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A DISCUSSION BETWEEN
THE EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHY OF KARL JASPERS
AND THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF RUDOLF BULTMANN

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THESIS

A DISCUSSION BETWEEN
THE EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHY OF KARL JASPERS
AND THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF RUDOLF BULTMANN

Submitted to the University of Glasgow for the Degree of
Ph.D. in the Faculty of Divinity by Eugene T. Long, III.

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PREFACE

I

The encounter between Christian theology and existential philosophy, which can be observed in many quarters, has taken a particular form in the direct confrontation between the thought of Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann. This encounter is of particular interest for several reasons. First, both Jaspers and Bultmann are aware of an interrelationship between their individual fields of study. On the one hand, Jaspers maintains that the essential themes of western philosophical thought have their source in Biblical as well as Greek thought. Further, philosophical faith, which Jaspers develops in place of the faith of a revealed religion, has its roots in Biblical thought. Although philosophical faith is free from all ecclesiastical authority, it lives under the guidance of Kant and the Bible.¹ Jaspers also maintains that the experience of helplessness in freedom, which is a central theme of philosophical faith, was understood only with the aid of Paul, Augustine and Luther.²

¹ Scope, pp. 28ff.; Myth, p. 78.

² P.K.J., p. 780; Myth, p. 73.

On the other hand, it is well known that Bultmann openly acknowledges his debt to the philosophy of existence, particularly in its Heideggerian form. He not only finds the categories of this philosophy helpful in the exposition of the Christian faith, but claims that Christian theology must fall back on the philosophical analysis of man if it wants "to clarify existence in faith in a conceptual way, i.e., if it wants to be a science and not merely a sermon."³ Every theologian, according to Bultmann, is dependent upon an understanding of existence, conscious or unconscious, which he brings with him to every situation and to every theological task. It is the duty of the theologian to clarify this understanding, and Bultmann thinks that the philosophical analysis of existence is a means by which this can take place.

Secondly, both Jaspers and Bultmann have demonstrated an interest in the communication between philosophers and theologians. Jaspers maintains that even after the first world war he had no real interest in theology and yet it proved impossible for him to ignore it. In 1928, at the end of a lecture-course on metaphysics, a young Roman Catholic priest expressed his gratitude to Jaspers for the course but offered one objection, "that most of what you

³ Existence, p.97.

have lectured on is, according to our point of view, theology."⁴ The realization that as a philosopher he was discussing what others considered to be theology led to an attempt on his part to clarify the relationship between philosophy and theology.

According to Jaspers, the relationship between philosophy and theology is not one of exclusion. "Religion is no enemy of philosophy, but something that essentially concerns it and troubles it."⁵ Philosophy and theology certainly clash with regard to the authority of the religious community, but there is also a contact and even a convergence in the contents of these two disciplines. Because of the importance that Jaspers assigned to religion, he became eager to hear what was being said in religious circles. He mentions both his study of Martensen's dogmatics and his indebtedness to the thought of Søren Kierkegaard.⁶ Jaspers also remarks that he has been in communication with the thought of Rudolf Bultmann for a number of years. This was concretized in a lecture delivered by Jaspers at a meeting of Swiss theologians at Basel in which he discussed the truth and

⁴P.K.J., p.77.

⁵Scope, p.77.

⁶P.K.J., pp.75-76,86.

untruth of Bultmann's project of demythologization.⁷

Bultmann's interest in communication with philosophers has its origin in the lively discussion between philosophers and theologians which has traditionally characterized the atmosphere at Marburg, Bultmann's scientific home. Bultmann looks upon these discussions between philosophers and theologians as most fruitful adventures, and it is from these discussions that his concern with existential philosophy has developed. According to Bultmann, it is through the philosophy of existence that he has been able to discuss the Christian faith with persons that he could reach in no other way. Thus, in reply to Julius Schniewind, Bultmann maintains that it was as a result of his restatement of the Christian faith in existentialist terms that he has been able to discuss the faith with the philosopher, Kamlah.⁸

This awareness of the relationship between philosophy and theology and the desire for communication between philosophers and theologians suggest the possibility of a fruitful discussion between the thought of Jaspers and Bultmann. However, while the direct encounter between them has revealed many significant areas for dialogue, the end-results

⁷ This lecture was published along with Bultmann's reply and Jaspers' rejoinder in Myth And Christianity, New York, 1958.

⁸ K.M. pp. 122-23; Existence, pp. 283ff.

have not always been as successful as one might have desired. Bultmann begins his reply to Jaspers by expressing the sense of pleasure and honor that he had felt in first reading Jaspers' remarks on demythologizing. But he then says that he finds it difficult to reply to Jaspers' remarks because "they have little in common with the spirit of genuine communication. This style is not that of a Socratic-Platonic dialogue, but rather of an ex-cathedra pronouncement."⁹ Bultmann, while admitting that Jaspers' position may make it impossible for him to experience personally the task that the theologian faces in the hermeneutic problem, suggests that Jaspers has made no attempt to understand this task and the responsibility it involves.¹⁰

Jaspers seems to have the reverse situation in mind when he holds Bultmann's "orthodoxy" responsible for the lack of communication between them. Jaspers' experience in failing to make contact with Bultmann in the 1920's, when Bultmann visited Heidelberg, and other similar experiences with theologians has led him to suggest that discussion with theologians always breaks off at crucial points. "They fall silent, make an incomprehensible statement, speak of something else, assert something unconditionally, address kind and friendly words to one, without having actually realized

⁹ Myth, p. 57

¹⁰ Myth, p. 60.

what one has previously said--in the last analysis they are not really interested...¹¹ Jaspers admits that he selected the concept of demythologization as the subject for discussion with Bultmann because the latter had chosen to make an alliance between this and an orthodoxy that maintained that the idea of God without Christ is madness from the Christian point of view.¹²

In effect, Jaspers and Bultmann are both saying that the other participates in a form of exclusivism which works against genuine communication. This wall between them, however, is not impenetrable. While there will inevitably be a divergence at particular points between the philosopher and the theologian, there is not inevitably a wall which prevents genuine communication. Indeed, in spite of the clash between Jaspers and Bultmann, fundamental problems are illuminated which are most significant for the discussion between Christian theology and existential philosophy. It is also true that both Jaspers and Bultmann have, in their replies, indicated a further will toward communication. This study is an attempt to continue this communication between Jaspers and Bultmann and thus to clarify certain aspects of the contemporary dialogue between Christian theology and existential philosophy.

¹¹ Offenbarung, p.451.

¹² Myth, p.110; Jaspers refers here to an earlier statement by Bultmann; see Essays, p.161.

II

The focal point of this discussion between the thought of Jaspers and Bultmann is that of human existence in its relation to God. This meeting-point allows us to begin where Jaspers' philosophy and Bultmann's theology have their beginning and where they have much in common. It also permits us to move through to the center of their differences. The method of presentation will, I hope, allow freedom for the clarification of certain issues within the thought of each thinker and at the same time make possible a genuine Auseinandersetzung between their thought and the reader. Each chapter presents first the thought of Jaspers and second the thought of Bultmann. A final section in each chapter seeks to indicate the major points of convergence and divergence in their thought. This method also leaves an opportunity for certain personal reflections and suggestions in the course of the discussion between Jaspers and Bultmann.

The study is divided into three parts and is followed by a conclusion which develops some of the thoughts implied in the main body of the study regarding the relation between faith and history. Part one, entitled God and Existence, sets the theme for the study and it is from the problems raised in this part that the other two parts are derived. The two chapters in part one reflect the

relationship between God and man in the form of the dialogue between God and man and man and God.

Part two, entitled Revelation and Faith, also contains two chapters, in this case reflecting the disclosure of God to man and man's response. Finally part three, entitled Faith and Communication, contains one chapter in which is discussed the communication of faith's understanding of the relation between God and man.

It gives me pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Ronald Greger Smith whose encouragement and criticisms have been invaluable in the development of this study. I would also like to express my appreciation to Professor John Macquarrie who has contributed to this study in many ways. Finally, thanks are due to my wife, Carolyn, who has encouraged me to do this work from the beginning and has made possible the leisure in which it could be done.

E.F.E.

ABBREVIATIONS

Anti-Reason	Jaspers, <u>Reason And Anti-Reason.</u>
C.W.M.	Ogden, <u>Christ Without Myth.</u>
Essays	Bultmann, <u>Essays Philosophical And Theological.</u>
E.T.	Macquarrie, <u>An Existentialist Theology.</u>
Existence	Bultmann, <u>Existence And Faith.</u>
G.V.	Bultmann, <u>Glauben Und Verstehen, 3 vols.</u>
H.E.	Bultmann, <u>History And Eschatology.</u>
K.M.	Bartsch, ed., <u>Kerygma And Myth.</u>
Myth	Jaspers and Bultmann, <u>Myth And Christianity.</u>
Mythology	Bultmann, <u>Jesus Christ And Mythology.</u>
N.T.	Bultmann, <u>Theology Of The New Testament, 2 vols.</u>
Offenbarung	Jaspers, <u>Der Philosophische Glaube Angesichts Der Offenbarung.</u>
Origin	Jaspers, <u>The Origin And Goal Of History.</u>
P.K.J.	Schlipp, ed., <u>The Philosophy Of Karl Jaspers.</u>
Reason	Jaspers, <u>Reason And Existenz.</u>
Scope	Jaspers, <u>The Perennial Scope Of Philosophy.</u>
S.D.	Macquarrie, <u>The Scope Of Demythologizing.</u>
S.T.	Tillich, <u>Systematic Theology, 2 vols.</u>
Truth	Jaspers, <u>Truth And Symbol.</u>
Wahrheit	Jaspers, <u>Von Der Wahrheit.</u>
Wisdom	Jaspers, <u>Way To Wisdom.</u>

PART ONE

GOD AND EXISTENCE

FROM MAN TO GOD

Part one of this study is concerned with the relationship of human existence to God. In this chapter we make an analysis of this relationship from the side of man. We are concerned to elucidate the nature of human existence in the world, its failure to be its authentic self, and the transition to authentic existence and the nature of it.

1. Existence in the World

a. Karl Jaspers

Jaspers suggests that there are a number of possible answers to the question concerning the nature of human existence in the world. An answer can be given from the universal knowledge of the sciences, from the study of history and from various interpretations of the world of ciphers.¹ Most significantly, however, the nature of human existence in the world is discovered out of man's self-awareness as a creature of the world who is not bound by it. In this self-

¹ Cipher (Chiffre) is a technical term for Jaspers which means the code language of Transcendence. Properly understood, cipher refers to any form of objectivity which becomes transparent to Transcendence in the moment of individual existence. However, when Jaspers speaks of the world of ciphers, he refers to particular objective forms such as the symbols and myths of religion which may become transparent to Transcendence. See chapter V of this study.

awareness, one no longer has an absolute picture of oneself. Rather, all pictures pass into moments of the imageless as one transcends the finite world and finds oneself in relation to Transcendence.²

Man exists in the world and thus is subject to study as an object in the world. But man also experiences freedom from the world in the awareness of the existence which he finds in relation to Transcendence. He lives in the world but is not bound to it as are the other creatures of the world. He is free from bondage to it in his potential Existenz in relation to Transcendence.³ This twofold understanding of man results in two different, but inseparable approaches to the nature of human existence. We see man "as object of inquiry, and as existence endowed with a freedom that is inaccessible to inquiry."⁴

In his understanding of man as an object of inquiry, Jaspers remains faithful to his earlier training as a scientist and to his conviction that all knowledge and under-

² Offenbarung, p.445.

³ Existenz is a term which Jaspers uses to indicate authentic existence which man knows always as a potentiality. That is, man never possesses his authentic self. We have followed the example of W. Earle in leaving this image in its German form. See Reason, p.11.

⁴ Wisdom, p.63; Scope, p.56.

standing comes through the world in which human existence has its being.⁵ As an object of inquiry, man is a subject for the study of anatomy, physiology, psychology, sociology, and so on. Jaspers' own contribution in this direction is not negligible as can be demonstrated from his early research in the field of psychology. His massive study, Allgemeine Psychopathologie, which made its first appearance in 1913, has passed through seven editions in Germany, and has been translated into French, Spanish, Japanese, and recently into English. It is considered a major volume in psychopathological phenomenology, a field which has gained recognition through the work of Jaspers and his former colleagues at the school of psychiatry in Heidelberg.⁶

Scientific study is considered by Jaspers to be necessary to the apprehension of something about the nature of man. Its research is of supreme interest and rewarding if pursued in the spirit of scientific criticism. It

⁵ After graduating from the Gymnasium, Jaspers matriculated for three semesters as a student of Jurisprudence. He then enrolled as a student of medicine, passed the state medical examination in 1908 and received the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1909. Following his graduation, Jaspers began work in the psychiatric hospital of the University of Heidelberg. In 1913 he became Privatdozent in psychology in the faculty of philosophy and in 1921 Professor of Philosophy. See P.K.J., p.7.

⁶ See the Foreward to Jaspers, General Psychopathology, Manchester, 1963.

reveals "what and how and within what limits we know a thing and how little we know, in terms of what is possible, and how radically inaccessible to this knowledge authentic humanity remains."⁷ The last part of this quotation is perhaps the key to Jaspers' own transition into philosophical studies. According to Jaspers, all departments of scientific knowledge apprehend something about man, some process which actually takes place, but it errs when it claims absolute and final knowledge of man as a whole. Every insight into the nature of man, if it is absolutized as a knowledge of the whole man, destroys freedom, that aspect of human existence which can never be enclosed in the study of man as an object. If one absolutizes scientific knowledge of man, one misses essential man as an existence endowed with freedom. But if one follows the scientific investigation through to its limits, one comes up against the knowledge of humanity which is inaccessible to objective inquiry.⁸

History is also an essential source in man's inquiry about himself. But, as with science, the essential understanding of man cannot be grasped in an objective structure, but only in the realization that we transcend the limits of

⁷ Wisdom, p. 66.

⁸ Scope, pp. 61-62; Offenbarung, pp. 445-46; See ch. IV/12.

the objective structures of history.⁹ Man is an historical being, immersed in history, and consequently he belongs to it. But man also knows his freedom from it, his potentiality which, through responsible decision and choice, shows him to be other than determined by structures of history external to himself. In reflection upon history, man breaks through the world and finds the roots of his potential Existenz in the beyond. As Jaspers puts it: "By making history our own, we cast an anchor through history into eternity."¹⁰

Jaspers' discussion of the nature of man in science and history indicates that man can draw no conclusive image of himself from an understanding based on his reality as an object in the world. Man, as he is through freedom, cannot be contained without remainder as an object in the world. His existence as a free creature with a potential Existenz is as little comprehended in this manner as is Transcendence. He can be fully understood only out of his relation to Transcendence in which his potential Existenz has its source.¹¹

Likewise, man's existence cannot be fully grasped in the various interpretations of man in the world of

⁹ Wisdom, p. 96

¹⁰ Wisdom, p. 109; See ch. III/8, IV/12.

¹¹ Offenbarung, p. 451.

ciphers, that is, in the world of myths, symbols, religions, and so on. If one approaches the world of ciphers in an attitude of abstraction, seeking the abstract meaning in them, one cannot fully comprehend the nature of man's existence. The ciphers become the source of our self-understanding in relation to Transcendence only when we transcend their objectivity, when the objectivity of the symbols is suspended and becomes transparent to Transcendence and Existenz. Again, man's understanding of himself is seen to pass through the world of objectivity, but in such a way as to indicate that he is not bound by it.¹²

At the limits of all forms of self-understanding in the objective world, man confronts his freedom and his potential Existenz. His potentiality is indicated in the questions that arise, questions that cease when self-understanding is dissolved into mere empirical existence. From whence do we become man? What is the present meaning and goal of our life? What are our possibilities and limits? Such questions indicate man's freedom and potentiality in transcending the limits imposed upon him by the finite world. When they are answered in definitive worldly forms, they cease to be questions and the freedom of man

¹² Offenbarung, pp. 451ff.

from the world is lost. Any answer, which claims to possess the truth in a definitive way, whether it is given in science, metaphysics, or religion, makes the same error. It is only when these questions remain open that man has an indication of his potential Existenz.¹³

Man's understanding of himself as a being, who lives in the world and yet free from it in his potentiality, does not have its basis in the results of objective inquiry, but in a self-awareness that both precedes and comes after such inquiry.

Each of us for himself is certain of what man is, in a way that precedes scientific research and also comes after it. This is the prerogative of our freedom, which knows itself bound up with cogent knowledge, but is not included in it as an object of cognition. For in so far as we make ourselves the object of scientific inquiry, we see no freedom, but factuality, finiteness, form, relation, causal necessity. But it is by our freedom that we have awareness of our humanity. ¹⁴

Jaspers' analysis of man leads us through the world of objective understanding to the understanding of man as potential Existenz. He means thus to indicate the inseparability of man understood as an object of inquiry and as existence endowed with freedom that is not accessible to objective research. Jaspers develops this systematically

¹³ Offenbarung, pp. 461ff.

¹⁴ Scope, p. 62.

in his concept of the Incomprehending-that-we-are (Das Ungrreifende das wir sind).¹⁵ Here he suggests that man, in any mode of the objective understanding of himself in the world, or in any combination of them, comes up against a limit and experiences a sense of incompleteness and dissatisfaction. He does not fulfil himself in any of these modes of understanding and in the failure to do so becomes aware of the infinity of his selfhood, that which transcends all forms of finite knowledge. He knows that his possibilities are not all exhausted in these modes of existence. This is sensed in his dissatisfaction with himself, in his search for the fundamental unity of himself that is not available at the level of finite existence.

In each mode of the Incomprehending-that-we-are, we come up against an infinity of selfhood that is not contained in finite existence. We are aware of a potentiality, a manner of being that is unfulfilled. Jaspers indicates this

¹⁵ The Incomprehending (Das Ungrreifende), also translated, the Comprehensive, is a fundamental but difficult concept in Jaspers' thought. The Incomprehending refers to Being or Transcendence. However, Jaspers also speaks of the Incomprehending-that-we-are which he divides into the four modes of Dasein, Bewusstsein überhaupt, Geist, and Existenz. He means to indicate the whole range of the possible in every mode of human existence. In each mode of the Incomprehending-that-we-are, an horizon is encountered which indicates something further, and in pushing beyond each horizon, we come finally to Transcendence in its relation to Existenz. See ch.II/4, V/14.

potentiality of the self in the term Existenz. Man is unable to eliminate his finiteness. He cannot flee from his existence in the world as one might attempt to do in some forms of mysticism. But, in becoming aware of his finiteness he does break through its bonds. In an anecdote cited by Jaspers, two Bavarian peasants are discussing the situation of man and one suggests that Darwin may have been right, that maybe man is descended from the ape. The other peasant replies: "Yes...., but just the same I'd like to see the ape that first noticed that he wasn't an ape any more."¹⁶ Man is not simply immersed in the world; he knows that he is. He is not simply finite but knows that he is, and in this way he transcends finiteness. Man is aware of his finiteness in his consciousness of that which is not finite, of that which enters his consciousness and causes him to transcend finiteness.¹⁷

In breaking through the bonds of finiteness, man is aware of his infinity, his potential Existenz in relation to that which stands beyond him. He knows that his existence in the world is not something that he ascribes to himself. "We did not create ourselves. Each man can think that he might possibly not have been."¹⁸ But he also knows that his potential Existenz is freedom from the

¹⁶ Scope, p. 61.

¹⁷ Scope, pp. 63-65.

¹⁸ Wisdom, p. 64.

world is not something dependent upon himself, but upon that which stands beyond him. "When I am authentically free, I am certain that I am not free through myself."¹⁹ Every animal is perfect in its own way; it fulfills itself within its own limitations. However, man cannot fulfill himself in his finiteness, but always strives toward the self, revealed in his potentiality. In the limitedness of his finiteness he is aware of a potential Existenz which he cannot assign to himself, but which must be given to him.²⁰

Jaspers understands the freedom and potentiality of man to be known only in relation to Transcendence. Thus, the essential thing for man is that he experience his authentic self as that which is given to him out of Transcendence, that is, out of that which lies wholly beyond the limitations of the world and existence in the world. It is through Transcendence that man encounters his true self. Man exists in between the world and God, as empirical existence limited by the world, and as potential Existenz in relation to Transcendence.²¹

Existenz, which man never possesses but knows only as potentiality, can be given no concrete definition. The term itself is an index to the being of man that we

¹⁹ Wisdom, p. 65.

²⁰ Scope, pp. 66-68.

²¹ Scope, p. 71.

cannot, in the last analysis, formulate. Existenz is that aspect of existence which cannot be grasped in empirical studies, in abstract understanding, or in any attempt to form a unity out of the totality of finite knowledge. It is the individual selfhood which confronts us as potentiality. It is not a possession of man, but a possibility, a way of being that he chooses or rejects in each moment. Existenz is the unique potentiality of man and distinguishes him from mere animal existence.

Existenz is the selfhood that underlies all other modes of human existence. It is understood in unity with freedom, and thus escapes all investigations in the world which proceed on the basis of a given order and structure. It is the selfhood seen at the limits of finite existence, individual selfhood in which the sole possible manifestation of the depths of Being comes. Existenz is the hidden ground in man to which Transcendence addresses itself and in which man's potentiality of freedom is revealed. Transcendence is the power through which I come to my true self in freedom from the world, and Existenz is the selfhood through which Transcendence addresses me not as a void but as that which has a real relation to my being. In this meeting of Transcendence and Existenz lies the unity of time and Eternity. Transcendence enters the particular

historicity of the self in its potential Existenz.²²

In summarizing the characterization of Existenz, we can speak of it as the selfhood of man in which Transcendence has its relation to temporality and in which man is aware of his potentiality. It is "the dark ground of selfhood, the concealment out of which I come to encounter myself and for which Transcendence first becomes real."²³ We are thus only circumscribing the meaning of Existenz; for to assign it an actual content would reduce it to the level of conceptualisation and hence to the status of worldly existence.

We have characterized Jaspers' understanding of existence in the world as one in which man is both bound to the world and free from it. Man is existence in the world and potential Existenz in freedom from it. However, man does not participate in his potentiality in a natural way, that is, according to natural law. Because Existenz is actual only in unity with freedom, it is realized only in man's decision to take up his potentiality. This means that man is faced with the decision, either to limit himself to finite existence and to acquiesce in a way of being that is less than human, or to take up his potential Existenz in the way of freedom from the bonds of the finite

²² Reason, pp. 60-65.

²³ Reason, p. 64.

world. It is only in the latter decision that he becomes really human.

Jaspers is not so naive as to assume that mankind is always choosing his potential Existenz. Indeed, one might say that one of the great forces behind his philosophizing is the desire to awaken man to the possibility of his authentic self as given out of Transcendence. But this same man, out of the same initial awareness of freedom, can seek security and fulfilment not in the gift of himself in Transcendence, but in the given order in which he lives as an empirical being. He may choose to understand himself in his intellect and in his ideas which, when absolutised, contradict his selfhood of freedom. This fall away from his potential Existenz takes several different but related paths.

Man, in fact of the anxiousness of decision, can seek security in an absolutised form of the world. He renounces himself and plunges into a routine of finite being. Irresoluteness becomes the form of peace that he seeks. Transcendence is reduced to the level of the immanent; what is merely immanent assumes the form of an absolutised power in the world. Man seeks to draw close to the Divine and seeks to experience it directly as something in the world. This results in various forms of demonology.

Demonology can take the form of a turning away from

Transcendence in which man creates his gods out of the world. Freedom is thus lost and becomes merely the acceptance of the fate that seizes man. "The spirit of humanity is reduced to an inner disposition to behave humanely under certain circumstances, it is not an awe before the soul that is rooted in eternity by its relation to transcendence, before man as such."²⁴ The relation to the One is lost and life is fragmented; it is dissolved into the indeterminate. Nature becomes the ultimate and all-embracing necessity and man loses his distinction from nature. Man assumes an aesthetic attitude and substitutes the contemplation of supposed reality for the fulfilment of his true reality. "Life is fragmented into the multiplicity of the contingent" and man no longer needs to commit himself.²⁵ He misses Reality and deludes himself with a supposed supersensory sphere. Transcendence is replaced by immanence and is lost.

Demonology takes another form in the deification of man. It is a universal phenomenon to elevate man to the superhuman, and to see the ideal of humanity realized in him. In this situation, man submits blindly to an individual and deifies him. This occurs in the following of motion picture stars, in the submission to certain rulers

²⁴ Scope, p.126.

²⁵ Scope, p.128.

and generals, and it is a great factor in the shaping of great religions where a man is raised to the level of God. The deification of man arises out of the seeking of an absolute authority in the world toward which absolute obedience is possible. One seeks here a "tangible proximity of the distant, hidden God."²⁶

Nihilism is also a form of rejection of the true selfhood of man and a falling prey to the limitations of empirical existence. For the nihilist all contents of faith are untenable, all interpretations of Being and the world are seen to be delusions. But nihilism itself, in its negations, must begin from something recognized, some standard which, if apprehended, cancels out nihilism. And this standard, according to Jaspers, is a positivistic one. Being is regarded as identical with empirical existence which can become an object of knowledge. Again, man, in seeking to ground himself in the world, separates himself from his true freedom and loses his potential Existenz.²⁷

Jaspers' understanding of man's failure to choose his Existenz in freedom is clearly not unrelated to the symbol of the fall in Christian theology. For Jaspers, the "fall" does not have the sense of universality that it does in Bultmann's thought, nor is it understood in terms of guilt

²⁶ Scope, p.131.

²⁷ Scope, pp.132ff.

before a loving and forgiving God.²⁸ But it does carry the meaning of man's binding himself to the world in such a way as to separate himself from his true existence in relation to Transcendence, and in this way Jaspers speaks similarly to Bultmann. The dehumanizing of man or the rejection of the way of freedom is, according to Jaspers, the rejection of that self given by Transcendence, and the replacement of it with a self, created by man out of the finiteness of the world.

b. Rudolf Bultmann

Bultmann, as an interpreter of the New Testament, is primarily concerned with the manner in which man understands himself as existence in the world and in relation to God. In this concern he stands very near to Jaspers. Both Jaspers and Bultmann direct our attention primarily to the understanding of man as more than a creature of the natural order. Both understand man as one who transcends the world in his self-understanding.

The concept of the cosmos or the world in the New Testament is not cosmological, but historical or eschatological.²⁹ Thus it differs from the Greek sense of cosmos. Greek antiquity conceived cosmos as a "totality bound together by rationally comprehensible relationships of law

²⁸ P.K.J., p.760; Myth, pp.73ff.

²⁹ N.T.I, pp.254,256.

into a unified structure containing heaven and earth and all living beings, including gods and men."³⁰ Man was understood as a part of that cosmos "organically incorporated in the objective cohesion of the world, the object of observation like the other objects of nature."³¹ Man thus becomes a part of the totality. He is lost in a world-view in which the individual is seen as a part of the whole.³²

In contrast to the ancient Greek conception of the world and human existence in the world, the New Testament means in its use of world, "the world of human beings."³³ The world often denotes "the quintessence of earthly conditions of life and earthly possibilities."³⁴ It is God's creation, that which is to be distinguished from the Creator. God is not immersed in the world as in Greek thought, but is separated from it, and man, who is understood as a creature of the world, is radically distinct from God.³⁵

The world in the New Testament can refer simply to men as a whole or it can have the particular emphasis of "this world", a dimension of hostility toward God and estrangement from Him. In this latter sense, the world

³⁰ N.T.I, p.254.

³¹ Essays, p.72.

³² Essays, pp.72ff.

³³ Essays, p.77.

³⁴ N.T.I, p.254.

³⁵ N.T.I, p.254.

becomes "the sphere of all men's thinking, planning and desiring, in their cares and wishes, their pleasures and pursuits, their pride and arrogance."³⁶ "This world" is the world of corruption and death and stands in antithesis to God.³⁷

The responsibility for the antithesis between God and the world is placed not upon the material structure of existence, but upon man's rebellion against the Creator. While the New Testament agrees with the Gnostics that man is a slave to the world and its powers, it does not conceive the soul as the prisoner of a material body. The world is not "this world" in its created existence, but becomes so in the fall of Adam, that is, in the sin of man. Man chooses to bind himself to the world and thus it becomes hostile to God.³⁸ Bultmann summarizes his understanding of the world when he writes:

Now this means that "kosmos" . . . is much more than a time-concept or a space-concept; or, more exactly, it is an eschatological concept. It denotes the world of men and the sphere of human activity as being, on the one hand, a temporary thing hastening toward its end (I. Cor. 7:31), and on the other hand, the sphere of anti-godly power under whose sway the individual who is surrounded by it has fallen.³⁹

³⁶ Essays, p. 77.

³⁷ N.T.I, pp. 255ff.; K.M., p. 17; Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes, Göttingen, 1950, pp. 33-34

³⁸ K.M., p. 17.

³⁹ N.T.I, p. 256

It is this understanding of the world which forms the background to Bultmann's consideration of human existence in the world. Man exists in the world but not simply as part of a totality. Rather, the world is the sphere in which the action of man takes place. Man exists in the world and the world is the means of his existing. Yet, he is free from the world, capable of placing his trust in it or in the God upon whom its existence is dependent. Man, living in the world has the possibility of life or death, freedom or bondage. Man is in the world but not of the world.

Bultmann does not make an analysis of man as a material body on the one hand and a spiritual body on the other hand. Rather, he sees in the relation of existence to the world a way of being in which man can choose either bondage or freedom. Man's way of being in the world is called by Bultmann, somatic. Man is a unity. Paul does not separate the being of man into separate aspects or functions, but understands him as a unity and indicates this in his reference to the body of man. When Paul refers to man in the concept soma or body, he does not intend to speak of a substance, but of a way of being. It is not that man has a body but that he is body.

it is clear that soma is not a something that outwardly clings to a man's real self ... but belongs to its very essence, so that we

can say man does not have a soma; he is soma, for in not a few cases soma can be translated simply "I" (or whatever personal pronoun fits the context) 40

When Paul speaks of man in terms of body, he refers to the essential being of man in which man has a relationship with himself. "Man is called soma in respect to his being able to make himself the object of his own action or to experience himself as the subject to whom something happens."⁴¹ Man is understood as a creature who has the freedom to transcend the lawful cosmos in his relationship to himself.

Human existence, which is capable of a relationship with itself, faces two fundamental possibilities. Either, man can affirm his authentic self in his freedom, or he can choose self-estrangement in putting himself at the disposal of some outside force in the world. He can live in the world and be not of the world, or he can fall in bondage to it.

Since it belongs to man's nature to have such a relationship to himself, a double possibility exists: to be at one with himself or at odds (estranged from himself). The possibility of having one's self in hand or of losing this control and being at the mercy of a power not one's own is inherent to human existence itself.

40 N.T.I, p.194.

41 N.T.I, p.195; H. Bartsch, Ed., Kerygma Und Mythos, VI/1, Hamburg, 1963, pp.21ff.

But in the latter situation the outside power can be experienced as an enemy power which estranges man from himself or as the opposite, a friendly power that brings man estranged from himself back to himself. 42

Soma then refers to that way of being in the world in which man can live either as a captive of the world or in freedom from it. Bultmann's analysis of man as body is supported in his analysis of the concepts, psyche, pneuma, and zoe. Man is a whole person living in relationship to himself (soma), a willing and knowing creature (psyche, pneuma), living in his concrete existence (zoe).⁴³

This state of living toward some goal, having some attitude, willing something and knowing something, belongs to man's very nature and in itself is neither good nor bad. The goal toward which one's life is oriented is left still undetermined in the mere ontological structure of having some orientation or other; but this structure ... offers the possibility of choosing one's goal, of deciding for good or evil, for or against God. 44

The understanding of existence in the world, which Bultmann develops theologically, is more than the understanding of man that comes as a result of objective research. Like Jaspers, Bultmann finds man to have an understanding of himself that is not limited by scientific research. Existence in the world is a way of being which is known only in man's awareness of himself as one who is capable of harmony or estrangement. The possibility of

42 N.T.I, p.196

43 N.T.I, pp.203ff.

44 N.T.I, p.209.

harmony with oneself and hence authentic existence is not something that man achieves out of himself. Rather, it is dependent upon man's understanding himself to be given a new way of being in relation to God. Human existence, which rejects its dependence upon the transcendent God, binds itself to the world in such a way that it becomes "this world". The world then is the power which destroys human freedom because man is limited by the world; he is unable to transcend it.

In the New Testament, God is understood as the Creator of the world, that is, the world and man are not self-sufficient. The world and man are properly understood only in the acknowledgement of their dependency upon the Creator, when man is understood as creature and world as creation. Thus man cannot be authentically himself unless he sees himself in relation to the God who transcends the limitations of the world. It is in dependence upon the Creator that we as creatures are freed from the limits of the world and take up our authentic possibility.⁴⁵

As we have indicated, Bultmann's analysis of existence in the world presents man with two possibilities, either to choose himself in relation to God and freedom from the world, or to choose himself within the limits of

⁴⁵ Essays, p.81.

the world and thus to bind himself to it. The latter possibility is fulfilled in the act of man that Christian theology symbolizes in the doctrine of sin. In this act or decision, man relies upon creation rather than the Creator and thus stands over against God.

In a discussion of the Pauline conception of man and his sin, Bultmann writes: "Whereas hitherto he (man) might have enjoyed the world as God's creation, it has now become 'this world', the world in revolt against God."⁴⁶ As Professor Macquarrie has said, this revolt against God in the New Testament is not simply the statement of an ontological possibility but describes the actual being of man.⁴⁷ And Bultmann, like other New Testament theologians, is faced with the problem inherent in Pauline theology of acknowledging the universality of sin as the condition of man, while accepting man's responsibility for it. Bultmann's analysis of Paul leads him to conclude that sin is inevitably awakened in man; it is a universal occurrence. Man fundamentally strives in the wrong direction.

Nevertheless, sin is understood in unity with guilt which would be sacrificed if the universality of sin were attributed to some inherent quality in man. Man can be guilty only if he is responsible. Bultmann observes the

⁴⁶ K.M., p.18

⁴⁷ E.T., p.109.

ambiguity in Paul's thought at this point, and tries to solve the problem of the universality of sin and man's responsibility for it by directing us to the inheritance of sin attributed to Adam. According to Bultmann, every man is born into a humanity which is already guided by a false striving. And since human existence has its existence in relation to others, mutual trust can be destroyed by a single happening which establishes mistrust and thereby sin. This creates a world in which each person looks out for himself, each insists upon his own rights and struggles for his own existence. Thus, sin is always already here, and man always stands before the divine command, "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not", with its intent to snatch man out of his self-interested pursuit of life.⁴⁸

Sin, in the New Testament, refers to the individual's seeking his own security in the world. The world becomes the source of man's hopes and aspirations. However, since the New Testament understands the world and the individual only as creation and creature of God, the seeking of oneself in the world means a revolt against God.

The New Testament says that men are lost to the world, and that means at the same time to themselves as they are, as people of the past. The world indeed is simply the sphere which men have made into a power over themselves by whatever they have done in the past....

⁴⁸ N.T.I, pp.249-55.

But what is the real crux of sin? What is it if sin is unresponsiveness towards the future? It is dread-the dread of the man who is unwilling to surrender to what is a mystery to him, and who wishes to cling on to himself. It is dread of God and so revolt against God.

Since according to God's will man is to live on a future basis, he falls prey to nothingness and death in shutting himself off from the future in dread. He cannot bear to look into the void. In order to cling on to himself he fastens frantically on to what he can accomplish. 49

The New Testament finds the real life of man not in his being a part of the totality of the cosmos, but in "what happens at any given time, in the sphere of the individual, and in the arena of history."⁵⁰ It is in the world of concrete historical events that man is confronted with both his actual and his possible existence. But in actual fact, he awakens to himself in this existence as one who is not really free to choose his potential existence of freedom, "for he has always in reality decided in favour of his past as it is. He remains involved in dread and in sin, and in everything he does he gets more and more securely attached to them."⁵¹ His authentic life stands above him "as what he does not possess and so as a judge-

49 Essays, p. 61.

50 Essays, p. 83.

51 Essays, p. 84.

ment upon him."⁵² Unable to live out of the anxiousness in which he is called to place his dependence in an unknown future, that is, in the transcendent God, man fastens on to a security that he can produce, and thus shuts himself off from the future in which alone his true existence is possible. It is in this decision that the world becomes "this world."

"This world" is the world of corruption and death. Clearly, it was not so when it left the hands of the Creator, for it was only in consequence of the fall of Adam that death entered into the world (Rom. 5:12). Hence it is sin, rather than matter as such, which is the cause of corruption and death. 53

Then, man awakens to himself as one already in sin. He "has always already missed the existence that at heart he seeks, his intent is basically perverse, evil."⁵⁴ Man knows himself as focusing his anxiety upon some particular object of the world, seeking here security. But in so doing, the world over which he seeks to be master becomes master over him.⁵⁵

2. Freedom and Authentic Existence

a. Karl Jaspers

Authentic existence or Existenz has been characterized as man's potential way of being in freedom from the

⁵² Essays, p. 84.

⁵⁴ N.T.I., p. 227

⁵³ K.M., p. 17.

⁵⁵ K.M., pp. 18-19.

world and in dependence upon Transcendence. Existenz has its being in man's being given to himself out of Transcendence. It cannot be conceptualized, but is only realized individually in the experience of Transcendence. Jaspers does not define Existenz, but appeals to the individual to acknowledge it as his own potentiality. This appeal is necessary because man seeks to fulfill his existence in the world and thus separates himself from his potential Existenz. Our task now is to elucidate the means by which Existenz becomes a real possibility for man who has rejected it, and the manner of being which results from participation in Existenz.

Contrary to the conception of man as the sinner, who can be freed for his authentic existence only by a particular act of God in history, Jaspers finds in the Biblical religion the concept of man's God-created nobility, the nobilitas ingenua as it was called by the Pelagians. In this inborn nobility, man is humble in the knowledge that he is not self-created, that he must be given to himself by Transcendence. In the nobilitas ingenua, man stands in a direct relation to God through his freedom, and knows himself to be determined by God without the assistance of an external agency.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Myth, pp. 50-51.

However, this God-created nobility in man is not something that he possesses once and for all. Rather, it must be conquered continually and can be lost. When it is lost, man exists in a way of being that is less than human. He binds himself to the world and forgets his givenness in Transcendence. But freedom from this lost way of being and hence freedom for potential Existenz comes not through an external act as in the Christian faith, but in the inner awakening of the nobilitas ingenita.⁵⁷

The awakening of the nobility in man created in God's image, that is, the awakening to potential Existenz in its dependence upon Transcendence, has its beginning, so to speak, in man's awareness of his finiteness. According to Jaspers, "man's freedom is inseparable from his consciousness of his finite nature."⁵⁸ Finiteness is something that man cannot annul; he can only break through it.⁵⁹

Man becomes conscious of his finiteness in what Jaspers calls the boundary situations (Grenzsituationen) of life. Human existence is always existence in situations, and there are some situations which remain essentially the same. "I must die, I must suffer, I must struggle, I am subject to chance, I involve myself inexor-

57 Myth, pp. 73ff

58 Scope, p. 64.

59 Scope, p. 65.

ably in guilt."⁶⁰ These fundamental situations in human existence cannot be changed or evaded by man. Rather, in these situations he focuses upon a limit, a blank wall beyond which he cannot penetrate. A decision is placed before him. Either he defies the boundary situation and lives as if it did not exist, or he truly apprehends its significance and, through despair and rebirth, moves toward his authentic self in freedom from the limits of finite existence.⁶¹

There is no guarantee that one will move toward his authentic self out of the experience of a boundary situation. These situations do point up the insecurity of man. But he may seek his security in the world and thus again come up against his finiteness. Man may seek mastery over nature and community with other men in order to guarantee his existence. But there remains within nature and community the incalculable. Man cannot avoid labor, old age, sickness, and death, and he cannot find in his community the security of absolute justice and freedom. The struggle of man continues. The precariousness of all worldly

⁶⁰ Wisdom, p.20.

⁶¹ Wisdom, pp.19-20; John Macquarrie shows the irrelevance of Barth's criticism that many persons encounter a boundary situation without coming to the truth of Transcendence. Jaspers is well aware that man may avoid these situations and the meaning disclosed in them. See D.S., pp.174ff and K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, III/2 Edinburgh, 1960, pp.113ff.

existence forbids him to become content in the world and points to something else. Man's finiteness is also indicated in the very nature of cognition itself. Human knowledge is not self-sufficient, but is dependent upon experiences given in direct perception. Even human cognition is dependent upon the world and hence limited by it.⁶²

Closely associated with man's awareness of his finiteness in the various situations of human existence is the awareness of a summons to his authentic self in the Unconditional Imperative. Conditional imperatives, those issued through some external authority, make me dependent upon some practical aim or authority. But the Unconditional Imperative, which calls me to my authentic self, has its source within me. "Conditional imperatives confront me as fixed but transient principles, by which I can outwardly sustain myself. Unconditional imperatives come from within me, sustaining me inwardly by that which in myself is not only myself."⁶³

The Unconditional Imperative comes from within me as the command to be my authentic self. "I become aware of

62 Scope, pp. 64 ff.

63 Wisdom, p. 55.

myself as of that which I myself am, because it is what I ought to be." ⁶⁴ This imperative cannot become an object of knowledge. It is only when I live on the basis of something not explainable in objective terms that I live out of the Unconditional. Thus the Unconditional Imperative cannot be proven, but has reality only in the man who follows it in faith. This imperative confronts me with the "ought" of authentic Existenz and demands a decision from me. It demands a decision not from my natural Existenz, but from my freedom whose foundation is in Transcendence and not natural law. This is a decision which becomes clear through reflection, and it is in reflection that man becomes aware of his transcendent ground. ⁶⁵

Man becomes aware of his potential Existenz in his consciousness of finiteness and in hearing the summons to his authentic self in the Unconditional Imperative. In this Jaspers reveals his intention to make authentic Existenz dependent not upon the self, but upon God, who is the foundation of the true self. To live out of the Unconditional Imperative is to live out of the Eternal. ⁶⁶

64 Wisdom, p. 55

65 Wisdom, pp. 55-57

66 Wisdom, p. 56

The essential thing for man is that he know himself given to himself by Transcendence. It is through Transcendence that man is guided to his inner unity.⁶⁷

There is sometimes the tendency to characterize Jaspers' philosophy in terms of the boundary situations of death, suffering, and so on. There is truth in this characterization in so far as it illuminates a theme that is central to Jaspers' thought, that is, that in the failure of man to fulfil himself, Transcendence is made manifest as the origin and goal of his fulfilment. But if this characterization overshadows the role of Reason in communication, there is the danger that man's transition to Existenz will not be fully understood.

In Way To Wisdom, Jaspers records three movements which give rise to philosophizing: the sense of wonder, doubt and uncertainty in knowledge, and the awareness of helplessness in the boundary situations of death, chance, guilt, and insecurity in the world. But none of these movements is thought by Jaspers to be able to account for our present philosophical thought. These movements "can operate only if there is communication among men", and

67 Scope, p. 71.

this communication is at the same time rooted in the experiences of wonder, doubt, and helplessness.⁶⁸ The transcendent Truth, out of which I participate in Existenz, is not something that I confront automatically in an individual situation of finiteness. Rather, it becomes known to me only in the midst of my communication with others.⁶⁹

Communication has its basis in the polarity of Reason and Existenz and its relation to other Existenzen. Reason was the subject of three guest lectures delivered by Jaspers at the University of Heidelberg where he had been both student and professor. These lectures were published in 1950 under the title, Vernunft Und Widervernunft In Unser Seit and were translated into English in 1952. Early in the first lecture, Jaspers indicates his concern for Reason: "Since the day in 1901 when I first entered the University of Heidelberg and these very rooms as a student I have always regarded Reason as the essence of philosophy."⁷⁰ Jaspers strengthens this statement toward the end of his second lecture when he writes:

68 Wisdom, pp.25ff.

69 See ch.V/15.

70 Anti-Reason, pp. 7-8

Many years ago I spoke about existentialism and at the time I added that it was not a new or special philosophy of its own but the one eternal philosophy. Since this had been momentarily lost in the merely Objective I argued that it was permissible to characterise it by Kierkegaard's basic concept.

Today I should prefer to call Philosophy the philosophy of Reason, since it appears urgently necessary to stress this age-old essence of philosophy. Once Reason is lost, philosophy itself is lost. From the very beginning its task has been and still remains to acquire Reason, to restore itself as Reason which, whilst submitting to the necessities of the intellect and making the intellect entirely its own, does not succumb to its restrictions.⁷¹

Reason, as it is understood by Jaspers, is more than the intellect (Verstand).⁷² It is something permeated by the whole personality of man. Man, who is aware of his finiteness and potentiality, seeks fulfilment in one of two ways. Either he looks for fulfilment in some aspect of the finite world or he follows the way of Reason. "Again and again we stand at these cross-roads, faced with the possibility of becoming ourselves through Reason. This is the ever-repeated decision, the possibility of becoming oneself, of becoming free which coincides with the way to truth ..." ⁷³

71 Anti-Reason, pp. 63-64

72 See ch. IV/12

73 Anti-Reason, p. 69

Reason is, so to speak, the motivating force in existence which expresses dissatisfaction in all modes of finite existence. It continually transcends the limits of finite knowledge and brings to light that which is beyond the limits of empirical existence. It "stands before the absolutely counter-rational, touching it and bringing it, too, into being."⁷⁴ Reason opens the way to Existenz and consequently to Transcendence. "Reason as the encompassing bond in continuous movement, and the One of Transcendence in unseizable rest encounter each other, both objectless, both beyond the subject-object polarity."⁷⁵

Reason, understood in this manner, exists in polarity with Existenz as the movement in existence which awakens man to his potential Existenz; Reason and Existenz exist not in opposition but in unity. Reason is man's incessant search for fulfilment which awakens Existenz from its sleeping and inactive state and thus makes man aware of his potentiality. Existenz prevents Reason from sinking into a merely intellectual movement or a dialectic of the spirit (Geist) by calling Reason into relation with the historicity of individual selfhood.⁷⁶ Thus, Reason is truly itself

74 Reason, p. 65

75 Offenbarung, p. 464

76 Reason, p. 68

only in relation to Existenz. It is oriented towards its other, Existenz, which supports it and gives decisive impulses to it. Existenz is the other, so to speak, toward which Reason moves, and Reason stands open to Transcendence through the relation of Existenz to its other, Transcendence.

However, the movement by which man, in the polarity of Reason and Existenz, comes to Transcendence and authentic selfhood, is not a movement that takes place in the individual as an isolated person. This movement is fulfilled only in relation to other persons and traditions, that is, in communication with them. Existenz, upon which Reason is dependent and through which it is fulfilled, comes into being in the experience of Transcendence. But, Transcendence is known to me only in the midst of my relation with other persons and the traditions of persons.

The only reality with which man can reliably and in self-understanding ally himself in the world, is his fellow man. At all levels of communication among men, companions in fate lovingly find the road to the truth. This road is lost to the man who shuts himself off from others in stubborn self-will, who lives in a shell of solitude.⁷⁷

It is not necessary that communication resolve itself in agreement. Indeed, it is in error if it thinks itself to have arrived at any definitive truth. Rather, Reason is

dissatisfied in every particular mode of communication and wills boundless communication. Reason never finds fulfilment in any mode of existence, but runs aground in the multiplicity of truths; it can never win and establish Truth. Nevertheless, in its movement, there occurs the deepest openness for Transcendence.⁷⁸

Reason, in communication with other persons and truths, stands open to Transcendence and hence to authentic Existenz, but it cannot produce them. Existenz is actual only as a gift of Transcendence. Reason in communication opens the way to Existenz, but Existenz becomes present for me only in the awareness that it is given to me from beyond myself. Speaking metaphorically, Reason on its way up encounters Transcendence already pulling it up. In the failure of Reason to fulfil its quest, man stands open to the possibility of being given to himself from beyond, from Transcendence.

The truth of Transcendence and the truth of Existenz are inter-dependent and are known only in relation to one another. The transcendent Truth is known to me only at the boundaries of human existence where it flashes out momentarily. But it remains unknown apart from the leap

of Existenz when I know myself given from beyond.⁷⁹

Transcendent help for man's overcoming his bondage to false security in the world reveals itself to man solely in the fact that he can be himself. "That he can stand by himself, he owes to an intangible hand, extended to him from transcendence, a hand whose presence he can feel only in his freedom."⁸⁰ The leap of Existenz is affirmed in philosophical faith, a faith which is never sure of itself and always strives to elucidate itself.⁸¹

The truth of Transcendence, upon which Existenz is dependent, is known only through communication and at the limits of finite knowledge where it flashes out momentarily. It is known only in the leap of Existenz when I am free for myself in the world and free for myself in relation to Transcendence. Thus, neither Transcendence nor Existenz can be spoken of as if it were a possession of man. Just as Transcendence remains the distant One, Existenz remains potential Existenz. Nevertheless, the life, which acknowledges this in philosophical faith, is a manner of being which differs from life, which is lost in bondage to

79 Offenbarung, pp. 138-39

80 Scope, p. 66

81 See ch. IV

the finite world. It is now our task to illuminate this mode of existence.

In the strict sense of the word, we cannot characterize authentic selfhood, that is, Existenz. Such a characterization would reduce Existenz to the level of the finite world in so far as Existenz would be spoken of as a known factor, a possession of man. Existenz remains in the future of man and for this reason cannot be grasped in a definitive sense. According to Jaspers, the real danger facing man is the self-assurance in which he thinks himself to be already that which he is only capable of becoming. "The faith by which he finds the road of his potentialities becomes then a possession that concludes his road ..." ⁸² Existenz is always that toward which man is moving. It is known only in some initial stage in which man can be said to be "on the way" to Existenz.

Man "on the way" lives out of God's guidance. It is through Transcendence that man moves toward his inner unity, his authentic selfhood. The guidance of God differs from any form of guidance in the world in that it operates only in the freedom of subjective certainty and consequently gives no objective guarantee. ⁸³

82 Scope, p. 71

83 Wisdom, pp.66ff.; Scope, pp.71ff.

God's voice resides in the light that comes as his own conviction to the individual open to tradition and his environment. God's voice becomes audible in the freedom of subjective conviction, and this is the only organ by which it can impart itself to man. Where man's resolve arises out of his depths, he believes that he is obeying God, though he has no objective guaranty for his knowledge of God's will.⁸⁴

The medium through which man is guided is his own judgement concerning himself and his actions.

This judgment restrains or impels, corrects or confirms. The voice of God as judgment regarding man's actions has no other expression in time than in this judgment of man himself with regard to his emotions, motives, actions. In the free and forthright self-awareness of judgment, in self-accusation, in self-affirmation man indirectly finds God's judgment, which is never definitive and always equivocal.⁸⁵

Because God's guidance is known only subjectively through human judgement, the acknowledgement of this guidance is always subject to confusion with man's will. Thus human judgement is always in error when it finds in itself the final word of God's guidance. No man can be fully satisfied with his self-contained judgement. He always requires reflection upon it in view of the criticisms of other persons and traditions. It is in communication with others and in listening to their judgements that man seeks to unmask his self-will in his moral self-satisfaction.⁸⁶

84 Scope, p. 72

85 Wisdom, p. 68

86 Wisdom, p. 68

Nevertheless, there is finally the solitary decision which has no support in the world of things and persons. The decisive judgement is that of God and not of any person or tradition, and this is known only in the subjectivity of the individual. The subjective awareness of God's guidance must always remain uncertain; there is always the risk of error. "The risk implied in the question of whether in this matter I am really myself, whether I have truly heard the guiding voice from the primal spring of being, never ceases." 87

This final truth of judgement in the subjectivity of the individual takes place in two forms. First, there are the universal ethical imperatives such as the Ten Commandments which carry intuitive conviction. They can be followed apart from faith in God by a limitation of their meaning to what man can accomplish in himself. "But wholehearted obedience to the ethical commandment that is clearly heard in freedom is usually bound up with the perception of transcendence precisely in this freedom." 88

A second form of the truth of judgement arises from the fact that in the concrete situations of human existence,

87 Scope, p. 73

88 Wisdom, p. 69

action cannot be derived from universal laws, but only out of the immediate necessity of acting. Here, one acts out of God's guidance in the moment although what one perceives as his duty must always remain questionable. We cannot find here a certainty which allows us to generalize our acts as universally valid. It is always possible that everything will look different later. It is only in retrospect that we can speak of God's guidance and even here there is no certainty.⁸⁹

This life of potential Existenz which is lived out of philosophical faith is a way of living from moment to moment out of the guidance of God. "Psychologically speaking, the voice of God can be heard only in sublime moments. It is out of such moments and toward such moments that we live."⁹⁰ For the man who lives in this manner, who sees through the opaqueness of life, every situation is a task for man's freedom, a task which can "only be understood clearly through Transcendence, the sole reality, and the unconditional commandment of love that is manifested in it ...".⁹¹

89 Wisdom, pp 69-70

90 Wisdom, p. 70

91 Wisdom, p. 72

According to Jaspers, this life of faith has "a character of indeterminism (i.e. in reference to what can be stated - I do not know whether and what I believe) and also of the absolute (in practice, in the activity and repose that grow out of the decision)." ⁹² Jaspers is reluctant to speak of any form of certainty or assurance in the existence of faith. Certainty for him is synonymous with the objectification of Transcendence and Existenz, and consequently he strives to maintain a radical openness to all possibilities of truth.

If one asks if philosophy is of help to one in distress Jaspers equates the question with the seeking of an objective support in the world and says that philosophy offers no such support. Philosophy's only support is reflection, "a gathering of spiritual sustenance through the actualization of the Comprehensive, to win oneself by being given to oneself." ⁹³ The philosophical tradition can be thought of as something like a support, but only in so far as it is considered as preparation or recollection, inspiration or confirmation. ⁹⁴

92 Scope, p.22; See ch.IV/11.

93 Scope, p.25

94 Scope, pp.15, 25

Nevertheless, Jaspers indicates something other than a pure indeterminism and relativism in speaking of the Absolute witnessed in one's decision and activity. He is aware that any decision has some stability although it can never be the stability of objectivity. The absoluteness of decision comes only in the subjectivity of the individual, in one's immediate relation to the ground of one's decision.⁹⁵

It is this attempt to maintain complete openness to Truth on the one hand and the finality of Truth on the other hand that gives to human existence the character of a struggle which never comes to rest. Thus, my life "on the way" is immersed in a continuous dialectic in which I am led to the "frontiers where being seems absolutely torn apart, where my authentic being becomes faith, and faith becomes the apprehension of Being in the seemingly absurd."⁹⁶ If man meditates upon himself and transcends himself, and if man stands open to unlimited communication with others, the presence of Transcendence may reveal itself in man's coming to himself as given from beyond. But because of the uncertainty in temporal existence, life is always an experiment.⁹⁷

95 Scope, pp. 22ff

96 Scope, p. 23

97 Wisdom, p. 125

b. Rudolf Bultmann

Man, according to Bultmann, exists in every now, facing the demands of the moment. Yet he always stands in bondage to his past for which he has in reality already decided. His authentic life is before him as that which he does not possess and as that which judges his present existence. But how then is the transition to his authentic self made and what is the manner in which he then exists?

The freedom of man from his past and for his authentic self has its beginning, so to speak, in man's awareness of himself and his potentiality. This self-awareness or self-understanding is present in man's anxiousness and dread when he confronts both his finiteness and potentiality. Man faces the uncanny and enigmatic nature of human existence. He does not find fulfilment in himself, and the unfulfilment of which he is aware is always in the future. Out of this dread man seeks the means by which his potentiality can become reality. This seeking or inquiry lifts man out of himself and the world to which he is bound, and the transcendent sphere, which lies beyond man, is touched upon. In this way, man's inquiry about himself and his inquiry about God coincide. 98

Closely related to man's knowledge of himself revealed in his dread and anxiety is the knowledge of himself disclosed in conscience. Like song, conscience indicates a relationship of man to himself. It is in man's conscience that he knows that his conduct is his own. Conscience reflects upon and judges the intent of one's mind; "it is a knowledge about one's own conduct in respect to a requirement which exists in relation to that conduct." ⁹⁹ My past is judged and I am pointed to some still unaccomplished conduct. This knowledge of oneself, which is indicated in the concept, conscience, is a universal human phenomenon. Thus, Paul takes it for granted that non-believers also have a conscience; all persons know the demands of the law which are "written in their hearts." ¹⁰⁰

The self-understanding, which comes through dread and conscience, makes us aware of our limitations and possibilities. But this is only a knowledge of man and is thus incapable of freeing him from the bondage that he has created. While this form of self-knowledge is dependent upon the transcendent sphere, man cannot, on

99 N.T.I, p. 217

100 N.T.I, pp. 216-218

the basis of this knowledge, call forth a relationship to that sphere in such a way as to make freedom and authentic existence into a reality. As a fallen creature, I am unable to accept my potential manner of being. I do not have the freedom to take up the demand that confronts me.

Bultmann maintains both the universality of sin and the radicalness of its nature. While he grants that man has an awareness of his sin and that this awareness has a transcendent reference, he also maintains that the only knowledge of God, that is other than the knowledge of man's limitations and insignificance, is dependent upon God's revelation of Himself. Man's freedom is dependent upon God but man's bondage to the world veils this relationship to God. Thus, man is unable to achieve freedom unless God reveals Himself in the world in such a way as to call man out of the world.

I am determined by my past, which I carry with me into every 'now'. I do not stand, as it were, with my real self behind me. I do not in the least have full control over myself, but am what I have become: I am not free. And all my decisions are basically always already decided for me. I simply tie myself down more and more to what I already am-or, as the New Testament would say, to my sin. 101

Freedom is something that man is unable to achieve for himself. In every attempt to gain his own freedom he only binds himself more securely to his past. According to Bultmann, the liberation of man comes only through the act of God in His forgiveness of sin. "That means simply the obliteration of man's past, and taking him to be what he is not--the man of the future; it means relieving him of dread and thereby making free for the future." 102 This forgiveness of God is not a general idea which teaches us something about God. Rather, it is an act of God in which God confronts man in history addressing him in forgiveness and freeing him from the world, the past, and himself.

But the message of the New Testament is not a Weltanschauung which would teach the idea of a forgiving God, or the idea of God's grace; on the contrary, it is the proclamation of an act of God, by which he forgives sin. God confronts man as the one who forgives, in no other way than that in which he always meets man, that is in the historical event. And yet again it is in another way (for why should one suppose man to be capable of deciding differently in this case than he would in other circumstances?) - that is, in an historical event which at the same time is an eschatological event. The New Testament proclaims that the freedom and the arbitrary nature of God's action is authenticated by the fact that he had acted decisively for all the world and for all time in the person of a concrete, historical man, Jesus of Nazareth. Through him

everyone is addressed and asked if he is willing to hear God's message of forgiveness and grace here. In Jesus Christ the destiny of every man is decided. He is the eschatological act of God.¹⁰³

James Stewart records an illustration of forgiveness which, with modification, can be of assistance in illuminating Bultmann's understanding of God's forgiveness as an act which frees man. A government official in India often found it necessary to be away from home while performing his duties. During these long periods away from home he was unfaithful to his wife and became bound to this way of life and to the guilt that was registered in himself. Finally, one day he called his wife into the room and began to unfold the whole story. As he proceeded, he could see the pain and torture that passed over his wife's face, as though she had been struck by a whip. But when it was all over, she reaffirmed her love for him and announced that she would assist him in building their new life together.¹⁰⁴ The government official had by his own choice bound himself to a manner of being from which he could not free himself. Even if he were to change his actions, he could not alter the situation

103 Essays, p. 85

104 James Stewart, A Faith to Proclaim, London, 1953, p. 58

between himself and his wife. He was fully dependent upon her act of love and forgiveness. Only in this way could he be freed from the past that he had created. This act on her part came through ordinary expressions and words, but it came as the personal address of forgiveness which was the only thing that could free him. In this act, he was accepted for what he was not. The old world was ended and a new world was born.

In a similar way, Bultmann understands man to have enslaved himself to the world and to himself and thus to have separated himself from God. When man awakens to his situation, he finds himself already determined by his past. Freedom from this past cannot come from himself because it is from himself that he must be freed. Likewise, an idea cannot free him, because an idea always has its origin in man, that is, in him who requires to be freed. The freedom of man, according to Bultmann, is dependent upon God's act of forgiveness just as the freedom of the government official was dependent upon the act of his wife. And this act of forgiveness is believed by Bultmann to have taken place in the historical event, Jesus of Nazareth, when he becomes, through faith, the one in whom God puts an end to our past and frees us for the future.¹⁰⁵

While it is true to say, I think, that Bultmann does not always show adequately the relationship between the past fact of Jesus of Nazareth and the present event of God's addressing me in forgiveness, he does always intend to maintain both poles of this event. If on the one hand, God's act of forgiveness were removed from a particular time and place, forgiveness would be no more than an intuitive experience or a timeless truth, and Bultmann rejects both. If, on the other hand, God's act of forgiveness were removed from its present relation to my existence, it would become only a dead thing of the past and would be unable to free me from my present situation of bondage. In one place, at least, Bultmann indicates the past and present nature of God's act by speaking of grace as prevenient and acting.

Certainly the Word says to me that God's grace is a prevenient grace which has already acted for me; but not in such a way that I can look back on it as an historical event of the past. The acting grace is present now as the eschatological event. The Word of God is Word of God only as it happens here and now. The paradox is that the word which is always happening here and now is one and the same with the first word of the apostolic preaching crystallized in the Scriptures of the New Testament and delivered by men again and again, the word whose content may be formulated in general statements. It cannot be the one without the other. 106

The paradox of the historical event, Jesus of Nazareth, becoming the eschatological event in my present experience, setting an end to my past and freeing me for the future of God is a repeated theme in Bultmann's thought and will arise in other contexts in this study.¹⁰⁷ The important thing for us to see at this point is that the freedom of man is dependent upon faith's decision before the proclamation of God's Word of forgiveness in this particular event. In the decision of faith in which the historical event, Jesus of Nazareth, becomes God's eschatological event for me, I am freed from my past and live out of the gift of God in which the future is bestowed upon me. In faith I live in a peculiar sense of detachment from the world to which I have bound myself in the past. While living in the world I am freed from slavery to it; "the world has again become perceptible as creation."¹⁰⁸

The transition from inauthentic to authentic selfhood occurs for Bultmann in faith's decision before the proclamation of God's Word of forgiveness in time. Two factors in this transition should be further elucidated.

107 See ch. III/8,10

108 Essays, p. 86

First, it is important that we realize that man's participation in authentic being is dependent upon something which takes place external to his own existence. The eschatological event is authentic only as it is present to me in the proclamation of it as an event for me. Nevertheless, it is an occurrence, which had its beginning in Jesus of Nazareth, and becomes present to me only in the proclamation of the kerygma, which announces the event of Jesus as the eschatological event for me.

Secondly, it should be observed that man's transition to authentic existence has, for Bultmann, a personal meaning. In the Christian faith, the bondage of man to his finite existence is interpreted as a rebellion of the creature against God, the Creator. In seeking to find his security in the world, man forgets the world as creation and attempts to become master over it. The guilt of man in this instance reaches deeper than that incurred in the failure to acknowledge his finiteness. Guilt is the awareness that my life has been ruled by a self-will which seeks to implement its own claims. I set myself over against the claims of God and neighbour and, in desiring to fulfil myself out of my own resources, live a life of levellessness in relation to others. This life, which I know to be my past in every present moment, requires the forgiving Word

of God. It is only the person who accepts this forgiveness, submits to the judgement of God, and takes upon himself the demand of love, who can speak of and to God. And it is only this person who participates in authentic existence.¹⁰⁹

Authentic existence, which is known potentially in man's awareness of himself in dread and in the judgement of conscience, becomes a reality in God's Word of forgiveness in Jesus as the Christ. When in faith this act becomes present for me, I am released from myself and live in a new existence which always remains a gift to me. The old man is obliterated and I am taken to be the new man in the grace of God. But what then is the manner of this new existence? How are we to characterize existence in faith?

Existence in faith is existence in the "interim", existence between the times. Man "is taken out of the past and belongs to the future and yet does not stand in that future, but in the past ..." ¹¹⁰ He is freed from his particular past as sinner, that is, from the existence in which he, unable to live in uncertainty before God, chose

109 Essays, p. 14

110 Existence, p. 254

to secure himself by living out of his own power in the world. He is freed from the life based on tangible realities and abandons all self-contrived security. "He no longer bears the care for himself, for his own life, but lets this care go, yielding himself entirely to the grace of God ..." ¹¹¹ Man experiences freedom from anxiety over death, from legal prescriptions and from human conventions and values, because he no longer seeks security in himself but belongs to the One to whom he surrenders in faith. ¹¹²

In this way, man is taken out of his past and into the future. The future is not something of his own making, but is the future gifted by God, a future that must be given in every situation that man encounters. In himself man is still of the past. He is of the future only because God accepts him in the present for what he is not. For this reason, man never stands in the future as if he possessed it in himself. What is always a gift to me remains before me in so far as I cannot contain it in myself but must stand open to it, in reception of it. Thus, man exists between the times, between the past which no longer binds him and God's future of freedom from the past which is met in every situation as a gift of grace.

111 N.T.I, p.331

112 Existence, p.255

In the interim, men exist in a particular relationship to the world. They exist eschatologically. On the one hand, they are free from the world. "They are no longer citizens of this world, but belong to a commonwealth that is in heaven (Phil. 3:20)." ¹¹³ On the other hand, they live in "concrete life relationships, in callings, in social institutions, as married persons, as buyers, etc., and this all takes place in a city and in a state." ¹¹⁴ Existence in faith does not reject the world, life in the world, nor the joy and despair that is encountered there. Rather, the faithful live in the world as persons who are not enslaved to it.

Authentic man lives in the world as one who is free from it. His detachment from the world is not a form of asceticism. He still lives in the world and requires the knowledge of man and things that all other persons require. There is no question of calling for an abandonment of science, politics, education, art and so on. Indeed, it would be an illusion to think that such an abandonment could actually take place. "As long as action in the world is required of Christians, as being men—and an action

113 Existence, p. 260

114 Existence, p. 260

in love from them - an understanding is demanded of the world in which the action takes place." 115

Men must know the conditions, the means and the consequences of their actions, and so long as men live together in the world, an organization for community living is necessary in order that action can take place. 116

Detachment from the world in Christian existence does not mean abandonment of it. Rather, it means "preserving a distance from the world and dealing with it in a spirit of 'as if not'." 117 Creation is there for man's use, but it is no longer the means of his enslavement. "Outwardly everything remains as before, but inwardly his relation to the world has been radically changed. The world has no further claim on him, for faith is the victory which overcometh the world (I John, 5:4)." 118 Man lives in the world as if not in the world, free for activity in it and yet free from slavery by it.

Existence in faith never becomes a possession of man. If it were taken as a sure possession,

115 Essays, p. 37.

116 Essays, pp. 37-38.

117 K.M., p. 20.

118 K.M., p. 20.

the result would be libertinism. Or if were thought to be something that we must preserve with care and vigilance, the result would be asceticism. Existence in faith is never something static, something possessed, but always retains the character of a gift which must be constantly laid hold of in every new situation. 119

Life in faith is not a possession at all. It cannot be exclusively expressed in indicative terms; it needs an imperative to complete it. In other words, the decision of faith is never final; it needs constant renewal in every fresh situation. Our freedom does not excuse us from the demand under which we all stand as men, for it is freedom for obedience (Rom.6:11ff). To believe means not to have apprehended but to have been apprehended. It means always to be traveling along the road between the "already" and the "not yet", always to be pursuing a goal. 120

Existence in faith always remain in the world and hence the world continues to be alluring. There is always the temptation to become enslaved to it. It holds out a specious security which man faces in every

119 Existence, p.255

120 K.M., p.21.

moment. Hence this life never becomes a possession, but lives always under the imperative and must see itself as a gift in each new situation.

Nevertheless, there is a form of assurance in Christian existence. Faith is not dependent upon the existence of man, but upon God. Faith is a decision made before the proclamation of the Word of God, but it knows itself gifted from beyond human existence. "The disciples did not choose Jesus; he chose them (John 15:16)." ¹²¹ Because faith is understood as hearing and obeying, it trusts not in itself, but in that which it hears. Existence in faith has this sort of assurance, but it is never to be confused with an assurance mediated by objectivity. Faith finds no security in the objective world. Indeed, Bultmann claims that if faith "began to ask reasons for its right to exist or a guarantee for its own validity, it would have lost its assurance." ¹²²

In this way Christian existence has, for Bultmann, a certain sense of security. It is by no

121 N.T.II,p.77.

122 N.T.II,p.77.

means the form of security that one finds in the visible world, for "faith is the abandonment of man's own security and the readiness to find security only in the unseen beyond, in God." 123

faith is security where no security can be seen; it is, as Luther said, the readiness to enter confidently into the darkness of the future. Faith in God who has power over time and eternity, and who calls me and who has acted and now is acting on me - this faith can become real only in its "nevertheless" against the world. 124

Because man no longer finds security in himself but in the beyond of God, he is free for fellowship with others. "Now that he is delivered from anxiety and from the frustration which comes from clinging to the tangible realities of the visible world, man is free to enjoy fellowship with others." 125 The existence of freedom in dependence upon God is not removed from the life with other persons. On the contrary, faith in Jesus as the light of the world is genuine only in walking in that light, that is,

123 Mythology, p.40

124 Mythology, pp.40-41.

125 K.M., p.22.

in responding to the divine love in love for one's brother.¹²⁶ Here the only motive for action in the world is love "which as complete surrender presupposes freedom from the world."¹²⁷ In becoming free from himself, man becomes a slave to all. And this becoming a slave to all has its foundation in the love of God in Jesus Christ.

It has been suggested earlier in this chapter that human existence has its being in relation to others and that sin occurs in the mistrust between persons, when each person seeks his own security in serving the interests of himself in the world. With this in mind, we can see how freedom from ourselves in dependence upon God's grace restores the possibility of a mutual relationship of trust between persons. Freed from dependence upon himself and placing his security in God, man stands open to all persons that he encounters, without feeling that he has first to secure himself. The possibility of sin actualized

126 Existence, p.256; "To Love Your Neighbor", Scottish Periodical, vol.I, no.1, 1947, pp.42ff.

127 Existence, p.261.

in "Adam", which becomes reality for me in my sin, is replaced by the possibility of new life in Christ, which becomes reality for me in faith.¹²⁸ This new life in Christ is never a possession, but occurs in every moment in which man confronts the decision of faith. Thus, the new fellowship among persons is never a program, but a way of being toward others in every encounter with them.

128 N.T.I., p.252.

3. Analysis

Both Jaspers and Bultmann express a serious concern for the decision of man by which he limits his existence to the world and rejects his existence of freedom from the world. The appeal to man to acknowledge his inauthentic existence is one of the basic motives for Jaspers' Philosophie, and this appeal is clearly a central theme of the Christian proclamation. Likewise, Jaspers' understanding of man's inauthentic existence is very similar to Bultman's understanding of it. Man secures himself in the finite world and thus separates himself from his authentic existence, which is dependent upon being given to itself by Transcendence. Thus, Jaspers maintains the dependence of man upon God and the inability of man to choose his authentic self out of his own resources. Nevertheless, man is understood to be capable of an awareness of his potentiality and also of a decision to accept himself as given from beyond, a decision which Bultmann finds to be dependent upon the act of God in Jesus as the Christ.

If one asks why man, in the face of his potential existence, chooses to bind himself to the finite world, one becomes conscious of a definite will which creates a life independent of Transcendence. I become a slave to the finite world only when I will to live my life in separation

from Transcendence, when I will to create my own existence and seek my security in the world. Both Jaspers and Bultmann agree that I am responsible for this choice. But what then will cause me to reverse my decision and accept myself as given in Transcendence? Apparently, for Jaspers, I may make this new decision at any moment when I come up against the limits of my existence, limits which I must have already encountered and ignored if my past decision is considered to be one for which I am responsible. But why then, should I will something different now than I willed in the past?

The raising of these questions points up a basic divergence between the thought of Jaspers and Bultmann. Jaspers conceives man's transition to authentic existence to have its basis in the awakening of the nobility in man created in God's image. Bultmann finds this same transition to have its basis in God's act of forgiveness in the event of Jesus as the Christ.

Jaspers' conception of this transition to authentic existence creates a problem which he never seems to solve. On the one hand he maintains that freedom and Existenz are not self-created but are the gift of Transcendence. Transcendence speaks to us "only when we are free, and at the same time know that our freedom depends on Transcendence..."

Only this knowledge of our being grounded in transcendence can make us free in the world." 129 Jaspers stands very near to traditional Christian theology at this point and even acknowledges his indebtedness to it for this insight. He admits that he only understood clearly the "experience of helplessness in freedom" through Paul and Augustine. 130

On the other hand, however, Jaspers maintains that to say that man must be given to himself out of Transcendence does not mean that he must be forgiven sin in an act of God. Rather, the nobilitas ingenita is thought to be awakened so that man experiences unfathomable assistance in overcoming evil.

Now, my position is this. To say that man is given to himself, is not to say that he is forgiven sin; what takes place is the awakening of the nobility in man created in God's image and likeness. By being given to himself, man receives unfathomable, unexpected, and incomprehensible help in overcoming evil, which is permanent. To say this is to give mythical expression to a truth which induces man to strive for his self-improvement in repeated and ever-renewed decisions. 131

Thus, when we ask Jaspers how man is given to himself from beyond, he seems to reply that an inner call to be his authentic self induces him to strive for self-improvement

129 Myth, p. 74

130 Myth, p. 73

131 Myth, p. 74

in repeated decisions. In the last analysis man always seems to be thrown back upon himself. Thus Jaspers says that "man is confident that he can fulfill the will of the hidden God by an effort entirely subjected to his own responsibility, and that he will be helped by God in an incomprehensible and unpredictable way."¹³² The Unconditional Imperative and the guidance of God by which man comes to his inner unity has its basis not in an act external to man, but in his inner subjectivity. It is true that Jaspers claims to have asserted with force the infinite character of God's guidance and also that this guidance must always pass through critical reflection so that man's act of will might never be blind.¹³³ But it is difficult to see how he escapes the subjectivity and immanentism which he would also like to avoid.

The tendency toward immanentism is discussed more fully in the next chapter where we are concerned more specifically with the nature of God's action in the world.¹³⁴ But enough has been said here to point up the difference between Jaspers and Bultmann. A significant understanding of the condition of man in inauthentic existence must look

132 Myth, p.51

133 Scope, pp. 37, 71ff.

134 See ch.II/5,6

realistically at the decision by which man loses himself in finiteness. The decision, if it is a responsible one, is made not in blindness, but in the awareness that man may choose to place his security in the uncertainty of transcendence, or in the finite order which one seeks to control and possess. It reflects an attitude which is not likely to reverse itself in another situation where the same decision is placed before man.

Bultmann acknowledges this situation of human existence when he says that we cannot dispose of our past decisions by simply becoming aware of our finitude and acknowledging it. Rather, if the acknowledgement of finitude is in earnest it will be "inevitably the confession of guilt before the power that makes me finite..."¹³⁵ And that guilt, according to Bultmann, "can only be wiped out by a Word of forgiveness."¹³⁶ Bultmann records an analogy which helps to illustrate this point. A man, who is wooing for another's love, knows that his past is not something simply in the past but that it is he who was thus and acted thus. He cannot free himself from this past, which makes up his present, but can be freed from it only by the goodness and purity of the other person.¹³⁷

135 Essays, p. 13

136 Essays, p.13

137 Essays, p.14

To put this in another way, the man, who rejects himself as given out of Transcendence, is the same person who may or may not become the authentic self in dependence upon Transcendence. But in rejecting his authentic self, his inauthentic self becomes that person that he brings into the present with him. Because he is the inauthentic self, he cannot free himself but is dependent upon the initiative of the One who is the source of the authentic self.

Jaspers and Bultmann, of course, stand very near to one another in this. Both agree that I am free for my authentic self only in dependence upon the Other which transcends me. But if this dependence is centered, for Jaspers, in the inborn nobility of man, for Bultmann it is centered in the act of God in Jesus the Christ, God's Word of forgiveness. It is this which gives the Christian faith its peculiar character.

Christian belief has its peculiar character in speaking of an event that gives it this right, in saying that it hears a Word which demands that it should recognize God as standing over against man. For Christianity belief in God is not belief and trust in God as a general principle, but belief in a definite Word proclaimed to the believer. The event is Jesus Christ, in whom, as the New Testament says, God has spoken, and whom the New Testament itself calls 'the Word'

In order to understand this, however, we need to reflect further on how this Word tells man that

he can believe in God. It tells him by its promise of the forgiveness of his sin: and in saying so, it is also telling him that that submission to the power which calls us into life and makes us finite, and acknowledgement of that power by us, is only real and radical, and what it should be, when it is at once a confession of sin and a plea for mercy.¹³⁸

Bultmann knows authentic existence to be dependent upon the Other of Transcendence. Yet, he does not direct us inward but outward to find this Other. It is true that the transition to authentic existence does not take place apart from my own existence. I must always actually participate in God's act of forgiveness so that it becomes forgiveness for me. My self-understanding and my manner of being must be changed. That is, I must stand in a new relationship to God and to the world in which I live. Nevertheless, the focal point of my encounter with Transcendence, in which I am given to myself, is not my subjectivity, but history. The focal point of faith and hence of authentic existence is Jesus Christ.

Bultmann's analysis of the situation of human existence seems to us to be more realistic than Jaspers' at this point. If existence is fallen because man has chosen to find himself out of his own resources in the world, it is difficult to see how the situation will be

altered by directing man inward to himself. Such would result, it would seem, either in a dependence upon the human subject, which is already the problem, or in an ascetic form of life in which one seeks his freedom outside of the world. Bultmann, on the other hand, directs us to an event in the world outside of ourselves, in which faith confronts the address of the transcendent God as the Word of forgiveness, which sets us in a new situation before God and ourselves.

This same basic distinction between Jaspers and Bultmann forms the basis of their thoughts concerning the finality of authentic existence. Both Jaspers and Bultmann maintain some form of finality. Jaspers says that faith has the character of indetermination but also of the absolute. The final or absolute character of this existence comes in the practice, activity, and repose that grows out of the decision of faith.¹³⁹ It is this, I think, that allows Jaspers to say that he does not know whether he believes but he will venture to believe in the way that he outlines in philosophical faith.¹⁴⁰ Bultmann's characterization of the life of faith as existence between

139 Scope, p. 22

140 Wisdom, p. 95

the times is similar in so far as it also speaks of a finality of existence and yet of an incompleteness. However, a closer look indicates a fundamental distinction.

According to Bultmann, existence in faith "is a movement between 'no longer' and 'not yet'." ¹⁴¹ In the decision of faith, man is released from his past of sin. The false security of the world is surrendered. Thus Paul, in contrast to Judaism, speaks of righteousness as already given to man in the present. ¹⁴² This does not mean that man has perfected and freed himself from his past. It means that God does not "count" man's sin against him. It means that man stands in a new relation to God in which the world becomes God's creation and not the domain of man's independent existence. ¹⁴³ Reconciliation, for Paul, indicates a complete reversal of the relation between man and God which has already taken place. This happens not through any deed of man but at God's initiative. ¹⁴⁴

In existence in faith, man is put into a new situation. The age of salvation has already dawned. What was for Jewish eschatology a life of the future has

141 N.T.I. p.322

142 N.T.I. p.274

143 N.T.I. pp. 276-77

144 N.T.I. pp. 286-87

now become a present reality. The "no longer" of existence is taken to its logical conclusions in the Gospel of John where Jewish apocalyptic eschatology is eliminated. The world has no further claim on man because faith overcomes the world.¹⁴⁵

The present reality of authentic existence has its basis in the salvation occurrence in Jesus as the Christ. "The last judgement is no longer an imminent cosmic event, for it is already taking place in the coming of Jesus and in his summons to believe (John 3:19; 9:39; 12:31)." ¹⁴⁶ It is to this event as the prevenient act of grace that faith in its present existence turns.

Faith does not appeal to whatever it itself may be as act or attitude but to God's prevenient deed of grace which preceded faith The attention of the believer does not turn reflectively inward upon himself, but is turned toward the object of his faith. "Faith", then, as "obedience" is also "confession". ¹⁴⁷

In speaking here of faith's appeal to God's prevenient deed of grace, Bultmann refers us back to his discussion of Paul's understanding of reconciliation in which he had said:

That is, the "reconciliation" precedes any effort--indeed any knowledge--on man's part, and "reconciliation" does not mean a subjective process within man

145 K.M., p. 20

146 K.M., p. 20

147 N.T.I., p. 319

but an objective factual situation beschaffter Tatbestand).
 God (ein objectiver, durch Gott beschaffter Tatbestand).
 All man can do is to "receive" the reconciliation
 (Rom. 5:11); therefore, at the same time God set up
 reconciliation He also set up the "ministry" or the
 "message" of reconciliation, and men are invited
 henceforth on their side to accomplish the subjective
 alteration in themselves: "be reconciled to God"
 (II Cor. 5:20). The "word of reconciliation", then,
 is not the conciliatory and reconciling word but the
 proclamation of the already accomplished reconciliation,
 and "be reconciled" is the invitation to faith.¹⁴⁸

Existence in faith has the character of "no longer"
 in so far as faith has its basis in what has already taken
 place in the event of Jesus as the Christ. This is God's
 act of prevenient grace which makes authentic existence a
 concrete possibility for me. Through Christ, the
 possibility of life, of authentic existence was brought into
 the world.¹⁴⁹ And this possibility becomes a reality
 through faith. The faith, in which authentic existence
 has its being, has its basis not in inwardness nor in general
 truths, but in the proclamation of an event in time which
 faith knows as the deed of God's grace. Here it is
 announced that the past is ended and the present begun in
 God's act of reconciliation.

However, to say that authentic existence has its "no
 longer", is not to say that it is a possession of man.

148 N.T.I., pp. 286-87, The German phrase has been added by
 me from the German edition.

149 N.T.I., p. 252

The "no longer" is fully dependent upon God. It is God who has accepted us in spite of our past. Our past is still with us in so far as we are the same person, but it does not count in our relation to God because he accepts us in spite of it. (The government official, who was unfaithful to his wife, cannot erase his past. But he can be freed from its bondage in his wife's acceptance of him in spite of it.) Yet, because the "no longer" is dependent not upon ourselves but upon God, we always exist at the same time under the "not yet" of authentic existence. We do not possess this existence but must receive it as a gift in every moment of life.

The paradox of the Christian faith is precisely this, that the eschatological process which sets an end to the world became an event in the history of the world, and becomes an event in every true sermon, and in every Christian utterance.¹⁵⁰

If Christian existence transcends Jewish apocalyptic eschatology with its "no longer", it transcends the eschatology of Gnosticism with its "not yet". Existence in faith cannot be expressed exclusively in indicative terms but needs an imperative to complete it. "In other words, the decision of faith is never final; it needs constant renewal in every fresh situation."¹⁵¹ Authentic existence,

150 Myth, p. 70

151 K.N., p. 21

which becomes a possibility in God's act in Jesus Christ, becomes a reality for me in faith which must be renewed in every situation of life. There is always a "not yet" because authentic existence is not dependent upon human accomplishment, but upon God's act which I receive in faith.

The general agreement between Jaspers and Bultmann with regard to the "not yet" of existence in faith is obvious. The failure of man to possess his authentic selfhood is a central theme in Jaspers' discussion of human existence. Existenz is known as a potentiality. Man lives out of the imperative to be his authentic Existenz. The certainty of Existenz in its relation to Transcendence is found only in communication among men, in incessant asking, seeking, and testing for Truth. Reason is dissatisfied in every form of possessed truth and unceasingly breaks through every form of objectivity and stability. Existenz is dependent upon man's being given to himself by Transcendence and Transcendence always remains the distant One which only flashes out momentarily.

However, it is more difficult to find the relationship between Jaspers and Bultmann with regard to the "no longer" of human existence. Jaspers does not appear to be content with simply a "not yet". He realizes that Existenz must make an actual leap in order to be itself. That is, he is

aware of the insufficiency of a complete indecisiveness which attempts to remain in between authentic and inauthentic existence. In fact he understands indecisiveness as a form of inauthentic existence. Nevertheless, he has difficulty in presenting any form of "no longer" that is really significant. The "no longer" with which he presents us seems to be that of man's decision to live on the basis of a particular faith which at the time appears as meaningful. However, it is this same decision which must always remain open, for man never knows whether or not he believes, and any statement of belief, once made, grounds Transcendence in objectivity and must be transcended.

Here we are confronted with a dilemma in Jaspers' thought that will arise in several contexts in this study. Jaspers does not intend to base himself absolutely in the self-certitude of Reason which, by its very nature, cannot bring Truth into being but can only direct us toward it. He remarks: "The kind of philosophizing which always seeks to ground itself in mere reason must always end in vacuity!"¹⁵² Jaspers speaks not only of the philosophizing, which attains

¹⁵² Reason, p. 141

to no definite results in the existence of man, but also of the decision of man in which Existenz knows itself given to itself in Transcendence. "In philosophy it is how that which is not reason and through which reason first gains its whole scope is present, which is decisive over the substance of philosophy in its historicity." ¹⁵³ Thus philosophical faith is considered to be "the fundamental source of that work by which man makes himself in an inner act as an individual before his Transcendence..." ¹⁵⁴

Over against this however, we are confronted with the unceasing attempt of Jaspers to keep this decision open because the Truth, through which Existenz has its being, can be expressed only indirectly and can be known only in the moment of individual existence. Thus he says of the propositions of philosophical faith that they must remain in the realm of non-knowledge and their truth can only be pointed out by a chain of reasoning, that is, in philosophical communication. They serve in the last analysis only as awakeners to Truth. ¹⁵⁵ The man who

153 Reason, p. 141

154 Reason, p. 141

155 Wisdom, p. 85

philosophizes lives in relation not to witnesses to Truth but in relation to the chain of individual men who openly search in freedom.¹⁵⁶

Jaspers is faced with the dilemma of making a decision on the one hand that must be kept open on the other hand. He seems to make the decision out of the humanist tradition of the Western world as it stands under the influence of the Christian faith. But he seems to keep this decision open in so far as he remains in the realm of philosophy. It is, I think, this dilemma which causes P. H. Heinemann to refer to Jaspers as a "fidèle manqué and a frustrated Christian philosopher."¹⁵⁷

Paul Tillich would seem to have something similar in mind when he suggests that philosophical faith is questionable from the point of view of the philosopher whose passion for truth is one "open to general approach, subject to general criticism, changeable in accordance with every new insight, open and communicable."¹⁵⁸ Tillich further maintains that existentialism is unable to give an answer to the question implied in human existence except in terms

156 Reason, p. 141

157 P. H. Heinemann, Existentialism And the Modern Predicament, New York, 1958, p.77

158 P. H. Heinemann, Existentialism And the Modern

of "religious or quasi-religious traditions which are not derived from the existentialist analysis." 159

Bultmann would seem to agree with Tillich when he maintains that philosophy can understand the deficiencies of man and can suggest that man ought to be his authentic self, but cannot speak of the unique existence of man.¹⁶⁰ Bultmann understands the authentic existence of man to become a reality only in response to the proclamation of the Christian Church in which we hear of the "no longer" and are summoned to live on the basis of this particular event. Thus, authentic existence becomes a reality only in the decision made before this particular claim. The decision cannot in this situation remain completely open, but neither does it necessarily result in a dogmatism which refuses communication with all others.¹⁶¹ Because the existence found in this decision is fully dependent upon God's act, man can never claim to possess this existence in a final way. He must remain open to it as a gift in every new situation. Yet he lives in the awareness that God has already acted on his behalf.

159 S.T.II, p.25

160 Existence, p.93

161 See ch.III/9,10

II

FROM GOD TO MAN

Chapter one approached the relationship between God and man from the side of man. It was concerned to indicate the manner in which man understands himself in relation to God. This chapter is concerned with this same relationship, but it approaches it from the side of God, so to speak. That is, we want to indicate in this chapter the sense in which God participates in this relationship. This is discussed in the context of God's transcendent and immanent relation to man.

In using the words transcendent and immanent, we do not intend to bring to mind the metaphysical conceptions of God which are represented in deistic and pantheistic thought. Nor do we intend to suggest that a proper understanding of God might be derived from some combination of these two conceptions of Him. Rather, we use these expressions as a means of clarifying the sense in which Jaspers and Bultmann understand the transcendent God's activity in the world.

4. God's Transcendent Relation to Man

a. Karl Jaspers

Most introductions to the philosophy of existence will reveal that it is most difficult to make generalizations

about the subject. Each philosopher, who might be characterized under the general heading of existential philosophy, defies classification and demands to be treated individually. Nevertheless, there are certain similarities among individual thinkers which allow one to make some generalizations concerning certain aspects of their thought. Thus, Frederick Copleston's introduction to the subject makes a division between atheistic and theistic existentialism.¹ While the thought of Heidegger, Sartre and Camus is discussed under the heading of atheistic existentialism, the thought of Kierkegaard, Marcel, and Jaspers is considered under the heading of theistic existentialism. Jaspers can be treated along with Marcel and Kierkegaard because he, like they, speaks of transcendent Being and relates it to the godhead of religion.

The concept of God is a significant one for Jaspers and is, as we saw in the last chapter, fundamental to his understanding of human existence. The third section of Philosophie is given over to an analysis of Transcendence and his more recent studies reveal an even greater interest in speaking of God in a manner that is, so to speak, more characteristically theological. God is discussed under a variety of titles such as the Encompassing, Being,

¹ Frederick Copleston, Contemporary Philosophy. London, 1960, pp.125ff.

Transcendence, and so on. But in all of these titles, Jaspers seeks to portray that which lies beyond finite existence and yet is the origin and goal of it. God is transcendent to man but is known to man in his individual experience. Thus, we can characterize the relation of the transcendent God to man in both a negative and a positive manner.

Knowledge, according to Jaspers, is restricted to that form of universally valid knowledge which arises in the work of a scientist. Here, the object is known to the understanding subject in such a way that knowledge of it can be demonstrated to others.² This does not mean that Jaspers conceives this form of knowledge to compose the whole scope of human thought. The fact that he claims to be a philosopher indicates that he passes beyond the limits of universally valid knowledge. According to Jaspers, philosophy produces no universally valid results. Any insight, which is recognized by all on the basis of external proofs, becomes scientific and ceases to be philosophical. Philosophy is concerned not simply with the particular knowledge of science, but with the whole of being, with a truth which moves us more deeply than objective knowledge.³ But it does not mean that God can

² Wisdom, pp.7ff.

³ Wisdom, p.8; For the relation between science and philosophy, see ch.IV/12.

never become an object of knowledge, because the transcendent God transcends all objective structures. He can never be possessed in worldly knowledge.

It is from this basis that we speak negatively of the transcendent God. Man has his foothold in the objective world and whenever he seeks to possess God in his thought, he finds himself restricted to the definite knowledge of objects. "Pushing ahead restlessly into the ocean of Being, we find ourselves always again and again at the beach of categorically secure, definite, particular knowledge."⁴ If we seek to possess the transcendent God in our knowledge, He becomes an object in the world and we lose Him. For this reason, the transcendent God remains in the distance, hidden and unknown.

Thus, the traditional proofs of God's existence, in so far as they are considered scientifically compelling proofs, are false. This does not mean that the refutation of these proofs proves the opposite, that there is no God, but simply that God is not an object at the level of worldly knowledge. For instance, the cosmological proof infers the existence of God from the existence of the cosmos, a final cause from the world process, the source of motion from motion, and the necessity of the whole from the particular.

⁴ Truth, p. 36.

However, if in this proof, we mean to infer the existence of one thing from the existence of another, it is inapplicable to the discussion of God, for we can in this manner only infer the existence of things in the world from other things in the world. Thus, instead of proving God's existence, these proofs obscure our awareness of Him by making Him into an object of the world.⁵

Far from proving the existence of God, these so-called proofs mislead us into placing God within the real world, or second cosmos, which is as it were ascertained at the limits of the cosmos. Thus they obscure the idea of God.⁶

However, if these arguments for the existence of God are not regarded as proofs, they may still in some way be valid. That is, they may express metaphorically an awareness of the mystery inherent in the world and human existence. They may confront us with the emptiness and imperfectibility of the world and thus admonish us not to be content with the world as the foundation of our life. Understood in this manner, these proofs suggest to us that God is not an object of universally valid knowledge, that He cannot be experienced by the senses but can only be believed in.

⁵ Wisdom, pp. 42-43.

⁶ Wisdom, p. 44.

Jaspers continues his attack on all attempts to make God into a knowable object in the world in his criticism of the conceptions of God in empirical forms and images. "From time immemorial God has been conceived in empirical forms, including a personification after the image of man. And yet every such conception is at the same time in the nature of a veil." ⁷ While his criticism applies to all attempts to conceive God in worldly forms, it comes to bear in particular upon the tangible representations of God in religion. Philosophy, says Jaspers, looks upon all such representations as deceptive and misleading simplifications. It "distrusts the religious images of God as seductive idols, magnificent as they may be." ⁸

This attitude, which criticizes all tangible representations of God, finds profound expression in the Biblical injunction, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or likeness." Originally, this injunction meant that because God is invisible, man must not worship Him in images and idols. But Jaspers considers it to have grown in depth when it "developed into the idea that

⁷ *Wisdom*, pp. 47-48.

⁸ *Scope*, p. 79.

God is not only invisible but also inconceivable, unthinkable." ⁹ If I think something it must be a definite something, an object of thought. But God can never become an object of thought. Transcendent Being must remain nothing to human thought. ¹⁰

In this manner, then, God remains a void for human knowledge. Being totally transcends the world of objective knowledge and cannot be known at that level. Etienne Gilson finds the contemporary problem of God dominated by the Kantian and Comteian patterns of knowledge. He maintains that while the thought of Kant and Comte diverge at many points, the avenues which lead out from them have in common the reduction of knowledge to the level of Newtonian science. Thus, because God is not known in empirical perception, one says that one has no knowledge of God. ¹¹ Similarly, we can say that Jaspers limits knowledge proper to universally valid knowledge and removes God from its grasp. If one attempts to possess God at this level, God becomes an object in the world and is lost.

However, it is one thing to refuse to identify God as an object in the world. It is another to deny the

⁹ Wisdom, p.48.

¹⁰ Jaspers, Philosophie, Berlin, 1948, p.711.

¹¹ E. Gilson, God and Philosophy, New Haven, 1941, pp.109ff.

awareness of that which transcends this world. Jaspers is equally definite in his objection to that form of thought which takes no notice of that which transcends the objective world. He associates this way of thinking with what he calls a false enlightenment. False enlightenment strives to base all knowledge and action on the intellect, absolutizing its insights which can never be more than particular. It misleads us into thinking that man can know himself out of his own knowledge and can act on this knowledge alone. "In short, it strives to stand man upon himself, in the belief that he can attain to everything that is true and essential through intellectual insight. It strives only to know and not to believe." ¹²

Over against this tendency to absolutize the intellect in false enlightenment, Jaspers understands man to live out of Reason. Reason uses the intellect as a means of elucidating that which is given to it, but in inner experience and communication with others, the man of Reason breaks through the limits of the intellect and stands open to that which transcends it. There is, then, an actual awareness of Transcendence at the boundaries of existence in the world where man comes up against that which transcends him. In this way we can speak of a positive

¹² Wisdom, p. 89.

awareness of Transcendence.

Man's awareness of the transcendent God beyond the limits of the world comes in the awareness of his freedom from the world. "The man who attains true awareness of his freedom gains certainty of God. Freedom and God are inseparable."¹³ If I reject my freedom from the world and become content with the existence of nature, there is for me no God. If I did speak of God apart from this freedom, God would be reduced to an object in the world. It is only when I assert my freedom from the world and transcend its limitations that the transcendent God becomes a reality for me. It is in this freedom that I know that I am not through myself. "The highest freedom is experienced in freedom from the world, and this freedom is a profound bond with transcendence."¹⁴

The experience of freedom and Transcendence is not an object of knowledge but can be realized only in philosophical faith, an experience of Being through the mediation of history and thought.¹⁵ The individual awakens to this experience in his struggle with the objective structures that he meets in the world. In following out the implications of science and conceptual thought we experience

¹³ Wisdom, p.45.

¹⁴ Wisdom, p.45.

¹⁵ Scope, p.15.

a sense of dissatisfaction which points to depths beyond the limits of objective knowledge. We confront this limit in a variety of actions in the world, but most urgently in the boundary situations of human existence. The awareness of the limits of existence is fulfilled finally in the moment of authentic Existenz, when the objective world is suspended and becomes transparent to Transcendence. Here at the height of our freedom from the world we confront our true self and Transcendence to which it is bound.

Jaspers is not unaware of the dangers of psychologizing at this point. But he does not think that he falls into this error. Rather, he seeks a subjectivity which is appropriate to the peculiar "objectivity" of Transcendence.¹⁶

Object and subject belong together. This fundamental feature of our empirical existence, of our consciousness, and of our possible Existenz I call the Encompassing. Each subject implies the object proper to it, and vice versa. Abstract consciousness, the "I think", implies the valid objectivity of scientific knowledge, in which the common point of consciousness, the "I think" becomes meaningful; empirical existence implies an environment; existential freedom implies transcendence. In each case we must arrive at a subjectivity that is equivalent to its objectivity. Therefore, the propositions "subjectivity is the truth" and "objectivity is the truth" are both valid; neither excludes the other, but requires it as its complement.¹⁷

¹⁶ Both Jaspers and Bultmann use "objectivity" with regard to the experience of Transcendence in a way that differs from the objectivity of the world. They mean thus to indicate that the experience of God is something other than subjectivity. We denote this use of "objectivity" with inverted commas.

¹⁷ Myth., pp. 96-97.

Just as man is conscious only when he has an objective being before him which determines his concern, so he is Existenz only as Transcendence is understood as the power through which he is himself. The "Uncompassing-that-we-are" exists only in relation to something other than itself." 18

The Other is either the being which is in the world for consciousness as such, or it is Transcendence for Existenz. This twofold Other first becomes clear through the inwardness of Existenz. Without Existenz the meaning of Transcendence is lost. It remains only something indifferent and not to be known, something supposed to be at the bottom of things, something excogitated, or, perhaps for our animal consciousness, something weird or terrifying plunging it into superstition and anxiety, a subject to be investigated psychologically and removed through a rational insight into the factual by consciousness as such. Only through Existenz can Transcendence become present without superstition, as the genuine reality which to itself never disappears. 19

We do not have in Jaspers' thought the image of the encounter that we find in Bultmann's thought and thus we do not have the emphasis upon man's coming up against that which overwhelms him and challenges him to decision. Nevertheless there is a transcendent Other for Jaspers. In his movement towards his Existenz, man comes upon that which is not himself, in knowing that he can receive himself only as a gift. In his freedom he knows himself given to himself from a beyond that he cannot possess in his thought.

18 Reason, p.61.

19 Reason, pp.61-62.

b. Rudolf Bultmann

The concept of God's transcendence, which seemed almost to have been forgotten in some theology of the nineteenth century, was asserted with a new authority in the first part of the twentieth century in the thought of Karl Barth. Barth denounced the immanentism of Schleiermacher's theology, which tended to find an unbroken line of development between man and God, and announced that "one cannot speak of God simply by speaking of man in a loud voice."²⁰ This attitude toward the thought of the nineteenth century, which is influenced by Kierkegaard's "infinite qualitative distinction" between God and man stands in the background of much contemporary theological discussion and is one of the influential factors in the thought of Rudolf Bultmann.

Bultmann, like Jaspers, maintains that God is transcendent to all human perception and thought. God cannot be known as He is in Himself on the basis of man's own discovery. Man is unable to know or discover God in the world. According to Bultmann, the potential atheism of a scientist is contained not only in the fact that he might deny the existence of God, but also in the fact that as a scientist he might try to prove this existence on the basis of objective knowledge. To speak of God in

²⁰ Karl Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, London, 1928, pp.195-96.

scientific propositions is to speak in a universally valid way of that which cannot be comprehended in this dimension. It is to make the transcendent God into an object in the world.²¹

Bultmann understands that there are natural and historical occurrences in the life of man which are capable of being investigated as objects in the world. In such investigation, I exercise the rational faculties that are given with my existence. The knowledge which I gain by these means is valid and is important to my life in the world. But this knowledge is limited to the world and can never be knowledge of the God who is transcendent to the world. A closed web is encountered in objective observation which prevents man from discovering God in the world. Man can break through this limit only in faith.²² If we speak of God in any other way than faith, we reduce Him to the level of the world and thus lose Him.

It is important that we develop further Bultmann's rejection of all attempts to locate God in any worldly form because one of Jaspers' major criticisms of Bultmann's thought and of theology in general is that the transcendent God is reduced to the level of the immanent world and is lost in objectivity. Bultmann intends, however, to make

²¹ G.V.I., p.27.

²² K.M., p.198.

God the "object" not of knowledge, but of faith and this faith finds no proof of itself in the world.

True it is impossible to prove that faith is related to its object. But, as Hermann taught us long ago, it is just here that its strength lies. For if it were susceptible to proof it would mean that we could know and establish God apart from faith, and that would be placing him on a level with the world of tangible, objective reality. In that realm we are certainly justified in demanding proof. 23

God has not offered a proof for Himself in the Scriptures, in the so-called facts of salvation, or in the witness of the Spirit. In none of these forms does God become a worldly entity capable of being proved. That is, in none of these forms do we see God properly as an object of knowledge. 24

God acts in the world but always remains hidden except to the eye of faith. His action is not something that one can observe in an objective manner. Bultmann makes a distinction between Wunder and Mirakel in order to emphasize the hiddenness of God's action. Miracle, which speaks of an event contra naturam, is misleading because it makes God into an object in the world and the ordered structure of nature is abandoned. However, wonder, understood in Bultmann's sense, means that God acts within the natural events in such a way that his action can only be perceived

23 K.M., p.201; see note 16.

24 K.M., pp.201-202.

in faith.²⁵ God's transcendent action in the world can be identified neither with an act that intervenes in the natural order of events nor with the content of a world-view such as is contained in pantheism. "To the scientific, objective observer, God's action is a mystery."²⁶

Pantheism can say "there divinity is working" with regard to any event, whatever it may be, without taking into account the importance of what happens for my personal existence. Christian faith can only say, "I trust that God is working here and there, but His action is hidden, for it is not directly identical with the visible event. What it is that He is doing I do not yet know, and perhaps I shall never know it, but faithfully I trust that it is important for my personal existence, and I must ask what it is that God says to me. Perhaps it may be only that I must endure and be silent."²⁷

God's transcendent action takes place within the events of the world, but is known as God's action only in the moment of faith. Only the worldly events are visible to man apart from faith. And it is within these events that the eye of faith sees the action of God. This does not mean that I must deny the activity of God in saving the life of my child. But it does mean that apart from faith I see only the course of natural events. It is only in faith when I surrender myself to God that I see His activity in the world.²⁸

²⁵ G.V.I., pp.214ff.

²⁶ Mythology, p.61.

²⁷ Mythology, p.64.

²⁸ Mythology, pp.61-62.

A Wunder - i.e. an act of God - is not visible or ascertainable like worldly events. The only way to preserve the unworldly, transcendental character of the divine activity is to regard it not as an interference in worldly happenings, but something accomplished in them in such a way that the closed web of history as it presents itself to objective observation is left undisturbed. To every other eye than the eye of faith the action of God is hidden. Only the "natural" happening is generally visible and ascertainable. In it is accomplished the hidden act of God.²⁹

God is transcendent to man in that man cannot grasp Him in the forms of worldly knowledge. We cannot speak about God in objective or mythological terms.³⁰ We can only speak analogically of God, that is, in relation to human existence because it is only in this way that He is known to us.³¹ In this we grasp both the negative and the positive aspects of God's transcendent relation to us. Negatively, it must be said that we can in no way discover God and contain Him in our conceptualizations. But positively it is said that we know the transcendent God as He relates Himself to us in our personal experience. If we could speak of God only in general formulations, we could say nothing. However, man transcends this limitation in being confronted by God in concrete existence.

²⁹ K.M., p.197; Wunder has been translated as miracle. We have left the German form to indicate Bultmann's distinction between Wunder and Mirakel.

³⁰ Bultmann's definition of mythology has been widely criticised. This is discussed in some detail in ch.V/14. We agree with H.P. Owen that Bultmann normally uses mythology in relation to the objectification of God in worldly terms. See Owen, Revelation And Existence, Cardiff, 1957, p.15.

³¹ See ch.V.

If God's action must be thought of as hidden, how is it possible to speak of it except in purely negative statements? Is the conception of transcendence an exclusively negative conception? It would be if to speak of God did not also mean to speak of our personal existence. If we speak of God as acting in general, transcendence would indeed be a purely negative conception, since every positive description of transcendence transposes it into this world.³²

The transcendent God is known positively from within the world when He relates Himself to us in encounter.

God is the mysterious, enigmatic power that meets us in the world and in time. His transcendence is that of someone always having power over the temporal and the eternal; it is the transcendence of the power which creates and sets limits to our life - not that of a substance or a void with which the soul unites and into which it is swallowed up as it soars above the world in devotion, abstraction and ecstasy.³³

I am aware of the transcendent God not by being united with a void that swallows me up, but in the encounter of the Other within the world. Here a limit is set to my existence and I am called out of the world. The point of encounter, however, is not some noble self, some deus in nobis, through which God addresses me. There is nothing in human existence which forms a contact point between God and man.³⁴

³² Mythology, p.66.

³³ Essays, p.9.

³⁴ G.V.I., p.397.

The Christian faith maintains that the transcendent God acts on me here and now. But the Christian believes this "because he knows that he is addressed by the grace of God which meets him in the Word of God, in Jesus Christ." ³⁵ Man's positive awareness of Transcendence is dependent upon God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. God's encounter with man in the world is hidden except to the eye of faith, which sees what happens in the here and now in the light of the divine Word. ³⁶

The encounter which takes place between God and man in the world has its foundation in God's act in the world.

But this encounter is real for me only in my present meeting with God in which the God of the New Testament becomes my God. The encounter of God with man always remains transcendent to objective categories and can be known only in the present moment of my personal existence. But, if Bultmann rejects the attempt to objectify this encounter in finite categories, he also rejects the suggestion that he makes God into an invention of the human subjectivity. God is more than the invention of my subjectivity in that he stands over against me as that which is other than myself.

³⁵ Mythology, p.64.

³⁶ Mythology, p.64.

Under the influence of modern science there has been the tendency to make a radical distinction between objectivity and subjectivity. Objectivity is limited to the knowledge that results from scientific observation. Objects are abstracted from the world of relations and are understood within the limitations of certain questions raised within the context of finite knowledge. Anything which transcends these boundaries is given the inferior status of subjectivity.

Bultmann, however, transcends this narrow distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. Consequently, his discussion of the encounter with the transcendent God passes beyond these limits. God is neither a creation of the human subjectivity nor an object that can be abstracted from man's relation to Him. Rather, He is known from within the relation to Him as the One who stands over against man.

Bultmann is often accused of what his critics think to be his subjectivism. That is, it is thought that the transcendent God is lost in the depths of human subjectivity. But, if Bultmann is guilty at times of expressing himself in a way that lends itself to this interpretation, it is clear that he does not intend to make this error. God exists whether or not I believe in Him, but I cannot know Him apart from my relationship to Him in faith.

If then it be true that we cannot speak of an act of God without speaking simultaneously of our own existence, if such an act cannot be established apart from its existential reference, if it dispenses with the objectivity attainable by impartial scientific investigation (e.g. by experiment), we inevitably ask whether divine activity has any objective reality at all. Does it exist apart from our own subjective experience? ...

This objection rests upon a psychological misconception of what is meant by the existential life of man. When we say that faith alone, the faith which is aware of the divine encounter, can speak of God, and that therefore when the believer speaks of an act of God he is ipse facto speaking of himself as well, it by no means follows that God has no real existence apart from the believer or the act of believing. It follows only if faith and experience are interpreted in a psychologizing sense.³⁷

Bultmann retains a form of "objectivity" in his understanding of faith's awareness of God in encounter, but it is not the objectivity of scientific thought. Such would reduce God to the level of tangible reality, whereas God always withdraws Himself from identification with the world. Rather, it is an "existential objectivity", one which the subject knows only in relation to it. The "objectivity" of God is the subject's awareness of that which overwhelms him in the here and now.³⁸ H.W. Hartach indicates this in pointing to Bultmann's distinction between self-consciousness and self-understanding. "Self-consciousness is something that a man produces in himself

³⁷ K.M., pp.199-200.

³⁸ Mythology, p.63.

apart from any external event." ³⁹ But self-understanding "depends on something outside a man. Something must happen to enable a man to obtain a new understanding of his existence, his life. He must encounter somebody to get a new self-understanding." ⁴⁰ John Baillie illustrates this understanding of "objectivity" in speaking of the test of reality.

The test of reality (which is the same as to say of being or of objectivity) is the resistance it offers to the otherwise uninhibited course of my own thinking, desiring and acting. Reality is what I 'come up against', what takes me by surprise, the other-than-myself which pulls me up and obliges me to reckon with it and adjust myself to it because it will not consent simply to adjust itself to me. Reality presents itself to me, and that means that it always meets me in the present, never in the past or in the future.... These are truths which have been very fully developed by many writers of recent years, principally under the influence of Kierkegaard, very notably by Dr. Martin Buber - but nowhere more elaborately than by the late Eberhard Grisebach...⁴¹

What Professor Baillie has said in more formal language, Bultmann has said in the form of an analogy in which he relates the encounter of God with man to man's encounter of the love of another. The essential character of love depends upon its being an event. Love, in the real

³⁹ H.W. Bartsch, "Demythologising In Germany Now", Hibbert Journal, vol.62, no.44, October, 1963, p.19.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.20.

⁴¹ John Baillie, The Sense Of The Presence Of God, London, 1962, p.33.

sense of the word, cannot be apprehended by objective observation, but only in the encounter with it. Yet even if we fail to understand it or open our hearts to it, it still calls forth an existential reaction of some form. Whatever our reaction is, we have met with that which is other than ourselves. We are no longer the same after the encounter as we were before it.⁴²

In an analagous way, the God who transcends all categories of tangible objective knowledge is more than a creation of human subjectivity. There is an "objectivity" in the encounter with God that shows itself in inhibiting my present thought and action. I come up against that which is other than myself, but which cannot be known apart from my relation to it. It is in this meeting that the transcendent God becomes more than an empty and unknown void. It is out of this experience that we are able to speak positively of the transcendent God.

⁴² K.M., p.200.

5. God's Immanent Relation to Man

a. Karl Jaspers

According to Jaspers, God is wholly transcendent to man in that He can never become an object of human knowledge. However, God is not simply the beyond at the limits of our questioning and reflection. While Being is the last thing that we reach through questioning from our situation, it is in itself the first. "It is not made by us, is not interpretation, and is not an object. Rather it itself brings forth our questioning and permits it no rest."⁴³ God's immanence is understood as the primal source of all being which calls us from out of the depths of finiteness. Jaspers refers on occasion to the power of attraction (Zugkraft) of Transcendence.⁴⁴ We confront this Zugkraft at all levels of temporal existence in which we, in face of the multiplicity of truths, seek for the one truth.

The continuous horizontal line of time in which we live is intersected by the vertical line of the unknown One which bestows meaning and fulfillment on the truth we receive in communication. This basic reality is recalled in symbols, in images of a pre-temporal origin of the temporal necessity for communication or of an ultimate perfection of eternal harmony in which communication is surmounted.

⁴³ Reason, p.59.

⁴⁴ Offenbarung, p.464.

In the beginning was the One, the Truth to which we now have no access. But the One that we have lost calls from the depths of all temporality as if all the scattered fragments of truth should, through communication, be recovered from their present dispersal into the peace of the primal unity; though the forgotten Truth can never again be attained in time, it is constantly present in the movement that presses on towards it.⁴⁵

This does not mean that the human Reason is identified with the call of the primal source. If God in His immanent relation to the world is understood to be that which brings forth our questioning, calling us to the One beyond the multiplicity of temporal truths, Reason is understood as an instrument of existence which opens us up to the transcendent One. "It is the existential absolute that serves to actualize the primal source and bring it to the widest manifestation."⁴⁶ Reason does not flow from the primal source of being. Rather, Reason, as the encompassing bond in continuous movement, encounters Transcendence in its unknowable rest.⁴⁷

The transcendent One is immanent in the world as the primal source of our being and makes it possible for us to become conscious of our finiteness and potentiality. As we indicated in Chapter One, man confronts his freedom and

⁴⁵ Art1-Reason, pp.43-44.

⁴⁶ Scope, p.47.

⁴⁷ Offenbarung, p.464.

his potentiality in his awareness of his finiteness. But this consciousness of finiteness is awakened from its unconscious state only through the presence of the Infinite. Man becomes conscious of his finiteness in comparison with the Absolute and the Infinite.

The infinite is touched, though not apprehended, first in the idea of infinity, then in the conception of a divine knowledge essentially different from man's finite knowledge, finally in the thoughts of immortality. The infinite which though unfathomable does enter into man's consciousness, causes man to transcend his finiteness by becoming aware of it.

Through the presence of the absolute and the infinite, man's finiteness does not remain merely the unconscious datum of his empirical existence; but through the light of transcendence it becomes the basic trait in his consciousness of his created nature. 48

An intimation of God's immanent activity is given in the Unconditional Imperative, which is understood as the source of man's will. Jaspers does not wish to identify this imperative with passion, vital will, or self-assertion. It is not something which comes forth from the "natural" man, but only from his decision as a creature of freedom. Nevertheless, the Unconditional Imperative has its source within man and its unconditional reference is something that in-dwells him so that at any moment he may become suddenly aware of it. 49

48 Scope, p.65.

49 Wisdom, pp.56-57.

Where a development in time seems to have given us possession of it (the Unconditional), all can still be betrayed in a moment. Conversely, where a man's past seems to be mere factuality, weighing him down under endless contingencies to the point of annihilation, he can nevertheless at any moment begin as it were from the beginning through sudden awareness of the unconditional.⁵⁰

God is present in the world, but not as an object. We cannot identify Him with the process of the world as can a pantheist. Rather, God remains, for Jaspers, the distant and hidden God, transcendent to all worldly categories. God is in the world only in the ambiguous language of phenomena and is known only in our penetration of these phenomena and ascension to the eternal presence. In philosophizing, we awaken to the eternal presence which is already there. "In it each of us understands what he actually knew before."⁵¹ God is transcendent to anything that I can know in the world and thus remains distant and hidden. But He is immanent to me through a continuity of myself with God which, though hidden at times, is always there if I will awaken to it.

This reality (God) is accessible to existence through the orientation toward God that lies at its source. Hence faith in God, springing as it does from the source, resists any mediation. This faith is not laid down in any definite articles of faith applicable to all men or in any historical reality which mediates between man and God and is the same for all men. The individual, always in his own historicity,

⁵⁰ Wisdom, p. 58.

⁵¹ Wisdom, p. 51.

stands rather in an immediate independent relation to God that requires no intermediary.⁵²

It is this inward relation to God which is the source of Jaspers' characterization of the philosophical life. The philosophical life springs from man's awakening to his lostness in the busyness of the world, and his need to find the depth of meaning in life. Jaspers senses the need for man in his daily affairs to be sustained by a depth of meaning which will penetrate him even in the performance of monotonous tasks. He grants that this depth of meaning has, in the past, been present to the individual from the world into which he was born and from the Church which shapes the steps of his life. But he does not find this to be the case in a crumbling world where less faith is placed in tradition, where man puts his trust only in the outward order and where the depths of meaning are lost. "Here the individual can rely only in himself. By living philosophically he seeks to build up by his own strength what his world no longer gives him."⁵³

In the kind of crumbling world in which man lives today, the individual finds himself staring without love into the void, forgetting his true self in being consumed by the busyness of the world. And it is from the awareness

⁵² Wisdom, p.47.

⁵³ Wisdom, pp.120-21.

of this that the desire to lead a philosophical life springs. Just as man is about to recover himself the world draws him again into "the all-consuming machinery of empty labour and empty leisure." ⁵⁴ Man must snatch himself out of this emptiness if he is not to lose himself to thoughtlessness and routine, and philosophy is, for Jaspers, the means by which he can do this. "Philosophy is the decision to awaken our primal source, to find our way back to ourselves, and to help ourselves by inner action." ⁵⁵ The philosophical life, in which one seeks one's way back to oneself, follows two paths, the path of solitary meditation and the path of communication with men. In the first path, man reflects inward upon his own consciousness.

We men cannot do without our daily moments of profound reflection. In them we recapture our self-awareness, lest the presence of the primal source be lost entirely amid the inevitable distractions of daily life.

What the religions accomplish in prayer and worship has its philosophical analogy in explicit immersion, in inner communion with being itself. This can take place only in times and moments (regardless whether at the beginning or end of the day or in between) when we are not occupied in the world with worldly aims and yet are not left empty but are in contact with what is most essential. ⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Wisdom, p.121.

⁵⁵ Wisdom, p.121.

⁵⁶ Wisdom, p.122.

Unlike religious meditation, philosophical meditation demands solitude. There are three aspects to this contemplation. Firstly, there is self-reflection. I recall my actions, thoughts, and feelings for the day. I ask myself where I have erred, where I have evaded responsibilities, been insincere and so on. I try to discern my good qualities and seek ways to enhance them. I make judgements upon myself with regard to my particular conduct and find principles by which I decide to judge myself. I learn from the philosophical tradition with its injunction to self-reflection, realizing that such reflection can never be conclusive and is always subject to error. The tradition is looked upon as preparation or recollection, inspiration or confirmation.⁵⁷

Secondly, philosophical contemplation consists of transcending reflection (transzendier ende Besinnung), in which, guided by philosophical methods, I gain awareness of the godhead. I read the symbols of being and seek to ascertain that which is eternal in time. I "seek to touch upon the source of my freedom and through it upon being itself; I seek as it were to partake of creation."⁵⁸

Thirdly, I reflect upon the action that I should take in the present. I seek to clarify my present task for the day

⁵⁷ Scope, p.15; Wisdom, p.123.

⁵⁸ Wisdom, pp.123-124.

"when in the inevitable intensity of practical thinking I lose my awareness of the comprehensive meaning." 59

This path of solitary contemplation is fulfilled only in conjunction with communication, that is, in reflecting and judging oneself in view of the assertions of other persons. Without this communication with others, I am subject to error and liable to the seduction of inauthentic self-assertion. But when I meditate upon myself, the source of my being and my task in the world, and open myself to unlimited communication, "an imponderable presence which can never be forced may come to me: the clarity of my love, the hidden and always uncertain imperative of the godhead, the revelation of being - perhaps bringing with it peace of mind amid life's constant turmoil..." 60

Some twentieth century theologians, in reaction to the errors of the nineteenth century, have tended to withdraw the "wholly other" God to such a distance that relationship with Him seems somewhat doubtful. Jaspers' thought concerning the transcendent God cannot be accused of this exaggeration, but it does seem possible that he has not questioned seriously enough the errors of the idealistic philosophy of the nineteenth century. His statement of the

59 Wisdom, p.124.

60 Wisdom, pp.124-25.

transcendence of God is certainly clear regarding the transcendence of the natural order, the objective world. Indeed, one of the prime motivations in his criticism of Bultmann's thought has been the concern to remove God from all attempts to contain Him in finite forms. Because of this, he can dismiss the criticism that he makes the error of immanent thought and claim that he could not have asserted Transcendence more resolutely.⁶¹

Nevertheless, he always finds the basis for the relationship between God and man in the continuous presence of God in the world, so that man needs only to awaken to that which calls to him from his depths as the primal source of his being. Transcendence is present for me in my awakening to myself as a being of freedom and potentiality. This emphasis upon the "in me" of God at times threatens the distinction that he wishes to make between God and man.

⁶¹ Myth., p. 97.

b. Rudolf Bultmann

H.P. Owen's analysis of Bultmann's thought is of particular importance to us at this point where we are attempting to elucidate Bultmann's understanding of God's immanent relation to the world. While we have suggested that Jaspers' understanding of God is inadequate because God is finally swallowed up in immanence, Owen suggests that Bultmann's understanding of God is inadequate because he has not developed the idea of immanence far enough. It is not our intention to discuss Owen's thesis in any detail since this would take us beyond the scope of our immediate concern. But we hope to make use of his analysis in order to move right through to the issue that is central for us in this section.

Owen's study leads him to the conclusion that Bultmann's use of the image of encounter for describing the relationship between God and man suffers from an inadequate view of the divine immanence. Owen thinks that God's act must be located, so to speak, in the unseen center of man's existence, but he believes that Bultmann conceals God's act in the events outside man.⁶²

⁶² Owen, Revelation And Existence, pp. 54-55.

This criticism of encounter amounts to saying that Bultmann lacks the idea of divine immanence. In one place he says outright that the idea of immanence is radically incompatible with Christian theism. He stresses the God 'without' to the total exclusion of the God 'within'. He does not take seriously enough the truth that all men are created in God's image. Certainly he does not ignore this truth. He would say that the divine image is shown by men's power to think of God (however negatively) and, still more, by man's possession of needs that only God can answer. Yet we must take one further step and assert that God is actually present in man as the ground of his thinking and the cause of his needs. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' 63

Owen's analysis of Bultmann's thought, which leads him to this conclusion, begins with a study of encounter as an image for describing the relationship between God and man. According to Owen, encounter presupposes an initial separation. "If we say that X encounters Y we imply that until encounter has taken place X and Y are separate entities that lack any contact with each other." 64 Encounter implies a spatial distance between persons or things. Thus, "Two friends are apart until they 'encounter' each other in a certain place, either by accident or by arrangement." 65 Owen maintains that this image has the same implication when it is applied to the sphere of religion.

63 Owen, Revelation And Existence, pp.52-54; Owen has reference in this passage to Bultmann, Primitive Christianity In Its Contemporary Setting, London, 1950, pp.229ff.

64 Ibid., p.52.

65 Ibid., pp.52-53.

Before the event of encounter, God and man are separated by a great gulf. "This gulf is not caused merely by man's ignorance and sin; it is caused primarily by the absence of God's act. If God does not act except through encounter, it means that before encounter he has not acted at all." ⁶⁶

Owen reminds us that he is not raising the problem of human knowledge. He is not asking how much man knows about God, but how far God acts toward man. He is seeking to clarify the sense in which God has acted to bestow His presence in man as the "ground of his thinking and the cause of his needs." ⁶⁷ At this point we need to make two observations before proceeding to develop more fully Bultmann's understanding of God's action in the world.

First, when Bultmann uses the image of encounter to describe the relationship between God and man, he does not intend to withdraw God from a continuous relation to man and make the relationship between God and man dependent upon some occasional and arbitrary decision of God to encounter man in the proclamation of the Word. To speak of the encounter with God in the proclamation of the Word does not deny a prior relationship with God. In fact,

this prior relationship with God is central to Bultmann's

⁶⁶ Owen, Revelation And Existence, p.53.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp.53-54.

thought in so far as the man of faith knows himself to have been the man of sin, the man who has rejected God's encounter with him.⁶⁸ It is not simply a question of two friends being apart until they encounter each other in a certain place. Rather, the two friends are encountering each other all the time. But, because of a past decision to break off this friendship the one does not acknowledge the other as his friend until something occurs which frees him from his past decision.

Second, Owen's criticism of Bultmann is made on the basis of his understanding of the image of God in man. Owen has not developed this theme explicitly, but it seems that the image of God for him refers to an indwelling power which enables man to come to Transcendence. The indwelling power of God is, one assumes, continuous with the being of man and needs only to be realized.⁶⁹

If Owen intends to make God's immanence continuous with the being of man, he is certainly correct to distinguish his thought from Bultmann's thought at this point. It would be misleading to suggest that Bultmann is like Karl Barth in his understanding of God's immanent activity. The next chapter will indicate a basic

⁶⁸ G.V.I., pp.295ff.

⁶⁹ Owen, Revelation And Existence, pp.67, 77.

difference in their thought.⁷⁰ However, Bultmann does share Barth's desire that God be spoken of in such a way that the radical distinction between God and man is not veiled. Thus, for Bultmann, it is not a question of God's indwelling, but of God's encountering man in every "now". The reason that man does not respond to the encounter always and everywhere is man's sin, which closes him off from this encounter and affirms a life based on worldly existence.

With Owen's criticism and these two observations in mind, we are in a position to indicate more clearly the direction that Bultmann's thought follows on the subject of God's immanent relation to man. Like other critics of the nineteenth century, Bultmann is concerned to speak of God in such a way that He is no longer capable of being discovered in man's self-consciousness. Man's relation to the Divine is dependent upon that which can in no way be confused with the being of man. There is nothing in man, no better self which exists as a contact point for the revelation of God. Bultmann, like Barth, distinguishes the Christian faith from all religion conceived as something blossoming forth in the development of the human mind.

⁷⁰ See ch. III/7.

But the Christian faith is not to be conceived of as something of this kind. Rather does it involve an awareness that it is something given by God himself and effected by the message of Jesus Christ, to which it is itself the response. It is therefore understandable when the question whether there is a point of contact for the Christian faith with the religious feelings and ideas of man, is answered in recent theology with a decisive negative - there is no contact, but only a conflict! There is no such thing as a religious faculty in man which has only to be developed. God, in speaking to us himself, also creates in us the faculty with which to hear him. 71

When Bultmann speaks in this manner, one might be inclined to think that man must await some arbitrary action on the part of God which will create the faculty by which he can hear His address. However, a closer analysis of what Bultmann means in such passages reveals his assumption that God and man already exist in relationship to each other, although it may be a perverted one. Man is created in the image of God, that is, in responsibility before Him. But man places himself in conflict with God; he ignores his responsibility before him. Thus the man, who is encountered by God's conflict, is the man who has already rejected God's revelation of Himself.

Yet it is, paradoxically enough, in the very conflict that the point of contact is created or rather revealed. There can be a conflict only where there is a relationship: and a perverted relationship is still a relationship.

I cannot contradict a stone - only a man: nor can God contradict a stone, for the stone itself has nothing to say - but only man, whom God has created in his own image. The man who is confronted by God's contradiction is the man who has placed himself in conflict with God and has by that action lost himself. God's conflict with him calls him back to himself - to what he really is.... The man who meets with God's contradiction is man gone astray. Such a man is determined by his relation to the way he is to go and the way in which he seeks to go, and does not stand neutral towards it, like a post standing off the road. 72

Eultmann does not say that man sits back and awaits an arbitrary decision of God to encounter him at some specific place and time. Rather, he says that the believer is aware of himself as a creature who has chosen the creation over the Creator and has thus perverted the relationship between God and himself. We know that we have not acknowledged the God who "meets us always and everywhere."⁷³ Eultmann speaks from within the circle of the Christian faith as one who knows himself to have been accepted by God in spite of his past. From this perspective, he understands himself, prior to faith in the forgiving Word in Jesus Christ, as one who has already decided against the encounter of God in the world.

Thus, although God encounters us always and everywhere, we live a life which is unable to move through to God because

72 Essays, p.136.

73 Mythology, p.78.

we have chosen a life of self-glorification. We have rejected God's authority in our life. When this man attempts to speak positively of God, he is in fact only objectifying his own dread in an attempt to find security in himself and the world in which he lives. Therefore, Eultmann says that apart from the forgiving Word of God in Jesus Christ, which frees man from the seeking of security in the world, he has no positive knowledge of God.

all talk of the transcendent God becomes illusory when it is an attempt to be more than a mere negation, that is, more than the admission that the actual reality of man is devoid of God. To imagine God's transcendence behind this life as the sphere into which man can take flight from the things of this world, in theoretical contemplation, asceticism and mysticism, is wishful thinking. And in the same way it is wishful thinking to imagine the things of this world as a screen on which we can view the transcendent, and to hear in this world - in nature and history - the rushing current of the divine life-stream. Man has absolutely no right to do any of these things. He cannot infer the fullness of God in some transcendent sphere from the absence of God in the here and now. And he cannot see the transcendent in the things of this world as his 'this world' is shaped by sin.... Man can speak of the transcendent as a positive reality if the transcendent makes a gift of itself to him. Otherwise it remains a negative concept, and to seek to grasp it, notwithstanding this fact, as something positive is to sin, and to do violence to God's power. 74

To say that man has no positive knowledge of God apart from the proclamation of God's forgiving Word in

74. Essays, pp.106-107.

Jesus Christ is not to say that man has no relationship to God apart from this Word. God's continuous activity in the world is indicated in Bultmann's understanding of man's quest after the fulfilment of his existence. Man never loses his destiny to be his authentic self. "It is not possible to lose one's destiny to be one's self, and this destiny remains constantly at work in man, in the form of the question about what he really is, which constantly exercises him consciously or unconsciously..."⁷⁵ In man's knowledge of himself, of his limits and possibilities there is an implicit knowledge of God. Man's awareness of his limits and the question of his true self has its source in God's revelation of himself in nature and history. But this question can never be turned into a positive knowledge of God because of man's sin, which refuses to stand open to God's gift and seeks rather to fulfil itself in the world. Thus, this understanding of the self and the negative knowledge of God implied in it, is properly understood in the Christian faith only as it leads man to the forgiving Word in Jesus Christ where the believer receives the freedom to receive God's gift.⁷⁶

There is then, according to Bultmann, an advance relation to God which is described by Augustine in the

⁷⁵ Essays, p.136; See ch.I/2, III/7.

⁷⁶ Essays, pp.114-118.

image of the restless heart. Some theologians argue that we have no advance relation to the theme of the Bible because the theme is the revelation of God which we know only in His revelation in Jesus Christ. However, Bultmann maintains that while we have no advance knowledge of God's revelatory act in Jesus Christ, we do have a relation to God in our search for Him.⁷⁷ Yet we cannot, in this inquiry, move directly through to God for this inquiry is fulfilled for the Christian faith only in the personal encounter with God as revealed in the forgiving Word in Jesus Christ. Mr. Owen observes this aspect of Bultmann's thought in making a distinction between the thought of Bultmann and Augustine, and this distinction also reflects his own disagreement with Bultmann. Owen notes the similarity between the thought of Bultmann and Augustine but points out what is for him an important distinction.

Bultmann and St. Augustine are at one in describing religion as a movement from the outward and sensible to the inward and the spiritual. Then they diverge. For Bultmann this movement does not itself disclose God's presence; it is a preparation for hearing God's Word in an encounter; for St. Augustine the movement itself brings man to God; it discloses God as one who is always present in man, even when man fails to recognize his presence.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Mythology, pp.52-53; K.M., p.192.

⁷⁸ Owen, Revelation And Existence, p.56; See also, Owen, "Existentialism And Ascetical Theology", The Church Quarterly Review, vol.CXX, no.335. London, April-June, 1959, pp.226ff.

Bultmann is consistent with this understanding of God's immanent activity in the world in his discussion of conscience. Man does not, simply in knowing the moral demand in conscience, know God. But he does in conscience have an awareness of the demand which is understood in the Christian faith as God's demand. Bultmann's point is to suggest that man, who hears the demand in his conscience and seeks to fulfil it, does not, according to the Christian faith, know God's demand and God as Judge. For when one really acknowledges God, one despairs, because God is not the moral law but the Holy One before whom only the pure in heart can stand.⁷⁹

The man who thinks he can see God in the demand of the good, and then does not founder in the confession that he is a sinner, is like the Jews who, according to Paul, sought to gain glory in the sight of God, for themselves, by zealous fulfilment of the law. For he is of the opinion that he is good enough in his moral conflict in the sight of God, can maintain himself in God's presence, and is in no need of any justification through grace.⁸⁰

God is in continuous relation to man in the voice of conscience. Pagans also know this demand as written on their hearts. They can do what God commands. But in knowing this they do not know God, not because He does not encounter them, but because they live in sin, and in seeking

⁷⁹ Essays, pp.102-103.

⁸⁰ Essays, p.103.

to fulfil themselves in this demand of the good, close themselves off from the Holy God.

As we have said, it is not our task here to discuss in any full sense the relationship that exists between the thought of Owen and Bultmann. Nevertheless, we can say in brief that the point of disagreement between Owen and Bultmann is not unlike that between Jaspers and Bultmann. Owen wishes to maintain an image of God's presence which will enable man to move directly through to God. Bultmann, on the other hand, because of his understanding of man's sinful existence in which man always seeks to fulfil himself in the world, maintains that God's presence can only be understood in faith as the activity of the transcendent God, which encounters us everywhere, but which is properly understood only in light of the Word of forgiveness which frees us from our sin. The passage to which Owen has referred in suggesting that Bultmann's thought lacks the divine immanence, shows clearly the latter's position.

In both systems (Christianity and Gnosticism) that (God's) transcendence is conceived radically. There is nothing to suggest the classical view that God is immanent in the world, no suggestion that the orderly, law-abiding process of nature and course of history are proofs of the divine immanence. The New Testament knows nothing of the Stoic conception of providence. There is a great gulf between God and the world.... But this transcendence is not conceived ontologically as in Gnosticism. The gulf between God and man is not metaphysical.... Nor is the transcendence of God confined to the pure negativity of the

'not worldly'. In the first place, it is his glorious sovereignty, which refuses to tolerate the pride of man or his forgetfulness of his creaturely status.... Up to this point we are still moving within the orbit of the Old Testament tradition. But at this point it acquires an entirely new sense through the New Testament recognition that God, precisely by shattering all human boasting, reveals himself as the God of grace. The transcendence of God and his grace are one and the same thing. The Cross of Christ, which is God's judgement over the world and the means by which he makes the wisdom of this world foolishness, is the revelation of his grace.... As grace, the transcendence of God is always his futurity, his constant being ahead of us, his always being where we would like to be. He is always there already as the gracious God for those who are open to the future, but as the judge for those who shut their hearts against the future. ⁸¹

Bultmann stands in between the immanentism of the nineteenth century and the tendency to exclude the truth inherent in immanentism in the thought of the Barthians in the twentieth century. On the one hand, he does not speak of God's immanent activity on the basis of some sense of the divine which is ever present to man. On the other hand, he does not eliminate the truth of immanentism to such a degree that God is totally withdrawn from the day-to-day life of man.

Bultmann replaces a natural understanding of God's immanence with a historical understanding of it. That is, while he rejects a view of God's activity which tends to

⁸¹ Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, pp.229-230.

identify it with natural existence, he accepts a view that acknowledges the transcendent God's immanent activity in the world. God operates within the world not as the immanent power behind my authentic existence to which I can awaken at any moment, but as the One who stands over against me demanding a decision from me. It is this activity of God which makes possible my quest for God and hence my hearing His Word of forgiveness which frees me for Him. Thus, Bultmann maintains that in the resolve by which God's gift of forgiving grace is apprehended, the gift of God is already at work. "The Spirit is not the prime cause behind the human will, but operates in that will." ⁸² We are given the "possibility of life" (= God's gift) which is already at work in us. But the responsibility is placed upon us for appropriating this gift and the Spirit is operative in our resolve.

⁸² K.M., p.121; Owen objects to this quotation as an indication of God's immanence and asks how the Spirit can be an interior presence if it is reduced to the spoken word. Two things can be said to this. First, Owen means by interior presence the power that dwells in human existence, although it needs to be continually received. Bultmann, on the other hand, is cautious to speak in a way that will insure that God's nearness is not something continuous with man. Second, Bultmann does not reduce the Spirit to the spoken word. Rather, he understands it to serve as the bridge which leads man to open himself up to God's forgiving Word. The Spirit is active within our decision for that Word. See *Existence*, p.31 and G.V.III, pp.129-130.

Bultmann's point, I think, is this: While he never denies the validity of what God has done in the past, he can speak only out of the present experience of faith in Jesus Christ in which the present meaning of history is realized. From this experience he sees that God has been at work calling him to his authentic life, but that he has rejected this call in seeking security in himself and the world. God's activity in calling him cannot be understood as some natural process, a process which is continuous with the being of man. This would veil the distinction between God and man and reduce God to the level of a life fluid. Rather, the man of faith understands that God encounters him everywhere, that every moment is filled with the possibility of new life. And in accepting this new possibility of life in faith, he is aware that:

the meaning in history lies always in the present, and when the present is conceived as the eschatological present by Christian faith the meaning in history is realised. Men who complains: 'I cannot see meaning in history, and therefore my life, interwoven in history, is meaningless', is to be admonished: do not look around yourself into universal history, you must look into your own personal history. Always in your present lies the meaning in history, and you cannot see it as a spectator, but only in your responsible decisions. In every moment slumbers the possibility of being the eschatological moment. You must awaken to it. 83.

In awakening to the present as the eschatological present, that is, in deciding for God's gift of meaningful life in the present, I am aware that this gift is already at work within me, that God is acting within my decision.

6. Analysis

Jaspers takes a decisive step in speaking of actual Transcendence, and in relating this to the godhead of religion. This is a step, for instance, that Martin Heidegger does not take. Transcendence, according to Jaspers, cannot be objectified in any finite form and is known only in the immediate experience of the human subject. While Bultmann acknowledges some truth in Jaspers' concept of Transcendence, he criticizes it in comparing it to Schleiermacher's concept of the universum and to the concept of transcendence in the philosophy of the Spirit.

Transcendence obviously has at first for him (Jaspers) the negative sense of the nonobjective; then, the insight that Existenz does not belong to the world of objects leads him to hypostatize the nonobjective as the All-Encompassing, indeed, as God Thus he says that man has the possibility of experiencing himself as given to himself and guided by transcendence, and that the liberal faith does not regard it impossible for God, conceived of as absolute transcendence, to effect anything. This All-Encompassing reminds us of the "universum" of Schleiermacher, to whom Jaspers occasionally refers rather maliciously. Other statements remind us of Kant. According to Jaspers, direct relation with the god head is possible for every man in his own responsible freedom of reason. "In the direct relation of his own freedom to God", man knows that he is determined by God. In the last analysis, what is this transcendence but that which was formerly called "the spirit"? - the spirit which, to be sure, is transcendent in relation

to "physical presence", but is immanent in human reason! Is such transcendence the transcendence of God? And since, according to Jaspers, "the mystery of the revelation of the truth" is disclosed in sudden illuminations within the history of the spirit, his transcendence seems also to be immanent in history.⁸⁴

Bultmann's comments in this paragraph are very broad in scope and perhaps are more suggestive at times than concrete. Further, we must realize that when he comments here on Jaspers' thought, he refers primarily to this one essay in which Jaspers has reflected on Bultmann's project of demythologizing. While Bultmann is certainly familiar with The Origin And Goal Of History, we are not given an indication that he is familiar with Jaspers' work as a whole. Jaspers himself dismisses quite simply the comparison of his thought with that of Schleiermacher and the concept of the Spirit, and suggests that such comparisons would not be made if one were familiar with his other writings, particularly Von Der Wahrheit and Reason And Existenz.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, there is in this paragraph written by Bultmann a basic criticism that points up a major divergence between the two thinkers. This can, perhaps, be most profitably

84 Myth, pp. 66-67

85 Myth, p. 97

discussed in terms of the confrontation of man with the transcendent God in man's historical existence.

Both Jaspers and Bultmann make the distinction between Historie and Geschichte which is now generally accepted in German thought. Historie refers to the understanding of history in which the events of history are considered from a distance. Historisches consciousness is, according to Jaspers, the knowledge of historical occurrences considered as objective structures to be contemplated. It develops an encompassing picture of world history in its ability to interpret present existence on the basis of the past. In historische consciousness, we always stand opposite the events, considering and questioning them according to their causes. History, understood in this manner, is concerned not with the self as an individual, but with man in general. It is concerned with the objective structures external to the individual, the diversities of men, nations, and cultures.⁸⁶ Bultmann also acknowledges this form of historical knowledge. In fact, his own significant contribution in this field has received the praise of Jaspers.⁸⁷

86 Jaspers, Philosophie, pp.397-98; Myth, p.98

87 Myth, pp.20-21

Bultmann finds the roots of this historical consciousness in Greek science and concludes that its concern was not with the origin and goal of individual existence, but with the past as an object to be investigated.⁸⁸

Geschichte, however, refers not to objective events seen in separation from my personal existence but rather to that which affects vitally my personal existence. The geschichtliche consciousness, says Jaspers, must be personal. In it I am conscious of myself in relation to other persons. I am bound up with the situations in which I find myself. The subject and object of history are inseparably bound up with one another.⁸⁹ Geschichtlichkeit refers to the meaningful possibilities of my existence in the present. It is "the existential possibility of achieving and experiencing the actual unity of time and eternity in the moment."⁹⁰ This same understanding of history is the basis for Bultmann's existential interpretation of the New Testament. The historian in this sense participates in the object of his reflection in such a way that his understanding of himself is affected. According to Bultmann,

88 Bultmann, "Das Verständnis Der Geschichte Im Griechentum Und Im Christentum", Der Sinn Der Geschichte, Ed., L Reinisch, München, 1961 pp.51ff

89 Jaspers, Philosophie, p.398

90 Myth, p.99

we understand human existence rightly when we interpret it historically in this manner. Geschichtlichkeit refers to man's possibility of being (Sein-Können).⁹¹

While neither Bultmann nor Jaspers intend to separate one understanding of history from the other, it is history in the sense of Geschichte which is their major concern in their analysis of human existence. However, if their basic understanding of history as the meaningful possibility of the self is similar, they differ when they speak of the fulfilment of this possibility. For Jaspers, human existence achieves its potentiality through existential freedom in its relation to Transcendence. But for Bultmann, this same possibility is fulfilled in the encounter with Transcendence in the present eschatological act of God in Jesus Christ. We attempt to elucidate here this distinction between the thought of Jaspers and Bultmann on the basis of the "how" and the "where" of man's confrontation with Transcendence.

The "how" of man's confrontation with Transcendence and hence his transition to authentic existence is described by Bultmann in terms of the encounter of God with man.

⁹¹ G.V.I, p. 118; Kerygma Und Mythos, VI/1, p.21.

Bultmann maintains that Jaspers has missed the full significance of the historicity of man because the address and encounter play no part in his thought. He suggests that the coincidence of subject and object is attributed by Jaspers to the Encompassing, whereas it can only be rightly understood when the subject perceives the object as an address to him in genuine encounter.⁹² Bultmann does not develop his criticism very far at this point. But, I think he means, that although Jaspers recognizes the historicity of man as an existence in a particular situation influenced by the historical tradition, Jaspers does not understand fully the sense in which that which is external to him encounters him demanding specific decisions. If this is accurate, Bultmann is making the same criticism of Jaspers' thought that he made of Croce's thought in History And Eschatology.⁹³ This criticism will, I hope, become clearer in the next few paragraphs.

Bultmann's concern is that man's historicity be understood not simply on the basis of his reasoning reflection upon himself and the world in which he lives. Rather, he understands it to be composed of man's acts of decision

92 Myth, p.66.

93 H.E., p.142.

which he makes in the face of present encounters. Thus, he criticizes the philosophy of the Spirit (with which he associates Jaspers) for allowing man to remain within himself. This criticism is developed in an earlier essay where Bultmann summarizes his understanding of revelation as it is conceived in the thought of Romanticism and Idealism. Quoting from Emil Brunner, Bultmann says that Romanticism and Idealism do not conceive revelation as objectively present in the world as in rationalism, but rather as "the emergence into consciousness of the omnipresent and eternal basis of all phenomena, the recognition of something that was always true, the perception of a divine presence that could have been perceived before, since it was always there..."⁹⁴ Bultmann maintains that the character of revelation from beyond can be maintained in Romanticism and Idealism in so far as it is acknowledged that man cannot be authentic in himself and that empirical facts as such cannot be revelation. But, he says, the Spirit is said to attest itself in the empirical facts and men becomes aware of the Spirit "when he reflects on himself as spirit and thereby finds the 'deus in nobis', i.e., when he flees from his concrete existence in time to

94 Existence, p. 67.

his supertemporal essence." ⁹⁵ When revelation is understood in this way, "man remains within himself; and he speculates about the identity of being and consciousness in order again to find himself even when he tries to get beyond himself." ⁹⁶ Apparently Bultmann means to suggest in his criticism of Jaspers' thought that while the latter understands authentic man to be dependent upon God, and the revelation of God to occur from beyond the empirical world, he nevertheless turns inward to man seeking here the continuous presence of God. ⁹⁷ The concept of encounter appears to be the means by which Bultmann seeks to overcome this dilemma.

Burckhardt, Croce, Dilthey, Collingwood, and other historians and philosophers are alike in understanding man as the core of history, its real subject. This is also implied in the definition of history as the field of human actions. History thus understood can never be separated from nature and the natural events. The historical character of peoples is influenced by factors such as climate, availability of water and so on. Natural events

⁹⁵ Existence, pp.67-68.

⁹⁶ Existence, p.68.

⁹⁷ Myth, pp.60,66-67.

might even directly influence the life of an individual. Thus a thunder-clap is said to have driven Luther into a monastery. Such events do not determine human existence but they are relevant for it. Bultmann calls these events encounters (Widerfahrnisse) and distinguishes them from human actions. They are events which occur outside human actions but may call forth these actions.⁹⁸

Human actions are not, according to Bultmann, examples of a kind of passive behaviour. Rather they are a specific kind of action. Croce sees rightly the relativity of every moment and also that every historical phenomenon has a positive meaning. But he does not take into account what Bultmann calls the encounters. For Croce, the essence of man is reason and not will. Thus according to Bultmann, he ignores the decisive action of man. Bultmann maintains that life is lived through decisions and consequently "though the human will is in general not without reason, the will is to be esteemed as the determining factor."⁹⁹ The character of every historical situation is decision and

⁹⁸ H.E., pp.139-140; Bultmann supplies Widerfahrnisse as the German equivalent for encounter. However, when he speaks of the encounter of God in history, he uses Begegnung.

⁹⁹ H.E., p. 142.

by the decision taken, "the yield of the past is gathered in and the meaning of the future is chosen."¹⁰⁰

This understanding of history as the decisive action of man in the face of an encounter is taken by Bultmann into his discussion of man's relation to Transcendence. Man does not know God by coming to an awareness of his presence through reason. Rather, he makes a decision in the face of that which encounters him as an event from outside himself. Thus, when Bultmann criticizes Jaspers for ignoring the encounter and address of God, he is saying that Jaspers ignores the decision made before that which stands outside him and over against him. The meeting of God and man occurs for Bultmann when God encounters man summoning him to decide to receive the gift of his authentic self.¹⁰¹

It is, then, Bultmann's concept of the encounter which allows us to make a distinction between his and Jaspers' thought concerning the "how" of the confrontation of God with man. But this concept also allows us to make a distinction between his and Jaspers' understanding of

100 H.E., p. 141.

101 Mythology, pp.70-71.

the "where" of this confrontation. According to Bultmann, the transcendent God encounters man in the world, in time. He contrasts this with the disclosure of Transcendence in illuminations within the history of the Spirit which he attributes to Jaspers. God encounters me not in some doubtful sphere beyond the world to which I must somehow ascend, but in the midst of the world, in my day-to-day experiences. The Unconditional is met within the conditional, Transcendence within the imminent world. Professor R. Gregor Smith summarizes Bultmann's thought in this way:

In the day-to-day decisions of the responsible person, in every sphere with which he has to do, this absolute meeting may be disclosed. It is not an extra to those day-to-day events, but appears in and through them. It is truer to say that God is met through the world than over and above it. He comes not 'plumb down from above', but is to be glimpsed in every event, in every needy hand upraised, every conflict of will, every utterance of hope or love.¹⁰²

Then faith is not understood as the acknowledgment of some other-worldly sphere, but as the openness for God's unique encounter with us in the day-to-day situations of life. It is openness for God's encounter with us in the world. Any other understanding of God's action in the world is, according to Bultmann, not possible for modern man.

102 R.G. Smith, The New Man, London, 1956, p.91.

Damit kehren wir zu dem Satz zurück, dass für den modernen Menschen der Gedanke eines Gottes oberhalb oder jenseits der Welt entweder unvollziehbar ist oder pervertiert wird in einer Religiosität, die der Welt entfliehen möchte. Nein! Nur der Gottesgedanke, der im Bedingten das Unbedingte, im Diesseitigen das Jenseitige, im Gegenwärtigen das Transzendente finden, suchen und finden kann, als Möglichkeit der Begegnung, ist für den modernen Menschen möglich.

Dann gilt es also, sich jeweils offenzuhalten für die Begegnungen Gottes in der Welt, in der Zeit. Nicht die Anerkennung eines Gottesbildes, mag es noch so richtig sein, ist wirklicher Gottesglaube; vielmehr die Bereitschaft dafür, dass uns das Ewige jeweils in der Gegenwart begegnen will—jeweils in den wechselnden Situationen unseres Lebens.... Die Situationen können ebenso solche der Beglückung wie der Enttäuschung, des Gefordertseins wie des Erleidens sein.... Diese Bereitschaft kann eine fragende; aber sie kann auch eine völlig unbewusste sein. Denn überraschend, wo wir es nicht erwarteten, kann uns Gott begegnen. 103

Bultmann's thought is at times ambiguous when he attempts to relate this understanding of God's encounter with us in the world to his understanding of the particularity of the Christian faith.¹⁰⁴ However, we can be certain that he never intends to separate these day-to-day encounters from the proclamation of the Christian Church. God encounters

103 Bultmann, "Der Gottesgedanke und der moderne Mensch", Zeitschrift für Theologie Und Kirche, 60. Jahrgang 1963 Heft 3, Dezember, 1963, pp.346-47. Generally speaking, passages from sources which have as yet found no translator are left in their original form in this study.

104 See further ch.III/8.

us in the world through nature and history calling us to decision before him. However, the Christian faith believes that man does not have the freedom for this decision, that man is determined by his past by which he has become what he is. This understanding of man's sin along with the understanding of man's historicity gives the Christian faith its peculiarity.¹⁰⁵ Freedom for this decision cannot come from man himself because it is from himself that he must be freed. Thus freedom must come to him as a gift, and the Christian faith believes that it receives this gift in the form of a personal address which imparts to man the grace of God that makes him free.¹⁰⁶

This occurs when faith hears the proclamation of the eschatological event in Jesus Christ as the action by which God has set an end to the old self and made possible the new self. The eschatological event in which we are freed from ourselves and for God's encounter happens within history "beginning with the appearance of Jesus Christ and in continuity with this occurring again and again in history ... It becomes an event repeatedly in preaching and faith."¹⁰⁷

105 H.E., pp. 149-150.

106 H.E., pp. 150-151.

107 H.E., p. 151.

It seems to me that Bultmann intends to bring together in one event the encounter of God within history and the proclamation of God's Word in Jesus Christ as the eschatological event which frees us for God's encounter. Thus he says that "the meaning in history lies always in the present, and when the present is conceived as the eschatological present by Christian faith the meaning in history is realised." ¹⁰⁸ The eschatological character of the moment comes not from our looking to Christ as the center of time from which we interpret history backwards and forwards (Cullmann) but by Christ being understood as "the ever present or ever becoming present eschatological event." ¹⁰⁹

That is to say, that the Now gets eschatological character by the encounter with Christ or with the Word which proclaims him, because in the encounter with Him the world and its history come to an end and the believer becomes free from the world by becoming a new creature.

Christ is the eschatological event not as a figure of the past but as the Christus praesens. And indeed he becomes present in the Word proclaiming Him and in the sacraments.... The paradox of history and eschatology is that the eschatological event has happened within history and happens everywhere in preaching. That means: eschatology in a true Christian understanding of it is not the future end of history, but history is swallowed up by eschatology.¹¹⁰

108 H.E., p. 155.

109 Bultmann, "History And Eschatology In The New Testament", New Testament Studies, vol. I, no.1, September, 1954, p.15.

110 Ibid., pp.15-16.

The proclamation in which the "now" gets its eschatological character is one in which Jesus Christ becomes Lord, setting an end to the old world of the hearer and taking him into the new world. This Word can be heard by me in the sermon, in the spoken words of the Christian or in the silent deeds of the good and holy man who exemplifies Christian love in the world.

Ja, man kann schliesslich auch fragen, ob die Verkündigung immer nur in gesprochenen Wort erfolgen muss, und ob sie nicht auch durch wortloses Tun geschehen kann. Gewiss kann auch die Tat den Charakter der Anrede haben. Nur handelt es sich bei einem Tun, das als christliche Verkündigung wirken kann, nicht um die etwaigen Wirkungen der christlicher Religion in der abendländischen Kultur, sondern um den Erweis christlicher Liebe von Mensch zu Mensch. Steht nicht das Werk Albert Schweitzers als Verkündigung durch die Tat vor uns? Die Tat der Liebe öffnet dem, der sie empfängt, den Weg, von sich frei zu werden, indem er hineingezogen wird in das Reich des Waltens der Liebe und angeleitet wird, auch das von Menschenmund gesprochene Wort der Verkündigung als Gottes Wort zu verstehen. III

The paradox of the Christian faith is that God addresses us in wordly forms and events. This does not mean that God's Word is identified with something tangible, but rather that faith hears within the tangible God's address which can never be identified with it. Bultmann thus attempts to state this paradox without making the error of reducing the

Word of God to an object in the world. The paradox, according to him, can only be understood in the present moment of faith when man knows God to address him. This is, I think, to be contrasted with Jaspers' more Socratic point of view in which the worldly form serves as a means of awakening man to the ever present Truth that he has forgotten amidst the busyness of his day-to-day life. Jaspers' point of departure turns man inevitably inward upon himself.

It is this turning man inward upon himself that gives to Jaspers' thought the character of immanentism which Bultmann has observed. Jaspers replies to Bultmann's criticism saying, "I do not think it is possible to assert transcendence more resolutely than I have done in these works." ¹¹² And if one were to infer from Bultmann's criticism of Jaspers' thought that the latter simply reduces Transcendence to immanence so that no distinction between God and the world is possible, one would have to side with Jaspers. Certainly he is speaking of something more than his subjective experience in finding his authentic self only as a gift from beyond. And it is also true that one of the prime motivations in his thought is the desire to remove Transcendence from all imminent categories.

112 Myth, p.97.

Nevertheless, the distinctiveness of Transcendence is endangered when the approach to it is one primarily of inward awareness, and it is toward this that Bultmann's criticism is really directed. Transcendence is always present; it is the primal source of our being which we may have forgotten, but which we can recover through reflection upon ourselves and the situation in which we find ourselves. God is accessible to man through the orientation toward him that lies in the depths of man, through the nobilitas ingenita. The individual stands in an immediate relation to God that requires no intermediary. The Other of Transcendence becomes clear to me not through the encounter from outside myself, but through my freedom as I transcend the limits of the objective world.

In contrast to this tendency toward immanentism in Jaspers' thought, Bultmann suggests that God stands over against us as the One who challenges us from within history. He can say this only on the basis of his faith which asserts that God's Word can be heard in human words.¹¹³ For Jaspers, God must finally stand at the boundaries of our day-to-day experiences, as that to which we awaken in the subjectivity of our existence.

113 See ch.III/10.

The question of the relation of the transcendent God to man also implies the question concerning the nature of that relationship. Is it abstract and impersonal or is it intimate and personal, analagous to human relationships? Personal, for Jaspers, is a restrictive characteristic of the finite world and thus cannot be descriptive of the relationship between God and man except it be used as an image which is finally negated. Bultmann, however, finds the basis of the relationship between God and man in the personal encounter in which God confronts man judging him, loving him, caring for him and so on. While he does not speak of God so as to make Him a person beside other persons, he does find the relationship between God and man analagous to the relationship between man and man.

According to Jaspers, man breaks the commandment to make no false images of God in speaking of God as a person. Personality is a finite image and should not be mistaken for the reality of God. Images are indispensable to human thought about God and personality is one of those images, but we come closest to God in the negation of all images.¹¹⁴ While Jaspers considers the image necessary to human thought and vision about God, he thinks that they are properly

114 Wisdom, p.46.

understood only when we transcend their objectivity, when the image loses its objectivity and becomes transparent to God. Thus he is critical of prayer when it seeks the hand of the personal God. When prayer degenerates from quiet contemplation to the seeking of the hand of the personal God, God's help is limited to a finite content and God is lost. ¹¹⁵ Prayer is not without its truth, but for the philosopher it must be divested of all pragmatic relations to the godhead. It must break with the concreteness of a personal relationship to the Godhead and move into abstract philosophical contemplation.

at first it (prayer) expresses only devotion and gratitude to God, but later it becomes progressively internalized and man finds in it a firm ground on which to stand. The aim of this contemplation is no longer to achieve practical mundane results, but inward transfiguration. When such speculative spiritualization developed into genuine contemplation, it was like one continuous prayer.¹¹⁶

God remains in the distance, the Unknown One at the limits of our existence. The Biblical injunction, "Thy will be done", means that we must bow down before that which defies our understanding, confident that it stands above that which is understandable to us. "Trust in this basic attitude makes possible an all-encompassing sense of

115 Wisdom, p.72.

116 Scope, pp.82-83.

thankfulness, a wordless, impersonal love."¹¹⁷ Jaspers paraphrases the presence of God at the end of philosophical endeavor in these words:

It is the silence in the face of being. Speech ceases in the presence of that which is lost to us when it becomes object.

This ultimate can be attained only in the transcending of all thought. It cannot itself be transcended. Before it lies contentment with one's lot and the extinction of all desire.

Here is a haven and yet no fixed home. Here is a repose that can sustain us amid the inevitable unrest of our wanderings in the world.

Here thought must dissolve into radiance. Where there is no further question, there is also no answer. In the philosophical transcending of question and answer we arrive at the limit, at the stillness of being.¹¹⁸

Jaspers leads us into a mystery of Transcendence, a beyond which escapes our grasp and yet demands our respect in the awareness of our limits. But while Jaspers admits his roots in the Biblical faith, the mystery with which he leaves us seems more akin to the "inert mystery of an encompassing ignorance" which Professor Hepburn distinguishes from the "active, holy mystery" of the Biblical faith.¹¹⁹ The mysterious and Holy God of the Christian faith stands not only in the distant horizons, but is met by man in personal experience as the One who stands near as a father

117 Wisdom, p.50.

118 Wisdom, p.49.

119 Ronald Hepburn, "A Critique Of Humanist Theology", Objections To Humanism, Ed., H.J. Blackham, London, 1963, pp.32-33.

stands near to his children. This contrast is shown in Bultmann's understanding of God's presence in the world.

God (for Judaism) had retreated far off into the distance as the transcendent heavenly King, and His sway over the present could barely still be made out. For Jesus, God again became a God at hand. He is the power, here and now, who as Lord and Father enfolds every man - limiting and commanding him. This contrast finds expression in the respective forms of address used in prayer. Compare the ornate, emotional, often liturgically beautiful, but often over-loaded forms of address in Jewish prayer with the stark simplicity of "Father"! ... The "Lord's Prayer" stands out above Jewish prayers not only in its single address but in its direct simplicity throughout... God is near; he hears and understands the requests which come thronging to Him, as a father understands the requests of his own child ... 120

God lives in intimate relation to men. He demands good from man, governs the world in his care, and demands the trust and dependence of man. God is at hand as the Father and Lord; He enfolds man limiting him and commanding him. He hears and understands the requests of his children, embraces them in fatherly kindness and forgives them. God meets each man in his individual history, in the day-to-day events with His gift and demand.¹²¹ It is not that man and God stand in a direct person-to-person relationship so that God and man are understood as equal partners each living from and for the other. Rather, the

120 N.T.I., pp.23-24.

121 N.T.I., pp.22-26.

believer lives in relationship to God as the receiver of a gift.¹²²

Bultmann does not single out God as a particular person. It is not that I meet, in the encounter with God, another person like myself. It is rather that I am aware of God's action in the world in relation to my personal existence. God commands me, judges me, redeems me and so on. This personal relationship is constitutive of my religious experience. H.W. Montefiore expresses a similar understanding of the relationship between God and man when he says that we cannot say that God Himself is a person like other human persons. Neither can we say that there is personality in God. Rather, "We must content ourselves with saying that God works in a personal way."¹²³

According to Bultmann, I cannot know God as I know another human person. But when I do know God, I experience Him acting on me here and now in relation to my personal existence. Thus, I conceive God's action as an analogue to the action that takes place between persons. This analogy reflects my experience of God acting on me here and now.

122 N.T.II, p.86.

123 H. Montefiore, "Towards A Christology For Today", Soundings, Ed., A. Vidler, Cambridge, 1962, p.166.

God as acting does not refer to an event which can be perceived by me without myself being drawn into the event as into God's action, without myself taking part in it as being acted upon. In other words, to speak of God as acting involves the events of personal existence.... When we speak of God as acting, we mean that we are confronted with God, addressed, asked, judged, or blessed by God. Therefore, to speak in this manner is not to speak in symbols or images, but to speak analogically. For when we speak in this manner of God as acting, we conceive God's action as an analogue to the actions taking place between men.... It is in this analogical sense that we speak of God's love and care for men, of His demands and of His wrath, of His promise and grace, and it is in this analogical sense that we call Him Father.... Thus, God's love and care, etc., are not images or symbols; these conceptions mean real experiences of God as acting here and now. Especially in the conception of God as Father the mythological sense vanished long ago.... As applied to God the physical import of the term father has disappeared completely; it expresses a purely personal relationship.¹²⁴

Neither Bultmann nor Jaspers identify the transcendent God as a particular person. Nor do Jaspers or Bultmann reject completely the use of personal in relation to God. Jaspers himself acknowledges that the cipher of the personal God is highly effective in one's becoming aware of the presence of God. However, it is not necessary to one's apprehension of God and is only properly understood when it is transcended in philosophical reflection.¹²⁵ But personal, for Bultmann, is constitutive of religious experience and expresses the manner in which man knows God as acting on him.

¹²⁴ Mythology, pp.68-69.

¹²⁵ Offenbarung, p.225; Myth, pp.97-98.

It is true that one can easily slip into the error of speaking of God as a person beside other persons. In such speech God is lost in the world. But it is difficult to see how we can maintain God to be the One who gives me to myself without somehow acknowledging the "person" of my authentic self and consequently the relation of my person to the giver of this personality. It would seem that my personality has its being not in relation to something impersonal but in relation to that which acts toward me in a personal way.

PART TWO

REVELATION AND FAITH

THE NATURE OF REVELATION

Revelation, as it is generally understood, means the disclosure of that which is otherwise hidden. It can refer to new information with which we have not been previously acquainted or to an event in our life in which our situation as a self is altered. Thus, one can speak of a lecture that was a "revelation" or of an occurrence in which one gains a new understanding of oneself. Both Jaspers and Bultmann use the term revelation in the latter sense. Revelation, for them, refers to the disclosure of God in which man's understanding of himself is altered.

This chapter is concerned with the nature of general and special revelation, and the exclusivism of revelation in Jaspers' and Bultmann's thought. The distinction between general and special revelation is one made by Emil Brunner.¹ General revelation refers to the universal revelation of God and special revelation refers to a unique revelation bound to a particular history.

1. Emil Brunner, The Mediator, London, 1956, pp. 21ff.

7. General Revelation

a. Karl Jaspers

Jaspers makes a distinction between liberal and orthodox faith on the basis of their attitudes toward the idea of revelation, and he defines revelation in two ways to coincide with this distinction. On the one hand, revelation means the unique intervention of God in history at a given place and time (Offenbarung), and on the other hand it means the illumination of Truth in the history of the Spirit (Offenbarwerden).² Jaspers associated Offenbarung with the form of orthodoxy that the liberal spirit of a Lessing, a Goethe, or a Kant, attacks. He finds nothing of this liberal spirit in Baltmann, but rather associates him with the orthodox spirit.

According to Jaspers, revelation, in the orthodox sense, means that God manifests himself at a given place and time and only there.³ Thus, God is made to appear as an object in the world. One is supposed not only to revere this object on the basis of tradition but also to possess here the absoluteness of the godhead. "Revelation is the immediate utterance of God, localized in time and valid for all men, through the word, commandment, action,

² Myth., p.41.

³ Myth., p.41.

event." ⁴ In all of its utterances, its canonic writings, its creeds, dogmas and so on, the revelation is conceived as physically present. ⁵

Jaspers rejects this so-called orthodox view of revelation for three basic reasons. Firstly he does not wish to locate Transcendence in an observable object in the world. To identify God with the phenomena of the world is to objectify Him and hence to lose Him as the transcendent One. Religion, as Jaspers understands it, is bound up with a particular community of men, and it always embodies man's practical relation to the transcendent on the basis of something holy in the world which is distinguished from the unholy. Religion embodies its truth in tangible symbols and denounces the god of philosophy as a mere abstraction. But philosophy knows of no separate community, no existent invested with a sacred character and set apart from the world. Philosophy mistrusts the religious images of God and looks upon them as seductive idols. All worldly images of God, when mistaken for His reality, only conceal Him. They are properly understood as mere hints, metaphors of the transcendent God. ⁶ Whatever is said and done in the name of revelation is done in worldly forms and actions.

⁴ Scope, p.83.

⁵ Myth., p.41.

⁶ Scope, pp.78ff; Wisdom, pp.48ff.

Thus, while philosophical faith does not deny that God can act as absolute Transcendence, it does insist "that all it can perceive is the actions, the sayings, and the experiences of human beings." ⁷

Secondly, Jaspers maintains that orthodoxy arrests the Incomprehensible in its ready-made, self-sufficient dogmas, and resists all further development and clarification. The image that Jaspers has in mind, in saying this, is that of the individual or the church which no longer listens and questions, which no longer, in practice at least, admits the incomprehensibility of Transcendence. Over against this, liberal or philosophical faith maintains that we meet the Incomprehensible in our knowledge of the world, in other men and in ourselves. We experience the Incomprehensible as something that is not fundamentally and absolutely incomprehensible, but as something which is striving to be comprehended, which we acknowledge to be capable of endless clarification. Thus, man stands open to himself and the world in a movement of endless comprehension and not in the arrested state of one whose comprehension is full and complete. ⁸

Thirdly, Jaspers rejects orthodoxy's claim to an exclusive revelation. While he admits that absolute Truth

⁷ Myth., p.42.

⁸ Myth., pp.38-39.

is something that is manifested in the immediate experience of the individual, he considers this experience falsified when it is made into a universal claim to truth for every man. "The absolute is not universal, but is historical in the impenetrable, self-illuminated dynamism of the present act." ⁹ The consequence of all attempts to turn this individual experience of Truth into a truth valid for all, is self-deception, intolerance, and the incapacity for communication with others. The claim to exclusive truth gives freedom to such impulses as the will to power, cruelty, and the impulse to destroy. And these impulses are justified on the basis of the truth that man claims to possess. Contrary to this, liberal faith rejects all forms of exclusivism and recognizes various avenues to God. "It recognizes that the way to God is possible also without Christ, and that the Asians can find it without the Bible." ¹⁰ Jaspers does not mean that one must make a synthesis of all religions in the manner of the enlightenment. But he does mean that one should concentrate on the pre ma of revelation, the becoming of God as the absolute for me in my particular historical experience. On this basis, one can make claims to Truth only in himself and cannot create from this a universally valid truth. ¹¹

⁹ Scope, p.89.

¹⁰ Myth., p.46.

¹¹ Scope, pp.110-111.

At this point and before we go on to indicate what Jaspers means by Offenbarwerden, we should, perhaps, emphasize that Jaspers' treatment of Offenbarung reflects his own understanding of what the Church means by revelation. There is obviously some truth in what he says. The Church, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, is often guilty of identifying revelation with a particular worldly form and has at times given way to acts of violence in the name of an exclusive truth. However, many theologians of this century can agree with much that Jaspers says at this point, without feeling that this necessitates their rejection of the definitive character of the Christian revelation, Bultmann being prominent among them.

Jaspers leaves us in no doubt as to his opinion of the idea of revelation, as it is conceived in the so-called orthodox sense. However, he maintains that we can still speak meaningfully of revelation, though in a different sense. Revelation for Jaspers means Offenbarwerden, a concept that he considers to have reached its deepest understanding in the thought of Kierkegaard.¹²

Diese Offenbarung wird in der Liberalität nicht geglaubt. Wohl ist ihr gegenwärtig das Geheimnis des Offenbarwerdens des Wahren in Sprüngen der Geschichte des Geistes, die Unbegreiflichkeit, wie Menschen dazu kamen, ist gegenwärtig als der tiefe Grund des noch Unverstandenen in allem Offenbargewordenen.

¹² Wahrheit, pp. 540-41.

Aber die Gewohnheit, das gleiche Wort Offenbarung für jenes unverrückbare absolute Handeln Gottes und für dieses Offenbarwerden von Wahrheit zu gebrauchen, darf nicht über den radikalen Unterschied beider hinwegtäuschen. 13

The Offenbarwerden of Truth occurs in the inner act of man in which man becomes aware of the possibilities of his true being and his relation to Transcendence. This existentielle Offenbarwerden is distinguished from all empirical forms of understanding in that it cannot be grounded in any objective knowledge. It does not refer to something which is manifested in a community, but only to the individual act in which one becomes aware of one's potential selfhood. Here, one stumbles upon the mystery that in the act of self-creation, the self is received as a gift from beyond. When man makes himself, so to speak, he becomes certain of Transcendence. Thus, for Kierkegaard, Offenbarwerden was both an inner act and an understanding of Eternity. 14

In Jaspers' understanding of "revelation", the transcendent Reality reveals itself not in some object in the world, but in the inner consciousness of man. The unconcealment (Unverborgenheit) of Truth occurs in the moment of individual existence, when man confronts

13 Kerygma Und Mythos, III, p. 36; the English translation of this passage (Myth., p. 41) does not make Jaspers' meaning as clear as the German.

14 Wahrheit, pp. 541-42.

simultaneously his authentic self and the transcendent Other. While this understanding of revelation or illumination has certain mystical characteristics, Jaspers does not think it identical with the mysticism in which one flees from the finite world and communication with others. Rather, he maintains, the inner act, in which one catches a glimpse of Eternity, comes through the world and communication with others.

Offenbarwerden is tied up with reflection. It is in reflecting upon the world and himself in the world that man awakens to the presence of Transcendence. The world and everything in it is a mystery, and philosophy seeks to illuminate that mystery and bring it into consciousness. The symbol catches this mystery for us. Otherwise it would be lost in the void while we sought to gain ourselves in the definite knowledge of the finite world. In transcending the limits of the objective structure of the symbol, we are turned inward upon ourselves. The objective structure is suspended and becomes transparent to Transcendence in our inner experience of freedom and authentic selfhood.¹⁵

Revelation in this sense does not refer to something that can be definitely known, but to that which can be perceived only indirectly through the world. Thus, it

¹⁵ Truth, pp. 37ff.; see ch. V/15.

cannot refer to something that happened once and for all in some period of time. The Being of Transcendence must be at any time or place newly and freely grasped.¹⁶ In my individual historicity, I experience the presence of Being as that which I have always known, but which can never be bound to a worldly form.¹⁷

Then, the idea of Offenbarwerden does not imply for Jaspers a flight from the rational world. Rather, man ascends through the world to the presence of Transcendence. He moves within the horizons of thought, questioning and seeking in communication with others, coming to rest in no stable knowledge of the world. Man researches in the sciences, seeking to raise his experience into consciousness, to transform it into knowledge. He questions his being and potentialities in the light of the words and maxims of history which he encounters. He seeks fundamental knowledge, the ordering of his knowing consciousness.¹⁸ But this world in which man lives and works is not self-explanatory. At the limits of the knowledge of objects, and the self who is the subject of knowledge, man comes up against a boundary, the limit of human understanding and here he founders.

¹⁶ Wahrholt, p. 788.

¹⁷ Truth, p. 65.

¹⁸ Truth, pp. 70-71.

At this limit, the manifestation of transcendent Being is possible. In the acknowledgement of his freedom from the objective world and hence his possibilities beyond it, the individual stands open to Transcendence, the source of his potentiality. The world through which he has plunged is read as a cipher, the secret script of the transcendent Reality. Transcendence is unveiled, not in the secure categories of the world, but in the inner experience in which man becomes himself.

Offenbarwerden is immediate, it requires no intermediary being. God is accessible to man not through some external authority, but through the orientation toward God that lies at the source of human existence. The individual is referred not to another, but to himself. This truth Jaspers finds embodied in the Christian religion. According to him, the spirit of Christ belongs to each individual. "It is the pneuma, i.e. the spirit of an enthusiasm surging upward to the suprasensory. It is also the openness to one's own suffering as a road to transcendence; he who has taken the cross upon himself can ascertain the authentic in failure."¹⁹ According to Jaspers, this "Christ in me" and the God-given nobilitas ingenita mean the same thing, the actuality of the Divine in man which man either follows

¹⁹ Scope, p.103.

or betrays. That is, it is not simply a natural possession but must be realized in every situation.²⁰

However, this does not mean for Jaspers that I must apprehend the redeeming Christ outside me by realizing the spirit of Christ in me. There is no exclusive bond of the "Christ in me" with the historical Jesus. Jesus as the God-man is a myth and one cannot arbitrarily limit one's demythologization at this point.²¹ Rather, man stands in an immediate and independent relation to God in his freedom. In his own historicity, he is capable of a relation to God that requires no intermediary.²²

While Bultmann's concept of revelation means the coming up against God who encounters me and calls me to choose my true self, Jaspers' concept of revelation means the recapturing of my authentic selfhood at the end of philosophical reflection. It is the awakening to the presence of Truth, which, if hidden, is always present for the man who frees himself from bondage to the world. Revelation is more like the switching on of a light in a room that I have forgotten than the encounter with a Divine Thou who stands over against me demanding a decision from me. Offenberwerden is not graceless, that is, it is not something that I create out of myself. But this grace is one which is continuous with my being.

²⁰ Myth., pp. 50-51.

²¹ Scope, pp. 103-104.

²² Wisdom, p. 47.

b. Rudolf Bultmann

Karl Borth's rejection of the tendency in the nineteenth century to replace the revelation of God with human discovery stands in the background of much contemporary theological thought. Nevertheless, his assertion of God's transcendence and His revelation in Jesus Christ is, in the eyes of many who owe much to him, so radical that he does not treat adequately the Biblical understanding of revelation in nature and history. Thus Emil Brunner writes:

Borth turns the true statement, "Only through the historical revelation of the Old and the New Covenant is sinful man able to recognize the original revelation of Creation, which is concealed from him by his sin", into the erroneous statement, "There is only one revelation: the historical one in Christ." Similarly, he turns the correct statement, "Only through the historical revelation in Christ can man perceive his sin," into the false statement, "Only in the light of the revelation in Christ - namely, in the rejection of the same - does man become a sinner." But the Bible says: Man is a culpable sinner because he rejects the revelation in the Creation which God gives him... Of himself he can no more perceive this sin than, as a result of sin, he can truly know the revelation in the Creation. It is only through the historical revelation that man comes to perceive both the revelation in the Creation and his sin, which, for this reason, is without excuse. 23

23 Emil Brunner, Reason And Revelation, London, 1947, pp.79-80.

It is in view of this criticism of Barth's thought that we can begin to grasp Bultmann's understanding of the revelation of God. Bultmann agrees with Barth in the latter's emphasis upon the distinction between God and man, which makes God unknowable apart from His revelation of Himself. But he is not so radical as Barth in denying all revelation outside the Christian faith. There is, according to Bultmann, a general or natural revelation of God in nature, history, and conscience which makes possible an indirect or negative knowledge of God.

Bultmann's thought is very similar to that of Martin Luther at this point. Firstly, like Luther, he rejects natural theology in its classical sense, that is, he rejects the idea that a definite knowledge of God is possible on the basis of rational inference from the natural order. Bultmann rejects natural theology not only because of the philosophical criticism of it, but primarily because it ignores the fact that the one and only approach to God is through faith. If one accepts the knowledge of God set forth in natural theology, God's transcendence is forgotten and God is known in the manner of the world. As in the Stoic tradition, God is understood as the immanent energy by which the natural world is sustained and as the world-reason which manifests itself in the order and beauty of

the world. However, when one understands God in faith as that which transcends the natural order, the only real knowledge of God comes at God's initiative, in His revelation of Himself.²⁴ Similarly, Bultmann rejects the form of natural theology in which a knowledge of God is maintained on the basis of a religious a priori. Here the "infinite qualitative difference" between God and man is diminished and revelation and faith are reduced to the proceedings of the Spirit and the consciousness.²⁵

Secondly, like Luther, Bultmann acknowledges a general revelation of God and hence a general knowledge of God. According to Luther, there is a two-fold knowledge of God, one general and available to all men and one particular and available only to those who participate in faith in Jesus Christ. This general knowledge is not based upon man's discovery of God in the world, but upon God's revelation in creation. God is apprehended in and through creation and not from behind it on the basis of man's rational inference. God encounters man in the natural order, the same God who meets him in Christ. However, man does not rightly recognize God in His general revelation, but closes himself off from Him, and seeks

²⁴ G.V.I., p. 294.

²⁵ G.V.I., pp. 295ff.

security in himself and the world in which he lives. Man perverts God's general revelation in his sinfulness. Thus the general knowledge of God, perverted by sin, becomes a form of idolatry and man loses himself in his own imagination and opinion.²⁶

If all men knew God, wherefore doth Paul say, that the Galatians knew not God before the preaching of the Gospel? I answer, there is a double knowledge of God, general and particular. All men have the general knowledge, namely, that there is a God, that He created heaven and earth, that He is just, that He punisheth the wicked. But what God thinketh of us, what His will is toward us, what He will give or what He will do to the end we may be delivered from sin and death, and be saved (which is the true knowledge of God indeed), this they know not. As it may be that I know some man by sight, whom indeed I know not thoroughly, because I understand not what affection he beareth towards me.... For (Luther proceeds to assert) upon this proposition which all men do naturally hold, namely, that there is a God, hath sprung all idolatry, which without the knowledge of the Divinity, could never have come into the world. But because men had this natural knowledge of God, they conceived vain and wicked imaginations of God... and so dreamed that God is such a one, as by nature He is not. So the monk imagineth Him to be such a God as forgiveth sins, giveth grace and everlasting life for the keeping of his rule. This God is nowhere to be found. Therefore he serveth not the true God, but that which by nature is no God; to wit, the imagination and idol of his own heart... 27

²⁶ Philip Watson, Let God Be God, London, 1947, pp.73ff.

²⁷ Quoted by Watson, Ibid., pp.73-74.

The similarity between Luther's and Bultmann's thought becomes apparent when we begin to develop Bultmann's understanding of the general revelation of God available to all men which is not dependent upon the particular revelation in Jesus Christ. God's revelation in creation makes it possible for all men to have a concept of God, although, from the viewpoint of the Christian faith, this is distinguished from the "acquaintance" with God in faith.²⁸ Bultmann refers to this knowledge, based on God's revelation in creation, as man's knowledge of his own limitations and insignificance or as a knowledge of God in advance of the revelation in Jesus Christ.²⁹

Bultmann's allusions to the general revelation of God are frequent, but they are always made from within the perspective of the Christian faith. That is, he does not step outside of faith and observe it from a distance, so to speak. He can speak of general revelation only in so far as he sees it from within the revelation in Christ. Thus, Bultmann maintains that there is given a knowledge of God in man's understanding of himself and his limitations. If man kept this knowledge thoroughly open, "creation would speak as God's Word for him."³⁰ But the Christian faith

²⁸ Essays, pp.91, 94.

²⁹ Essays, pp.94, 114; Mythology, p.52.

³⁰ Essays, p.114.

says that man does not keep this knowledge open, that he twists this negative knowledge into a positive knowledge and creation becomes mute for him.³¹ Bultmann puts this clearly when he writes:

For the revelation in Christ is not the first. Man could already have known God earlier. From the beginning, the "word" was the "light" of men (John 1:4)... Naturally, this light, this knowledge about God is not a cosmological or theological theory, but rather is an understanding of oneself through acknowledging the Creator. But the world has displaced this knowledge by the knowledge of what it itself does and has.... In a similar way, Paul teaches (in Stoic terminology) that man should have recognized the world as creation and honored God as God, although, in fact, he has done exactly the opposite.

Thus there is a "natural revelation", or, at least, there was one. But it is not something that simply lies before one's eyes, nor is the knowledge of it a knowledge of the world, a theistic view of God. Rather it is a knowledge by man of himself, an understanding of himself as a creature and thus an honoring of God. This possibility has especially been given to the Jew through the law, in which he daily encounters God's claim and by which he is daily led to see that he does not exist by and for himself, but that his being is limited by the claim under which he stands.

But man misunderstands himself and puts himself in the place of God. And every man comes out of a history that is governed by this misunderstanding.... There is another possibility only if it is given to him to come into his present from somewhere other than a lie and from sin. And that this possibility is given is what is proclaimed in the message of Christ.³²

³¹ Essays, pp.114-115; See ch.I/2, II/5.

³² Existence, pp.82-83.

This awareness of both the general revelation of God and the sinfulness of man makes possible both the contact and the conflict between the Christian faith and other claims to faith. Bultmann is not satisfied with a simple dismissal of natural theology, although he looks upon all expressions of faith outside the Christian faith as unbelief. According to Bultmann, the fact that one understands the Christian proclamation suggests some prior knowledge of God. The man of faith looks back to an old self and knows that he has already rejected God's revelation, that he was given an opportunity for a relationship with God, but chose to find his security in the world. It is the Christian proclamation which frees him from this past.³³ Bultmann also acknowledges that man speaks of belief in God outside the Christian faith. And while Bultmann considers this to be unbelief from the viewpoint of faith, he nevertheless recognizes here a knowledge of the self which is dependent upon God's revelation.³⁴ Finally, Bultmann observes a relationship between the theological and philosophical understanding of man. Philosophy and theology talk about the same man, but theology sees man through the eyes of faith. Thus faith and unbelief are not simply talking about two different creatures, but of one,

³³ G.V.I., pp. 295-96.

³⁴ G.V.I., pp. 300-301.

whom faith considers to be not the natural man but the converted sinner.³⁵

Then the Christian faith has contact with all claims to truth on the basis of man's understanding of his existence in relation to God. Because faith looks upon other claims to truth as unbelief, it acknowledges that God is already revealing Himself to man. All men have an advance relationship to God in what Augustine has called the restless heart. "Man's life is moved by the search for God because it is always moved, consciously or unconsciously, by the question about his own personal existence. The question of God and the question of myself are identical."³⁶ These questions are identical not because theology is identical with philosophy and psychology, but because man's understanding of himself is dependent upon his relation to God. This relation to God is dependent not upon some hidden or revealed deus in nobis, but upon God's initiative in revealing Himself to man in creation.

However, the Christian faith conflicts with all other claims to truth when it refers to them as unbelief. It acknowledges the possibility of a general knowledge of God, but maintains that because of man's sin this possibility is closed off and God's Word in creation becomes mute.

³⁵ G.V.I., pp.305ff.

³⁶ Mythology, p.53.

If man would remain in open inquiry and expectation, God's Word would address him. But, in fact, man rebels against this openness to the future of God and, in attempting to construct his own image of God, loses Him. God reveals Himself always and everywhere but, because of man's sin, man does not have the freedom to remain open to this revelation. This freedom, according to Bultmann, comes only in faith's response to the proclamation of God's Word of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

The Christian faith, in accepting God's general revelation of Himself, does not mean to suggest that the believer can return to a stage of inquiry and thus find God's revelation. Faith recognizes that this inquiry is completed by man in an answer which represents unbelief to Christianity. But faith does, says Bultmann, acknowledge the possibility of man's knowledge of God apart from Christ and consequently man's responsibility for unbelief. The revelation of God in nature and history reveals our limitations and teaches us that we do not possess the revelation. It directs us into the attitude of the man who knows that he can only receive. Thus it constantly refers us to the revelation of God in Christ. Only in this way is it revelation for us, "and that means that, apart from Christ, it is not revelation for us. But when we do start from Christ, the whole of the world in nature and history can receive the illumination of revelation." ³⁷

³⁷ Essays, p.118.

8. Special Revelation

a. Karl Jaspers

Special revelation refers to the unique occurrence of revelation in history and the sense in which the Christian faith maintains a vital connection with this event. According to Jaspers, special revelation results in the dogmatic claim that God has assumed an objective form in history. What is only a cipher of Being becomes an objectification of Being, and a truth for a particular history is made into a truth valid for all people.

Jaspers agrees that Transcendence is revealed to man in his particular historical tradition, but he apparently sees no necessary connection between the particular historical facts of that tradition and the transcendent Truth. According to Jaspers, revelation occurs when the world of objects becomes a cipher of the transcendent Reality, but since objectivity is suspended in this experience, there is no necessary connection between the object and the revelatory moment. All the world is a potential cipher of Transcendence and this includes the so-called revelation in Christ when it is removed from its exclusive claims. But the worldly reality can never be spoken of in such a way as to be said to contain Transcendence.³⁸

³⁸ Truth, p.76.

Thus Jaspers admits that God addresses man in the cipher of the God-man. He acknowledges the validity of speculations on this cipher, especially that undertaken by Nicolaus Cusanus. But he distinguishes this appreciation of the Christian tradition from the religious faith in revelation (Offenbarungsglaube) which, according to him, does not refer to Jesus as a cipher, but as the Reality (Wirklichkeit) of God which is and was present in space and time as the worldly reality (Realität).³⁹ Once the revelation has been spoken, says Jaspers, once it assumes a mundane form, it deteriorates into finiteness and even trivial rationality and its meaning is perverted. Philosophical faith "repudiates an objective redemptive history conceived as an absolute event and as a prerequisite of salvation for all men", but "it accepts this history as a myth."⁴⁰

As in the case of other myths, the validity of this one must be tested existentially, and judged on the basis of the strength that emanates from its language, the truth that arises from it in the reality of life. Liberalism recognizes faith in revelation, including belief in the truth of the redemptive history as a possible truth valid for him who believes it - in so far as the believer does not, by his deeds or his words, draw consequences destructive to the freedom of men who find themselves directly before God, nor attempt to coerce others by violent means. 41

³⁹ Offenbarung, pp.251-254.

⁴⁰ Myth., p.47.

⁴¹ Myth., p.47.

Jaspers' attitude toward the Einmaligkeit of the Christian revelation is illuminated in his study of the life of Jesus in The Great Philosophers. In this study his aim is to bring the reader into relationship with the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth. The ultimate purpose of such a venture is that we might become ourselves by contemplating that which is eternal.⁴² Thus, while Jaspers' purpose takes us beyond a mere presentation of the facts of Jesus' life, it is nevertheless with the life of Jesus that our quest has its beginning. He has elsewhere explained the philosopher's attitude toward Jesus in saying:

The philosopher, as opposed to the critical-historical skeptic, regards Jesus as a historical figure, and sees in Jesus' faith the same calm determination which the philosopher seeks, and the same uncertainty with respect to God's will, which the philosopher experiences. To him, Jesus, a man, represents questioning of God, obedience to God, search for God - i.e., to know God's intentions - a search he carries on although he is already secure in God. To him Jesus represents the overcoming of all human rigidities and presumptions, a breakthrough to truthfulness and love that knew no bounds, one of the great men who have been crucial in determining the course of philosophy. But nowhere is the direct word of God to be found. This conception of Jesus is that of the synoptics (prior to the later editions); it is not that of the Gospel according to St. John. ⁴³

Jaspers' study of the life of Jesus, which appears to be untouched by recent New Testament scholarship, sets out

⁴² Jaspers, The Great Philosophers, New York, 1962, pp.vii-xix, 74.

⁴³ Myth., p.82.

to arrive at a portrait of Jesus which he considers to be "clearly discernible through the veil of tradition."⁴⁴

The philosopher in producing such studies seeks inspiration from the experience of Jesus and other such figures. In communication with them, man might become aware of himself and his potential Existenz. Thus, Jaspers says this of the lives of Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus:

For philosophy they are men. As men they must have their particular traits of character, their limitations; because they are historical, they cannot have universal validity for all. There are four of them; no one can be taken exclusively and alone. Where one of them is absolutized as the one and only truth, it means that believers have divested his image of all natural humanity.... Our philosophical attitude toward them is this: We are moved by what they have in common, because we stand with them in the situation of being men. None of them can be indifferent to us. Each one is a question addressed to us that leaves us no peace.⁴⁵

For Jaspers the lives of such men are "beacons by which to gain an orientation."⁴⁶ As he has said elsewhere, philosophical faith "looks on all formulated and written philosophy only as preparation or recollection, only as inspiration or confirmation."⁴⁷ The only other possibility that Jaspers sees is one in which the particular history or tradition is made exclusive. That is, either

⁴⁴ Jaspers, The Great Philosophers, p.74.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.105.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.105.

⁴⁷ Scope, p.15.

one looks upon history as an inspiration or stimulus, or one absolutizes a particular history and thus reduces Transcendence to the level of worldly knowledge.

b. Rudolf Bultmann

Special revelation is characteristic of the New Testament faith in that faith is said to have an indissoluble relationship with the historische event, Jesus of Nazareth, which it looks upon as the eschatological act of God. Such a relationship means for Jaspers that revelation is identified with an objective event. However, Bultmann maintains not that the historische event is identical with revelation, but that God's revelation takes place within it. Revelation, for Bultmann, is not simply the communication of objective knowledge. It is an occurrence in the life of man in which he responds to the event of Jesus who died and was raised for him.⁴⁸ In this occurrence, man comes to a new understanding of himself; "everything has been revealed, insofar as man's eyes are opened concerning his own existence and he is once again able to understand himself."⁴⁹ According to Bultmann, it is this that Martin Luther meant in saying: "Thus, in

⁴⁸ Existence, pp.74-75.

⁴⁹ Existence, p.85.

"going out of himself, God brings it about that we go into ourselves; and through knowledge of him, he brings us to a knowledge of ourselves." ⁵⁰ In the same context, he refers to Karl Barth's saying, "To hear God's word does not mean to wander in the remote realms of metaphysics, but rather at long last to come to oneself, to learn to see oneself, to be revealed to oneself as one really is." ⁵¹

Bultmann's exposition of the Christian faith brings together two factors which he considers to be inseparable. First, there is the present encounter with God in which my understanding of myself in relation to God is altered. It is here that we see Bultmann's relation to Kierkegaard and consequently to Jaspers. This only takes place as an event in my life in the present and can never be identified with any objective content. But secondly, this present encounter is, for Bultmann, bound up in an indissoluble way to the past event in which Jesus of Nazareth is understood as the eschatological event in faith. If Jaspers does not always see clearly the first aspect of revelation in Bultmann's thought, Thieliicke and others do not see the second. For Bultmann, the present and the past come together as one in faith's response to the proclamation of the Christian Church. ⁵²

⁵⁰ Existence, pp. 85-86.

⁵¹ Existence, p. 301, n. 11.

⁵² Kerygma Und Mythos, VI/1, p. 26.

Bultmann is well aware of the limitations of the understanding of revelation in which God becomes an object in the world. It is this which gives the impetus to his program of demythologizing. The mythological element of Christianity, which objectifies revelation, is interpreted by Bultmann so that the essential meaning of the myth as a possibility of human existence is laid bare. But Bultmann is also aware of the limitations of nineteenth century theology, which tended to forget the historical roots of revelation. The kerygma proclaims Jesus Christ as the ever present Word of God, which sets an end to our old world and brings in the new. However, "The Now of the kerygma (2 Cor.6:2) is not purely fortuitous, but identical with the advent of Jesus and his passion."⁵³ It is not that the facts of the past are recalled in their worldly actuality, or that one encounters human existence and its interpretation in the past. Rather, in the recollection of the kerygma, the events of the past are re-presented in such a way that they are renewed as an encounter which demands a decision from me.⁵⁴

Bultmann's attempt to bring together the personal encounter of God with man in the moment and the particular history of Jesus of Nazareth has been met by many objections.

⁵³ K.M., p.115.

⁵⁴ K.M., p.115.

Some of these objections can be explained away as examples of misunderstanding, but others often suggest problem areas for Bultmann's thought as well as the thought of his contemporaries. These objections or criticisms run the gamut from one extreme to the other. Thus, while Thieliicke accuses Bultmann of reducing revelation to self-consciousness, Jaspers accuses him of objectifying it.⁵⁵ These criticisms also raise a number of weighty problems, such as those connected with the quest for the historical Jesus, which can receive only passing attention in this study. While a close analysis of these criticisms would serve no real purpose here, brief mention of some of the more characteristic ones will help us to clarify our own immediate concern with Bultmann's understanding of special revelation.

The greater part of the objections to Bultmann's thought has avoided the extremes indicated in the remarks of Thieliicke and Jaspers, and has tended rather to suggest that Bultmann treats inadequately the meaning of the past event for the present encounter. Julius Schniewind, for instance, rejects the criticism of Thieliicke and maintains that Bultmann has never denied a relationship between the "now" of the revelatory moment and the event which occurred in the Palestinian world in the first century. Nevertheless, he does think that past history is treated inadequately by

⁵⁵ K.M., pp.76, 148, 154; Myth., pp.76ff.

Bultmann.⁵⁶ H.P. Owen makes a similar criticism in declaring that the distinction between Historie and Geschichte cannot be maintained, and Giovanni Miegge says that the Jesus of history is dissolved "almost without remainder into the Christ of faith", that Jesus' significance is found by Bultmann not in the was but only in the dass of his life.⁵⁷ Ian Henderson speaks of the "subordinate role" of the Jesus of history, and John Macquarrie maintains that Bultmann speaks at times as if historical factuality were quite irrelevant, that he sets up a Christ of faith whose relation to the Jesus of history is at least exceedingly tenuous.⁵⁸ Schubert Ogden, on the other hand, attributes such objections to a misunderstanding of Bultmann's thought and suggests that Bultmann has always maintained the continuity between the Jesus of history and the crucified Christ of the kerygma.⁵⁹

There are, it would seem, two basic questions raised in these remarks on Bultmann's thought. First, what is the relationship between the historische Jesus and the kerygma which proclaims him as the Christ, as God's eschatological act? Second, what is the relationship between the

⁵⁶ K.M., pp.79ff.

⁵⁷ H.P. Owen, Revelation And Existence, pp.112-115; Giovanni Miegge, Gospel And Myth, London, 1960, pp.126ff.

⁵⁸ Ian Henderson, Myth In The New Testament, London, 1960, p.49; S.D., p.91.

⁵⁹ C.W.M., p.81.

Einmaligkeit of the event of revelation and the present event of revelation for me?

With regard to the first question, it seems certain that Bultmann does maintain continuity between the Jesus of history and the proclamation of the early Christian Church. It is certainly true that Bultmann thinks that he maintains this continuity. According to him, the kerygma presupposes the historical Jesus. Without Jesus there would be no kerygma.⁶⁰ The Word of God, which addresses us in the kerygma, is not something invented by the human spirit, but rises up in history. It has its origin in the particular event of Jesus Christ. In this sense Jesus becomes "evidence of the Word of God."⁶¹

At the very beginning of New Testament Theology, Bultmann writes:

Thus, theological thinking - the theology of the New Testament - begins with the kerygma of the earliest Church and not before. But the fact that Jesus had appeared and the message which he had proclaimed were, of course, among its historical presuppositions; and for this reason Jesus' message cannot be omitted from the delineation of New Testament theology.⁶²

The kerygma maintains that God made the historical Jesus into the Christ^{or} rather than a historische event, Jesus, is

⁶⁰ Bultmann, Das Verhältnis der unchristlichen Christushot-
schaft zum historischen Jesus, Heidelberg, 1962, p.8;
Referred to henceforth as: Heidelberg Academy Lecture.

⁶¹ Myth., p.70; H.E., p.151.

⁶² N.T.I., p.3.

the eschatological event. Thus the kerygma is dependent upon the historical Jesus.⁶³

There seems little reason to question whether or not Bultmann has maintained some continuity between the historical Jesus and the early Christian kerygma. Here, one can agree with Schubert Ogden. However, it is not at all clear that persons such as Professors Henderson and Macquarrie really question this continuity. The continuity that Bultmann maintains between Jesus and the kerygma is based on the dass of Jesus. That Jesus lived and died is, according to Bultmann, the only thing important in the preaching of Paul and John. There are no speculations about the was of Jesus. It is, it would appear, this apparent indifference to a what of Jesus' life that Macquarrie questions.⁶⁴ And it is this problem which is engaging the talents of many of Germany's leading New Testament theologians today.

The second question asks about the relationship between the Einmaligkeit of the Christian revelation and the present event of faith. This question can be rephrased to ask, what is the relationship between Historie and Geschichte? How is the historische event of Jesus related not only to the early Christian kerygma, but to my present

⁶³ Heidelberg Academy Lecture, p.8.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp.8ff; E.T., pp.22ff.

geschichtliche encounter with the Christ of faith?

It must be made clear in answering this question that Bultmann does not ignore the objective basis of the present encounter. Existential interpretation is based upon certain events in time which are available to the eyes of objective historical research. Without this basis, it would result in a picture of fantasy.⁶⁵ Thus Bultmann does not reject all attempts to portray the historical Jesus. While he claims that the Synoptic Gospels do not suffice as sources for a reconstruction of Jesus' life, that they tell us nothing of his inner being, they do, he says, let us know enough of Jesus' work to make certain traits of his life visible. According to Bultmann, one might, with caution, suggest that Jesus was an exorcist, that he broke with the sabbath law, that he had fellowship with outcasts, that he was not an ascetic like John, that he proclaimed the eschatological message of the immanent rule of God and so on.⁶⁶

However, according to Bultmann, this form of knowledge does not have much to do with the present encounter with the Christ of the kerygma. Historische research is relevant only in so far as it is able to confirm and illustrate with

⁶⁵ Kerygma Und Mythos, VI, 1, p.23.

⁶⁶ Heidelberg Academy Lecture, pp.11ff.; K.M., p.117.

some probability the dass of the kerygma, that is, in so far as it acts against any scepticism of the historicity of Jesus. This kind of research can never prove the legitimacy of the kerygma.⁶⁷ The geschichtliche encounter with the Christ of the kerygma is not an encounter with the objective picture of Jesus, but with the Christ proclaimed as God's Word which places us into a new situation before Him.

Then, has Bultmann destroyed all real continuity between the present encounter and the past event? Does he maintain that Eternity crosses time in any moment of encounter in such a way as to make the Einmaligkeit of the Christian faith unnecessary? Certainly, he does not intend to do this. Indeed, it is Bultmann's attempt to maintain the unity of the past and present, which lies in the background of many of Jaspers' criticisms. How then does he maintain this unity?

Hermann Diem tells us that Reformation theology found the unity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith in faith's decision before the proclamation of the Church. In the kerygma of the Church, Christ becomes the eschatological event for the believer. It is, I think, in a similar manner that Bultmann would maintain this

⁶⁷ Heidelberg Academy Lecture, pp.13-14.

continuity. The kerygma, which presupposes the dass of the historical Jesus, takes the place of Jesus for us and re-presents his coming as the present eschatological event for us. The kerygma transforms the "once" of the historical Jesus into the "once-for-all" and announces the decisive eschatological event as an event for us in the present.⁶⁸

In the kerygma the historische event is proclaimed as the eschatological event. Jesus is proclaimed as Lord and, in faith, an end is set to the old self and the new self is received as a gift. And since it is the Church through the kerygma that makes possible the repetition of this event, faith in Christ is at the same time faith in the Church as the bearer of the kerygma.

If this then is the state of affairs, that the kerygma proclaims Jesus as the Christ, as the eschatological event, if the kerygma claims that in him Christ is present, then it has taken the place of the historical Jesus: it represents him. In that case there is no faith in Christ which is not at the same time faith in the church as the bearer of the kerygma, i.e. in dogmatic terminology, faith in the Holy Spirit. But faith in the church is at the same time faith in Jesus Christ, a faith which was not demanded by the historical Jesus.... It is often said, and mostly in a critical sense, that on my interpretation of the kerygma Jesus has risen again into the kerygma. I accept this way of putting it. It is perfectly correct, so long as it is correctly understood. It presupposes that the kerygma itself is an eschatological event. And it says

⁶⁸ Hermann Diem, "The Earthly Jesus and the Christ of Faith", Kerygma And History, Eds., C. Braaten and R. Harrisville, Nashville, 1962, p.198; Heidelberg Academy Lecture, p.25.

that Jesus is really present in the kerygma, that it is his word which meets the hearer in the kerygma. 69

The continuity between the historical Jesus and the present encounter with the Christ of faith is maintained in a dialectical relationship. The kerygma announces that the historische event has become the eschatological event. However, two things must be observed. First, the proclamation itself is only an historische event for objective observation. Second, this event is the eschatological event only in the moment when an end is set to my old world and the new ushered in. Jesus becomes present as the Christ in the proclamation of the Church, when God's Word addresses me here, when I, living in the midst of the world, am freed from bondage to it.

If my present encounter with the Word of God is separated from Historie, revelation loses its ground in history and man is thought to be saved by the "metaphysical element alone."⁷⁰ The end result of this is a form of mysticism or other-worldliness. But if my present knowledge of God is thought of only in relation to Historie, God's

69 Heidelberg Academy Lecture, pp. 26-27. From a translation made by R.C. Smith for the use of his students.

70 Refers to a sentence attributed to Fichte: "Man is saved by the metaphysical element alone, and not by the historical." See Emil Brunner, The Mediator, p.29. by the metaphysical element alone, and not by the historical." See Emil Brunner, The Mediator, p.29.

transcendence becomes lost in worldly knowledge. Both the metaphysical and the historical aspects of revelation are maintained only when one leaps, so to speak, from Historie into Geschichte and finds that the geschichtliche encounter with God has its basis in God's act from within Historie. The Christian faith maintains that this has occurred in the event of Jesus as the Christ and occurs again and again in the preaching of the Church.

9. The Exclusivism of Revelation

a. Karl Jaspers

Much of Jaspers' attack on religion has been directed against what he calls the exclusivism of revelation. According to him, the Christian does not say this is my way, but this is the way of revelation for all men. In quoting Jesus' saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life", the Christian turns what is absolute for him into a universal and exclusive truth.⁷¹

Exclusive truth refers to that which is universally valid. It differs from absolute Truth which is historical, that is, present only in the moment of individual existence. Transcendence is, according to Jaspers, present in the world, but only in the inner experience of man. Thus it stands beyond the categories of human perception which are necessary to universal truth. The making of transcendent Truth into universally valid truth is superstition (Aberglaube), the binding of Transcendence to objectivity. The absolute Truth is known only in faith and has no certainty or guarantee within the world.⁷²

According to Jaspers, the binding of revelation to objective categories, and hence the reducing of transcendent Truth to the level of objective truth, results in exclusivism

⁷¹ Scope, pp. 88f.

⁷² Wahrheit, p. 789.

and intolerance. The claim to certainty replaces the uncertainty of faith. Thus, he says, the Christian believer counts all persons to be lost who live before or without the coming of Christ. He thinks of the adherents to other religions as heathen and seeks to force belief when it is not accepted voluntarily. This results in self-deception, intolerance, and the incapacity for communication with others. It is this attitude which Jaspers holds responsible for the break-down in discussion between philosophers and theologians.⁷³

Jaspers rejects all claims to an exclusive truth but, at the same time, he acknowledges the validity of what he calls the absolute or historical Truth of revelation. Absolute Truth is not universally valid, but is "historical in the impenetrable, self-illuminated dynamism of the present act."⁷⁴ That is, Truth is absolute in individual experience, but every formulation of it is relative.

It (absolute Truth) is profoundly unknown, much as can be known and said through it. Nothing can take its place, it is always unique and yet it may serve others not only as an orientation, but as a prototype by which to recognize something of their own which differs from it in its historical manifestation and yet coincides with it in the light of eternity. That which is historically, existentially true is indeed absolute, but this does not mean that the expression or manifestation of it is a truth for all.... The absoluteness of

⁷³ Myth., p.45; Scope, pp.92-93.

⁷⁴ Scope, p.89.

historical truth implies the relativity of every formulation of it, and of all its historically finite manifestations. Universally valid statements can be based only upon relative standpoints and methods. Formulable faith contents must not be treated like universally true propositions; the absolute awareness of truth in faith is something fundamentally different from the comprehension of the universal validity of scientifically true propositions, which are always particular. 75

According to Jaspers, then, there is only one transcendent Truth, but there are manifold manifestations and formulations of this Truth. Each of these formulations is relative in so far as it is composed of finite words and actions. Truth is not contained in the human form itself, but only in the revelatory moment when Existenz actually confronts the beyond. This Truth cannot be contained in one formulation or in a combination of them, but is known only when we pass beyond all formulations to the Truth itself. And this takes place in individual reflection and in communication with others.

Thus, when Jaspers surveys history, he does not locate its center or its axial point in the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth, for this would make the meaning of human existence dependent upon a particular manifestation of truth. It would universalize that which is valid only for believing Christians. Rather, he locates the axial period of history

⁷⁵ Scope, pp.89-90.

in the time between 800 B.C. and 200 B.C., the time when men of various traditions became conscious of their being as a whole, of their possibilities and limitations, and strove for liberation and redemption. Confucius and Lao-tse were living in China and all the schools of Chinese philosophy came into being. India produced the Upanishads and Buddha, and ran the whole gamut of philosophical possibilities. In Iran, Zarathustra appeared, in Palestine, the prophets. Greece witnessed the appearance of Homer, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Plato and others. All of this developed independently and yet almost simultaneously in China, India, and the West.⁷⁶

What is new about this age, in all three areas of the world, is that man becomes conscious of Being as a whole, of himself and his limitations. He experiences the terror of the world and his own powerlessness. He asks radical questions. Face to face with the void he strives for liberation and redemption. By consciously recognizing his limits he sets himself the highest goals. He experiences absoluteness in the depths of selfhood and in the lucidity of transcendence.⁷⁷

This period of universal history was characterized by reflection. Communication took place between persons with various experiences and thoughts. Man was no longer enclosed within himself but became uncertain of himself and thus open to new and boundless possibilities.

⁷⁶ Origin, pp.1ff.

⁷⁷ Origin, p.2.

"Together with his world and his own self, Being becomes sensible to man, but not with finality: the question remains." ⁷⁸ In this way the men, who are separated by particular traditions and manifestations of truth, can be seen to be at one in the uncertainty of existence which gives rise to the quest for the One that lies beyond all finite formulations. That, which is the origin and goal of life, is only ambiguously present in the particular formulations of particular people.

Thus, mankind cannot be unified on the basis of particular contents of faith in Offenbarung. Man's unity with others is based upon the universal quest for Truth and the knowledge of oneself. It is man's awareness of his limitations and his openness to others, in seeking to come to clarity about himself, that is the best remedy against the narrow exclusivism that makes a creed, which has truth in its historical existence, into a truth valid for all. ⁷⁹

Here again we encounter the same difficulty in Jaspers' thought that we encountered in the first chapter. Jaspers agrees that man experiences absolute truth in a particular tradition and yet maintains that man must remain open to other traditions so that in communication with them he might understand himself. One might agree that in communication

⁷⁸ Origin, p.3.

⁷⁹ Origin, p.19.

with others, one's faith can be illumined and perhaps deepened. But this, it seems, is different from suggesting that one must return to the stage of inquiry about God.

b. Rudolf Bultmann

The question of the exclusivism of revelation or the relation of the particular claim to truth to the various other claims is always a troublesome one for Christian theologians, and Bultmann is no exception. The complexity of the issue in Bultmann's thought can be illustrated by the fact that Karl Jaspers and John Macquarrie arrive at almost contradictory interpretations of his thought on this question.

On the one hand, Jaspers argues that while Bultmann himself might not look upon those persons outside the Christian faith as "poor lost heathen", his thought leads him inevitably in this direction. According to Jaspers, whenever the decision of faith is bound to an objectively conceived divine proclamation, the result is exclusivism.⁸⁰ On the other hand, John Macquarrie, while admitting the ambiguity in Bultmann's thought, leads us to believe that

⁸⁰ Myth., pp.78-79.

Bultmann does not deny revelation outside the Christian faith.⁸¹

We have suggested in this chapter that Bultmann acknowledges a form of general revelation in which man is said to have an indirect or advance relation to God. But our question here is whether Bultmann, on the basis of the particular revelation in Jesus Christ, denies or accepts the possibility of revelation elsewhere which may be definitive for man.

Professor Macquarrie admits that Bultmann occasionally speaks as if there is no genuine knowledge of God or authentic existence apart from the kerygma. But, says Macquarrie, Bultmann is equivocal at this point for he also maintains that "it is 'turning from the world' which is the way to God, and that Christians and non-Christians who have taken this step are unified in a 'community of the transcendent' which has nothing exclusive about it!"⁸² Further, Bultmann says: "In every moment slumbers the possibility of being the eschatological moment. You must awaken to it."⁸³ Such passages suggest to Macquarrie that Bultmann's thought is not guilty of the type of exclusivism that Jaspers finds there.

⁸¹ S.D., pp.173ff.

⁸² S.D., p.177. Refers to Essays, pp.300ff.

⁸³ S.D., p.178. Refers to H.E., p.155.

Macquarrie's thought on the exclusiveness of revelation is highly indebted to Bultmann's understanding of revelation as an occurrence in actu and on this basis he suggests that Bultmann's emphasis upon the uniqueness of the Christian revelation expresses not its exclusive but its definitive character. The revelation in actu occurs within the historical tradition of the Christian faith. In so far as revelation occurs here for me, it has an ultimate or definitive character which necessarily excludes other truths as being valid for me. But this understanding of revelation is not, according to Macquarrie, incompatible with the recognition that there may be revelation for others which is not revelation for me.⁸⁴

However, Schubert Ogden rejects Macquarrie's analysis at this point and repeats the charge of exclusivism made by Jaspers. Further, in distinction from Macquarrie, Ogden finds Bultmann's thought quite unequivocal on this issue. Ogden maintains that the two passages, which Macquarrie has cited in support of his interpretation, are taken out of context and hence misunderstood. He says that although Bultmann embraces atheists, nihilists, and believers in a community of the transcendent, he then asks whether we can speak of this community as having its existence in relation

⁸⁴ S.D., pp.179-182.

to God. And in answering this question, Bultmann reaffirms his position claiming that authentic surrender to God comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, the Christian community is distinguished from the world community in the transcendent. Further, says Ogden, while Bultmann maintains that every moment contains the possibility of being the eschatological moment, he understands this possibility to be realized only in the Christian faith.⁸⁵

Then, while Jaspers and Ogden maintain that Bultmann's thought results in an exclusivism of revelation, Macquarrie suggests that this might not be the case, that Bultmann might be speaking definitively but not exclusively of revelation. Neither Jaspers nor Ogden sees, in the sense that Macquarrie does, that one, who participates in a particular occurrence of revelation, implicitly at least denies the validity of other claims to revelation. Bultmann, for instance, says that it is meaningless to raise the question of the absoluteness of faith from within faith "for then it has already been decided, since faith is the answer to revelation."⁸⁶ However, it is precisely this that leads Macquarrie to his interpretation of the definitiveness of revelation.

⁸⁵ C.W.M., pp.174-175.

⁸⁶ Existence, p.89.

Two basic observations are fundamental to our understanding of Bultmann's thought with regard to the exclusivism of revelation. Firstly, Bultmann's speech about God's revelation in Jesus Christ and its definitive character for faith must be seen in light of his understanding of revelation in actu and pro me. While Bultmann never separates the present event of revelation from the event in the past in which it had its origin, he nevertheless insists that this past event is meaningful for me only as it becomes present again and again in every now of my existence. Bultmann is not writing comparative religion, and thus is not seeking to discover the various relationships between the Christian religion and other religions, which can be observed from outside the event of revelation. Rather, he is seeking to communicate the occurrence that he has witnessed from within the community of faith. His primary concern is not one of determining whether or not revelation occurs for others; indeed he cannot determine this if revelation occurs only in relation to personal existence. His primary concern is to proclaim the revelation which has significance for his existence and the existence of the community in which he participates.

Does Jaspers realize that wherever a revealed faith speaks, it asserts, and must assert, the absoluteness of its revelation, because it regards itself as the true fulfillment of the commandment: "I am the Lord thy God.... Thou shalt have no other gods before me...." At all events, it is absurd to look for various instances of revelation in the history of religion or the spirit. As a historian I can only discover various instances of faith in revelation, never of the revelation itself. For the revelation is revelation only in actu and only pro me; it is understood and recognized as such only in personal decision.... The Christian religion is a historical phenomenon, as other religions, and like the latter it can be considered with regard to its spiritual content and its existential understanding of man. Certainly, the religions of this earth can be classified from the point of view of their spiritual content and the depth of their existential insight. But even if, in attempting such a classification, we were to give the Christian religion the highest rank..., this would mean something fundamentally different from the claim of the Christian faith to absoluteness. This claim can - but also must - be raised by the believer only, not on the basis of a comparison with other modes of faith, but solely as answer to the word that is concretely addressed to me. 87

The problem is not that the Christian religion cancels out other religions, but that the participant in the Christian revelation understands himself and his relation to others on the basis of that revelation, just as he understands love on the basis of his own love relationship with his wife.

Once again it is not that man is not subject to the demand to love his neighbour outside the realm of faith, nor that he could not know about it and fulfil the demand here and there, but that he who in faith is certain of the divine love,

87 Myth., pp.67-71.

understands himself and ^{his} community with men simply on the basis of this love, and that it thus becomes the dominant and sustaining force of his life. 88

It is, I think, this view of revelation that Macquarrie has in mind in referring us to the two passages of Bultmann's thought, which indicate for him something other than exclusivism on the part of Bultmann. It is true, as Ogden says, that the community for Bultmann is fulfilled only in faith in the Christian revelation. But Bultmann makes this judgement from the viewpoint of the Christian revelation, that is, as one who participates in this revelation. Looking through this pair of glasses, the atheists, and so on appear to be linked together in a search for God which is fulfilled in the Christian community.⁸⁹ Likewise, the moment is realized as the eschatological moment only in the Christian faith because this is the only way that the Christian can understand it to be realized.

Secondly, however, there are places where Bultmann appears to step outside the limits imposed upon speech by an understanding of revelation in actu, and makes statements regarding other religions which have the character of universally valid statements. He says, for instance, that if man were to remain open to the general revelation of God,

88 Essays, p.303.

89 Essays, p.303.

God's Word would address him in creation. "But, in fact, man just does not do this: he twists his negative knowledge into a positive knowledge, and so creation becomes mute for him who holds God's truth a prisoner." ⁹⁰ Elsewhere he writes:

The Christian belief therefore criticizes on the basis of its knowledge not the non-Christian inquiry about God... but first of all the answer which the non-Christian inquiry constructs. It asserts indeed that man apart from Christianity could not arrive at an answer at all, even if he carried on to the end in the clarity and seriousness of his inquiry. It asserts that all answers apart from the Christian answer are illusions. ⁹¹

Such statements pose a dilemma in Bultmann's thought which he does not seem to fully clarify. There are two levels at which the relationship between the Christian faith and other faiths can be seen. On the one hand, Christianity can be studied as a religious phenomenon in the history of the mind. This implies that the researcher stands apart from the particular commitment of faith and judges its relationship to other faiths on the basis of objective knowledge. From this perspective, one cannot really judge whether or not a particular religion is based on revelation, but can only observe the inquiry about God and the various claims about revelation. Here, according to Bultmann,

⁹⁰ Essays, pp.114-115.

⁹¹ Essays, p.98.

there is an inner relationship between all religions.⁹²

On the other hand, according to Bultmann, "If Christian theology thinks of the Christian faith not as a phenomenon of the history of the human mind, or of religion, at all, but as the answer to the question put to man through a particular revelation of God", there is no continuity between the Christian and non-Christian religions, but only conflict.⁹³ Faith understands itself as the response to God's revelation of Himself, and to the man, who participates in this response, all other claims to revelation appear meaningless.

Although Bultmann's thought is very similar to Barth's at this point, he takes a step beyond Barth in acknowledging that other claims to revelation are valid in so far as they represent a "stage on the way to God."⁹⁴ The non-Christian inquiry about God has its basis in God's general revelation and thus is not to be contradicted by the Christian faith, because it can see that it is this inquiry which leads to the revelation in Jesus Christ. However, the Christian faith does come into radical conflict with other claims to truth with regard to the answer given to this inquiry. God can be spoken of properly only in the Christian faith.⁹⁵

⁹² Myth., p.68; Essays, pp.133ff.

⁹³ Essays, p.134.

⁹⁴ Essays, p.135.

⁹⁵ Essays, p.161.

But does not Bultmann become inconsistent with his attempt to remain within the address of revelation when he claims that "man apart from Christianity could not arrive at an answer at all, even if he carried on to the end in the clarity and seriousness of his inquiry", or that "all answers apart from the Christian answer are illusions?"⁹⁶ Is it not one thing to say that a particular claim to revelation has no meaning for me and another to say that it is simply illusory? In other words, is Bultmann not guilty at times of turning a claim to the pro me of revelation into a universally valid claim?

Bultmann is certainly correct to emphasize the definitiveness of revelation and to realize that the particular affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ implicitly at least denies the various conflicting claims to truth. It is this aspect of faith which is not given much scope by Jaspers. But this does not allow him to say, it would seem, that all other answers to the inquiry about God are illusions. Such an attitude not only makes any genuine dialogue between religions impossible, but falsifies the claim that revelation is only in actu.

⁹⁶ Essays, p.98.

10. Analysis

Jaspers, it has been suggested, makes three basic criticisms of the orthodox concept of revelation with which he associates the thought of Bultmann. Firstly, he maintains that orthodoxy binds the revelation of God to a particular object in the world and thereby objectifies God and reduces Him to the level of the world. Secondly, orthodoxy arrests the Incomprehensible in ready-made dogmas, and all further development and clarification is resisted. Thirdly, orthodoxy turns the claim of truth for me into the claim of truth for all, and the result is an exclusivism of revelation which denies revelation to others. It is in the context of these criticisms that the relationship between the thought of Jaspers and Bultmann can be seen.

According to Jaspers, Transcendence is present ambiguously in the code language of the world. Thus, while a particular event may have importance for my awareness of Transcendence in so far as it mediates my awareness of it, there is no indissoluble connection between the event and the revelation. When revelation is bound to a particular tradition, says Jaspers, Transcendence is thought to be unambiguously present in the world. A worldly authority (Bible, Church, etc.), which claims to have its source in God, demands belief in its assertions. Thus faith is

directed not to the transcendent God, but to a worldly authority which has a human foundation.⁹⁷

Jaspers admits that Bultmann struggles against the tendency to locate God unambiguously in an object of the world, against a concept of revelation which would reduce the transcendent Truth to the level of universally valid truth. Nevertheless, he thinks that Bultmann's thought leads inevitably in this direction in asserting that God's encounter with man in the present takes place by way of the event of the first century. Thus Bultmann, according to Jaspers, retains the error of orthodoxy and objectifies the truth of revelation.⁹⁸

Bultmann, however, rejects Jaspers' criticism and maintains that Jaspers does not understand him. Like Jaspers, Bultmann says that the "belief that 'God manifests himself at a given place and time, that he has revealed himself at one place and time and only there and then, makes God appear as a fixed thing, an object in the world'." ⁹⁹

Bultmann also agrees with Jaspers in saying that the Church often interprets the revealed faith in this manner. But Bultmann maintains that this is the very error against which he is struggling. Indeed, Bultmann's whole program of

⁹⁷ Myth., pp.45ff.

⁹⁸ Myth., pp.76-77.

⁹⁹ Myth., p.67.

existential interpretation is motivated by the desire to de-objectify revelation. Revelation in his view is always an occurrence in the present. Further, it is always an eschatological event which remains in the future and must always be further clarified. Revelation never becomes a possession of man in ready-made dogma. It is understood and recognized only in the decision made in the "now" of existence. Faith is not the acceptance of a body of objective truths, but a readiness for God's encounter in the world at any moment.¹⁰⁰

Then, if the thought of Jaspers and Bultmann is so much alike, what is it that distinguishes their thought and causes Jaspers to criticize Bultmann for the very thing that the latter is attempting to avoid? It is Bultmann's affirmation of the paradox of the Christian faith, that the Word became flesh, that the historische event became the eschatological event, and that this occurs for us today in the proclamation of the Church. Jaspers sees only two possibilities for the revelation of God. Either revelation is identified with an objective event in a particular place and time, or revelation is free from all particular events and occurs in the moment of individual existence when man awakens to the presence of the Eternal. But Bultmann suggests a third possibility, that God's revelation is

¹⁰⁰ Myth., p.67.

paradoxically related to objective history in the proclamation of the Word.

Bultmann does not offer an apology for this paradox of the Christian revelation. Rather, he seeks to elucidate this as the offence of the Gospel so that the decision becomes clear to the hearer.¹⁰¹ The Christian faith speaks of an historische event which is at the same time the eschatological event, the event which sets an end to the world and its history. This paradox is contained in the New Testament in its witness to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the Judge, and so on, as the one who, in the fullness of time, brings in the age of salvation and sets an end to the existing world. In him the old aeon has reached its end and the new is begun.¹⁰²

This paradoxical assertion, clothed in mythological language, was not always clear in primitive Christianity, but was brought to clear expression by Paul and John. The man, Jesus of Nazareth, could in no way legitimate himself as the Word of God. He is legitimized only through the encounter of the Word itself, that is, only in the moment of human existence when the objective event became the eschatological event. It is the offence of the Christian faith that an ordinary world event, which is no

¹⁰¹ G.V.III, p.212.

¹⁰² G.V.III, p.202.

more than that to objective observation, becomes for faith the eschatological event, the event in which man is released from his past and freed for God's future.¹⁰³

The paradox of the Christian faith is misunderstood if it is seen as an event in the past. If one looks to the past, one seeks the skandalon of the Christian faith in something that is available to objective observation. However, the true skandalon is an assertion of faith on the basis of its existential encounter with God's Word, in which the selfhood of the believer is actually altered, put into a new relationship with God. It is not something that a scientific observer can find in history for he can see only the objective event. Thus the paradox of the Christian faith must always be something that occurs in the present; it exists only when I experience freedom from my old self and freedom for my new self.¹⁰⁴

But how does this paradox become a present reality for me? According to Bultmann, it is present in the "Verkündigung und in dem ihr antwortenden Glauben und Unglauben, dem Glauben als Heil, dem Unglauben als Gericht."¹⁰⁵ In the proclamation of the Church, the paradox is repeated,

¹⁰³ G.V.III, pp.202-205.

¹⁰⁴ G.V.III, p.205.

¹⁰⁵ G.V.III, pp.205-206. See ch.V/15.

or better, re-presented. The preacher cannot legitimate himself. His sermon is a historische event and at the same time an eschatological event. It is simultaneously the Word of God and the word of man; "in der Verkündigung vollzieht sich das Ereignis, das Jesus Christus heisst, fort, die Offenbarung Gottes in Menschenwort."¹⁰⁶ In the preaching, God becomes present to me as my God, summoning me to decision before Him. In itself the sermon is only the word of man, but it becomes the eschatological event of God in the moment when God's Word addresses me in the human word, when I am confronted with the decision either to live out of my past or God's future. Yet this present encounter with God in the preaching of the Church is not separated from the event, Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, it looks back to this event as evidence that the eschatological event has its origin in time, that it is not simply a system of general truths which has only to be recalled in recollection (Plato), but that it rose up in history.¹⁰⁷

For Bultmann, the skandalon of the Christian faith is not something that he has decided upon arbitrarily. It is not an artificial limit to demythologizing. Rather, it is something that has addressed him in history and has demanded

¹⁰⁶ G.V.III, p.207.

¹⁰⁷ Jesus, pp.10-11; Myth., p.70; see ch.IV/12.

a decision from him. It is the point at which he begins demythologizing the New Testament, not the last vestige of mythology. It is questionable whether Jaspers has understood clearly this paradoxical aspect of the Christian faith. At any rate, it is clear that he does not acknowledge the "stumbling block" which Bultmann has attempted to lay before him. For Jaspers, the only significant skandalon is the "scandalous fact that Jesus, God's representative on earth, suffered the most disgraceful and painful death." ¹⁰⁸ According to Jaspers, Bultmann overlooks this genuine stumbling block and proclaims a false one.

The story of terrible injustice done to an innocent man, who was put to death like a criminal slave, with its emphasis on the reality of boundless suffering, has cast an illuminating light on the inevitability of all human suffering and on the human capacity for suffering, and it can help preserve us from Stoic apathy. It is this stumbling block - like the one inherent in the idea that man is given to himself - that, as I see it, can still be genuine today. We resist it and we respect it; and when this myth speaks to us, we see everything in a new light. ¹⁰⁹

The stumbling block that Jaspers observes is not that of God's Word addressing man in human words, but one in which the limits to human existence are indicated. Jaspers, consciously or unconsciously under the influence of the

¹⁰⁸ Myth., pp. 83-84.

¹⁰⁹ Myth., p. 84.

Christian faith, does not wish to detach the experience of Transcendence from history. He allows himself to be questioned by history and in this way the myths and symbols of history speak to him. But the answer to these questions always comes from beyond history. The illumination which he seeks is mediated through nature and history, but is finally fulfilled only in detachment from it. History thus becomes for him the scaffolding which can be removed as soon as the building is completed. Jaspers wants to retain the scaffolding because it is necessary to communication and makes God's revelation something different from that conceived by the mystics, who soar up and away from history, but he seems to think that the retention of it can result only in the objectification of revelation and the exclusivism of religion. He stands very near to Bultmann, but he does not accept the paradoxical unity of time and Eternity, which Bultmann finds in the proclamation of the Church. Jaspers hears in the kerygma only the word of man.

Jaspers further maintains that Bultmann's understanding of revelation results in an exclusivism which sets up barriers between men. However, when we ask Jaspers what he puts in place of Bultmann's claim to revelation, his answer is highly equivocal. On the one hand, Jaspers maintains the ambiguity and relativity of every expression

of revelation, but on the other hand suggests that one awakens to Transcendence only from within a historical tradition. Jaspers admits his own debt to the Biblical tradition, for instance, but declines to follow it in either its Jewish or Christian manifestation. He acknowledges the importance of the historical tradition on the one hand, but rejects any particular affirmation of it on the other hand. He attempts to walk the narrow fence between Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, between faith and nihilism, but has he chosen an impossible task? Can one in fact maintain the significance of a particular tradition and yet reject any positive affirmation of it?¹¹⁰

Jaspers is quite aware that man is born into a historical tradition and develops in relation to it. He realizes that apart from such a tradition man is nothing. Thus he understands Europeans to be what they are in virtue of the Biblical religion and the secularizations which have their source in this religion. "It is a simple fact that without the Bible we pass into nothing. We cannot abandon our historical origin."¹¹¹ But he does not seem to grasp

¹¹⁰ Jeanne Hersch has made a similar criticism to which Jaspers has given a reply. However, her use of the term tradition seems to be somewhat different from our use and for this reason we have not included this here. See P.K.J., pp.610, 772ff.

¹¹¹ Jaspers, The European Spirit, London, 1948, p.60.

the claim that the tradition has upon men. It is not simply that men reflect upon their tradition and awaken to their primal source. Rather, they are confronted by the tradition, become themselves in the face of it and preserve it. Otherwise, there would be no tradition.

Because Jaspers has no real appreciation of the claim of the tradition upon me, and my preservation of it, he cannot appreciate the confessional task of theology which does in fact preserve the tradition. H. Richard Niebuhr maintains that "Theology finds itself forced to begin in historic faith because there is no other starting point for its endeavor."¹¹² We begin "by stating in simple, confessional form what has happened to us in our community, how we come to believe, how we reason about things and what we see from our point of view."¹¹³ The Christian faith is called into being through the tradition, which proclaims again and again God's eschatological act, and faith's response to God's Word, heard in this proclamation, preserves this tradition in its confessional formulas.

It is this confessional aspect which forms, I think, the background to what Jaspers would call Bultmann's exclusivism of revelation. If an individual or group are

¹¹² H.R. Niebuhr, The Meaning Of Revelation, New York, 1960, p.38.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.41.

are confronted with the transcendent Truth, the confession of that Truth, implicitly at least, denies other conflicting claims to truth. But, as Paul Tillich says, "the problem is not the right of rejecting that which rejects us; rather it is the nature of this rejection."¹¹⁴

What then is the nature of Bultmann's rejection of other claims to truth?

Firstly, it is clear that he does not simply reject all awareness of the transcendent truth outside the Christian faith. He does not make an either/or between Christianity and other religions, that is, he does not take up the position of some earlier missionaries in which heathen religions were regarded simply as idolatrous and hence destroyed.¹¹⁵ Rather, as we have suggested in this chapter, Bultmann maintains that God reveals Himself in creation so that man has a relation to God apart from Christ, although it is a perverted relation because of man's sin. It is this relationship to God which makes possible for Bultmann the contact between Christianity and other religions. The Christian faith has a contact with all beliefs in the inquiry about God which is apparent in these claims to truth. It does not reject this inquiry, but seeks to penetrate into it and illuminate it.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Paul Tillich, Christianity And The Encounter Of The World Religions, New York, 1963, p.29.

¹¹⁵ Essays, p.135.

¹¹⁶ Essays, P.98.

Secondly, however, Bultmann maintains that the Christian faith is in conflict with all other religions in so far as they claim to have an answer to this inquiry. According to Bultmann, man, confronted by God's revelation in creation, inquires after God. But, instead of remaining in expectation of the divine grace, man seeks an answer in the world and thus separates himself from the coming of God's Word. In this state, man requires the freedom for God's Word which can only come from God Himself. And the Christian faith finds this freedom in the coming of Jesus as the Christ.

Then the answer in Jesus Christ, which is definitive for the Christian faith, will certainly come into conflict with other answers which would reject the Christian answer. But does this give Bultmann the authority to say that "from the standpoint of the Christian faith, the humanistic idea of God is to be designated as an error and a delusion—so far as it seeks to be a belief in God?"¹¹⁷ It would, if Bultmann meant only that all answers outside the Christian faith no longer can be answers for the Christian believer. However, Bultmann seems at times to go further than this and suggest that no answer outside the Christian

¹¹⁷ Essays, p.161; Jaspers refers to this essay in his criticism that Bultmann makes the Christian revelation exclusive: Myth., p.110.

answer can be valid. At least we can say that when Jaspers raises the very point that we have raised and points to this same passage, Bultmann makes no reply.

Yet it would appear on the basis of Bultmann's own discussion of the revelation in actu that the Christian faith must remain more agnostic about the possibility of an answer being found to man's inquiry outside the Christian revelation. Certainly, we cannot say definitely whether or not other persons have encountered an authentic revelation of God, since revelation cannot be observed except from within the revelatory moment itself. Further, whatever claims were made to revelation could be seen by us only from the point of view of the revelation, which is definitive for us, and this revelation supplies the critical perspective from which we view all other claims to truth. Nevertheless, if we maintain that revelation is only in actu, and if we acknowledge the limits of our finite perspective, it would seem that we must maintain the possibility that God might address other persons definitively in ways that differ from the way in which we have heard His address. Indeed, some such approach would seem to be necessary to account for the variety of expressions of revelation from within the Christian Church itself. Bultmann's former teacher, Wilhelm Herrmann is of some assistance at this point when he writes:

Now, to all this we may reply that we by no means wish to assert, even for a moment, that the savages of New Holland have no knowledge of God, no pulsations of true religion, and therefore no communion with God. But we do not know through what medium such knowledge and such communion reach them. We cannot enter fully into the religious life even of a pious Israelite, for the facts which worked upon them as revelations of God have no longer this force for us.... Since we cannot feel as Jews, the revelation which was given to Israel can no longer satisfy our need. Our position is different; we stand in such historical relationships that Jesus Christ alone can be grasped by us as the fact in which God so reveals Himself to us that everything that hides Him from us vanishes away. The knowledge of God and the religion which have been and which are possible to men placed in other historical conditions are impossible to us. 118

The revelation of God in Jesus Christ is a definitive occurrence in actu which illuminates other events and enables us to understand them. In this light, we are able to recognize the activity of God in man's inquiry about Him, and to criticize the various answers to this inquiry which also question us. This, however, is different from suggesting that revelation cannot occur for persons in other historical situations. The only way that I would be able to deny a definitive revelation to other persons would be from within their particular history. Thus the relationship between revelation in one history and revelation in

118 W. Herrmann, The Communion Of The Christian With God, New York, 1906, pp.62-63.

another is neither that of an either/or, or of a unity of all, but of a dialectic in which the confession of one history is challenged by the confession of another and vice versa. And one might add that it is in this dialectic that one becomes more clearly aware of the meaning of revelation.

This approach to the exclusivism of revelation is very similar to the approach taken by Jaspers with two fundamental differences. The communication between religions, as Jaspers understands it, seems to assume that the other's claim to revelation is valid. Further, it requires that I decipher and hence transcend the very history within which revelation has occurred for me. However, this calls for two unacceptable conclusions. First, in order to assume the validity of revelation on the part of the other, I must be able to stand outside history in order to observe it. Yet both Jaspers and Bultmann maintain that revelation can be known only from within history. Second, the result of deciphering seems to be the elimination of the historical or the reduction of it to a subjective moment in human experience. And this stands in conflict with our support of Bultmann's understanding of the historical revelation. Jaspers seems to require that we return to the stage of inquiry when we

communicate with others. But such is not possible for one who has been addressed definitively by the Word of God in history and has responded to it in faith.

IV.

FAITH AND TRUTH

Philosophical faith is an expression in current theological and philosophical discussion which owes its origin to the work of Karl Jaspers. It is fundamental to his philosophy and, if the subject matter of his writing can be taken as evidence, it can be said that it has gained more significance for him in recent years. Jaspers sets philosophical faith over against Offenbarungsglaube, by which he means "orthodox" faith or faith in a worldly authority. However, Bultmann's understanding of the Christian faith also claims to be something other than faith in a worldly authority. This chapter makes an analysis of philosophical and Christian faith with particular regard to the nature and truth of faith.

11. The Nature Of Faith

a. Karl Jaspers

Jaspers seeks to communicate indirectly the Truth that cannot be grasped in objective and universally valid statements. The result of this is a philosophy which

evades precise definition at many points.¹ This has been apparent elsewhere where we have attempted to define terms such as Existenz or Transcendence, and it will be apparent in our efforts in this chapter to characterize the nature of philosophical faith. Jaspers assures us of this when he says that faith is known "only in an ultimately indirect communication of the total philosophical work."² We have in fact been participating in this indirect communication of faith thus far in this study, for it is something which is bound up with every human impulse and decision. Whenever we discuss some aspect of human existence, we are discussing philosophical faith. However, we must now attempt to characterize in a more systematic form the nature of philosophical faith in order to see more clearly its relation to Christian faith.

Firstly, it will be obvious by now that philosophical faith is not belief in a body of doctrine which is looked upon as universally valid. Rather, philosophical faith

¹ Frederick Copleston has remarked that German students and professors find something more tangible in Heidegger's phenomenological analysis and that many say that Heidegger at least takes us somewhere whereas Jaspers takes us into the unthinkable. Copleston, Contemporary Philosophy, p.165. The idea of indirect communication is discussed in chapter V of this study.

² Reason, p.141.

is something which can be characterized only negatively and can never become a credo.³ Jaspers does refer to certain propositions of philosophical faith; God is; there is an Unconditional Imperative; man is finite and imperfectible; man can live in God's guidance; and the reality of the world subsists ephemerally between God and existence. However, they do not constitute a creed, but remain always in the realm of non-knowledge. "None of these five principles is demonstrable in the sense of a limited insight into objects in the world. Their truth can only be 'pointed out,' 'elucidated,' by a chain of reasoning, 'recalled to mind.'⁴ "The truth of each proposition of philosophical faith is valid only in the negation of the proposition. As Jaspers says, "The realm of the objective must remain in motion, must evaporate as it were, so that as the object vanishes, a fulfilled consciousness of being is made clear by this very vanishing."⁵

Secondly, philosophical faith is free from the claims of all external authorities. According to Jaspers, medieval philosophy thought of itself as a praeambula fidei.

³ Scope, pp. 15ff.

⁴ Wisdom, p. 85; See also Scope, pp. 28ff.

⁵ Scope, p. 23.

Descartes was a servant of the Church. Spinoza believed himself to be in possession of the truth, and Hegel developed his logic as a form of divine worship. But today, says Jaspers, philosophy is incapable of finding the meaning of faith in such external authorities, and seeks God out of its own sources.⁶

Philosophical faith has the atmosphere of what Jaspers calls the "spirit of philosophy" in his discussion of Lessing's classic, Nathan The Wise. According to Jaspers, Nathan overcomes the tragic neither in a mystical vision nor in the assurances given in Christian orthodoxy. No other world is brought in to overcome and subdue the tragedy of the immanent world. Lessing's world and the place for dealing with tragedy is the natural world, the place where men are united not in any final truth, but in the free striving for Truth.⁷ The philosophical spirit is the free striving for Truth which is demonstrated in the life of Nathan. It stands on the boundary between revelation and nihilism, between faith and the denial of the world.⁸ It is a spirit of openness and freedom in which the individual recognizes his relationship to the

⁶ Reason, p.138.

⁷ Wahrheit, pp.949ff.

⁸ Revelation and faith in this sentence have reference to so-called "orthodoxy". See Chapter III/7.

"chain of private men who openly search in freedom."⁹

This attitude toward all external authorities is further elucidated in Jaspers' appreciation of the dialectic in scepticism. Scepticism is valid in so far as it maintains a negative attitude toward all objective claims to truth. It destroys all objects and places no limits on doubt. Yet, in this very process, it reveals that it does not doubt all, for it is acknowledging a truth by its own denial. That is, it doubts on the basis of a truth which calls all into doubt. Scepticism is a continuous and ever new movement, in which one stands at the limit where Truth is possible. Yet once the sceptic is aware of this and attempts to develop this Truth, the questioning of scepticism must begin all over again.¹⁰

The attitude of philosophical faith, which we have attempted to characterize in speaking of the "spirit of philosophy" and of scepticism, is summarized by Jaspers when he says; "Philosophical faith venerates traditional philosophy but does not maintain an attitude of obedience to it. It does not look on history as an authority, but as one continuous spiritual struggle."¹¹ This understanding of faith results in the understanding of the

⁹ Reason, p.141. ¹⁰ Wahrheit, pp.728-732. ¹¹ Scope, p.26.

believer as an exception (Ausnahme), one who founders upon objective authority and struggles with it. The concept of the exception, to which Jaspers devotes considerable space in Von Der Wahrheit, has its roots in Jaspers' understanding of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. Seen externally the exception is the abnormal and irregular life. But seen existentially, it is the personal life of man which breaks through the objective and universal order and leads us beyond the finite world.¹² Jaspers speaks of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard as exceptions in every sense and describes them in these words:

Those who knew them felt attracted in an enigmatic way by their presence, as though elevated for a moment to a higher mode of being; but no one really loved them.

In the circumstances of their lives, one finds astonishing and alien features. They have been called simply insane.... They cannot be classed under any earlier type (poet, philosopher, savior, genius). With them a new form of human reality appears in history. They are, so to speak, representative destinies, sacrifices whose way out of the world leads to experiences for others.¹³

The life of the exception is not limited by Jaspers to the Nietzsches and the Kierkegaards of history, but is a possibility for any one who would participate in their struggle. The historicity of man and his being as Existenz includes the possibility of the being of the

¹² Wahrheit, pp. 748ff.

¹³ Reason, pp. 37-38.

exception.¹⁴

Thirdly, philosophical faith "is the fulfilling and moving element in the depths of man, in which man is linked, above and beyond himself with the origin of Being."¹⁵ Faith, understood in this manner, is an inner act in which man becomes his authentic self through the recognition of the transcendent source of his being. While one might be inclined to look upon this statement as a more positive statement of philosophical faith, a closer consideration of it reveals the same negative characterization of faith.

Philosophical faith is distinguished from all forms of that which we might refer to as "outer faith". An outer faith takes certain goals of volition or contents of reason as the purpose of life. It is a temporal faith which is limited to the rational and empirical. Thus Communism, with its ideal society, might be looked upon as an example of outer faith. The Christian faith can also be seen in this manner when it seeks to shape the future by the content of dogmas or rationalized goals. But these examples of outer faith can claim to be faith only in the sense of transcending the present and looking to the future. Outer faith is, in short, faith without Transcendence.¹⁶

¹⁴ Wahrheit, p. 759.

¹⁵ Origin, p. 215.

¹⁶ Origin, pp. 213ff.

In contrast to this, philosophical faith might be characterized as an inner faith which, for Jaspers, is the only faith that can give meaning to the outer faiths of freedom, world order, and so on.¹⁷ Jaspers' rejection of outer faith stands in line with Kierkegaard's criticism of the "system", which had achieved its final polish in German idealistic philosophy. Faith in a system of any type refers to that which is closed and complete, but the faith of which Jaspers speaks is open and incomplete.¹⁸ It is that movement in man in which he acknowledges his communion with Transcendence beyond the stability of the finite world. This faith is something realized only in the immediate experience of the individual.¹⁹ It is an attitude of life, a fundamental characteristic of human existence which "must continually draw upon the primal source within each historical situation."²⁰ Faith is an existential act in which Transcendence becomes actualized in the individual's awakening to his true self.²¹

Finally, philosophical faith, which is immersed in

¹⁷ Origin, pp. 214ff.

¹⁸ Jaspers writes: "The philosopher of systems is, as a man, like someone who builds a castle, but lives next door in a shanty." Reason, p. 26.

¹⁹ Scope, p. 39.

²⁰ Scope, p. 16.

²¹ Scope, p. 22.

the struggle with the objective authorities of the world, can be said to have no finality other than that which exists in the independent thinking of each individual, and even that must always be put into question.

Philosophical faith seems to have a form of certainty in a particular historical situation when Jaspers says: "I do not know whether I believe. But faith takes hold of me to such an extent that I dare to live by it."²² But it can never become a possession. "Hence I must recognize not only that I do not know God but even that I do not know whether I believe. Faith is no possession. It confers no secure knowledge, but it gives certainty in the practice of life."²³

b. Rudolf Bultmann

Jaspers dismisses the Christian faith because of its dogmatism. He maintains that faith in dogma can never be faith in the transcendent God. Bultmann agrees with Jaspers' basic criticism, but he maintains that Christian faith is not submission to a body of dogma or a set of principles, which are applied in the various situations of life. Faith is to be distinguished from any Weltanschauung

²² Scope, p. 40.

²³ Wisdom, pp. 50-51; See Chapter 1/2.

and is understood as an occurrence in the life of man when he responds to the address of God in the moment. "Real belief in God is not a proposition which one can have ready to hand in order to evade the challenge of the 'moment'. On the contrary, it must actually be grasped and confirmed in the 'moment'...."²⁴

The Christian faith then, according to Bultmann, cannot be understood as an intellectual assent to a body of doctrine. Rather, as for Jaspers, it is something in which the whole person is involved. It is the hearing of God's address in the moment and the decisive act of the person in which he becomes his authentic self.²⁵ Faith has the character of obedience, but it is also an act of decision. That is, faith is an actual decision on the part of man to abandon his security in the world and to live out of God's future. Without this decision man is understood to be determined from beyond himself and all responsibility is taken away from him. "Christians have the Spirit; but that is not to say that they act under the magical influence of an impersonal power. Being 'led by the Spirit'... does not exclude personal decision but only becomes real in

²⁴ Essays, p.7.

²⁵ Essays, pp.9-10.

it."²⁶ However, this is always a decision made in response to God's gift and demand. Consequently, the decision of faith has the character of obedience.

The Christian faith, according to Bultmann, is a decision in which man responds to God's gift and demand in the moment. It is not something that man possesses, because it is dependent upon God. Faith's only security lies in man's turning over his anxieties about himself and his future to God, who encounters him in the present moment.²⁷

The similarity between Jaspers' and Bultmann's conception of faith is obvious to this point. However, they diverge when Bultmann says that the act of faith is at the same time confession of faith in the kerygma of the Christian Church. The Christian faith, according to Bultmann, refers to a particular event, God's saving act

²⁶ Essays, p.62; Bultmann's frequent use of decision is misunderstood unless it is seen in the context of obedience and decision before God's gift of grace in Jesus Christ. In this way it is distinguished from any decision which affirms the self-sufficiency of man. Bultmann makes this clear when he writes: "This decision does not proceed from motives of this world, but is a decision against the world; it becomes a possibility only through the fact that God appears to man as He who is revealed in Jesus." N.T.II, pp.76-77; See also N.T.I, pp.314-317.

²⁷ N.T.I, pp.320-322.

in Christ. It has a "dogmatic" character in so far as it is the acceptance of the "word of faith". In this sense, faith can be spoken of as faith in the Gospel, faith in the word of God or faith in the Scriptures. We have faith in what is written in the law and the prophets or in what the prophets said, in Moses and his writing, in Jesus and his word, and so on.²⁸

Thus, there is a close relationship between faith and knowledge. Paul speaks of the knowledge of faith as "the knowledge of salvation communicated by the kerygma" and "the new knowledge of himself which comes to the man who believes."²⁹ This two-fold knowledge of God's saving act in Jesus Christ and man's new self-understanding is proclaimed in the kerygma and appropriated in faith. Paul, according to Bultmann, brings them together in the one act of faith-belief. Belief is the "willingness to consider true (= believe) the facts reported of the pre-existent Son of God - incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection from the dead - and to see in them a demonstration of the grace of God."³⁰ Faith is "self-surrender to the grace of God" and "signifies the utter reversal of a man's previous under-

²⁸ N.T.I, p.318; See also R. Bultmann and A. Weiser, Faith, London, 1961, pp.62-63.

²⁹ Bultmann and Weiser, Faith, p.68.

³⁰ N.T.I, p.300.

standing of himself..."³¹ The homogeneity of these two acts is maintained in understanding them together as making up the one act of decision. Thus "Paul can speak of Christ as 'the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me' only as the Paul who has waived his own righteousness and given up his self to die."³²

The knowledge of faith, then, is neither the type of knowledge that is involved in one's assent to dogma nor the knowledge of Gnosticism, the self-knowledge which recognizes a divine element in man as constitutive of the authentic self. Rather, it is an historical (geschichtliche) knowledge, which is known only in relation to personal existence in the moment. Faith's knowledge is related to the self and is not dogma. Yet, it has its origin in a concrete event in history outside of the self. The age of salvation has already dawned and the life of the apocalyptic future is already present in the coming of Jesus.³³ This event is passed on to me in the kerygma of the Church, and faith is obedience to the specific act of God, which is proclaimed here as an act for me.³⁴ It is not mere piety, but a specific confession in which the believer knows himself created anew.

³¹ N.F.I., p.300.

³² N.F.I., p.301.

³³ K.M., p.20.

³⁴ Existence, pp.140-41; Essays, p.86.

Faith is also a "knowledge" in that it knows about the saving act of God that is proclaimed to it. However, it is not knowledge in the sense of speculation about some historical or cosmic event, but rather a knowledge in which the man of faith also knows about himself and understands himself anew, in that he understands the saving act as a gift and himself as one to whom it has been given... God's revelation in Christ is not the communication of knowledge as such, but rather an occurrence for man and in man that places him in a new situation and thereby also opens up to him a new understanding of himself... Thus his knowing has its basis in his being known by God...³⁵

Bultmann's conception of the nature of the Christian faith can be summarized by saying that it is a decision which is taken again and again in the face of God's gift, which confronts man in the proclamation of the Christian Church. It is the decision in which man is freed from his past bondage to the world and stands before God's fulfillment of life's meaning. Faith acknowledges this freedom to be the gift of God, which has come to expression in Jesus Christ. Man acknowledges himself as recipient of that gift in which he understands himself anew. And in this way faith takes on the character of confession.

12. The Truth Of Faith

a. Karl Jaspers

i. Faith And Reason.

Reason, as we suggested in chapter one, is an

³⁵ Existence, p.141.

important concept for Jaspers, and has taken on more significance for him in recent years.³⁶ However, it is not something which has developed as a polar opposite to philosophical faith. On the contrary, it would seem that there has been a parallel development of both Reason and faith.

Any attempt to define Jaspers' understanding of the relationship between Reason and faith must begin with the distinction between Reason (Vernunft) and intellect (Verstand). While these two aspects of human existence are never separated in the act of reasoning, they can be properly understood only when we look at them as particulars. Reason (Vernunft) refers to that movement in human existence which "takes in" all various meanings of truth. It is, as we said in the first chapter, bound up with existence and works in relation to it. Reason develops all possibilities open to existence with the aim of embracing the whole of truth. According to Jaspers, Being becomes manifest in many ways, and it is Reason's task to relate the various manifestations of truth by asserting each one. In this process, no one way of truth is confined in itself and no one truth can claim final authority. Reason asserts each truth, but follows at the

³⁶ P.K.J., p. 838; See ch. I/2.

same time an underlying and inextinguishable will toward the One where all belongs to all.³⁷

However, if Reason reveals a "will to unity" or a "will to the One", it does not settle upon any complete unity so as to form a system. Rather, it refuses final harmony and strives to effect the break-through in every totality. It is open to the infinity of meaningful content and breaks through every fixation of truth in order to stand open to that, which is more than any particular truth.³⁸

Reason, which stands open to the infinity of meaningful content, is not a natural endowment which acts automatically like a natural event. It requires a decision out of human freedom. By a free act, man turns from the life that is given him and takes the way of Reason. That he can do this is a mystery to him, for he knows that he cannot will this freedom for himself, but that it must be given to him. This decision for Reason is at the same time a decision for truth, freedom, and the unconditionality of this decision. It stands over against nature and necessity.³⁹

Reason, understood in this sense, is not an enemy of

³⁷ Offenbarung, pp. 126ff.; Wahrheit, p. 120; Scope, pp. 45ff.

³⁸ Offenbarung, pp. 127ff.; Scope, pp. 46ff.

³⁹ Anti-Reason, pp. 50ff.

philosophical faith, but an "indispensable element" in it. Reasoning man lives out of the roots of his particular history, but at the same time relates himself to every mode of historicity that he encounters.⁴⁰ He breaks through all limits and recognizes an all-encompassing unity, which lies beyond immanent particulars. Thus, the possibility of a consciousness of that which transcends all is opened up. The way of Reason is the way that faith must travel. Philosophical faith affirms the way of Reason and acts within it in such a way that man overcomes his empirical isolation and acknowledges the source of his being as coming from beyond himself. This is an act which is performed not once and for all, but continually in man's coming to his authentic self in the moment.⁴¹

However, Reason is not free of the challenge of the intellect (*Verstand*), the objective understanding that takes place in the isolating of ideas.⁴² Rather, it stands in continuous dialogue with the intellect. Reason can make no move without the intellect; it must undergo at every turn man's attempt at definiteness and clarification. The intellect challenges Reason, fixing limits and striving for clarity and certainty. And in turn, Reason challenges the intellect allowing it to come to rest in no certain know-

⁴⁰ *Scope*, pp. 45-47.

⁴¹ *Reason*, pp. 141ff.

⁴² *Wahrheit*, p. 120.

ledge; it breaks through every conclusion in recognition of its limits.⁴³

Jaspers does not make the error of the Enlightenment. He knows the misuse of the intellect which bases all knowledge, will, and action upon it alone. It is this false understanding of the intellect which destroys the tradition upon which all life rests, dissolves faith, and results in nihilism. This false use of the intellect strives to absolutize its insights, which can never be more than particular. It strives to make man and his finiteness the final authority.⁴⁴

However, when the intellect is understood in its proper perspective (when its limits are recognized), it does not destroy philosophical faith, but is an essential factor in the understanding and elucidation of it. The challenge of the intellect is directed against all blindness which accepts ideas without questioning them. It stands over against all restrictions to inquiry and all traditional prejudices. It demands an unlimited critical awareness of the quality and limit of every insight. With this faculty man strives to understand what he believes; he wants to base his knowledge on experience fundamentally accessible to all. He wants to know the degree to which proof is

⁴³ Offenbarung, p.128; Scope, p.45. ⁴⁴ Wisdom, pp.89ff.

valid and the limits where the intellect is frustrated. "And he would like also to have a reasoned basis for the indemonstrable premise, which he must ultimately take as the foundation of his life..."⁴⁵

Philosophical faith, then, stands in the midst of the dialogue between Vernunft and Verstand. Reason seeks the limits of knowledge and opens the way for faith to transcend the empirical isolation of man. But this faith must always be subjected to the critical questioning of the intellect. It is in this dialogue between Reason and intellect that faith is made possible, and it is also in this dialogue that faith is shown to be something other than a possession of man.

ii. Faith and Science

The truth of philosophy is certainly something other than the truth of science for Jaspers. Science makes judgements on the basis of rational evidence and requires no personal commitment in order that its knowledge be accepted as universally valid. Its discoveries are made on the basis of trial hypotheses, which are confirmed or rejected on the basis of experience. But the truth of philosophy cannot stand alone on the basis of rational evidence. It requires the commitment of the individual

⁴⁵ Wisdom, p. 88.

in order to achieve the status of truth. That is, its truth is not rationally demonstrable and universally valid.⁴⁶

This does not mean that a radical division exists between the knowledge of science and the knowledge of philosophy so that no positive relationship between them is possible. Rather the relationship between science and philosophy has both positive and negative aspects. Jaspers summarizes this relationship when he says that "philosophy cannot fully realize its possibilities except side by side with science, in distinction from science, and in aiming beyond science."⁴⁷

Philosophy, then, stands side by side with science. It never ignores the realities which are accessible to science, and demands with it to know what is real. Such knowledge preserves the sanity of philosophical thought and makes it face the facts. "Unless an idea is submitted to the coldly dispassionate test of scientific inquiry, it is rapidly consumed in the fire of emotions and passions, or else it withers into a dry and narrow fanaticism."⁴⁸ Science is able to unmask illusions and break up false knowledge. It faces the half-truths that veil the realities from which man flees, and in breaking up premature and uncritical thinking

⁴⁶ Jaspers, *The Idea Of The University*, London, 1960, pp. 24-29.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29

⁴⁸ *Wisdom*, p. 159.

keeps man from falling into a deceptive complacency.⁴⁹

Further, science supplies the attitude and method which is the basis for philosophical thought. "Science springs from honesty and produces it."⁵⁰ It is honest in accepting the criticisms of its assertions, and one is compelled by it to examine one's insights. This form of honesty Jaspers thinks was essential to philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, and he accepts it as his guiding light. It makes up part of the scientific mode of thought which he considers "indispensable to the preservation of human dignity."⁵¹

Philosophy, then, walks side by side with science. But it also recognizes that it is something distinct from it. In contrast to science's way of thinking, there is that type of thinking which "produces insights without universal validity and cogency, yet of fundamental importance to life itself."⁵² Philosophical thinking penetrates through to the heart of reality that lies at the ground of all appearances. It is not concerned with something that is hitherto unknown, but is concerned to elucidate what one really wants, means,

⁴⁹ Jaspers, The Idea Of The University, p.40; Wisdom, pp.160ff.; Scope, p.12.

⁵⁰ Jaspers, The Idea Of The University, p.40.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.45.

⁵² Ibid., p.28.

or believes. This truth is not something which stands alone on the basis of rational judgement. It requires the commitment of the thinker in order that it achieve the status of truth. This thought is less than science in that it does not yield universally valid knowledge, but more than science in that it is a creative way of thinking that actually transforms man.⁵³

Finally, Jaspers recognizes that philosophical thinking passes beyond science. Science does not produce knowledge of Being itself, but only knowledge of particular appearances or objects within the finite order. It cannot provide life with its meaning or goals, its values or directions. Rather, in the midst of scientific thought, one becomes aware of its limits and consequently of that which has its source in something other than that available to scientific investigation. I become aware of striving toward a unity of the particular data of science. No one piece of knowledge satisfies and I experience the "unqualified will to know", the questioning of Reason, which compels me toward the oneness of reality. Science is then looked upon not as an end in itself, but as a part of that striving toward the whole of truth.⁵⁴

Philosophy is seen to be inherent in the very act of

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 38.

scientific research; it is the inner meaning that guides the methodical work of science. When a person consolidates this guidance of Reason in reflection and becomes conscious of it, he is at the state of philosophizing. Apart from this guidance, science becomes meaningless correctness and aimless busyness.⁵⁵ Philosophy thus passes beyond the limits of science without rejecting its validity. The truth of philosophy is that which is known only in transcending the objects available to science, and this means that the truth of philosophy requires the commitment of the individual, who is not able to find objective proof for this truth. Philosophical truth has no universal validity but is "absolute for him who conquers it in historical actuality..."⁵⁶

The relationship between scientific and philosophical truth is that of a circle. Faith affirms the truth of philosophy in transcending the limits imposed upon man by the finite world and thus criticizes science when it claims absolute knowledge based on the finite world. At the same time faith must stand open to the findings of science, if it wants to be something other than uncritical emotionalism and fanaticism. Science, on the other hand, criticizes the tendency in faith toward uncritical conclusions

⁵⁵ Wisdom, pp.158-59.

⁵⁶ Wisdom, p.162.

but, at the same time, acknowledges the limits that it faces in its own work, and this leaves the way open for the truth of philosophical faith.

iii. Faith and Tradition

Philosophical faith is not something that comes into being in separation from the historical tradition. Rather, it is dependent upon the tradition and has its birth in relation to it. Jaspers' own interest in the historical tradition of philosophy is obvious in the history of philosophy that he is writing. It is in our relationship to this tradition that we come upon ourselves and find our own source in its source.⁵⁷

Historical tradition is important to faith as the source through which we find our true selves, but it is in no way a guarantee of philosophical faith. Philosophical faith transcends the limits of the objective order and could never turn to that order for its proof. Thus, while Jaspers finds some analogy between the authority of the philosophical tradition for philosophical faith, and the authority of the religious tradition for religious faith, he is careful to say that the philosophical tradition is not something which

demands obedience. The historical tradition of philosophy is looked upon as the deposit of inexhaustible truth which is a source by which we come to truth in our own experience, but it can never claim to be a definitive truth that demands our obedience.⁵⁸

The historical tradition is important to faith not as its guarantee but as the language by which faith comes to itself. The individual studies the historical tradition, and gains an intelligent mastery of the facts. At the end and the summit of this study he may experience the source of his being. The historical tradition becomes the mirror of what is his own and he comes to himself in his own present experience. Philosophy has only one reality, says Jaspers, and that is here and now. Only through this present reality do we gain access to the timeless.⁵⁹

The historical tradition is the "awakener" to truth in the present. It is that which enables us to come into our present awareness of existence. This tradition is not limited to one particular history with an authoritative claim. Rather, "Every tradition is valid as a possible language, and becomes a true language ... in given historical situations for Existens, which discovers itself in them."⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Wisdom, pp.142-43

⁵⁹ Wisdom, pp.143-44.

⁶⁰ Myth, p.47.

It is in this capacity of "awakener" that Jaspers accepts the Bible as an important source for Westerners. The Bible is not a source for universally valid ideas, but is that historical source before which the illumination of the self (Selbsterhellung) can take place. The Bible is a depository of human experiences of Transcendence. It includes the religious, mythical, historical, and existential experiences of man over a thousand years. What is spoken of as revelation is therein already interpretation in human speech and thought.⁶¹

The results of Biblical study include not only the historical (historischen) knowledge, but also the assimilation of the reality which lies at its source and can become known in our personal relationship to it. In our reasoning reflection, we grasp the existential meaning of the Bible, winning that which is non-historical through the historical facts. In this reflection we become open to that which lies at the source of the Biblical record, but cannot be contained in finite categories.⁶²

Thus, Transcendence is not something which can be actually contained in the objects of a historical tradition. Transcendence can never become actually present in the world, but is always known in faith's transcending the limits of

⁶¹ Offenbarung, pp. 49 Off.

⁶² Offenbarung, pp. 492-493.

the finite world. Because of this, historical tradition, Biblical or other, has no real authority for faith, which is final within itself. The tradition is important in so far as one awakens to one's source of being in dialogue with it. But it can never claim the authority that is often claimed in Roman Catholicism and forms of Protestant dogmatism. The historical tradition does not guarantee the truth of faith, but is a cipher by which one awakens to Transcendence and one's true existence in the present moment of life.

iv. Summary

The result of this understanding of the relationship of philosophical faith to the various claims of truth and authority is a faith which is in suspension. Man is always thrown back upon himself where he experiences that he is given to himself from beyond. There is no final guarantee in reason, science, or tradition. The truth of faith at this point can be finally attributed only to the individual who, in spite of the uncertainty, cannot avoid its truth.

Nevertheless, we are not led to believe that this decision of faith is one made without reference to the world in which the faithful man must live. That is, faith is not thought to be an anti-rational decision. The decision of faith must always be questioned by the intellect.

Yet, faith must at the same time show the limits of intellectual knowledge. Science tests the claims of faith and works against all forms of fanaticism and emotionalism, but is itself limited by the awareness of the limits of its knowledge. Thus, the way for faith is left open at least as a possibility. And if the historical tradition can claim no real authority over faith, faith is seen to awaken to itself in dialogue with the tradition and not in complete separation from it, as if faith were simply an individual and purely subjective intuition of God.

The picture that we have of philosophical faith is not of a faith which removes itself from the realm of the world and its critical functions. Rather, we have the picture of faith striving to understand what it believes and does. The man of faith wants to base his knowledge on that which is accessible to all, to grasp what is true by his intellect, and where possible to offer proof for his decision. Philosophical faith lives in suspension between the decision for the Unconditional and the questioning of the conditional. It tries to walk the narrow way between faith and unbelief. The result is a faith in which the faithful does not even know if he believes, but dares to live by this faith.

b. Rudolf Bultmann

i. Faith And Reason

One of the factors, which distinguishes Bultmann from theologians such as Karl Barth, is the former's positive acknowledgement of the validity of what the ontological tradition in philosophy has called Reason (Vernunft). Reason, understood in this sense, refers to the meaningful structure of reality and is the source of meaning in human existence. It is that which is finite but recognizes its finiteness and thus rises above it. If Bultmann is not as clear and systematic as Jaspers in his discussion of Reason understood in this way, it is obvious that he is concerned with it and accepts it as a positive thrust in human existence. In contrasting Reason with the power of the "flesh", he writes:

It is, of course, correct that we can also say he is flesh and reason, but not in the sense of his being partly the one and partly the other, or as if reason (voûs) and flesh (σάρξ) were two powers struggling within man against one another- the power of good and the power of evil. The flesh for Paul is a power, certainly: with a definite tendency peculiar to itself. But man's reason is not a contrary power of a similar sort; it is man's 'ego', which can be receptive to God's demand and also has of itself the tendency to follow that demand, which, nevertheless, is not a power but is given over to the dominion of two powers - namely, the flesh and the spirit (πνεῦμα).

It is not flesh and reason that are the protagonists in the conflict, but flesh and spirit, which struggle with each other for man's 'ego' to determine whether it will end up by doing what it wills to do or not. 63

Reason, understood as the source of meaning in human existence, can be observed in Bultmann's discussion of the inquiry of existence. According to Bultmann, "Every human being knows or can know about its finiteness..."⁶⁴ Human existence is moved by its "care" for the morrow and yet knows that it cannot make life finally secure within its limited means. Life is driven this way and that way, longing for the true and the beautiful, the meaning of life. It is motivated by the desire for love or the thirst for knowledge in which one admits that he can know nothing. Life is driven by the idea of deity and it hears the summons of the ought.⁶⁵ The kind of knowledge that is involved in this quest of existence is "not theoretical knowledge but is the knowledge which breaks in on us in critical moments of our being itself."⁶⁶ Reason is bound up with human existence and seeks its meaning.

It is Reason understood in this sense which, according

63 Essays, p.51.

64 Essays, p.2.

65 Essays, pp.3-5.

66 Essays, p.7.

to Bultmann, gives rise to the intellectual pursuits of the human mind. Bultmann's own contribution in the realm of the intellect can be observed in his work as a historical critic. The realm of the intellect is not one that he dismisses lightly as of no consequence. On the contrary, he explicitly acknowledges the importance of scientific knowledge in the interpretation of the Bible and he thinks that faith becomes clear about itself with the help of critical scientific thought. This is all necessary in so far as man must preserve his faith in the active life of the world in which he is to be master in God's service.⁶⁷

However, according to Bultmann, the intellectual pursuits, which are associated with humanism, result in the attempt to "make the world man's home."⁶⁸ Science, law, and art cause man to look upon himself as a member of the cosmos which he perceives as an entity pervaded by his mind.⁶⁹ Because of this, the Christian faith stands in conflict with humanism. "In the eyes of the Christian faith the world is the extraneous element, which even the dominion of the mind cannot turn into a home."⁷⁰ The world is not man's home and cannot be turned into suchⁿ on the basis of a civilization set up in the service of the

⁶⁷ Essays, pp. 19, 162.

⁶⁹ Essays, pp. 152-53.

⁶⁸ Essays, p. 152.

⁷⁰ Essays, p. 153.

true, the good, and the beautiful. Man, according to Bultmann, does not become aware of the transcendent God by striving for the true, the good, and the beautiful, but only when he is freed from this world by God.

Bultmann does not simply reject intellectual knowledge, but maintains that it exists in tension with the Christian faith. This is so because the individual Christian lives in concrete situations and requires the knowledge of humanism in preserving his faith in the active life of the world. However, Bultmann does not seem to have developed a positive relationship between Reason and faith in the sense that Jaspers has. Although Bultmann recognizes the validity of the inquiry of Reason, he seems to assume that Reason's quest fulfils itself in a knowledge provided by the mind, which makes the world into man's home. This is in keeping with what he has said in suggesting that man's inquiry about God does not remain open, that he twists a negative knowledge of God into a positive or worldly knowledge. In this act man finds his security in himself and in the world in which he lives.⁷¹

Bultmann gives a positive function to Reason in relation to faith in so far as faith acknowledges the inquiry about God. Thus, one is said to come to the Bible

⁷¹ Essays, pp. 114-115.

with the question of the meaning of human existence. But he does not give much scope to the intellect or the discursive aspect of Reason in relation to faith. While he maintains that faith does not call for a sacrificium intellectus and that strict truthfulness can never be separated from faith in God, he seems to assume that the intellect works on a different level from faith and has little to do with it.⁷² Thus the Word of God is said to be addressed not to the theoretical reason but to the self as a hearer.⁷³ Faith does not flee from the world of the intellect; it uses it in so far as faith must live in the world. But the intellect does not seem to be able to seriously challenge faith or, at least, if Bultmann implicitly accepts the criticism of faith by the intellect, he does not develop it explicitly and consistently in relation to the decision of faith.

It is this ambiguous development of the relation between Reason and faith that has, I think, led Owen and Hepburn to suggest that Bultmann makes a deficient assessment of the human reason.⁷⁴ Both Owen and Hepburn cite

⁷² Bultmann, This World And The Beyond, London, 1960, pp. 157-58.

⁷³ Mythology, p. 36.

⁷⁴ Owen, Revelation And Existence, pp. 147ff.; R. Hepburn, "Demythologizing And The Problem Of Validity", New Essays In Philosophical Theology, Eds., A. Flew and A. MacIntyre, London, 1958, pp. 241-42.

similar passages in support of their criticism:

The man who wishes to believe in God as his God must realize that he has nothing in his hand on which to base his faith. He is suspended in mid-air, and cannot demand a proof of the Word which addresses him. For the ground and object of faith are identical. Security can be found only by abandoning all security, by being ready, as Luther put it, to plunge into the inner darkness. 75

It would be wrong at this point to raise again the problem of how this preaching arose historically, as though that could vindicate its truth. That would be to tie our faith in the word of God to the results of historical research. The word of preaching confronts us as the word of God. It is not for us to question its credentials. It is we who are questioned, we who are asked whether we will believe the word or reject it. 76

What Owen and Hepburn are pointing to in support of their criticism that Bultmann makes an insufficient assessment of human reason with regard to faith is brought into clear focus in an essay entitled: "How Does God Speak To Us Through The Bible". The following paragraphs are taken from it.

For what God says to us through the Bible is in the form of an address. It can only be listened to, not examined. The man to whom God really speaks through the Bible hears what God says to him and acts accordingly, and he has just as little time and reason to ponder over the how, as has a son to submit the style of his father's words to theoretical examinations. In doing so, he would forget to hear rightly....

How then should we hear? Which is the right way to prepare? The first condition for readiness is this: we must silence all other voices; everything we say to ourselves, everything other people say to us. For we want to hear what God says to us. And if we take this seriously, there is room for but one voice....

Is that possible? Is the promise of the Scriptures that God has forgiven us and received us in his mercy through Jesus Christ a word that we can believe as God's word?

If we still ask these questions, we are obviously not yet rightly prepared. For they indicate that we still consider the Bible as an ordinary book which we may study like other books in order to profit by it. If we ask for plain convincing reasons why God speaks actually here, in the Bible, then we have not yet understood what God's sovereignty means. 77

The problem suggested in Owen's and Hopburn's criticism and in the passages cited is an important one and arises in another context in the next chapter.⁷⁸ Bultmann's lack of a systematic epistemology results at times in statements which seem to conflict with his intention at other places, and these passages are examples of this. Bultmann develops the concept of natural revelation in relation to the inquiry of Reason and this allows him to suggest that the revelation in Jesus Christ occurs in answer to man's inquiry. But then he issues statements which seem to suggest that God addresses man in the words of the sermon or Bible in such a way that man's critical functions are by-passed. Where then does the problem lie?

77 Existence, pp.166-68.

78 See ch.V/15.

It would appear that this problem has at least two major sources. Firstly, Bultmann has not developed clearly the relationship between Vernunft and Verstand. While he shows a definite awareness of both the receptive and the critical functions of Reason, he does not seem to have a clear idea as to the critical function of the intellect in Reason's inquiry about God. He concentrates upon that aspect of the inquiry, which passes beyond the limits of finiteness and objectivity and opens itself up to the revelation of God. However, a complete analysis of human Reason would need to indicate the critical function of reason in every human act. Man does not come to the address of God in the Bible in such a way as to leave behind his critical reflection. Rather, it is in the midst of his criticism of the objective structure before him and in Reason's seeking to transcend the limits indicated by the intellect that God's Word can be heard as a personal address, which can be received only in faith. Because God's Word encounters me from within some objective form, the decision of faith can never by-pass reflection on that form.

Secondly, there is the tendency in Bultmann's thought for the intellect and the decision of faith to be discussed as if they existed in two unrelated dimensions of existence,

as if they really had very little to do with each other.

Thus he writes:

Christian preaching, in so far as it is preaching of the Word of God by God's command and in His name, does not offer a doctrine which can be accepted either by reason or by a sacrificium intellectus. Christian preaching is kerygma, that is, a proclamation addressed not to the theoretical reason, but to the hearer as a self.⁷⁹

According to Bultmann, human life is lived through decisions and this means, in contrast to the thought of Croce, that man is essentially will, although Bultmann does say that human will is in general not without reason.⁸⁰ This emphasis, upon life as decision and the awareness that God cannot be identified with anything objective, leads Bultmann to speak at times as if the decision of the self and the reasoning of the intellect are two separate unrelated dimensions of being. However, it would appear to be more realistic to suggest that in every decision, there is involved an element of withdrawal, a questioning which if it can never prove the validity of faith's decision, does challenge the tendency of faith to find its security in the world or in human subjectivity. This does not necessarily mean that reasoning results in a form of abstract, disinterested objectivity, but rather that reasoning is vitally bound up

⁷⁹ Mythology, p. 36.

⁸⁰ H.B., p. 142.

with my own existential commitment.

Bultmann is certainly correct to emphasize the fact that one cannot legitimate the Word of God by means of the application of one's reasoning abilities to the objective structure of the Bible, the sermon, and so on. Such an assertion would require that one submit to the authority of the intellect and remain blind to its limits. Nevertheless, because the intellect is a part of the selfhood which is addressed by the Word of God, one cannot speak as if to by-pass the questioning of the intellect. Rather it is in the struggle of the intellect that human limits are revealed and God is seen to be possible only as something other than an object in the world. It is this struggle, so to speak, which prepares the way for faith, or better, in the struggle of Reason and intellect, faith comes to itself before the address of God. And since faith is now in every situation, human existence must always be understood in a dialectical relationship of Reason and faith in every moment.

ii. Faith And Science

The period of history in which the Christian faith and science were understood as enemies seems for the most part to have passed and we are left with what John Habgood

has called the "uneasy truce between science and theology."⁸¹ Both science and theology are at present under the pressure of revolutionary changes and it is at times difficult to clarify precisely what is being said. But there does seem to be some truth in Habgood's thinking that both science and theology have been given their areas of concentration and that neither is seen to interfere with the other.

Bultmann has made a clear distinction between the knowledge of science and the knowledge of faith. Scientific knowledge is that which arises from the methodical investigation of the phenomena, which encounter man in the world, in nature and history. The object is seen as it is in itself and does not require the commitment of the self in order that it become a part of scientific knowledge. Faith's knowledge, on the other hand, is that which requires the commitment of the knower. It is that which is seen by man in light of the reality of the moment. Faith's knowledge is always that of the will and the responsiveness to the moment, which cannot be decided by science.⁸²

Faith, understood in this manner, does not deny the

⁸¹ John Habgood, "The Uneasy Truce Between Science And Theology", Soundings, Ed., A. Vidler, Cambridge, 1962, pp. 21ff.

⁸² G.V. III, pp. 107.; Essays, pp. 16-20.

validity of scientific research. Rather it frees man for this activity and acknowledges the necessity for this form of knowledge. Christian existence is eschatological.

That is, man, while he is not bound by the world, nevertheless, lives in it. He makes his life in a world of concrete and practical concerns and thus requires the scientific knowledge that relates to this life.⁸³

Faith also affirms the viewpoint of science which makes the mythological view of the world obsolete. Bultmann has accepted the full force of the scientific understanding of the world and has decided that faith must not maintain another, as if it were in competition with science at this point. Faith does not offer another view of the world. Rather it affirms that the scientific view does not comprehend the whole of reality.⁸⁴

Bultmann's understanding of faith is, then, not in conflict with the findings of science. Faith is only concerned that science remain secular, that is, that it remain within its limits and not begin to assert that it understands the meaning and purpose of being. It is a constant problem of Christian living that "scientism" claims to possess,⁸⁵ the basis of the "knowable", the meaning of human existence. This holds out to man a false security,

⁸³ Essays, pp. 88ff.

⁸⁴ Mythology, p. 61; Essays, pp. 88-89.

which derives from man's thinking himself master of the world. It is not science, but this false science which faith must attack.⁸⁵

The Christian faith acknowledges the validity of science and does not stand in conflict with it. Rather, it accepts the understanding of the world given in science as necessary for faith's action in the world. The paradox of faith is that it "nevertheless" understands as God's action here and now an event which is completely intelligible in the natural or historical connection of events."⁸⁶ And this "nevertheless" Bultmann understands to be inseparable from faith.

God's action is hidden in the world and is never subject to the control of objective observation. We can speak of this act only in terms of our existence and never in terms of objective events which would be available to scientific observation and criticism. That is, I can speak of God's action only as the encounter which demands my personal decision.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Essays, pp.17, 88-89.

⁸⁶ Mythology, p.65. Jaspers criticizes Bultmann's usage of science indicating that he does not have an understanding of so-called modern science. While it is true that Bultmann does not always speak unambiguously about science, he is certainly aware of the attitudes of modern science. But he is also concerned with the "scientism" that pervades the thinking of the average "modern man". See Myth, pp.4ff. and G.V.III, pp.108ff.

⁸⁷ Mythology, pp.65-67; See ch.II/4.

In so defining faith's knowledge of God's act, Bultmann has drawn a clear division between the spheres of science and faith. The clarification of the separate and distinct roles of science and faith has been one of the significant tasks of twentieth century thought, and Bultmann has made no small contribution in this direction. And I think that we can agree that it has been necessary to indicate the different dimensions of reality with which science and faith are concerned.

However, once this distinction has been made, one then begins to ask if this is all that can be said or if there is not some common ground upon which science and faith can meet. The radical distinction between science and faith raises serious questions which neither faith nor science can avoid. Firstly, will faith not be left to the whims of a subjective thinker? That is, will man have no grounds for speaking of God's act other than his subjectivism, and how then will we face the various and often contradictory claims that are made in the name of God's acting? Secondly, will not such a distinction encourage the form of secularism which explains life in terms of the knowable and sees religious faith as irrelevant, a product of one's private needs and emotions? Thirdly, will not science itself, if defined too narrowly, lose its significance as a quest for truth and become, as Jaspers says, a

form of busyness and meaningless correctness? Finally, and perhaps primarily, does such a distinction not draw an artificial division in man that is not true to his existence? Is not man both scientist and believer at the same time and can we say that the one aspect of the self is unrelated to the other?⁸⁸

These questions are many and far-reaching and it is beyond the scope of this study to suggest a solution to them. Nevertheless they do indicate the danger in making a truce between science and faith on the basis of discontinuity without continuity. They also, perhaps, indicate the direction that one might take in seeking a common ground between science and faith, while profiting from the distinction that has been drawn between them.

There does appear to be a possible meeting point between science and faith in the very fact that both the scientist and the believer have their common origin in human existence. Indeed, they may be the very same person. In so far as the scientist is a human being, it is likely that he will, in the midst of his scientific research, be concerned with questions relating to the meaning of his existence. This is to say that the scientist

⁸⁸ Some of these questions are discussed in brief in the essay by John Habgood, *Op. Cit.*, and John Dillenberger, Protestant Thought And Natural Science, London, 1961.

is not simply a machine which tabulates data without any reference to life. Rather he is often aware of a relationship between his study and the nature of the self. This would seem to be verified not only by those who express sympathy with the interests of religious faith, but by those who, in rejecting religious faith, seek to speak of the purpose or purposelessness of man, on the basis of scientific knowledge. On the other hand, the believer is also the scientist or at least he will be influenced by the findings of science in his generation. Bultmann himself acknowledges that one does not accept a view of the world that one would deny in everyday life, and he welcomes the findings of science which cause faith to reflect upon its true nature.⁸⁹

Jaspers suggests a common ground between science and faith when he speaks of Reason as the source behind the scientific search for truth, and as that which indicates to man his limits and compels him toward the "oneness" of reality. If Bultmann has not developed this so systematically, he at least hints of something like this in his discussion of the forms of human community.

In all of this, of course, the possibility of true community is always there—in the sphere

⁸⁹ K.M., p.4; Essays, p.19.

of engineering as the possibility of comradeship; and in the sphere of science it will be to a great extent realized the more the research worker as a man has a part existentially in the subject which gives his work its validity; that is, the more he is aware of the fact that all scientific work is ultimately not intended to bring to light partial truths, but that it takes place in the service of the search for the truth about man's existence- in the service of a true understanding of the self. I need only call to mind names like Planck and Von Weizsäcker. 90

Bultmann has on several occasions hinted at an understanding of the relationship between science and faith which is more profound than a mere separation of them into different spheres of reality. Nevertheless, the reader does often feel that he actually works within this framework of discontinuity without continuity and thus requires to develop further his own understanding of the continuity of science and faith.

iii. Faith and Tradition

The Christian faith is an historical faith. That is, it is in some manner dependent upon the historical tradition out of which it comes. This does not mean that faith looks to certain acts as the proof for faith. Bultmann, like Jaspers, does not think of the historical tradition as a deposit of facts which can be passed on to faith

as its support and the means by which it proves itself to the non-believer. Nevertheless, Bultmann does find in the historical tradition of the Christian faith an authority that is not valid for Jaspers. According to Bultmann, the Christian tradition confronts man with the claim that God speaks here in the proclamation of the Church. And this proclamation is seen to be rooted in an indissoluble way to the event of Jesus Christ as God's Word for man.

The proclamation of the Christian Church, which calls faith into being, is rooted in the "that" of Jesus of Nazareth. Although Jesus can never be the guarantee of faith, he is evidence of God's Word which confronts me now. This is to say that the Word of judgement and forgiveness which encounters me in the present has its evidence in the historical event of Jesus.

In the Christian message, however, there is absolutely no question of man's being given an historical account of a section of the past, which he might put to the test, or critically confirm or reject. He is told, on the contrary, that in what happened then, whatever the circumstances, God has acted, and that through this action of his the Word of divine judgement and of forgiveness which now confronts him is authenticated; this action of God's is to be interpreted as the actual establishment of this Word - as the proclamation of this Word itself. No science of history can verify this assertion - either to confirm or to reject it; for it is beyond the sphere of historical observation to say that in this Word and its proclamation God

has acted. 91

The "demythologized" sense of the Christian doctrine of incarnation, of the word that "was made flesh" is precisely this, that God manifests himself not merely as the idea of God - however true this idea may be - but as "my" God, who speaks to me here and now, through a human mouth. And the Christian message is bound to a historical tradition and looks back to a historical figure and its history only to the extent that it regards this figure and its history as evidence of the word of God. The "demythologized" sense of the assertion that Jesus Christ is the eschatological phenomenon that brings the world to its end is precisely this, that Christ is not merely a past phenomenon, but the ever-present word of God, expressing not a general truth, but a concrete message, that word that destroys and in destruction gives life. 92

It is not a simple task to pin-point what Bultmann means in speaking of Jesus as the authentication of God's Word or the evidence for it. But a lead is given in his distinction between the concrete Word of God and a general truth or idea of God. This distinction is made by Bultmann in his discussion of the teachings of Jesus.

But in studying the teaching (of Jesus) there is again danger of misunderstanding, of supposing such teaching to be a system of general truths, a system of propositions which have validity apart from the concrete life situation of the speaker. 93

General truths can be measured and studied on the basis of an ideal system which implies an already existing standard, that is, a standard beyond history which is

91 Essays, p.18.

92 Myth, p.70.

93 Bultmann, Jesus And The Word, New York, 1958, p.10.

already a possession of mine, and which has no necessary relationship to an historical event. Study of truth in this sense is a work of "recollection" in the Platonic manner. Truth is, then, that which is measured apart from history understood as an event in time.

In contrast to general truth, Bultmann understands God's Word to be that truth which arises in the concrete situation of a man existing in time. The Word comes amidst Jesus' interpretation of his own existence, in uncertainty and decision; it comes as the expression of a possibility for understanding human existence. In this event I am not confronted by a system of ideas, but by a specific address that questions my interpretation of my own life.⁹⁴ In this way, then, the event of Jesus distinguishes God's Word from a system of general truths, and stands as evidence for it as that which addresses us concretely.

The Christian faith is committed to the particular tradition of the Church and to Jesus of Nazareth as evidence for the Word which is heard there as concrete address for me. Man is confronted with the proclamation of the Church and asked whether or not he will understand himself in this way. He is told that in what happened then, God has acted, and that through this event, the Word of judgement

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

and forgiveness, which confronts man now, is authenticated as a concrete possibility for him.

It is in this sense of personal address to me that the particular historical tradition has its authority for faith and not in any sense of dogma which demands or compels my obedience. The tradition of the Christian faith confronts man with a particular claim calling for a particular response, and is not a statement of general truth which is placed before me for consideration. The Bible, says Bultmann, comes to us not as other books catering for our interest, but claiming at the outset to be God's Word. The Christian Church places it before us in an authoritative claim that God speaks here for us. Faith then decides for the Word heard here, a Word which is always personal and is addressed to the individual.⁹⁵

iv Summary

Faith, for Bultmann, as for Jaspers, has no external guarantee to which one can turn for security. Man is confronted in his personal existence with a Word addressed to him, and his decision must finally be one that is taken without proof of its validity. Faith cannot find in Reason, science or the historical tradition, a final

⁹⁵ Existence, pp.167ff.

authentication of its decision.

Nevertheless, faith is not a purely subjective act on the part of the individual. While we have pointed to what appears to be an inadequate assessment of the place of the critical function of science and the intellect, we have attempted to speak of this as an inadequate development of faith's relation to them, rather than an intentional separation of faith from all criticism.

13. Analysis

Faith for Jaspers and for Bultmann is a particular decision made by the individual when he dares to live in view of the transcendent God. This is a decision which cannot be finally verified apart from man's commitment in it. It remains aware of the limitations of finite existence. Bultmann maintains as seriously as Jaspers that faith is something which exists in the free act of man and not in obedience to an objective authority in the world (doctrine, church, etc.,). While Bultmann understands faith as a specific confession, the confession is always one whose content is actualized only in the 'moment' when man is addressed by Transcendence.

This does not mean for either Jaspers or Bultmann that faith is simply an intuitive relationship to God which

is unrelated to the finite world and responsibility in it. Even Jaspers thinks faith dependent upon the world in so far as man is born into a particular situation and awakens to truth in relation to this situation. And Bultmann maintains a dialectical relationship between faith and the objective world so that faith is understood to have its origin in the encounter with God from within the world. Yet, in attempting to develop this dialectic in Jaspers' and Bultmann's thought we have suggested that neither Jaspers nor Bultmann maintain it adequately. While Jaspers tends to dissolve the objectivity of the world and the historical tradition in deciphering it, Bultmann does not always develop adequately the relationship between faith and the critical reason.

This problem can be further elucidated in the context of faith and authority. Jaspers asserts that religion binds itself to a worldly authority and thus professes a certainty of God based on this authority. Over against this, Jaspers maintains that revelation can never be identified with a worldly authority and hence all such authorities must be rejected. Bultmann, on the other hand, says that Christianity does not possess revelation in a worldly authority. While he has not explicitly developed the question of faith and authority, he does give some indication of his thoughts on this matter when he speaks of

the dialectical relationship between the world and God's action in the world. In this context, he quotes with approval G. Vahanian's reference to religious authority.

Religious authority does not entail the eradication of personal autonomy for the sake of blind assent to a system of beliefs claiming the sanction of absolute or divine authority. But religious authority... symbolizes a synthesis of subjective truth and objective reality.... Faith is an attempt to reconcile subject and object, subjective truth and objective reality... without overwhelming either one of the terms. 96

Bultmann does not intend to base faith on an objective structure in time in such a way as to deny the transcendence of God or the free decision of man. Rather, he understands faith to stand in between the eternal truth of God, which transcends all worldly authorities, and the situation in history in which this truth is perceived. Thus, while faith is not determined by a historical form, it has its being only in being encountered by God in it. Bultmann would agree with Ebeling when the latter writes:

faith comes to us out of history, and it takes us into its history.... For faith is not some kind of innate truth of reason, which we may come upon of ourselves and which we can recall as we please. Nor is it a purely inward happening which concerns us solely in our private existence. Rather, faith comes into being as the consequence of the witness of faith. And it depends for its nourishment on the constantly renewed witness, the Word of faith. That is to say, it comes into being, and continues in being, when it is handed on, in

96 G. Vahanian, *The Death Of God*, New York, pp.164-65. Cited by Bultmann in "Der Gottesgedanke...", p.343.

tradition.⁹⁷

Jaspers is, of course, in part agreement with Ebeling and Bultmann at this point. For, whatever criticisms one makes of his use of tradition, it is clear that he wishes to maintain tradition as a cipher by which faith awakens to itself. In this way, at least, faith is dependent upon the historical tradition. However, Jaspers would disagree with them when they maintain an indissoluble connection between a particular historical tradition and the existence of faith. According to Bultmann, man is addressed by God in the proclamation of the Church and looks back to Jesus as evidence for this proclamation. Faith makes itself in response to this address, and faithful man understands his past and future, and the whole of history in the light of it.

In this way, the Christian tradition takes on an authority that it does not have for Jaspers. For Bultmann, the Bible is not simply one book among others catering for our interest. It claims at the outset to be the Word of God in addressing us. The Church puts it before us in its authoritative claim that God speaks to us here. As hearer, we are called to decide for or against the Word which is said to be spoken here.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ G. Ebeling, The Nature Of Faith, Philadelphia, 1961, p.25.

⁹⁸ Existence, p.168.

Yet, the historical tradition, the witness of faith, cannot compel obedience. However much it speaks of God's Word, it always addresses us in speech which is subject to the limitations of finite man. Thus the Church can in no way claim complete and final authority in itself, in a person, or in the Bible. God's Word can never be identified with that which must always in the last analysis be the word of man.

The authority of the tradition is not something static, but something dynamic. It exists only in the moment when man hears the address of this tradition as personal address, as that which confronts him, calling for a personal response. Thus, we can say that the authority of this witness of faith is actually dependent upon man's hearing it as personal address for him. The witness of faith becomes an authority for me when I submit to it in faith, acknowledging it as valid for me.

This does not mean that I determine the Word of God or the tradition that witnesses to it. It means that it becomes an authority in my life only in my submission to it. God's Word is addressed to me in the preaching of the *kerygma*. It comes with a particular interpretation of the meaning and significance of my life, and calls for my decision. Will I understand myself in the moment of this address or will I reject it for another form of self-under-

standing? This address questions my way of being and indicates a new possibility for me which has entered history in the event of Jesus Christ. If man in faith decides for the self-understanding that is presented here, the witness to that event takes on a particular authority for him. It is here that he seeks and finds the authentic self.

A significant thing about this witness to the Christian faith is that it makes a specific claim and calls for a specific decision. It does not lay itself before us as a general idea to be contemplated, but arises out of history with the imperative, "make it so in you!" Thus we do not adequately understand this tradition when we place it simply within the history of ongoing ideas (though we can do that also). We are free to reject the claims of this tradition, but if we are to take it seriously, we must at least realize that it does make these claims.

We have maintained that the authority of the Christian tradition is in some sense dependent upon man's submission to it. This does not mean that this authority has nothing to do with the various spheres of judgement and criticism which are also a part of human existence. To the contrary, we would want to maintain that faith's submission to the authority of the Christian tradition must always undergo the criticisms of the intellect in its various modes.

Faith, which acknowledges an authority in the Christian witness to faith, can never prove itself to unbelief. But this does not mean that faith's decision before the Church's proclamation is something which is made blindly and with no grounds for its decision. Rather, in so far as faith is the response of the whole man, it must be one which comes to grips with the opposing truths of science and the critical reason. Faith must show itself in continuous dialogue with the intellect in every respect. It would seem that faith's only security lies in this way of insecurity.

There is little doubt that Bultmann has acknowledged both the decision of faith in the moment and the critical function of Reason. He does not intend a sacrificium intellectus and his many statements concerning the task of the intellect make a criticism of blind subjectivity invalid. Nevertheless, there is a tendency in many places for him to speak of either one or the other in a way that casts suspicion upon his development of their relationship.

On the one hand, we agree with Bultmann that the moment of faith is in one sense of the word free from the ambiguities of human existence and consequently the sort of threat that is raised by one who can see no further than the narrow confines of the intellect. There is a participation in Reality in the moment of faith just as

there is a participation in love, which can only be authenticated from within the moment itself. Without this participation, man would remain lost in the ambiguities of indecision.

However, on the other hand, it is important to say in the same breath that this immediate participation in the reality of God is made from within the human situation with all of its finitude and the ambiguities which that implies. Thus, man does not simply unite himself with ultimate Reality; he is also separated from it by the fact that he lives under the conditions of finite existence. To ignore this or even to de-emphasize it is to risk speaking as if faith were some arbitrary leap into the inner darkness.

It is because the decision of faith is made from within the conditions of human existence that the intellect must always be an active force in the decision of faith. The intellect must stand over against all decisions of faith which are subject to error by the very fact that finite man makes the decision. It must challenge all blindness which accepts without questioning. It must demand a critical awareness of the quality and limit of every insight. Here it seems, Jaspers speaks more adequately than Bultmann. While both are aware of the problem, Jaspers has developed more clearly the inner tension

between the transcending of finitude in faith's union with Reality, and the criticism of the intellect which always challenges this act.

The development of this tension between faith's certainty and the questioning of the intellect does not necessarily lead to the older formulation whereby faith and reason become enemies. This would be so only if the intellect were seen in some absolute sense and its own limitations were not seen in the total context of the inquiry of Reason. The sense in which the tension is developed here is one in which faith and the intellect are in conflict only within the context of the greater search for Truth.

What we have said regarding faith and authority can be summarized in this manner: Faith is not something born and nourished in the life of the individual alone. However significant the individual decision, faith has its birth and is fed within the community in which its possibility is both announced and questioned. The Christian faith dares to live in response to the Word of God heard in the witness of the Church, but it can never consider itself closed and concluded. Nor can it be a decision of the moment which ignores the continuous criticism of the intellect. Unless faith

sees itself in this manner, it becomes meaningless
subjectivism or obedience to a finite authority.
That is to say, it becomes unbelief.

PART THREE

FATH AND COMMUNICATION

V

THE COMMUNICATION OF TRUTH

Any study in the nature of communication must be concerned with more than the words and symbols that are the vehicles of communication. It must be concerned with the total communication situation. Thus, one must investigate not only the particular language that is used in communication, but also the content of this language and the situation in which this content becomes meaningful for the hearer or interpreter. This approach is of particular significance in the study of Jaspers' and Bultmann's thought because we are concerned in both cases with the communication of that which cannot be grasped and possessed in finite terms. Both Jaspers and Bultmann maintain that God, who can be known only in the "moment" of human existence, is nevertheless known only in communication among men.

14. The Language of Communication

a. Karl Jaspers

An exposition of Jaspers' understanding of the language of communication must begin where he begins, that is, with the subject-object dichotomy in human knowledge. In all knowledge, man is said to stand in a polar relationship between subject and object. However,

transcendent Being is not something that can be contained solely in either the subject or the object of this dichotomy. Rather, the awareness of the presence of Being lies simultaneously in the grasping of the object and in the fulfilment of my subjectivity.¹

Jaspers' philosophy is a philosophy of the Encompassing. It attempts to discuss metaphysics on the basis of neither the subject nor the object of human existence, but out of that indefinable area which encompasses both of them. It is the receptive and non-objective clarification of the whole of Being in all of its relations, and not the objective clarification of something stable.² That which encompasses the subject-object dichotomy and is found in neither subject nor object, Jaspers defines as the Encompassing.

The fundamental philosophical operation at all times is, more or less consciously, to transcend towards that out of which the objective as well as the thinking of the subject intending the objective arises. What is neither object nor act of thinking (subject), but contains both within itself, I have called the Encompassing. This latter does not speak for itself either

¹ Truth, p.21.

² Wahrheit, pp.158ff. Jaspers' philosophy is characterized as a perichontologie. It is concerned not with Being as a determinable object to be clarified in objective thought but illuminates the sphere in which Being becomes Being for us.

through the object or through the subject, but through both in one as that which is the Transcendence at one and the same time of consciousness as well as of Being. ³

The Encompassing understood in its fullest sense is Transcendence or Being itself. It has its roots in the basic philosophical question, "what is?". What is is that lies at the base of everything, which holds everything together?⁴ Jaspers' answer to this question in terms of the Encompassing has clear affinities with the "Idea" in the history of Western Philosophy. Gerhard Knauss has suggested that it is imbedded in the Platonic and Kantian views of the Idea, but it has undergone the criticism of Kierkegaard in being related to the subject, that is, to individual human existence.⁵

Man asks regarding the foundation of all that is. But in seeking to answer this question, he finds himself bound to the subject-object dichotomy. Yet, in this dichotomy, he realizes that the foundation of all that is, Being as a whole, can never be confined to one side of this dichotomy. Rather, it is that which is bound to neither subject nor object, but is manifested in the dichotomy itself. That which is neither subject nor object, but is manifested in the split between them is

³ P.K.J., p.73.

⁴ Wisdom, p.28.

⁵ P.K.J., pp.141ff.

called the Encompassing, Being or God.⁶ Thus the Encompassing has no distinct and objective content; it never appears as an object in finite knowledge.⁷

Jaspers' philosophy of the Encompassing stands in opposition to the tendency to absolutize either the subject or the object of the dichotomy. The absolutizing of the object can take several different forms, but each errs for the same basic reason. The so-called realist, who rightly points out the empirically real, is wrong when he assumes empirical reality to be conclusively known, and when he claims to determine absolutely the issue of Truth. The moralist errs, when laws, formulated on the basis of a definite content, are thought to be absolutely valid in every situation and time. The aestheticist fails when he turns against the endless movement of relations in favor of Being, as a substance to be possessed. The ontologist fails in coming to rest upon the completeness of conceptualized Being.⁸

It is when the objective becomes absolutized in this way that a revolt or a break-through to subjectivity occurs (Kierkegaard's revolt against Hegel, for instance). Subjectivity is valid in its polemic against the various

⁶ Wisdom, pp.28ff.

⁷ Reason, p.52; See ch.II/4.

⁸ Truth, pp.25ff.

forms of bondage to the objective. But subjectivity can also fail when it loses its relationship to objectivity and absolutizes itself.⁹

The Encompassing is Being itself, which is neither subject nor object, but is present through both as that inexhaustible depth which transcends them. Nevertheless, it is known to me as I stand within the subject-object dichotomy in which all finite knowledge is immersed. There is more to our understanding than external order and mental clarity. There is an inexhaustible depth in all experience that directs us beyond the limits of knowledge in the subject-object split. This is the Encompassing, which appears and disappears for us in two opposed perspectives: "either as Being itself, in and through which we are - or else as the Encompassing which we ourselves are, and in which every mode of Being appears to us."¹⁰ Thus there are two conceivable approaches to Being as the Encompassing, either toward Being itself, conceived as nature, world, or God, or toward the Encompassing-that-we-are, in which every mode of Being appears to us. Jaspers considers the latter approach to be the necessary one since Kant.¹¹ By approaching

⁹ Truth, p.31.

¹⁰ Reason, p.52.

¹¹ Reason, p.54.

Being through the Encompassing-that-we-are, he means to work through the various modes of the subject-object dichotomy in which we are immersed, coming in each mode upon the horizon which forces us to acknowledge the limits that prevent us from grasping the totality of Being. This horizon, by its very existence, indicates something further, something that we cannot grasp within one particular mode of the subject-object dichotomy, or even in a combination of them. It is from this situation that the question of the Encompassing arises.¹²

The Encompassing is not a horizon within which every determinate mode of Being and truth emerges for us, but rather that within which every particular horizon is enclosed as in something absolutely comprehensive which is no longer visible as a horizon at all.¹³

The Encompassing-that-we-are, (that is, the modes in the subject-object dichotomy in which an horizon is encountered), is divided into three basic modes. In the first mode of the Encompassing-that-we-are, man is understood as Dasein, being-there. Dasein is empirical existence, living in relation to its environment; what is experienced is perceived with the senses. In this mode, we are aware of the secret that lies in the simple consciousness of reality: I am there and these things

¹² Reason, pp.51ff.

¹³ Reason, p.52.

are there, an understanding or sense that some mental patients lose temporarily. Secondly, man is understood as consciousness-in-general (Bewusstsein überhaupt), in which he confronts tangible objects. In this situation, man succeeds in some degree in attaining universally valid knowledge, though always of determinate objects. Thirdly, as spirit (Geist), the mind is related to the world of theoretical forms. What is only fragmented in the understanding is held together in the ideas of the mind.

In these three modes, man is understood as an object in the world. But in following through any of these modes, in covering the whole range of immediate experience, man becomes aware of that inexhaustible depth, which cannot be contained within the limits of any one of these modes nor in a combination of them. At the limits of these three modes of the Encompassing-that-we-are, we are always referred beyond, in knowing that our being is not exhausted here. Being manifests itself in manifold appearances in these several modes, but always recedes from our grasp. Our life is seen to come from a source that lies beyond the reaches of man's limitedness in any of these modes of the Encompassing-that-we-are. This is shown in man's dissatisfaction with himself, in his recognition of his inadequacy, in his subordination to the Absolute, or in the unceasing urge for unity, which is Being and Eternity.

It is also shown in man's consciousness of an "indefinable memory, as though he shared in the knowledge of creation (Schelling), or as though he remembered something beheld before any world existed (Plato)", and in the consciousness of immortality.¹⁴

In this recognition of the incompleteness of man, his potential Existenz is revealed, his being which has its source not in Dasein, or in Bewusstsein überhaupt, or in Geist, but in the primal source which lies beyond all of this. It is in this hidden ground of potential Existenz that Being is made manifest as Transcendence, not simply as a void to be treated with indifference, but as that through which I am genuinely myself. When compared with any of the three previous modes of the Encompassing-that-we-are, Existenz shows that without it, all would be empty, without ground, mere possibility or empirical existence. Existenz is the source from which all other modes of the Encompassing-that-we-are receive animation, and from which they speak.¹⁵

In this highly condensed introduction to Jaspers' approach to the understanding of the appearance of Being in human existence, we have set forth what seems to be a necessary background to the understanding of the cipher

¹⁴ Scope, pp.19-20.

¹⁵ See ch.I/1.

as the language of philosophical faith. What has been said might be summarized in three short statements. First, all knowing is immersed in the subject-object dichotomy. Second, the Encompassing (Being) is present in each mode of the subject-object dichotomy as that which is contained in neither the subject nor the object, but penetrates both. Third, the Encompassing remains a void except to Existenz, the hidden ground in human experience for which the Encompassing becomes real and meaningful, as that through which man is really himself.

It is precisely at this point that the communication of philosophical faith is seen to be important. Man, in all modes of the Encompassing-that-he-is, is capable of breaking through the objectivity in the subject-object dichotomy, and the non-objective presence of Being is "touched upon". The objectivity of Dasein is the environment, the objectivity of consciousness-in-general is the tangible object, and the objectivity of the spirit is the idea. Dasein breaks through its objectivity in not finding a fulfilment of its will. Consciousness-in-general penetrates its objectivity in seeing its universal validities as a series capable of being infinitely gathered. Spirit breaks through its objectivity in being unable to take into itself the reality of the less than total, the contingent and the merely factual. Man, in each mode

of the Encompassing-that-he-is, touches upon the Encompassing which is more than the subject or object in any instance.¹⁶

But, as we have said, it is in Existenz that the Encompassing becomes present as Transcendence, as that through which I am genuinely myself. In Existenz, objectivity is the tangible presence of Transcendence in myth, understood as a cipher or code language.¹⁷

While no one of the modes is separated from the other and while all modes go together in making up man, it is, nevertheless, in Existenz that Transcendence is "known" to me in such a way that I am aware of a real relationship between myself and Transcendence. And it is the myth or symbol, understood as cipher, that mediates this relationship. In this way the cipher becomes the vehicle of communication, the language of Transcendence, so to speak. What then is the cipher?

The term cipher has its origin in the replacement of the written characters of language with ciphers (Ziffern), a form of code language which permitted the transmission of secret messages. This code language then requires interpretation or deciphering (entzifferung) in order to be understood. This basic idea has been

¹⁶ Reason, pp.85ff.

¹⁷ Myth., p.14.

expanded in philosophical thought in speaking of the secret script of the Weltgeist which requires to be interpreted by man. Being, hidden in the script of the world, is known through a proper deciphering or reading of the script. Cipher thinking has a long history in philosophical thought. It can be found in Plato's concern for the relation between the part and the whole. The Middle Ages united the thought of the cipher with the metaphors of the book of nature. In the eighteenth century, it received an encompassing character, so that all that is in man and outside of man was understood as a hieroglyphics of the whole that lies beyond the particular. Jaspers can be credited with a renewal of the cipher in his use of it as the speech of Transcendence.¹⁸ In the attempt to clarify Jaspers' understanding of the cipher, we begin with a general definition and from there develop certain specific characteristics of it in a more particular form.

The cipher is not for Jaspers something that can be equated with knowledge. It is rather that which lights up in the ground of things. It withdraws from all universally valid experience and verifiability.

¹⁸ The history of the cipher is outlined in: Wörterbuch der Philosophischen Begriffe, Ed., J. Von Hoffmeister, Hamburg, 1955, p.139.

Its truth lies in the interrelationship (Zusammenhang) with human existence.¹⁹ Thus cipher, properly understood, is not a form of objectivity, but objectivity in suspension. It is not accurate to point to a visible object, such as a myth, and indicate it to be a cipher. The cipher is the symbol within the myth or symbol, the hidden ground which, in lighting up, becomes the speech of Transcendence.

Nevertheless, the cipher is understood as the speech of Transcendence which takes place not simply in a world out there, but in the midst of my relating myself as a subject to an object. Thus, both the subjective and the objective structures of reality are essential to the cipher becoming the speech of Transcendence. There is no direct speech which by-passes the world. Any object within the world, including thought itself and the foundering of human existence at the limits, is a potential cipher. But in every situation, the object must be transformed in such a way that it becomes transparent to the hidden speech of Transcendence.

Because the cipher comes to appearance not directly, but from within the world, Jaspers speaks at times of an outer knowing of the cipher. Thus he says that we know ciphers in the collecting and arranging of myths, symbols, revelations and so on, that is, in the historical study

¹⁹ Offenbarung, pp.153ff.

of these forms. But this outer knowing becomes inner if we become concerned with them in our Existenz. It is only in this inner knowing that the depth in the myth is revealed.²⁰

it is from this perspective that Jaspers supports the validity of the myth over against what he considers to be the destruction of myth in Bultmann's program of demythologizing. His support of myth does not mean that he retains the literal character of myth as the speech of Transcendence. He is in agreement with demythologizing in so far as it reacts against the perversion of myth that interprets it not as a code or cipher, but ascribes literal and material reality to the symbols. Jaspers wants to restore myth as "the language of a reality that is not empirical, but existential."²¹ Myth, properly understood, is not literal, but historical, that is, understood only in immediate relation to my Existenz.²² Jaspers summarizes his approach to demythologizing in saying:

When I speak of de-mythification, I do not mean the translation of mythical content into something like a purer truth nor its interpretation in terms of some unmythical truth-content. I mean rather a passing beyond all myths, - the picturesque foregrounds of the infinite manifold, - to an unpictured godhead,

²⁰ Offenbarung, pp.154-55.

²¹ Myth., p.17.

²² Myth., p.18; Offenbarung, p.172.

which appears neither as picture to the eye nor as thought to thinking, but which is the reality beyond all myths and beyond all possibilities of thinking, a reality, which is experienced and touched by us only in myths and thoughts. 23

The cipher reading of the myth is bound to no specific content of the myth, but only to the reality that is experienced by me in the myth's becoming the hidden speech of Transcendence.

Beginning with this more general introduction to the nature of the cipher, we are now in a position to expand our understanding of it by looking more carefully at particular aspects of it. Firstly, then, Jaspers understands the cipher as objectivity in suspension and transparent to the nature of Being. Jaspers' reluctance to say anything objective with regard to the experience of Transcendence, in spite of his repeated emphasis upon man in the objective order, is brought out clearly in his speaking of the cipher in terms of suspended and transparent objectivity. It is true that there is no object that cannot become a cipher. But it is also true that there is nothing within the object itself which relates to its being a cipher. However Jaspers attempts to maintain the importance of objectivity in man's experience of Transcendence, it is always, in the last analysis,

²³ P.K.J., pp.782-83.

suspended. The cipher is the transformed object which hangs suspended between the two poles of the subject-object dichotomy. Perceptible objectivity (Gegenständlichkeit) is transformed into what Jaspers calls being an object (Objectivität). Thus the perceptible object is said to be not destroyed, but transformed into a cipher.²⁴

In this state of suspended objectivity, the visible object becomes transparent to reality. This is elucidated in Jaspers' drawing a distinction between deutbare symbolism and schaubare symbolism. Deutbare symbolism refers to something final and definite such as the libido in psychoanalysis or the dialectic in Hegel. There is a determined signatum to which it refers. Such a use of symbolism can never be transferred to the cipher. But there is also what Jaspers calls, schaubare symbolism, which is approachable only from the depths of Existenz. It is an appearance which opens itself up in the present moment of my Existenz.²⁵ This understanding of symbolism can be transferred to the cipher. Both schaubare symbolism and cipher, however, refer not to anything fixed and objective, but to the transparency of objectivity in the relation of Transcendence to Existenz.

²⁴ Truth, p.19, 38-39.

²⁵ Jaspers, Philosophie, pp.801-802.

When the symbol becomes a cipher, I grasp Reality (Wirklichkeit) in it. But when the symbol becomes an object with a fixed meaning, essential Reality is lost. In this objectified state, the symbol is said to collapse into a sign (Zeichen), a signification (Bedeutung) or a metaphor (Gleichnis). Such fallen symbols can be arranged according to multiple points of view and these make up the world of ciphers as objects of consideration. But symbols, understood in this manner, are said to have the same relation to their origin as bones to a dead body. Once one begins to talk about symbols in a detached way, the symbols die. Only when we proceed from the symbol within the symbol do we come to essential Reality, although detached talk about the symbol can be understood as preparation to the reading of the symbol as a cipher.²⁶

In the understanding of the cipher as suspended and transparent objectivity, Jaspers draws our attention to the darkness at the borders of sensuous data, a darkness or a depth which cannot be penetrated at the level of objective knowledge. Philosophizing seeks to penetrate that depth. Jaspers claims that the sensuous is not abandoned in this act. But he also says: "Transparency of sensuousness signifies at the same time disassociation from sensuousness as such."²⁷ It is clear that he

²⁶ Truth, p.49.

²⁷ Truth, p.44.

intends to be free of all objectivity but wants to do so without abandoning it.

Jaspers contrasts the appearance of Being in the transparency of the objective order with what he thinks to be the religious understanding of God's presence in the world. Religious corporeality, says Jaspers, is superior to pure bondage to transparentless realities, in so far as it causes an upswing to the supersensuous. But, in comparison to the presence of Being in philosophizing, it appears as a distinctive empirical reality. Its end result is not transparency of the sensuous, but Transcendence bound in an empirical reality (Realität) of the world.²⁸

Secondly, the cipher is understood as the historical (geschichtliche) speech of Transcendence, a speech which can be known only in relation to Existenz. The cipher is not something present which signifies something absent, a here signifying a beyond. Rather, the signification of the cipher lies in a presentness which is not translatable into a knowledge of something. Thus even as we speak of the cipher as the speech of Transcendence, we speak only metaphorically, for its specific character

²⁸ Truth, p.46.

as speech is never attained to, but only encircled.²⁹

Transcendence is not, for Jaspers, a void which is as if it were not. Yet, because it is transcendent, it cannot become present in the immanent world as it is in itself. That is, Transcendence cannot become an object of knowledge. Rather, a form of immanent Transcendence is required and Jaspers thinks that he finds this in the cipher as the speech of Transcendence. Ciphers are the spiritual realities in our speech but never the tangible presence of Transcendence itself. When the truth of Transcendence is thought to be contained in perceivable reality, Transcendence is lost.³⁰ Ciphers bring Transcendence to appearance not as tangible reality but as present Reality for my Existenz.³¹

The speech of Transcendence in the cipher is immediate (unmittelbare) speech. It is that which is heard historically in the presentness of my Existenz.³² Ciphers bring Transcendence into the present through no knowledge or insight, but alone in the illuminating power in the historicity of the individual.³³ Thus the truth

²⁹ Truth, pp.41-42.

³⁰ Offenbarung, p.163.

³¹ Jaspers, Philosophie, pp.792ff.

³² Ibid., pp.786-88.

³³ Offenbarung, pp.172-73.

of Transcendence is not a dead thing of the past, but it is present, existential truth. The becoming aware of Reality occurs in the hearing and appropriating of the cipher as the speech of Transcendence, when Existenz hears it and comes to its true self.³⁴

Thus, the cipher can be properly understood only in relation to Existenz. When Existenz hears the speech of Transcendence and comes to its true self, in that moment, we can speak properly of the cipher as the speech of Transcendence. This speech is experienced not in a definite concept, but in Existenz reaching through to the bottomlessness of the object, to the source of its meaning, which can be known only as a present experience. The cipher is only present as speech of Transcendence in the 'moment' of individual Existenz.³⁵

Thirdly, the signification of the cipher cannot be separated from that which is signified in it. The signification of the cipher is not, that something present signifies something absent, but lies "in a presentness which is no longer translatable into knowledge of something."³⁶ The cipher is the presentness of Being

³⁴ Offenbarung, pp.183-85.

³⁵ Offenbarung, pp.173-74.

³⁶ Truth, p.42.

which cannot be cognized, but only listened to ("Die Chiffer wird vernommen, nicht erkannt.").³⁷

According to Jaspers, we do question the cipher as to its meaning, and by this we experience a deepening of the cipher. But in this questioning, we also become aware that no interpretation is sufficient. "The cipher is the inexhaustible signification with which no definite interpretation is commensurate, but which rather demands in the interpretation itself an endless movement of interpreting."³⁸ This interpretation is not a form of cognition, but is itself a metaphorical act, a game (Spiel). By this Jaspers means to indicate interpretation as a preparation to the manifestation of Being. But this interpretation can never interpret Being itself which is the real presentness in the cipher. Being itself is nameless. "If we speak of it, then we use an infinite number of names and cancel them all again."³⁹

Thus the cipher has no definite content for its real content is not something which it signifies, but the presentness of Being which is in no way available as a content of knowledge. It is this which leads

³⁷ Wahrheit, p.1033.

³⁸ Truth, p.42.

³⁹ Truth, p.42.

Jaspers to make the distinction between sign (Zeichen), symbol (Symbol), and cipher (Chiffer). The sign indicates an other, but that other is present without the sign. Thus there is no necessary relationship between the sign and that which it represents. As Tillich would say, the sign does not participate in the reality to which it points.⁴⁰ The symbol is the presence of an other in which the symbol and the symbolized are inseparable. Because of this, Jaspers can at times use symbol and cipher interchangeably. But he prefers to distinguish the cipher from the symbol, because the symbol has the sense of a representation of an other, whereas the cipher has the sense of speech, speech of Reality which can become spoken (angesprochen) and thus only heard.⁴¹

Wenn wir von Zeichen, Symbolen, Chiffern reden, so kann man unterscheiden: Zeichen sei definierbare Bedeutung eines Anderen, als solches auch unmittelbar Zugänglichen; Symbol sei die Gegenwart eines Anderen in anschaulicher Fülle, in der das Bedeuten und das Bedeutete untrennbar eines, das Symbolisierte nur im Symbol erst selber da ist; Chiffer sei Sprache des Transzendenten, das nur durch Sprache, nicht durch die Identität von Sache und Symbol in Symbol selbst zugänglich ist.

⁴⁰ Paul Tillich, Theology Of Culture, New York, 1959, p.54.

⁴¹ Wahrheit, pp.256-57; Offenbarung, pp.157, 192.

Wir ziehen das Wort Chiffer dem Worte Symbol vor. Chiffer bedeutet >Sprache<, Sprache der Wirklichkeit, die nur so gehört wird und angesprochen werden kann. Symbol dagegen bedeutet eine Vertretung für ein Anderes, auch wenn dieses nur im Symbol und auf keine andere Weise da sein kann. In Symbolen sind wir meinent auf das Andere gerichtet, das dadurch Gegenstand wird und in diesem gegenwärtig ist. Aber Symbole können Moment der Chiffersprache werden. Dann sind hineingenommen in die Bewegung des Denkens auf die Transzendenz hin oder von ihr her. Dann verlieren sie ihre verführende Substantialität, aber versinken auch nicht in die Blässe >blosser Symbole<. 42

Finally, the cipher is said to have the character of ambiguity. Jaspers' attack on the once-happenedness of revelation does not result from a view that there are many truths. There is only one Truth. He is not a relativist in allowing a number of truths, nor does he seek to gather together the best of all religions. He cannot be a relativist in either of these ways because Truth can never be contained in a knowable object in time. The one Truth is always historical, absolute in the existential moment of the individual. It is the unconditional Truth for Existenz and just for this reason is not capable of finite interpretation or explanation.⁴³

⁴² Offenbarung, pp.157-58.

⁴³ Reason, p.100.

On the other hand, he will not permit this one Truth to be bound to any particular object or tradition just because it is unconditional. The one Truth may become apparent to Existenz in the depths of a variety of objects as they assume for me cipher-status. But Truth still stands beyond all of the various truths in finite categories. These many truths are properly understood neither in excluding the variety in favor of one finite representation of truth (Christian Orthodoxy, for instance), nor in remaining simply indifferent to other claims to truth. Rather, what is seen to be unrelated in the multiplicity of finite truths is thought by Jaspers to be related in Transcendence, in the moment when man seeks the distant Truth beyond all particular truths.⁴⁴

Because of this, the cipher always retains a sense of ambiguity. There can in the cipher be no Truth which is final and universally valid, for Truth is known only existentially. The unequivocalness of the cipher lies in Transcendence being immediately present to me. Its equivocableness lies in Transcendence approaching finite existence in time where it can never become universally valid.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Reason, pp. 100ff.

⁴⁵ Jaspers, *Philosophie*, pp. 796ff.

b. Rudolf Bultmann

In the analysis of Jaspers' thought, we sought to begin where he begins in coming to the cipher as the language of communication. In the same way, the analysis of Bultmann's thought must begin at the point out of which language arises for him. And this point we conceive to be the hermeneutical problem of "interpreting the Bible and the teachings of the Church in such a way that they may become understandable as a summons to man."⁴⁶ That is, we must begin with Bultmann's program of demythologizing.

The volume of material that has been evoked by demythologizing is astounding, to say the least. A glance at the now long list of volumes in the series of Kerygma Und Mythos, a scanning of publishers' catalogues which in some cases have a special section for books on this subject, or a look to the index of almost any contemporary study in theology will give some idea of this volume. It cannot be our aim, in beginning with the problem of demythologizing, to summarize all of this material or even all of Bultmann's own contribution to it. Such a study would probably only duplicate other work and might also veil the essential issue that is at hand for us. We will satisfy

⁴⁶ Myth, p. 60.

ourselves with a brief summary of the major aims in Bultmann's program of demythologizing from which we hope to proceed toward an understanding of the language of communication.

Perhaps Bultmann's most compact and yet adequate summary of the task of demythologizing is found in the second volume of Kerygma Und Mythos when he writes:

second volume of Kerygma Und Mythos when he writes:

Demythologizing wants to make clear (bringen zur Geltung) the essential intention of myth, namely the intention to speak of the existence itige, unweltliche Macht, a power which is not perceivable in objectifying thought.

Therefore, demythologizing is negatively the critique of myth's image of the world (Weltbild) in so far as this conceals the essential intention of the myth. Positively, demythologizing is existential interpretation, in which it wants to make clear the intention of myth, precisely speaking, its purpose to speak of the existence of men... 47

Demythologizing is a method of interpretation which is to be applied to the Scriptures. It is not an elimination of the mythological assertions, but an interpretation of them, not a method of subtraction, but a hermeneutical method.⁴⁸ But what is the end purpose of this form of interpretation? Bultmann answers this in his letter to Jaspers when he says that the Bible and the

47 Kerygma Und Mythos, vol. II, p. 184 and vol. VI/1, pp. 23ff.

48 Kerygma Und Mythos, II, p. 185; Mythology, p. 18.

teachings of the Church must be presented to man in such a way that he hears them as a summons to decision.⁴⁹

Demythologizing is not limited in purpose to an abstract statement of God and man. Rather it is a method by which the proclamation of the New Testament might, in the last analysis, be brought before man in such a way that he hears it as a summons and is challenged to a genuine existential decision. Bultmann presents this problem to Jaspers as one of teaching and preaching concerning texts dealing with the resurrection of Jesus in the flesh, demons, and so on.⁵⁰ This means that Bultmann is, in the last analysis, seeking a language by which the proclamation of the New Testament can be communicated in an authentic way. That is, Bultmann seeks a way of speaking that will remove the false veils of the mythological language and present the essential content as a genuine summons to man.

It is our immediate task to discover the language which develops out of the program of demythologizing. It is a particularly difficult task because Bultmann has not advanced very far beyond a statement of the method of hermeneutics. It is certainly true to say that he has not developed a systematic statement of language and seems

⁴⁹ Myth, p. 60

⁵⁰ Myth, p. 60.

himself to be searching for this. The result of this is that we are left with a number of ambiguous assertions about language. Yet enough is said to indicate at least the direction that he is taking, and it is our task to indicate this direction in so far as we can on the basis of these assertions.

Any discussion of the language of communication in Bultmann's thought must begin with the concept of myth which is perhaps the most discussed term in his writings. It has been generally assumed that Bultmann's definition of myth is on the one hand inadequate and on the other hand ambiguous and inconsistent.⁵¹ A good number of these criticisms are summarized by Professor Macquarrie in his attempt to elucidate Bultmann's concept of myth.⁵² Over against these criticisms, however, Schubert Ogden maintains that the critics have not limited themselves to Bultmann's own narrow definition of myth. Ogden's own analysis leads him to say that Bultmann's definition of myth, if taken in the narrow sense in which he speaks of it, is "thoroughly consistent and remains completely untouched by the charge of ambiguity."⁵³ That this debate is not yet completed

⁵¹ Even Ogden agrees that Bultmann's concept of myth is not the prevalent one. C.W.M., p.147

⁵² S.D., pp.198ff.

⁵³ C.W.M., pp.31.169.

is demonstrated in a recent essay in which John Penton Young maintains over against Ogden that Bultmann's use of myth is inconsistent.⁵⁴

No real purpose will be served in a continuation of this debate in this study. I would agree with Ogden that we ought to discuss myth in terms of Bultmann's own definition of it, and on this basis decide whether he is ambiguous or not. I would also agree that there is a basic consistency in Bultmann's use of myth. Both Ogden and Macquarrie agree to this in some sense. However, I find it a bit difficult to find the clarity in Bultmann's definition of myth that Ogden finds, and doubt if Ogden could convince a linguistic analyst of this clarity. Much of the criticism of ambiguity has centered around Bultmann's original definition of mythology in which he said that it was "the use of imagery to express the other worldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side."⁵⁵ Ogden tries to rescue this definition on the basis of Bultmann's restricted use of the term "world", saying that this allows Bultmann to give a more narrow scope to this definition of mythology than others

⁵⁴ J.F. Young, "The Post Liberal Theology Of Christ Without Myth", The Journal Of Religion, vol. XLIII, no. 2, April, 1963, pp. 93ff.

⁵⁵ K.M., p. 10, note 2.

would allow. (Hepburn, for instance claims that this definition takes in all oblique language.)⁵⁶ I think it is true that Bultmann has since clarified this original definition,⁵⁷ but it is doubtful if the original one can be rescued in the way that Ogden would do it. The most obvious objection to the "rescue" is that world is not the only term used in this definition. We would also need to say something about "human" and "this side" or immanence. But even if we were to agree that Bultmann is rescued by Ogden here, we would still have to face the situation that Bultmann admits that mythology may be used in another sense and yet never supplies us with an adequate distinction between this use and the concepts of symbol and analogy, although we do agree with Ogden that he does make a distinction between these terms.

However, once this has been said, we can proceed to discuss the nature of language in Bultmann's thought, for, as both Ogden and Macquarrie admit, there is at least an implicit consistency in Bultmann's use of myth in the program of demythologizing. Further, however much Ogden and Macquarrie disagree (and perhaps Ogden has exaggerated this disagreement) they both suggest that the result of demythologizing produces not a flat language but an oblique

⁵⁶ R. Hepburn, "Demythologizing And...Validity", pp.229ff.

⁵⁷ Kerygma Und Mythos, II, pp.180ff.

language, for Bultmann. With this in mind, we will seek to understand myth in the manner in which Bultmann more normally uses it and from this will move to his use of the concepts, symbol and analogy.

Bultmann's original definition of myth and mythology in his first essay on demythologizing is clarified in this later statement:

Ich verstehe unter „Mythos“ ein ganz bestimmtes geschichtliches Phänomen und unter „Mythologie“ ein ganz bestimmte Denkweise. Um die Diskussion dieses Phänomens, dieser Denkweise handelt es sich. Ich gebrauche den Begriff Mythos in dem Sinne, wie er in der Geschichts- und Religionswissenschaft üblich ist. Mythos ist (der Bericht von einem Geschehen oder Ereignis, in dem übernatürliche, übermenschliche Kräfte oder Personen wirksam sind (daher oft einfach als Göttergeschichte definiert). Mythische Denken is der Gegenbegriff zum wissenschaftlichen Denken. Das mythische Denken führt bestimmte Phänomene und Ereignisse auf übernatürliche, auf „göttliche“ Mächte zurück, mögen diese nur dynamistisch oder animistisch gedacht oder als persönliche Geister oder Götter vorgestellt werden.⁵⁸

The intention of myth as a historical phenomenon is to speak of man's existential relationship to Transcendence and this could not be spoken of in language perceived solely on an empirical basis. Bultmann's program of demythologizing seeks to make this intention of myth clear. Thus, it is false to think of demythologizing as a means of eliminating the myth. It is one thing to eliminate the

⁵⁸ Kerygma Und Mythos, II, p.180.

myth of the resurrection from the pages of the Bible for instance. It is another thing to ask what this myth means. And it is this essential meaning of the myth that Bultmann pursues. Thus, as Professor Macquarrie has suggested, talk about "de-mything" with regard to Bultmann is mistaken.⁵⁹

However, there is a negative aspect to demythologizing, which Bultmann speaks of as a critique of the image of the world found in myth. He refers here, I think, to that way of thinking in myths in which the essential intention of the myth is concealed behind the objectifying of God in finite terms, and the assigning of unusual happenings within the natural order to the work of supernatural powers or spirits. Strictly speaking, this form of "mythical thinking" is mythology and it is against this form of thinking that the negative aspect of demythologizing reacts.

It is clear to readers of Bultmann that one of the major motivations in his thought lies in his reaction to ways of speaking of God that make God an object in the finite order. This objectification of God reduces God to the level of the immanent world and we are in fact left with no God at all. Therefore, when mythical thinking proceeds in such a way as to equate God with an object in

⁵⁹ S.D., p.214.

the world, criticism is necessary. Bultmann says this in writing: "Mythical thinking is just as objectifying as scientific thinking, for instance, when the former represents the transcendence of God in terms of remoteness in space, or when it personifies the power of evil as Satan. This is precisely what makes demythologization necessary."⁶⁰

But mythical thinking also attributes unusual events within the natural order to the work of supernatural spirits or powers. Here the problem is essentially the same as that in the objectification of God. But now the emphasis is placed upon that understanding of the world which is in conflict with more recent discoveries about the nature of the world. Bultmann considers this outdated view of the world as unimportant to the essential intention of the myth, and further thinks that this presents a false stumbling block to the modern mind. In fact, Bultmann frees faith from dependence on any view of the world, ancient or modern. Faith demands "to be freed from any world-view produced by man's thought, whether mythological or scientific. For all human world-views objectivize the world and ignore or eliminate the significance of the encounters in our personal existence."⁶¹ In binding faith to a world-view, we are

⁶⁰ Myth, p. 61, note, 1.

⁶¹ Mythology, p. 83.

over and over again yielding to the "temptation to objectivize God and His action."⁶²

Mythology then, in the more narrow sense in which Bultmann uses it, refers to that form of thinking in which myth objectifies the transcendent God and in which the events of the world are ascribed to supernatural powers. Demythologizing is a critique of mythology in this form. Not only can we dispense with mythology in this sense, but it is essential that we do so.⁶³ This does not mean that myth, understood in its essential intention, is eliminated. It means that we must seek to interpret this essential intention which has been concealed by mythical thinking.

Does this then mean that all oblique language has been eliminated by Bultmann? Apparently, not. In the conclusion of his original essay on demythologizing, he suggests that mythology has been eliminated in the narrow sense in which he uses it, but not in the more broad sense in which persons "regard all language about an act of God or of a decisive, eschatological event as mythological."⁶⁴ Bultmann says much the same thing in his reply to J. Schniewind when he writes: "Much of our ordinary language

⁶² Mythology, p. 83. See also pp. 15, 35-36.

⁶³ K.M., p. 103.

⁶⁴ K.M., pp. 43-44.

is based on mythology in any case, and there are certain concepts which are fundamentally mythological, and with which we shall never be able to dispense - e.g. the idea of transcendence."⁶⁵ In both cases, however, he is careful to distinguish this form of mythology from his more particular usage, and in the latter case he suggests that "the original mythological meaning has been lost, and they (concepts which are fundamentally mythological) have become mere metaphors or ciphers."⁶⁶

Bultmann's thought is not fully developed at this point and we are only given a hint as to the direction that he is following. Apparently he intends to speak of the remaining mythology in terms of symbols and images. He would seem to be saying the same thing that he had said in his reply to Schniewind when he suggests: "Mythological conceptions can be used as symbols or images which are perhaps necessary to the language of religion and therefore also of the Christian faith."⁶⁷ It is here that he comes the nearest to giving a definition of mythological conceptions used as symbols and images.

⁶⁵ K.M., pp.102-103.

⁶⁶ K.M., p.103.

⁶⁷ Mythology, p.67.

First, if we concede that the language of faith is really the language of myth, we must ask how this fact affects the program of de-mythologizing. This concession is by no means a valid argument against de-mythologizing for the language of myth, when it serves as the language of faith, loses its mythological sense. To speak, for example, of God as creator, no longer involves speaking of His creatorship in the sense of old myth. Mythological conceptions can be used as symbols or images which are perhaps necessary to the language of religion and therefore also of the Christian faith. 68

In this passage, Bultmann appears to identify symbols and images with that aspect of mythology which is untouched by demythologizing. He also seems to be saying that the language of the Christian faith is in some sense dependent upon these symbols and images. While he says here that the symbol is "perhaps" necessary to the language of faith, he has been more positive in other places. In one instance he writes that "it is impossible to depict the ineffable blessedness of those who are justified, save in symbolic pictures such as a splendid banquet, or in such pictures as the Revelation of John paints."⁶⁹ In another instance he says that God's future "is present in the holiness and love which characterizes the believers in the Holy Spirit which inspired them, and in the worship of the Church.

68 Mythology, p. 67

69 Mythology, p. 29.

It cannot be described except in symbolic pictures."⁷⁰

We gather from such passages that Bultmann intends to retain the myth understood as a symbolic picture and this, we think, is in line with his aim to interpret the essential intention of the myth as opposed to simply eliminating the myth. If this is true (and there is not enough unambiguous material here to be sure), there seems to be a relationship between what Bultmann is saying and what Paul Tillich speaks of in terms of the "broken myth".

A myth which is understood as a myth, but not removed or replaced, can be called a "broken myth"....All mythological elements in the Bible, and doctrine and liturgy should be recognized as mythological, but they should be maintained in their symbolic form and not be replaced by scientific substitutes. ⁷¹

However, once this has been said, we have still the distinction drawn by Bultmann between symbol and analogy. And again we are immersed in ambiguity which makes us think that Bultmann has not gone very far in the direction of developing a language of faith. We have said, on the basis of certain passages from Bultmann's work, that it appears that the language of faith requires symbols. But

⁷⁰ Mythology, p. 31.

⁷¹ Paul Tillich, Dynamics Of Faith, New York, 1958, pp. 50-51. This was suggested to me by John Macquerrie. See S.D., pp. 203ff. However, Professor Macquerrie does not make the clear distinction between symbol and analogy.

now we read that "to speak of God as acting does not necessarily mean to speak in symbols or images."⁷² This kind of speaking, which is not in symbols and images, is analogical speaking. This obvious contradiction to what we have said cannot be explained away. But, perhaps we can elucidate what we think to be Bultmann's intention, by placing this sentence into the context in which it was said. Just prior to this, Bultmann has said:

If it is true that mythological conceptions are necessary as symbols or images, we must ask what it is that is now expressed by such symbols or images. Surely it is impossible that their meaning within the language of faith should be expressed in terms of mythological conceptions.⁷³

One is reminded in this paragraph of an earlier statement by Bultmann in which he puts a question to Jaspers concerning the hermeneutical problem.

He (Jaspers) is as convinced as I am that a corpse cannot come back to life or rise from the grave, that there are no demons and no magic causality. But how am I, in my capacity as pastor, to explain, in my sermons and classes, texts dealing with the Resurrection of Jesus in the flesh, with demons, or with magic causality? And how am I, in my capacity as theological scholar, to guide the pastor in his task by my interpretations.... When he says that the redemptive history, which actually is related in the New Testament in the

⁷² Mythology, p. 68.

⁷³ Mythology, pp. 67-68; see also Keryama Und Mythos, VI/1, pp. 25ff.

form of^a myth (for instance, Phil. 2:6-11) must "be tested existentially and judged on the basis of the strength that emanates from its language, and the truth that arises from it in the reality of life," I can only reply to such a vague statement by the question, "Well, how is this done?" 74

It is clear, I think, that much of Bultmann's work is concerned with the task of interpreting the meaning of the Christian faith in such a way that the person will hear its summons. Thus once he acknowledges the "broken myth" or the symbolic form of the myth, he has yet to unfold the meaning of this symbol for the hearer. There is no automatic way in which this symbol takes on meaning for the hearer. Every sermon seeks in some way to clothe the symbol with meaning. Thus I do not think that Bultmann is really presenting us with a choice between symbol and analogy, although in the more traditional way of speaking these two terms represent two different ways of thinking. However hesitant Bultmann is to speak about symbols, we are inclined to think that he remains in the symbolist tradition and that the analogy, as he uses it, is an attempt to supply a method whereby the meaning of the symbol can be conveyed to the hearer. In the use of analogy, he hopes to be able to convey the myths essential intention to speak of the relation of human existence to Transcendence.

⁷⁴ Myth, pp. 60-61.

Bultmann's development of the concept of the analogy is, as both Macquarrie and Ogden have said, inadequate.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, it is important that we reach as adequate an understanding as possible, and we make our beginning with an early essay (1925) in which Bultmann is not concerned directly with the concept of analogy, but with the general question regarding how we are able to speak of God. Bultmann draws a distinction between speaking about God (über Gott) and of God (von Gott). He maintains that we cannot speak about God without losing Him. To speak about God is to make God into an object, to assume a neutral standpoint outside of God, and consequently to lose the real God. Likewise, in speaking about love, we lose the true sense of love which can be known only in loving.⁷⁶ According to Bultmann, there are no universal truths about God, which have any validity apart from the reference to the concrete existential situation of one's speaking of God. It is not only an error to speak about God in the fashion of science, but it is also sin in so far as it becomes our undertaking and is dependent upon ourselves.⁷⁷ To see God on the basis of worldly knowledge, which does not acknowledge its

⁷⁵ G.W.M., p.169; S.D., pp.202ff.

⁷⁶ G.V.I, pp.26ff.

⁷⁷ G.V.I, pp.27-28.

dependence upon the wholly other of God, is sin, because we then bind ourselves to "this world".⁷⁸

To speak about God in detachment from God is to depend upon ourselves, literally to speak about ourselves and our world in distinction from the wholly other God, who is known to us only in the moment of revelation, that is, when he addresses us in our concrete existence. It must be made clear that Bultmann absolutely rejects speech about God in metaphysical abstraction. For him, God can be spoken of only in relation to human existence. This is not to say that God is an assertion of our own existence. At least Bultmann does not intend to say this. Rather, God is seen as the Reality of our existence. To speak of God in relation to our existence has its meaning only in relation to the proposition that God is the definite Reality of our existence. Such speech is authentic only as it is made from out of the Reality to which man stands in relationship in his concrete existence. To speak properly of God is really to speak out of God (aus Gott).⁷⁹

Bultmann wants to avoid the error that he sees in speaking about God, by speaking of God in relation to human existence. It is from within this relationship that

⁷⁸ G.V.I, p.33.

⁷⁹ G.V.I, p.28.

Reality becomes master over the self. I know God in so far as He is the authority in my life. Thus speech of God must be at the same time speech of my existence.⁸⁰

In the strict sense of the word, this speech of God is not of God as He is in Himself, but of God as He acts toward me. We understand God only in that which He speaks to us. We can, for example, in so far as we stand under His Word of judgement, speak of His act of judgement. At this point, Bultmann acknowledges his debt to his former teacher, Wilhelm Hermann, who said: "Of God we can only say what he does to us".⁸¹ Bultmann expands this in a later essay when he again quotes Hermann: "Of God, we cannot say what He is in Himself, but only, what He does to us."⁸² The earlier essay, in which Bultmann is concerned with the sense in which we can speak of God, stands in the background of his program of demythologizing and consequently in the background of his more recent comments on the language that we use to speak of God. This is demonstrated when he writes: "Sie (die entmythologisierende Interpretation) sieht, dass wir von Jenseits der Welt, von Gott, nicht reden können, wie das Jenseits, wie Gott, „an sich“ ist, weil dadurch das

⁸⁰ G.V.I, pp.28ff.

⁸¹ G.V.I, p.36.

⁸² Kerygma Und Mythos, II, p.185.

Jenseits, weil Gott, zu einem diesseitig-weltlichen Phänomen objektiviert werden würde."⁸³ It is, I think, from this background that we can best approach an understanding of his use of analogy in the communication of faith.

The term, analogy, first arises in Bultmann's work in a reply to a number of critics of the program of demythologizing. Bultmann says in this reply that an act of God ("our being addressed by God here and now, our being questioned, judged and blessed by him") must denote an act in a real and "objective" sense, that is, it must be something more than the creation of human subjectivity.⁸⁴ Further, he claims that this act can be spoken of only in speaking at the same time of my existence. Such speech of God's act, says Bultmann, is "neither symbolical nor pictorial (bildliche), though it is certainly analogical, for it assumes an analogy between the activity of God and that of man and between the fellowship of God and man and that of man with man."⁸⁵ This first definition of analogy or analogical speech of God is repeated in a longer form in Jesus Christ And Mythology:

⁸³ Kerygma Und Mythos, II, p.185.

⁸⁴ K.M., pp.196-97; See ch.II/4.

⁸⁵ K.M., p.197.

Therefore to speak in this manner (of God's acting in relation to personal existence) is not to speak in symbols or images, but to speak analogically. For when we speak in this manner of God as acting, we conceive God's action as an analogue to the actions taking place between men. Moreover, we conceive the communion between God and man as an analogue to the communion between man and man. It is in this analogical sense that we speak of God's love and care for men, of His demands and of His wrath, of His promise and grace, and it is in this analogical sense that we call Him Father. 86

In both instances where Bultmann has given this definition of analogical speech of God, he has referred to Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth,⁸⁶ Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth. While Frank has in fact said very little with regard to analogy in this study, what he has said serves as another aspect of the background out of which Bultmann speaks of analogy. According to Frank, all knowledge, whether theoretical, practical, or religious, represents a relation to an object different from itself. This relation between two terms can be defined through an analogy. In philosophical knowledge, Frank thinks of analogy as an "existential analogy" as opposed to a logical analogy. Analogy is not seen as a mere relation in logic, but as the relation of logic itself to reality and existence. Thus analogy can be

⁸⁶ Mythology, pp. 68-69.

defined as "a relation of a relation."⁸⁷

Even ourselves, our freedom, personality, and volition must be understood as analogies in the philosopher's search for ultimate Truth. It is in these analogies or forms of human existence that Absolute Truth is refracted. This however does not mean for Frank that the resulting philosophical ideas are "merely subjective and arbitrary, poetical metaphors."⁸⁸ Rather, "they are true analogies, that is, they express in terms of human existence the truth through which they are themselves determined."⁸⁹

Unfortunately, Frank has not said enough in his short discussion for us to draw any real conclusions. But there are revealed two attitudes in his discussion of analogy which seem to have some relevance for our discussion of Bultmann. Firstly, Frank intends that analogy be seen as something other than a mere subjective and arbitrary metaphor. Rather, he wants that the analogy express in terms of human existence the Truth which determines it. Secondly, this analogy is not simply a logical analogy but an existential analogy, a relation of relations in human existence.

⁸⁷ Erich Frank, Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth, New York, 1959, p.179, note 56.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.163.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp.163-64.

Bultmann's own discussion of analogy suggests two similar attitudes. First, he indicates that the speech of God must be other than a form of subjective symbolism. The passage to which we have reference here is much clearer in its German form because Bultmann indicates that he uses pictorial and symbolical speech in a particular sense.

Vielleicht darf man sagen, dass hinter allen Einwendungen gegen die Entmythologisierung die Befürchtung steckt, dass ihre konsequente Durchführung es unmöglich machen würde vom Handeln Gottes zu reden oder dass sie solche Rede nur als bildliche Bezeichnung subjektiver Erlebnisse zulassen könnte...

Zunächst ist zu antworten, dass in der Tat die Rede vom Handeln Gottes, soll sie sinnvoll sein, nicht bildliche "symbolische" Rede ist, sondern ein Handeln in vollem realen, "objektiven" Sinne meint. 90

In this passage Bultmann indicates that the speech of God, which he later refers to as analogical speech, is not to be lost in a form of mere subjective symbolism. Apparently he refers to the interpretation of symbolism given in various naturalistic theories in which the image or picture is understood as an expression of human subjectivity.⁹¹ Contrary to such subjectivism, the language chosen must denote the act of God in a real "objective" sense. Objective here does not mean an action of God conceived as a

90 Kerygma Und Mythos, II, p.196.

91 For a summary of the types of interpretation of symbols, see W.M. Urban, Language And Reality, London, 1939, pp.594ff.

worldly phenomenon, as Bultmann himself indicates in the same paragraph. We assume that he means the act of God in existential encounter in which one is said to come up against that which is not himself.

Secondly, the language of the act of God is thought to be analogical because "it assumes an analogy between the activity of God and that of man and between the fellowship of God and man and that of man with man".⁹² Man knows God as he is addressed in his personal existence by God. Thus we can speak of God's act only in speaking of our personal existence. That is, we can speak of God only in such a way that the events of our personal existence are involved. We draw an analogy between our personal relation to God and our personal relation to other persons. We conceive the "communion between God and man as an analogue to the communion between man and man."⁹³

The result is a speech of God's relation to man made on the basis of man's relation to man. Like Heidegger, Bultmann relates language to its origin in human existence and seeks to preserve the existential force of language which is threatened by emphasis being placed upon factual description and logical analysis.⁹⁴

⁹² K.M., p.197; Mythology, p.68.

⁹³ Mythology, p.68.

⁹⁴ See Macquarrie's brief summary of Heidegger's concept of language, S.D., pp.191ff.

Finally, it must be said that the type of analogical speech of God, which Bultmann has in mind, appears to be a form of confessional speech. Any general statement of God's acting could result only in a negative statement of God since "every positive description of transcendence transposes it into this world."⁹⁵ I can make use of general conceptions in so far as all language employs general conceptions, but these general conceptions are adequate only in speaking of God's action here and now with me.

It is wrong to speak of God as acting in general statements, in terms of the formal analysis of man's existence. It is precisely the formal, existentialist analysis of human existence which shows that it is indeed impossible to speak of our personal existence in general statements. I can speak of my personal existence only here and now in the concrete situation of my life. To be sure, I can explicate in general statements the meaning, the sense of the conception of God and of God's action in so far as I can say that God is the power which bestows upon me life and existence, and in so far as I can describe these actions as the encounter which demands my own personal decision. By doing so I acknowledge that I cannot speak of God's action in general statements; I can speak only of what he speaks here and now to me. 96

Bultmann lends the same confessional theme to the concept of analogy when he writes:

95 Mythology, p. 66.

96 Mythology, p. 66.

From this view of the situation some important conclusions follow. First, only such statements about God are legitimate as express the existential relation between God and man. Statements which speak of God's actions as cosmic events are illegitimate. The affirmation that God is creator cannot be a theoretical statement about God as creator mundi in a general sense. The affirmation can only be a personal confession that I understand myself to be a creature which owes its existence to God. It cannot be made as a neutral statement, but only as thanksgiving and surrender. 97

That Bultmann speaks this way within the context of developing the concept of the analogy indicates to us that his use of analogy can never be understood apart from personal confession. To separate analogy from the encounter with God in my here and now is to make it into a general conception, which does not really speak of God at all but only of the world.⁹⁸

97 Mythology, p.69.

98 Ogden de-emphasizes this thrust in Bultmann's thought when he says that in practice, at least, Bultmann implies a more objective speech of God by speaking about God in analogies drawn from Heidegger's existential analysis, and by urging that one speak about God in a fully objective sense. However, Bultmann always seems to relate his use of analogy to a confessional statement. Further, the passage, to which Ogden directs our attention, places the word objective into inverted commas. This would seem to indicate in the context of the preceding sentences that Bultmann speaks of "objective" in the sense that it is used in so-called encounter theology. Thus objective would be different from pure subjective symbolism. But it would be the "objectivity" of something standing over against me, not the objectivity of an object or thought in the traditional sense. O.W.M., p.150.

15. The Communication Situation

a. Karl Jaspers

Communication is a major term for Jaspers and a full discussion of it would require that we work our way through each mode of the Encompassing-that-we-are. As we have seen, all modes of the Encompassing-that-we-are, are related, and man is understood to come to Truth not by by-passing these various modes, but by participating in each of them. However, it is finally in the mode of Existenz that Truth is acknowledged as Transcendence. And it is the realization of Truth in this sense that concerns us in our discussion with Bultmann. We must now ask how this transcendent Truth can be communicated.

In the strict sense of the word, we would need to say that the Truth of Transcendence cannot be communicated. That is, Truth is not something closed in itself, a timeless and objective truth that can be passed on to men in the form of a possessed truth, which is quite independent of man's participation in it.⁹⁹ Truth is that which can be known only in the immediacy of human Existenz as man participates in that Truth.

However, Jaspers also maintains that this Truth is not available to man apart from communication. It is not

⁹⁹ Reason, p.96.

something that comes to me directly as if by-passing the world. To speak in this way would be to identify Truth with nothingness, a mere void. Truth is known to man only as it appears in time as a reality through communication, that is, in the relationship between one individual and another. It is through communication that man becomes aware of Truth.¹⁰⁰ It is the "community of mutually conscious understandings" that distinguishes man from an animal and it is in this community that Truth becomes present for me.¹⁰¹

Then, the unconditional Truth is known to me only as I communicate with other men. Human existence is more than biological nature. It is that which comes to be in relationship to other persons and traditions of persons (Thus, in the past, deaf-mutes, who were deaf at birth, have remained undeveloped).¹⁰² Human existence comes finally to its authentic self when it sees its origin and goal in Transcendence. Here only can the self's awareness of incompleteness be fulfilled. Here lies the final goal, so to speak, of all communication between persons. The Reason (Vernunft), in which the self searches for

¹⁰⁰ Reason, pp.79-80; See ch.I/2.

¹⁰¹ Reason, pp.77ff.

¹⁰² Reason, pp.78-79.

fulfilment, finds fulfilment in no one mode of the Encompassing-that-we-are, but pushes beyond all limitations in boundless communication. It refuses to settle on any one-sided proclamation, but continues to seek alongside all other persons. "It is not I who bring the truth by myself: I can only seek for truth, along with the other who meets me, by listening, asking, and testing." 103

The image that Jaspers leaves with us is not that of a man secure in the knowledge of Transcendence passing on this knowledge to others. The image is rather that of men struggling together "listening, asking, and testing", always on the way, never arriving at a stable and fixed truth. This struggle is the struggle of philosophizing in which man knows himself to be related not to "the holy chain of 'witnesses to the Truth',... nor to that of atheism... but rather he is related to the chain of private men who openly search in freedom." 104 This struggle does not demand the abandonment of one's historicity and the fulfilment of one's life, but a struggle with the historically different in abandonment of all claims to exclusivism. It is in this struggle

103 Anti-Reason, p.43.

104 Reason, p.141.

that the limits to finite truth are realized and the openness to the transcendent Truth is made possible.¹⁰⁵

Three things are involved in the total communication situation in which persons become open to Transcendence, the mode of communication, the language of communication, and the person or the interpreter, who becomes aware of the Truth in communication. For Jaspers, we might say that the mode of communication is indirect. Communication of Truth arises in my relation to another person. But the situation is not one of the other person addressing me directly with a truth in propositional form. Nor is it even a direct announcement that Truth is found here when one becomes existentially open to it. Rather, the communication is one which causes the listener to reflect upon his existence in such a way that he may read the cipher-script of Truth in the world.

Thus Jaspers' philosophy, which is his way of communicating, is not intended to be either an objective system or a soliloquy. Jaspers seeks in his philosophy to bring the reader through the various modes of the Encompassing-that-we-are, in which the limits of finite existence are indicated. He appeals for us to pass

¹⁰⁵ Scope, p.173; Reason, pp.91-92.

through this mode of reflection with him. Philosophizing understands itself as the "timeless chrystalization of the Timeless".¹⁰⁶ It is a way in which man grasps Being historically, but only in its appearance, never as it is in itself. In philosophizing, one expresses a faith without revelation and appeals to others out of this faith. But, philosophizing realizes that Truth is grasped only in what a person is as a possibility through himself.

Mein Philosophieren verdankt allen Gehalt denen, die mir nahe traten. Es hält sich für wahr in dem Masse, als es Kommunikation fördert. Der Mensch kann sich nicht über den Menschen stellen; an ihn kommt nur, wer ihm auf gleichem Niveau begegnet; er kann ihn nicht lehren, was er soll, aber mit ihm finden, was er will und ist; er vermag mit dem Anderen solidarisch zu sein in dem, wovon Dasein besetzt sein muss, wenn es sich uns zum Sein wandelt. 107

Jaspers means, I think, to indicate this same sort of indirect communication of Truth when he speaks of the role of the pastor. The important thing is that the pastor actually participate in that which he seeks to communicate. It is not a "correct" understanding but the "spirit of the faith" which is significant. The language of faith, when spoken authentically, that is, by a man who participates in it, "gives us a sense of our own finiteness,

106 Jaspers, Philosophie, p.v.

107 Ibid., p.vi.

helps us to arrive at certainty."¹⁰⁸

The mode of communication is then essentially indirect for Jaspers. He does not in his philosophy seek to pass on Truth that he cannot possess. Rather, the goal of communication seems to be a struggling with others in such a way that Truth becomes known in the experience of the strugglers.

We have already discussed at some length the language which forms a part of this communication situation. It is in the cipher that Transcendence becomes present for man and the cipher, as we have said, can be any object which becomes transparent to Being in the immediacy of Existenz. However, there is in particular that store of human experience of the Unconditional which is found in the myths and symbols of religion and art, and in the history of philosophical speculation. This language, understood in its cipher status, is important to the communication of philosophical faith, because it is only in such language that we can speak of that which is not simply empirical but existential. This language is historical and can lay no claim to universal validity. It is properly understood only in the moment in which Existenz passes beyond the

¹⁰⁸ Myth., p.34; See also pp.101ff.

objectivity of the language.

Finally, we must look to the person who becomes aware of Truth in communication in order to see how this occurs. This aspect of the communication situation is of particular importance for us, because it is here that communication is fulfilled in the individual's awareness of Transcendence through his reading of the cipher-script.

The reading of the cipher-script, or the hearing of the speech of Transcendence in the cipher, is an existential act in which I, at the limits of finite knowledge, stand open to Transcendence. This reading which is fulfilled, so to speak, in the present moment of my Existenz takes place in an ascending scale.¹⁰⁹ The cipher is first known in aesthetic contemplation in which the visible symbols are seen in their infinite meanings or interpretations. This is the form of neutral consideration practiced in the historical sciences. The ciphers are thus understood in the history of myths, religions, art, literature, politics, law, and philosophy. The objects under investigation are confronted from a distance and without commitment. Interpretation or reading in this sense proceeds on the basis of an other. The cipher is read in view of an "other" meaning in the

¹⁰⁹ Jaspers, *Offenbarung*, pp.187-88.

world, a meaning of language, of psychic expressions, of purposes desired by actions and so on. This form of interpretation has a life of infinite interpretability.¹¹⁰

The neutral gathering and interpretation of symbols is an indispensable task in the reading of the cipher-script. It is through this that we find the something in history which serves as the mediator of Truth to our Existenz. It is in following out this interpretation that we despair of encountering Being in its essence.¹¹¹

This is what Jaspers means, I think, in saying: "sie werden zuerst kund in ästhetischer Unverbindlichkeit als ein unermessliches Reich von Bedeutungen - wir gewinnen dann Teil an ihnen in der Betroffenheit..."¹¹²

The process of interpretation can be fulfilled finally, only in the moment when the ciphers illuminate the real situation of our existence. "Sie erhellen schliesslich im Augenblick der wirklichen Situation unsere Existenz."¹¹³

It is, in fact, only in the latter sense that we can speak properly of the reading of the cipher-script, for such must always be an existential reading, in which transcendence becomes present for me.

110 Offenbarung, p.186; Truth, p.54.

111 Truth, p.37.

112 Offenbarung, pp.187-88.

113 Offenbarung, p.188.

Ciphers, understood in their proper sense, do not permit an interpretation with regard to an "other" as in the more neutral form of historical understanding.

Ciphers are themselves the presentness of their content and cannot be separated from it. However, essential Reality is not univocal in its appearance, but speaks to me only in that which I can hear. It is manifest to me only in relation to my Existenz. I do not hear Reality in its totality, but only in the degree that I, as existence, appropriate the speech of Reality as my own.¹¹⁴

In this becoming aware of Reality, a decision takes place as to whether I see in Being less than I am or more than I am. The first decision (seeing in Being less than I am) leads me eventually to various forms of naturalism, technicalism, and utilitarianism. I accept the findings of realism and materialism, positivism and idealism, which all agree in understanding the self to be that which has developed from something earlier and lower, and soulless and unfree. The difficulty with this decision is that it reaches its limits and founders. It can provide no means for comprehending man's potential Existenz, his love, and his thinking and knowing.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Truth, pp.56-57.

¹¹⁵ Truth, p.57.

The second decision (sensing in Being more than I am) leads to philosophizing which, "bound to tradition and historical depth, finds its possible fulfillment in symbols." ¹¹⁶ In this decision "I surge up and beyond myself with the urge to yield to an 'other', to Reality itself." ¹¹⁷ Philosophizing is the "eros" to which Being shows itself by simultaneously veiling and revealing itself in symbols. "The interpretation of the symbols is the presence of the Being of Reality." ¹¹⁸ When interpretation proceeds in this direction, Jaspers speaks of the ascent to the reading of the cipher-script (Der Aufsteig zum Lesen der Chifferschrift). When this interpretation is abandoned, essential Reality is lost and the symbol is said to slip into what is generally visible. This slipping occurs in manifold ways and is an ever present possibility. ¹¹⁹

The symbol can slip into empirical reality so that the tangible becomes the reality itself. In this situation, the phenomenon of the world replaces the symbol and becomes a support in the world. This is called, by Jaspers, superstition, and it is this that he thinks

¹¹⁶ Truth, p.57.

¹¹⁷ Truth, p.57.

¹¹⁸ Truth, p.58.

¹¹⁹ Truth, pp.58ff.

happens in the understanding of revelation in the Christian tradition. The symbol can also slip into allegory where images are only mental allusions to reality and not the objectivity of an original fundamental experience of it. Thirdly, the symbol can slip into the realm of detached aesthetic contemplation in which one "plays" with unlimited possibilities. As we have seen, this might be understood as preparation for existential interpretation, but it can also be understood as an end in itself. Fourthly, symbols can slip into conceptualizations or dogmas. Cipher reading is thus replaced by a knowledge accessible to the intellect. Finally, the cipher can slip into what is intentionally sought. In this situation, the cipher is used as a means to achieve a desired goal. But, ciphers are not a means to an end and we cannot produce them in order to achieve a particular aim. Rather, they are "accepted, found, and unconsciously experienced. I cannot control them, but can only be conquered by them." 120

Interpretation, which escapes this false slipping of the symbol, is spoken of as philosophizing, an initiation into the consciousness of Being. Interpretation, which is the initiation into the consciousness of Being,

120 Truth, p.60.

achieves its fulfilment in the symbols which have become effective. It is completed not in a form of abstract contemplation, but in the inner action of the self to whom the impressiveness, depth, and force of the symbols are communicated. This form of interpretation leads one, so to speak, back to the immediate Reality out of which philosophizing has its beginning. There are for Jaspers stages in this form of interpretation, the highest stage being the penetration of objectivity in such a way that everything becomes a cipher.¹²¹

The first stage of philosophizing interpretation is called gliding awareness (Schwebenden Innesein). Gliding awareness is an attitude of unrestricted reflection. It has been suggested earlier in this study that Reason (Vernunft) includes, for Jaspers, that capacity for breaking through every limitation imposed by conclusive definitions. Thus, interpretation, motivated by this Reason has no final basis within anything of the empirical world. Being is present in a cipher for which everything objective and subjective is relative as a phenomenon in the movement of thought, and in which sensual tangibility is overcome in the final stage of interpretation. Thus, the form of interpretation,

¹²¹ Fruth, pp.65-66.

which ascends to the reading of the cipher of Being, has no final foundation in the empirical world, but "glides" with respect to each of the modes of subjectivity and objectivity. Jaspers writes: "I am aware of Being by not having become bound or grounded anywhere." 122

Two presuppositions are necessary to gliding awareness. First, objectivity must be understood in its relativity. Second, one's support in the distant One must not be lost. Gliding awareness is not simply a form of relativism, which finds one piece of truth here and another there. But at the same time, it is to be contrasted with any form of knowledge in which knowledge is seen to be definitive and coercive. Truth comes to us in the objective world, but is absolute in so far as it becomes really present for me in the presence of my Existenz. Truth has its basis in the distant One which becomes present to existence in the material world to the extent that existence is freed from bondage to this world.¹²³

The second stage of philosophizing interpretation is that of the ascent through the grasping of all objectivity. Philosophizing cannot omit any mode of objectivity, but must be present again and again in each

122 Truth, p.66.

123 Truth, p.69.

mode, seizing methodically in every presence that which is essentially real. Philosophizing begins with a sense of wonder, of astonishment, which overcomes the finding of everything as self-evident.¹²⁴ Astonishment turns into questioning and the answers to these questions assume various forms of objectivity through which philosophizing must pass. One answer is given in the various sciences. In this method of research, I try to be present in all activities of the world and try to raise whatever I experience into a definite knowledge. Another answer is given in the thoughts which address us as wisdom and maxims, illuminating what we are and can be as Existenz, and what is present to us. Thirdly, in philosophical logic, one seeks the fundamental answer which is in the totality of all sciences, illuminations, and so on. This is the ordering of my knowing consciousness. Finally, an answer is given in the cipher-script which has become objective in poetry, art and religion.¹²⁵ In the midst of these various forms of objectivity, however, I recognize the hidden depth. In philosophizing, I must move through all of these answers, until finally I penetrate these forms of objectivity in such a way that they become in the strict sense of the word, ciphers of Being.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Truth, pp.37, 70.

¹²⁵ Truth, pp.70-72.

¹²⁶ Truth, pp.66, 70.

Thus we come to the highest stage in philosophizing interpretation where we ascend through the objectivity of the world to Divinity. The one God is distant, the completely other. The sensual experience and the intellect must deny Him. Transcendence cannot be deduced from any object in the world. His infinite distance means that man must again and again founder in trying to ascend to Him.¹²⁷

Either, "we are stranded on the way in the absolutizing of finite knowledge."¹²⁸ While we live in the world and in the subject-object dichotomy, we from time to time believe that we come face to face with an ultimate. But to absolutize the ultimate, to fix it in a particular historical form, is to lose it. Ideas and historical forms may have their validity as a "language en route", but they are false if they claim to grasp Reality in its totality as the content of faith. The true ascent to Divinity lies in our "gliding awareness" and "foundering" in objectivity that refuses all fixations of Reality in definite forms. Or, "we miss the way by wanting to rush directly into the reality of God."¹²⁹

127 Truth, p.72.

128 Truth, p.72.

129 Truth, p.73.

If Jaspers acknowledges the dangers inherent in ascending to Divinity through the world, he also recognizes the falsity of trying to grasp God directly as if by-passing the world. One ascends to Transcendence only through the world. When one seeks God directly, one ends up in emptiness. Everything becomes nothing.

The possible fulfilment of ourselves comes only in the ascent through the world. The world is transformed into a mediation between God and man and in this transformation becomes a cipher. The only road to the one God is along that way in which all that is (what we encounter and what we ourselves are) becomes transparent. All perceptible images of God are renounced in the transcending process, in which I open the space for that form of speculation that breaks through the world toward Transcendence.¹³⁰ According to Jaspers, theology never gets further than an intellectual understanding of the reading of the ciphers. Theology has truth, if it preserves the tension toward the absolutely transcendent, but "every imaging of God which believes it can grasp Him Himself other than in the vanishing mediation of cyphers falls short of the mark. We can only penetrate into phenomena and seek to discover the ground of the mystery." ¹³¹

¹³⁰ Truth, pp.74-75.

¹³¹ Truth, p.75.

Jaspers' thesis is clear. Man's ascent to God takes place through the phenomenal world which is finally transcended in the immediate relationship with the transcendent God. One "founders" on the way in the failure of the phenomenal world to produce God. And in this foundering, the phenomenal world may become transparent to God, that is, God may become immediately present to Existenz. It is not possible, simply in the thinking through of all possible metaphors of God, to reach God Himself, because the objective form can never be more than a pointer to Him.

The situation would be different, according to Jaspers, if there were a direct and exclusive revelation of God, such as that claimed as the foundation of the Indian and Judeo-Christian-Islamic religions. However, when such a claim is made, persons are actually making the truth of their particular historicity into truth with common validity for all men, and this Jaspers considers to be false. He does not deny that Transcendence has spoken historically for men everywhere. But he does deny the affirmation of the particular form in which it speaks. This, he considers to be a confusion of the symbol with Being itself. It is arrogance to demand that others submit to my form of truth. The contents of "revelations" are seen properly only when they are stripped of their

absolutism and exclusiveness and are adopted philosophically in the form of ciphers.¹³²

The ascent to God cannot come to rest in any particular form. There are not even any directions that one can give as to how one might ascend to God, though it can be said that such an ascent is possible only "in the totality, out of historical depth, in the Encompassing of everything thinkable and everything that can be experienced."¹³³ The communication of philosophy cannot give us essential Reality. It can at best create the possibility of our being aware of it. "Philosophy awakens, makes one attentive, shows ways, leads the way for a while, makes ready, makes one ripe for the experience of the utmost."¹³⁴

b. Rudolf Bultmann

The transcendent God for Bultmann, as for Jaspers, is known only in the moment of my concrete existence. God cannot be passed on from one person to another in dogmas or creeds. Also, like Jaspers, God does not come to man in intuitive experience which by-passes the world. Nevertheless, the mode of communication through which man is confronted by God differs from that of Jaspers.

¹³² Truth, pp.75ff.

¹³³ Truth, p.78.

¹³⁴ Truth, p.79.

For Bultmann, the communication of the Truth of Transcendence takes place in the direct address of the preaching of the Christian Church.

The preaching of the Church corresponds to Jaspers' reading of the cipher-script in so far as both seek not to pass on information, but to bring man into an existential relationship with the transcendent God. Bultmann even acknowledges that philosophical instruction can take on indirectly the character of preaching. It can clarify the essence of human existence and the meaning of conscience and decision, and can lead the reader or hearer to a mode of self-reflection in which he is faced with the question of his authentic existence.¹³⁵

However, in contrast to this more indirect form of preaching, Bultmann understands genuine preaching as a summons or address, literally a direct address (Anrede). It is "a declaration which addresses the hearer immediately and challenges him to a definite act."¹³⁶ Bultmann expands this definition when he asks how God speaks to man:

According to the Bible, however, God's heralds are above all men, in the Old Testament the prophets, in the New Testament Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles. What they preach

135 G.V.III, p.122.

136 G.V.III, p.122.

is not their own thoughts and judgements, but the call of God, which they proclaim whether they will it or not. "The lion roars, who does not fear? Jahweh speaks, who will not be a prophet?" Thus, the prophet Amos formulated it. Such speech of the messenger is speech with authority, with an authority that human speech otherwise does not have. The herald does not speak out of his own authority and claims no status for himself. As Paul says: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as lord." Thus there is no discussion of this proclamation; it demands simple faith (Über dies Verkündigung gibt es daher keine Diskussion; sie fordert einfach Glauben.)

Authentic Christian preaching is that which claims to be the call of God through the mouth of man and, as the authority, demands faith. It is its particular paradox that in it God's call is encountered in human words. This paradox is most clearly expressed in the Gospel of John. Here in all clarity the offence (Anstoss) is made distinct, in which Jesus, a man, claims, as Revealer, to speak the Word of God. The words which he speaks are God's words, he does not speak out of himself alone. The prologue of the Gospel expresses the paradox in the sentence, "The Word became flesh." But this paradox is also valid for the Church's preaching... The preaching of the Church has its meaning as the Word of God, for the preacher does not present his own view, does not admonish and comfort on his own authority, but transmits the Word of God as the authoritative Word. 137

The paradox, that God's Word is actually addressed to man through the words of a human being, that the preacher transmits the Word of God and not his own views, is the focal point in Bultmann's understanding of preaching. This same paradox exists in the life of the

preacher himself, who is simultaneously the preacher of God's word to the community of the Church and the man to whom this Word is addressed.¹³⁸ Such preaching differs from the communication of world-views or general truths, which can be reflected upon and discussed. It is rather an authoritative address, communicated through men, which demands faith.¹³⁹

Authentic preaching is not to be equated with the teaching of general truths. While teaching may be included within preaching, it is justified only when it points up a question in this or that area of life and the answers given in light of the Word of God.¹⁴⁰ Neither is authentic preaching to be equated with ethical instruction. It has no special demands to make with regard to ethics, but can say only two things. First, it must show man that he is in need of forgiveness, and this is revealed when in human speech, God's forgiveness is spoken. Second, it must show that the commandment of love is fulfilled only when man is freed from himself for pure devotion to others, and this freedom comes only as an event in the Word of forgiveness.¹⁴¹ Finally, authentic

¹³⁸ G.V.III, pp.166-67; See ch.III/10.

¹³⁹ G.V.III, p.124.

¹⁴⁰ G.V.III, p.124.

¹⁴¹ G.V.III, pp.125-26.

preaching cannot be equated with doctrinal instruction. While it is true that "the content of preaching might also be formulated in dogmatic principles", faith's acceptance of such preaching comes not in ascent to a dogma such as that of original sin, but in the confession, "God be merciful to me a sinner." 142

Authentic preaching is neither the teaching of general truths nor ethical or doctrinal instruction. "Authentic preaching is that which preaches Jesus Christ as Lord, whatever its words and ideas." 143 This means for Bultmann that the preaching is an event, an historical occurrence (geschichtliche Tatsache). It is the communication of a historical occurrence which is more than simply a fact.¹⁴⁴ The appearance of Jesus which took place within history (innerhalb der Geschichte) sets an end to history. And the preaching of this event is properly grasped "only when it is understood as the call to see in the appearance of Jesus the end of the world."¹⁴⁵

Authentic preaching is not the telling of the story of Jesus' life and deeds. This would be only a historical report (historische Mitteilung). Authentic preaching

142 G.V.III, p.126.

143 G.V.III, p.129.

144 G.V.III, pp.126-27.

145 G.V.III, p.127.

proclaims Jesus as the end of the world when it proclaims him as Lord so that the paradox of Jesus, within the world putting an end to the world, rules over the life of the hearer who, living within the world, withdraws from dependence upon it. Thus the hearer lives in the world in the manner characterized by Paul's well known phrase, "as though they did not." ¹⁴⁶ Where the Word truly resounds, the end of the world must be a present reality to the hearer so that he is faced with the decision whether he will belong to the old or the new world, whether he will remain the old man or become a new man. ¹⁴⁷

Bultmann's understanding of authentic preaching makes it clear that he does not seek to pass on an objectified form of Transcendence in doctrine, teaching, or person. Preaching is authentic only when man is confronted through the words of men with the address of God, which can be known only in the present moment of existence as personal address. Like love, this is an event in my existence in which I am put into a new position, a new relationship with the one who speaks.

The mode of communication for Bultmann is the direct address of preaching. That he has not related

¹⁴⁶ G.V.III, p.128.

¹⁴⁷ G.V.III, p.129.

his concepts of myth, symbol, and analogy to the specific task of preaching is probably a further indication that he has not yet developed the language of faith in any real way. However, we can begin to recognize some relationship between his concept of analogy and his understanding of authentic preaching, when we acknowledge the major characteristics of preaching. Preaching is a form of direct address in which the self is personally addressed, that is addressed in such a way that one's personal existence is involved. It will be remembered that Bultmann's analogy was thought to be a way of speaking of God in terms of His relation to human existence, as opposed to a more general and abstract way. And Bultmann in one case even says that this speech of God which he describes as analogy must be able to convey faith's full and direct meaning.¹⁴⁸ Perhaps, it is in this way that he would relate the language of communication to the preaching of the Church.

The final aspect of the total communication situation is that of the interpreter or the one who hears this address of God's Word. For Jaspers, the hearing comes in an indirect manner in which man works his way through the world finally transcending all bondage to the

¹⁴⁸ Mythology, p.68.

objective order. Bultmann indicates the stance of the hearer before the preaching of the Word of God when he says: "what they preach is not their own thoughts and judgments, but the call of God, which they must proclaim whether they will it or not... Thus there is no discussion of this proclamation; it demands simple faith."¹⁴⁹

Bultmann elucidates what he means at this point in a later essay where he is concerned with a criticism made by Jaspers.

Der Inhalt der Verkündigung kann also nicht gemessen und beurteilt werden nach Prinzipien vernünftigen Denkens, so gewiss er nichts Unvernünftiges ist, das ein sacrificium intellectus fordern würde. Ein solches Missverständnis würde das Paradox ebenso zunichte machen wie die Auflöschung der Verkündigung in allgemeine Wahrheiten. Nein! Das Christentum verkündet ein Ereignis, oder vielmehr: in der Verkündigung vollzeit sich das Ereignis, das Jesus Christus heisst, fort, die Offenbarung Gottes in Menschenwort.

Die Verkündigung ist daher nicht die Mitteilung allgemeiner Wahrheiten, sondern sie ist Anrede-Anrede, die Entscheidung fordert. Freilich nicht Entscheidung als blinden Willkürakt, sondern wissende Entscheidung. Sie bedarf eines Verstehens, and zwar muss der Hörer verstehen, als wer und woraufhin er angedet wird. Mit anderen Worten; Sie bedarf der Selbstverständnisses unter der Anrede. Fragt man nach einer Legitimation, so darf man freilich nicht, wie Karl Jaspers verlangt, hinter die Anrede zurückfragen nach einer Legitimation des anredenden Wortes, das zunächst auf diese Legitimation hin geprüft werden müsste. Denn auf diese Weise entzieht man sich gerade der

¹⁴⁹ G.V.III, p.123.

direkten Anrede. Die „Legitimation“ besteht einzig und allein darin, dass sich der Hörer unter der Anrede selbst verstehen kann, dass er also das ihm in der Anrede erschlossene bzw. zugemutete Verständnis seiner selbst vollziehen kann und will. 150

This reply to Jaspers is an extension of Bultmann's earlier reply when he said:

The faith that recognizes the claim of the revelation is not a blind faith, accepting something incomprehensible on the authority of something external. For man can understand what the Word of revelation says, since it offers him the two possibilities of his self understanding. 151

In his understanding of man as the hearer or interpreter of the Word addressed to him in authentic preaching, Bultmann seems to make the same radical distinction between the personal and the theoretical self that we observed in the discussion of faith in Chapter four. But, before this distinction is discussed in the context of the understanding of preaching, two further observations need to be made.

First, Bultmann is here replying to the question put forth by Jaspers in which he asks for a criterion of truth for the direct revelation of God. Like Bultmann, Jaspers acknowledges the limits of the intellect; he understands philosophical faith to transcend these limits

150 G.V.III, p.207.

151 Myth., pp.69-70.

in its relation to God. Jaspers agrees that the awareness of Transcendence is in some sense self-authenticating in so far as it is beyond proof by empirical knowledge. He also agrees with Bultmann that God does not have to justify himself before men. Yet a problem remains for Jaspers. While it is true that we cannot question God, we must question the human words in which it is claimed that God speaks. "It is not God who has to justify himself, but Paul and all those who followed him down to Luther, and on to the present." 152

Secondly, Bultmann appears to be presenting us with an either/or between general truths and personal address. While we agree that there is a necessary distinction between the truth that I contemplate with my intellect and the truth which is personal for me, we would also say that personal truth is addressed to me through general conceptions. Bultmann himself says the same thing.

Even if we do not speak of God in general terms but rather of His action here and now on us, we must speak in terms of general conceptions, for all of our language employs conceptions, but it does not follow that the issue at hand is a general one. 153

However, if God's personal address comes to me through the medium of general conceptions, then it seems that I

152 Myth., p.81; See also pp.42, 68-70.

153 Mythology, pp.66-67.

am saying that my understanding of these general conceptions is related to my personal understanding of God's address to me.

Bultmann understands authentic preaching as the Word of God addressing man personally through the medium of human words. In this is the paradox that the call of God comes through the mouth of man. But if this is true, we must take this paradox seriously. We cannot with Jaspers find only human words and experiences so that we have finally to transcend these words and experiences in coming to God in some doubtful sphere at the borders of the finite world. But neither can we speak in such a way that the human aspect of this paradox is overcome by an overpowering Word of God. If we seek to maintain the paradox of the Divine speaking in the human, the human aspect must be seen to be as real as the Divine. This paradox does not contradict what is human (language, thought, etc.) but only man's reliance upon the human in such a way that man finds fulfilment in himself.

Bultmann is certainly correct to emphasize that faith understands the words of preaching as the occasion in which God Himself addresses man. While the words alone convey no more than human experiences, it is the faith of the Christian that God's Word is heard in these words. However, it seems that these words themselves must have

some relation to the Word of God. We do not claim that God's Word is addressed through nonsense syllables. Bultmann's own work shows clearly that he considers certain forms of human speech to be inadequate to the communication of God's Word. But if this is so, it would seem that the words themselves play an important part in the communication of God's Word. It would also seem that a more theoretical consideration of these words is related to their becoming the vehicle of God's Word for me. Otherwise I am left with a form of subjectivism in which God's Word can be distinguished from other words only on the basis of numinous feelings which are private to me. If we are in any situation able to say that this is God's Word and that is not, we speak not simply out of subjectivism, but out of a more theoretical contemplation of the various claims to truth. While Bultmann is correct to show that neutral observation does not acknowledge God's Word, he is wrong to leave the impression that this form of judgment is something entirely different from and unrelated to the decision of the self in the moment of revelation. On the contrary, we would maintain that every personal decision is made within the general considerations of the theoretical self.

16. ANALYSIS

Jaspers' reluctance to form any objective speech of God is dramatized in his repeated rejection of revelation which, according to him, objectifies Transcendence and reduces it to the level of the immanent. Apparently he can only understand the Christian faith as a dogmatism which somehow identifies God with a stable object in the world. For him, the object has significance only in so far as it is seen at the boundary of human existence where the object loses its objectivity and becomes transparent to Transcendence. Jaspers' philosophy is characterized by man's foundering at the limits of existence where Transcendence can be touched, although it remains unknown except to the immediacy of Existenz which finds here the givenness of its authentic self. Transcendence cannot be communicated in the language of the world, but only indirectly in man's foundering in objectivity.

such is the boundary where what the Whole is beyond all decision can momentarily flash out. But this illumination is transitory in the world and, although of decisive influence upon men, incommunicable; for when it is communicated it is drawn into the modes of the Encompassing where it is ever lacking. Its experience is absolutely historical, in time out beyond time. 154.

Jaspers attempts in this manner to escape both the objectification of Transcendence in Offenbarungsglaube and the flight from the world in the various forms of asceticism. The cipher is the means by which he seeks to do this. He wants to maintain a complete openness to Truth which has no bounds within the objective order and at the same time a finality to Truth which can be realized in my concrete Existenz. But this attempt for him results in a communication of Truth which is essentially negative and empty.

Jaspers is never able to make any positive statement of God, of His acting toward us, without also transcending it and in effect negating it. All statements of God are properly understood as ciphers with no definite content. He says of the proposition concerning God's existence: "We apprehend its meaning only as we transcend, as we pass beyond the world of objects and through it discover reality."¹⁵⁵ Thus it is that Jaspers characterizes one at the end of philosophical reflection in terms of a "silence in the face of Being", where speech

¹⁵⁵ Wisdom, p.47; See also Myth., pp.14-15: "Thus, when transcendence is the object of thought in speculation about Being, this object is present in such a way that only its disintegration (Zusammenbruch) through the movement of thought shows that it means."

ceases and all thought is transcended and passes into radiance.¹⁵⁶ The speech, which arises out of this approach to Transcendence, is essentially negative and is to be distinguished from Bultmann's more positive speech of God. In spite of Bultmann's attack on all forms of objectification, he is still able to speak of God as my God, my Judge, and my Redeemer. Bultmann finds within the picture of Jesus as the Christ not only the unknown God, but the embodiment of the hidden and revealed wisdom of God, which enables man to understand the mysteries with which he struggles.¹⁵⁷

What then is to be said about this divergence between Jaspers and Bultmann? First it must be made clear that we are not confronted with an either/or decision. There is in Jaspers' emphasis a truth which is an essential part of the Christian faith's understanding of God. For the Christian faith, the God revealed in Jesus Christ is never one to be possessed in any finite form. If Jaspers tends to dissolve the transcendence of God when he talks about the "Christ in me", he reminds us in other places of the complete transcendence of God before whom man stands. Of this God we cannot speak as if we possessed

¹⁵⁶ Wisdom, p.49.

¹⁵⁷ Existence, p.33.

Him nor can we claim that we alone have the revelation of Him. Just because the Christian faith understands God to speak paradoxically in the world, it is always tempted to possess God in objectivity. And Jaspers' polemic against this tendency is to be welcomed and accepted. Here it would seem, both Jaspers and Bultmann stand side by side.

Second, if we accept that the relationship between God and man is in any way meaningful, then it seems possible to suggest a more positive speech of this relationship than Jaspers will allow. At the same time, however, because this speech is dependent upon this relationship, in which the individual is involved, it can never claim to be conclusive and universally valid. An analysis of Jaspers' speech of God will demonstrate that he is concerned at least with a particular form of silence and not just any silence. Every statement in which he speaks of God's transcendence, His freedom from universal categories, His not being a person and so on, indicates a more positive understanding of God. Further, even if Jaspers' thought suggests that symbols are a ladder to the ultimate, which can be discarded in the moment of Truth, it nevertheless indicates some positive relationship between the symbols and God in indicating

some to be more adequate than others in the awakening of philosophical faith.¹⁵⁸

Third, if there is to be some positive speech of God and if it has its basis in the relationship between God and man, it must not be a speech only of a direct and unmediated intuition. Both Jaspers and Bultmann are inclined at times to make this error. Speech of God must make it clear that we have no understanding, theoretical or existential, which is available to us apart from the objective world in which we live. And if we did have an understanding apart from the world, there would be no basis for speech.

For the Christian Church, faith's existence and speech is dependent not upon direct intuition, but upon the event of Jesus as the Christ. As Bultmann himself tries to make clear, faith is bound to a worldly happening, a fact in time. Whatever his inadequacies at this point, he at least makes this much plain. But this worldly happening is understood in faith as that which puts an end to the world. The Christian faith speaks of the historical occurrence (historischen Ereignis), but understands this occurrence to be the eschatological occurrence.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Offenbarung, p.225.

¹⁵⁹ G.V.III, p.202.

Thus, when faith speaks, it must express itself in such a way that the eschatological occurrence is seen really to be an occurrence in time, that is, in a historische event. Otherwise, the moment of faith's interpreting this event as the eschatological event will be replaced by a form of intuitive experience that has no real relation to history and the world in any objective sense. But at the same time, it must be acknowledged that the objective occurrence can be understood as the eschatological occurrence only in faith's relationship to it. Thus, the speech of faith must also acknowledge a dependence upon my personal decision of faith. In this sense, the speech of faith is always confessional in character, dependent in part upon my own decision or interpretation.

In so far as the speech of faith is dependent upon my personal decision, it cannot become an exclusive or dogmatic speech. But this is not to say that there cannot be a sense of conviction out of which I can speak to others, saying that God addresses me here. Such a conviction does not necessarily result in the type of exclusivism that Jaspers fears. Indeed it could not, if understood in the way that we have suggested here. But one can speak positively of this Truth which has been encountered, in so far as one is committed to it.

Finally, if we want to say that the past event of Jesus as the Christ is real for me only in its becoming a present event for me, and if we want to escape the errors of intuitionism, we must speak in such a way that the present event for me is understood as an occurrence in the world. Speech of God must be what Ebeling calls "worldly talk of God".¹⁶⁰ This does not mean that the distinction between God and the world is to be blurred. The tendency to blur this distinction appears to be a real possibility in the form of speech that is suggested by Schubert Ogden in his attempt to supplement Bultmann's analogy with the analogy of Charles Hartshorne.¹⁶¹ However, if there is the tendency on the one hand to blur the distinction of God and the world, there can be on the other hand a way of speaking in which God seems to have little or nothing to do with the world. This danger is a real one for both Jaspers and Bultmann. While it would not be accurate to say that either has abandoned the world, the concentration upon the speech of God in relation to personal existence tends to veil the real existence of man

¹⁶⁰ G. Ebeling, Word And Faith, London, 1963, pp.354ff.

¹⁶¹ S. Ogden, "What Sense Does It Make To Say, 'God Acts In History'", The Journal Of Religion, vol.XLIII, no.1, January, 1963.

in the world. And it is only in relationship to this world that God addresses us. Jaspers and Bultmann are, of course, both aware of this danger and each in his own way attempts to maintain the relationship between God and the world. However, with both, the world seems in the last analysis to be either negated or at least made secondary to personal existence.

If the transcendent God is truly encountered in the world, then speech must somehow indicate this. Bultmann's understanding of revelation as an eschatological occurrence which takes place within an historical (historische) occurrence indicates, it seems to me, the direction that a valid speech of God must follow. But he has not yet solved the problem of the relationship between human existence open to the encounter with God, and human existence immersed in the world of natural events and human community.

In making this criticism of Bultmann, we must acknowledge that this problem has not yet been solved by any theologian or philosopher with whom we are familiar. But there does seem to be promise in the direction taken by those scholars who have been working under the influence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Speech of God, as we understand it, must speak of God in such a way as to lose neither Transcendence nor the world. Bonhoeffer was saying as

much in 1944 when he wrote:

I should like to speak of God not in the borders of life but at its centre, not in weakness but in strength, not, therefore, in man's suffering and death but in his life and prosperity.... God is the 'beyond' in the midst of our life. The Church stands not where human powers give out but in the centre of the village... The outward aspect of religionless Christianity, the form that it takes, is something to which I am giving much thought... 162

The potential fruitfulness of this approach to theology was indicated by Professor Ronald Gregor Smith in the last chapter of his study, The New Man. And Gerhard Ebeling has discussed more particularly the problem of language in a way that makes clear his dependence upon Bonhoeffer's scattered remarks on the subject.¹⁶³ It is in this direction that we would seek a necessary supplement to Bultmann's speech of God, one that will take account not only of the grounding of faith in the past event of Jesus as the Christ, but one that will see the present appropriation of this in the decision of faith as an act which takes place in and through the world.

The distinction, which has been drawn between Jaspers' more negative speech of God and Bultmann's more positive speech, is indicated in Bultmann's use of analogy. While the concept of analogy is not fully developed by

¹⁶² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters And Papers From Prison, London, 1953, p.124.

¹⁶³ G. Ebeling, Word And Faith, pp.98ff., 333ff., 354ff.

Bultmann, we can see in it his departure from Jaspers and also the potentiality in it of speaking in a manner which is in keeping with the direction that we have suggested here.

The traditional concept of analogy originated, in part, out of the dilemma imposed upon man in the conflicting views of God set forth on the one hand by so-called negative theology, and on the other hand by Christian doctrine. Negative theology affirms radically the transcendence of God and God becomes the Incomprehensible for which all language is inadequate. Critics of negative theology claim that this approach leads eventually to an unknown God and a life of agnosticism. Traditional Christian doctrine ascribes attributes to God on the basis of God's being revealed in Jesus as the Christ. But critics of this approach claim that one runs the risk of anthropomorphism in speaking of God as good, wise, and so on. The concept of analogy arose as an attempt to mediate between these two extremes of agnosticism and anthropomorphism.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ The following discussion of the traditional concept of analogy is dependent in particular upon: E. L. Mascall, Existence And Analogy, London, 1949, pp.92ff. and Frederick Ferre, Language, Logic and God, New York, 1961, pp.67ff.

Traditionally, two types of analogy have been considered relevant to the language of theism. They are two sub-types of the analogy unius ad alterum in which the relationship between the terms of the analogy is understood on the basis of the relation that the one term has to the other. The two sub-types of analogy unius ad alterum are the analogy of attribution and the analogy of proportionality.

In the analogy of attribution two terms are related which differ in many respects. One term of the analogy possesses the characteristic predicated of it in an actual sense, and the other term has the same characteristic predicated of it in a derivative^a sense. Thus when we say that God is good, we are taking a term derived from our experience of the goodness of creatures, and applying it in a derivative sense to God. But as Mascall suggests, we are not in this way saying that God is good in the formal or actual sense. At most we are saying that God is able to produce goodness in man. The analogy of attribution does not exclude the possibility of God's possessing goodness formally in Himself, but the analogy itself does not ascribe goodness to God in this manner. It only says that what is able to produce an effect may have the term signifying that effect applied to it.

The analogy of proportionality claims that both terms in the analogy possess the analogue in a literal and not in a derived sense. However, each term is said to possess it only in a way appropriate to its own distinctiveness. Thus, bull applies to both an animal and a target. Bull is contained formally in each term of the analogy, but in a mode determined by the term of the analogy itself. Thus goodness, predicated of God belongs to His nature in the same way that goodness belongs to the nature of man. In this situation, God's goodness is neither unrelated to man's goodness, nor is it identical with it. We are in effect saying that the goodness of God is to God as the goodness of man is to man. It is clear from this that we can conceive man's nature and the relation of goodness to it, but we cannot do the same with goodness in relation to God's goodness. Thus the analogy again seems to fail its role as the mediator.

It is apparent that this short summary of the traditional use of the concept of analogy is not all that can be said on this matter. Professor McIntyre of Edinburgh has indicated a number of uses of analogy in contemporary philosophy and theology which differ from the traditional forms.¹⁶⁵ But we do have enough

¹⁶⁵ John McIntyre, "Analogy", Scottish Journal of Theology, vol.12, no.1, March, 1959, pp.1-20.

information to see that Bultmann's concept of analogy is not to be simply identified with either of the traditional concepts. Analogies of the traditional type are metaphysically oriented and seek to provide us with information about real properties of the Divine. Bultmann, on the other hand introduces what Erich Frank calls an existential analogy, in which he attempts to speak not so much of God as of God's relation to human existence in the act toward existence. Bultmann's analogy cannot be understood in separation from personal confession in which God is known to speak to me here and now.

If Bultmann intends with his concept of analogy to speak of God purely in personal terms so that all speech of God becomes simply speech of myself, he faces a real difficulty. And this difficulty would face him whether or not he said at the same time that speech of myself is speech of God. As Van Buren says:

If "God loves me" means, "I feel secure, wanted, of value," then the second sentence can function perfectly well in place of the first. It does not follow, however, that "God loves me" will function in the place of "I feel secure." 166

However, while Bultmann often writes as if the result of demythologizing and the speech of analogy will be simply

¹⁶⁶ Paul Van Buren, The Secular Meaning Of The Gospel, London, 1963, p.67.

speech of myself, he always maintains or wants to maintain a link with the historical event of the Christian revelation which, consistent or not, prevents his speech from becoming purely and simply talk about myself.

Bultmann opens a possible direction for the speech of God, in seeking somehow to bring together my personal existence and the historical event out of which my personal existence has come to speak of God. But he has not yet been able to speak positively of this relationship without revealing the tendency to dissolve the speech of God into speech of myself. An adequate language of God will need to face this problem in Bultmann's thought and seek to develop my present relation with the past event of Jesus as the Christ in such a way that speech is of more than my personal existence. Such a speech must be speech out of the world in which I have my existence.

CONCLUSION

VI. FAITH AND HISTORY

We now have before us a fairly comprehensive survey of Jaspers' and Bultmann's thought concerning the relationship between human existence and God. This relationship has been approached from a number of directions and in each case we have sought to bring to light the fundamental lines of convergence and divergence in their thought. In spite of the fact that one speaks as a theologian and the other as a philosopher, a remarkable similarity has been indicated in their understanding of men's relation to God. Perhaps, in saying this, we need to recall that Jaspers looks upon himself as a protestant and a heretic in the Christian Church, and that Bultmann's roots in existential philosophy are much the same as Jaspers'. However, at every crucial point where one might be inclined to put Jaspers and Bultmann into the same mold, so to speak, they shatter the mold and move out in their separate directions.

It is not our purpose here to summarize the discussion between Jaspers and Bultmann which has formed the main body of this study. Our intention from the beginning has been to open up the possibility for further discussion between Christian theology and existential philosophy, and it is now our aim to indicate the direction in which such discussion might be continued with profit. Jaspers and Bultmann

are alike in approaching man not simply as an object in the world, but as one who has the possibility of existing either inauthentically in bondage to the world or authentically in freedom from it. They also agree in understanding inauthentic and authentic existence to be dependent upon man's relation to God. For both, authentic existence is dependent upon a gift of God which becomes realized in history through faith. However, in working out the precise relationship of faith to history, their thoughts diverge and their ideas clash.

Jaspers is representative of the philosopher who, since the Renaissance, has challenged every implicit or explicit tendency to impose a "religious" superstructure on the understanding of existence in the world. He sees clearly the problem of religious supernaturalism which has resulted in the misleading division between the sacred and the profane, the suprahistorical and the historical. But he is also aware of the problem which has developed out of Post-Renaissance man's attempt to control history. Man has sought to convince himself that his true destiny resides in his unlimited perfectibility, and he has sought his security in this perfectibility. He sought freedom from all external authorities and he thought that he had found this freedom in himself, in his creation and control

of history.

But today, it is history itself which challenges man's freedom and security. His advances in science and civilization have often become the means of his self-destruction. In seeking to control history, man has fallen victim to its control; his actions do not appear to conform to his intentions. Because history seems to challenge man's freedom and security, it has come to be understood as a process with a necessity similar to nature. Man reflects upon the objective forces of nature and history and his only freedom seems to be that of yielding himself up to these powers. The very freedom which Post-Renaissance man sought seems frustrated in his failure to overcome the powers of history.¹

As a philosopher, Jaspers stands at the end, so to speak, of man's attempt to find his freedom in his own control of history. According to Jaspers, Reason challenges all attempts to impose a supernatural structure upon human existence. But, at the same time, Reason challenges man's attempt to create his own existence out of the world. Freedom, for Jaspers, is found not in man himself, but comes finally as a gift from beyond. Human freedom is real-

¹See the discussion of this development in philosophy in: Erich Frank, Philosophical Understanding And Religious Truth, Chapter V.

ized in the inner act of man in which he acknowledges his authentic existence to be the gift of the Eternal. This act occurs not in some mystical flight from the world, nor in the assent to some worldly authority, but in the "moment" of human existence when history and nature become ciphers of Transcendence, the speech of God.

Bultmann, as a theologian, comes to the present with a background similar in many respects to Jaspers' background. He seeks, as vigorously as Jaspers, to break through the tendency of religion to impose an artificial superstructure upon history. Demythologization is an attempt to break through the supernatural and the supra-historical and to bring the gift of God into time and into history. Bultmann is also aware of the frustrated attempt of modern man to gain himself out of his own creation of himself in the world. Yet, Bultmann has grasped, at the same time, the significance of the thought expressed by Luther when he said, "The sphere of faith's works is worldly society and its order."²

We can put this in other words in saying that Bultmann takes seriously the meaning of God's incarnation in the world, that God entered history, that the Word became flesh. If this event stands as a judgement upon man's

²Quoted by R.G. Smith, The New Man, p. 41. This study provides an excellent survey of man's attitude to history since the Renaissance from the theological perspective.

attempt to gain his freedom out of his own perfectibility, it provides hope in the announcement of man's freedom from the world. The incarnation does not impose a superstructure upon history, but announces from within history that God's gift of freedom is a new possibility for men, that this gift can be encountered in day-to-day events in the world.

Thus, both Jaspers and Bultmann bring us to the question concerning the relation of faith to history which is so significant in the contemporary world of thought. It is also at this point that their thoughts seem to diverge and move out in different directions. Yet it would seem that it is in this question concerning the relation of faith to history that further discussion along the lines provided by Jaspers and Bultmann may be most fruitful. While we have supported Bultmann's attempt to elucidate the Christian understanding of incarnational history, we have also indicated certain inadequacies which become apparent in the confrontation with Jaspers' thought. The result is that we are not left with an either/or decision between the thought of Jaspers and Bultmann. Rather, at particular points in their discussion where their thoughts conflict, we confront the possibility of a breakthrough in some of the major problems that they raise. It is along these lines we suggest that further discussion between the

thought of Jaspers and Bultman might be profitable. We want to suggest two areas in which we think that such a venture might prove fruitful.

First, there is the problem of the relationship between Historie and Geschichte in the interpretation of history. History is interpreted or understood in two dimensions. Dimension seems to be an appropriate term here, for we are speaking not of two events in time but of two ways of looking at the same event. For instance, the Church in Britain has an annual Remembrance Day. On this day these Words of Remembrance are read in Churches throughout the nation: "They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old; Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them." For the external observer, who in no way identifies himself with the history to which these words refer, the words have little or no meaning, but are simply words read annually in the Church to commemorate those who have given their lives in service of their country. But for many British people, who have lived through the history to which these words refer, the words re-enact a situation in which sectional differences are forgotten and individuals are bound together as the British nation. Seen from the first dimension the words are

simply a group of symbols which have been brought together by certain precipitating situations. But seen from the second dimension the words become pregnant with meaning.

These two dimensions of understanding are indicated in the German language by the words, Historie and Geschichte. The historische dimension designates that mode of understanding in which one observes something from a distance and without commitment. The geschichtliche dimension designates that mode of understanding in which one is actively engaged in the object of one's knowing. That is, history confronts me with the type of question that requires of me more than disinterested observation. Geschichtliche understanding, then, is not simply subjectivistic since it is based on something external to the interpreter, but neither is it objectivistic, an understanding based simply on external observation. On the one hand, Geschichte is an understanding of Historie. Without the latter, the former would have no existence. On the other hand, Historie, if left to itself, results in emptiness and meaninglessness. It is fulfilled only in relation to Geschichte. In this sense we can say that Historie and Geschichte overlap one another, that they stand in dialectical relationship, each in some way dependent upon the other.

While it may be true to say that in some quarters

the important thing is to grasp clearly the distinction between these two dimensions of historical understanding, the real question, for those who have worked along the general lines set by Jaspers and Bultmann, is the one regarding the relationship between Historie and Geschichte. Are we simply to separate these two dimensions, or are we to ask how they are bound up with one another? Both Jaspers and Bultmann maintain that Historie and Geschichte are related. Yet, in working out this relationship, the thought of the one always seems to be a critique of the thought of the other. It is at this point that one possible channel for further discussion along the lines set for us by Jaspers and Bultmann can be seen.

Jaspers begins his thought with a foothold in the objective dimension of human experience. This is true of his life both biographically and intellectually. His initial interests were in the field of science, which grounded him in the historische dimension of understanding, and as a philosopher he has always attempted to begin in this dimension, so to speak, and move through to its limits. This same perspective is maintained in his discussion of faith's understanding of the disclosure of Transcendence. Jaspers suggests that the awareness of Transcendence is mediated through nature and history. Yet this mediation occurs only

when we transcend the objective structure of nature and history, when nature and history become transparent to Reality in the "moment" of human existence.

Jaspers' central method seems to be, that beginning at any one point within the historische dimension and carrying it through to its limits, we come upon the question of Existenz, which is the question of Geschichte. It is this process that he traces in his understanding of the Encompassing-that-we-are. Man encounters an horizon in every aspect of human thought, which urges him further in the greater quest for Truth, which lies at the base of all human knowledge. And this quest culminated in the decision in which one makes oneself in relation to Transcendence, an act that must be performed again and again in every moment of life. Jaspers seems to be saying something very similar to von Weizsäcker, when the latter says, "only after we have pursued the history of nature up to man do we become aware that by inquiring into nature we are inquiring into ourselves."³

Jaspers, of course, does not suggest that Historie dissolves into Geschichte. Rather, it would seem that Historie, in being taken to its limits, founders upon that which can be fulfilled only by a decisive action on the

³ C.F. von Weizsäcker, The History Of Nature, London, 1951, p.143.

part of man, in which he leaps, so to speak, from historie into Geschichte. I find Jaspers' analysis very helpful up to this point and the suggestions that he makes with regard to the relation between science and philosophy are illuminating.

However, the next step that he takes is less helpful and tends to weaken the very relationship that he has developed so clearly from the side of Historie. It is here that Jaspers introduces the concept of the cipher as the speech of Transcendence. Jaspers' discussion of the cipher begins in the objective world with the myths and symbols recorded in time. But in philosophical reflection, in which he attempts to transcend the objectivity of the symbols, Historie seems to be suspended. The objective world is suspended and becomes transparent to Being in a moment of human experience. Historie seems, in the final analysis, to be nothing more than the situation into which man is born, a stimulus for man's awakening to the truth. Certainly there does not appear to be an indissoluble relationship between it and man's immediate experience of Transcendence.

Thus when one approaches Jaspers' understanding of relationship between Historie and Geschichte from the side of Geschichte, Historie seems rather unimportant. Jaspers'

reaction to the objectification of truth seems to have over-powered him at times and he seems to have difficulty in getting beyond a de-historicized or subjectivistic metaphysic. At least one can say that Jaspers finally removes the experience from its real roots in time. The dialectic between Historie and Geschichte seems to be weakened by his radical criticism of objectivity.

Bultmann, it would seem, is able to supply the missing link in Jaspers' development of this dialectic. Some persons have suggested that Bultmann flees from Historie and takes refuge in Geschichte. But whenever they have made such criticisms, they have had to take account of the continuous recurrence of Historie in his thought, and they have done so by maintaining in one way or another that Bultmann's thought is inconsistent. We, on the contrary, have suggested that Historie is always the presupposition of Geschichte for Bultmann. The geschichtliche understanding of oneself which is fulfilled in the Christian faith, according to Bultmann, cannot be separated from Historie, but is dependent upon it. Bultmann has made this very clear in his most recent essay on the subject.⁴ Whenever one sees the geschichtliche event in Bultmann's thought, one is at the same time directed to

⁴ Kerygma Und Mythos, VI\1, pp.22ff.

the historische event.

However, the dialectic is not always so clear in Bultmann's thought when we look at it from the side of Historie. From this perspective, it seems that Bultmann, for the most part, is content to bring our attention to the two dimensions of historical understanding and to the judgement of the Christian faith upon the tendency of man to absolutize his historische knowledge. He has given little attention to a positive development of the relationship between historische research and man's understanding of himself in the geschichtliche moment.

It is at this point that Jaspers' understanding of historische research within the context of the greater search for wisdom has its relevance. Bultmann himself seems to open the way for the development of his thought along these lines in his recognition of Planck and von Weizsäcker as men who are involved existentially in their work as scientists.⁵ But he has not brought into a clear perspective what positive contribution historische research makes to man's understanding of himself, except to suggest that it indicates that the Word of God has its roots in a particular event in time.

In so far as Jaspers understands historische research as one part of the greater search for truth, which

⁵ Essays, p.299.

has its impetus in the search for truth and its fulfillment in the moment of authentic existence, the theologian can learn from him. It is not this research that the Christian faith challenges, but the tendency of such research to fulfill the question of truth out of itself, that is, by absolutizing something in the world. Unless contemporary theology pays more attention to this side of the relationship between Historie and Geschichte, there is the danger that the dialectic between faith and the world will be lost and the world and faith will become two unrelated dimensions of life. Historische research might become simply a meaningless activity of busyness separated from the quest for truth, and geschichtliche understanding might be ignored or dismissed as an irrelevant realm of subjectivism.

Secondly, and closely related to the problem of the relationship between Historie and Geschichte, is the problem of the relationship between faith and reason. This is a question which arises in every new age of theology and must be answered again and again in the context of the thought of the age. The particular aspect of the problem with which we are concerned can be understood in the context of the relationship between the decision of faith and rational reflection. This perhaps can be put in the form of an analogy. John and Mary, who have known one another

for only a short period of time, become aware of some dynamic occurrence taking place between them, which demands a decision from them. But, how will they make this decision?

Three fundamental possibilities are open to them in this situation. First, they can respond spontaneously, "doing what comes naturally", so to speak. This form of decision might be associated with words such as subjectivism or even emotionalism. Second, they can abstract themselves from the situation and seek to reflect upon their relationship in an objective manner, asking psychological^{and} physiological questions. Third, they can attempt to hold together the immediate experience of their situation and their reflection upon it. That is, they can seek to reflect from within the experience itself.⁶

The first possibility appears more closely related to an animal response than a human response, and reveals little of the capacity of the human to transcend himself

⁶ H.P. Owen makes reference to Gabriel Marcel's distinction between primary and secondary reflection in regard to this decision of faith. Owen understands this to be a possible way out of the problem caused by Bultmann's inadequate assessment of reason. Marcel's thought at this point seems very near to Jaspers' thought. See G. Marcel, Mystery of Being, vol. I, London, 1950, 77ff. What we have called the second possibility is for Marcel primary reflection and what we have called the third possibility, Marcel calls secondary reflection.

and his situation in making a responsible decision. The second possibility is an unthinkable one if one is really interested in making a decision. That is, abstract study of human relationships may provide necessary information, but it can never lead in itself to a decision. Rather it results only in indecision. Thus the third possibility seems to be the most adequate one. Here John and Mary confront the immediate experience of the occurrence between them, asking questions of it, but always in relation to the experience itself.

These same three possibilities can be applied analogously to one's immediate experience of the encounter with God in the world. According to Bultmann, this encounter takes place within the day-to-day events in the world, where God addresses us and calls us to decide whether we will live out of our past or His future. But how will we decide? Will we react spontaneously in a blind act of will on the basis of the immediate experience? Such a decision would probably lead to illusion and deception. Will we withdraw from participation in the event and seek to make our decision as a disinterested observer? This could lead only to indecision and faith would be looked upon at best as an interesting possibility. But is there then not some sense in which reflection and decision

become a part of the act of faith? If so, reflection and decision would not be self-cancelling, but united in faith's understanding of the historische event as the eschatological event of God.

Both Jaspers and Bultmann can be said to participate in some way in the third possibility, but neither seems to have made an adequate statement of it. It is certain that Bultmann realizes that objective observation can never be turned into the decision of faith. Further, in spite of the criticisms that we have made of his development of the relation between reason and faith, it is clear that he does not intend faith to be looked upon simply as a blind act of the will. Jaspers has made a more systematic statement of the relation between faith and reason and shows more clearly the complex dialectic between them. But he attempts to remain in two camps at once, the camp of the philosopher who thinks in universals, and the camp of the theologian who speaks out of a concrete decision. The result is a questionable decision of faith which must somehow be kept open.

Thus, while neither Bultmann nor Jaspers separates completely faith and reason in the decision of faith, neither seems to have worked out all of the difficulties involved in it. While we are inclined to say that Bultmann

treats inadequately the questioning of reason in the decision of faith, we are inclined to say that Jaspers treats inadequately the concreteness of faith's decision.

The search for a break-through in the problem posed by the thought of Jaspers and Bultmann might do well to begin with Bultmann's understanding of history as encounter, and faith as the decision made from within the particular encounters in history. Both Jaspers and Bultmann agree that human freedom is attained only in being freed from the past, that is, from life bound to and limited by the knowable world. This freedom comes only in man's "leap" out of the self which is his past and into the unknown future. But apart from a unique moment in time, such a leap would seem to lead into the void or back into the self. Apart from a unique moment in time in which I am related to something outside myself, it is difficult to understand how actual freedom can take place. This unique moment is found by Bultmann in God's act in Jesus Christ. It becomes the unique moment when man hears here the address of the Eternal as that which takes him out of his past and into the future.

Faith for Bultmann is the decision to be oneself in face of God's encounter. However, we must recall that the Christian faith is neither a spontaneous and subjective

reaction nor a soaring up and beyond the world in mystical communion with the transcendent One. It is rather a decision to act in history out of the demand that is encountered there. That is, God's encounter, and consequently man's decision, occurs not outside the world but within it. And in so far as it occurs within the world, the decision of faith can never be separated from the questioning of reason. Rather, it is in this questioning of reason that faith has its foundation and understands its possibility. In the development of this dialectic between faith and reason, Jaspers is helpful in suggesting that all rational reflection is finally bound up with the philosophical question of human existence. In this sense, faith and reason contradict one another only when reason is narrowed to a closed view of the intellect which admits to no limitation. However, when the questioning of the intellect is bound up with the greater question of truth, faith does not conflict with it, but fulfils it.

Erich Frank, who shares many common roots with Jaspers and Bultmann, and who might well be considered as one who has attempted to overcome some of the difficulties raised in this study, is helpful when he writes:

According to the Gospel, the child possesses the truth because it has faith, and it is faith in which also reason is grounded. This does not mean that faith is the opposite of reason. It is reason itself which understands faith as its own presupposition and as the only reasonable thing. For to reason is to question. Whatever may be the things in which we believe - this world, man, his moral nature, anything else - reason will some day discover how questionable such a faith is. Only faith in a God beyond this world or any power in man cannot be refuted by reason, nor can such faith be proved on intellectual grounds. Thus faith is never entirely separable from reason. We could not reason if we did not believe, nor could we believe if we had no reason, and reason alone can understand what we believe and give our belief actual existence in the world. 7

Frank seems to suggest that the decision of faith is never separated from reason and hence from reflection. God's encounter, as we understand it, occurs within the events of the world. Apart from reason, it would seem, the encounter might be limited to that which is available to objective observation. The object of faith might then be myself, some person that I make into a divinity, or

7 Erich Frank, Wissen, Wollen, Glauben, Zürich, 1955, p.375. Ludwig Edelstein, the editor of these essays by Frank, has brought to my attention the fact that H.G. Gadamer believes it to have been Frank's intention to give <<eine gesichtsphilosophische Begründung>> of Jaspers' metaphysics. Frank, a Christian philosopher, combines a unique interest in existential philosophy with the critique of modern science. Of particular interest to this study are four essays written just prior to his death in 1948: "Faith and Reason", "Time and Eternity", "Nature And History", and "The Role Of History In Christian Thought", all of which are gathered in this collection.

some other object in the world. Only the criticism of reason can indicate the limitations to such belief and prepare us, so to speak, for the coming of the transcendent God within time. Faith becomes possible in the foundering of reason. It is the address of God in Jesus Christ which reveals the Eternal's judgement upon man's attempt to believe in himself and the world about him. But it also reveals the promise of the Eternal that man might be freed from the world and taken into the future.

Certainly, the decision of faith cannot be proven in reason. Indeed, it seems to do the very opposite in challenging all attempts of faith to ground itself in an object in the world. But perhaps it is in this tendency toward the elimination of all gods in the world that reason comes nearest to being a proof of God. That is, perhaps it is, in seeing our attempts to achieve God out of the world, that we come upon our relationship to God as a perverted one, and hence upon our need of his act of grace.

In suggesting that further discussion along the lines set for us by Bultmann and Jaspers might prove fruitful with regard to the problems of the relationship of Historie and Geschichte, and faith and reason, we do not mean to suggest that a simple combination of their thoughts will produce a solution, free of all difficulties. We write

from the perspective of Christian theology, and warning enough against such a simple combination of ideas should be contained in the realization that Jaspers' philosophy seems in the final analysis to set Truth free from particular history. Further, if we might be inclined simply to look upon Christian theology as the fulfilment of Jaspers' philosophy, we should be warned that such a suggestion is completely foreign to Jaspers' own understanding of his philosophy. He maintains that he has at no time looked upon philosophy as the gateway to religion but as its polar opposite. "The insufficient element in the philosophical work of philosophy as it exists in books and doctrine lies in the fact that philosophy wants to be the gateway to that philosophizing which can be carried out only by each individual in his own reality." ⁸

However, the theologian can profit from Jaspers' thought, in so far as it serves as a critique of the fundamental philosophy with which the theologian comes to his task of interpreting the faith. Here, Jaspers' thought is of particular significance for one who shares Bultmann's method of theologizing, for he finds himself holding in common with Jaspers many aims and methods. For this reason Jaspers' suggestions and critiques of theology can be received in openness in the realization that his thought challenges theological thought and causes it to reflect more deeply upon its presupposition and methods.

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