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Kant's idea of the origin of evil and its influence on recent theology

Wade Hamilton Boggs Jr.

KANT'S IDEA OF THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

AND

ITS INFLUENCE ON RECENT THEOLOGY

BY

WADE HAMILTON BOGGS, JR.

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INTRODUCTION

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A. Definition of Problem

Our problem is rather clearly and briefly suggested in the title of this thesis. It is to ascertain and set forth Kant's idea of the origin of evil, and then to trace its influence upon recent theology. The problem is complicated by the fact that there are contradictory positions set forth by Kant in different ones of his works. The problem is further complicated by the fact that while certain recent theologians of great contemporary influence have undoubtedly been influenced by Kant, they have been influenced only in certain particulars of their theology and not in others. It is also a part of our problem to evaluate this entire trend of thought.

B. Significance of Problem

The significance of this problem can scarcely be overestimated. It would be a worthwhile exercise simply to study the great philosopher alone, with a view to learning his teachings about moral evil. But when it is realized that over 200 years after his death, some very prominent theologians go back to him for a suggestion in solving this baffling theological problem, then it is seen to be even

more worthwhile.

This problem, the origin of evil, is not purely an abstract exercise, far removed from practical everyday morality. While no final explanation has ever been given, it is yet nedessary to a complete theology that one adopt certain positions with reference to it. And just which positions are adopted makes the difference in one's own code of ethics between morality and immorality, between responsibility and irresponsibility, between reverance and blasphemy.

Furthermore, the ramifications of this problem, as will be shown in the paper, will extend into virtually every vital area of philosophy and theology.

C. Procedure Followed

The procedure followed can easily be seen by a glance at the table of contents. Beginning with a statement of, and an evaluation of Kant's general metaphysics, we next show how the framework of his solution to the problem of evil is contained in his general metaphysics. After criticising Kant's position, we next proceed into a statement and appraisal of Kant's idea of a timeless fall as modified by recent theologians. Lastly, we attempt a frank evaluation of the entire non-temporal fall idea, concluding with an investigation of the most serious alternative solution to the problem of the origin of evil.

D. Sources of Information

A complete list of my sources may be found in the Bibliography at the end of the thesis. Some of these books were naturally used more than others. The entire thesis of course, swings around Kant. Among the recent theologians, Brunner was studied more extensively than any other man. Niebuhr's position proved to be a most stimulating and interesting one. F. R. Tennant and N. P. Williams were read with great profit. Baillie, Barth, and Temple were very useful. From time to time in my thesis, it will also be noted that reference is made to a number of philosophers, studied mostly under Dr. Holtzclaw.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

KANT'S GENERAL METAPHYSICAL SCHEME

Our point of focus in Kant is his idea of evil, but we can make no progress in understanding his idea of evil, nor in evaluating it, until we see how it grows out of his general metaphysical scheme. Therefore, our first step is to set forth briefly and clearly Kant's general philosophical positions.

A. Background of His Thought

Kant's philosophy must be considered against the background of the philosophies of several of his predecessors. The beginning of the movement which influenced Kant so much goes back to the day when René Descartes remained for a whole day "shut up in a stove". In that period he made his celebrated attempt to doubt all things; and found that he could doubt all else, but not that he was doubting; that remained certain. Hence his famous declaration "Cogito, ergo sum - I think, therefore I am". From this basic certainty of his own existence, he endeavored to construct again the fabric of knowledge.

Descartes, by reason of his starting point, involved himself in the necessity of holding that the mind knows only

its own ideas. But some of these are clear and distinct, and the veracity of God (whose existence is supposed to be established by the Ontological Argument) guarantees that these give real knowledge of the extended world. So Descartes at last has three real entities - the mind, God, the extended world - God being the link between the other two.

On the Continent the rationalist elements in Descartes were worked out, on the assumption that clear and distinct ideas give knowledge of reality. This led through Spinoza and Leibnitz to the extreme dogmatism of Wolf. In England another stream was set flowing which applied to the Cartesian scheme an empirical criticism, so that Locke denied the objective reality of secondary qualities, Berkeley also of primary qualities, and Hume of the mind itself - so that there was nothing left but ideas or impressions caused by nothing and held by nothing.

Here Kant takes up the tale and seeks to unite the English and Continental lines of thought; i.e., the empirical and the rationalistic streams of thought.

B. Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason"

Kant challenges Hume's premises. He claims Hume was wrong in saying <u>all</u> knowledge comes from separate and distinct sensations. In addition, says Kant, there is a knowledge that is independent of sense experience, a knowledge

which is certain to us even before experience, and therefore 'a priori'.

Kant demonstrated this in his "Critique of Pure Reason." He contends therein that experience is by no means the only field to which our understanding can be confined. There are general truths which bear the character of an inward necessity, and are clear and certain in themselves.

These truths derive their necessary character from the inherent structure of our minds, from the natural and inevitable manner in which our minds must operate. The great thesis of Kant is this - that the mind of man is not passive wax upon which experience and sensation write their absolute will; nor is it a mere abstract name for the series or group of mental states; it is an active organ which molds and coordinates varied sensations into unified ideas.

But how does this come about? Kant answers by his Transcendental philosophy, which is a study of the inherent structure of the mind. There are two stages in working up sensations into the finished product of thought. (1) The first stage is the co-ordination of sensations by applying to them the forms of perception - space and time. Kant calls the study of this stage Transcendental Esthetic. (sensation or feeling).

Now how is it that the mind changes sensations into perceptions? Out of the multitude of stimuli that play upon the body, the mind acting as an agent of selection and coordination uses two simple methods for the classification of the material presented to it: - the sense of space and the sense of time. The mind allocates its sensations in space and time. Therefore space and time are not things perceived, but modes of perception. Furthermore, space and time as modes of perception are a priori because it is inconceivable that we should ever have any future experience that will not also involve them. And because they are a priori, they are absolute and necessary.

(2) Now we come to the second stage of working up our sensations into the finished products of thought. This stage he calls his "Transcendental Logic" (the science of the forms of thought).

In this section, Kant analyzes those elements in our thought which are given to perception by the mind. He shows that the mind has levers which raise the perceptual knowledge of objects into the conceptual knowledge of relationships, sequences, and laws. Just as perceptions arranged sensations around objects in space and time, so conceptions arrange perceptions (objects and events) about the ideas of cause, unity, contingency etc. In short, the mind is the coordination of experience. Sensation then is unorgan-

ized stimulus, perception is organized sensation, conception is organized perception. And this order, sequence, and unity comes not from the things themselves; rather it is our purpose or our mind that puts the order, sequence, and unity upon them.

Now we come to Kant's Transcendental Dialectic. So far Kant's analysis has shown the world to be a product to which the mind contributes as much by its moulding forms as the things in the world contribute by stimuli. Now Kant declares that we have no certain knowledge about external objects except that they exist. An object as it appears to us is a phenomenon, an appearance, perhaps very different from the "thing-in-itself." In being experienced, an object would be changed for us by its passage through sense and thought, so that we can know only its appearance, or phenomenon, or about the sensations we have of the object. This makes him a dualistic realist in his epistemology.

This means that we can never know the object as it was before it was transformed into an idea. Thus this transcendental dialectic judges that any attempt by science or religion to go beyond the limits of sensibility and to say what ultimate reality is must end in mere hypothesis.

C. Kant's "Critique of Practical Reason"

Kant's Critical Philosophy leaves us with no more than a problematical noumenal world beyond the confines of our human experience. But this means one real gain says Kant. If we cannot prove the existence of a God, we have at least excluded the possibility of disproving him.

Since the possibility remains that a noumenal reality may exist, he gives in his "Critique of Practical Reason" another avenue of approach which enables him to postulate the noumenal world at least as an object of faith.

If this phenomenal world were the only world, freedom would be excluded by the universal law of causality. Therefore Kant is led to postulate the possibility of a noumenal realm in order to extricate himself from the deterministic conclusion.

He decides it is conceivable that as a phenomenon, an act may be strictly necessary, while yet in its reality, as it enters into the noumenal world, it is self-determined and free. The possibility of freedom is thus not excluded. But we have this reason for believing in its actuality; it is necessary to postulate freedom and an intelligible world in order to satisfy the demands of the moral law.

The essence of the moral life consists in obedience to a law - the categorical imperative. This law cannot be

derived from empirical sources since it by definition is universal. The only way therefore to bring this highly abstract law of duty to bear on actual conduct is to test the law of duty by its own abstract self-consistency. If anything is to be our rational duty it must be of such a character that it can be acted on by all rational beings under all circumstances without resulting in inner contradiction. The sole content of morality is so to act that your action may become a universal law.

Just how Kant uses these results to make possible the postulates of freedom, immortality and God will be shown at length in a later chapter.

We merely call attention here to the fact that a wide gulf is made between the results of reason and the postulates of the spiritual life in Kant's system.

D. Kant's "Critique of Judgment"

In his third work, the "Critique of Judgment", Kant tries to make the gap between the results of reason and the postulates of the spiritual life a little less absolute by an analogy from aesthetic experience, and in giving an adequate account of a biological organism, both of which require purpose, but these points do not lead to any genuine reconstruction of his position.

Kant asks the question, Is there anything here in the realm of feeling that is universal and necessary? And he decides that beauty is. Beautiful objects seem to exhibit purpose. We see purpose in the beauty of a sunset. Or we can also see purpose in a living creature which demands that we go beyond a mere scientific explanation. And purpose hints at the existence of a purposer.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM OF KANT'S EPISTEMOLOGY

A. Preliminary Remarks - Weaknesses of an Eclectic System

As philosophers are in the process of erecting their own reasoned edifices, it is customary for them to attempt to destroy opposing philosophical structures, and to build their positions upon the crumbling ruins of the systems they have attacked. In building a philosophical system, it seems that an unavoidable step in the process is to tear down the thought systems of other men, and to defend one's own viewpoints against their alternative positions.

While this may be unfortunate, it is almost a necessity that it should be so. One might prefer an eclectic system, which selects the best from every system. But while eclectic systems may have the virtue of being more inclined to see the good points of all systems, in point of fact they are generally rather superficial and full of contradictions. So, in writing a philosophical dissertation, it sometimes becomes necessary either to build an eclectic system which is shallow and full of contradictions, or else to build a

position that is more consistent, but which may tend to distort the structure of reality by one's own limited viewpoint. As Rollo May puts it, "It is needless to say that such distortion is not limited to psychologists; it is present, generally speaking, in the explanations which all of us, whether philosophers, theologians or ministers, give for the supremacy of our own sect or point of view."[1]

I am aware that I am subject to the same limitations of finiteness and limited outlook which characterize all humans. But while I might prefer to tread softly and toss bouquets of flowers to each philosophical system, recognizing that each has its own peculiar elements of truth, this would scarcely be a fit method to follow in a philosophical thesis.

It becomes necessary at the outset of a treatise on philosophy, therefore, to evaluate and choose the particular theory of knowledge which will undergird one's system. Some have tried to build a system without consciously accepting or rejecting any theory of knowledge. Brunner for example does not admit that he has any theory of knowledge whatsoever. Yet it is always the case that such men proceed unconsciously upon some theory of knowledge. I shall point out just how this is so later on in the case of Brunner.

1 Rollo May - Christendom - "Reason and Emotion" - p.237

There have been many brilliant philosophers who have taken opposite sides of this question, from the days of Plato (an Idealist) and Aristotle (a Realist) on down to the present. And there are obviously many cogent reasons for and against each. But as I have pointed out, it is necessary to adopt some theory, either consciously or unconsciously, so I am bringing mine out into the open here in connection with my analysis and criticism of Kant's epistemology.

I am employing the terminology used by D. C. Macintosh in his "The Problem of Religious Knowledge". According to Macintosh, there are two basic epistemological points of view.

1. Epistemological realism, or monistic realism says that a man is able to have direct knowledge of objective reality - whether it be of the physical world or whether it be of the spiritual world.

2. Dualistic Realism says there is a numerical distinction between what I look at and my idea of it. What I perceive is only my idea of it.

Realism may be subdivided into extreme monistic realism (naive realism) which says there is nothing between me and the object of perception which distorts my knowledge of it. In the realm of religion, the mystic who claims to have a direct knowledge of God would be an extreme monistic realist. But there is also the critical monistic realist who is aware of the fact that some of the things he might attribute to the object of perception (or apprehension) may be subjective. In religion for example, we may sometimes

mistakenly attribute to God that which does not belong to Him. We may have mistaken guidance from prayer. But the fact remains that we do have contact with God and know Him at least to some small degree.

Epistemological dualism may be subdivided into dualistic realism and into monistic idealism. Its essential ingredient is that a man can know only his ideas. But as to whether there is an objective reality beyond, the dualistic realist would say yes, there are objective realities beyond the ideas. Kant would be classified here. It is the position taken by all those of the representative perception school. The monistic idealist would hold that our ideas are all that exist - there is no reality beyond. Hegel is such a complete idealist.

B. Kant's Epistemology Analyzed

Briefly stated, Kant's philosophical structure is erected on the following theory of knowledge. There are no innate ideas in the sense of complete ideas prior to experience. Knowledge begins with experience, which consists of the ideas we have when we perceive the world. But while knowledge begins with experience, there is another kind of knowledge which is a priori. In other words, this a priori knowledge is distinct from the knowledge gained from experience; yet it is never found apart from experience; nor does it ever go beyond experience.

Kant makes no significant advance over Hume's position apart from his addition of a priori knowledge, which is also entirely subjective. Thus we are shut up to a knowledge merely of our ideas, or of the phenomenal world. The noumenal world which includes the physical world, the self, and God is not an object of knowledge for us. We can never know things-in-themselves. Any position which has these as objects of knowledge would necessitate causality if inferential processes are involved to prove them. But causality is a priori, and therefore cannot be used to prove the noumenal world. This means that Kant's epistemology prevents him from admitting that the noumenal world may either be known directly or that it may be deduced. Naturally, under this system, there is no place for even an effort to advance theistic proofs.

Kant is thus shut up completely within his subjective world. There is no possible way for the external world to act upon his subjective mind in a recognizable way. The spiritual world, the material world, the self cannot be objects of knowledge. This is complete agnosticism no better than Hume left us, except for Kant's addition of the subjective mental categories of thought. But even these are subjective and can enable us to know nothing of the noumenal world. The total result therefore, of Kant's epistemology is to leave us in an altogether unsatisfactory

subjective predicament.

C. Kant's Epistemology Criticized

It so happens that this dualism has a more harmful practical result with reference to the spiritual world than in the case of the physical world. We are left without knowledge of either. Yet we are forced to go on living in the physical world in as real a sense as if we had never denied the possibility of knowing it. But an agnostic attitude toward the spiritual world may have decidedly harmful consequences. Not being able to prove there is a God, we may then choose to live as though He did not exist. Therefore, such a theory of knowledge is hot a very stable foundation on which to build a theology.

And there is this to be said against dualism - It assumes the complete unreliability instead of the reliability of the primary relations of thought, which itself is an assumption of no small import. Since an assumption is involved even here in the dualistic theory of knowledge, this means that an element of faith is involved. The line between fact and theory is broken down. This means that the dualist is compelled to rely on evidence which is circumstantial in nature as truly as does the realist. If neither is able to offer any ground which is indubitable as a starting point, then why not take the theory which says that we <u>can</u> have some knowledge of the external world?

There is another line of reasoning which weakens decidedly the dualistic theory of knowledge. If we asked Kant to prove that we know only our ideas, or phenomena, he would be compelled to acknowledge that this fundamental idea involved assumption. He inherited this dualism from Hume, who accepted it from Berkeley, who in turn took it over when he accepted Descartes' representative perception. But when Berkeley took this over from Descartes, he then proceeded to deny the evidence upon which alone this doctrine can be based. That evidence is the assumption of the existence of a real world which causes the ideas in our minds. But Berkeley denies the existence of the external world. Therefore he has cut out the only means by which he or Descartes or anyone can establish the fact that we know only our ideas. Now Kant took over this theory of knowledge that we know only our ideas from Hume and Berkeley. Yet he will not admit the existence of the noumenal world as a cause of the ideas in the mind. Therefore he has out out the only means by which he could prove that we know only our ideas. Therefore, Kant's starting point, as does Berkeley's, involves the unproved assumption that we know only phenomena. So this dualistic theory of knowledge does not have the advantage so often attributed to it that it gives us certain knowledge. This is simply not true. There is an element of faith here just as there is in a realist theory of knowledge.

From this second line of reasoning, we reach the same conclusion that both realist and dualist are compelled to rely on evidence that is circumstantial in nature. Both must see that the line between fact and theory is broken down.

We may offer here these further considerations in favor of a Realistic position. First, it is in accord with the universal conviction of men that we know a real external world both physical and spiritual. Second, the dualistic theory goes back to the sharp dichotomy which Descartes made between mind and matter. Today there are many considerations that indicate there is no such sharp dichotomy. Mind and matter are intimately related. An Idea in our minds will produce a reaction in our bodies. They clearly seem to interact. Since the doctrine was reared in the first place on the supposition of its wide severance, and since there is evidence against the existence of such a wide severance, then why not give up dualism which precipitates us into agnosticism if followed out with strict logic? Third, even if a dualistic position were adopted, even if the assumption of the wide severance between mind and matter be accepted, just what is solved by setting up an idea between the mind and matter? There still remain difficulties that are just as insoluble as the initial difficulty of how mind can know

matter; first, there is the difficulty of proving how the mind can know an idea, and second, there is the difficulty of proving how an idea can know matter. Instead of solving anything, a dualistic position introduces new problems to be solved; it involves one in infinite regress.

Fourth, it seems more reasonable to me that we should trust our faculties than that we should distrust them. If I decide to distrust my faculties, what basis am I going to stand on when I knock them down? In order to do this, I must believe that some of my nature is trustworthy in order to assert that the rest is not. An agnostic dualistic position is thus utterly inconsistent with itself. It turns in on itself like a snake biting its own back.

Fifth, a realistic epistemology eliminates the threat to our religious faith which is involved in the doctrine that we know only our ideas. To adopt a dualistic theory of knowledge is to take an incipient agnostic epistemological position. The holder of such a view is able to exercise faith that his ideas correspond to reality, but he can never know the reality itself. While such a view would make no appreciable difference in one's life in the physical world, it might have very serious results in his attitude toward the spiritual world. When a person concludes that he cannot know God, but that he can know subjective experiences, there is a natural tendency for him to put God and the

authority of religion on a lower level than his own subjective experiences. True, there have been many devoutly religious men who have gone through life with this incipient agnosticism at the basis of their thinking. But my point is that such a theory of knowledge does not furnish a very stable foundation for religion. But once we see that we know the external world on exactly the same basis as we know the spiritual world, religion is placed in a stronger position. Faith is needed in connection with our knowledge of both spiritual and physical world. There is no more justification for assuming that our faculties completely deceive us in connection with the one than with the other.

A fruit of this agnostic theory of knowledge is our modern liberal theology. Schleiermacher, for example, started just where Kant left him. He holds that experience is central; theology is the explication of my subjective experience. Ritschl also has a similar epistemology. Barth and Brunner, as we shall develop later, hold virtually this same view. They seek to emphasize the opposition, the tension, the dialectic between faith and reason. Thus the light of revelation is seen all the brighter against the darkness of human reason. In fact, they rejoice in the opposition that comes between reason and special revelation.

While it has not been true of the theologians of Crisis it is a fairly accurate assertion to say that this agnostic

tendency has generally worked out into its logical end in humanism. So we conclude that the only way to eliminate this tendency to agnosticism is to eliminate the dualistic theory of knowledge.

Sixth, a realistic theory would seem to be the only point of view which would account adequately for what seems to be real spiritual knowledge. (a) If we hold that our experience of values is trustworthy, then the values must be objective. And if we say that values are objective, then are we not saying that we do have a direct knowledge of the noumenal? (b) If we say that we have fellowship with God in prayer, or that we have guidance from him, then we are affirming a direct knowledge of the spiritual realm. This latter might be denied by a non-religious person, but the experiencing of values as objective is true for anyone.

Van Dusen in "The Plain Man Seeks for God" lists six reasons which point almost irresistibly to the fact that values have an objective reality. (1) Man's universal consciousness of values and his universal belief that the values of which he is conscious are objective is Van Dusen's first reason. (2) Practically, values are the most important factors in life. Strange indeed would be a definition of the 'real' which would deny reality to such forces. We might as well deny the reality of consciousness as the reality of that which impels and controls consciousness.(3) There is no other way to account for the development of the recognition

of values within human consciousness save as men's response to a prior and eliciting stimulus in the nature of things. (4) A charge against the objective reality of values may be urged with equal power against the objective reality of 'facts', of the world of nature. Ultimately, they stand or fall together. To be sure, we do not feel the difficulty of the subjective distortion of objective reality so acutely when we are dealing with nature. For the facts of nature are usually tangible and measurable, susceptible of immediate verification through the senses and of scientific verification through impersonal mathematical norms. But values are more subtle, intangible, personal. Agreement is more difficult. The criteria for verifying the reality of values are far more delicate. But it is a difference in <u>criteria</u>, not in the <u>reality</u> of what is being tested. (5) Also the sensitive conscience feels itself commanded by an absolute moral law which is somehow written into the ultimate nature of things. History gives abundant witness to the reality of the moral order. The plight of the world today can scarcely be interpreted otherwise than as history's stern reminder that we live in a world where material and selfish ideals cannot finally prevail. (6) Lastly, values appear at the highest level of a continuous but hierarchical cosmic process. This would seem to point to values as being the key to the meaning of cosmic evolution.

Van Dusen does not claim that any one of these reasons is conclusive, but he does say that "the agreement of the six in their common suggestion gives it a force which ought to be invincible."[1] If this is true, and I believe it is, then the organic interdependence and relative importance of the two orders which Kant and his school sought to sever is fully revealed. Accordingly, the realm of values is organic to, and the climax of, a cosmic process which has its structural base in the material order of the realm of facts.

If we agree that the subjective predicament in which dualism leaves us is an unsatisfactory one, how may we escape from it? Temple tells us in his famous Gifford lectures, "If I were asked what was the most disastrous moment in the history of Europe I should be strongly tempted to answer that it was that period of leisure when René Descartes.....remained for a whole day 'shut up alone in a stove'"[2]

I am inclined to agree with him that this Cartesian 'faux-pas' has sent speculative thought out on a futile quest in a wrong direction.

According to Baillie, "More and more the conviction has been borne in upon us that the only way to get out of the ego-centric predicament is never to get into it."[3]

1 Van Dusen - The Plain Man Seeks for God - p.112
2 Temple - Nature, Man and God - p.57
3 John Baillie - Our Knowledge of God - p.152

We have already suggested some reasons for thinking in terms of another theory of knowledge which is realistic. Martineau states his reason for adopting a different theory of knowledge in a clear, compelling way.

He gives this theory in his "Right, as Universally Valid."[4] While not criticizing Kant primarily, he does level some words against a dualistic theory of knowledge such as Kant held. He argues that such a theory would require us to treat our whole inner life as so many personal phenomena. It proceeds on the supposition that our natures deceive us, and when they present us with what is "other than one's self," they are merely entertaining us with dreams which are a part of ourselves.

Of course there is no guarantee against such an illusion if we entertain such a theory of knowledge as would deny to us direct knowledge of anything save our own ideas. But, continues Martineau, whoever argues thus is assuming "the unveracity, instead of the veracity, of the primacy relations of thought," and is reducing "all intellectual procedure to the analysis of personal phenomena,"[5] thereby proclaiming universal agnosticism.

Martineau clearly states that he takes what each faculty reports as to its correlative term. This would make his

4 Caldecott and Mackintosh - (Ethical Theism - James Martineau) p. 388

5 Caldecott and Mackintosh - Selections from the Literature of Theism - (Ethical Theism --James Martineau) p.389

theory of knowledge monistic realism. When this position is modified by making it a critical monistic realism, it is safeguarded from the objection of its being a naive realism.

Most of the objections to a monistic realistic epistemology fall into thin air as soon as the force of the critical monistic realism is recognized. Admittedly, a naive realism is untenable. It simply does not account for such phenomena as illusions, color-blindness, mirages, mistaken ideas of God, mistaken guidance through prayer. But when one safeguards a monistic realistic epistemology by making it critical, he comes nearer a view that is tenable. The critical monistic realist recognizes that when external reality is screened through man's faculties, it may suffer some important alterations or distortions. For example, railroad tracks appear to come together at some distant point. An object appears to us as possessing color; yet there is evidence that the color is in our minds. Certain objects appear to us as solids; yet physics is telling us there may be mostly space between the infinitesimally small protons and electrons, of which they consist. Also, men have such different ideas of God, of right and wrong.

All of these examples are fatal for the extreme monistic realist. But the critical monistic realist realizes that some of the things he might attribute to the object of per-

ception or apprehension may be subjective. In religion, for example, the fact that men have conflicting ideas of the will of God is a fact that upsets the naive realist's position. But the critical monistic realist replies that the universal existence of conscience testifies that all men have some knowledge of God, although it may be very partial and very small.

With reference to the railroad tracks, the critical monistic realist contends that we know the objective reality of the tracks, but their coming together is a subjective distortion. With reference to color, he would say that the object itself is known, but the color is a subjective distortion (if this is a scientific fact - I am not sure that it is). Or he might even contend that there were certain chemical combinations which are objects of knowledge, but their appearance as color is subjective. With reference to the supposed lack of solidity in objects we have been accustomed to think of as solid, the critical monistic realist might have more difficulty. But even if this theory (I understand it is not yet fully verified as a scientific fact) should be proved, he could still assert that while the object consists of protons and electrons (atoms), that he knows something of what they are <u>in combination</u>, even though solidity itself is subjective.

All that the critical monistic realist need contend is

that his faculties do not completely deceive him with reference to objective reality. If he knows an object, even if his knowledge is perverted, partial, and small, his position that mind can know something of matter is still vindicated.

What about the charge which Leighton makes that a realistic epistemology plunges one into materialism, which is a philosophical aberration? He is of course erroneously ascribing to the realist the position that there is but one substance, that there is no difference between mind and matter. But a realist does not necessarily have to relinquish holding to the two substances, mind and matter, as separate and distinct. He merely asserts that they are not as completely different as the dualist would have us believe. And there is increasing evidence from science to show that body and mind are not poles apart after all. Matter and mind are closely related. Body and mind interact. This is a far cry from making them identical. Perhaps there is some slight danger of the naive realist lapsing into materialism, but the critical monistic realist, when he admits a place for subjective distortion of external reality, is forever saved from the charge of materialism.

Let it be admitted that the monistic realist has no complete answer to the question as to <u>how</u> mind is able to know matter. He merely holds that the evidence points in the direction of the fact that mind is able in some unexplainable

way to know matter directly. This is no better in this particular, but neither is it any worse, than dualism, and all the considerations listed above, I believe, tip the balance in a realistic direction. Dualism cannot explain either how mind knows an idea, or how the idea knows matter. There is mystery here regardless of one's theory of knowledge.

Another objection is raised to monistic realism in "The World and the Individual" by Josiah Royce. Royce contends that the monistic realist cannot account for memory and imagination. But this objection has no force unless one is inclined in the direction of a completely idealist system, as Royce is. Both the dualistic realist and the monistic realist have theories of knowledge which are designed merely to explain how mind knows matter. They do not say that this is the only function of which mind is capable. There is a world of room left for both memory and imagination in a monistic realist position.

When this theory of knowledge is applied consistently, it enables us to have some direct knowledge of external reality - of the moral and spiritual world and the physical world. Such a theory of knowledge gives us an "objective authority" in the case of moral experience which is an "object of immediate knowledge, on the same footing of certainty as the apprehension of the external material world."[6]

6 Caldecott and Mackintosh - Selections from the Literature of Theism - (Ethical Theism --James Martineau) p.389

Again Martineau says, "I know of no logical advantage which the belief in finite objects around us can boast over the belief in the infinite and righteous cause of all."[7]

This makes a complete parallelism between the way we know the external authority in moral experience, and the external world in perception. "The externality in the one case, the authority in the other, the causality in both, are known upon exactly the same terms, and carry the same guarantee of their validity."[8] So nothing more is needed for this moral revelation than the same fundamental faith on which all our physical knowledge rests.

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7 Ibid., p.389
8 Ibid., p.393

CHAPTER III

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THE IDEA OF THE ORIGIN OF EVIL IN KANT'S PHILOSOPHY

A. The Idea of a Timeless Fall Prior to Kant

The idea of evil which Kant developed was not entirely an innovation. There had been earlier attempts along the line of a timeless Fall. Origin, for example, during his Alexandrine period, allegorized Genesis III, in accordance with the traditional Alexandrine exegetical methods. He read into his treatment the theory borrowed from Plato's "Phaedrus" of a pre-natal fall of individual souls. He thus affirmed 'Original Righteousness', but referred it to a transcendent and extra-temporal mode of existence, where also supposedly the pre-natal fall took place.

The Platonic myth of the fall of the soul from the celestial sphere previous to its earthly life appears again in the systems of Philo and Plotinus. It also finds a distant echo in the speculations of Erigena. But what in all these thinkers was but an unsubstantial dream is in Kant a serious deduction from his theory of knowledge and of morals.

B. Framework of Solution to Problem of Evil is Taken from Kant's Major Works

In his Critique of Pure Reason, Kant shows that we can only have knowledge of what is the object of possible experience, of the sensible, phenomenal world. But the possibility of a supersensible or noumenal world is left open. In his Critique of Practical Reason this possibility is exchanged for necessity. A supersensible sphere and a supersensible nature for man, independent of relations of time, are demanded by the facts of our moral experience. In the sensible world our actions are but parts of the cause and effect sequence which characterizes nature, and which is wholly determined. However, the freedom of will demanded by our consciousness of the moral law ('I ought' necessarily implies 'I can'), belongs to us as supersensible beings. It is from this dualism between the phenomenal and noumenal man that Kant attacks the problem of the origin of evil in his later work "Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason."

C. Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason

When is evil brought about? Kant answers that it is brought about when a man adopts the impulses of his sense-nature, rather than the dictates of his reason, into his 'maxims' or the subjective ruling principles which his will

appoints to itself for the exercise of its freedom. The subjective ground for the possibility of adopting evil maxims is the thing to be accounted for. This, however, cannot be due to any determining act in time, for then evil would belong to the empirical realm governed by necessity, and so would be no longer moral evil. It is therefore an innate bias or propensity, in the sense that it is in force before any use of freedom is experienced. It is therefore in man at his birth. "The following explanation is necessary in order to define the conception of this propensity. Every propensity is either physical, that is, it appertains to man's will as a physical being; or it is moral, that is, appertaining to his elective will as a moral being. In the first sense there is no propensity to moral evil, for this must spring from freedom, and a physical propensity (founded on sensible impulses) to any particular use of freedom, whether good or evil, is a contradiction. A propensity to evil, then, can only attach to the elective will as a moral faculty. Now nothing is morally bad (that is, capable of being imputed) but what is our own act. On the other hand, by the notion of a propensity we understand a subjective ground of determination of the elective will antecedent to any act, and which is consequently not itself an act. Hence there would be a contradiction in the notion of a mere propensity to evil, unless indeed this word 'act' could be taken in two distinct senses, both reconcilable with the notion of freedom. Now the term 'act' in general applies to that use of freedom by which the supreme maxim is adopted into one's elective will (conformably or contrary to the law), as well as to that in which actions themselves (as to their matter, that is, the objects of the elective will) are performed in accordance with that maxim. The propensity to evil is an act in the former sense (peccatum originarium), andis at the same time the formal source of every act in the second sense, which in its matter violates the law and is called vice (peccatum derivatum); and the first fault remains, even though the second may be often avoided (from motives other than the law itself). The former is an intelligible act only cognisable by reason, apart from any condition of time; the latter sensible, empirical, given in time (factum phaenomenon). The former is especially called, in comparison with the second, a mere

propensity; and innate, becauseit cannot be extirpated(since this would require that the supreme maxim should be good, whereas by virtue of that propensity itself it is supposed to be bad); and especially because, although the corruption of our supreme maxim is our own act, we cannot assign any further cause for it, anymore than for any fundamental attribute of our nature."[1]

"Now this propensity itself must be considered as morally bad, and consequently not as a natural property, but as something that can be imputed to the man, and consequently must consist in maxims of the elective will which are opposed to the law; but on account of freedom must be looked upon as in themselves contingent, which is inconsistent with the universality of this badness, unless the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is, by whatever means, interwoven with humanity, and, as it were, rooted in it; hence we call this a natural propensity to evil; and as the man must nevertheless, always incur the blame of it, it may be called even a radical badness in human nature, innate (but none-the-less drawn upon us by ourselves)."[2]

In these quotations, we see that this evil which Kant denominates "radical badness", must have its origin in our freedom, must belong to the supersensible sphere, and must be the nature of a supersensible or timeless act. It cannot be traced further in the noumenal realm without entering upon an infinite regress. Beyond this, then, no light can possibly be thrown upon the source of evil. In the last resort, Kant teaches, it is quite inscrutable.

It is hard to say exactly what is this 'intelligible act' with which Kant identifies the evil propensity. The 'act' is banished from our temporal or phenomenal life, but is not referred to a previous existence. It is strictly timeless. "Origin (primary) is the derivation of an effect from its primary cause, that is, one which is not in its turn an effect of another cause of the same kind. It may be considered either as a rational or a temporal origin. In the former signification, it is only the existence of the effect that is considered; in the latter, its occurrence,

1 Religion Within the Limits, et. II - Abbott's Translation pp. 337 -338

2 Ibid - III (Abbot, Kant's Theory of Ethics) p.339

so that it is referred as an event to its cause in time. When the effect is referred to a cause which is connected with it by laws of freedom, as is the case with moral evil, then the determination of the elective will to the production of it is not regarded as connected with its determining principle in time, but merely in the conception of the reason and cannot be deduced as from any antecedent state, which on the other hand must be done when the bad action, considered as an event in time, is referred to its physical cause. It is a contradiction then to seek for the time-origin of free actions as such (as we do with physical effects); or of the moral character of man, so far as it is regarded as contingent, because this is the principle of the use of freedom, and this (as well as the determining principle of free will generally) must be sought for simply in conceptions of reason."[3]

This 'intelligible act' is therefore the rational, not the temporal origin of our evil. And it is equally the origin of all our empirical actions as of the first. Every bad action, when we inquire into its rational origin, must be viewed as if the man had fallen into it directly from the state of innocence.

D. Effect of Fall on Nature of Man According to Kant

(a) Radical Badness

As a result of the non-temporal fall, man is corrupted in the center of his being, in his will. Kant calls it a "radical innate evil in human nature," a "natural propensity to evil."[4] He actually goes so far in characterizing it as to say, "This evil is radical, because it corrupts the ground of all maxims; it is, moreover, as a natural propensity,

3 Ibid IV - (Abbott) p.347
4 Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone - I. Kant Translated by J. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson - p.28

inextirpable by human powers, since extirpation could occur only through good maxims, and cannot take place when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt....."[5]

(b) Man Can Still Accomplish A Moral Revolution.

After the above positive and conclusive statements about man's basic corruption of the will, it might come as a surprise to learn that Kant holds with equal tenaciousness to man's ability to bring about a moral revolution by his own powers, and of himself become a good man. "Yet duty bids us do this (accomplish this revolution), and duty demands nothing of us which we cannot do. There is no reconciliation possible here except by saying that man is under the necessity of, and is therefore capable of, a revolution in his cast of mind, but only of gradual reform in his sensuous nature....."[6]

Kant himself faces squarely the contradiction involved here. "But does not this restoration through one's own exertions directly contradict the postulate of the innate corruption of man which unfits him for all good? Yes, to be sure.....Yet the postulate in question is not opposed to the possibility of this restoration itself. For when the moral law commands that we ought now to be better men, it follows inevitably that we must be able to be better men."[7]

Whence originates this counteraction to man's radical evil? Kant has to retreat again to the noumenal realm to resolve this dilemma. "This is true of everything which is to be regarded as an event in time (as change), and to that extent as necessary under the laws of nature, while at the same time its opposite is to be represented as possible

5 Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone - I. Kant Translated by T. M. Greene and Hl H. Hudson - p.32
6 Ibid - p. 43
7 Ibid - p. 46

through freedom under moral laws."[8] In other words, just as Kant was forced to retreat to the inscrutable timeless realm for an explanation as to how the fall took place, just so he says it is necessary to retreat to the same inscrutable realm to explain man's ability to change from badness to goodness by his own unaided powers.

E. Criticisms

The criticisms of this idea of a non-temporal Fall will be reserved until after our treatment of certain recent theologians who have adopted a solution of the origin of evil similar to Kant's. Here we shall give certain criticisms which are applicable primarily to the Kantian treatment of evil.

The basic criticism I would make just here is the fact that there is a fundamental contradiction between his position in the "Critique of Practical Reason" and his position in "Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone." In the "Critique of Practical Reason" Kant exhibits a comparatively shallow optimism about the ability of human beings to obey the maxims of the moral law. 'I ought; therefore I can' pretty well sums up his thinking. But in his "Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone" he has a theory of sin which stands in complete contradiction to his general system. In fact, if his theory of "Radical Evil were allowed to have its logical implications, it would shatter his general system

8 Ibid - p. 46

of ethics. Radical evil is man's inclination to corrupt the imperatives of morality so that they become a screen for the expression of self-love. He declares this evil to be 'radical' because it corrupts the very basis of all maxims. In this analysis of the human capacity for self-deception and its ability to make the worse appear the better reason for the sake of providing a moral facade for selfish actions, Kant penetrates into spiritual intricacies and mysteries to which he seems to remain blind in his "Critique of Practical Reason."

Another more insuperable difficulty grows out of his attempt to answer the question, Is reformation possible. He replies: Yes; for it is a duty. You ought; therefore you can. How the return from evil to good is possible cannot indeed be comprehended, but the original fall from good to evil is qeually incomprehensible, and yet is a fact, says Kant. Now, freedom which belongs to the supersensible realm cannot be determined by anything in the phenomenal world; consequently, if freedom has, apart from time, given the man a determination, then no eventin time can produce a change. Nay, it would be a contradiction to suppose the removal of an act in the noumenal world by a succeeding act. Contrary or contradictory attributes cannot be attributed to the same subject except under the condition of time. If therefore, the intelligent being is timeless, we cannot pos-

sibly attribute to it two decisions, of which one annuls the other. Kant is not at all consistent here, for he argues that it is not possible to destroy this radical corruption by human power, but only to overcome it. Why does he not conclude here, I ought to destroy it, therefore I can?

Even if this "I can" were granted, it would be only a theoretical, not a practical possibility. If the man endowed with the faculties in their true subordination, with reason supreme, has yet not had strength or purity of will to remain so, what practical possibility is there that having this subordination perverted he can restore it? There is obviously an external aid necessary here. Not that anything wholly external could effect the change, which can only be produced by something operating on man's own moral nature; but as Abbott puts it, "there must be a moral leverage, an external fulcrum, a *pou sto*. Such aid, such leverage are provided by the Christian religion. It has introduced a new motive, perfectly original and unique, the overpowering force of which has been provided in many crucial instances...."[1]

Another criticism grows out of Kant's view of the source of obligation in the Autonomy of the will. It would seem that a law, in order to be a law, must be above the nature to which it is a law, and which is subject to it. A being which gave itself the moral law, and whose freedom, therefore, is Autonomy, would not be conscious of obligation or duty,

[1] Religion Within the Limits of Pure Reason - Intro. - Ixii

since the moral law would coincide with its will. Kant draws the apparently self-contradictory conclusion that we, though willing the law, yet resist it. Even if this be granted, it would follow, not that we should feel obliged, but that either no action at all would follow, or the more powerful side would prevail. That we condemn ourselves when we have violated the law is an important fact, on which Kant very strongly insists, but which his theory fails to explain. Is it not a far simpler and truer explanation to say that this self-condemnation, this humiliation in the presence of an unbending judge is a proof that we have not given ourselves the law; that we are subjects of a higher power? Indeed, Kant himself in one or two places admits as much - "Therefore in all duties the conscience of the man must regard another than himself as the judge of his actions, if it is to avoid self-contradiction....and since such a moral being possessing power over all is called God, hence conscience must be conceived as the subjective principle of a responsibility for one's deeds before God."[2] Another place he says - "Hence only he can be thought of as highest law-giver of an ethical commonwealth with respect to whom all trueduties, hence also the ethical, must be represented as at the same time his commands; he must therefore also be one who knows the heart... But this is the concept of God as moral ruler of the world. Hence an ethical commonwealth can be thought of only as a

[2] Ibid - p. 322

people under divine commands; i.e., as a people of God, and indeed under laws of virtue."[3] Unfortunately, however, Kant's basic premises exclude this insight from attaining the place it ought to have in his system as a whole.

The distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal man to which Kant resorts is generally felt to be a real deficiency in Kant's teaching. Our entire criticism of his epistemology may be considered an amplification of this point. Whether there be a transcendental self or not, the self concerned with moral practice is the empirical self of time processes, specific desires and duties. Kant has an unreal separation between sense and reason which makes his system of morality seem formal and far aloof from actual human life.

There is a difficulty in connection with Kant's treatment of the corruption of human nature. We have pointed out how Kant distinguishes between man noumenon and man phenomenon in order to escape the difficulty of reconciling responsibility with the innate corruption on which he so strongly insists. He says that the innate evil of human nature rests on an inversion of the natural order, the legislative will being subordinated to the sensibility. But how can this be reconciled with the self-given and therefore self-willed law which makes good a duty? It is inconceivable that the

3 Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone - p.90-91

pure supersensible essence could invest the sensational nature (the objects of which have for it no reality) with a preponderance over itself.

A further contradiction appears to be involved in the relation of evil to freedom; for he states that freedom is as inseparably connected with the law of Practical Reason as the physical cause with the law of nature, so that freedom without the law of Practical Reason is a causality without law, which would be absurd; and yet, on the other hand, he regards freedom as an ability from which proceeds contradiction to the moral law.

Also, it is hard to conceive how the supersensible essence of man which gives man from itself the categorical imperative, should also give him the evil maxim. It is hard to conceive how this supersensible essence of man could cause the impulses of men's sense-nature, the objects of which have for it no worth if any reality, to preponderate as motives over the moral law.

Here is a final criticism, which to my mind is rather devastating. It seems unnecessary to derive the evil act from the adoption of a general maxim or universal rule, without which determination to action cannot be supposed, rather than simply from the non-suppression of the impulse in the single case. Kant simply removes the freedom from the specif-

ic moral act, only to smuggle it in again in the supersensible realm. Superficially considered, this criticism would seem to strike a death-blow to any and all attempts to explain the origin of sin along the line of a non-temporal fall. However, in a later chapter,[4] I shall show how certain of the recent theologians make a significant alteration on Kant's view of freedom. Instead of resorting to the distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal realms, they show how man's capacity for self-transcendence insures his freedom to respond to the call of God from without.

F. Julius Muller, The Mediator of Kant's Idea of Evil to Recent Theology

To this theologian goes the credit for mediating Kant's idea of evil to recent theology. We shall not attempt to present a comprehensive summary of Muller's great work, because its leading ideas will be brought out again in connection with our treatment of Brunner, (who asserts that his position came from Muller), and of Niebuhr whose "Nature and Destiny of Man" has striking resemblances to Brunner's "Man in Revolt."

Many consider that Muller's work on the doctrine of Sin is still the most philosophical and exhaustive standard treatise on the subject.[5] Muller finds the Augustinian theory inadequate to solve the great antinomy which Kant's

4 Evaluation of Non-Temporal Fall Idea - Ch. V - p.
5 The Origin and Propagation of Sin - F. R. Tennant - p. 54

work had served to emphasize: the antinomy between the inalienable sense of responsibility which the individual feels for his own evil and the fact that sinfulness seems at the same time inborn and prior to any action. And so he is constrained to supplement it by postulating a personal fall for every man, previous to that of the race in Adam, in a state of existence which Muller calls extra-temporal, but which is nevertheless prior to birth. We are led to believe that Muller's primary reason for accepting this position was not for its intrinsic cogency and naturalness, but rather as an only alternative, as the sole remaining chance of rational satisfaction in which his mind could find a refuge.

CHAPTER IV

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THE IDEA OF A TIMELESS FALL IN RECENT THEOLOGY

A. Importance of Fall in Western Theology

Underlying Brunner's and Niebuhr's writings on Christian anthropology, we find two essential tenets upon which they insist. The first is the complete necessity to sin in which men are involved, or the totality of sin; the second is that man is nevertheless fully responsible. Such a position, when superficially considered, is contradictory and utterly untenable. However, beforeruling this position out of court, let us reserve judgment until we have come to some conclusion about the Fall. We must realize that Brunner and Niebuhr are directly in the line of Western theology after Augustine and Calvin, and that they are merely reaffirming the same two paradoxical tenets of these two earlier theologians. For Augustine and Calvin, the Fall was of tremendous importance. In fact it is basic to their whole position. The same may be said of Brunner and Niebuhr, with some important qualifications which will be made later. If we judge purely by what Brunner says, we might be led to

believe that he placed even more emphasis on the Fall than his theological forebears. The Fall, he holds, has created a gulf between man and God which is unbridgeable by man. There is a complete contradiction which runs through all mankind, and there is consequently a complete discontinuity, both moral and epistemological, between man and God. Niebuhr would probably agree with Brunner about the reality of this contradiction, although he avoids the extremes to which Brunner goes in characterizing it.

1. The Fall Defined by Brunner and Niebuhr.

Brunner states that "sin is inexplicable,"[1] and that it is impossible for us to reduce the original sin "to a single formula."[1] Nevertheless, he makes the attempt, and on the basis of this attempt, we shall try to give the essence of his definition. This is summarized in the following quotation - "The final ground of sin is this, that we love ourselves more than our Creator - that is, self-will, incomprehensible as it is, yet known to us all in the depths of our being."[1] This sin is composed of mingled elements of doubt, distrust, and defiant desire for freedom. Nevertheless, I think Brunner would on the whole agree with Niebuhr in reducing the primary element of man's basic sin to pride. It is primarily a revolt of the creature against the Creator. It is "the assertion of human independence over against God, the

1 Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, p. 132

declaration of the rights of man's freedom as independent of God's will....."[2]

One rightly suspects that this original contradiction is inseparably connected with man's finiteness. Does Brunner escape the pitfall of the classical reduction of sin to man's finiteness? There can be no doubt of Brunner's great emphasis on man's creatureliness. For example, he says, "there is an impassable gulf between the Creature and Creator.... There is no greater sense of distance than that which lies in the words Creator-Creation...The greatest dissimilarity between two things which we can express at all - more dissimilar than light and darkness, death and life, - is that between the Creator and that which is created."[3] We might well question whether this is not the real reason for his assertion of complete discontinuity between man and God. Surely this statement is sufficient to account for it without even referring to moral discontinuity.

However, Brunner does not shut himself up to assigning sin purely to man's finiteness. Niebuhr even more clearly than Brunner shows how man's finiteness can be the occasion of man's sin, without being the inevitable cause of it, or the substance of it. It is man's pride, his refusal to accept his position of complete dependence upon God, the arrogance

2 Ibid, p. 129
3 Ibid, p.90

of man's autonomous reason, his attempt to live as though he were not finite, not just a creature, not dependent on the Creator, which lies at the basis of man's Fall. (An important question with which we shall deal later on is this - Is not Brunner's emphasis on man's finiteness his real reason for postulating the unbridgeable gulf? True, later on he does assert the Fall as the reason for the complete discontinuity between man and God, and say that because of the Fall, it is impossible for man in any way to recross the gulf. But when he says this, is he not obscuring the issue raised by his former statement that man's finiteness is enough to cause complete discontinuity between man and God? In other words, we wonder if epistemological discontinuity is not basic, in spite of Brunner's statements to the contrary.)

Thus the Fall consists of a break of man's right relation to God. It is putting man at the center instead of God, and as long as there is this wrong relation to God, even man's so-called good acts and sins, are displeasing to God. Brunner and Niebuhr see pretty well eye to eye so far.

2. Wherein They Differ from Augustine and Calvin.

I have stated that Brunner and Niebuhr are in the line of Western theology after Augustine and Calvin. Yet they do not scruple to part company with them in the literalistic methods of interpretation by which they arrive at their doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin. They hold that it is

impossible to present an historical report about the Fall and its effects. Adam was no real historical personage. Indeed, each one of us is Adam, and Adam's experience characterizes each of us. Yet this experience is not an empirical one. It does not belong to our temporal history. It is an experience which lies in super-history, but for which we are nevertheless responsible.

Brunner says, "Above all....it will become clear that when we talk about the origin of man we are not speaking of a certain man called Adam, who lived so many thousand years ago, but of myself, and of yourself, and of everyone else in the world."[1] He says later, "The Fall, too, is not an event in the story of the growth of humanity;...it lies behind or above the empirical plane. The antithesis between 'created good-fallen' has nothing to do with the difference between 'earlier (in the empirical time-series) or later.' Abraham is no nearer the good Creation and the event of the Fall than I am, because he lived at an earlier time. To trace the story of the growth of humanity back into the past does not bring us finally to the Fall and the Creation. The difference between 'primitive' and 'developed' has no more connexion with the content of the Christian statements than the difference between the child and the grown man. In so far as the child is a human being, it has a share both in the Creation in the image of God and in the Fall; and the same is true of

1 Ibid P. 88

the 'primitive' human being who lives in our own day, or who lived before us."[1]

Brunner's restatement of this doctrine grows out of his criticism of the traditional ecclesiastical doctrine. He has no quarrel with the substance of their[2] doctrine, namely, that man has fallen or apostatized from his origin, and that this original sin constitutes a fateful determination of man's actual condition.[3] But while he accepts the substance of their position, he parts company with them over their literalistic means of stating the doctrine. "What Augustine wanted....was this: the unity of inescapable necessity and responsibility which cannot be shaken off...But his actual solution of the problem fell very far short of his intention".[2] He objects first to the way Augustine makes Adam the physical father of the race, and then asserts that we are sinners because we have inherited sin through our natural descent from the sinful father of our race.

Secondly, he objects to the way Augustine makes Adam the representative of the human race as a whole. He objects to both of these for the same reason - namely, because a personal relation ought not to be explained by a physical fact. He admits an element of truth here in that the solidarity of being involved in sin manifests itself also in inheritance.

1 Ibid, p.399
2 Ibid, p.121
3 i.e., Augustine and Calvin

But he rejects the one-sidedness with which this one element is made the prevailing, and the only element in the doctrine.

Niebuhr's position is virtually the same as Brunner's. Says Niebuhr, "It is obviously necessary to eliminate the literalistic illusions in the doctrine of original sin if the paradox of inevitability and responsibility is to be fully understood; for the theory of an inherited second nature is as clearly destructive of the idea of responsibility for sin as rationalistic and dualistic theories which attribute human evil to the inertia of nature."[1]

3. Evaluation of Their Changes.

It may be felt here that Brunner has not contributed much to the solution of the problem by his super-history explanation, and that Niebuhr has made no significant advance over Augustine by his removal of the problem from the historical-temporal realm.

However, I am of the opinion that this stripping of Augustine and Calvin of the literalistic elements in their Fall doctrine is all to the good. I believe it is necessary that we should recognize the mythical nature of the Fall story. This need not be considered a radical position. It is possible for one so to interpret the Fall story while holding a very conservative view of inspiration. Our reasons for so interpreting this story as a myth are not scientific primarily.

1 Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, P. 262

It is not mainly a case of yielding a point to the pressure of secularism. Rather the theological difficulties connected with a literal Adam compel us to seek another interpretation that will not do violence to conscience. As Brunner puts it, "The abandonment of the historical form of the doctrine is not a loss, nor is it a trifle, but it is a necessary purification of the Christian doctrine for its own sake, not for the sake of science."[1]

The theological difficulties connected with a literal Adam, and with a literal and temporal Fall, briefly, are these. A literalistic interpretation makes it necessary that we work out a connection between Adam's sin and our own sinful nature, if the Augustinian necessity to sin be retained. Some sort of inheritance view such as Calvin's, or a 'seminal identity' view such as Augustine's, or a 'federal covenant' view, seem to exhaust the possible ways in which such a sinful and guilty nature may be passed along from Adam to his descendents. Such a view can only result in weakening man's sense of responsibility, and in tending to place the blame on God.

As far as we can ascertain, the evidence of psychology so far is against the existence of 'acquired characters'. But even if it were proved that heredity is a powerful factor in tending to precipitate men into sin, this is a far cry from saying that hereditary factors initiated in Adam determine each of us to sin. In other words, I find it very difficult

1 Ibid, p. 88

honestly to believe myself guilty for what Adam did, or to believe myself responsible for my sins, if his sin pre-determined me to sin. This is not to say that 'inheritance' does not play a part, but it is to say that placing the whole blame on 'heredity' is to remove the responsibility from man.

The 'seminal identity' view, and the 'federal covenant' view, have this same effect, and therefore must be considered untenable.

If the 'hereditary' or 'representative' views be eschewed, a person is likely to seize upon 'environment' or 'social transmission' as an explanation of the totality of sin. Again, a partial truth is to be admitted here, but if these partial explanations are made the sole cause of the totality of sin, man is again robbed of responsibility.

If 'inheritance' or 'environment' be held as partial explanations, as factors which causeman to have a tendency to sin, andif it also be held that man does not sin by necessity, then the second horn of the Augustinian paradox is relinquished. This means that no man has to yield to this tendency to sin. It is an indeterministic approach, which is the essential ingredient of Pelagianism. This is an inviting alternative which has attracted many liberals and rationalists, and we shall examine it with care later on. Anticipating the results of our examination, I believe we shall find that Pelagianism is not above serious criticism, and does not give as accurate a description of the empirical facts of

sin as we observe them as does the Augustinian view.

So, conditioned upon the validity of our future examination of Pelagianism, it would seem that the only avenue of escape lies in the direction of interpreting Adam and his experience as the experience of everyman, if we are to hold to a 'Fall' view at all. This experience of everyman may not be assigned to a particular moment in his individual history. Rather, if any moment be postulated of which it is not true, then for that moment the truth is distorted. The Fall story is simply a picture of what is true of the human race, individually and collectively. Perhaps it is unnecessary to press an interpretation further than this, save to say that the literalistic interpretation leads us into such difficulties that the truth cannot lie in this direction. Exactly where the truth does lie, perhaps we cannot define, but may we not go with Brunner and Niebuhr to the extent of admitting that the evidence points us to a non temporal solution?

This needs to be added: no matter how far back one traces sin, whether in the individual, or in the race, he cannot reach any empirical, self-explained sin which may be denominated the source of all subsequent sins. Even if we go back to Adam as an historical personage, his so-called first sin is not the first sin. The serpent is introduced to symbolize the fact that evil had entered the scene prior to any human action. In other words, we can only conclude that any sin,

no matter how far back we take it, presupposes itself. No matter how far back one goes in human history, he cannot escape the paradoxical conclusion that the situation of finiteness and freedom do not constitute a temptation that necessarily precipitates man into sin if sin were not already introduced into the situation. "Perhaps the best description or definition of this mystery is the statement that sin posits itself, that there is no situation in which it is possible to say that sin is either an inevitable consequence of the situation nor yet that it is an act of sheer and perverse individual defiance of God."[1]

Brunner's removal of the problem to super-history is not as absurd as it appears at first blush. Since the origin of sin is in the last analysis unexplainable, and since we must hold to man's responsibility, Brunner and Niebuhr may have made a contribution to the problem by admitting that an empirical origin of sin will not solve the problem. We grant that this position is more in the form of a negative safeguard than a positive explanation, but I believe even this is some gain over holding to something which is demonstrably untenable.

But the capstone of our evidence cannot be placed upon our reasoned edifice until the alternative positions be considered. If the Augustinian and Calvinistic literalism be re-

1 Reinhold Niebuhr, Nature and Destiny of Man, p. 181

jected, and if a non-temporal, super-history solution to the origin of evil be adopted, what other alternatives have yet to be considered? N. P. Williams says, "So far as sin is capable of a genetic explanation at all, there are four possible explanations and four only: namely, (1) Monism (2) Dualism (3) Pelagianism (4) the theory of a 'Fall' of some kind."[1] The second of these, which is the basis of Manicheism, is the most untenable of all, and is inconsistent with a thorough-going theistic position. Number one is the basis of all pantheistic systems. In the last analysis, sin is eliminated, because the responsibility for evil goes back to God. Number three, or Pelagianism in one of its forms, seems very inviting on first thought, and therefore we have reserved it for more detailed consideration later on. There remains only a Fall-view of some kind. But we have eliminated a literal-temporal Fall; therefore, we are forced to retreat in the direction of a relatively indefinable non-temporal Fall. By its very nature there can be no ultimate proof of this position, nor any exact description of it. But this is not to say that it is a mere blind guess. All the considerations we have given above are pointers in this direction. Just here, we again remind the reader that the trustworthiness of our reasoning so far is conditioned upon the value of our subsequent estimate of the Pelagian systems, which I believe to be the most acceptable of the alternative positions.

1 N. P. Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, p. 535

B. Effect of the Fall on the Nature of Man

1. According to Augustine, Calvin, Luther.

(a) Brunner's and Niebuhr's Difficulty

We have now stated the main points of Brunner's and Niebuhr's positions on the Fall. But there are still a number of fine points, albeit important ones, which remain obscure. For example, what difference does the Fall make in the nature of man? In particular, what effect does this Fall have upon man's capacity to know God, upon his capacity to receive the revelation of God, his rational faculties in general?

Brunner's and Niebuhr's difficulty stands out at the very first. If they are going to remove the fall from history, and remove all chronological significance from it, how can they state that the original Image of God in man was prior to the Fall? Furthermore, how can they compare what they now conceive to be the status of the Image of God in man with what it was originally intended to be?

(b) Augustine, Calvin, and Luther on Man's Nature after the Fall

Augustine and Calvin faced no great difficulty here, because they held to a literal Adam, to a chronological sequence of events, and to an historical Fall. Augustine interprets the Biblical conception of the Image of God in terms which include man's rational faculties, but which suggest

something beyond them. This something beyond man's rational faculties consists in man's capacity for self-transcendence. Human life points beyond itself. This power of transcendence placed man so much outside of everything else that man can find a home only in God. This later element in Augustine definitely pushes him above the neo-Platonic and Aristotelian exclusive emphasis upon man's rational faculties alone as constituting the Image.

Calvin exhibits this same basic definition of the Image of God with its relation to a temporal, historical Fall clearly worked out. "...the image of God includes all the excellence in which the nature of man surpasses all the other species of animals."[1] He proceeds to elaborate his definition of the Image of God in terms of both a unique structure of human nature and of an original and now lost perfection of character. He refers to the 'reason of the soul', by which he means capacities which include the self-determination of the will and the quality of transcendence which Augustine had emphasized.

Luther furnishes a good connecting link between Augustine and Barth. Here is how Niebuhr characterizes Luther on this point; "Luther is so concerned to re-establish the Augustinian doctrine of original sin against the semi-Pelagian-

1 John Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, V. I, Ch. 3, Part 3.

ism of Catholicism that all his interpretations of the image of God are colored by his eagerness to prove that, whatever the image is, it is now lost."[1] His estimate of the original image in Adam is exceedingly extravagant. Adam had an illumined reason, a true knowledge of God and a will the most upright to love both God and his neighbor. But now, after the Fall, 'the image is so maimed and obscured by sin', 'so leprous and unclean' that it can only be defined in contrast to the present state of sin.

2. According to Niebuhr.

(a) Man's nature in general.

Niebuhr removes the nature of man from any connection with a temporal Fall. He strips Augustine and Calvin of their literalistic elements here as he does with the Fall, while retaining the essence of their position. The image, or man's essential nature, consists of man's rational faculties, together with man's capacity for self-transcendence. Empirical man is able to transcend "himself in such a way that he must choose his total end".[2] Instead of going back to an historical original righteousness conception of Adam, like Barth and Brunner he says that man must find his true norm and his essential nature only in the character of God as revealed in Christ (not to be identified with the Jesus of history). Christ existed in history, but the love which his life and death embody is the

1 Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, p. 160
2 Ibid, p. 163

point where history culminates and ends. In other words, the true meaning of man's essential nature cannot be found in anything merely finite. There must be the introduction of a principle of meaning which transcends the world of meaning to be interpreted. Anything short of this is idolatry.

His definition, clear and simple so far, becomes more involved when he relates it to and contrasts it with the "justitia originalis", or man's original righteousness. So far, he has defined the image to be man's rational faculties, together with man's capacity for self-transcendence. (His essential nature, his true norm can only be completely seen in the second Adam, or Christ, because of the Fall (p. 146). This is to be set in juxtaposition with the Biblical view of man's weakness, dependence, and finiteness, and with the fact that evil has entered man not as a result purely of his finiteness, but as a consequence of man's unwillingness to acknowledge his dependence and accept his finiteness. This explanation of evil is his definition of the Fall.

(b) Freedom and the Nature of Man

Now the question arises, what is the relation of freedom to his definition of the essential natureof man and the Fall? Briefly, like Brunner he embraces the Augustinian paradox that "man sins inevitably and by a fateful necessity but that he is nevertheless to be held responsible for actions which are

prompted by an ineluctable fate."[1] This means that original sin while it is inevitable, is nevertheless not outside the realm of man's responsibility inasmuch as it is not to be regarded as belonging to man's essential nature. On the one hand the will of man is enslaved to sin and is incapable of fulfilling God's law. On the other hand, he insists on the reality of free-will just as Augustine does whenever he has cause to fear that the concept of original sin might threaten the idea of human responsibility. So, as he puts it, "... logical consistency is sacrificed in order to maintain on the one hand that the will is free in the sense that man is responsible for his sin, and is not free in the sense that he can, of his own will, do nothing but evil."[2]

Connecting this with his doctrine of the image, it would seem that the self-transcendence of which the image partly consists guarantees man's freedom and responsibility. On the other hand, the Fall, or the fact that each empirical sin pre-supposes itself, proves thatman can do nothing but evil.

The resultant emphasis of Niebuhr's view is well stated by himself, "There is...less freedom in the actual sin and more responsibility for the bias toward sin(original sin) than moralistic (Pelagian) interpretations can understand."[3]

(c) The Effect of the Loss of the 'Justitia Originalis' upon the Nature of Man.

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1 Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, p. 241
2 Ibid, p. 243
3 Ibid, p. 250

Now comes the difficult task of relating the image to man's loss of his 'justitia originalis'. We have already said that Niebuhr eschews any chronological sequence here. The relation of man's essential nature to his sinful state cannot be solved within terms of the chronological version of the perfection before the Fall. It is, as it were, a vertical rather than horizontal relation. When the Fall is made an event in history rather than a symbol of an aspect of every historical moment in the life of man, the relation of evil to goodness in that moment is obscured.

He specifically renounces also all theories of human depravity which deny that man has any knowledge of the good which sin has destroyed. Man's reason is not so vitiated by the Fall that he cannot be aware of the sense of conflict between what he is and what he ought to be. This element of man's reason which makes man uneasy about the contrast between his true and his present state is that to which faith in Christ links itself. Were it not for this remnant of the image, faith in Christ could find no lodging place.

This distinguishes Niebuhr from Barth whom he classifies as a 'radical Protestant' for declaring the very image of God in man to be destroyed. Does it distinguish him from Brunner? The answer is 'yes' and 'no.' He is like Brunner in that fallen man's sense of responsibility is retained as a 'connecting point' for the gospel. But Brunner would de-

ny the content which Niebuhr gives to this responsibility. Brunner would deny that man's reason and conscience tell him what he is and something of what he ought to be.

However, this remnant of the image cannot give man a completely true picture, either of what man is truly or of what he has become. "Any human statement of the blessedness and perfection which are man's proper state and nature, are themselves coloured by sin, so that Christ, as the second Adam, is required to restore the image of the first Adam as he was before the Fall."[1] In other words, Niebuhr holds "that sin is a corruption of man's true essence but not its destruction."[2] He tries to steer a course between Catholicism's position that the Fall means the loss of something which is not essential to man and doesn't therefore represent a corruption of his essence, and radical Protestantism which believes the image of God to be destroyed.

He distinguishes between the essential nature of man and the virtue and perfection which would represent the normal expression of that nature. Man's essential nature contains two elements: 1. all his natural endowments, or his character as a creature imbedded in the natural order, and 2. the freedom of his spirit, or his transcendence over nature and his self-transcendence. The virtues or the normal expression of each of these elements are: 1. natural law qualified by man's freedom even in this area, and 2. faith,

1 Ibid, p. 266
2 Ibid, p. 269

hope, and love.

At this point there is some ambiguity in Niebuhr. At first he says the virtues and perfections (faith, hope, love) represent the "normal expression"[1] of man's essential nature. Then he says these are the "special requirements" of his nature as free spirit. Now does he mean something new here, or are we to equate the two? If language means anything, it would seem that he means them to be equated. That is to say, just as the natural law defines the proper performance or expression of man as a creature in the natural order, so do faith, hope, love define the normal expression of man as a self-transcendent creature and as a creature who transcends natural process.

If we have surmized correctly above, then we may define Niebuhr's position with reference to the knowledge of God which man has after the fall. He repudiates the Catholic position that the knowledge of God is a supernatural grace which is a further gift beyond man's essential nature. Rather it is the "requirement of his nature as free spirit."[2] The question is, by making this a "basic requirement of man's freedom", does he mean merely the proper expression of man's nature? Andif so, is he saying that this proper expression is totally lacking as content, and only the form remains, or is he saying that it is lacking only in the sense of being partially corrupted? So far, his statements are open to

1 Ibid, p. 270
2 Ibid, p. 271

either interpretation.

Later we find him giving this further clarification: he says that faith and hope and love are the requirements of freedom in that man's nature will not let him be content with any expression of his nature short of these basic requirements. Thus, as man never actually attains this normal expression, there is always the uneasy conscience.

He adds that sinful man lacks these basic requirements of freedom and is "incapable of achieving them".[1] This means that while sin does not destroy the structure by virtue of which man is man, and while it does not yet eliminate man's sense of obligation toward the essential nature of man (which is the sole remnant of man's perfection), yet man is incapable of achieving these counsels of perfection. This sense of obligation toward his essential nature actually appears to sinful man, but it appears in the form of law. This law is the claim of his essential nature upon him. The law, or man's uneasy conscience, which corresponds to it, is the first point of contact between man and God. Law is given by revelation, but it is also written in the heart. So Barth is wrong in asserting man's essential nature has been destroyed. The image of God has been preserved in spite of man's sin.

We are here strongly reminded of Brunner's absolute separation of the 'form' from the 'content' of the image. However, there is this difference: by loss of 'content' Brunner

1 Ibid, p. 272

not only means the normal expression of man's essential nature is lost, but also man's reason and conscience give him no valid factual knowledge of what this 'normal expression' ought to be. Niebuhr is not so extreme here.

He makes a significant point in connection with his effort to find a locus for original righteousness, since he has repudiated "before the Fall" in an historical sense. Just as a disease in an organism affects the whole, so no human faculty can be exempt from the disease of sin. "Reason" in particular cannot be exempt. Harking back to his previous assertion that the knowledge of God is one of the unattainable basic requirements of man's freedom, we can now begin to see where his position is leading us. "Reason", as is every other human faculty, is corrupted by the Fall, yet not in such a way as to destroy man's essential nature, his freedom of spirit, his dissatisfaction and uneasiness of conscience with anything short of the true knowledge of God, but rather in such a way as to render man incapable of achieving this knowledge of God.

Niebuhr is really subject to two interpretations here. If when he says the effect of the Fall upon reason is to render man incapable of having a valid knowledge of God, he means <u>totally</u> incapable, this will put him pretty far in the extreme direction of Brunner, if not Barth. But if he means merely that man's reason is incapable of having a com-

plete knowledge of God, he would with other slight modifications be in line with Baillie's view.

The following simple change would take him from Brunner's camp to Baillie's. The uneasiness of conscience which remains to man after the Fall may and should be conceived as a partial knowledge of God's will - not as an abstract law totally disconnected from the person of God. As Temple puts it, God is a personality, and it follows that any revelation He gives must be, not abstract law, but his own righteous will. Therefore, the knowledge of law of which Niebuhr speaks (and of which Brunner also speaks, though it is inconsistent for him to do so, as will be shown later), must present itself to men as a sense of obligation to a Person. Yet this knowledge of God and his will is not to be conceived as what man can ascertain by his natural reason(thus giving him an excuse to be puffed up), but rather as a part of God's gracious general revelation. It should be conceived as man's confrontation with God. Therefore, this uneasiness of conscience is a knowledge of God, albeit a partial knowledge.

Niebuhr tries to steer a course between the Catholic and Lutheran positions. The Thomistic Catholics err in their tendency "to derive too unqualified moral norms from a reason which is presumed to be limited but uncorrupted as far as it goes".[1] He says they fail to recognize that all historic norms are touched with both finiteness and sin; and that their sinfulness consists precisely in the bogus claim of

1 Ibid, p. 285

finality which is made for them.

On the other hand, the Lutheran position is untenable. It tends to regard reason as so completely involved in the corruption of sin that it has no confidence in any natural law norms. He adds that it is equally as important to reject this claim of moral relativism.

The only thing left for him to do now, he thinks, is to head for the fox-hole of dialectics in order to define the proper function of reason - "Reason is in fact in an equivocal position between the self-as-subject and the self-as-agent ofaction, between the self as transcendingitself and the anxious self in action. It is the servant of both. Its universal judgments, its effort to relate all things to each other in a system of coherence, can be alternately the instrument by which the self-assubject condemns the partial and prejudiced actions of the sinful self, and the vehicle of the sinful self by which it seeks to give the sanctity of a false universality to its particular needs and partial insights."[1] So he tries to hold on to both aspects of reason. He is in agreement with Calvin on this point. "Calvin's attitude toward reason stands between the Catholic and the Lutheran viewpoint. His position lacks consistency but it is probably more consistent with the facts than either the Catholic or the Lutheran position. He writes: 'Reason, by which man distinguishes between good and evil, by which he under-

1 Ibid, p. 285

Stands and judges, being a natural talent, could not be wholly destroyed but is partly debilitated, partly vitiated, so that it exhibits nothing but deformity and ruin'...It is hardly logical to claim that something which is only 'partly vitiated' exhibits 'nothing but deformity and ruin'. But there is at least an approach in this inconsistency to the fact that reason is both a servant of sinful self-love and an organ of judgment upon it."[1]

(d) Criticism and Estimate.

Just where this fence-straddling gets Niebuhr is questionable. Reason is now in the strange predicament of being able at least to some valid extent to judge between right and wrong, and of deciding what man ought to do. Yet it is also an organ of sinful self-love precisely because it makes such judgments, always assuming them to be final.

Perhaps it will be easier to extricate oneself from this impasse if we modified Niebuhr's position to the extent of making the knowledge of God and of his will which fallen man has to be the result of God's gracious general revelation - not the sheer ability of man's prideful fallen reason to arrive at. We have already suggested how Baillie and Temple do this. The knowledge content of this general revelation consists of man's uneasy conscience. This means that fallen man has some understanding of his own status, and also some apprehension of what he ought to be. In other words, he has

1 Ibid, p. 285

this much of a grasp of God's will for him, though it may be very slight, and very partial. But Niebuhr cannot say that it is not valid if man is to be "without excuse." This far we must go if man's responsibility is to be maintained.

Man's sin is manifested in two ways. One is that man does not live up even to this light of his conscience, and therefore he is without excuse. But man's sin is also manifested in that he assumes the moral norms, or the conception of God's will which he has, to be complete and final. As a matter of fact, it is tinged with finiteness and sin. Herein lies man's original sin, his prideful refusal to recognize his finiteness. And this original sin, which man commits by his own fault, issues forth inevitably in specific sins of act.

But does the fact that at lower levels of morality, God's will as man understands it, differs sharply from God's specially revealed ultimate will of faith, hope, and love, mean that man had no knowledge of God prior to the special revelation? We have already admitted that it was only a partial, incomplete knowledge because it had to be screened through man's fallen reason. But we insisted it was not totally invalid, at the time and to the people to whom it was given, lest man be given an excuse.

Perhaps we may draw an analogy from the history of God's dealings with Israel. The Old Testament revelation was valid

for the people to whom it was revealed. Yet it was not the final revelation. hen Christ, the complete revelation of God came, he not only fulfilled the previous revelation, but this very fulfillment had the effect of seeming to negate some of the previous revelation. But surely we would not deny that the Old Testament had a valid revelation from God.

The same is true of the moral experience of each individual. The light of fallen man's conscience constitutes a valid, if partial revelation. But the special revelation in Christ is the fulfillment of all the partial knowledge given in general revelation. When the two are brought into sudden comparison, the result may appear to be a violent contrast. But this does not mean that the individual at the earlier moral stage did not have a valid, if partial, knowledge of God and his will.

Nor can Niebuhr insist that the justitia originalis, revealed anew in Christ completely destroys the validity of an earlier and partial knowledge of God and his will for man. If he were to insist on this destruction, then he would jeopardize his entire definition of the image as involving a dissatisfaction with man as he is, and an aspiration after his justitia originalis. This very definition necessitates at least a partial knowledge of God and His will.

So much is necessary to make man "without excuse." But another step is necessary for man's salvation. Niebuhr is

dead right when he says that a mere awareness of a higher ideal is no automatic guarantee that a person will live up to the higher ideal. An indispensable part of the Christian definition of sin is that the good that men would do, that they do not. Niebuhr and Augustine are right in holding that the will is enslaved, in bondage to sin. But purely as a matter of emphasis, Christian preaching can only emphasize the will's freedom to accept Christ and his forgiveness and renewal of the will as a gift. To be thorough in our theology, we must counterbalance this with the doctrine of election, but in our preaching emphasis and in our thinking we shall and must allow this much freedom to man.

A further thing happens when the justitia originalis is revealed by Christ. Man's sense of his sinful condition is increased by the contrast, and his conception of the moral norm is heightened to include love. Thus no previous moral norm, no system of justice can be regarded as finally normative. Thehigher possibilities of love always hoverover every system of justice. Niebuhr says that these higher possibilities of love are at once the fulfillment and the negation of justice. I find no fault with this dialectical way of summing up the matter, provided this love, this justitia originalis, be not conceived of as totally invalidating man's earlier knowledge of God at the time of the earlier moral level. As we have pointed out, the genuiness of this

prior, partial knowledge cannot be relinquished without simultaneously sacrificing man's responsibility.[1]

It may be objected that such a view brings us dangerously close to moral relativism. However, the relativism consists rather in the fault of the apprehension. If this be moral relativism, then I can only protest that the differences between the Old and New Testaments, which is an exact analogy, constitutes moral relativism.

Temple's reasons for expecting a special revelation in addition to the general revelation give a necessary supplimentary insight here. Just as a great man necessarily reveals more of his nature and of himself at a time of crisis which calls for an extraordinary exertion of his powers, so has God given a special revelation of himself because the predicament of sinful man called for it if man was to be saved.

While man had a partial revelation, and an uneasy conscience which corresponded to it, man could not even live up to the light that he had because he wasin bondage to sin. Furthermore, man sinned even in connection with setting up these "oughts", these moral norms, because his sinful nature prompted him to set up these norms as final. Yet the responsibility for this sad state was man's. His was the original, basic sin of pridefully rejecting his proper condition of dependence upon God and trust in Him. So that man by his own fault was in a hopeless situation as far as extricating

1 Niebuhr goes on to admit the necessity of retaining moral norms of justice for a sinful world which is incapable of fulfilling the law of love.

himself was concerned. The disciples realized this when they asked after Jesus' conversation with the rich young ruler, "Who then can be saved?" The sin of the rich young ruler was the basic sin of all men - a trust in one's own resources, in oneself rather than in God. Therefore it was just as hard for everyone guilty of this basic sin to be saved (of which the ruler was merely one example) as it was for the camel to pass through the eye of the needle. The key phrase of this incident is seen when Jesus accepts and endorses the fact that this ultimate possibility of human life is beyond the capacity of sinful man: "With man this is impossible." But, it is an ultimate possibility of divine grace: "But with God all things are possible."

Herein lay (and still lies) the explanation of why man could not be saved without this additional emergency action on God's part which Temple calls the special revelation. And as we pointed out, sinful man does have enough freedom left to be able to accept the gift of salvation made known in this special revelation. God's grace gave this new revelation; it is man's responsibility to accept it.

3. According to Brunner

(a) The Relation Between General Revelation and the Nature of Man.

(1) General Revelation Affirmed.

The logical starting point to understand Brunner's idea of the nature of man resulting from the fall is to begin

with his conception of general revelation. While he and Barth would pretty well agree on their definition of Revelation ("that absolutely unique event in which the Word of God addresses man"[1]), they clash on the matter of a general revelation.

Brunner does make some strong, clear affirmations of a general revelation. However, there is some unfortunate ambiguity in Brunner at this point, as to whether he really means general revelation when he says it, or whether he is unconsciously lapsing back into the older traditional position of natural knowledge. The difference between the two is this - In natural theology, man was supposed to be able to ascertain certain religious truths by his own unaided faculties. Revealed theology on the other hand was that body of religious knowledge which man was unable to get by his unaided faculties, but which had to be revealed to man. This distinction was to the fore when Lord Gifford established his famous lectureship on natural religion. However, a newer theology relies instead upon the distinction between two varieties of revealed knowledge, general and special.

Brunner supposedly subscribes to the newer concept of general revelation, inasmuch as he uses the term. And by this he supposedly means that God's self-disclosure in

1 Thomas - notes on Brunner

nature, history, and conscience may be apprehended by all men wherever the subjective conditions are met. In the apprehension of this disclosure, human faculties are used, but they are not necessarily man's unaided faculties.

His acceptance of this newer view enables him to follow Dr. Barth in denying that there can be any knowledge of God which God Himself does not impart, while affirming against Dr. Barth that all men have some knowledge of Him.

However, he seems to lapse back into the older view. He says in "Our Faith", "That God exists is testified by reason, conscience, and nature, but who God is must be revealed".[1] Here, the inference is that revelation takes place only in Christ; that the testimony of nature, reason and conscience is purely that derived by unaided human faculties. If he were consistent, he would have to admit that both are revelations. A general revelation, if it be a revelation at all, just as truly as a special revelation must be revealed. An admission that man is able by God's grace to apprehend the content of the one should consistently apply also to the other.

His real trouble here is that he tries to hold on to two mutually exclusive propositions. He tries to strip the process of the giving and receiving of revelation of any element of intellection on man's part. Yet he also tries to hold that all men do apprehend some knowledge of God.

1 Emil Brunner, Our Faith.

This inconsistency will be developed at length when we begin to criticize Brunner's position.

We return now to establish the fact that Brunner does assert in unmistakable language a general revelation. Like Baillie he insists that "God has in some degree revealed Himself to all men, and that we neither know nor can conceive of any human nature which is not already aware of confrontation with God."[1]

Says Brunner, "The question is not whether there is any general revelation or not, for if there were none no one would search after God at all...."[2] He adds, "Thus even outside Christian revelation of the Bible man is not without God nor without truth."[3]

(2) Its Connection with Brunner's Conception of the Image of God in Man.

This matter of Brunner's asserting a general revelation is indissolubly connected with hisposition on the image of God in man. It is conceivable that the evidences of God's handiwork in nature might go unapprehended by some men, but it is inconceivable that God's revelation in reason and conscience should ever be totally unapprehended by man. It is of the very essence of a revelation in conscience that the revelation be apprehended by man. Otherwise we could not speak of a revelation in conscience. So the matter of a general revelation and of the image of God are seen to be inte-

1 John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p. 28
2 Emil Brunner, The Mediator, p. 31
3 Ibid, p. 414

grally related. The conscience Brunner holds to be an integral part of the image of God in man. The assertion of the former necessarily involves the latter.

However, the image of God may be spoken of in two senses. It may be spoken of materially, as a content, as man's 'justitia originalis', the righteousness that man had before the Fall. Spoken of in this sense, Brunner contends that the image has been wholly effaced by the Fall. Man is not able to do any wholly good act. But the image may also be spoken of formally, by which Brunner means that which distinguishes man from the beast, his reason, his conscience, his capacity for receiving and giving rational discourse. This aspect of the image has not been annihilated by sin. In fact conscience and reason are the presupposition of man's ability to sin.

Brunner clings tenaciously to this 'formal' element of the image in man which he says must act as a point of contact in man for the gospel. Man could not be saved at all unless he were a being who can be addressed, and who is not like stocks and stones. There are three elements in the point of contact:

> "(1) Our humanity, our reason, that which distinguishes us from the beast, our capacity to speak and receive rational discourse.
> (2) The content of rational consciousness, our sense of creatureliness and death to come.
> (3) Our self-consciousness as over against our natural knowledge of God, our conscience whose content is fundamentally a sense of guilt, the point of contact as a

problem of theology (Zwischen den Zeiten, 1932, 6)."[1]

In "Man in Revolt," Brunner expresses himself even more clearly. He contends that in the Fall, man lost the content, but not the form of the image of God. By form, he means man's creation as a responsible and rational being, with the consequence that man was and still is addressable by God. By the content of the divine image, he means freedom, which is the content of responsibility; and goodness which is the content of rationality. There is an absolute distinction drawn between this form and the content which fills it. The form has been retained unimpaired, but its content has been utterly lost. "The true content of responsibility is freedom; but man since the Fall, while remaining responsible, has wholly lost his freedom of will. The true content of rationality is goodness; but man, while remaining rational, has utterly lost the capacity to do, or even to desire, any good thing. 'I teach with Barth', he writes, 'that the original image of God is demolished, that the justitia originalis and with it the possibility of doing, or even of willing, what counts before God as good - and so also the freedom of the will is lost.' 'We make here....a distinction of category. Formally the image is not infringed upon even in the least degree; sinful or not man remains a responsible subject. Materially, the image is utterly lost; man is a sinner through and through, and there is nothing about him which is not

1 Emil Brunner, God and Man, p. 30 - Preface by W. Lowry

stained by sin'."[1]

(3) Deficiencies of General Revelation (Due to Fall).

Before leaving the task of stating Brunner's position here, we must show how this destruction of the justitia originalis, or the content of the divine image in man, causes Brunner to modify his clear assertions of a general revelation. This general revelation is deficient because man's freedom of will to respond to the promptings of conscience is lost; also, man's goodness, even his capacity to desire goodness, is lost. Therefore, Brunner says this general revelation has certain limitations. It is an indirect, or broken, or distorted, or perverted revelation as he variously describes it. "In asserting this we do not mean.....that on this account we would claim that all philosophical, mystical, and general religious knowledge of God is not true. It is not absolutely untrue, but it is partial truth, half truth."[2] Again he says, "the Christian believer regards 'general' revelation as an indirect (gebrochen) form of revelation. In so far as the idealist and the mystic are aware of its existence they have the truth. But in so far as they do not recognize that it is merely an indirect (gebrochen) revelation and think that in it they have an authentic knowledge of God they are not in the truth."[3]

1 John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p. 29-30 - quoting from Natur and Gnade, p. 9 and p. 11
2 Emil Brunner, The mediator, p. 473
3 Ibid, p. 32

But not only is general revelation deficient because indirect, but also it is incapable of supplementing special revelation. The problem is not whether there is a second revelation in nature, history, and conscience, but rather what is the relation between the two revelations?"[1] Brunner affirms a dialectical relation between the two. "If it is an actual fact that this event is unique, then its relation to a natural or general revelation can only be partial. Neither an absolute denial nor an absolute affirmation, but both at the same time, the Christian conception of a general revelation is in principle 'dialectic'. What the 'natural man' knows apart from Christ is not half the truth but distorted truth. No religion in the world, not even the most primitive, is without some elements of truth. No religion is without its profound error, an error which is of its very essence....So also there is no philosophy which is without truth...but also there is none without a sinful distortion of the truth..."[2] So not only is this general revelation 'gebrochen', but it is incapable of being a ground for, or supporting special revelation. It is incapable of being a first story upon which special revelation rests like a "second story."[3]

On the whole, Brunner's definition of the image does not remove him from his general Augustinian dilemma of the re-

1 Emil Brunner, Man and God, p. 22 - Walter Lowry's introduction
2 Emil Brunner, The Mediator, p. 33
3 Emil Brunner, Out Faith, p. 2

sponsibility of man for his sins coupled with his involvement in sin so as to make it necessary. The 'form' of the image makes him responsible and rational; and the total lack of content makes his sin inevitable. The main criticism of Brunner's position here, unless it wishes to strike out against this Augustinian foundation along Pelagian or Barthian lines, must content itself with examining Brunner's "facile sundering" of the 'form' and 'content' of the image.

Once Brunner's definitions of the image are seen to be a mere restatement of his general Augustinian position, I see no insurmountable difficulty connected with allowing that man remains responsible and rational, while his capacity for goodness and his freedom not to sin are destroyed because of the Fall. If Brunner errs here at all, it seems to me it is primarily because he has such a complete 'form' without any 'matter'.

(4) Estimate of Baillie's Criticisms

I cannot go with Baillie in all his criticism of Brunner. He objects to Brunner's refusal to admit any saving value to the incomplete knowledge of God in the general revelation (granting that Brunner does admit such knowledge). I see no point whatever to this objection. It is because man has this knowledge and yet does not act upon it that he is "without excuse." This is a valid, if partial knowledge of God, which serves to bring man face to face with his need of God's further gracious act in Christ. Yet there need be

no saving value in the general revelation per se.

Baillie's criticism of Brunner for saying the 'form' of the image is not infringed upon in the least degree is better taken. Here Brunner's neat definitions do not do justice to the complex factors. The ravages of sin have surely extended not only to the content, but also to the form of the image. Our reasons have been corrupted hardly less than our desires and our wills. "I cannot therefore follow Dr. Brunner in his facile sundering of goodness from reasonableness. If we remained perfectly reasonable, we should also remain perfectly good."[1] Thus this distinction ceases to have meaning the moment it is made absolute.

However, Baillie's own way out of this problem, as indicated by his criticism of Brunner at least, seems to me to be rather superficial; "He (Brunner) does not see that when the quid (content) disappears utterly, the quod (form) itself is no longer there. He does not see that if goodness were to cease to have any appeal to us, then our choice of the evil way would no longer be a choice at all, nor in any sense ....the act of a free moral agent."

Perhaps Brunner overstated his case somewhat in saying goodness had no appeal to men; but his main point is that all men have completely lost power to do anything good, and Baillie's criticism doesn't touch this point. Baillie seems to think Brunner's whole position is undermined by

1 John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p. 52

the simple criticism that unless man has enough freedom left, so that goodness has some appeal to us, then man is no longer a free moral agent, and his choice of the evil way would no longer be a choice at all. This is probably true, but even if goodness does have some appeal to us, this does not invalidate Brunner's primary claim that goodness as content, as actuality in the lives of men, may be lacking. Man is still in bondage to sin until he is released by Christ. And while being in bondage to sin, he can still experience dissatisfaction with his present state, and long for a better one.

(b) Criticisms of Brunner's Position

(1) General Estimate of His Position.

The chief conclusion I have reached about the controversy over Brunner's subtle division of the image of God is that it neither strengthens his case, nor clarifies his position, nor adds to what he tells us in other ways. His endorsement of the basic Augustinian paradox of necessity to sin and responsibility is made abundantly clear in other sections of his book. This is in substance what he is reaffirming in his severance of the image into 'form' and 'content.' Such a subtle distinction only muddies the water and makes his position more open to attack on little points, as I have pointed out in connection with Baillie above.

I concede that it is possible for us to think of the content as being lacking if Brunner means simply goodness

and freedom not to sin apart from a knowledge of what constitutes goodness, and perhaps apart from their constituting some appeal to us. But I agree with Baillie that it is impossible to think of a totally intact 'form' (responsibility and rationality), if the content is lacking.

(2) His Dialectical Conclusion Criticized

There is ambiguity caused by Brunner's failure to say whether he means a perverted general revelation, or a perverted apprehension of it. Does he mean what his actual language says, that God's revelation in this general sense is distorted, perverted, indirect (gebrochen) per se? If he means this, he is laying the responsibility for the perverted indirect character of the revelation upon the one who is making the revelation. This is blasphemy.

But perhaps his failure to distinguish between the giving and apprehending of the revelation obscures the fact that he really means that this revelation is perverted, indirect, distorted because it mustbe screened through man's fallen conscience and reason. This could be made into a tenable view with certain slight modifications.

The general revelation is at fault because man does not recoguize that what he has apprehended of God and of God's will is not an ultimate revelation. The moral norms that man sets up on the basisof this general revelation, his fallen, prideful nature tends to assume to be ultimate norms.

He pridefully refuses to recognize that these are partial truths. For this reason, this general revelation is 'gebrochen'. It is also a perverted revelation because man does not and cannot live up even to the light which this partial revelation gives.

Brunner and Niebuhr tend to put their conclusions with reference to the relation of the general and special revelations in a rigid dialectical form. When the two are brought into sudden comparison, there does seem to be a rather violent contrast between the way of law, and the way of grace and love through Christ. But a rigid dialectical relationship between the two cannot do complete justice to the situation. If the special revelation negates the general revelation, if it completely annihilates it so that we can no longer say that all men have a general revelation with knowledge content, then we must logically absolve natural men of all sin. If he does not have a valid (even if partial) revelation that gives him some knowledge of God and His will, then he has an "excuse" for his sins. Or rather he is no longer a responsible moral agent.

If a dialectical relation between general and special revelation be admitted, then logically there must be likewise a dialectical relation between the messages of the Old and New Testaments. Christ did not "fulfill" the law, instead he destroyed it, he negated it, he annihilated it.

Brunner is placed in a very embarrasing position here and he does not succed in extricating himself from it. What he finally does is to adopt a contradictory position on the Old Testament. He says on the one hand that Revelation is that absolutely unique event in which the Word of God addresses man. Then later he also says there is revelation in the Old Testament. This looks like Brunner holds two mutually exclusive propositions.

(3) Diagnosis and Criticism of Brunner's Epistemology

This criticism of Brunner is merely in the form of a question mark. Is not his real reason for asserting such a complete unbridgeable gulf between man and God due to man's finiteness? There are some passages which certainly seem to teach this. If this be true, it means that epistemological discontinuity is due to this classical strain in Brunner, rather than to a more fundamental moral discontinuity. It is true that many times, especially in the "Mediator" he says that the Fall is the cause of man's lack of knowledge of God. But I wonder if this is not an unnecessary support for a position that was already held even apart from any Fall.

His tendency to assume a basic Kantian dualistic epistemology fits right in with this diagnosis. Our knowledge of both special and general revelation he tries to strip of all rational content. In "The Mediator", he says it

is not what Christ said that constitutes the revelation; it is not any facts about him; it is the coming of Christ himself. In otherwords, this special revelation tells us who God is, yet in such a way as to involve no intellection (says Brunner). It is apprehended only in decision by faith. The spectator can have none of it.

In like manner with reference to the general revelation, it merely tells us that God is. He logically tries to maintain that the revelation in nature, in conscience, and in reason gives us no factual content about God, but merely enables us to apprehend that He is.

However, Brunner himself cannot consistently maintain this theory of revelation as being totally devoid of all intellection. Time and again, he unconsciously lapses into language which reflects that he is thinking in terms of rational content to revelation; whether he admits it or not. The single phrase 'knowledge of God' implies a rational content.

Or take the general revelation in conscience for example. Consistently, he at times speaks of conscience as giving just a nebulous feeling of guilt. But I submit that if it be a revelation at all, it must have some rational content. There must be a judgment of man as he is, and a judgment of what he ought to be.

Furthermore, it is impossible to conceive of an en-

counter with God, whether it be conceived as a general or special revelation, apart from its involving a minimum of intellection. Kant helped us here when he showed that the mind imposes categories of its own upon every experience. Thus, an encounter with God must at least involve certain rational judgments which the mind by its very nature fixes upon the experience. It is impossible to conceive of an encounter with a person apart from intellection. Brunner would tell the natural man that he must make a venture in faith and decide for God.,But the natural man has a right to ask, "On the basis of what shall I make my decision? What are the facts with reference to this Christ whom you denominate God's special revelation? Only after you give me at least some information can I make my decision." Logically, Brunner has left himself only a mathematical point as the content of his revelation.

Brunner must hold that the person who acknowledges that he is a sinner, and who admits that Christ is the Son of God, has no revelation. Only after he accepts Christ, only after he decides for Christ is there revelation. In other words, he identifies regeneration with revelation. There is only the uprush of life itself. But even in this experience, there is no knowledge content.

Another point which we have urged many times is that unless we grant some rational content to general revelation,

some knowledge of right and wrong, man cannot be held responsible for his sins. Apart from this minimum of factual content, man does not even know when he sins.

If our diagnosis of Brunner's real reason for asserting his deep, unbridgeable gulf between God and man be correct, if it is due to man's finiteness, then his treatment of the atonement fits in with our diagnosis. There is a tremendous emphasis upon "God's coming" to man. It is God who bridges the gulf in the person of His Son. The coming of God in Christ constitutes the bridge. Then, Brunner does get around to saying that the substitutionary atonement of Christ is what really bridges the gap. But this seems almost superfluous after his strong emphasis on the incarnation as being the bridge.

Another way Brunner states this position is to assert a dialectical relation between faith and reason, between revelation and knowledge. That is, the experience of faith, the experience of regeneration, of the revelation in Christ contradicts what man knows of God through reason.

This extreme contrast Brunner himself is unable to maintain consistently. He breaks it down sometimes in direct statements. In "Our Faith" he says "because your heart knows God."[1] He even says, "This knowledge (self-knowledge of man) is the knowledge of faith; i. e., revealed knowledge."[2]

1 Emil Brunner, Our Faith, p. 2, 3.
2 Emil Brunner, God and Man, p. 153

This contrast also breaks down in his numerous assertions that revelation stands in contradiction to other knowledge. An assertion of a contradiction applies only in the field of knowledge. Knowledge cannot be contradicted by anything except other knowledge. It must be contradicted by other assertions which claim to be valid knowledge. Therefore, an affirmation that faith contradicts knowledge can only mean that faith, or revelation, is knowledge.

This contrast breaks down in his frequent use of the term 'truth' to describe the content of revelation. If truth be defined as a character of a judgment, proposition, or statement which correctly interprets reality, (and in no other sense does truth have real meaning) and if revelation is truth, then it must consist of valid judgments or propositions concerning reality. So it is impossible to set the truth of the Word over against the alleged truth of knowledge without the truth of the Word being knowledge itself. So if Brunner's idea of truth has any meaning, it is bound to be knowledge. And thus his contrast between faith and reason, revelation and knowledge, is untenable.

His contrast breaks down also when he erroneously assumes that an encounter with a person does not involve knowledge. This point we have developed elsewhere.

If this contrast breaks down, then the way is open for

us and Brunner to adopt the orthodox view - to have faith and reason supplementing each other - to have special revelation as a necessity for salvation, but to have general revelation supplementing and corroborating it.

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION of NON-TEMPORAL FALL IDEA

It will be recalled that while we have expressed sympathy with the basic Augustinian paradox, that we did so only after the Fall was removed from the realm of actual history, after the fashion suggested by Brunner and Niebuhr.

I am not unaware of the criticisms which may be made of this solution. It is of such a nature that it can only be expressed in abstract philosophical terms. There is no concrete Adam, not even a relatively concrete 'drag' from evolution which accounts for man's sin. There is just nebulous talk about super-history.

Furthermore, it is not easy to give much positive content of meaning to this explanation, if we avoid the pitfalls which Kant encountered. It is more in the nature of a necessary retreat to a relatively indefinable place toward which Brunner's and Niebuhr's reasoning points. In other words they reach it mostly by a process of elimination.

Its main advantages are these. (1) It avoids the pitfalls of a literalistic interpretation of the Fall story, and it shows that a chronological sequence and cause and effect reasoning cannot help us here. All this may be classed

as the negative advantage of avoiding untenable alternative views. (2) It has the distinct advantage of taking an empirical estimate of man as we find him today, and reasoning from this starting point. This I consider to be equally as much a commonsense starting point as to start from the historical of evolutionary insights, which are still somewhat hypothetical.

Here is man - a sinner. Yet it is impossible to account for man's sinful nature by a temporal origin to man's sin. Each temporal origin, whether in Adam or in the individual presupposes a previous sin. Finiteness and temptation would not necessarily lead to sin unless sin were already in the picture. Since a temporal origin is impossible, there is no alternative save a non-temporal origin. Yet this must be stated in such a way as to retain man's responsibility, and this can only be done if man is responsible for this basic sin in the non-temporal realm. Niebuhr locates it in a moment of the self which transcends time.

By man's capacity for self-transcendence, we have seen that Niebuhr agreed with Augustine that man's needs pointed toward something outside and beyond himself for their satisfactions. This makes man dissatisfied until he finds his true home in God. Precisely in this self-transcendence consists the most significant aspect of the image of God.

It is in this capacity for self-transcendence that man's

freedom lies. Temple points in this direction when he says "The element of self-determination in the act of moral choice is usually greatest when there is time for reflection and least when any action taken must be taken immediately....The locus of freedom is the personality as a whole, but rather the life of thought then of will, so far as will is conceived as active in particular choices of alternative modes of conduct."[1]

Thus he tends to remove freedom from the time of activity to the mind in its times of reflection. And as Niebuhr and Augustine hold, it is the mind by means of which self-transcendence is possible.

We have shown that Kant adopts a solution similar to that of Brunner and Niebuhr. It is undoubtedly the parent of their views as mediated through Julius Muller. (Brunner admits as much.[2]) Kant admits the empirical universality of evil. It arises out of the adoption by man of 'law-contradicting maxims' as motives of action in place of the maxims dictated by the moral law. These law-contradicting maxims are suggested by the sensual nature, which, though not evil in itself, is the source of evil in so far as it demands satisfaction regardless of moral restraints. This is an inborn inclination to evil, but it is one for which we are blameworthy. Therefore,

1 William Temple, Nature, Man and God, p. 257
2 Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, p. 142-145

it must somehow be traceable to our own act. It cannot be based upon the theory of 'seminal identity' with Adam: in the case of each individual, therefore, it must be traceable to the individual's own act, and each man must be the Adam of his own soul. But we have possessed this inborn bias to evil from the moment of birth; how or when then did we commit the act which produced it? To solve this, Kant set up the dualism of his general metaphysical system between the phenomenal and the noumenal selves. The 'phenomenal ego' is temporal and determined, and the 'noumenal ego' is timeless and free.

It is therefore to the 'noumenal ego' that the fundamental act of wrong choice must be assigned. The Fall is thus a timeless act; instead of a single collective Fall in time we have a multiplicity of individual and extra-temporal falls.

We need to be reminded here that Kant's epistemology shuts us up to a knowledge merely of our ideas, or of the phenomenal world. The noumenal world which includes the physical world, the self, and God is not an object of knowledge for us. Therefore, the freedom which he attributes to the noumenal ego is a characteristic of an entity the very existence of which is a mere "postulate."[1] Man's freedom is not a fact of knowledge; it is merely conceivable that

1 Abbott, Kant's Theory of Ethics, p. 218

as a phenomenon, an act may be strictly necessary, while yet in its reality, as it enters into the noumenal world, it is self-determined and free. The possibility of freedom is thus not excluded. And the only reason we have for believing in it is that we must postulate it to satisfy the demands of the moral law.

However, it is not necessary to follow Kant here in this wide severance of the noumenal and phenomenal.[1] For example, we are not conscious of any such severance in Niebuhr.

Temple gives a clarifying remark in this direction - "(The will) is free, for the origin of its actions is itself; it is bound, for from itself there is no escape. Partial escape is indeed possible in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness, just because that pursuit is not self-initiated but is a response to a call from without. For the need of the self is to escape from self-centredness and this it can never do by its own effort....The escape, when affected, always involves, at first or at last, the sharp break which is called conversion or the new birth."[2]

This is an excellent balancing of man's freedom with his bondage. As Niebuhr puts it, "The greatest proof of man's freedom consists in the recognition that he is not free."[3] Man's freedom is guaranteed in his ability to respond to a call from without himself. Temple rightly says the call of

1 Brunner may be guilty here of this in his inordinate insistence on man's finiteness and its meaning for man's reason

2 William Temple, Nature, Man and God, p. xxvii

3 Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, p.

truth, goodness, beauty only offers him a partial escape. Man is also able to respond to the call of God from without. But the true call of God consists first in the heightening of man's awareness of his bondage to sin, and second in the offer of divine grace to help him break the grip of the basic sin of self-centredness. This call man is able to hear and respond to. Yet it is not a call in response to which man is able to save himself; rather he responds by accepting his salvation as a gift. Therein lies the inexplicable fact of man's freedom and of his bondage. Inasmuch as man's freedom consists in his ability to respond to a call from without, the nearest approach to giving it a 'locus' of which I am aware is Niebuhr's when he puts it in the self in the moment when it transcends the self.

With this significant alteration of Kant in mind, there remains a fundamental similarity in the views of Kant, Niebuhr, and Brunner. All three insist upon removing the Fall to a non-temporal 'locus'. And it is against this solution of the problem, erroneously conceived as an effort at a positive solution, and erroneously conceived to have certain definable characteristics, that the most scorching criticisms have been made.

N. P. Williams for example, makes this acute criticism of Kant. "Strictly speaking, a 'timeless act' appears to mean nothing: for an 'act' must involve some change, if not

in the world external to the agent, at least in the agent himself, and change implies succession and time. But if the word 'act' really means 'state', we are left with the hypothesis of an eternal and presumably necessary evil principle existing in all noumenal selves, or all selves considered as noumenal. In other words, Kant's (and Niebuhr's and Brunner's) theory seems to be either meaningless or Manichean".[1]

The obvious reply to Williams is that he misconceives the whole point of this timeless Fall. It is a retreat from the errors that are inherent in a temporal Fall. His very insistance upon either a 'state', or an 'act' shows that he is still thinking in terms of the temporal. After reading his own so-called solution, which is one of the weakest I have read, I am still of the opinion that a non-temporal 'locus' for original sin, in spite of its admittedly indefinable elements, is still the only direction left open. Brunner correctly insists that man's original sin is an "act",[2] but then he avoids Williams' criticism by equating this "act" with the state of "being a sinner"[2] - "But in the very concept of 'being a sinner' this act is conceived as one which determines man's whole existence."[3] This seems to me to be about the ultimate form in which this paradoxical solution may be stated. As Brunner rightly points out, both of these

1 N. P. Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, p. xxxii
2 Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, p. 148
3 Ibid, p. 149

ideas are set alongside each other in Scripture without a suggestion of tension. "Indeed....between the two statements that man is the slave of sin, and that every sin is an actual decision, there does not seem to be in the Bible even a relation of tension; both statements are set alongside each other, each in its own place, and are given equal and full weight..."[1]

With Niebuhr, he fully agrees that no "deterministic-causal"[2] explanation for original sin will do, but there is some ambiguity as to whether he follows Niebuhr in his relegation of the problem to the 'timeless sphere'. I believe that he consistently should go with Niebuhr here. There is no temporal moment to which original sin in the race or indifidual may be traced. Certainly to this negative extent, original sin is timeless. However, in at least one place he seems to reject this timeless explanation. "What is held in common, however, is this, that what the church means by the Fall and Original Sin we do not seek in the region of that which can be empirically proved, but 'beyond'; not in a timeless or supra-temporal sense, however, but in a created primal existence, which like the Creation can only be 'seen' from the point of view of experience".[3] But in spite of this

1 Ibid, p. 147
2 Ibid, p. 147
3 Ibid, p. 152

seeming exception, I believe that at bottom it means about the same thing as his 'super-history' concept, which, if words mean anything, is bound to involve a transcending of time.

When Brunner says "being a sinner is not a state but an act because it is <u>being person</u>,"[1] he only muddies the water as far as I am concerned. 'Being a person' is not a matter in which any volition is involved on our part; it is "an act of sheer omnipotence,"[2] as Baillie says. It is not an answer to the Word of God in the original Creation which answer we freely made, as Brunner contends.

Nor is Brunner's explanatory illustration about the "state" and its "constitution"[3] very helpful, because the constitution of a state is an historical event. It has a temporal origin, and is ratified by a formal, free vote of a people. Original sin cannot be compared to this with rewarding results.

So I prefer to take Brunner's reduction of the problem of original sin to the Scriptural paradox - that man sins because his very 'being is a sinner'; yet his 'being a sinner' is to be conceived not as a state but as an act of turning away, of apostasy. I prefer to take Temple's and Niebuhr's explanations of the 'locus' of man's freedom and of his original sin. Yet, it is to be admitted that theirs is not a complete explanation; it is empirical only in the

1 Ibid, p. 148
2 John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p. 24
3 Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, p. 150-152

sense that it points out the direction in which the solution must lie; yet the actual solution lies on yonder side of the border which positive empirical proof cannot cross.

Does a non-temporal Fall explanation have a satisfactory conception of guilt? This question is the sword which Pelagianism wields so impressively in its criticism of all 'inheritance', 'seminal-identity', 'federal covenant', finiteness, ignorance, explanations of sin. In each of these man is rendered sinful and guilty through no fault of his own, and we are inclined to agree that Pelagianism is justified in its criticism. While Pelagianism has a highly satisfactory explanation of guilt, we feel that so far no Pelagian theory has been formulated which is not open to rational criticism along other lines, and which in addition is not as accurate a psychological explanation of the complex phenomena of sin as the Pauline psychology.

But what about the non-temporal Fall theory and the matter of guilt? Brunner is very careful never to make an explicit statement attaching guilt to original sin. However, I believe that his position consistently demands that guilt should be so attached. Even so, he and Niebuhr have a very tolerable explanation of guilt inasmuch as they make man responsible for his original sin. That is, man's freedom resides in his capacity to transcend himself, and it is in this relatively indefinable area that the basic sin takes

place. At the least, this theory avoids making men guilty for a sin which someone else committed. Man's loss of his 'justitia originalis' is due to his own fault.

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VI

PELAGIANISM - THE MOST SERIOUS ALTERNATIVE

May I candidly confess that I have no innate prejudice against the efforts to deal with the problem of sin and its effect on the Image from this angle. On the contrary I was at the first strongly impelled myself to seek a solution in this direction. The way in which liberals and rationalists are able to point out serious difficulties in all positions following the Augustinian tradition is most impressive. May I also state that I would still like to see a solution worked out from this direction which avoids some of the difficulties which we shall indicate below. My reason for not accepting this line of reasoning is primarily because I have found actual Pelagian solutions to be equally open to rational criticism, and to have the additional disadvantage of not being as consonant with the facts of human experience.

The essential ingredient of Pelagianism is its insistence that actual sins cannot be regarded as sinful or as involving guilt if they do not proceed from a will which is essentially free. There may be a bias toward evil in nature, or a social structure that is strongly conducive to sin, but there is no absolute necessity for a man to sin.

Most forms of Pelagianism which grant man enough free will to make him responsible for his actual sins, however,

do not do justice to the universality of sin. When we see that all men actually have sinned, we are almost compelled to hunt for a principle which will do justice to this universality. The Pelagian must be prepared to answer this question affirmatively, "Is it possible for any human being not to sin?" And it seems to me that the facts point to a negative answer. Surely it is a reasonable demand to make of the Pelagians that they produce a group of people, or at least one person (other than Christ who was not only human but also divine) who illustrates their contention that man does not sin by necessity. So much may be said of Pelagianism in general.

1. Kant and His 'Radical Evil'

Immanuel Kant makes one of the most serious Pelagian efforts to grapple with this problem. The only point I wish to make in connection with his effort is to show that it is open to rational criticism just as much as Augustinianism.

However, Kant does come to real grips with this problem in his estimate of evil as "radical". "The contradiction in man," he points out, "ought not to be traced back to an objective, neutral impersonal entity, neither to sense, nor to the fact that man is finite, nor to the imperfection of the stage of development, nor to ignorance....nor to the weakness of the spirit, nor....to inheritance."[1] Man's sin is in

1 Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, p. 128

the centre of his nature, in his will. However, Kant does not draw the necessary conclusion from this that man sins "by an ineluctable fate." He said rather that this evil in man, while it is radical, can nevertheless be overcome by a revolution in the disposition of which man himself is capable.

But I submit that this solution involves just as great a logical and rational difficulty as do any of the Augustinian solutions. If man's will is sinful, then man is corrupted in the very centre of his being. To appeal to a 'higher element' in man's will is to assume that man is not corrupted in his essential nature. A thorough-going rationalist cannot hold to both of these. Either man is corrupted in his essential nature or he isn't. One cannot say in one breath that the will of man is evil, and in the next assert that man can nevertheless overcome this evil bias by a revolution in the disposition which he himself is able to bring to pass. So that Kant's Pelagian effort fails to satisfy the minimum requirement of rational consistency.

2. Original Sin and Theistic Evolution

The second sericus Pelagian effort with which I shall deal is that which interprets original sin in the light of theistic evolution.

Generally speaking, this approach has the very great advantage of bringing to the problem the insights gained by the scientific study of man's early history.

I am including this line of approach under Pelagianism because I believe a theistic evolution approach, to be at all worthy of consideration, must proceed along indeterministic lines. If the deterministic angle be emphasized, then God is made responsible for the sin of man. F. R. Tennant, while his solution is for the most part, strongly indeterministic, nevertheless commits the unfortunate faux-pas of asserting determinism in his fourth Hulsean Lecture - "What introspection really discovers is an internal conflict between nature and nurture, natural desire and moral end:...and this is the inevitable condition of human life and the expression of God's purpose."[1] This certainly appears to blame God for the way in which he created man. He is saying in substance that the will of God immanent in organic evolution has brought man into existence with a secret flaw in his soul, which sooner or later betrays him into actual sin. This is no improvement over the old 'inheritance' views which robbed man of the responsibility for sin. Therefore, I believe a theistic evolution approach must proceed along indeterministic lines if it is not to run immediately into insurmountable obstacles.

Such a theory, I surmise, would proceed along these lines. Genesis would likely be read so as not to exclude theistic evolution, and we agree that this is altogether possible. Such a theory would have to acknowledge the fact of original

1 N. P. Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, p. 532

sin. It would assert that people are born with a tendency to sin, or to anti-social conduct, as psychology terms it. While these tendencies are strong, so as to make sin highly probable, they do not make sin inevitable. These tendencies are not evil in themselves; they are simply natural impulses which can, if not controlled, result in sin.

These tendencies are inherited, and thus go back to the first human being(s) andhave been passed down ever since. These are natural characteristics and are transmitted from one generation to another. This does not necessarily say that they are acquired characteristics, though they may be so called in some treatments.[1]

The first human or humans was (were) morally innocent. They possessed natural impulses by process of biological continuity. This is a long way from interpreting original righteousness to mean that Adam was practically equal with Christ, as Luther for example did.

The effect of the fall on the first man was a rupture of fellowship between him and God; for his posterity it did not necessarily mean that. For them, it merely meant that they inherited a weakened nature or an increased tendency to sin, which makes it possible for them to have fellowship with God, but almost inevitable that they will sin.

I do not know of any system which has worked out the

1 F. R. Tennant will have none of this 'acquired character' solution, because again it tends to take the responsibility from man.

sin appear a conscious choice of evil in defiance of a known good.

A theory which did take the implications of Tennant's criticism seriously might conceivably be worked out from evolutionary premisses, and when it is I shall be one of the most eager and sympathetic of those who investigate it. Such a theory must recognize that when man has yielded to the impulses of original sin, that his will becomes enslaved by sin so that he is unable to extricate himself from this bondage. It must go on to recognize that man can only, therefore, be saved by a power outside himself. In its essence, such a view would be in complete harmony with the traditional view of salvation by grace.

Such a view would undoubtedly recognize the obvious truth that the will of a young child is better able to choose the right than an adult hardened in sin. Of course, religious education has always taken this obvious fact into account in its emphasis upon training the children of the church during their more impressionable years.

An Augustinian defendant could reply that this is a commonsense viewpoint which undoubtedly has a measure of practical truth in it. But a deeper look at the problem will reveal that even the young child is guilty of the basic, original sin just as much as an adult. Even the child has its centre in himself and not in God. If the root sin of

humanity is correctly defined as a failure to trust God and to depend on Him, together with a corresponding false pride in one's own resources, then perhaps the Augustinian viewpoint is just as reliable as a working hypothesis.

And now we are ready for a brief analysis and criticism of the indeterministic theistic evolutionary solution. What is involved in this view is a weakening of one of the two essential prongs of the Augustinian dilemma. There is no totality of sin; there is no necessity to sin in which men are involved. The objections to this may be summarily stated: (1) No single person save Jesus the Christ, may be produced as an example of one who embodies the proof that man is not involved in a necessity to sin. If the Pelagian assertion of freedom were true, that man does not have to sin, it would be a fine thing. But the empirical fact that "all have sinned" strongly suggests that the Augustinian analysis is more true to the facts. (2) I find the estimate of the nature of original sin given by Augustinianism infinitely preferable. It consists of a rupture of man's relation with God, a prideful refusal to acknowledge one's dependence on God rather than self, instead of a 'hangover' of certain impulses by process of biological continuity. Undoubtedly, this latter explanation is one factor in the total picture, yet for an ultimate, basic analysis of sin, I do not see how we can do otherwise than trace itto a bad relationship to

God; - namely, the prideful refusal to recognize our dependence on God rather than self. (3) The Pauline psychology, absurd as it may seem to rationalistic moralists, is a more accurate description of sin as weactually observe it.

The real reason, for example, why Niebuhr follows the Augustinian line is because he feels it conforms more nearly to the psychological and moral facts in human wrong-doing than either Pelagianism or semi-Pelagianism. "The truth is that absurd as the classical Pauline doctrine of original sin may seem at first blush, its prestige as a part of the Christian truth is preserved, and perennially re-established, against the attacks of rationalists and simple moralists by its ability to throw light upon complex factors in human behaviour which constantly escape the moralists."[1] He illustrates this by an example from modern religious nationalism. "Yet it would be fallacious to assume that a Nazi gives unqualified devotion to the qualified and conditioned value of his race and nation by a consciously perverse choice of the lesser against the higher good. But it would be equally erroneous to absolve the religious nationalist of responsibility merely because his choice is not consciously perverse."[1]

Here the Pauline psychology is a better explanation of this complex phenomenon than any other. The specific act of sin is the consequence of blindness: "Their foolish heart

1 Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, p. 249

was darkened." But this blindness is not merely the blindness of man's natural ignorance. Nor is it a 'cultural lag'. Nor is it due to any inherited tendencies which necessarily involve man in sin. It is derived from a "vain imagination." It was because they "professed themselves wise" that they "became fools."

"It is clear from such analysis of religious nationalism in terms of Pauline psychology that the distinction between original sin and actual sin cannot be made as clearly as is assumed in moralistic treatises on sin. The actual sin follows more inevitably from the bias toward sin than is usually assumed. On the other hand the bias toward sin is something more than a mere lag of nature or physical impulse, or historical circumstance. There is, in other words, less freedom in the actual sin and more responsibility for the bias toward sin (original sin) than moralistic interpretations can understand.

The actual sin is the consequence of the temptation of anxiety in which all life stands. But anxiety alone is neither actual nor original sin. Sin does not flow necessarily from it. Consequently the bias toward sin from which actual sin flows is anxiety plus sin. Or, in the words of Kierkegaard, 'sin presupposes itself.' Man could not be tempted if he had not already sinned."[1]

1 Ibid, p. 250-251

These last two paragraphs have really two points that need to be distinguished. First, there is the fact that Pauline psychology is the best description of the complex phenomena involved in sin. Second, there is the inescapable conclusion that no single temporal sin can be postulated as the 'original sin'. No matter how far back we take it, sin continues to presuppose itself. Niebuhr and Brunner both conclude that the only remaining position to which they can retreat is to take original sin out of the temporal process entirely.

(4) There is one last criticism, which takes into account the chief difficulty which confronts Christianity. In our criticism of Pelagianism, we have showed how Kant gave a serious and accurate estimate of sin as 'radical', as being located in the centre of man's being, in his will. But we showed how he held to his rationalistic principle ("I ought; therefore I can") and drew the illegitimate conclusion from his sound premisses that man was nevertheless able to accomplish the needed revolution of the direction of his will by his own efforts. The emphasis of the theistic evolution approach on the other hand has been the loophole of freedom not to sin which it holds out.

The practical difficulty which the Christian ministry has with both of these Pelagian solutions is that they tend to encourage sinful, fallen men in false pride. If natural

man's basic sin is false pride in self, and a failure to trust in God, then any philosophical or theological position which tends to confirm and encourage man's false pride can only be considered as practically dangerous.

Perhaps the chief explanation of the greater spiritual fruitfulness of the Augustinian theology lies just here, namely, the death blow which it deals to man's false pride.

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