

things-in-themselves exist, but beyond this bare fact, we know nothing. That is, we know the existence, the that, but cannot know the nature, the what of things-in-themselves. It can be readily seen that this view destroys any possible foundation for traditional metaphysics and theology. For if we can know the existence of the world, the soul, and God, but cannot know anything of their nature, then how is it possible to say anything meaningful about them?

Kant answered that, on the basis of pure or theoretical reason, it is not possible. However, on the basis of practical reason, certain postulates must be assumed; namely, the freedom of the soul, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God. These assumptions are based, said Kant, not upon theoretical reason and scientific knowledge, but upon practical reason and moral faith. The moral law, which presses upon every man in its categorical form, demands these assumptions, and therefore they must be granted. Although Kant thus attempted to provide a justification for rational belief in God, his influence upon Christianity was largely destructive. The great consequence of his thought for the history of theology is the separation of the sphere of the moral and spiritual from the sphere of the phenomenal world.

G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) held that Ultimate Reality is Universal Reason moving through eternity in a living, evolving process, and embodying itself in the actual universe. This view maintained that thought and being, the idea and its object, are one. If the idea and its object are one, then knowledge of the thing-in-itself is attainable. Men could once again rationally know God. In this way Hegel thought to escape the phenomenalism and resultant agnosticism of Hume and Kant. However, this identity principle brought God back into human experience with a vengeance! The divine and the human were now continuous, and the stage was set for the epoch of immanence, the nineteenth century.

Because of Hegel's metaphysics, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack and Wilhelm Herrmann were able, in spite of being bound by the empiricist epistemology of Hume and Kant, to construct a new approach to theology via Christian experience. These men found the real revelation of God in the inner life of man, and particularly in Jesus Christ, who enjoyed a greater measure of "God-consciousness" than any other man.

This, then, was the heritage which Karl Barth rejected when he became convinced that God and man are not continuous, but radically discontinuous; and that man is not divine, but finite, sinful, and in desperate need of divine grace. Barth's emphasis on the "infinite qualitative distinction" between eternity and time, and between God and man, signaled the end of the "epoch of immanence" and the beginning of the "epoch of transcendence."

However, this emphasis contained certain serious implications. If God is radically discontinuous, completely transcendent, wholly other, then is he there-by rationaly unknowable? Barth answered, God is not knowable in terms of rational propositions or "revealed truths," but only through a personal, subjective encounter with Jesus Christ, who is God's only Revelation. However, in this encounter God, being wholly transcendent, remains rationally hidden and concealed. Thus, even one moment after such an experience, no intelligible assertions can be made concerning the infinite, transcendent God! The question may properly be posed: "How is it possible to speak meaningfully about God if no rational, intelligible assertions can be made about him?" Yet Barth continued to speak of the objective reality of God, and of God's election, God's creation, God's Revelation, God's mighty acts in Christ, and God's grace, all of which acts take place in a realm above history, a supra-historical sphere!

Rudolf Bultmann realized this fatal inconsistency in Barth's application of his own first principle, and attempted to enhance his own view by pointing it out. The Barthians, he said, made two fatal errors. First, they attempted to speak to the modern world, but made only partial concessions to modern science and philosophy. They denied the historicity of Adam as the first man (a concession to modern science), but insisted on the doctrines of the Fall and of original sin. They denied the