside of nature. Responsibility lies outside of law of causality. Yet Brunner does not distinguish between theoretical and practical reason, but emphasizes the connection between the two.

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\(^1\) Cf. Brunner, "Gesetz und Offenbarung," Theologische Blätter, 4, 1925, nr. 3.

\(^2\) Cf Die Mystik, p 245.

\(^3\) Salakka, op. cit., p. 86.
While Salakka offers a penetrating analysis of Brunner's theology, he does not go far enough in differentiating the first two periods of Brunner's thought. Our criticism is that we are left with the impression that Salakka thinks Brunner's thought merely evolved from the cultural optimism of his pre-dialectical period to the critical polemic of his dialectical period.

2. The significance of Brunner's Dialectical Epistemology.

Brunner's dialectical theology must be seen as a part of the larger movement which sought the re-orientation of theology from an anthropological to a transcendental basis. The calamity of the First World War and Karl Barth's Römerbrief were both catalysts in Brunner's transition from Kulturprotestantismus to dialectical theology.

After the First World War, Brunner saw that it was impossible to maintain that human culture could be identified with God's revelation. Instead of occupying a continuous plane, the divine and human elements of religious epistemology had to be separated. In this regard, the influence of the Marburg school of neo-Kantianism was of decisive importance for Brunner's theology. This school of thought stressed the importance of the objective element over the subjective element in religious epistemology, thereby emphasizing God's transcendence rather than his immanence. The emphasis on the objective element necessiated a new description of the relationship between God and man. Brunner found this description in Ebner's and Buber's philosophy of dialogue.

Brunner's pre-dialectical epistemology was heavily dependent on the thought of Schleiermacher and Bergson. In Das Symbolische,
Brunner maintained that human experience was the source of our religious knowledge. He identified revelation with human reason and his emphasis was on the religious subject. We, as subjects, receive our religious knowledge by means of intuition. This reliance on experience and intuition stressed the immanent aspect of religion. God can be immediately known by a human subject who is able to perceive the infinite in the finite. A religion of immanence proceeds from an temporal subject to an eternal object. Brunner's criticism now is that this ascent of human knowledge places God and man on a horizontal epistemological plane.

In *EFG* and *Die Mystik und Das Wort* Brunner repudiates this reliance on intuition and immanence. Instead, he maintains that special revelation is our source of human knowledge. Our knowledge of God has a transcendent basis. This means that we are unable to perceive the infinite within the finite world. Knowledge of God must be mediated; it descends from the eternal to the temporal sphere. We, as knowing subjects, are not an a horizontal epistemological plane with God.

Brunner's dialectical epistemology is essential for an understanding of his Christological and soteriological positions in *The Mediator*. Unfortunately, he has not give a very complete account of his understanding of special revelation. This task is left to the first part of *The Mediator*. We are, however, able to properly construe what Brunner intends by his use of faith as his primary epistemological category.

3. The Epistemological Category: Faith as *Fides*. 

We need to distinguish two definitions for faith: *fiducia* (which is a trusting, confident attitude towards God) and *fides* (which refers to perceptual awareness).¹ In *EEG*, Brunner described faith as the relation to God and knowledge of Him.² As we shall see below, the definition of faith as *fides* is the best characterization of Brunner's primary epistemological category during his dialectical period.

Brunner's use of the concept of faith follows the example of both the medieval Roman Catholic Church and John Calvin. In the middle ages, Aquinas gave the classic Catholic definition of faith. For Aquinas, faith is belief in revealed truth. The human mind is unable to know God in his simplicity. He can only be known discursively and by means of propositions. These truths are presented in the creeds. Faith is an act of intellectual assent to divine truth. The will which assents is moved by the grace of God. This assent, however, remains an act of choice.

This concept is also found in the definition which comes from the First Vatican Council (1870). Chapter 3 of the "Constitution on Faith" defines faith as "a supernatural virtue, by which, guided and aided by divine grace, we hold as true what God has revealed, not because we have perceived its intrinsic truth by our reason but because of the authority of God who can neither deceive nor be deceived."³

Both views of faith, *fiducia* and *fides*, are found in the writings of the Reformers. Luther's main emphasis was on faith as a total reliance upon God's omnipotent goodness. For Luther, faith was an

¹The following discussion comes from Hick's article "Faith" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
²*EEG*, p. 90.
³Cited by Hick, op. cit.
attitude of trust and self-commitment. Faith is not "belief that" but rather "belief in." Calvin gave greater prominence to the cognitive aspect of faith. For Calvin, faith responds to the Bible as the inspired Word of God. There is thus a permanent relationship between faith and the Word.

During the dialectical period of his thought, Brunner follows Calvin's utilization of the concept of faith more closely than that of Luther. Calvin connects faith, which rests on God's Word, to knowledge of the divine will. In order to obtain true knowledge of Christ, we must receive him as he is offered by God. For Calvin, faith implies certainty. The individual stands in God's sight and makes God's promises true "by inwardly embracing them."¹ Calvin's view of faith places the initiative on God.

The concept of fides is reflected in the voluntarist theory of faith. F. R. Tennant provides one of the best-known examples of this theory. He connects the ideas of faith and belief, which he says are both necessary for epistemology.² In Tennant's view, "the objective situation" suggests possibilities. The subjective attitude of the individual knower interprets these possibilities. In this regard, fiducia presupposes fides. It presupposes belief in an object which is already established.

Brunner's preference for *fides* is shown by his insistence on the "pure objectivity of faith" (*reine Sachlichkeit*). By granting ontological status to the Word, Brunner emphasizes its objective character which comes to man from the other side. The Word is therefore transcendent. Brunner also finds that faith is transcendent - it has no anthropological significance. Faith has nothing whatsoever to do with human experience or human knowledge. Instead, it is concerned with wonder and revelation.\(^1\)

In "Gnosis and Glaube" Brunner writes that faith can only believe revelation and only revelation can be believed. God is the source of knowledge who brings salvific truth.\(^2\) Brunner describes faith as paradoxical and dialectical. It is paradoxical according to its content - a contradiction of human knowledge. An example is the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, which implies discontinuity between God and humanity. Faith is dialectical according to its form - sin is imbedded so deeply in humanity that we cannot exercise our reason without at the same time displaying the effects of sin. From the presence of human sin we see that justification is from God.\(^3\)

Brunner insists that theology must express the *content* of revelation. Revelation tells us that there is a cleft between ourselves and God. *Gnosis* is a human attempt to seek immediacy with God by bridging this cleft with knowledge (*Erkenntnis*). Knowledge stands in opposition to faith, which says that God does not reveal Himself in the Ideal, but in the Word. Faith is obedience to the Word. The

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\(^1\)Leipold points out that Brunner's use of faith as *fides* during his dialectical period is dependent on Barth. Cf p. 64.

\(^2\)In *Philosophie und Offenbarung* (Tübingen, Mohr, 1925), pp. 30-33.

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 34-36.
obedience of faith requires that man give up the idea that he is a partner with God.¹

In "Offenbarung als Grund und Gegenstand der Theologie" Brunner insists that Christian faith rests on revelation. Revelation indicates that there is a cleft between being (Sein) and obligation (Sollen). There is thus no way for humanity to reach God. Faith is not a human act; it is a divine act which by definition occurs only once.² Or, as Brunner contends, "There is no point where the temporal flows into the eternal."³

Brunner's definition of faith shows how he views the discontinuity between God and humanity:⁴

Faith is first a complete break with the unmediated. It also is a break with continuity and immanence, and therefore also with pantheism. In faith man steps out of his own, out of the circle of immanent possibilities. It is in faith where he denies his own autonomy, where he no longer has the "ground," where he no longer stands on the ground. Faith is where man hangs, where he himself has nothing, where everything is taken out of his hand. Faith is where man does not accept, but is accepted. Faith is where man no longer measures and verifies his own worth, but lays everything aside and only hears and obeys. Here can man know the Other as he is.

Brunner's Religionsphilosophie Evangelischer Theologie also demonstrates his preference for an understanding of faith as fides. Brunner writes, "The place of theology is the Church, as its ground

¹Ibid., pp. 37-52.
²Antrittsrede an der Universität Zürich, 17. Januar 1925 in Philosophie und Offenbarung, pp. 11-19.
⁴Ibid., pp. 20-21.
and content is the revelation of scripture."\(^1\) Revelation is the departure point for theology. What the Christian understands as revelation, "can only be made clear when it is understood in connection with its content."\(^2\) The Christian faith comprises the knowledge and recognition of the divine self-enclosure (Selbsterschließung) in Jesus Christ. "This, the becoming human of the Logos, is the ground, content and norm of all expressions of Faith."\(^3\)

In *EEG* Brunner specifically criticized Ritschl for holding to the definition of faith as *fiducia*. In *Die Mystik* Brunner defines faith as claiming God's communication to be true. Furthermore, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, he identifies faith with the content of revelation as found in Scripture. These three factors indicate that Brunner prefers the definition of faith as *fides* during his dialectical period. This understanding of faith shows the epistemological discontinuity between God and man and places the epistemological initiative on the side of God. These two epistemological principles, the discontinuity between God and man and the transcendent initiative, are re-enforced by the importance Brunner places on a metaphysical interpretation of the person of Christ in *The Mediator* and the soteriology he deduces from that Christology.

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\(^1\) *Religionsphilosophie*, p. 6.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 7.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 8.
Chapter Three: Brunner's Dialectical Soteriology: *The Mediator.*

Partially as a result of the influence of Natorp, Brunner's epistemology during this period of his career posits the superiority of the object of religion over the religious subject. As we saw in the previous chapter, Brunner claims that human experience does not provide knowledge of the religious object. We are able to obtain this knowledge only by means of special revelation. Unfortunately, in *The Mediator,* Brunner does not make a positive contribution to the discussion on special revelation, concentrating instead on the shortcomings of his theological predecessors.

*The Mediator,* perhaps the best known work of Brunner's dialectical period, grew out of the conflict with what he calls "modern theology." In his criticism of modern theology, Brunner singles out Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Harnack for consideration, and these three theologians present a united front against which he struggles. The book is divided into three sections or Books. Book One, "Preliminary Considerations," echoes many of the same concerns Brunner wrote about in *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube* and *Die Mystik und Das Wort.* This section, emphasizing the epistemological distance between God and man, contains Brunner's doctrine of special revelation. He works out the Christological consequences of this epistemology in Book Two, "The Person of Christ," where he accepts the two-natures doctrine of Christ's person as articulated at Chalcedon. Brunner applies this epistemology to soteriology in the final part of *The Mediator,* "The Work of Christ," which reflects Anselm's theory of the atonement.
I. Preliminary Considerations.

1. Special Revelation as the Source of Religious Knowledge.

Brunner seeks to identify a source of religious knowledge which both maintains the discontinuity between God and humanity and places the epistemological initiative on the side of God. This source of religious knowledge is special revelation. Given the repetitive nature of Brunner's criticism of modern theology, our purpose is perhaps best served by concentrating on his remarks concerning special revelation rather than on his views about the theology of Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Harnack. However, since his discussion of special revelation is interwoven with his criticism of modern theology, some overlap appears inevitable.

Beginning with the "preliminary considerations" of modern theology, Brunner lists five presuppositions of this theology with which he takes issue: the autonomy of man against God; the lack of a distinction between general and special revelation; the assumption of the continuity between man and God; the relativizing of the radicalness of evil; and the dissolution of Christian faith by historical research. Brunner's critique of the presuppositions of modern theology contain an implicit repudiation of many of his positions in Das Symbolische.

Since one of the characteristics of the Enlightenment was the doctrine of the autonomy of man, it had no need of a doctrine of special revelation. Brunner judges that modern theology adopted this characteristic of Enlightenment thought. In consequence, "Theology has established a connection with the convictions of the European educated man - in so far as he is not without religion at all
- and the effort is being made to regard theology as one branch of
general religious science and thus of general intellectual culture."¹ In
Brunner's mind, we are faced with a choice: either we opt for belief
in universal religion and general revelation, or we adopt the
Christian faith with its belief in the Mediator.

The question is whether God reveals himself directly to the
human soul or reveals Himself through the Mediator.²

When the mystic, the idealist, or the neo-Platonist speaks
of revelation he means that the contact between the Divine
and the soul of man, that union between the infinite and
the finite, between the Creator and the creature in the
highest act of knowledge, in contemplation, intuition, in
mystical experience, which by its very nature can take
place anywhere and at any time; a 'revelation' which, so
far as it does take place, is independent of all the 'accidents
of history'.

In fact, Brunner has just described general revelation, which
offers immediate knowledge of God divorced from a concrete
historical act. He places "Christian revelation" in opposition to the
immediate knowledge of God. Christian revelation is not based on a
series of repeated events which are available to everyone. By its
very nature, Christian or special revelation must occur only once -
the Incarnation of the Divine Word. The Incarnation unites man and
God and yet maintains the absolute distinction between them. It is
not mediated through nature or history.

With its emphasis on immediate, intuitive knowledge of God,
modern theology obliterated the distinction between general and

¹The Mediator, A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith,
²Ibid., p. 29.
special revelation. Brunner separates the two types of revelation and maintains that the relation between them is not complementary. In his view, modern theology (rationalism and idealism) opposes special revelation either directly or indirectly. Rationalists directly oppose special revelation by rejecting the claim that reason can be limited, even if this limit is God's self-communication. The idealists indirectly oppose special revelation. When they speak of Christ and the atonement, they do not consider the personal reality of Jesus Christ. Instead, they speak of the "idea" of Christ which can be detached from the historical life of Jesus.

According to Brunner, the two principles of modern theology which led to the preference for general revelation are the assumption of continuity between humanity and God and the development of humanity. The assumption of continuity is characterized by three anthropological approaches to God: intellectualism (which uses human reason to explain the world), the meditative abstraction of mysticism (which uses the sensual, particularly human feeling [Gefühl] in its attempt to reach God) and the exercise of the moral will (whereby the individual believes that he takes part in the idea of the Good).

Since, as modern theologians maintain, man is basically one with God - the principle of the continuity between the human and the divine - it follows that humanity is progressing inexorably towards the Kingdom of God. This progress assumes the development of humanity. As a result of this assumption, modern theology generally avoids dealing with the problem of evil by maintaining that it is only an apparent contradiction between man and God. Brunner cites Kant
as one of the few prominent thinkers of the previous century to recognize that evil is the opposition of the human will to the law of God.

Brunner contends that modern theology has either relativized or neglected the doctrine of sin. He offers Schelling's treatise *On Human Freedom* as an illustration of the problem of evil as treated by early nineteenth-century thought in general and idealism in particular. Schelling defines evil as

"nothing other than the primal basis of existence insofar as it strives towards actualization in created beings, and thus it is in fact only the higher potency of the basis operating in nature. But just as this is eternally only the basis, without itself being, so evil can never attain realization and only serves as basis, in order that the good may develop from it, by its own power, and may through its basis be independent of and separate from God."

In Brunner's view, a rediscovery of the meaning of the Fall would serve as a better explanation of the sinful condition of humanity.

Two points show the connection of the doctrine of special revelation with that of sin in Brunner's theology. First, he insists that knowledge of sin is obtained only by knowledge of the Mediator; it is not obtained by knowledge of the world. Second, since revelation *precedes* repentance, it follows that the revelation brought by the Mediator is unique. Without this revelation, we, as humans, do not have a proper understanding of sin which spurs us to repentance.

Brunner's final criticism is that modern theology has confused history and revelation by making them coterminous. While God's

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1Ibid., p. 55.
self-communication took place within history, the disastrous aftermath of the First World War belies the contention that history is the medium of God's self-communication. Instead, Brunner insists that history itself stands in need of redemption. Hence, the Incarnation cannot be an historical process; rather, it represents an actual, sensible state of the presence of God:

Incarnation means entering into the realm of visible fact, being the object of police reports, a subject for the photographe, for the commonplace journalist, and other things of that kind. It is a state in which an individual can be touched, handled, or photographed; it is an isolated fact within time and space, the filling of a certain point within time and space which apart from this fact would have remained empty, and which can be filled in with this fact alone: all this belongs to the actuality of the Incarnation of the Word. In this sense the 'Theology of Facts' cannot be interpreted too literally. For 'flesh' means the brutal solidarity of the facts of sensible existence.

In other words, faith is independent from history: the "fact" of Jesus Christ is truly historical and yet it transcends history. He can be known either "in the flesh" or "after the flesh." History, claiming that the teaching of Jesus was admissible for the time during which he lived (but it is not necessarily valid for the time after his crucifixion and resurrection), can only know Christ after the flesh.

Brunner avoids placing the New Testament statements of faith within the historical continuum, an error made by both Ritschl and the religionsgeschichte school. By their claim that the origin of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord (kyrios) was due to Hellenistic influence on the development of Christian dogma, the modern theologians sought

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to separate Christological doctrine from the New Testament. They thus maintained that they had a clearer grasp of Christology than did the earlier witnesses of the New Testament.

Brunner questions this working premise of Ritschl and his disciples, insisting that Christological doctrine must conform to the New Testament, and wants to know why John and Paul are not reliable Christological witnesses. He claims, perhaps naively, that there are no Christological fissures between the teaching of John and Paul. While he admits that the Gospel of John places greater emphasis on the deity of Christ than do the letters of Paul, Paul leaves no doubt as to the "otherness" of Jesus (cf. Phil. 2. 6-11). In Brunner's view, Jesus is different in kind from the rest of humanity, not merely different in degree. He maintains that form criticism has shown that the Christology of Paul was a tradition common to the early churches and thus provided the basis for the Nicene Christology.

2. Brunner's Criticism of the doctrines of the Person and Work of Christ as Held by Kulturprotestantismus.

In E.E.G and M.y.W Brunner criticized the epistemological suppositions of Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Harnack. He now turns to the Christological and soteriological conclusions drawn by these theologians. The obliteraton of the distinction between general and special revelation influenced the doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ in modern theology. In Brunner's opinion, this theology did not adequately distinguish between Christianity and religion in general, regarding Jesus as the founder of a new religion who never transcended the boundary of humanity. In consequence, the
Incarnation was viewed as another chapter of human history and Jesus as a religious hero who provided ethical and religious stimuli for individuals to observe and emulate.

Despite Schleiermacher's overt hostility to the Enlightenment, Brunner contends that he had a great deal of affinity with it by maintaining the unity of religions. In his *Speeches*, Schleiermacher belies the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ by denying the uniqueness of the mediatorship of Jesus: "Yet He (Jesus) never maintained He was the only mediator, the only one in whom His idea actualized itself. All who attach themselves to Him and form His Church should also be mediators with Him and through Him."¹ This prompted Brunner to comment, "Essentially (for Schleiermacher) Jesus represents not the Mediator, but the idea of mediation."²

In Brunner's view, Schleiermacher exemplifies idealist Christology. Such a Christology claims that the more creative mind stimulates the less original mind. In religion, the less "skilled" - those lacking a fully developed God-consciousness or a feeling of absolute dependence - are stimulated by Jesus. Salvation thus consists in absorbing the God-consciousness of Jesus. Schleiermacher's failure lies in his insistence on regarding Jesus, the archetypal religious man, as a *subject* of religion.

Brunner regards Ritschl's *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* as "the second milestone in the theological history of the last century" after Schleiermacher's *Speeches*. Although Ritschl condemned Schleiermacher's idea of a universal religion,

¹Schleiermacher, *Speeches*, p. 248.
²*The Mediator*, p. 50.
Brunner accuses Ritschl of holding to the same position. As did Schleiermacher, Ritschl failed to maintain adequately the distinction between religion without a mediator and the Christian faith in the Mediator. In consequence, "The Ritschlian theology is a Rationalistic system clad in scriptural garments."¹ When Ritschl protested against the intrusion of metaphysics into theology, he was thinking of the ontological speculation of the Hegelians and he forgot that there is also an ethical metaphysic. Brunner terms this metaphysic "ethical rationalism," representing, in the Kantian sense, "the introduction of the a priori, valid in itself, into the Kingdom of God."²

Ritschl regarded Jesus as the bearer of a moral and religious ideal. Brunner criticizes this Christology because it used the term "royal prophet" to describe the work of Christ "and entirely ignored that of the priestly Mediator."³ According to Ritschl, Jesus was the first to make the idea of mediation valid within history. The community founded by Jesus became the depository of his redemptive activity. Consequently, according to Brunner, the predicate of deity, properly belonging to Jesus, was "transferred directly to the community."⁴

The doctrine of reconciliation which follows "is here a purely subjective process, based indeed upon the intellectual conviction that the wrong idea of God as judge has been removed, and its place has been filled by the right idea that God is 'Love'."⁵ Reconciliation is the

¹Ibid., p. 57.
²Ibid., p. 59.
³Ibid., p. 97.
⁴Ibid., p. 61.
⁵Ibid., p. 62.
process of overcoming disharmony in the Kingdom. The individuals in the community further the cause of the Kingdom by conforming to the ethical ideal. According to Brunner, such a view of reconciliation identifies salvation with human achievement. This process, in his words, reduces Christ to "primus inter pares."\(^1\)

Brunner's criticism of Harnack is essentially the same as his criticism of Ritschl. According to Brunner, What is Christianity? is another example of ethical religious rationalism, portraying Christian faith apart from Christology. This book, Brunner continues, is similar to the thought of two other leading proponents of the Religionsgeschichteschule, Otto and Troeltsch, in that it recognizes general religion and general revelation as the only form of religion.

Liberal theology, in Brunner's view, presents Jesus as "the universal principal of human and ethical religion (which) has taken shape in its most perfect, sublime and historical form; it thus becomes finally manifest to us, and at the same time strengthens our own religious life."\(^2\) Both the Christology and soteriology of modern theology emphasized the continuity between God and humanity. The idea of continuity is based, in part, on Kant's categorical imperative which states that if we ought to do something, we have the ability to do it. On the basis of Kant's thought, liberal theology contended that we have the ability to be the kind of persons we ought to be - the kind of person exemplified by Jesus.

Brunner describes the categorical imperative as the intensification of the human tendencies innate in each of us. The distinction

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 66.  
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 100.
between this type of Christology and soteriology and the type Brunner calls "Reformation" or "biblical" lies in the distinction between general and special revelation. General revelation emphasizes the continuity between God and humanity and uses intuition as its basic epistemological category. Special revelation, on the other hand, emphasizes the discontinuity between God and humanity and uses faith as its basic epistemological category.

Brunner has a dual intent in the "Preliminary Considerations" of The Mediator. He wants, first of all, to show the deficiency of the doctrine of general revelation as held by modern theology. Second, he presents the doctrine of special revelation as an alternative. Special revelation maintains the superiority of the transcendent element over the temporal element in religious knowledge. Knowledge about God is not immanent within the individual; it must come from the other side.

II. The Person of the Mediator.

As we shall see, Brunner's discussion of the person and work of Jesus Christ is entirely consistent with the epistemological principles he laid down in E.E.G. MyW and Book I of The Mediator. He works deductively in arriving at his doctrine of the work of Christ by establishing a Christology before moving on to a discussion of soteriology. His remarks on the Person of Christ are divided into two parts: the deity of the Mediator and the humanity of the Son of God.

1. The Deity of the Word.

In his consideration of the deity of the Word, Brunner intends to clarify the relation between Jesus Christ and God the Father. The
importance he attaches to the transcendent element in his Christological discussion is shown by the fact that he discusses the deity of the Mediator before he discusses the humanity of Jesus Christ. This transcendent emphasis was entirely lacking in Das Symbolische, where the humanity of Jesus was the only aspect of Christ's person noted by Brunner.

In his treatment of the deity of Christ, Brunner relies partially on the concept of the Logos as found both in Greek philosophy of religion and Old Testament theology. The Gospel of John's ascription of Christological significance to the Word led naturally to the recognition of the influence Greek Logos speculation exercised on early Christian theology. In Greek thought, the Logos was the basic principle of reason and thought. However, it lacked the personal element - there was no concept of the "Thou" in Greek Logos speculation. It was the contribution of the Gospel to bind the cosmological and mythological Logos to a historical person.

According to Brunner, the Logos of the Old Testament is God's creative, addressive Word; it is not the intellectual intuitive self-movement of man. This Word, which comes to man from God, was mediated by the Old Testament prophets. In contrast to these prophets, Jesus was not an instrument of the Word. He is the Word. The prophets say, "Thus says the Lord;" Jesus says, "But I say to you." Jesus is more than a prophet imparting information because in his person, God is immediately present. Jesus does not tell us what every human being can know: he imparts himself as truth. We can "believe" in Jesus.
Brunner's use of the *Logos* concept is significant for several reasons. He introduces the "I-Thou" principle of Ebner's philosophy of dialogue into the Christological debate by employing this principle to highlight the divine aspect of Christ's person. Further, he shows that he no longer follows the theological lead of Ritschl in his discussion of the person and work of Christ. According to Brunner, the Mediator is divine because He is the *Logos*. As he sees it, the true meaning of the *Logos* is given only in orthodox Christianity.

(i) The Divine Nature of Jesus Christ.

Brunner's consideration of the divine nature of Jesus Christ is based on the creeds of the fourth- and fifth-centuries. The Nicene Creed, seeking to define the relation between the Father and the Son, stated that Jesus Christ was true God and true man. The Chalcedonian Creed, in its explanation of the relation of Jesus' humanity and deity, maintained that the human and divine elements in His person are neither mixed nor separate.

According to Brunner, the divine nature of Christ does not refer to something natural or physical, but to the quality of His being. Jesus must stand both on the side of man and on the side of God if He truly is the Mediator. The divine nature is itself revelation: the disclosure of the divine secret, the manner in which God makes known his intentions towards us. Brunner explains,¹

> The Word of God comes to us from the further side, from beyond the border-line which separates God and man; it is God's own word about Himself, His secret, based on the fact that He alone is God; it is something in which the world, man, and the human reason have no part, that which is

¹Ibid., 238.
reserved for God himself, that which separates Him, the Creator, from His creature.

We must take note of the fact that during this dialectical period of his thought, Brunner describes the relationship between the human and the divine in the person of Christ asymmetrically. He places the collective reality and significance of the person of Jesus Christ on the side of His divinity. The true essence (Wesen) of Jesus Christ is found in his deity (Göttlichkeit). The humanity of Jesus serves as the medium of disclosure for the historical appearance of His divine nature.

(ii) The Divine Person of Jesus Christ.

Brunner applies the primacy of the transcendent element over the anthropological to Christology in his discussion of the divine person of Jesus Christ. In so doing, he distinguishes between the personality and the person of Jesus Christ. He describes Jesus as a divine person with a human personality, placing the emphasizes on the deity of Jesus Christ because "through God alone can God be known."¹ In other words, there is an epistemological void between ourselves and God. Brunner uses the deity of the person of Jesus Christ to reinforce the transcendent emphasis of his epistemological thought. We cannot fill the void because we live on a different plane of existence than God. There is an absolute qualitative distinction which forms the border between ourselves and God. Since we cannot cross this border, the Word must come to us from the other

¹Ibid., p. 209.
side. Brunner's remarks show the influence of Kierkegaard on his thought:

Christ confronts us as the One who is Himself God, as One who does not seek God as we do, but who brings God to us, as One who does tremble before the Judgment of God, but who knows that He is Himself on the side of the Judge of the whole world, not as One who must endeavor to enter into the Kingdom of God, but as One who in His own Person brings in the Kingdom, even though in a hidden way. He is one who descends to earth, instead of ascending to heaven like the rest of us. He is not One who has to make up His mind, but is One who is the focal point of all decision, the 'only begotten,' the 'only' Son of God.

Earlier in his dialectical period, Brunner maintained an ethical dualism. With his emphasis on the transcendent Kingdom, we note an ontological dualism (between God and man) entering into Brunner's theology.

For Brunner, Christology is faith in Jesus Christ the Mediator. Apparently, faith is the acceptance of the doctrine of the two natures. He denies that his view is tantamount to metaphysical intellectualizing, claiming that "Jesus Christ" is not a doctrine, but an act of God. Brunner uses the Church doctrine of the two natures to show the contrast between the creature and the creator. It separates creaturely sinfulness and divine redemption. To the question, "Who is Christ?" Brunner responds, "He is true God and true man, and for this very reason He is the Mediator." Brunner views his thought as standing in the tradition of the two natures Christology of Chalcedon.

2. The Humanity of Jesus.

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1 Ibid., p. 248.
2 Ibid., p. 235.
Brunner's discussion of the significance of the humanity of Jesus relies heavily on Kierkegaard. He interprets the incarnation by means of Kierkegaard's idea of "incognito." According to Kierkegaard, the incarnation tells us that God is beyond thought and cannot be grasped by the human mind. In Brunner's dialectical theology, the humanity of Jesus functions as a veil over his deity. Since it is humanly impossible to know Christ, an individual is required to make the leap of faith to see the presence of God in the person of Jesus Christ. He takes the leap of faith because he discovers that human self-confidence or self-justification are impossible.

"The direction of the movement (of the incarnation) is the decisive question for faith as a whole," Brunner claims. If the incarnation represents our ascension to God, it is apotheosis and self-redemption. On the other hand, if the incarnation is God's descent to us, we are the recipients of redemption through God's grace.

Brunner's intent is to portray Jesus Christ as fully human in line with the Chalcedonian Creed. In so doing, he thinks that he is maintaining the tradition of the Church Fathers (particularly Irenaeus and Tertullian) and the Reformers (Luther and Calvin). He accepts the Reformed (Calvinistic) doctrine on the relation between the human and the divine natures in Christ. The Lutherans, however, taught the doctrine of communicatio idiomatum, which Brunner does not accept.

Brunner's refusal to accept the doctrine of communicatio idiomatum is based directly on his epistemological principle of the

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1 Ibid., p. 316.
superiority of the object of religion over the religious subject. The point will become clear if we consider the deity of Jesus Christ as the object of religious knowledge and his humanity as a religious subject. In Brunner's view, the doctrine of the communication of attributes does not clearly distinguish between the deity of Jesus Christ and His humanity. Evidently, Brunner believes that if he attributed the divine majesty to Jesus's humanity, he could no longer maintain the superiority of the object of religion over the religious subject.

Brunner relates the incarnation to salvation, a point criticized by Scheld, who thinks it makes more sense to relate the incarnation to the recreation of sinful humanity.¹ In Brunner's view, Jesus Christ was incarnate because of human sin. Scheld prefers to say that Jesus Christ was incarnate despite human sin.

Scheld has sharply criticized Brunner's teaching on the humanity of Jesus, calling it "deceptive" (trügerische).² Particularly at issue is Brunner's contention that Christ's humanity does not reveal His deity (the Enthullungsfunktion), but rather veils it (the Verhullungsfunktion). As a result, according to Scheld, the historical Jesus cannot illuminate the Lordship of God. Scheld claims that Brunner's thought directly contradicts the teaching of John 1. 1-3.

While it is true that Brunner had been more concerned with the humanity of Jesus in Das Symbolische, we must, however, take issue with Scheld's criticism. In The Mediator, Brunner is not as concerned with describing the human ideal as he was in Das Symbolische. His later concern is to show the failure of modern theology to arrive at a

¹Scheld, op. cit., p. 140.
²Scheld, op. cit., p. 144.
satisfactory doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ. When Brunner discusses revelation in his remarks on the Work of Christ, he prefers to discuss the soteriological rather than Christological significance of God's self-communication in Jesus Christ. Perhaps we can explain Brunner's teaching on the humanity of Jesus as a radical reaction against the theology his pre-dialectical period.

Does Brunner succeed in his attempt to construct a Christology based on the early creeds? Scheld correctly points out the docetic tendency of Brunner's Christology, as shown in his refusal to grant a divine personality to Jesus Christ.¹ For this reason, Scheld contends that Brunner has departed from the intent of Chalcedon to such a degree that he is unable to claim adherence to the Creed.² Scheld, however, goes too far when he complains that the historical (the flesh) is so far removed from the divine in Brunner's thought that it is unable to fulfill its revelatory function.

Hermann Volk argues by contrast that The Mediator remains faithful to the tradition of Chalcedon.³ The observations of both Scheld and Volk have merit. It is true that Brunner divides Christology into the "who" (deity) and "how" (humanity) of the earthly appearance of the person of Jesus Christ. However, his thinking about the divine nature of Jesus Christ must be understood in the context of his polemic against modern theology, which de-emphasized the deity of Christ. Brunner insists that an authentic theology stands or falls with the teaching of the divine nature of

¹Scheld, op. cit., p. 141.
²Scheld, op. cit., p. 134.
Jesus Christ. The Mediator represents Brunner's attempt to re-emphasize the deity of Christ against the Christology of Kulturprotestantismus.

III. The Work of Christ.

In The Mediator, the doctrines of the Person and Work of Christ are closely connected. According to Brunner, any separation of these two doctrines misinterprets the work of Christ in an ethical-practical manner. He distinguishes three aspects of the work of Jesus Christ (revelation, reconciliation and dominion), each of which follows from his deity. It is Brunner's contention that we see the unmediated presence of God in each aspect of the work of Jesus Christ.

1. Revelation.

The first aspect of the work of Christ is revelation, which is Jesus's prophetic work. Brunner stressed this phase of Jesus's work in Das Symbolische. During his pre-dialectical period, Brunner portrayed Jesus as one prophet among others. In The Mediator, Brunner includes the implications of Jesus's deity into his discussion of Christ's prophetic work.

Christ's deity tells us that Jesus is not merely a rabbi. He does not bring the objectified law, but rather represents God in person. There is thus no distinction between the revelatory form and the revelatory content. The revelatory teaching of Jesus is double-sided: Jesus stands both on the side of God and the one the side of humanity. Brunner explains, "The coming of the Son of God is His work. His existence is the redeeming revelation."¹ John 1. 1 tells us

¹The Mediator, p. 399.
that which we see is "absolutely nothing other than God."¹ Whoever has seen Jesus has thus seen the Father. In Jesus Christ the Word comes and revelation is given.

Brunner insists that we can know the Eternal Son and the Eternal Word only in Jesus Christ. We cannot know God as he is in himself; we can only know God in his act of revelation. We meet God only where God himself personally and really comes to us: in the Word. The Word is not only the personal presence of God, but it is also that which shows us the contradiction of our existence.

"The contradiction of human existence" means that the normal relation between God the creator and his creature has been obscured and corrupted by human sin. Hence, human attempts to reach God, which include the categorical imperative, are futile: "The phrase 'You ought and therefore you can' is a saying of the ancient serpent. It is the language of Pelagianism which adapts the Law until it becomes practical. It is impossible to do the Divine Will, because we are sinners, because this historical existence is a sinful existence."²

Brunner implies that human sin poses an epistemological barrier to human knowledge of God. Only God’s transcendentally-based revelation, accepted in faith, removes this barrier. Brunner is not concerned with the Incarnation as a metaphysical problem; rather, the incarnation tells us that Christ speaks to us. Real knowledge of Christ is not confined to the knowledge of the two natures, "but the knowledge that in Jesus Christ the barrier which separates us from

¹Ibid., p. 404.
²Ibid., p. 419.
the Creator has been transcended, so that now God really meets us personally, constitutes the real knowledge of Christ."¹

Brunner has done away with the anthropological basis of his pre-dialectical epistemology. In *Das Symbolische*, Jesus was portrayed as knowing what every person could know. His message, which was tied to his God-consciousness, was thus a clarification of human knowledge. There was no discussion about the messiahship of Jesus. Brunner corrects this omission in *The Mediator*, where he connects the message of Jesus to the person of Jesus. In his description, Jesus is conscious of the fact that he is God and that he has a responsibility to forgive sins.

2. Reconciliation.

Reconciliation is the second aspect of the work of Christ handled by Brunner. In *Das Symbolische*, reconciliation was a human work accomplished by emulation of the ideals announced by Jesus. In *The Mediator*, the accomplishment of reconciliation is dependent upon Christ's divine person.

Brunner emphasizes the *necessity* of redemption, which he claims was not found in modern theology. The necessity of redemption arises out of the nature of the divine-human relationship, which is characterized by human rebellion against God. This rebellion, representing an objective offence against God, determines the nature of human standing before God. Because of his

¹Ibid., 411. Brunner does not recognize that Anselm's view is similar to his own. This is because Brunner does not read *Cur Deus Homo* in light of the *Monologion* and *Proslalogion*. With these background works in view, we see that Jesus, in *Cur Deus Homo*, represents God to humanity. Jesus bridges the chasm between sinful humanity and the righteous God.
rebellion, man cannot of his own accord or by his own efforts return to God.

Brunner describes sin as "an attack on God's honour. Sin is rebellion against the Lord. God cannot permit this attack on His honour. The honour of God is His Godhead, His sovereign majesty. God would cease to be God if He permitted His Honour to be attacked."\(^1\) Only the inviolability of God's honor and the validity of His standards allow for the distinction between right and wrong. Three terms illustrate this infringement on the glory of God: evil, a philosophical designation, means opposition to the norm or Idea; sin, a religious conception, is the denial of original truth; guilt tells us we cannot go back to the beginning. In Brunner's view, only one thing is necessary: the will of God. Sin does three things: makes man supreme against God, rebels against the divine order, and negates the God-principle. This principle states that God alone exists and has authority. In other words, sin is a challenge to the \textit{vere esse} of God.

The \textit{vere esse} of God demands that he maintain order in the world. The maintenance of order includes the law of penalty, which is the expression of the personal Will of God and of the Divine Holiness. "Forgiveness, therefore, would be the declaration of the non-validity of the unconditional order of righteousness which requires penalty."\(^2\) The seriousness of guilt is recognized by the type of energy required to remove it. We cannot take God's forgiveness for granted - we have no right to expect it from God.

\(^{1}\text{Ibid., p. 444.}\)
\(^{2}\text{Ibid., p. 447.}\)
Brunner thinks that the penal theory of the atonement, which he finds in the Bible, the early church and Anselm best expresses the law of penalty: "The doctrine of the Church . . . since Anselm's profound and masterly example of the ideas which the New Testament provided for the explanation of the meaning of the Atonement, has emphasized almost exclusively the ideas of satisfaction and penalty."¹ In Brunner's dialectical soteriology, the idea of "penalty" corresponds to that of "guilt".

Modern theology, abandoning the concepts of sin, guilt and punishment, thinks in terms of general rather than special revelation. The modern mind, "spoilt by the sentimentality of the Enlightenment and the romantic movement" finds the idea of divine punishment intolerable.² It objects to juridical conceptions, although the concepts law, lord sovereign, penalty and judgment are found in the Bible. Modern theology's complaint is that these concepts refer to a blood-thirsty Oriental monarch or a primitive Eastern divinity.

The problem, according to Brunner, is that the idea of Divine Love has swallowed-up the idea of Divine Holiness. Modern theology replaces God's two-fold nature of holiness and love with the unilateral monistic ideal of God. Its leading thinkers thinkers find the theocentric idea of God intolerable.

The presence of guilt belies human attempts at self-redemption. Since the sinner has incurred a debt which he cannot pay, God himself must pay it by the expiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The cross is the only way "in which the absolute holiness and the

¹Ibid., p. 458.
²Ibid., p. 465.
absolute mercy of God are revealed together."¹ Brunner thus combines the ideas of revelation and reconciliation in his Christological interpretation. Jesus Christ, the God-man, not only mediates God's revelation, he also mediates redemption.

According to Brunner, the Cross represents the nadir of human existence. It also shows the desire God has for fellowship with human beings. This thought permits Brunner to deny the charge that the expiatory sacrifice is an anthropocentric idea: "The idea that God is angry is no more anthropopathetic than the thought that God loves."² Expiation is the self-offering of God, not the act of a "bloodthirsty, revengeful, Jewish God."³

Brunner points to a negative and positive aspect to the sacrifice. Negatively, the cross tells us that sin is not an illusion. Since God cannot overlook this insult to his honor, a real transaction must take place which expresses both the magnitude and the quality of the disturbance. This transaction, reinforcing the idea of discontinuity between God and the world, expresses the fundamental idea of the Christian faith in two ways: the necessity for special revelation and the necessity for the atonement.

Positively, the sacrifice tells us that God is love. This love of God is atoning love, however, and not the demonstrative love of Abelard's theory. It tells us that God is touched by human happenings and that forgiveness and redemption are correlative ideas.

¹Ibid., p. 472.
²Ibid., p. 478.
³Ibid., p. 482.
(iii) Dominion.

The royal work of Jesus Christ is the final soteriological theme discussed by Brunner in *The Mediator*. His main emphasis is on Jesus as the One who brings the Kingdom. His pre-dialectical conception of the Kingdom of God, often identifying it with the apex of human culture and achievement, followed the thought of Ritschl and Harnack. The modern idea of the Kingdom of God referred to the transformation of man within the limits of history.

Brunner placed less emphasis on the idea of the Kingdom during his dialectical period. In *The Mediator*, the Kingdom of God refers to God's sovereignty in creation. Brunner now portrays a transcendent Kingdom of God which breaks into the temporal sphere from the other side. In Brunner's dialectical theology, the Kingdom is eschatological and not a possibility of this world. Our own moral achievements do not determine our worthiness for the Kingdom.

The incarnation and resurrection also mean that the Kingdom of God transcends history. In his discussion on the Kingdom, Brunner is particularly concerned with the Resurrection, saying that this is not an "occult" event.\(^1\) Theology should not be concerned with the empty tomb; rather, it must keep the *meaning* of the resurrection in mind. The resurrection demonstrates the superiority of the divine will for redemption over the reality of God's wrath.

Brunner's thinking on the Kingdom is not entirely clear. He introduces the idea of a transcendent Kingdom, but fails to explain how the incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ function in

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 576.
regard to it. What is the relationship between the historical appearance of the transcendent God and the eschatological appearance of the Kingdom? This is a question not fully treated by Brunner until he wrote his *Dogmatics* during the final period of his career.

IV. Conclusion

1. Influences on *The Mediator*.

The influence of the Bible (the Gospel of John), the Early Church (Irenaeus and Athanasius) and the Reformation (Luther and Calvin) are all evident in *The Mediator*. Brunner sees a Christological thread running from John 1 through Chalcedon to the time of the Reformers. Brunner's use of these sources shows the "neo-orthodox" emphasis of his thought during his dialectical period.


Brunner's division of the mediatrship of Christ into three parts follows the pattern of the Gospel of John. T. E. Pollard demonstrates that the Gospel of John also divides the mediatrship of Jesus into three parts: he mediates God's activity in creation (i. 3, 10), thus showing us the distinction between the creator and the creature; he is the mediator of God's activity in self-revelation (i. 17, 18; viii. 19, 38); and finally, he is the mediator of God's activity in saving sinful humanity (iii. 16, 17).1 As we have seen, Brunner discusses each of these facets of Christ's work in *The Mediator*.

The main emphasis of Johannine christology lies in its incarnationalism. Incarnationalism states that God became man in

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Jesus, in whose earthly existence the divinity is fully present in, with and under the humanity. It poses a dual problem: what is the relationship between the pre-existent logos-Son and the godhead and second, what is the relationship between the human and the divine in Jesus Christ? Brunner relies on the orthodox Christology of the next four centuries to explicate this dual problem. The Council of Nicaea answered the first question; the second was answered at Chalcedon.

(ii) The Church Fathers.

Brunner was also influenced by earlier Church Fathers, particularly Irenaeus and Athanasius. Irenaeus commented on Jn. 1. 1-5:¹

Desiring . . . to establish the rule of truth in the Church, that there is one almighty God, who made all things by his Word, both visible and invisible, showing at the same time that by the Word, through whom God made the Creation, he also bestowed salvation on the men who are included in the creation; this commenced his teaching in the Gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word'.

Brunner himself attests to the similarity between his thought and that of Irenaeus:²

I am quite conscious of the fact there in thus relating to each other the Logos, the Word of God, Prophet, Christ, and the story of salvation, as the Coming of God, I am treading in the footsteps of Irenaeus. If anyone should feel inclined to call my work 'theology of the type of Irenaeus' I would be quite inclined to accept the description. Only I would have to remind my critics that between Irenaeus and the

²Brunner, The Mediator, p. 222.
present day there have been Augustine, the Reformation, and Kierkegaard.

In addition to Irenaeus, Athanasius also commented extensively on the *logos*, writing, "The renewal of creation has been wrought by the selfsame Word who made it in the beginning."¹ Salvation is entirely the work of God, thus affecting continuity between the creating and saving acts.

Athanasius believed that corruption was the penalty for human sin. The Incarnation banished death by re-creating man in the image of the Father. The Word became visible and revealed himself as the Word of the Father. We cannot expect to find God among created things; we perceive God in Jesus Christ only through the aid of revelation. The death of Christ settled our account with death and paid the price of our ransom.

Brunner approves of Athanasius’s explication of the doctrine of the incarnation:²

The Logos doctrine of Athanasius is the finest of all in its systematic and at the same time non-speculative character. Athanasius above all has clearly worked out the idea that man, created in the Word of God, has in it his life-principle - granted by grace - and since he has fallen away from the Word can only be restored by the Word coming to him again. 'God's Word had to come himself.' Only the Logos could make good, since He alone reveals God and in this revelation brings back the life which had been lost.

(iii) The Soteriological Model: Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo*.

Brunner’s pre-dialectical epistemology maintained a divine-human continuum, a position abandoned during his dialectical period.

In place of the epistemological category of intuition, Brunner substitutes faith. This epistemology emphasizes God's transcendence, has a metaphysical character, and shows the seriousness of human sin regarding human knowledge of God. The soteriological model which takes these characteristics into consideration is Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*.

Anselm's Christology followed the orthodox formulation of the early Church. In Harnack's words, the early Church faced the question: "Is the divine that has appeared on earth and reunited man with God identical with the supreme divine, which rules heaven and earth, or is it a demigod?"¹ This question concerns the relationship between God the Son and God the Father.

The Arian controversy broke out over the exegesis of Proverbs 8. 22ff ("The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth."). The Arians used this statement that God created Wisdom to draw an ontological distinction between the creator and the creature, or the Father and the Son. For the Arians, the *Logos* belonged on the side of the creature. In response, the Church adopted the Nicene Creed (325).

The creed expressed both cosmological and soteriological concerns. Underlying the creed is the assumption that only the creator of the universe could save humanity. Therefore, the Savior had to be divine. In short, the Creed established the groundwork for the ontological parity of God the Father and God the Son.

By the time of the Council of Chalcedon (451), the question was no longer the relation of the Father to the Son. Instead, the question was the relation of the human and the divine in the person of Jesus Christ. Once again, a soteriological implication surfaced. Christ had to be fully human to effect a transformation of the human condition. The doctrine of the hypostatic union demonstrated these soteriological concerns.¹

Anselm displays these same concerns in *Cur Deus Homo*, where he writes that every rational creature owes complete subjugation and obedience to God. The person who fails to render this obedience commits sin, which is the dishonouring of God by withholding what is due to him. God must defend against this attack on his honour which he does either by satisfaction or by punishment. However, what is restored to God must be greater than the loss suffered by the insult to his honour. God cannot dispense with this requirement for restoration. If a creature is allowed to sin with impunity, sin would be equated with righteousness, meaning that God would cease to be the controller of sin. Disorderliness would henceforth enter into God's Kingdom and sin would no longer be subject to the law.

The disorder in the Kingdom is adjudicated by aut satisfactio aut penitentia. Punishment is²

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¹Anselm discusses inter-Trinitarian relationships in *De Incarnatione Verbi*, which dates from the same period as *Cur Deus Homo*. This was developed partly in response to the nominalism of Roscelin. Anselm says that the persons in the Trinity are distinct, not separate. *God* is common to the members of the Trinity. Father, Son and Spirit are proper terms. Anselm accuses Roscelin of tri-theism or Sabellianism. Anselm wants to establish that the Trinity is numerically one (1) with respect to nature (God) but numerically three (3) with respect to persons (Father, Son, Spirit). Cf. Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 97-100.

²*Cur Deus Homo*, Bk. 1, ch. 20.
that as man in sinning took away what belongs to God, so God in punishing gets in return what pertains to man . . . Since man was so made to be able to attain happiness by avoiding sin; if, on account of his sin, he is deprived of happiness and every good, he repays from his inheritance what he has stolen, though he repay it against his will.

The alternative is satisfaction, which includes not only constant and unending obedience, but also restitution for past sin. Unfortunately, a person has nothing to offer as satisfaction for sin. Since obedience is obligatory, it does not render satisfaction for previous sin.

The important point is that the guilt of sin is measured against the being of God. Since God is infinite, even the smallest disobedience entails infinite guilt. In order to escape punishment, an individual must furnish an infinitely great satisfaction. The inability of human nature to furnish such satisfaction makes no change in the requirement, which follows from the being and honour of God. Since God is infinite, his honour is also infinite.

There is only one solution: a God-man must make the satisfaction. He must be God, since only God can make an infinite satisfaction. He must also be man, since the satisfaction must be made by the sinful humanity which owes it.

The God-man, who has no sin (guaranteed in part by the virgin birth), is under no obligation to render satisfaction to God. He suffered without being obliged to suffer. He owed obedience, not the punishment of death. Therefore, his death on the cross was voluntary.
Anselm follows Tertullian in distinguishing between works of supererogation and works which are demanded. Works of supererogation merit a special reward which must exceed the reward for mere obedience. Two observations follow. First, no one can give himself more fully to God than when he voluntarily surrenders himself to death for God's honour. Second, as Harnack writes in summarizing Anselm's view of the crucifixion, "The worth of such a satisfaction is infinite. Because the smallest violation of this life has an infinitely negative worth, the voluntary surrender of it has an infinitely positive worth."¹

The God-man is able to act on his own behalf and God the Father must compensate Him for this work of supererogation. However, nothing can be given to the God-man because he has everything by virtue of his divine nature. The Son is thus free to bestow what the Father has given him on those for whose sake he became man—namely, sinful individuals. The Father rejects no one who comes to him in the name of the God-man, who used his voluntary death to satisfy God's honor.

In Book II of Cur Deus Homo Anselm tells us that God created individuals with a rational nature in order that they might have the power of moral discernment. Moral discernment is loving God, or the _summum bonum_. In this most natural expression of personality, the individual has the power to subordinate his will to God's will.

Anselm insists that the rational creature ought to subordinate his will to the will of God. This means that the individual owes to God

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this debt of subordination. As John McIntyre shows, sin is not merely a commercial matter for Anselm. Instead, "It is in terms of the previous description of man's obligation as a rational nature to obey God's will, which is his just debt to God, that St. Anselm proceeds to define sin as non-payment of this debt."1

Anselm's emphasis is on sin and not on sins. Sin is not a quantifiable matter. Rather, "It is a radical alienation of man from that Person, whom, by nature of his creation and of the very essence of his being, he ought to love and follow after..."2 Sin is the failure of the whole person to subject the individual will to the will of God. The rebellion of the will is reflected in the intellect and in the body.

Anselm does not confuse personal sin with the nature of sin. Personal sin is committed but not transmitted. Anselm makes an exception in the case of Adam, whose personal sin caused human nature to become corrupt. This corruption is original sin, or the inherited lack of justice in the will. The proof of original sin lies in the disease and affliction of infants. The fact that they suffer signifies that they have original sin. Anselm concludes that human nature is corrupt and all individuals are guilty.3

McIntyre cites two errors made by Anselm's critics: either they do not understand the importance of aseitas to the archbishop's argument or they assume that God is a feudal baron writ large.4 Jaspar Hopkins says that Anselm's works are characterized by a

2Ibid.
3Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 204-211.
4McIntyre, op. cit., p. 204.
distinct internal consistency. The proper background of Cur Deus Homo, then, is found in Anselm's earlier works, particularly the Monologion and Proslogion. An understanding of the relationship of these two works to Cur Deus Homo should serve to dispel some of the criticism.

The Proslogion contains Anselms well-known ontological proof for the existence of God, the conclusion of which states: "We properly conceive of God as something than which no greater can be thought." Monologion 3 is an important link in Anselm's thought. Here he uses a special doctrine of universals to suppose that several things could not have the independent power of existing per se. A substance or thing is either universal (essentially common to many) or particular. Only God, as the Supreme Being, exists per se. Anselm assumes that if two or more beings exist per se, they would share the power of existing per se. If this were the case contingent beings would exist per se. God however, shares his nature (existing per se ) with no other being.

The opening prayer of Proslogion 2 and the closing prayer of Proslogion 4 give a clue about Anselm's view of existence. The key phrase is vere esse, which means that God alone exists simply and properly. God alone exists in such a way that he cannot be thought not to exist. God is not a being like other beings in that we do not

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1Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 3-5.
2See particularly Barth's book Aeselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum.
3Hopkins, p. 71.
attribute to him the ordinary reality of those things with which we
are most familiar. As Gregory Schufreider points out, there is no rift
in Anselm's thought between the universal and singular as applied to
God. God has no "universal." He is the only individual who can fulfill
the description of vere esse.¹ Vere esse is the distinctive character
of God. All other beings are contingent.

The understanding that God alone truly exists and that all other
beings are contingent removes the objection that in Anselm's scheme
God is merely a great private man or feudal baron. As Rudolf
Hermann remarks, "The God of Anselm is neither a powerful private
man nor merely the prince over a state, but He is above all the
creator of the world and of humanity."² Therefore, "So also is the
satisfaction no juridical postulate, but a metaphysical process."³

The question of satisfaction is metaphysical, not commercial or
even forensic. Harnack is only partially correct when he writes,⁴

It is not necessary for understanding (the theory of
Anselm) to have recourse to the Germanic notion of
satisfaction, since the material in hand, of which we have
to take into account, is quite sufficiently given in the
prevailing practice and theory of penance... At the same
time it may be held by way of reservation that the
transfusion of the penance discipline of the Church with

¹Gregory Schufreider, An Introduction to Anselm's Argument. Philosophical
p. 72. This is similar to Paul Tillich's remarks on the existence and essence of
God in Systematic Theology, vol i (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,
1951), pp. 202ff. Tillich criticizes the ontological and cosmological arguments
for the existence of God on pp. 204ff. S. N. Deane, op. cit., also contains
summaries of the critiques of the ontological argument.
²"Anselms Lehre vom Werke Christi in ihrer bleibenden Bedeutung,"
³Ibid., p. 379.
German ideas strengthened the theory and gave a casuistic tinge and eternality to the practice.

Considering the penitential practice of the Church and the geographical background of Cur Deus Homo, it is hardly surprising that the work took the form that it did. Those who criticize the book on its form miss its importance.

Brunner's explication of the expiatory sacrifice depends on Anselm:¹

It is quite possible that the reason why, among all the illustrations at his disposal, Anselm chose that of Satisfaction, was because it holds the balance evenly between the ideas of penalty and of sacrifice, and because it brings out particularly clearly the idea of an equivalent. On the other hand, if, in so doing, he allowed himself to be lead astray into the attempt to reckon out this equivalent, we must not overlook the fact that he was concerned with one thing only: with an infinite guilt and an infinite expiation. The stress he lays on the world "infinite" shows the seriousness of the problem Anselm is handling.

Brunner adds a personal element to Anselm's one-sided emphasis on God as the holy lawgiver. In Brunner's view, the existential danger of the broken relation between God and man is the presupposition of the expiatory sacrifice. Because the original relationship was so personal, the destruction has personal consequences for both humanity and God. The human consequence is sin; the divine consequence is wrath. Cur Deus Homo emphasizes the metaphysical necessity of Christ's satisfaction, a point echoed by Brunner in The Mediator.

The emphasis on an infinite guilt which requires an infinite expiation recalls the bases of Brunner's dialectical epistemology. This

¹The Mediator, p. 481, note 1.
epistemology denies the existence of a divine-human continuum; therefore all human attempts to obtain knowledge of God are thus doomed to failure. Brunner carries this over to his soteriology: all human attempts at self-redemption are equally futile. Epistemologically and soteriologically God must take the initiative, and this requires the entrance of a transcendent element into human history. Once again, we see that Brunner maintains the superiority of the object of religion over the religious subject.

(iv) The Reformation.

The influence of Reformation thought is fairly evident in The Mediator. Luther assumes the deity of Christ on the basis of scripture and the creeds. He finds continuity between the Johannine and Pauline Christologies. He also accepts both Athanasius and Anselm. For Luther, Christ ascends but we do not. He prefers to interpret the incarnation as a personal unity of man and God rather than a metaphysical unity. He speaks of the impersonality of Jesus' human nature.¹

As Paul Althaus shows, Luther's soteriology is also similar to Anselm's, "Luther, like Anselm, views Christ's work in terms of satisfaction."² Luther's soteriology has a penal emphasis - satisfaction occurs only through substitution. Anselm maintained either punishment or satisfaction; for Luther, satisfaction takes place

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through punishment. It is not punishment of the sinner, but the punishment of Christ.¹

Calvin argues for the deity of Word on the basis of John 1. 1-13: "But John spoke most clearly of all when he declared that the Word, God from the beginning with God, was at the same time the cause of all things, together with God the Father."² Calvin adheres strictly to Chalcedonian orthodoxy. He insists that humanity needs a mediator and echoes Anselm in maintaining that only He who is true God and true man could bridge the gulf between God and ourselves and be obedient in our stead.

Brunner approves of Calvin's adherence to Anselm's substitutionary scheme of the atonement. According to Calvin, the sole purpose of Christ's incarnation was our redemption: Christ appeared on earth to restore the fallen world, not to demonstrate God's love. He was condemned because of our sin, not because of a misunderstanding. Sin is an objective presence standing between us and God. Christ took the role of a guilty man and was crucified to accomplish human salvation; he was not crucified to clear up our misconceptions about God.

In Brunner's view, the whole struggle of the Reformation was simply the struggle for the correct interpretation of the cross. In the terminology of Luther, it was the struggle whether the cross is interpreted as a theologia gloriae or a theologia crucis. The cross represents the break-down of the intellectual and moral pride of

¹ Theodosius Hamack, Luthers Theologie mit besonderer Beziehung auf seine Versöhnungs- und Erlössungslehre, vol. ii (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1969), pp. 253-269 also says that Luther's thought is Anselmic.
² Calvin, Institutes, I, xiii, 7.
reason. Our attitude towards the cross determines whether we believe in general or special revelation.

Brunner employs Reformation thought as a corrective to ethical religion, which he traces from modern theology through Socinus back to Abelard. Ethical religion regards the passion of Christ "from the humanistic religious point of view as the highest proof of the perfect religious or moral union of Jesus with the Divine Will."

The advocates of ethical religion also have a subjective view of reconciliation. According to Brunner, they have no idea that the cross represents an objective transaction—God actually does something. Their error was that they set up the alternative of either Anselm's view of the atonement or the subjective view of the atonement.

2. Criticism of *The Mediator*.

*The Mediator* was a transition from the "modern" view of Christ of the nineteenth-century theology to the Christological statements of dialectical theology. For Brunner, nineteenth-century theology presented a united front against which he struggled in the name of the Christian faith. His criticism of modern theology represents an implicit repudiation of his pre-dialectical theology. Brunner attempts to replace the theology of *Kulturprotestantismus* with a re-interpretation of the meaning of the early Christological and soteriological witness in terms of the new theology. Unfortunately, he does not always distinguish between the theologies of Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Harnack.

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1Ibid., p. 438.
Brunner's new interpretation of theology is based on the re-orientation of his epistemology. Das Symbolische assumed the existence of a continuum between God and humanity. As a result, Brunner's theology had an anthropological emphasis, maintaining that human experience was the source of religious knowledge which individuals receive by means of intuition. The Christology which ensued interpreted Jesus as a religious hero with an especially acute God-consciousness. Salvation consisted in following the ethical commands of Jesus.

Brunner applies the re-orientation of his epistemology from an anthropological to a transcendent basis to soteriology in The Mediator, now placing the epistemological initiative on the side of God. His epistemology no longer reflects the influence of Schleiermacher and Bergson. He has abandoned human experience as the source of religious knowledge and claims that we are unable to know God apart from his self-revelation in Jesus Christ which we receive in faith.

Early in his dialectical period, Brunner adopted the idea of faith as fides. This is particularly evident in Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube. Towards the end of this period, after reflecting on Ebner's dialogical philosophy, he began to move towards the idea of faith as fiducia. Fides, however, remains the primary epistemological category.

Two factors indicate his preference for fides. First is Brunner's deduction of a soteriology from a previously established Christology. He establishes who Jesus is in order to know what Jesus does, implying faith as assent or belief rather than faith as a trusting relationship.
Another factor is the role of special revelation in Brunner's soteriology. Brunner describes two sources of special revelation: the Bible and the deity of Jesus Christ. Both of these factors represent knowledge which is to be believed. He does not grant a revelatory role to the humanity of Jesus. To do so implies that (a) God communicates directly with humanity and (b) the object of religion is not superior to the religious subject. On the contrary, Jesus brings God (the object) to humanity (the subject). Further, and very decisively, Brunner specifically repudiates natural revelation in Part I of *The Mediator*.

Brunner's preference for *fides* is also shown in the conclusion of *The Mediator*, where he maintains that the whole gospel of Jesus Christ is an exposition of the first commandment. He posits a two-fold thesis. First, "The message of Jesus Christ, the Mediator - the content of dogma - is only understood and taken seriously when it is understood as the exposition of the First Commandment, when the 'Dogma of Christ' constitutes the basis of the 'Christian ethic'."\(^1\) Second, "Obedience to the Will of God - that is, moral obedience - is not taken seriously until we believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Mediator."\(^2\) It is obvious that Brunner thinks the concept of faith includes a cognitive element.

The idea of faith as *fiducia* or a trusting relationship is implicit in *The Mediator*. However, this trusting relationship proceeds from the knowledge that Jesus Christ is truly God. Faith is a reflection on

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\(^1\) *The Mediator*, p. 593.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 593.
God's special revelation. The trusting relationship is established only after we know who Christ is and what he does.

Brunner thought that renewed emphasis on the deity of Christ was necessary. He maintained that the creeds reflected the teaching of the New Testament by emphasizing the deity of Christ. He no longer holds that they represent an intellectualization of the Biblical witness. Instead, he sees a line of continuity extending from the Gospel through the Church Fathers and Anselm to the Reformation. Brunner astutely distinguishes the Christological thought of Luther and Calvin. He prefers Calvin's explanation of the person of Christ to Luther's. However, his renewed emphasis on the deity of Christ resulted in a docetic or monothelite Christology, as shown by his position that Jesus has a divine will, not a human will.

For Brunner, the creed promulgated at Chalcedon guards against an idealistic Christology. In his view, idealistic Christology is either docetic or purely anthropocentric. It is docetic when it posits the completely transcendental idea; it is anthropological when it views Christology as a projection of humanity. In Brunner's interpretation, based on the first chapter of the Gospel of John, the Chalcedonian creed shows the possibility of uniting the immanent and transcendent elements.

During the dialectical stage in Brunner's thought, the incarnation represents a veiling of God. It has little to do with revelation. The humanity of Jesus is covering for the deity of Jesus. Brunner insists that it is impossible to unite history and revelation. He excludes a

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1 Cf. Leipold, op. cit., pp. 74, 100.
2 Scheld calls Brunner's dialectical christology "dialektische-doketisch."
revelatory function for the humanity of Jesus in order to guard against the danger (as he sees it) of an unmediated relation between God and humanity.

This naturally has consequences for Brunner's soteriology. His pre-dialectical soteriology, based on the assumption of the divine-human continuum, followed Abelard's moral influence theory. Brunner's dialectical epistemology and Christology has abandoned the working premise of this continuity. He thus needs to arrive at a soteriology which reflects this new emphasis in his thought.

Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* demonstrated the necessity of incorporating the element of transcendence into soteriological thought. The *Proslogion*, stating that only God truly exists (*vere esse*), is also very important for Brunner. The *vere esse* of God shows the ontological distinction between God and humanity. Since God and humanity do not lie on an ontological plane, they also do not occupy the same plane epistemologically. This chasm, created by man's sin, is bridged only by faith.

Although Brunner's departure from his pre-dialectical theology appears obvious, Scheld contends there is a point of continuity between Brunner's pre-dialectical and dialectical stages. He bases his argument on Brunner's use of Jesus' humanity as the medium for revelation. For some inexplicable reason, Scheld overlooks Brunner's explicit rejection of modern theology in *The Mediator*. Scheld also contradicts himself. He complains that Brunner's portrayal of Jesus Christ in *The Mediator* is docetic. The upshot, according to Scheld, is that the humanity of Jesus is unable to function as a true medium of God's revelation.
Scheld's difficulty stems from two sources. First, he does not recognize that Brunner uses different epistemological categories in each of the first two stages of his thought. His second difficulty is that he does not analyze the background material in each stage of Brunner's thought. Brunner begins to incorporate Kierkegaard, Luther and Natorp into his thought during his dialectical stage and then explores the difference between immanence and transcendence as it relates to theology.

It is difficult in the 1980's to understand the radicalness of the position Brunner's adopted in The Mediator in 1927. Humphrey calls this work "one of the outstanding contributions of this century to the theme of Christology." If this is the case, it is difficult to explain the paucity of secondary sources dealing with The Mediator. Despite this lack of critical attention, we must not overlook the value of this work as a polemic against what Brunner and others viewed as a discredited theology of immanence.2

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1Humphrey, op. cit., p.90.
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Chapter Four: Emil Brunner's Theology of Dialogue

In this chapter, we will show that Brunner has moved away from his neo-orthodox theology which was based, in part, on the creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon. His epistemology during this period represents a refinement, rather than a repudiation, of his dialectical position. While he still maintains that special revelation is the primary source of religious knowledge, he now interprets revelation as "truth as encounter." His view of faith has also changed. In place of an understanding of faith as fides, Brunner now views faith as fiducia. These changes in his epistemology are due partially to the influence of Luther and Kierkegaard. Brunner also altered his view of soteriology and Christology as a result of this epistemology. Beginning with soteriology, he moves away from Anselm's penal theory and adopts a position similar to Gustav Aulen's Christus Victor. Christologically, he works inductively, arriving at his conclusions about the person of Christ based on his previous consideration of the work of Christ.

I. The "Eristic" Theology of Emil Brunner.

Brunner's thought during the latter period of his career is best described as "a theology of dialogue," a characterization which reflects the influence of Ferdinand Ebner on Brunner's theology. Although Leipold and Roessler divide this final period into two sections, eristic and dogmatic, there is such a great degree of continuity in Brunner's thought from 1929, when he wrote "The Other Task of Theology," to the publication of the final volume of his
Dogmatics (1960), that we can treat his theology during this period as a single entity.

Brunner himself describes his theology during this period as "eristic." Eristic theology "is the intellectual discussion of the Christian Faith in the light of the idealogies of the present day which are opposed to the Christian Message."¹ Eristic theology is also missionary theology.²

Missionary Theology takes the form of a conversation between a Christian believer and an unbeliever. The Christian believer enters into the questions raised by the unbeliever; he gives full weight to all the truth and insight the unbeliever already possesses. But he shows also how his knowledge, and therefore also his questions, ignore the very thing which brings light and true knowledge. Missionary theology, is, so to say, pastoral work in the form of reflection, just as dogmatics is witness in the form of reflection.

1. The "Other" Task of Theology.

Brunner's article "The Other Task of Theology" (Die andere Aufgabe der Theologie, 1929) marks his transition to the theology of dialogue.³ In this article, Brunner describes two tasks that theology must undertake. Theology's first task is dogmatic. This theoretical task presents the Christian faith in biblical and systematic theology. By its reflection on the Word of God, it represents the "what" of theology. Theology also has another task. It seeks to understand humanity by meeting people in their existential situation. Brunner

¹Brunner, Dog. 1, p. 98.
²Ibid., p. 103.
calls this task the polemical, apologetic or eristic task. It is the "how" of theology.¹

Eristic theology seeks to explain the relation of revelation and reason. Each of these two epistemological emphases seeks a place for itself at the center of human existence. In response to the claims of reason, the Christian theologian must place himself in the position of his opponents. The theologian juxtaposes Christian truth as a theoretical expression with the theoretical expressions of reason. In Brunner's view, this shows that man can understand himself correctly only in faith.

For Brunner, theology and preaching belong together. He was a professor of systematic and practical theology at the University of Zurich. He wanted to avoid the study of "pure doctrine" by coordinating the study of theology with the proclamation of the Word. If theology honestly wants to consider seriously the human situation, in Brunner's opinion it must be co-ordinated with preaching.

Eristic theology helps man understand his own question about God by defending Christianity from a humanistic point of view. However, the eristic task is still dependent on God's creative Word. Brunner denies that his view is a capitulation of faith to reason. Eristic theology is not a path by which the non-believer finds God. It is not a bridge from man to God. Instead, it explains God's approach to mankind. As in his dialectical theology, Brunner maintains that the initiative lies with God.

¹For a discussion of Brunner's eristic theology, see Leipold, op. cit. and Schrootenboer, op. cit. These two works deal specifically with this period of Brunner's thought.
"The Other Task of Theology" explains the change in emphasis undergone by Brunner's theology. In this final period of his thought, Brunner seeks to engage religion and philosophy in a dialogue with Christian theology. During his dialectical period, Brunner emphasized the "first" task of theology by denying that the confrontation or dialogue of theology with religion and philosophy was its first or most important task.¹

2. Brunner's Transition to Dialogical Thought.

Brunner's transition to dialectical theology represented a radical and abrupt departure from his previous Kulturprotestantismus. His transition to the final stage of his theology was much smoother and of an evolutionary nature.² Although the influence of Luther and Kierkegaard was evident during his dialectical period, Brunner increasingly incorporates their thought into his theology after 1927.

(i) Martin Luther.

Brunner's dialectical theology shared many similarities with Calvin's thought - for example, in his view of faith, the Incarnation and Anselm's penal theory of the atonement. His work during this latter period shows increasing reliance on Luther. Brunner himself maintains that Luther's thought was instrumental in dissolving the synthesis between idealism and biblical realism.³

Particularly important is Luther's attitude towards reason. Underlying Luther's position is his idea of the fundamental dualism of the two Kingdoms. Luther allows that reason is adequate for

¹Der Mittler, p. 6. Cf. Leipold, op., cit., pp. 146-150.
²Scheld, however, maintains that this second transition period in Brunner's thought is no less radical than the first transition period, cf. pp. 200ff.
³Kegley, op. cit., p. 6.
mundane tasks, but it has no standing before God. In his view, native human intelligence extends only to the boundary line of the heavenly Kingdom. Since it cannot deal with sin and grace, it is not efficacious for salvation.

The proper context for Luther's interpretation of reason is the theological controversy over faith and works which he treats in his commentary on Galatians. He insists that nothing belonging to the flesh brings man to God. Good works, which are in the world, fall to the judgment of natural reason. They are a matter of the earthly Kingdom and give cause for boasting, which results in a theology of glory.

According to Luther, those who think that reason provides a path leading from man to God fail to distinguish the earthly Kingdom from the heavenly Kingdom. He indicts the Roman Catholic Church and the Fanatics (Schwärmer) as particular offenders in this regard. The Roman hierarchy claimed worldly authority on the basis of its spiritual offices. The Fanatics sought to order the political community on the basis of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. In Luther's view, each of these claims would prevent the earthly government from functioning.¹

The two Kingdoms are two dimensions of existence. The earthly Kingdom governs relations among men; the heavenly Kingdom governs man's relationship with God. The needs and requirements of the earthly Kingdom must not impinge upon the heavenly Kingdom because any confusion of the Kingdoms is a threat to salvation sola

gratia. Luther's doctrine of the two Kingdoms and his discussion of faith and reason show the close connection between epistemology and soteriology in his thought.¹

Luther's influence on Brunner's theology is evident as early as 1922. In Die Grenzen der Humanität, Brunner contrasts Reformation thought with liberal theology. He uses Luther's term "theology of glory" to characterize this theology. A theology of glory does not stand before God with empty hands. Instead, it stands before God and boasts of human achievement. Against this theology, Brunner describes Luther's theology of the cross.²

Evangelical and Reformation faith is not oriented towards experience and man, but toward God. It is not the step by step process of realizing freedom, but guilt and corruption. It is not immanent thought-process, but the jagged dualism of God and man. It is not even pride in the ascending line of development, but the broken line of the cross.

Brunner's Revelation and Reason reflects Luther's view on the possibilities and limitations reason holds for theology³ In this book, which he wrote as a prolegomena to his Dogmatics, Brunner maintains that reason, while it aids in the reception of revelation, is not efficacious for salvation. In his view, this limitation of reason is also a limitation of general revelation. Since reason is unable to show God's intention towards us, special revelation is necessary. If reason claims soteriological competence in this regard, it is arrogant.

²Die Grenzen der Humanität. Habilitationsvorlesung an der Universität Zürich (Tübingen, Mohr, 1922), p. 7. See also Althaus, op. cit., pp. 25ff.
Brunner's distinction between the natural orders and the Kingdom of God in *The Divine Imperative*, which played a pivotal role in his controversy with Karl Barth, is based on Luther's doctrine of the two Kingdoms. Brunner observes, "As Creator, God requires us to recognize and adjust ourselves to the orders He has created, as our first duty; as Redeemer, as our second duty, He bids us ignore the existing orders and inaugurate a new line of action in view of the coming Kingdom of God."¹ Brunner reiterates Luther's concern about the respective responsibility the Christian has regarding each of the two Kingdoms.

(ii) Soren Kierkegaard.

The thought of Soren Kierkegaard was the second important factor contributing to Brunner's transition to a theology of dialogue. Of course, Kierkegaard's description of existence exercised an immense influence on dialectical theology.² As we noted in the discussion on Ebner, Kierkegaard described existence as moving within three spheres: the aesthetical, ethical and religious. These three spheres are continuously present possibilities.

Each of the first two stages is unable to answer man's existential question. The aesthetic stage, identified with Romantic sensibility, is characterised by a lack of involvement. The ethical stage fails to give meaning to individual existence because it cannot account for the

uniqueness of the individual. Kierkegaard's criticism of the ethical stage is also a criticism of Kant. The person who knows the living God, Kierkegaard insists, "determines his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal."\(^1\) The failure of the aesthetic and ethical stages necessitates the existential leap of faith to the religious stage.

The religious stage offers two possibilities: Religion A and Religion B. Religion A, the religion of Socrates, is a religion of immanence and maintains a divine-human continuum. In its identification of self-knowledge with knowledge about God, Religion A assumes that the truth is present within every individual.

Religion B, on the other hand, is the religion of Jesus Christ. This religion announces that because the student is in error, the truth must be brought to him.\(^2\)

But one who gives the learner not only the Truth, but also the condition for understanding it is more than a teacher. All instruction depends upon the presence, in the last analysis, of the requisite condition...But this is something that no human being can do; if it is done it must be done by God himself...The teacher is then God himself, who acting as an occasion prompts the learner to recall that he is in Error.

The student stands in error because of human sin, which separates man from God and belies the efficacy of a religion of immanence. Since God is not immanent, He must reveal Himself; He does not draw man to Himself nor appear in all His glory and majesty. Instead, He descends in the form of a servant. This

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 10.
appearance of God is the paradox of the incarnation, which shows the infinitely qualitative distinction between time and eternity.

According to Kierkegaard, God is radically beyond the grasp of reason. God cannot be grasped by any philosophical affirmation; He can be known only in faith. For Kierkegaard, Christian faith is based upon the absolute paradox that God became man in Jesus Christ. We can only affirm this paradoxical statement, we cannot explain it or justify it. Kierkegaard describes faith as a relation between the individual and God.¹

Such a description of faith implies that truth is subjectivity. It is wrong to think that religious truth, or faith, is acquired in the same way that one obtains information. In Kierkegaard's opinion, we cannot abstract the truth from the person representing it. In other words, our concern is not with the objective truth of Christ, but rather with the relationship of the existing individual with Christianity.

Kierkegaard's distinction between Religion A and Religion B is evident in Brunner's thought as early as 1924. In his remarks on Kierkegaard in "Das Grundproblem der Philosophie bie Kant and Kierkegaard," Brunner reminds us that the individual exists.² Guilt is the decisive characteristic of human existence. The presence of sin means that critical thought, including that of Kant, reaches only to the border between the divine and the human. Indeed, it is unable to cross that border. The absolute paradox of the incarnation is a

¹John B. Cobb, op. cit., p. 137, discusses Kierkegaard's view of the divine-human dialectic.
break with all immanentist thought. "Faith is the end of philosophy or it is not faith," insists Brunner. Philosophy takes us to the divine-human border. Beyond the border revelation is necessary.

Kierkegaard's insistence that truth is subjectivity represents his greatest influence on Brunner's theology of dialogue. In *Truth as Encounter*, he uses this idea of Kierkegaard's to overcome the subject-object antithesis in religious knowledge. In this book, Brunner expresses the belief that the individual shares the quality of subjectivity with God.¹

The concept of subjectivity is closely tied to Brunner's understanding of the doctrine of faith (Kierkegaard's second main influence on his theology). Since the individual is a subject, he can enter into a relationship with God. Brunner has moved away from the cognitive definition of faith (*fides*) which tended to objectify God and resulted in an emphasis on doctrine. The element of subjectivity in Brunner's theology of dialogue de-emphasized the reliance upon doctrine for theology and allowed him to introduce the element of trust into his understanding of faith.

Throughout his career, Brunner was clear how much Kierkegaard influenced him. In 1962 he noted, "Today I, in contrast to Karl Barth, still profess allegiance to this great Christian thinker to whom present day theology, Catholic no less than Protestant, owes more than to anyone since Martin Luther."² According to Brunner, one of

²Kögley, op. cit., p. 11.
the reasons for his dispute with Barth was that Barth abandoned the thought of Kierkegaard.\textsuperscript{1}

3. Brunner's Anthropology and His Controversy with Karl Barth.

(i) The Controversy with Barth.

Brunner's theology of dialogue demonstrates the renewed interest in theological anthropology which led to his famous dispute with Karl Barth.\textsuperscript{2} According to Brunner, a Christian anthropology must be based on two presuppositions. First, the Word of God is the source of knowledge since "... man can only understand himself when he knows God in His Word."\textsuperscript{3} Because of his dualistic understanding of

\textsuperscript{1}Sperna Weiland, \textit{Philosophy, Existence and Christianity} (Assan, 1951), p. 35 says "Among the theologians it is E. Brunner rather than K. Barth who continued Kierkegaard's thought."

\textsuperscript{2}In his analysis of the origin of the controversy, Brunner charges that Barth has departed from the Christian existentialism of Soren Kierkegaard which characterized his \textit{Römerbrief}. At the root of the change, which dates from 1924, is the assumption of the ancient Roman Catholic doctrine \textit{natus ex Maria Virgine}. Barth replaced the truth of God which encounters us in Jesus Christ with a substantialist understanding of truth "which must be believed on the strength of authority." Cf. \textit{Truth as Encounter}, a new edition, much enlarged of \textit{The Divine-Human Encounter} (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 42. This statement is ironic because it reflects Brunner's understanding of "faith" during the dialectical period of his thought. Brunner gives three reasons for this change in Barth's thought. First, there is Barth's continued adherence to Protestant orthodoxy. Brunner observes that Barth increasingly incorporated Heppe's \textit{Dogmatics of the Reformed Church} into his own theological system. Second is Barth's theological hair-splitting. Brunner comments, "Like the old Scholasticism, he found it necessary to draw every finer distinctions to satisfy the requirements of the intellect, so that the volumes of his \textit{Church Dogmatics} continually swelled in bulk, and became a gigantic work comparable in size to one of the medieval \textit{Summae}." (\textit{Truth as Encounter}, p. 43.) Finally, Barth departed from his starting point, the Blumhardts. The faith of the Blumhardts did not rest upon doctrine, but upon the Word of God as the transforming power of human life. They hoped above everything for the consummation of the rule of God. For Barth, this represented pietism and a declension from pure doctrine. Brunner's indictment is that Barth no longer viewed faith as existence. In his fascination with the "object of faith," Barth drifted towards a new orthodoxy, losing interest in the central Reformation doctrine of the identification of the subject and object in faith.

\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Man in Revolt}, p. 65.
reason, Brunner insists that knowledge is hierarchical. Since this knowledge cannot ascend from the religious subject to the object of religion, it must be revealed. Human understanding of God descends from the eternal plane to the temporal plane. The second presupposition is that the Word of God is the source of being: "God has created all that is outside of Himself through His Word."\(^1\) The two presuppositions of Christian anthropology require that "the specific being of man, which distinguishes him from all other creatures, is not only known from the Word of God but it is also based upon the Word of God."\(^2\)

Brunner's book on ethics, *Das Gebot und die Ordnungen* (1932) was the catalyst of the controversy.\(^3\) Later that same year, he published "Die Frage nach dem 'Anknüpfungspunkt' als Problem der Theologie."\(^4\) The Anknüpfungspunkt, or point of contact, is Brunner's answer to the question of the relation of natural man and the Word of God. By defining the "point of contact" as the human question about God, Brunner shows the anthropological thrust of his eristic theology. The task of this theology "is the uncovering of the true character of existence through the disintegration of ideological fiction."\(^5\) In order to perform this task, eristic theology recognizes the difference between natural self-knowledge and self-knowledge which has its ground in the revelation of Jesus Christ. As a result of

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 71.
\(^2\)Ibid, p. 71. Cf. *Dogmatics*, ii, p. 53: "Jesus Christ as the Word of God Incarnate is here not the object, but the source and norm of truth."
\(^3\)Entwurf einer protestantisch-theologischen Ethik (Tübingen, 1932).
\(^4\)In *Zwischen den Zeiten* 10 (1932): 505-532.
\(^5\)Ibid., p. 525.
sin, man has interchanged the idea of God with the reality of God and allowed reason to supplant revelation. Despite this sin, humanity remains in contact with God by virtue of the Anknüpfungspunkt. There are two aspects to the Anknüpfungspunkt: the capacity for words (Sprachfähigkeit) and the possibility for understanding (Verständigungsmöglichkeit). Hearing and believing, saying "Yes" to God, comes from the Word of God. Saying "No" comes from man.

The following year (1933) Barth responded to Brunner's position. In the final edition of Zwischen den Zeiten he insinuates that Brunner has returned to the premises of nineteenth-century theology. He explains, 1

Thus says the eighteenth-century: revelation and reason. Thus says Schleiermacher: revelation and religious consciousness. Thus says Ritschl and his school: revelation and cultural ethos. Thus says Troeltsch and his school: revelation and history of religions. And thus one says today from all sides: revelation and creation, revelation and proto-creation, New Testament and human existence, the divine imperative (Das Gebot und Die Ordnungen).

Barth complains that this theology confuses human self-understanding with the revelation of God. In Barth's view, Brunner's ethical categories of the Moral Imperative and the Good imply that God meets man apart from the revelation in Jesus Christ. When Barth writes, "Many roads lead back to Rome!", presumably he means those roads paved by Bultmann, Gogarten and Brunner. 2

2 Ibid., p. 313. In a letter to Friedrich Schmid dated August 14, 1964, Barth writes, "... it struck me for the first time that I might have done better thirty years ago to direct my frontal attack against Gogarten instead of the much weaker Brunner ..." Cf. Karl Barth, Letters 1961-1968, edited by Jürgen Fangmeier and Hinrich Stoevesandt, translated and edited by Geoffrey W.
The debate was continued in 1934. In *Natur und Gnade*, Brunner praises Barth for turning Protestant theology back towards its proper theme and subject matter. Brunner comments, "Within the space of a few years he (Barth) completely changed the Protestant theological situation."\(^1\) Because of Barth's influence, theology was no longer concerned with the themes of the Enlightenment. The emphasis was on the "Word of God" rather than on "religion." Theology no longer was concerned the *deus in nobis*, but rather with the revelation in Jesus Christ.

Barth's theology stressed the Protestant doctrines of *sola gratia* and the role of the Bible as the ultimate standard of truth. From these two doctrines, Brunner finds six false conclusions drawn by Barth. In his reply, *Nein!*, Barth denies that he proposed the six conclusions drawn by Brunner, although "their wording here and there recall my thoughts and my writings."\(^2\) It appears impossible to entertain a serious discussion with Brunner's theology without reference to this dispute. For example, Leipold uses the controversy as a prism through which he views the development of Brunner's theology. However, since the controversy has generated considerable discussion elsewhere, we will confine our remarks to the new epistemological emphases presented by Brunner.

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\(^1\) *Natural Theology*, Comprising "Nature and Grace" by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the reply "No1" by Dr. Karl Barth, translated from the German by Peter Fraenkel, with an introduction by John Baillie (London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1946), p. 17.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 75.
One of the main points of contention was Brunner’s interpretation of the *imago dei*, a distinguishing characteristic of his theology of dialogue. During the first two periods of his thought, Brunner did not deal extensively with the doctrine of the *imago dei*. For example, in *Das Symbolische*, Brunner did not consider human sin to be an epistemological barrier to religious knowledge. In *The Mediator*, we find that sin does present such a barrier, but Brunner does not connect it to the doctrine of the image of God.

According to Brunner, Barth maintains that the image of God is entirely obliterated in the sinner and thus there is no trace of the lost image of God in man’s rational nature. Brunner replies that we must consider the image of God in man in two ways: the formal and the material.1 The formal structure, described in the Old Testament, is identical with human existence. God has endowed us with reason for the reception of the Word. This ability to receive the Word is not lost through human sin. The reception of the Word implies a responsibility before God which was originally given in love.

The gift of responsibility is the material image of God, described in the New Testament. It is "being-in-the-Word-of-God." As sinners, we no longer enjoy personal communion with God. In this respect, human personality is negated through sin and we have forefeited the material aspect of the image of God.2 Only by virtue of faith in Jesus Christ may we once again receive the personal Word of God in love.3

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1 Cf. *Dogmatics II*, p.55 and *Man In Revolt*, pp. 82ff.
A second epistemological emphasis concerns Brunner's renewed interest in general revelation. In his theology of dialogue, Brunner holds that both general and special revelation provide knowledge of God. His pre-dialectical position identified general revelation with human experience, thus excluding special revelation from his theology. During his dialectical period, Brunner's emphasis was entirely on special revelation, effectively denying any significant role to general revelation.

Brunner now accuses Barth of denying a general revelation of God in nature and responds that the world is the creation of God. "Where God does anything, he leaves the imprint of his nature upon what he does."¹ This imprint of nature includes the human conscience, or the consciousness of responsibility. People are able to sin only because they somehow know the will of God. Brunner applies the term "nature" to the permanent capacity to receive the revelation which God has bestowed upon his works.

The question, then, is not whether there are two kinds of revelation (general and special). The question is rather how the two revelations are related. Brunner holds that the revelation in creation would be sufficient for everyone to know God in his majesty and wisdom. However, human sin has dulled this perception, and as a result, the revelation in creation is not sufficient for salvation. Hence, God reveals himself anew in Jesus Christ. It is this revelation which shows God's true nature to sinful humanity. Only the

¹Natural Theology, p. 25.
Christian, the person who stands within the revelation of Christ, has true natural knowledge of God.\(^1\)

A third difference concerns the *lex naturae*. During the initial period of his thought, Brunner maintained that the categorical imperative represented a point of contact between humanity and God. In *The Mediator*, he saw the categorical imperative as a divisor between the temporal and transcendent planes. During the final period of his thought, Brunner interprets the categorical imperative in terms of the "ordinances of creation," which he claims are found apart from the revelation in Jesus Christ.\(^2\) One such example is monogamous marriage, the desire for which lies in human nature and is realized even by those who are ignorant of the revelation in Jesus Christ. Christians, on the other hand, recognize that monogamous marriage was instituted by the Creator.\(^3\)

(ii) *Man in Revolt*.

Brunner's theological exchange with Barth set the stage for the subsequent development of his theology. We should particularly take note of the renewed anthropological emphasis in his theology of dialogue. Brunner's main concern is not to provide an anthropological basis for theology, but rather to describe the theological existence of man. His treatment of the doctrine of sin is one of his major contributions to the discussion about the human situation.


\(^2\)*Natural Theology*, p. 29.

\(^3\)Cf. *Divine Imperative*, p. 140ff and Iibid., Bk III, and *Dog.* II ch. 8.
"Man is Revolt" is both the title of Brunner's Christian anthropology and his description of human existence. In Man in Revolt, he seeks to answer the question "What is man?" by answering, "The fundamental idea of my book is this: that even the unbeliever is still related to God, and therefore that he is responsible, and that this responsibility is not put out of action even by the fullest emphasis upon the generous grace of God, but, on the contrary, that God requires it."\(^1\) Two concerns occupy Brunner in Man in Revolt: an expansion on his thoughts concerning the imago dei and the incorporation of a doctrine of sin into his theology. In two regards, Brunner considers the question of anthropology to be the most important issue facing theology:\(^2\) "(a) as a subject of common concern in discussion with the unbelieving world; (b) as the basis of social ethics."\(^3\) He thus continues the thought of "The Other Task of Theology" and "The Point of Contact."

Brunner places his understanding of the doctrine of the imago Dei against the metaphysical solipsism and self-deification of idealism. In his description of idealism, nothing is able to stand against the self - a situation which removes responsibility from the individual. He explains, "The fundamental error of the non-Christian doctrine of reason is this: it implies reason without anyone to perceive, self-determination without any Divine determination, an irresponsible

\(^1\)Man in Revolt, p. 11.
\(^3\)Dogmatics, ii, p. 46.
rational self without any other being 'over against it'.

1 The non-Christian doctrine of man maintains the autonomy of individuals against God. As a corrective to this autonomy, Brunner introduces Ebner's and Buber's philosophy of dialogue, which places a "Thou" as the breakline to the "I."  

The problem of human sin is the second main theme of Brunner's anthropology. Brunner describes human sin as rebellion (the reversal of the original situation) and apostasy (disobedience to God). Sin is the spiritual defiance of the person who feels he owes his existence to himself and thus misunderstands freedom as independence. This rebellion, explained by the story of the Fall in Genesis, is also a denial of God.

The fact that we are created by God indicates that our whole existence is determined by our relation to God. Brunner describes our existence as one of "subjects-in-relation", or responsible relation. The generous love of God calls us to love Him in return. By sinning, we have given the wrong response to God. As a result of our sin, God's call has become distorted and we have lost our original freedom. God is now present to us in wrath; he is no longer present to us in love. Our relation to God, originally direct and personal, is now abstract. Although we remain moral personalities, we have lost the possibility of ordering our lives in accordance with our divine

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5 Dogmatics ii, pp. 119ff.
Rather than being personally addressed by God, we discover that something foreign and abstract, the Law, has come between ourselves and God.

Our struggle, in Brunner’s opinion, is against our human nature as God created it. We are "men in revolt." in that the direction of our lives is distorted, which leads to self-deification and to human deification of the world. This apotheosis is manifested in various states of conflict. The dialectic of human existence consists in the grandeur et misere de l’homme. Because of our sinful blindness, we misinterpret the traces of this greatness and this misery. Our interpretation of human existence oscillates between the overly-optimistic and the overly-pessimistic.

In his theology of dialogue, Brunner reflects at great length on the human situation. His anthropology during this period portrays a sinful human existence which has broken the personal relationship between God and man. Despite this sin, each individual is able to commune with God. However, the initiative for this communion lies entirely with God.

II. Brunner’s Dialogical Epistemology: The Divine-Human Encounter as the Source of Religious Knowledge.

Brunner’s dialectical theology emphasized special revelation as the source of religious knowledge. He maintained the superiority of the object of religion over the religious subject, thus sharply differentiating the two. The individual, as a passive participant, receives this knowledge by faith. In his eristic-dogmatic period,

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1Dógmatik, ii, pp. 118f.
2Dógmatik, ii, pp. 124ff; cf. Man in Revolt, pp. 172ff.
Brunner finally overcomes the subject-object antithesis with "encounter" by re-introducing the concept of human subjectivity into his theology. Brunner once again maintains, as he did during his pre-dialectical period, that the individual is an active participant in the process of acquiring religious knowledge.

Brunner delivered the Olaus Petri lectures at the University of Uppsala in the fall of 1937. The suggested topic of the lectures was the relation between the objective and the subjective in Christian Faith. "The concept of 'Truth as Encounter' came intuitively to my mind as the overcoming of this antithesis." Brunner defends the following thesis: The use of the objective-subject antithesis in understanding the truth of faith...is a disastrous misunderstanding. The Biblical understanding of truth cannot be grasped through the object-subject antithesis: on the contrary, it is falsified through it.

"Throughout the entire history of the Church we see two tendencies, objectivism and subjectivism competing with each other," contends Brunner. Objectivism, emphasizing the historical givenness of revelation, represents the tendency to seek security. Subjectivism, which emphasizes the free rule of the Spirit, represents the urge for freedom and spontaneity.

One of the opponents of subjectivism was dialectical theology, which sought to take the Biblical message in earnest. It listened to divine revelation and longed to hear about Jesus Christ the Mediator.

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1 Truth as Encounter, p. 2.
2 Ibid., p. 3.
3 Ibid., p. 69. The italics are in the translation.
4 Ibid., p. 70.
Hence, interest in "religion" disappeared. Brunner describes the unfortunate results of this theology:

Quite unnoticed, a neo-orthodox theology shapes itself out of the earlier dialectical theology, and it carried all the characteristic marks of objectivism: one-sided emphasis on doctrine, identification of doctrine with the Word of God, overvaluation of the formulated creed, of dogma; one-sided prominence given to the objective factor in preaching, the church being understood primarily in terms of doctrine, sacrament, and office, rather than as the fellowship of believers, the church being understood as institution; neglect of love in favor of orthodoxy, of practical discipleship in favor of a strict churchly attitude; misunderstanding of the missionary and pastoral task of the church as the result of a one-sided estimation of the sermon as the didactic expounding of the Bible and so forth.

In place of this objectivism, Brunner offers "The Biblical Understanding of Truth." As he did during the dialectical period of his thought, he holds that the Bible is the source and norm for Christian theology. The Bible deals with a God who approaches man: "The God of the Bible is always the God of man." Similarly, the Bible describes the man who comes from God: "Man in the Bible is always the man of God." In Brunner's reading of the Bible, God creates a counterpart, man, who has the power to be.

Accordingly, he believes two words summarize the human relation to God: lordship and fellowship. God's Lordship, His sovereign relation to humanity, "is his self-affirmation 'over against' and in the creature." God can do what He wills with His creation:

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1 Ibid., pp. 82ff.
2 Ibid., p. 88.
3 Ibid., p. 88.
4 Ibid., p. 97.
"That God really is Creator means that the creature has neither right nor power that is not derived from God."\textsuperscript{1} The creature has the power of knowing and acknowledging God. This power permits the creature to share in the essential nature of God - the power to be a subject.

The second characteristic of God's relation to humanity is fellowship. God creates in order that He may communicate Himself in love. He wants His creature to acknowledge Him as Lord and to obey Him by unconditionally loving Him. Fellowship presupposes Lordship; Lordship is fulfilled in fellowship. God's Lordship and love can only be known by His self-revelation, which is the basis of the personal correspondance between Himself and man. In His will to be known as Lord, God communicates in love.

Brunner describes two constitutive concepts for God's personal self-communication. The first concept is the Word, which "is the way in which mind communicates with mind, subject with subject, will with will."\textsuperscript{2} The Word discloses the secret of God's person and places God's will in front of man. The second concept is faith, which, Brunner now insists, entails more than mere passive acceptance of the Word on the part of man. Acceptance of the Word is a highly personal activity.

Throughout the final two periods of his theology, Brunner maintains that we receive revelation by faith. During his dialectical period, Brunner appeared to stress the cognitive idea of faith. His new understanding of the concept of faith is found in the third

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 94.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 102.
volume of his *Dogmatics*, where he credits Luther with rediscovering the significance of faith. We may also say that Brunner has rediscovered the significance of Luther. Brunner now defines faith as man's existence relative to God. Human individuals exist either in faith or in unbelief.\(^1\) In this regard he also recognizes the influence of Kierkegaard, whom he says "restored to its central position the question of the nature of faith."\(^2\)

Brunner cites several words which mean either "faith" (Glaube) or "to believe" (glauben): fides, fiducia, credere, pistis and pisteuein. "...all contain the element of loyalty and trust, of confidence, of security and of obedience as their decisive elements, this faith which always refers to God's speaking and active Person and personal and total commitment on the part of man..."\(^3\) Brunner defines the theme of faith: "That Jesus is the Christ, that in Him God addresses us as Lord and reveals and promises His Lordship to us and makes known this Lordship as the Lordship of His self-bestowing love..."\(^4\)

During this final period of his thought, Brunner moves from the concept of faith as fides to a concept of fiducia, as shown by his preference for the Greek term pistis and the infinitive pisteuein to characterize the concept "obedience-in-trust."\(^5\) In *EEG* Brunner specifically criticized Ritschl for defining faith as trust. Faith, he now

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\(^{1}\)*Dogmatics*, III, p. 140.

\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. ix.

\(^{3}\)Ibid., p. 176.

\(^{4}\)Ibid., p. 178.

\(^{5}\)Ibid., p. 104.
maintains, is not a psychological attitude, but submission to the way of salvation determined by God and described by Christ.¹

Brunner defines faith and belief largely in terms of Ebner's philosophy of dialogue. According to Brunner, faith testifies "I believe." By this confession, I state that I as an individual do not belong to myself. The act of believing is an admission that I belong to another and that I must acknowledge a personal Thou. This acknowledgment represents the transformation from human autonomy to dependence on God.²

Unbelief, or the will to assert one's own autonomy which is typical of "religion," is the opposite of faith. Brunner refuses to condemn all non-Christian religions as superstition (orthodoxy) or to consider all religions, including Christianity, as variants of the same basic fundamental religious phenomenon (the history of religions school). As does the Christian, the unbeliever also knows the categorical imperative. However, the unbeliever identifies this ethical law with the will of the self, which leads to self-justification and self-confirmation.³

Brunner disagrees with Buber's description of the two types of faith, calling it "a major attack on Christianity."⁴ In Brunner's opinion, the Old Testament lacks the historical self-communication of God because the three revelatory offices (prophet, priest and king) are not united in one person. According to Brunner, Buber restates

¹Ibid., p. 164.
²Ibid., pp. 141ff.
³Ibid., p. 148f.
⁴Ibid., p. 160.
the thesis of liberal theology by distinguishing between the teachings of Jesus and Paul.¹

Brunner connects the concepts of love (agape) and faith (pistis) by defining agape as God's voluntary self-giving and pistis as the active receiving of this love. Both terms imply something unconditional: agape is unconditional love and pistis is unconditional trust. Hence, there is a connection between the Word of God, offered in love, and faith, which accepts the Word.

In its complete dependence on God, faith is the only human act which is unconditioned. In return for this dependence, man receives himself completely from the hand of God. In faith man possesses no truth except God's truth. This truth is the appropriation of God's self-revelation. This appropriation is an act. There is no longer an antithesis between object and subject. There is only a personal encounter.

According to Brunner, the fact that God created man for this personal encounter indicates that the original human condition or created nature of man was one of faith. Sin is an aberation, an apostasy from this created nature. Faith actually precedes sin. The problem of truth, as the Bible speaks of it, "is represented with regard to sinful man who is called to faith through Jesus Christ."²

Brunner describes Biblical truth as "encounter," which means that the truth is not in man, but must come to him. Six points follow.³ First, truth as encounter is an attack on autonomous reason, which,

²Ibid., p. 110.
³Truth as Encounter, pp. 21ff.
since it is "Thou-less," regards the truth as the result of its own initiative. Consequently, it considers man to be self-sufficient. Brunner, following Kierkegaard, says that the truth originates from a point outside of humanity, thus opening up the possibilities of an "I-Thou" dialogue.

Second, truth as encounter "is the Word of the Thou which opens the self-enclosed self."¹ It is not the logos of the Greeks. Brunner thinks the Greeks were correct when they called the logos the principle of truth. However, in their failure to attribute a personal element to the Logos, they understood it as meaning and as thought, not as communication.

Third, in connecting the historical and personal characteristics of truth as encounter, Brunner believes he guards against two non-biblical antitheses. The first antithesis is the a-historical character of traditional reason, which in his view deals with substantives and not verbs. The Word of God, on the other hand, always expresses activity in verb and deed. The second antithesis is impersonalism which is used by philosophy to deal with an abstract individual. It fails to see that in the Bible God deals personally with an individual.

Fourth, the Word binds personal being and love together. "Love, not justice!" demands Brunner.² Love is personal; justice is impersonal. The Greek concept of justice knows nothing of agape, or self-surrendering, uncaused love. The I-Thou communication from God to humanity is one of love, not justice. It tells us that God loves us and acts towards us in a personal manner.

¹Ibid., p. 22.
Fifth, in expanding on his fourth point, Brunner portrays self-communicating love as disclosing the meaning of human life. In our dealing with other persons, we must go beyond legal prescriptions by living in loving fellowship with other people. In this respect, every human encounter becomes an encounter with God.

Finally, truth is not held or possessed. Truth lays hold of us; it comes to us. In this regard, it is identical with grace.

Truth as Encounter shows us that Brunner has fully incorporated the thought of Ebner into his theology. He uses Ebner's philosophy of dialogue to overcome the subject-object antithesis which characterized his earlier theology. In Das Symbolische, Brunner's emphasis was on the subjective aspect of religious knowledge. In this book, Brunner described Jesus as one religious subject among others. During the following period of his thought, Brunner emphasized the objective aspect of religious knowledge. The human role in religious knowledge was merely passive in that individuals receive special revelation.

Here, in the final period of his thought, Brunner grants an active epistemological role to humanity. The individual encounters God and responds to Him. By granting this active role to human subjects, Brunner has moved towards his pre-dialectical position. We must note, however, that Brunner's pre-dialectical epistemology placed the initiative on the human side of religious knowledge. During the final two periods of his thought, Brunner places the epistemological initiative on the divine side of the equation.

Brunner's dialogical understanding of faith retains the dialectical emphasis on the divine initiative. This divine initiative is God's self-
revelation and is a continuous, on-going act. Brunner adds a human subjective element to this divine self-revelation. This subjective element is the human response to God's self-communication. This human response is never a state, but a continuous, dynamic process.

The aspect of trust, missing in Brunner's dialectical epistemology, shows the renewed anthropological interest of Brunner's theology. Brunner now grants an active role to the human subject. This new understanding of the nature of faith is due in part to the influence of Luther and Kierkegaard.

III. Brunner's Dialogical Soteriology.

During this final period of his thought, Brunner utilizes an epistemology which emphasizes neither the subjective nor objective element of religious knowledge. His soteriology must also seek a model which mediates between the subjective position of his predialectical theology and the objective position of his dialectical period. The soteriological model for this final period of Brunner's thought is Gustaf Aulén's Christus Victor.


Gustaf Aulén's Christus Victor is among the most far-reaching theological criticisms of both Anselm's and Abelard's view of the atonement. In place of the "Latin/objective" view of Anselm and the "Subjective" view of Abelard, Aulen offers the "dramatic view" or Christus Victor.¹ He explains, "The central idea of Christus Victor is the view of God and the Kingdom of God as fighting against evil

powers ravaging in mankind."¹ There are two characteristics of this view. First, it is a doctrine of the atonement in the full sense of the word. That is, it is a work wherein God reconciles the world to Himself and is at the same time reconciled. Second, this theory of the atonement sees this reconciliation as a continuous divine work. In contrast, the objective view sees the atonement as originating in God's will. However, the act of atonement is an offering made to God by Christ acting on as man and on man's behalf and is, therefore, a discontinuous divine work. The subjective view describes a change which takes place only in man. In this view, God himself is not reconciled.

Aulén contends that the dramatic view of the atonement is the dominant idea in the New Testament.² He also finds the dramatic view in the theology of Irenaeus and Luther. "It has therefore every right to claim the title of the classic idea of the Atonement."³

Aulén cites several reasons for the historic neglect of the classic view of the atonement, beginning with the controversial background of the theology of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries.⁴ The historians of dogma either attacked or defended Protestant Orthodoxy. One of the thinkers who took issue with Protestant Orthodoxy was Harnack, who posited a subjective view of the atonement. In his The Mediator, Brunner reacted to Harnack's liberalism and defended the view of the atonement held by Protestant Orthodoxy.

¹ Ibid., ix.
² Ibid., p. 6.
³ Ibid., p. 7.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 7-12.
A second reason for the neglect of the classic view is that it was often confused with the Latin view. Aulén thinks the influence exercised by Anselm's theory was so great that the classic view was never articulated systematically as was the Latin view. As a result, neither the conservative theologians who defended Protestant Orthodoxy nor the liberal theologians who attacked it were disposed to consider the classic view.

In Aulén's opinion, the most significant reason for the neglect of the classic view is its dualistic character. Dualism was not popular with Liberal Protestantism, which emphasized the continuity between God and humanity. The classic view of the atonement sees a constant dualism between God and the created world which resists his will.

Aulén believes he can trace the history of classic view of the atonement from the New Testament through the Reformation. Although Brunner claimed the support of Irenaeus and Luther for his defence of the penal theory in The Mediator, Aulén insists that a correct reading of these two theologians shows that they prefer the classic view of the atonement.

Aulén has the unfortunate tendency of finding the classic view of the atonement wherever he finds the terminology "sin," death," and "devil." He finds this terminology in Irenaeus, who links the atonement together with the incarnation. He asks, "Why did he descend?" The answer: "That He might destroy sin, overcome death, and give life to man." The atonement in Irenaeus's thought,

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according to Aulén, "is first and foremost a victory over the powers which hold mankind in bondage."¹ The incarnation announces that God himself accomplishes the atoning work. The atonement represents the recapitulation or renewal of the relationship between God and humanity.

Aulén ties the concepts of sin and death together. He also adheres to the doctrine of total depravity: sin affects the entire person. Humanity lost its original fellowship with God because of sin. This apostasy involves guilt, which leads to death. Irenaeus also sees sin as alienation from God, which, according to Aulén, shows that he did not regard sin or salvation moralistically. Perhaps he is reacting here to the ethical emphasis liberal theology placed on the atonement.

Aulén's cautions against emphasizing the death of Christ to such a degree that the rest of Christ's earthly existence is ignored. The atonement involves the entire earthly existence of Jesus Christ. As did Irenaeus, he places great emphasis on the obedience of Christ during his life on earth. Christ's obedience is His triumph, which is a continuous process of victorious conflict. This view of Christ's life on earth leads to the double-sidedness of the atonement. The "double-sidedness" of the atonement means that God is both Reconciler and Reconciled. Aulén, unfortunately, lapses into terminology reminiscent of the ransom-to-Satan theories: "The sacrifice of Christ has relation both to God and to the powers of evil."²

¹Christus Victor, p. 20.
²Ibid., p. 31.
He takes issue with those who interpret Irenaeus in light of Anselm's theory, contending, "To read Irenaeus in the light of the Latin theory is, however, to miss the essential distinction. He does not think of the Atonement as an offering made to God by Christ from man's side, or as it were from below; for God remains throughout the effective agent in the work of redemption." However, when Aulén writes (regarding Irenaeus's view of the atonement), "Christ came down from heaven because no power other than that of God Himself was able to accomplish the work that was to be done. Incarnation and atoning work are thus set in the closest possible relation to one another; both belong to one scheme," he merely repeats the thought of Anselm.

Aulén also claims the support of Luther for his interpretation of the atonement. He admits there are elements of the Latin theory in Luther's thought, but insists that Luther's theory of the atonement follows the classic view. He gives three reasons for this preference:

First, in those places where it is altogether necessary for him to express himself with the greatest possible care and the greatest possible exactness, as, for instance, in the Catechisms, he always returns to the dramatic idea.

Second, he himself repeatedly assures us, with all possible clearness, that the statements of the meaning of the Atonement in dramatic terms give the very essence of the Christian faith; they are capitalia nostrae theologiae.

Third, and chiefly, the dramatic view of the work of Christ stands in organic relation with his theological outlook as a whole.

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2Christus Victor, p. 33.
3Ibid., p. 104.
In Aulén's opinion, Luther's theology has the three main characteristics of the classic view. First, there is the continuity of divine operation, represented by God's omnipotence. Second, the atonement is closely connected with the incarnation, emphasizing the deity of Christ. Third, Luther's view is dualistic and dramatic.

In his reaction to the Catholic mass, Luther refused to admit the possibility of any man-made sacrifice offered as propitiation to God. According to Aulén, two results ensue: the sacrifice of Christ cannot be made by Christ's human nature, and, Luther's thought is incapable of being interpreted in accord with the Latin theory. "There should, then, be no doubt at all that in Luther we meet again the classic idea of the Atonement."¹ In his analysis of Luther's soteriology, Aulén emphasizes the Reformer's hymns of praise which describe the triumph of Christ over the devil and other evil powers. His argument would be more convincing if he also cited Luther's commentaries and theological works.

Aulén's criticisms of Anselm and Abelard, and the alternatives he presents to these theories, highlight the emphases of the classic view of the atonement. The Latin view emphasizes the discontinuity of divine operation and continuity in the order of justice and merit: the satisfaction to God's justice is carried out by a sinless man, not by God himself. The subjective view also does not see the atonement carried out by God. Instead, it is carried out by an exemplar Ideal

¹Ibid., p. 108. This is disputed by Paul Althaus, op. cit., p. 222: "It is (therefore) a significant misinterpretation of Luther to classify him one-sidedly as a representative of the 'classic type' as the Lundensians do. On the contrary, Luther combines the classical and the Latin concepts - to use Aulen's term - but in such a way that he decisively follows the Latin line."
Man. As a result, God now sees man in a new light. Aulén complains that neither of these two views place enough emphasis on the incarnation. In the Latin view, Christ as sinless man atones on behalf of sinful humanity. This theory does not view the Father as the direct agent in the atonement. The subjective view presents Christ as an example of a peculiarly abstract and unreal idealized humanity. Aulén says, "The classic type shows a continuity of divine operation, and a discontinuity in the order of merit and justice."¹

Second, Aulén contends the Latin theory takes a materialized view of sin. This emphasis on objectification of the doctrine of sin obstructs the direct and personal relationship between God and man. The subjective view, on the other hand, sees sin as an infirmity, interpreting it in a physical, naturalistic and moralistic manner. In its failure to maintain the radical hostility of God toward evil, the subjective theory sees forgiveness as mere remission of punishment. In contrast to these two views, "The classic type regards sin as an objective power standing behind men, and the Atonement as the triumph of God over sin, death and the devil."²

Aulén's third criticism is the view of salvation offered by each of the other two theories of the atonement. The Latin view, interpreting the atonement as a series of acts, fails to see salvation as a unified whole. The first step is satisfaction or the death of Christ, followed by justification and sanctification. The result of this trifurcation is that the third act, sanctification, has no organic connection with the preceding two acts. The subjective view is

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¹Christus Victor, p. 145.
²Ibid., p. 147.
psychological, emphasizing the spectacle of the suffering Christ which
exercises a moral influence on people. The locus and content of
salvation are the changes wrought in an individual through the moral
influence of the spectacle of Christ's suffering. Their changed
behavior results in harmony, peace of mind and self-realization. In
Aulén's view, only Christus Victor maintains the unified whole of
salvation: "The classic idea of salvation is that the victory which
Christ gained once for all is continued in the work of the Holy Spirit
and its fruits reaped."\(^1\)

Aulén's fourth complaint concerns the relation between the
incarnation and the atonement. He maintains that the Latin view
does not clearly see the connection between the two. This short-
sightedness removes God from the atoning work. The objective
theory of the atonement maintains that Christ as man makes
atonement on behalf of humanity. The subjective view lays the
emphasis on Christ's human nature, holding that Jesus is merely an
exemplary man. In the classic view, "The conflict and triumph of
Christ is God's own conflict and triumph; it is God who in Christ
reconciles the world to Himself. The Incarnation is the necessary
presupposition of the Atonement, and the Atonement the completion
of the Incarnation."\(^2\)

The concept of God is the final category Aulén uses to criticize the
two views of the atonement. In the Latin view God's retributive
justice replaces his divine personal wrath. God becomes more
remote and he is not free to act. Since the sin of humanity places an

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 150.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 151.
obstacle in front of his mercy, God cannot act mercifully until his justice receives compensation. Compensation removes the obstacle of human sin. The subjective view completely obliterates the opposition of God to sin by trivializing sin. This view states that God's main characteristic is unchanging love. However, this divine love has become humanized and therefore stereotyped. In the classic view, the opposition is overcome in that "the Divine Love prevails over the Wrath, the Blessing overcomes the Curse, by the way of Divine self-oblation and sacrifice."\(^1\)

2. Brunner's *Dogmatics*, Vol. II.

(i) The Work of Christ.

During his dialectical period, Brunner arrived at a doctrine of the work of Christ deductively. In the *Dogmatics* Brunner works inductively: "For the person of Christ can be discerned from his work."\(^2\) He works from Melachthon's well known dictum, *Hoc est Christum cognoscere, beneficia ejus cognoscere*, which he had earlier rejected as too anthropocentric.

As he did in *The Mediator*, Brunner discusses the work of Jesus Christ in terms of the three offices. Each of these three offices is characterized by a verbal noun, emphasizing the *activity* of Christ. By maintaining the epistemological emphasis of encounter, Brunner moves away from his dialectical preference for faith as *fides*, which stressed the objectivity of the doctrine of the two natures.

In the excercise of His prophetic office, Christ *reveals*. The departure point for Christ's prophetic office is his activity during his

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 153.

\(^2\) *Dogmatics*, vol. II, p. 271.
life on earth. Brunner maintains the distinction he made in The Mediator regarding the relation of Jesus to the other prophets. Jesus is unlike other prophets in that his Word cannot be separated from His person.

Although the teaching of Jesus is very important, Brunner cautions against two errors. The first is the error of Harnack, who wrote, "Not the Son, but only the Father belongs to the Gospel as Jesus proclaimed it."¹ Harnack failed to identify the person and teaching of Jesus, overlooking the fact that the teaching of Jesus cannot be understood apart from his person. The second error consists in the tendency to turn the teaching of Jesus into "pure Christology," a tendency Brunner displayed in The Mediator.² He now believes this type of exposition suppresses the real meaning of Jesus's teaching.

In the exercise of his prophetic office, Jesus does not abrogate the law of the Old Testament. Instead, he summarizes the law in hissummons to absolute love. This summons is the imperative aspect of the Kingdom of God, which represents God's sovereignty. The Kingdom is the actual presence of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

The prophetic work of Jesus does not end with his own teaching. It points to something beyond. At this juncture, according to Brunner, God encounters mankind: "At the point where Jesus completes His life He reveals these three things: the Reality of God as Holy and Merciful, the reality of man as sinner, and the genuine

²Ibid., p. 276.
reality of man in God. Thus the revealing work of Jesus culminates in His priestly Work of reconciliation."¹

In his priestly work, Jesus reconciles God and sinful individuals. Although the priestly work of Christ culminates in His death on the cross, it certainly does not begin there. The priestly work of Christ encompasses his entire earthly existence. Christ's reconciling work is not only his passive obedience; it also includes his active obedience. Christ actively fulfilled the law because he fulfilled its meaning of agape. He proclaimed justification by faith alone during his entire life. Hence, Brunner contends that we must understand the cross in terms of the life of Christ.

Brunner describes several methods for interpreting the meaning of the crucifixion. The first method of interpretation is offered by the sacrificial cultus of the Old Testament. In the cultus, sacrifices were offered as an atonement for the injury done to God's holy honor by human sin. This interpretation states that we have forfeited our lives by our rebellion against our Creator and Lord.

The second interpretation is the idea of penal suffering, which also uses the imagery of the sacrificial cultus. The difference between the two views is that the idea of sacrifice has been moved from the sphere of the cultus to the sphere of public law. According to the penal theory of the atonement, the obedient Servant of the Lord suffers death on behalf of sinful humanity. This, of course, was the interpretation preferred by Brunner in The Mediator.

¹Ibid., p. 280f.
Brunner is to be commended for his third interpretation, that of Grotius. The main idea of this interpretation, according to Brunner, is that of guilt. The background of this interpretation lies in the area of civil law. The atonement falls on the "contract."¹

The creditor can, as Jesus says in His parable, tear up the 'bond' and in so doing cancel the debt. This third conception is suggested in the chapter on the Suffering Servant: He, the 'Righteous Servant' shall cover the deficit which they owe with something of His own and in so doing the 'bond'... which was against us is cancelled. He 'redeems us', and indeed He 'pays' at the cost of His life, and in this act He sets us free, through 'the blood of the covenant shed for many unto remission of sins'.

The fourth interpretation replaces the idea of atonement with that of redemption. Brunner's description follows Aulen's interpretation of the classic view:²

Here the idea is that of a struggle for power between God and the hostile powers of darkness which enslave and corrupt man, from which, however, God through Christ rescues the booty, by delivering man from the 'power of darkness' and 'translating' him 'into the Kingdom of the Son of His love'. The Cross achieves a real spoliatio hostium, which ends in a triumphal procession of the victor.

The final interpretation is that of the Paschal sacrifice, found in the imagery of Exodus. This interpretation holds that the blood of the New Covenant ends the Old Dispensation and initiates a new relationship between God and ourselves.

Brunner finds all of these interpretations interwoven in the New Testament, but he cautions that they are a posteriori ideas. They

¹ Ibid., p.285.
² Ibid., p. 285.
have two things in common: "owing to Sin, man's situation in relation to God is dangerous, sinister, and disastrous. But man cannot alter this situation. God alone can do this; and He has done it in Jesus Christ, through His Death on the Cross."\(^1\) Each interpretation indicates a transformation of the human situation and describes an act of God which points to "something" beyond.

Brunner asks the question, "What is it?"\(^2\) What is this "something" indicated by these theories of the atonement and redemption? He contends the theories of Abelard and Anselm are unable to answer this question. In Abelard's subjective theory, the cross was the supreme demonstration of divine love. His main criticism of Abelard is that this subjective theory fails to account objectively for human guilt. In Abelard's view, guilt is merely the mistaken opinion that we are separate from God.

Brunner criticizes Anselm for working deductively (as he himself did in The Mediator) in order to arrive at his theory of the atonement. According to Brunner, when Anselm writes in *Cur Deus Homo*, "God could not do otherwise,"\(^3\) he places an *a priori* necessity upon God. His second criticism is that Anselm portrays God as the object of the atonement: God is reconciled. Brunner contends that this is not the teaching of the New Testament, where we see that it is *people* and not God who are reconciled. He explains, "We are not dealing with a purely subjective or a purely objective process, but

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 286.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 287.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 290.
with an Event which is both objective and subjective at the same time, a truth of 'encounter'.'\(^1\)

This Event is necessary because communion with God has been destroyed by sin. Humanity cannot extricate itself from this state of separation. The state of separation can only be removed by God who must personally intervene in the human situation if there is to be a restoration of fellowship.

Fellowship cannot be restored by mere forgiveness which exists apart from the suffering of Christ. Brunner insists that forgiveness is connected with the death of Christ - an historical event which cannot be achieved by human individuals. "The message of the Cross is the highest expression of the fact that forgiveness cannot be taken for granted; forgiveness is God's act of reconciliation."\(^2\) The separation of forgiveness from the cross leads to the thought of Fichte's *System der Sittenlehre*. As he did in *The Mediator*, Brunner believes there is a continuous path from Abelard to German idealism.

Brunner finds three parts to the message of the cross. First, the cross reveals the incomprehensible, unconditional love of God. God demonstrates this love by penetrating into the depths of human existence in the person of Jesus Christ. Second, the cross reveals that God takes his own law seriously: He cannot merely overlook the trespass of his law. Finally, the cross discloses the human situation in that it is there that we see ourselves judged and justified.

The royal work of Jesus is his exercise of his lordship: he *rules*. Jesus did not merely proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God as

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 290.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 295.
did the prophets before him. If Jesus only proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom, he would be merely one of the prophets. Instead, he inaugurated this New Age and represented it in his own Person.

Jesus exercised his power in the "vicarious suffering for sinful humanity,"\(^1\) breaking down the sinful resistance of the ego to the will of God. "In faith in the atoning act of Jesus Christ on the Cross this self-determining 'I' is broken down, and in its place there comes the 'I' which accepts its life from the hands of God and dedicates himself to the service of God."\(^2\)

Brunner warns against identifying the Kingdom of God with this age. According to Brunner, the existence of the state is a sign that the rule of Christ is not yet realized. "The Lordship of Christ is therefore only a reality where men actually 'bow the knee' to Him, that is, in the Church."\(^3\) Christ is the authority in the community of persons who actually obey His will.

Brunner interprets the three offices of Christ as a unified whole. Jesus Christ, as the Revealer, is the light of the world who shows us that because of the guilt of our sin we live under the wrath of God. As Reconciler, Jesus Christ restores the broken communion between God and man. Jesus Christ the Redeemer breaks the power of sin which places us in opposition to God.

Brunner's description of the three offices of Christ show the dependence of his soteriology upon his epistemology. The revelatory office of Christ demonstrates that God takes the initiative in

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 299.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 300.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 303.
approaching mankind. This initiative is best explained by a doctrine of special revelation. Although Brunner incorporates a doctrine of general revelation into his theology of dialogue, he denies that this type of revelation has salvific efficacy.

The priestly work of Christ shows the importance of truth as encounter. In his role as reconcilor, Jesus Christ encounters sinful individuals. This encounter represents our source of religious knowledge, telling us that in Jesus Christ, God articulates his desire to resume loving fellowship with humanity. Outside of the person of Jesus Christ, we find no expression of God's desire for fellowship.

Christ's royal work demonstrates the primacy of faith as an epistemological category. We resume our fellowship with God by recognizing his lordship and sovereignty, which are presented to us by Christ's introduction of the Kingdom. We enter into this renewed fellowship in faith - the human response to God's call. The individual who responds affirmatively to God's call enters into a trusting relationship with him. The existence of this relationship is dependent upon both the divine and human participants. Without the loving initiative of God or the trusting response of the individual, there would be no relationship.

2. A Comparison of Aulén's Christus Victor and Brunner's Dogmatics II.

There are several similarities between the Christus Victor soteriology of Aulén and volume II of Brunner's Dogmatics. Most importantly, they both seek a balance between the objective and subjective interpretations of the atonement. For Brunner, this is entirely consistent with the epistemology he uses during this final
period of his thought. In his criticism of Abelard and Anselm, Aulen
highlighted five essential components of his theory of the atonement.
We can find elements of each of these components in Brunner's
theology during his eristic-dogmatic period.

First, Aulén insisted that a proper view of the atonement
maintains the continuity of divine operation. Brunner presents the
three-fold work of Christ (prophet, priest and king) as a single
divine activity. Throughout his discussion of the work of Christ, he
contends that God takes the initiative. However, there is one
important distinction between the thought of Aulén and Brunner on
this point. Aulen maintains that both God and individuals are
reconciled by the atonement. Brunner disagrees, saying that God is
not reconciled. In his view, it is only sinful individuals who are in
need of reconciliation.

Second, Aulén describes sin as an objective power standing
behind men. Brunner, in his theology of dialogue, substitutes an
ethical dualism in place of the metaphysical dualism of The Mediator
which he based on the doctrine of the two natures. This new
dualism, arising as the result of human sin, has epistemological
consequences. Apart from Christ, according to Brunner, we are
dependent on human reason and the categorical imperative for
religious knowledge. The categorical imperative, however, only leads
to a natural and abstract knowledge of God. This abstract knowledge
does not tell us that God desires personal communication with each
one of us.

The third similarity concerns the unity of the "components" of
salvation. Aulén interprets the work of salvation as a unified whole.
He does not see justification, regeneration and sanctification as a series of acts. Brunner agrees partially with Aulén, viewing justification, regeneration and sanctification all as aspects of the same act which Christ does through the Holy Spirit.\(^1\) Justification, which Brunner calls "the perfected form of faith," is "God's personal assurance in which he addresses 'me' in spite of my sin as His beloved son, an assurance that I ought to believe and can believe because it is based upon the reconciling act of His Son Jesus Christ."\(^2\) Regeneration is a special aspect of justification, "the creation of the person through God's historical self-communication."\(^3\) Sanctification is double-sided: on the side of God, sanctification is part of God's unique justifying act in Jesus Christ; on the side of man, sanctification is a series of acts.\(^4\)

The fourth similarity is the connection between the Work and Person of Christ. As does Aulén, Brunner emphasizes the *entire* life of Christ, not just the crucifixion. This emphasis maintains the connection between the Incarnation and the atonement, found in Brunner's discussion of Christ's state on the Cross. Brunner's examination of the work and life of Christ in terms of the prophetic, priestly and royal offices shows that it is by virtue of His deity that each of these offices receives its revelatory and soteriological significance.

Finally, Aulén holds that the atonement demonstrated the triumph of God's love over His wrath. In volume I of his *Dogmatics*,

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\(^1\) Cf. *Dogmatics* III, Section II.
\(^2\) Ibid., III, p. 191.
\(^3\) Ibid., III, p. 269.
\(^4\) Ibid., III, pp. 290-293
Brunner describes God as *agape*, "The statement 'God is love' points to the very message of the New Testament, of the Christian Gospel."\(^5\) He prefers this characterization because "Holiness creates distance, but love creates communion."\(^6\) The entire life of Jesus fulfilled this meaning of *agape*, or God's desire for fellowship. The work of Jesus represents the triumph of divine love (fellowship) over divine wrath (separation).

3. The Person of Christ.

Who can reveal, reconcile and rule? Brunner answers that only God can accomplish these tasks. This premise, from which he arrives at the doctrine of the deity of Christ, is basic to Brunner's Christology during this final period of his thought.

In Brunner's view, the person of Jesus Christ is a mystery. Was Christ a man like ourselves? Brunner answers affirmatively. Jesus was born of a woman and tempted as we are. His knowledge was limited by human conditions. We must also affirm that Jesus was not a man like ourselves. Although he was tempted, he was not defeated by this temptation and sin played no part in his life. He was the personification of the Holy Love of God.

The deity of Christ occupies a central place in Brunner's theology of dialogue. He criticizes three errant views. The first view regards Jesus as an example (Vorbild). According to Brunner, this concept is only half true. Although it holds that Jesus was *the* true Man, it overlooks the other half of the Chalcedonian Creed which states that Jesus was also true God. The second view sees Jesus as the perfect

\(^6\) *Dog.* I, p. 188.
ideal (Urbild). This view relatives sin by maintaining that ethical-religious perfection is a human possibility which can be attained without relation to Jesus. The final view sees Jesus as a religious genius, holding that Jesus is different in degree from other prophets, not different in kind. It is an anthropological category which constructs a fluid border between genius and non-genius.

Brunner also criticizes three unacceptable interpretations of the person of Christ. The first unacceptable alternative is adoptionism. Instead of placing the authority of Jesus in his person, adoptionism sees it as residing in his inspiration and states that the messiahship of Jesus was attested by his resurrection. This view, according to Brunner, divorces Jesus' messiahship from his activity on earth. The second theory is Sabellianism, which separates the personal being of Jesus from the Godhead. Sabellianism overlooked the fact that the Son is the revealer of the Father; he is not the Father. It confused the persons of God the Son and God the Father. The final view is Arianism, to which Brunner responds that if Jesus was a created being, his divinity is not genuine. If Jesus indeed reveals the Father, he must Himself be God.

Brunner reacts against the contention that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth furnishes protection against heretical views of the person of Christ. Each of the three unsatisfactory views of the person of Christ subscribed to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. In his opinion, the Bible tells us that God became man, it does not tell us
how this event occurred. In other words, the Gospel narratives do not deal with the origin of the Person of Christ. Brunner comments,¹

The great, unthinkable, unimaginable miracle of the Incarnation which the Apostles proclaim, is not that the Son of God was born as the son of a virgin, but that the Eternal Son of God, who from all eternity was in the bosom of the Father, uncreated, Himself proceeding from the Being of God Himself, became Man; that He, the eternal and personal Word of God, meets us in Jesus Christ as man, of our flesh and blood, as our Lord, who in His existence manifest to us the Being of His Father, and as the Redeemer, in whom we have reconciliation and free access to God and are true sons of God, if we believe in Him.

In his Dogmatics, Brunner places less emphasis on the doctrine of the two natures than he did during his dialectical period. According to Brunner, the doctrine of the two natures tells us that we have reached the limits of human understanding and further speculation leads to "Monophysitism" or "Diophysitism." He acknowledges his tendency in The Mediator "to deny to Jesus full human personality."²

In Brunner's opinion, each of these two unsatisfactory views (Monophysitism and Diophysitism) emphasizes a necessary Christological component. The monophysite view says that Jesus must have a divine nature in order to reveal God. The diophysite view states that the human nature of Jesus is genuine. It was the genius of the doctrine of the two natures to combine the strength of each view and show us that the human in Christ is human and the divine is divine. They are not the same thing.

¹Ibid., p. 356.
²Ibid., p. 360.
Brunner further expands upon his dialectical Christology by coherently incorporating the "states" of Christ into his theology. The first state is the cross. Jesus's death on the cross was the completion of the incarnation. It is the place where God meets man. Brunner interprets the impotence of the Son of God on the Cross as the "spoliatio diaboli."¹

The second state described by Brunner is the descent into hell. Protestantism interprets the descent into hell either as the beginning of Jesus' exaltation (Lutheran) or the deepest point of his humiliation (Reformed). Brunner prefers the Reformed view: the *descensus ad infernos* is a description of Jesus's spiritual suffering.

Jesus' resurrection is his third state. Brunner emphasizes the appearances of Jesus over the Empty Tomb in the Resurrection narratives. He considers the post-resurrection appearances of the risen Lord as the basis of the Christian Church. The Church knows Christ as the living, present Lord.

Brunner contends the emphasis on the empty tomb led to the medieval conception of the resurrection of the body. His differentiation between the resurrection of the body and the resurrection of the flesh reinforces his doctrine of the continuity of the individual personality, which was a point of contention in his controversy with Barth:²

Resurrection of the body, yes: Resurrection of the *flesh*, no! The "'Resurrection of the body' does not mean the identity of the resurrection body with the material (although already transformed) body of flesh; but the resurrection of

¹Ibid., p. 363.
²Ibid., p. 373.
the body means the continuity of the individual personality
on this side, and on that, of death.

In his discussion of Christ's third state, Brunner further applies
the classic view of the atonement to his Christology. The resurrection
announces that Jesus is the victor over death and the grave. He is
not the victor because He was raised from the dead, he is the victor
because he is the God-man. As such, he could not remain subject to
death.

The fourth state is the ascension of Jesus, which Brunner rejects
based on the "irreconcilable contradiction"\(^1\) of the doctrine with the
message of the New Testament. He denies that his discomfort arises
from the modern twentieth-century view of the world, which is
different than the world-view of the Bible. His rejection is based on
the fact that he does not find the doctrine of the ascension in the
Gospels.

The fifth state, the exaltation, "is absolutely central for faith."\(^2\) It
expresses the truth that in the resurrection the humanity and deity
of Christ are henceforth bound together. Jesus is our mediator and
represents creation in the heavenly world. By his exaltation, he has
returned to the transcendence of his pre-historical existence. The
body of the risen Lord is now in the Church.

IV. Interpretations of Brunner's Eristic-Dogmatic Period.

1. Secondary Sources.

This final period of Brunner's thought is the period which has
received the most attention in the secondary sources. This attention

\(^{1}\) Ibid., p. 374.

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 374.
is understandable, considering the fact that this period extends from 1927 to 1960 and covers most of Brunner's career at the University of Zurich. While each of these sources seeks to make a contribution, the quality and helpfulness of their respective contributions for understanding Brunner's theology as a whole is an open question.

Scheld's work provides the most thorough treatment of Brunner's Christology during this eristic-dogmatic period. Although he accounts for the re-orientation of Brunner's theology, noting the importance of Truth as Encounter, Scheld's concern is to present Brunner's Christology and soteriology in the Dogmatics as a corrective to The Mediator. He contends that Brunner's theology underwent a second re-orientation after the publication of The Mediator, maintaining that the distinction between the dialectical and eristic periods of Brunner's theology is as radical as the distinction between the pre-dialectical and dialectical periods.

Scheld's contention overlooks the continuity between the final two periods of Brunner's theology. His error is that he does not note the close relationship between epistemology and Christology/soteriology in Brunner's thought. Brunner's pre-dialectical theology was anthropological in that it emphasized human initiative in the quest for religious knowledge. This initiative was entirely and completely repudiated in The Mediator. Although Brunner re-introduced the concept of general revelation into his theology of dialogue, he maintained that this type of revelation does not provide knowledge about the true character of God. Throughout

1 Cf. op. cit., pp. 200-211.
his dialectical and eristic-dogmatic periods, Brunner insisted on the *divine* initiative regarding religious knowledge.\(^1\) During his dialectical period, he never subordinated the object of religious knowledge to the religious subject. In the eristic-dogmatic period, he refuses to subordinate or equate the divine subject with the human subject.\(^2\)

The importance of the divine initiative is underscored by Brunner's use of the concept of faith. Although Brunner uses two definitions of faith, each definition describes the reception of religious knowledge. During each of the final two periods of his thought, Brunner defines faith as the human response to the divine initiative.\(^3\)

Roessler's *Person und Glaube* is a helpful tool for the analysis of Brunner's epistemology. He notes the epistemological change in Brunner's theology in the period after 1927 and attributes this change to Brunner's use of I-Thou philosophy. According to Roessler, Brunner incorporates five basic categories into his use of this philosophy. These five categories designate the ontological structure of Brunner's thought and relate God's self-communication (revelation) to the structure of both human knowledge and human existence.\(^4\)

The most important category in Brunner's dialogical thought is *personality*, which is the leading motif of I-Thou thought. The

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\(^1\) *Revelation and Reason*, p. 32.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 24.


philosophy of dialogue presents both the "I" and the "Thou" as personal beings. Revelation is thus not a word from God, but it is God in person, God speaking.\footnote{Ibid., p. 791.} God addresses us personally in the Person of Jesus Christ. Our personal response to God's self-communication is faith, or truth in encounter. This address and response requires the involvement of our entire person. It is not an abstract encounter. We respond to a personal "Thou", not to an impersonal "It."

The second concept, according to Roessler, is relation. Personality finds its true expression only in encounter with another. Brunner maintains that all true life is encounter. The human "I" exists only in relation to the divine "Thou," telling me that God comes to me in Jesus Christ. In the person of Jesus Christ, God seeks to restore the broken divine-human relation.

*Actuality* is the third category incorporated by Brunner. This category dictates that personal relation is not given; rather it occurs. The relation is not static; rather it is the experience of an encounter. Our knowledge (Erkenntnis) is really recognition (Anerkenntnis). We actually take part in the revelatory act by our response in faith. We make a decision whether to say "Yes" or "No" to God, and by our participation acknowledge that God's approach to humanity actually occurs in Jesus Christ.

*Verbality* is the fourth category. In Brunner's description, the "Word" is the medium of personal relationship. Personal existence is dialogical in that it comprises address and response. The unmediated
I-Thou encounter appears only in the Word. Verbally, revelation is an expression, an address to us as individuals. Faith is our response to this address. Verbally, the medium of God's self-communication to us is the Word, where he meets us in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Brunner's final category is *dialectic*. Every personal relation has two aspects, each of which is grounded in the subjectivity of the participants in the relation. Revelation is thus two sided: God speaks, we respond. This represents the coincidence of God self-communication and our self-understanding, thus overcoming the subject-object antithesis of religious knowledge.\(^1\) Objectively, God communicates; subjectively, we respond. This relates to our existence in that we are both dependent on God (we receive our existence from Him) and free from God (we have the ability to respond either affirmatively or negatively to His address).

2. Conclusion.

This final period of Brunner's thought is best characterized as a theology of dialogue. He describes two simultaneous dialogues during this period. The first dialogue takes place between the Christian theologian and the non-believer. Brunner's eristic theology is an attempt to give a Christian answer to the non-Christian's question about God and the meaning of human existence. The second dialogue takes place between the individual and God. This dialogue is God's gracious, loving approach to man and man's trusting affirmative reply to God's call. Brunner's use of this second dialogue

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 131.
shows that he has re-introduced the subjective element of his pre-dialectical theology into his theology of dialogue.

Several new epistemological emphases are evident in Brunner's theology of dialogue. Brunner's dialectical theology used special revelation as the source of religious knowledge, granting no place to general revelation. By his use of special revelation, Brunner wanted to maintain God's initiative regarding religious knowledge. This divine initiative insures that human thinking about God will never be confused or identified with God's self-communication. Because of his missionary concern, Brunner incorporates a doctrine of general revelation into his theology of dialogue. He uses his understanding of general revelation as a buttress for his eristic theology. Despite human sin, Brunner maintains that a point of contact remains between God and the sinner. This point of contact consists in the sinner's ability to be addressed by God. He now describes the source of religious knowledge as "truth as encounter" and claims that this phenomenon cannot be explained without reference to the doctrine of general revelation.

During his dialectical period Brunner maintained that we receive religious knowledge by faith. His concern over the cognitive aspect of Christian theology led him to view faith as fides. He refined his understanding of the concept of faith during his eristic-dogmatic period. By adding the element of "trust" (pistis) to his understanding of the nature of faith, his epistemology moves towards an understanding of faith as fiducia. Brunner believes this description of faith as trust overcomes the problem of the subject-object antithesis in religious knowledge.
Brunner's doctrine of the work of Christ also follows this pattern. In his theology of dialogue, Brunner overcomes the reliance on either a subjective or objective soteriology by his use of the classic theory of the atonement. His description of truth as encounter and his definition of faith as trust maintains the subjective element in soteriology: the individual human subject must respond to God. The objective element is also present in Brunner's soteriology: the atonement does not merely clear up mistaken human impressions concerning the divine-human relationship. He insists that Christ's atonement accomplishes something objective in that it provides the basis for the restoration of the broken relationship between God and man.
Conclusion

We still have two tasks before us. First, we want to place the thought of Emil Brunner within the wider context of dialectical theology. The best way to do this is to compare Brunner's career with that of Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. Our second task is to offer criticism of Brunner's theology and to suggest possibilities for dialogue between Brunner and other contemporary thinkers, particularly Walter Ong and Gerhard Ebeling.

I. Brunner, Barth, Bultmann and the Course of Dialectical Theology.

The dialectical theologians formulated their thought as a reaction against the historicism of Kulturprotestantism. To the casual observer, they represented a united front. This front, however, began to unravel by the mid 1920's. The primary cause of dissension concerned the role granted to anthropology and reason within the context of dialectical theology.

Each of the dialectical theologians were educated in the Liberal tradition of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Hermann and Harnack. After the First World War, they reacted against this tradition and published works highly critical of their Liberal predecessors. One of the contributions of the dialectical theologians was their discussion of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Shortly after these works were published, the anthropological question arose and the dialectical theologians ceased to co-operate with one another.

1. Early Liberalism.
Theological education at the turn of the century was heavily influenced by Kulturprotestantism, "modern theology" or Liberalism. Modern theology conceived of its task at the investigation and understanding of religion. As James D. Smart remarks, "The religions of man were arranged in the form of a pyramid with Christianity at its apex."\(^1\) This theology viewed "God" as the explanation of human goodness which was immanent in every person. Modern theology also took an optimistic view of the world, in that Christianity and civilization seemed nearly interchangeable. The focus was on man rather than God. In place of a doctrine of special revelation, modern theologians emphasized religion and religious experience, thereby locating God in the cultural consciousness.

On the eve of the First World War, three theologians in particular sounded the themes of modern theology. Adolf Harnack's *The Essence of Christianity* considered the definition of Christianity as a historical question. However, Harnack insisted on the uniqueness of Christianity viz. other religions. Wilhelm Herrmann allowed that consideration of special revelation was legitimate for theological study. He emphasized the ethical quality of Jesus' life and the relation of this ethical quality to the "inner life" of the individual believer. In Herrmann's view, faith did not begin with a confrontation with Jesus, but with a confrontation of man with himself. Ernst Troeltsch maintained that a scientific evaluation of all religions demonstrates the superiority of Christianity. He further stressed the inseparability of Christianity from Western culture.

New Testament scholarship at this time had the disturbing tendency to undervalue or even deny the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Johannes Weiss, in "The Significance of Paul for the Modern Christian" (1919), viewed Jesus as a subject of religion. Weiss defended the odd position that Paul's worship of Jesus Christ was as idolatrous as the Roman Catholic worship of Mary. Wilhelm Wrede's Paulus (1909) regarded Paul as the second founder of Christianity. Wrede contended that Paul knew nothing of Jesus and that there was a break between Jesus and Paul in early apostolic times. Significant for our analysis is that Weiss and Wrede arrived at their conclusions by using a scientific historical methodology. The history of religions school of New Testament study was characterized by the "scrupulous integrity of its historical scholarship and its willingness to follow the facts no matter how disturbing the consequences."

Each of the three theologians under consideration (Brunner, Barth and Bultmann) studied at a university where the influence of modern theology was pronounced. Although Brunner studied for a brief period at the University of Berlin, he finished his theological study in Switzerland under Ragaz at the University of Zurich. The initial period of his theology, the so-called pre-dialectical period, is comprised primarily of his doctoral dissertation, *Das Symbolische in der religiösen Erkenntnis*. Although brief, this period has historical importance because it shows both the roots of Brunner's theology and the radicalness of his later reaction against his theological predecessors. The background of this period is the nebulous concept

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1Ibid., p. 43. Smart discusses the historical background of dialectical theology on pp. 31ff.
"nineteenth-century theology," which includes both the Kulturprotestantismus of Ritschl and Harnack as well as the Religious Socialism of Leonard Ragaz.

Brunner maintained an epistemicological continuity between the "human" religious subject and the (divine) object of religion during this period of his theology. That is to say, the religious subject has immediate knowledge of the object of religion: human religious knowledge "ascends" to God. Although Brunner does not detail his understanding of revelation, he implicitly employs a doctrine of general or natural revelation in that he contends that God can be known in the world. For Brunner, experience in the world is thus not to be differentiated from experience of God. Since God is immediately knowable, we, as religious subjects, obtain our knowledge about Him by means of intuition.

The influence of Schleiermacher and Ritschl is especially evident in Brunner's pre-dialectical period. Schleiermacher's influence on Brunner goes beyond their mutual consideration of the importance of intuition as a means of religious knowledge. Schleiermacher divided human existence into three spheres: the areas of knowing, doing and feeling. In Cobb's opinion, "One of the fundamental theses of Schleiermacher is that religion, or piety, belongs to the area of feeling and participates in the freedom and priority that this area enjoys in its relation to knowing and doing."1 When Brunner follows Schleiermacher in differentiating the emotional aspect of religion from the cognitive-reflective aspect of theology, perhaps he is

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1 John B. Cobb, Living Options in Protestant Theology, pp. 127f.
protesting against the excessive dogmatism (as he sees it) of Protestant Scholasticism.

Brunner, working "from below," proceeds Christologically from the historical to the supra-historical. His characterization of the fourth- and fifth-centuries as "intellectualized" represents a repudiation of the two-natures doctrine of the person of Christ which he would subsequently adopt. Brunner's main concern at this stage of his thought is to present a fully human Jesus, often at the expense of his deity. Jesus represents both the ideal of religious man, and, very importantly for Brunner's epistemology, a religious subject. The soteriology consistent with this type of Christological speculation is Abelard's moral influence theory, which Ritschl particularly praised as reflecting Biblical teaching.

It is apparent that Brunner's theology during this period is entirely consistent with the epistemological principles he has employed. Just as his epistemology proceeds from the historical to the suprahistorical, so also do his doctrines of the person and work of Jesus Christ. He regards Jesus as a religious subject with a clear intuition of the primary symbols of religious knowledge, the personality (Persönlichkeit) and "super-world" (Überwelt). These symbols are immediately obtainable by any religious subject, including Jesus. It was the genius of Jesus that he was able to express these concepts in terms of secondary symbols, the Heavenly Father and the Kingdom of God. Brunner's soteriology follows an exemplarist model. On the basis of intuition, an individual is able to act in such a manner as to follow the commands of Jesus. Both the Christology and soteriology of Das Symbolische proceed from the
religious subject towards the object of religion. It is safe to say that during this period of his thought, Brunner places the initiative epistemologically, Christologically and soteriologically on the side of man.

Barth and Bultmann shared this liberal heritage with Brunner. Both finished their schooling at Marburg, Barth under Herrmann and Bultmann under Heitmüller. Marburg was the home of the liberal journal Die Christliche Welt and Barth served as an assistant editor of the journal for one year following the completion of his studies. He found his editorial duties to be a heady experience. "How could it be otherwise when, as far as the Christliche Welt was concerned, even the writings of Troeltsch, Bousset, Wernle, Gunkel and so on were completely dependent on my censorship?"¹ Bultmann also was an avid reader of the journal and attended the annual meetings of The Association of the Friends of Die Christliche Welt.²

Three of Barth's early articles show his affinity with the theological liberalism of this time. In "Modern Theology and the Kingdom of God" Barth questions why so few graduates of "liberal" universities enlist in foreign missions while the "conservative" universities of Halle and Greifswald send many volunteers to the mission field.³ He finds the answer in the fact that the conservative

students accept the creeds. The problem for Barth, then, is how to combine evangelical faith with scientific investigation. Barth contends that the "scientific method" of study is necessary, although historical investigation shows the relativity of every religious phenomenon. He writes, "Religion is for us experience in an intensely individual form." The anthropological influence of Schleiermacher is evident when Barth maintains that the individual Christian consciousness is the basis of Christian knowledge. He further insists that Christian faith must harmonize with the cultural advances of modern civilization.

In "The Christian Faith and History" Barth attempts to reconcile the revelation of God in Jesus Christ with the results of the scientific investigation of the past. His description of faith shows the combined influence of Schleiermacher and Ritschl. Faith is the "experience of God, direct consciousness of the presence and activity of the superhuman, supernatural and therefore absolutely transcendent life power."¹ The emphasis once again is on the inner experience of the individual: "The creative principle through which faith comes to be is love, is the personal inner experience of pure self-surrender and pure community."²

Barth's final article during this period, "Belief in the Personal God," demonstrates the influence of Hermann Kutter on his thought.³ Barth reaffirms that personal experience is the source of religious

knowledge, but puts more emphasis on the living personal God. Although this article is rooted in liberal thought, it anticipates the first edition of the Römerbrief by bringing New Testament exposition to bear on the problems of systematic theology.

The final theologian we are considering, Bultmann, had two major publications, 1910-1912: "The Style of Pauline Preaching and the Cynic-Stoic Diatribe"¹ and "The Religious Moment in Ethical Instruction in the Epictet and the New Testament."² However, as Smart points out, we cannot infer a theological position from these two works.³

2. The Reaction against Modern Theology.

The dialectical theologians sought an evangelical-Reformation renewal in the fact of historicism. Their common opponent was the era of "modern theology" represented by Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Harnack and Troeltsch. These earlier theologians faced the problem of relating Christianity as faith with Christianiy as culture. The dialectical theologians initially rejected this problematic and sought a re-orientation of the relation of faith (and revelation) to history. Their repudiation of liberal theology was based on a radical rejection of historicism as a theological methodology.⁴

¹Der Stil der Paulischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1910).
³Smart, p. 82.
⁴Cf. Christoph Gestrich, Neuzzeitliches Denken und die Spaltung der diallektischen Theologie. Zur Frage der natürlichen Theologie (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] 1977), pp. 1-26. Gestrich uses Troeltsch as a typical example of the historicist school. He also raises the intriguing question whether the renewed interest in the "historical Jesus" (represented by Käsemann) marks the end of "dialectical theology."
Without a doubt, as far as Brunner was concerned, the First World War sounded the death knell of liberal theology. For Brunner, the War called into question the presuppositions of Religious Socialism, which now began "to look suspiciously like a beautiful illusion."\(^1\)

Barth shared this disillusionment.\(^2\)

The actual end of the nineteenth-century as "the good old days" falls for evangelical theology, as for other things, in the fateful year 1914...For me personally one day at the beginning of August that year stamped itself as dies ater. It was that on which 93 German intellectuals came out with a manifest supporting the war policy of Kaiser Wilhelm II and his counsellors, and among them I found to my horror the names of nearly all my theological teachers whom up to then I had religiously honoured. Disillusioned by their conduct, I perceived that I should not be able any longer to accept their ethics and dogmatics, their biblical exegesis, their interpretation of history, and that at least for me the theology of the nineteenth-century had no future.

Smart questions the role the War played in the theological re-orientation in the period following 1914. "It merely accelerated and extended a revolt that had begun before the outbreak of the war."\(^3\)

Smart's contention appears untenable in light of Barth's comment. Liberal theology tended to identify Western culture and civilization with Christianity. In the eyes of the dialectical theologians, the war was a blanket indictment of this theology. As Barth comments, "A whole world of exegesis, ethics, dogmatics and preaching, which I had hitherto held to be essentially trustworthy, was shaken to the

\(^1\)Kegley, op. cit., p. 7f.
\(^3\)Smart, p. 57.
foundations, and with it, all the other writings of the German theologians.\textsuperscript{1}

Barth served as a parish minister in Safenwil, in the Aargau district of Switzerland, 1911-1921. During this period he developed his deep and lasting friendship with Eduard Thurneysen, a neighboring pastor in Leutwil who introduced Barth to the thought of Blumhardt.\textsuperscript{2} Blumhardt suggested the possibility of God acting in the midst of contemporary life to transform the human situation. Barth used this idea in the re-orientation of his theology. He now maintained that theology cannot be based on human experience. The direction of theological knowledge is not from humanity to God, but rather from God to humanity. This also suggested a new understanding of eschatology. The Kingdom, breaking into the human plane, is present \textit{and} future; thus, we must wait for what God will yet accomplish.

Thurneysen agreed with Barth that the First World War represented a judgment on liberal theology. We see a glimmer of this judgment in his book on Dostoevsky, which eventually unshackled students from the pretensions of the human self and cultural optimism by pointing out the contradictions between Christianity and western culture. The problem, in Thurneysen's view, was that socialism had become nationalistic.

The change in the direction of Barth's and Thurneysen's thinking, from God to man instead of from man to God, prompted the two men

\textsuperscript{1}Cited in Busch, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{2}Smart, pp. 58-66, details how Thurneysen influenced Barth during this period.
to reconsider the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was no longer considered as part of the cultural ethos representing the attempt to build a bridge between the temporal and eternal planes. Rather, the Holy Spirit was the name for the living God in His self-revelation in the present.\(^1\) Revelation, which is God's thought about us, takes the place of human religious experience as the source of Christian theology and preaching. The new emphasis on revelation is crucial for understanding the genesis of the Römerbrief, as religious experience now has a negative connotation. Religious experience cannot bring an individual to grace; on the contrary, it broadens the gulf between the individual and God.

Smart lists the years 1917-1920 as a distinct period in Barth's theology.\(^2\) The famous first edition of the Römerbrief (1919), written while Barth was engaged in parish ministry in Safenwil, announced his departure from theological liberalism. Particularly significant was Barth's teaching on the coming Kingdom of God which is brought by Christ. It is Christ, not human culture, who discloses the mystery of what God is doing in history. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead introduced a new aeon. Human conscience and religion now represent a negative function to Barth. They cannot bring an individual to grace; rather, they lay open the gulf between human existence and God. In this commentary, Barth approves of the Social Democratic party but not the Religious Socialism Movement. His


\(^{2}\) Cf. Smart, pp. 56-99.
apparent approval of Marxism places him on the far left of the political spectrum.

Two of Barth's lectures are also significant during this period. "The Christian's Place in Society," delivered at Tambach in 1919, introduced Barth's thought to a German audience. In this lecture he affirms that the Kingdom of God represents an attack on society. He differentiates between religion, which constructs a kingdom continuous with human society, and Christian teaching, which maintains God's initiative in building the Kingdom. "Biblical Questions, Insights, and Vistas," delivered at the Aarau Student Conference in 1920, marks the end of Barth's pre-dialectical period and his transition to dialectical theology. He repeats his earlier remarks concerning religion and the Kingdom and adds an attack on "life of Jesus" research.¹

Bultmann served as Assistant Professor in Breslau 1916-1920. It is difficult to assess the direction of Bultmann's theology during this period. He scarcely comments on the First World War, writing only, "The last years of the war, as well as the ones that immediately followed it, were hard times that laid many privations on us and in which we saw a lot of need and misery."² While at Breslau, Bultmann wrote his *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (1921). He sought to combine the contributions of liberal theology, with its methodological integrity, and dialectical theology, which inferred (or deduced) revelation. Bultmann's "The Question of the Messianic

¹An English translation of these two lectures is found in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, trans. by Douglas Horton (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1928).
Consciousness of Jesus"\(^1\) builds on the earlier work of Wrede, prompting Smart to place Bultmann within the history of religions school.\(^2\)

Two further articles justify Smart's judgment. In his The "Ethical and Mystical Religion of Early Christianity" Bultmann distinguishes the essence of religion from its contemporary expression, thereby demonstrating his continued dependence on Schleiermacher.\(^3\) The article, with its teaching on the Kingdom, also lays the groundwork for Bultmann's epoch-making "demythologizing." He places "the Kingdom which conceals the ultimate goal and meaning of man's life no longer at the end of time but above time and ready to break in with each successive moment."\(^4\)

By the time of "Religion and Culture" (1920) there is still no evident break with Schleiermacher. Bultmann affirms that culture, which also encompasses ethics, and religion occupy separate spheres of experience within the individual. In a marked departure from his liberal predecessors, Bultmann separates religion and civilization. Yet, as Smart comments, "The Lutheran Bultmann here stands far apart from the Reformed Barth for whom the sovereignty of God would not permit the separation of any area of life from the scope of God's ultimate rule."\(^5\)

3. Dialectical Theology.

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2Smart, p. 73.
4Smart, p. 93
5Ibid., p. 99.
By 1924, we see that Brunner, Barth and Bultmann (and also Gogarten) have published works critical of certain aspects of liberal theology. However, these works do not necessarily indicate their author's transition to dialectical theology. Brunner's *EEG* and *Mysticism and the Word* are both highly critical of liberal theology, yet contain little in the way of a positive contribution in terms of dialectical theology. Perhaps Brunner's initial positive contribution was *The Mediator*, and even here the first third of the book repeats his earlier criticisms of Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Harnack.

As Brunner himself confessed, he was not an integral member of the group involved in the founding of *Zwischen den Zeiten*. Early in his dialectical period, we see Brunner's philosophical orientation. He begins to incorporate the thought of Ebner, Kierkegaard and Natorp into his theology. Brunner considered revelation as the arbiter of the issues arising between theology and philosophy.

Gestrich criticizes Brunner for failing to understand the hierarchy of faith and reason. He complains that Brunner refuses to place reason *under* faith. In Gestrich's view, Brunner does not adequately separate the eternal from the temporal plane.\(^1\) This observation is valid concerning Brunner's eristic-dogmatic thought, but does not apply to his dialectical period, during which he drew a hard and fast line between the eternal and temporal planes. As we have seen, Brunner maintained the superiority of the object of religious knowledge over the religious subject. In Brunner's view, revelation

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1Gestrich, pp. 34-79.
begins where reason leaves off and theology thus should be oriented towards the *reality* of revelation.

Barth announced his break with liberal theology in the first edition of the *Römerbrief* (1919). Chr. Kaiser Verlag wanted to reprint the commentary in 1920, but Barth refused. Barth's lecture at the Aarau Student Conference shows the new signs of this thinking. Barth now denies any continuity between the old world and the new, a distinction he failed to maintain in the first edition of the *Römerbrief*. The revised edition of his commentary, published two years later, was his first major work in terms of dialectical theology and represented a reaction against the first edition. Barth's main concern was to employ only *theological* concepts, maintaining that the Bible itself represents a respective philosophy.

Barth himself listed several reasons for producing a new edition of his commentary. The most important reason was his continued study of the apostle Paul. Following the publication of the first edition, Barth undertook an intensive study of I and II Corinthians. Certain results of this study are also evident in "Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas." The second major influence was that of Franz Overbeck, professor New Testament and ancient Church History at Basel, 1870-1897. Overbeck invented the category of *Urgeschichte*, which allowed him to maintain that the life of the early Christians was *in* history, but not *of* it. From Overbeck's work Barth drew the implication that the old world must die if the new world is to be born.

Two further reasons for the change in the *Römerbrief* are a better understanding of Plato and Kant on the one hand, and of Kierkegaard
on the other. Barth's increasing reliance upon Calvin, as well as upon his brother Heinrich, partially mediated the influence of Plato. The influence of the Marburg neo-Kantian Cohen dovetails with that of Kierkegaard to show that God lies beyond the boundary of human life. We can see two main influences of Kierkegaard on Barth's thought during this period: first, the conception of God as Unknown, and (second) the introduction of dialectic. Barth admitted that he borrowed certain philosophical terminology from Kierkegaard. Yet, as Smart contends, we should avoid attributing too much by way of Kierkegaard's influence to the development of Barth's thought in the first two editions of the *Römerbrief*.¹

Bultmann, hard at work on his exegetical publications, wrote an article highly critical of liberal theology in 1924, "Liberal Theology and the Latest Theological Movement." Despite this article, many similarities remained between Bultmann's thought and liberal theology. As Bultmann comments, "I have endeavored throughout my entire work to carry further the tradition of historical-critical research as it was practiced by the 'liberal' theology and to make our more recent theological knowledge fruitful for it."² Apparently Bultmann, teaching at Marburg, was caught in a cross current of influence represented by two other Marburg professors: Herrmann (liberalism) and Heidegger (existentialism).

4. The Person and Work of Christ.

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¹Smart, pp. 104-107. Barth lists two other factors which led him to reconsider *Römerbrief* I: the influence of Dostoevsky (mediated in part by Thurneysen) and the favorable reviews accorded the commentary. Barth felt the guarded approval given to his commentary by certain reviewers meant that he had been misunderstood and had failed to make his point.

By 1927, Brunner, Barth and Bultmann each published a contribution to the debate on the person and work of Christ. Brunner's *The Mediator* contains perhaps the most far-reaching critique of the Christology and soteriology as taught by the modern theologians. Particularly noteworthy is Book I of *The Mediator*, "Preliminary Considerations," which contains an explicit repudiation of natural revelation. Brunner's complaint is that natural revelation, emphasizing the continuity between the eternal and temporal planes, presents Jesus as a universal principle of human and ethical religion. In its place, Brunner applies the doctrine of special revelation, which stressed the discontinuity between God and humanity, to the doctrines of the person and work of Christ.

Brunner based his Christology on the creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon. The Nicene Creed defined the relation between the eternal Logos-Son and the Godhead. The Creed of Chalcedon addressed the issue of the relation between the human and divine in Jesus Christ. In Brunner's view, the doctrine of the two natures shows the contrast between God and humanity. Unfortunately, Brunner's emphasis on the transcendent element in the person of Jesus Christ led him to a docetic interpretation of Christ's person.

One of Brunner's primary contributions in *The Mediator* is his discussion of the work of Christ, which he describes in terms of revelation, reconciliation and dominion. He bases his discussion on Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*, which he finds standing in the tradition of the Bible and the Church Fathers. Brunner's use of the penal theory of the atonement shows once again his emphasis on the transcendent over the temporal in his theology during this period.
Brunner's contention that his *The Mediator* represented the first treatment of the doctrines of the person and work of Christ in terms of dialectical theology is only partially correct. Although Brunner's work was certainly the most thorough and systematic discussion of Christology and soteriology, Bultmann's *Jesus and the Word* appeared in the year preceding the publication of *The Mediator*. Bultmann actually anticipated the Christological and soteriological emphases of Brunner's subsequent eristic-dogmatic writings. His *Jesus and the Word* (1926) represents a further protest against the liberal doctrines of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The book "forces recognition of the fact that Jesus' teaching did not center around such ideas as the infinite worth of personality, the cultivation of the inner life, the development of man toward an ideal, that Jesus spoke rather of the coming Kingdom of God, which was to be God's gift, not man's achievement, of man's decision for or against the Kingdom, and of the divine demands for obedience."¹

Bultmann does not claim to present a systematic treatment of Christology and soteriology; rather, he bases his interpretation on the teaching of Jesus. His remarks concerning "The Coming of the Kingdom of God contain a reminiscence of Kierkegaard."² According to Bultmann, Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom places the human subject in an "Either-Or" situation: the subject must decide to serve either God or mammon (Mt. 6. 24). This demand for an "Either-Or" decision shows the absolute character of the Kingdom.

²Ibid., pp. 27-56.
represents eschatological deliverance, a transcendent event opposed to all relative values. In this regard, the Kingdom is not "ethical," that is, the culmination of all that is good.

*Jesus and the Word* actually contains very little Christological teaching. Bultmann goes so far as to deny that there is such a thing as a "divine nature" for Jesus, agreeing with Harnack that this doctrine was a product of the early church.\(^1\) Bultmann's objection is that this doctrine is too substantialist and thus "objectifies God." Yet, he contends, the teaching of Jesus portrays him as a messianic and eschatological figure. At this stage of his career, Bultmann had little interest in the personality of Jesus. In this regard, it is important to note that *Jesus and the Word* followed Bultmann's first great work, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (1921). His previous work on form criticism indicated that Bultmann would have little interest in constructing a far-reaching Christology based on Biblical texts.

One of the characteristics of the soteriology advanced by the dialectical theologians during this period is a rejection of Abelard's interpretation of the atonement. This rejection of Abelard is entirely consistent with the criticism of the liberal concept of the Kingdom of God. Bultmann also fits this mold. He writes, "Thus sonship to God is nothing self-evident, natural, which belongs to man as man, of which man needs only to become conscious in order to reap the benefits."\(^2\) In his remarks on the atonement, Bultmann incorporates the I-Thou dialogue of Ebner and Buber. God meets a Thou conceived of as a person. Only a *person* is able to make a decision for the Kingdom.

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\(^1\) Cf. ibid., pp. 103, 216.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 193.
Jesus Christ, as the bearer of the Word, confronts sinful humanity and brings us into the I-Thou relationship. As a personal Thou, the sinner has the ability to be addressed by the Word. As early as 1926 Bultmann wrote, "But if we return to the real significance of 'word,' implying as it does a relationship between speaker and hearer, then the word can become an event to the hearer, because it brings him into this relationship."1 As far as Bultmann is concerned, forgiveness consists in hearing and positively responding to the Word. Salvation is thus never a state, it is a relationship with God.

In his Christian Dogmatics (1927), Barth discusses Christology within the context of the Trinity, or God's "three-in-oneness" (Dreieinigkeit). As did Brunner, Barth uses a Johannine Christology. In Barth's view, the Logos is not a word about God, but where God Himself is found. As a result, we cannot deny the Son without at the same time denying the Father. The classic expression of the relationship of the Son to the Father is the Nicene Creed, which describes only one Son, and hence, only one revelation. For Barth, the incarnation represents "the objective possibility of revelation."

Everything we can say about a human being is also valid for the incarnate Son of God. He existed in time, as an individual (not as "generic man"), with the unity of body and soul, separated (ferne) from God. In other words, he was a human being in the same sense that we are. Despite this human existence, his deity was neither lost nor diminished in his incarnation. In this regard, Barth implicitly criticizes the anhypostic Christology of Brunner for being too

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1Ibid., p. 215.
abstract. Bultmann is explicitly criticized (in the same breath as Drews and Strauss!) for describing Jesus as merely the bearer of the Word, rather than as the Word himself.

The incarnation demonstrated that this man, Jesus Christ, was able to break through the sinful continuity of human existence. In this regard, Barth employs the concept of the virgin birth (natus ex Maria virgine), which guards against the possibility that the humanity of Jesus shared in the fall of Adam. The incarnation is also a wonder - it tells us that the Son became flesh; it does not tell us how he became incarnate.

A real shortcoming of Barth's 1927 Dogmatics is the lack of extensive discussion on the work of Christ. He describes soteriology in terms of the "I-Thou" relation: since we as humans cannot surpass our creaturely boundaries, God must become a "Thou" for us - hence the incarnation. Barth discusses soteriology in terms of the out-pouring (Ausgiessung) of the Holy Spirit, which is the subjective possibility of revelation. This subjective possibility states that in baptism, through the Holy Spirit, the individual becomes what he himself cannot be - a hearer and doer of the Word of God.

Donald Baillie's God Was In Christ (1948) represents the most far-reaching critique of the Christology held by the dialectical theologians. The rallying cry of the book is "no more docetism." Baillie explains, "No more Docetism, no more Monophysite explaining away of the human character of the life that Jesus lived, but a full and unreserved recognition of His human nature as 'homo-ousias'
with our own, which means essentially the same as ours."¹ According to Baillie, the perennial task of theology is to reflect on the meaning of the incarnation, "that Jesus is God and man."²

Baillie's criticism is particularly directed towards Brunner and Barth. He claims that it is impossible to read The Mediator "without getting the impression that Brunner is not vitally interested in the life and personality of the Jesus of history, but only in the dogmas about him."³ At issue is Brunner's anhypostasia, which denies a human personality to Jesus. As Moberly points out, "Human nature which is not personal is not human nature."⁴ Baillie also accuses Barth of not placing enough emphasis on the humanity of Jesus: "He has reacted so violently against the 'Jesus of history' movement that he does not seem interested in the historical Jesus at all. His theology has become so austerely a Theology of the Word (if one may venture with the greatest respect to say so) it is hardly a theology of the Word-Made-Flesh."⁵

Baillie's second point of contention concerns form criticism. He writes, "there is not stability in a position which accepts to the full of the humanity of Christ but has no interest in its actual concrete manifestation and doubts whether it can be recaptured at all."⁶ He agrees with Bultmann that we should re-interpret myth, but we must take care lest we eliminate myth altogether from theology.

²Ibid., p. 38.
³Ibid., p. 35.
⁴R. C. Moberly, Atonement and Personality, p. 92.
⁵Baillie, p. 53.
⁶Ibid., p. 28.
Baillie also takes a more optimistic view of the Gospel's ability to shed light on Jesus' existence than did Bultmann: "It seems to me that a good deal of confusion would be averted if we reminded ourselves that the phrase 'the Jesus of history' means simply and precisely: Jesus as He really was in His life on earth,' which includes of course what he did and said, what He intended and what He taught."\(^1\)

Baillie feels that Karl Heim's *Jesus der Herr* is on the right track to establishing a correct interpretation of the person of Jesus Christ. Baillie agrees with Heim (and Buber) in maintaining that God is known in an I-Thou relationship. "God" can be addressed, not expressed or "objectified." God loves us and imparts himself to us even to the point of incarnation. As a result, "nothing can be too high" if we guard our Christology against Docetism and Monophysitism.\(^2\)

As does Aulén, Baillie maintains that the doctrines of the person and work of Jesus Christ are inherently connected, "But any knowledge of Christ, or any Christology, which cannot show how it makes a vital difference, and brings 'saving benefits' to our human situation, must be more than suspect."\(^3\) A proper concept of atonement holds that God takes the initiative - "it is God that bears the cost." The divine initiative represents the objective facet of the atonement. Baillie, as did Aulén, cautions against divorcing the objective and subjective aspects of the atonement. The subjective

\(^{1}\)Ibid., p. 47.  
\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 132.  
\(^{3}\)Ibid., p. 159.
aspect of the atonement is the means by which it becomes a reality in the hearts and lives of persons. The I-Thou relationship best describes the union of the two aspects of the atonement: God speaks, we as sinners respond.

In fairness to Brunner, it should be mentioned that Baillie’s criticisms appeared twenty-one years after the publication of The Mediator. While it is true that Brunner subsequently corrected the docetic-monophysite tendencies of The Mediator (in volume II of his Dogmatics, 1950), he had already begun to re-think his theology in terms of the I-Thou relationship in Man in Revolt (1937) and The Divine-Human Encounter (1938).

Barth, on the other hand, never managed to cleanse completely his Christology from its docetic-monophysite characteristics.¹ For Barth, Jesus Christ is holy because in his person he recognized the sinfulness of human existence and the lack of human righteousness in God’s judgment. Barth emphasizes Jesus Christ’s existence as the Son of God which represents a vertical encounter of God and human individuals.²

5. The Question of Anthropology.

by the middle of the 1920’s, the theology(ies) of Brunner, Bultmann and Barth appeared to liberal thinkers, and perhaps also to American and British observers, to follow a common course. These three men pioneered a theological revolution and their thought represented a break with the past. The distinguishing characteristic

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¹Scheld, op. cit., pp. 212ff.
²Brunner teaches that God, in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, seeks communion with human individuals, thus introducing a horizontal element into Christology.
of their dialectical theology was their adamant refusal to confuse or identify the "beyond" of God with the "here" of mankind. The apparent unity of the dialectical movement began to unravel over the introduction of anthropological elements into theology. The central figure in these disputes was Karl Barth, who went to great lengths to differentiate his thought from that of Bultmann and Brunner.

(i) The Differences Between Bultmann and Barth.

An anthropological element in Bultmann's thought appears as early as 1925. In "What Does it Mean to Speak of God?" we see existentialism moving to the foreground of Bultmann's theology. He claims that we can know nothing about God except for what is reflected in human existence in response to faith. That same year, in "The Theological Exegesis of the New Testament," Bultmann introduced his concept of Sachexegese, the distinguishing characteristic of which is the claim that the reality of a Biblical text was disclosed both to the author and the exegete. He criticizes Barth for speaking of historical and theological exegesis. In Bultmann's view, theology is the conceptual representation of human existence as an existence determined by God. The following year (1926), in "The Question of Dialectical Theology," he described dialectical theology as an existential deepening of the historical method of theology.

Although Bultmann agreed with Heidegger that self-understanding is derived only viz. another, he departed from Heidegger on the matter of inauthentic existence. In contrast to Heidegger, Bultmann maintained that a human being does not have
the ability to put inauthentic existence behind him, as this occurs only by hearing the Gospel. Yet, in Bultmann's view, there exists a place for "natural theology." He cites three reasons for this: the understanding of existence possessed by the unbeliever, the non-Christian use of the concept "God," and the ontological knowledge of existence which is visible both to philosophy and theology.¹

Soon after the publication of his Christian Dogmatics in 1927, Barth presided over a seminar on Anselm of Canterbury.² Barth saw that Anselm's concern was understanding divine revelation rather than proving it. From Anselm, Barth gleaned eight conditions of theology. One of the conditions was that correct faith was necessary for correct understanding. Another condition states that theology seeks an extension of the Credo and an explanation of its acceptance. This second condition explains the change of title in Barth's work from Christian Dogmatics to Church Dogmatics: the new name indicates that the dogmatic task takes place properly only within the Church.

The first volume of Barth's new Church Dogmatics redefined his differences with Brunner, Bultmann and Gogarten, accusing them of turning theology back towards Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Herrmann. Barth particularly wanted to rework sections 5, 6, and 7 of his previous Christian Dogmatics because he felt that these sections had been misunderstood in terms of anthropological

theology. His use of the terms "phenomenology" and "existentialism" contributed to this misunderstanding.¹ By "phenomenology" Barth meant that human speech about God takes place from the "objective" viewpoint of the spectator. Barth uses the term "existentialism" to recognize his self-involvement in his theological statements. Unfortunately, he deduced statements about God from the concrete situation of the preacher.

The question was not whether theology should address the issue of anthropology. The issue, in Barth's view, was whether the primary form of theology was indeed anthropology. In this regard, Heidegger drew Bultmann in one direction, and the Reformers pulled Barth in another. The critical point of departure was that Bultmann separated the human existence of Jesus from his significance as the Christ. He separated the "flesh" of the world, or the outer events of history, from the inner world of primary reality, or the Beyond. As a result, "the separation of heaven from earth and of God from man for (Bultmann) was final and absolute and not just a rupture created by sin and overcome and healed in Jesus Christ."²

The basis of Barth's concern with the anthropological project was that it often viewed philosophy as a second source of revelation beside the Word of God. Barth insisted that we can speak of man only after speaking of God. He criticized Bultmann's de mythologizing scheme, claiming it was impossible to de mythologize and yet have fulfillment within history. Bultmann's Hegelian scheme, in Barth's view, based the external and eternal on the internal and temporal.

¹Smart, pp. 220-224.
²Ibid., p. 151.
Barth feared that Bultmann made the being of God philosophically identifiable with human being. Barth uses a Biblical hermeneutic which dialogues with the history of theology. Bultmann, on the other hand, uses a general hermenetic, resulting in his existentialism which dialogues with the history of philosophy in order to place theology in the framework of the general consciousness of truth. In other words, Barth speaks about God in order to arrive at human understanding (von Gott aus); Bultmann makes statements about man before speaking about God (vom Mensch aus).\(^1\)

For Bultmann, the Word was located in the Kerygma. He agreed with Gogarten that although "man" is revealed in dialogue with revelation, God remains hidden. Barth, with his incarnationalism, located the Word in a living person, Jesus Christ. Both men agreed that the revelation event gave birth to faith. They disagreed whether the focus was upon the Word to which faith responds (Barth), or upon the faith which responds to the Word (Bultmann).

The growing rupture between Barth and Bultmann took place against the rise of Hitler's Third Reich. Barth saw the theology of Bultmann (and Gogarten) as a compromise between the Gospel (as he saw it) and the demands of the increasingly authoritative German government. In his "State and Church," Gogarten found evidences of God's will in the created order.\(^2\) He described two areas of sovereignty: state and church, each autonomous in its own sphere. The state governed earthly existence, yet must not interfere in questions between the individual and God. Bultmann's "The Task of

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\(^1\)Gestrich, pp. 263-295.
\(^2\)In _Zwischen den Zeiten_ 1932, pp. 390ff.
Theology" did not differ significantly from Gogarten's article. He constructs no barriers to nationalism and allows that the rebirth of Germany under Hitler can be interpreted as an encounter with God.

(ii) The Brunner-Barth Controversy.

Brunner's *The Divine Imperative* (1932) was the immediate cause of the dispute between himself and Barth. This work, based on Luther's Two Kingdoms, contained an endorsement of natural theology. In fact, Brunner maintained that the current political situation in Germany made a natural theology all the more important. Two other articles of Brunner's also played a role in the controversy. "The Other Task of Theology" (1929) lays out the difference between the eristic and dogmatic tasks facing the Church. In "The Question of the Point of Contact" (1932) Brunner describes both a material and formal point of contact between individuals and God.

Brunner's understanding of the point of contact, or the formal *imago dei*, is similar to Bultmann's concept of *Vorverständnis*. Since he now finds this point of contact apart from special revelation, Brunner apparently has returned to a position closer to that of *Das Symbolische*. His work "Die Offenbarung" (1925) prefigures both "The Other Task of Theology" and "The Question of the Point of Contact." In the 1925 article he describes the "double theme" (*Doppelthema*) of theology: (a) to determine the concept of religion, and (b) to consider the questions from the standpoint of the general consciousness. In Brunner's view, the Gospel speaks of the continuity

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3In *Theologische Blätter* XII (1933), pp. 359ff.
between general human and general religious understanding and simultaneously represents the complete breakthrough of this continuity. As such, theology must be dialectical.

Brunner follows Gogarten in finding two "orders" based on Luther's Two Kingdoms. Each realm provides a hermeneutical function. The danger, as critics would later point out, is that the two orders lead to a privatization of faith, separating personal ethics from political involvement, which thus defeats its purpose. As Gestrich points out, "the concept of the orders is therefore not a specifically theological concept, but a philosophical and sociological concept. It means the introduction of natural law into the realm of the collective life of society."¹

Brunner does not contend that there are two revelations, general and special; rather, these two terms designate separate aspects of one and the same revelation. The confusion lies in that Brunner maintains that we have a natural knowledge of God rather than a Christian knowledge of nature. There are three difficulties in speaking of the revelation in creation. Positively, we identify human self-understanding with the revelation in creation. We understand ourselves in light of God's primeval creating will. Negatively, the Christian faith tells us that this identity is false in light of God's personal revelation in Jesus Christ. This positive and negative antithesis can never be resolved, in the view of conservative critics, because speaking of God is not possible in either a positive or a negative manner.

¹Gestrich, p. 329.
Barth, of course, denied the validity of each of Brunner's positions. The problem, as Barth saw it, is that natural theology was used to validate the present political order. He questioned the relationship of Luther's doctrine of the Two Kingdoms to Nazism. In response, Barth denied that revelation resided in the history of the German people.

The disagreement culminated in the dispute over *Nature and Grace* (1934). We immediately notice the difference in tone between the contributions of each participant. Brunner's tone is friendly, Barth's polemical. The question, perhaps, does not concern whether we see God outside of his revelation in Jesus Christ, but rather or not God has a place in our reality. What is the relevance of human self understanding for this question? As Barth would later explain in vol IV (3.1) of his *Church Dogmatics*, the alternative to natural theology was the election of the man Jesus. For Barth, revelation and election are identical. We obtain self-understanding only in reference to Christ and his election. Barth thus deal with an act of God, and not with a general ontology. In place of Brunner's formal *imago dei*, which Barth saw as an analogy of being, Barth presents the *analogia fides*. This type of analogy describes man (ontologically) as neither like nor unlike God; instead he is similar (ähnlich). Barth's adamant refusal to permit the *analogia entis* and natural theology is an attempt to free theology from false attempts at verification apart from the Word of God. Yet, as Pannenberg point outs, "all analogy in its ontological structure is an analogy of being."\(^1\)

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II. Evaluation of Brunner's Theology.

1. Criticism.

There are four specific criticisms of dialectical theology which we can also apply particularly to Brunner's theology.¹ The dialectical theologians maintained the sharp separation between sacred history and world history, resulting in the discontinuity between Christianity and the secular experience of humanity. This criticism goes to the heart of dialectical theology. The separation of the two planes of existence, of course, was the direct result of the perceived failure of Liberal theology. Brunner was guilty of this during his dialectical period, where he radically divided the human and divine elements of religious epistemology. His description of the eristic task of theology, however, was an attempt to overcome this division. While Brunner's eristic theology did not deal extensively with the relationship of Ur- or Heils geschichte to world history, his theory of the Anknüpfungspunkt represents an effort to show how secular human experience lies open to receive God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

A second criticism is the lack of interest in the historical Jesus. Once again, this criticism has its background in liberal theology, where emphasis on the historical Jesus was so strong that it excluded discussion of his divinity. This second criticism applies both to Bultmann, who maintained that the historical Jesus was irrelevant for Christian faith, and Brunner, who, in The Mediator, portrayed a docetic Christ. Under criticism from Baillie and others, Brunner

amended the Christology of The Mediator and presented a fully human Jesus in the second volume of his Dogmatics.

The lack of interest in the historical Jesus had the side-effect that consideration of eschatology was collapsed into the Christological discussion. The dialectical theologians separated the Kingdom of God from any temporal manifestation. God spoke only in His Word, Jesus Christ, the true meaning of which awaits eschatological verification along with the introduction of the Kingdom. Brunner himself never resolved the antithesis between eschatology and Christology. His eristic theology holds that the true meaning of life is found in the divine-human encounter which takes place in Jesus Christ. This seems to indicate that the believer has an idea of the true meaning of life in the present. Yet, in Dogmatics III Brunner says that the true meaning of life, the Kingdom of God, is given only by Jesus Christ in the parousia.\(^1\) Apparently, our understanding of the true meaning of life in the present has only proleptic validity and awaits eschatological verification in the Kingdom brought by Jesus at the parousia.

The third criticism is the failure of dialectical theology to engage in constructive dialogue with world religions. Brunner's position remained unchanged during the last two periods of his career. During his dialectical period, Brunner followed Kierkegaard in differentiating between Religion A and Religion B, or between man's approach to God and God's approach to man. Brunner also maintained this position during his eristic-dogmatic period. He

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\(^1\) Cf. particularly the chapter, "The Kingdom of God as the Meaning and Goal of History." pp. 367ff.
shows the continuity of his position in *Revelation and Reason*, where he writes, "Tolerance is a humane attitude, which respects the personality of the other, but it has nothing to do with the truth or falsity of the 'other's' opinions and ideas."¹ Brunner criticizes Buddhism, Islam and Judaism for denying the uniqueness and finality of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. World religions fail on two counts: atonement and incarnation.

The final criticism of dialectical theology is its failure to address the ethical problems of the nuclear age. This criticism is only partially valid. It is difficult to blame theologians, writing as early as 1921, for failing to anticipate the ethical concerns of the modern age. By the 1950's, at the dawn of the nuclear age, Brunner, Barth and Bultmann were all on their way to completing their respective life's writings. The proposed ethical failure of the dialectical theologians must be discussed in terms of their theological successors. Have the students of these theologians wrestled with modern ethical problems and come to any conclusions concerning the application of the principles of dialectical theology to these problems? Perhaps these students will discover that the answers given by dialectical theology are inadequate for addressing modern concerns. It must be remembered that the dialectical theologians faced a similar situation after the First World War and their response was to abandon the ethical positions of the professors.

Brunner did attempt to come to terms with ethical issues facing the Christian Church. Liberalism, with its close identification

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¹*Revelation and Reason*, p. 219.
between the eternal and temporal planes, proved unsatisfactory in light of Kaiser Wilhelm's "Holy War" of 1914-1918. Dissatisfaction with Liberalism was instrumental in Brunner's abandoning Religious Socialism and turning towards dialectical theology. His *The Divine Imperative* (1932), based on Luther's idea of the two Kingdoms, can be viewed as a corrective to his earlier Religious Socialism. Brunner went to great lengths to separate the eternal plane of existence from the temporal so as not to confuse the two. He spoke out against the totalitarianism of both the Nazis and Bolsheviks, certainly one of the ethical issues of the pre-nuclear age. Barth, that arch-fiend of fascism, refused to condemn communism.

There are, of course, specific criticisms of Brunner's theology apart from his role within the wider context of "dialectical theology." Brunner attempted to synthesize personalism with the Biblical message. John B. Cobb offers a particularly astute analysis of Brunner's thought. He describes the key to Brunner's theological position as follows,¹

> In Jesus Christ we meet God as Person, that is, God discloses himself to us as Person. If we respond in faith, we acknowledge him as Person and speak to him. In this encounter we gain knowledge of ourselves and of God, not of that sort which science seeks but the kind of knowledge we have of persons through personal relations.

Cobb criticizes Brunner's use of "theological positivism," which retains a radical distinction between theology and philosophy. The inconsistency of Brunner's position consists in the fact that although

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he maintains an analogy of being between God and man (the formal *imago dei*), he simultaneously refuses to allow reason and non-Christian philosophy a significant role in the theological enterprise. Given the formal analogy of being between God and the human individual, why does this analogy not extend also to human reason? The danger, in Brunner's eyes, is that the Christian God becomes identified with the God of philosophy.

The real question concerns the relationship between our encounter-knowledge of God and human thinking about him. Is all human thinking irrelevant to God? As Cobb points out, Brunner himself uses considerable philosophical terminology in his writings about God. This represents a tacit admission on Brunner's part that philosophy is relevant to the Biblical description about God. Cobb remarks, "Brunner's total position could be made much clearer and more consistent if he abandoned his strictures on philosophy and limited himself to distinguishing sharply between all thinking that is informed by faith and all thinking that is not informed by faith."¹

This criticism of Brunner's epistemology can also be carried over to his description of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Brunner writes that our encounter with Jesus Christ is the encounter with the Person, God. Apparently, we encounter two persons, Jesus and God. How is it possible to personally encounter God as Person if this encounter is mediated by Jesus Christ? In Cobb's view, this "bi-focal encounter" raises questions about Brunner's radical Christocentricity.² Once again, we see the importance of analyzing

¹Cobb, p. 165.
²Ibid., p. 169.
Brunner's theology from the standpoint of the epistemology he employs.

II. Possibilities for Dialogue.

Despite these criticisms, Brunner's theology remains open to dialogue with current thought in both the areas of epistemology and Christology/soteriology. Epistemologically, Brunner's theology of dialogue has many points in common with Walter J. Ong's analysis of the relationship between oral and literary cultures. In his Orality and Literacy, Ong repeatedly emphasizes the oral character of language. "Sound exists only when it is going out of existence."¹ In other words, language is an event. Language as event has two characteristics: it is empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced, and it is situational rather than abstract. Ong's interpretation of orality emphasizes that oral language is a relation between subjects, resulting in the communal identification of the knower with the known.

Oral language contrasts with written language. "Writing separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions of 'objectivity' in the sense of personal disengagement or distancing."² Written language restructures consciousness by attempting to establish outside the mind what in reality can only be in the mind. A written text interposes itself between the knower and the known, thus objectifying the relation between the two.

²Ibid., p. 65.
Ong applies his thought to the theological question when he states, "God the Father utters or speaks His Word, the Son, He does not inscribe Him."¹ The enduring question remains the relation between God's spoken Word and the Bible, the written Word of God. As far as Ong is concerned, this answer concerns Trinitarianism and not Personalism.

Ong's differentiation between oral and written language reflects the differences between the eristic and dogmatic tasks of theology as described by Brunner. Brunner's theology of dialogue attempts to overcome the subject-object antithesis in theology by emphasizing the personal character of God's demand to mankind and the human response to God in return. For Brunner, the divine-human encounter is always an event between two subjects. It is safe to say that Brunner describes this encounter within the context of orality.

Brunner's description of the dogmatic task of theology is similar to Ong's description of written cultures. In Brunner's view, dogmatics present a written, abstract clarification of the divine-human encounter which, when used as a creed, represents an objectification of the relationship between God and the human individual. In place of the subject-subject relationship, dogmatics erects a subject-object relationship.

Barth complained that Brunner compartmentalized theology into eristic and dogmatic components. Gerhard Ebeling's Theology and Proclamation presents a way out of this bi-furcation and yet remains faithful to the epistemological intention of Brunner's theology of

¹Ibid., p. 179.
dialogue. In contrast to Brunner, Ebling does not separate the eristic and dogmatic tasks of theology. He insists that we can speak "objectively" about God. Our speech about God takes place only within the context of faith - that is, in a relation. We also cannot avoid using the kerygmatic formulations; hence the importance of dogmatics, which he describes as "the responsible reflection on the dogmatic, assertive, linguistic event, which furthers and makes possible the cause of theology."¹

Ebling follows Brunner in re-introducing the historical Jesus, which Bultmann rejected as irrelevant for faith, into Christological discussion. According to Ebling, we have a theological obligation to take historical phenomena seriously as historical because we are bound by historical ways of thought. He stresses the importance of the man Jesus because it (the humanity of Jesus) affords an historical proof for faith. If we do away with this faith, we become independent of the Word.

For Ebling, Christology is homological; that is, it finds its appropriate counterpart in the linguistic structure of faith. Accordingly, he finds three related moments, "that I should identify myself with a Word that identifies me; that this identification with a Word extra me should compel me to take responsibility for it; and that such a language of consent should call others to consent."² Ebling is speaking of the uncertainty of our human situation. In place of our uncertainty, Jesus opens up a life of certainty as God's

²Ibid, p. 85.
representative. He makes the statement (important because it demonstrates his affinity with Gogarten, to whom Proclamation and Theology was dedicated), "If Jesus encounters us as the Word which brings certainty, then the truly remarkable thing about this, which can be neither replaced nor superseded by anything else, is that by distinguishing between the law and the Gospel (as Gogarten did in Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt) he gives certainly for the certain distinction between God and man."¹

Although Ebeling portrays Jesus as representing certainty for human beings, he does not advocate a theory of vicarious satisfaction. Instead, God shows Himself, in Jesus’ death, as self-giving reconciling love, as the utterable Word. This Word is the basis of the Church’s proclamation. God is served by the proclamation of His presence, "i.e., by acceptance of and submission to his presence, in other words, he is only served by Word and faith."² In the exposure to the Word-event, the individual looks for the death of the old man and the resurrection of the new man.

Ebeling’s primary departure from Brunner’s thought is his provision for an historical proof for faith, something Brunner would never allow. Yet, there remains broad latitude for dialogue between the two theologians. The linguistic basis of Ebeling’s thought overcomes the subject-object antithesis and still provides for the possibility of dogmatic statements about the person and work of Christ. For the student of Brunner, the work of Ebeling demonstrates

¹Ibid., p. 80.
²Ibid., p. 105.
the possibility of combining the eristic and dogmatic tasks of theology.

In Brunner's mind, his *Dogmatics* occupied a position between the objectivism of Barth and subjectivism of Bultmann. He was concerned over the apparent lack of influence his thought had on the theological development of students after the Second World War. One of the reasons for this lack of influence was Brunner's refusal to leave Switzerland and the University of Zürich to accept teaching posts in the United States or Germany. In contrast, both Bultmann (Marburg) and Barth (Göttingen and Bonn) occupied chairs in Germany, giving wider circulation to their views. Furthermore, Brunner's major works were all published in Switzerland. It is a well-known fact that Barth's first edition of the *Römerbrief*, despite its notoriety, did not sell very well initially. Originally published by G. A. Gäschlin of Berne, only half of the volumes of the first edition were sold until it was taken over by the German publishing house Chr. Kaiser Verlag.¹ Prior to this time, it was read and reviewed almost exclusively in Switzerland.

A second reason concerns the ground Brunner staked out for himself between Barth and Bultmann. In his desire to overcome the subject-object antithesis in theology, Brunner abandoned the dogmatic certainty of Barth's reliance on the Word of God and repudiated the subjective existentialism of Bultmann's program of demythologizing. Paradoxically, Brunner, who remained dialectical

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¹Cf. Busch, pp. 92ff.
by attempting to mediate between objectivity and subjectivity, found that he appealed neither to the right nor the left spectrum of what previously had been "dialectical" theology.
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