

FOUNDATIONS IN EXEGESIS: EICHRODT AND BARTH.

FOUNDATIONS IN EXEGESIS:
EICHRODT AND BARTH ON GENESIS 1:26-27.

By

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: The thesis considers the complex relationship between contemporary Old Testament studies and theological interpretation of the Bible, by focusing upon a comparative exposition of the accounts of Genesis 1:26-7 given by Walter Eichrodt and Karl Barth. This relationship consists in a certain impasse, a certain failure on the part of each discipline to take the other seriously, a certain conflict of interest concerning the proper task of each discipline. The examination of the foundations of each exegesis illustrates the nature of the conflict and leads to a consideration of the wider implications involved in the use of each method. Ultimately, these implications demonstrate that the adoption of specific foundations in exegesis depends directly upon a prior estimation of the nature of the biblical documents. It is the goal of the thesis to make this point.

To the Religion Department of McMaster University -
a witness to the ambiguous roots of truth.

To Dr. A. E. Combs,

In appreciation for the wholeness of the part.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	19
i. Description of Barth's exegesis.	19
ii. Analysis of the exegesis as involving exposition of theology.	27
CHAPTER TWO	38
i. Description of Eichrodt's exegesis.	38
ii. Analysis of the exegesis.	41
(a) use of lexical data.	41
(b) use of P's theological insights in exegesis.	44
(c) use of source material and chronology.	47
iii. Description of von Rad's exegesis.	49
iv. The contrast in exegesis indicates the 'public' nature of such exegesis.	54
CHAPTER THREE	62
i. Further discussion of Barth's exegesis.	62
ii. Barth's comments on textual criticism.	66
iii. Further discussion of Eichrodt's exegesis.	69
(a) as theological, but not in the sense in which Barth's exegesis is theological.	70
(b) as employing a methodology inadequate to the theological purpose.	75
iv. The place in theological exegesis for textual criticism and Old Testament theology.	84
CONCLUSION	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY	91

INTRODUCTION

The leading purpose of this thesis is to consider the complex relationship between contemporary Old Testament studies and theological interpretation of the Bible. The discussion takes place in the context of the more general issue concerning how the Bible is to be approached, read, and understood. The thesis delimits the issue by focusing upon a comparative exposition of Walter Eichrodt's and Karl Barth's accounts of Genesis 1:26-27, with a brief, considered reference being made to Gerhard von Rad's exegesis of the same verses because of the light it throws upon the nature of these accounts. Within such limits, the primary task is to extrapolate the prior foundations upon which the respective studies are built. Once these foundations are laid bare, the relationship between theological exegesis and Old Testament studies is shown to consist in a certain impasse, an impasse which illustrates, in the context of the more general issue, a conflict concerning the nature of the Bible and the way in which it ought then to be read and understood.

The claim of the thesis, then, is that the careful examination of these separate accounts of Genesis 1:26-27 reveals the foundations peculiar to each account -- foundations which are incompatible. The further claim of

the thesis is that the articulation of the separate foundations of exegesis upon which these accounts are based makes clear the problematic complexity of the relationship between contemporary Old Testament studies and theological interpretation of the Bible. Finally, that complexity raises the more general issue of the appropriateness of various methodological approaches to the biblical material.

Within the Christian community exegesis is the task of expounding and proclaiming to the community and to those outside the community, the Word of God. Such exposition is linked fundamentally with the Bible. There cannot be exposition of the Word of God without making reference to the Bible. It is the nature of the revelation which has come to man that it is bound up with these books, even though talk about the Bible as the witness to revelation is not immediately clear and unambiguous. But however one eventually understands this relationship, the fact of this relationship, the fact of the linking together of the Bible with revelation, raises the general issue of how one may approach the Bible, how one may use it, how one may read it. The issue as to the way, if any, in which the claims about the Bible which the Christian Church makes sets the Bible apart from other books is important. Does such a claim about the Bible really make any difference whatsoever? May the Bible not be treated as one would

treat any other ancient document, examining the sources of the language it uses, seeking to discover the historical context in which the documents were written, analysing the many peculiarities of its transmission into present hands? Or, on the other hand, does the recognition of the special character of the Bible preclude its subjection to such examination?

The question about the way in which the Bible may be read and understood which is raised by the claim which the Christian Church makes about the Bible as witness to revelation can be illustrated by reference to the ongoing discussion which takes place between biblical scholars and theologians about the meaning of texts. This debate is sometimes characterized by means of a somewhat easy contrast between 'exegesis' and 'eisegesis'. As J. G. Williams observes in an article dealing generally with biblical interpretation: "Any scholar engaged in the interpretation of the Bible. . . must sooner or later face a primary question: What is the difference between exegesis and eisegesis?" He defines these terms in the following manner.

Exegesis is legitimate interpretation which 'reads out of' the text what the original author or authors meant to convey. Eisegesis. . . reads into the text what the interpreter wishes to find there. It expresses the reader's own subjective ideas, not the meaning which is in the text.¹

When some such distinction is made, it is also customary

to identify the biblical scholar as he who attempts to discover by virtue of his historical critical work what the original author meant to say, and the theologian as he who 'reads into' the text whatever theological doctrines are suited to his particular purpose. And in this case, most sympathies lie with the biblical scholar. After all, the text must have had a single meaning. Surely the student of the Bible is on solid ground if he searches out that one meaning, that one insight which the writer intended to convey. Surely such is the goal of examining the Bible

It is the case, however, that to characterize the debate in this manner is to oversimplify seriously a far more complex relationship. Moreover, the distinction between exegesis and eisegesis is perjorative to theological interpretation. In order, therefore, to lay bare the true complexity of this relationship, it is necessary to examine a particular discussion between a theologian and an Old Testament scholar about the meaning of a particular text. Such an examination takes place in order to lay bare the foundations upon which the work of each scholar rests.

It is necessary to make clear why Barth and Eichrodt figure as major exegetes in this study. It cannot be emphasized too carefully that the problem of the impasse between theological exegesis and biblical studies has come

about only with the flowering of biblical criticism. Whenever textual criticism undertook the task of explaining a text, it considered its highest goal to consist in determining what the text meant in its original context. It was the task of textual criticism to establish what the author meant in his own time. Whether such was a legitimate goal will be at issue below [see Chap. III (iii) (b), page 75], but it remains the case that whenever this conception of the goal of textual criticism was accepted, the possibility of theological interpretation was put in jeopardy. The search for the one true meaning caused scholars to lose sight of the real goal of exegesis. One assessment of this situation is made by Brevard Childs:

While it remains essential to establish a text's foundation in its original context, the unusual corollary that the original function is alone normative does not follow. . . . The question of what a text now means cannot be dismissed. . . . To the extent that the use of the critical method sets up an iron curtain between the past and the present, it is an inadequate method.²

And the work of Barth and Eichrodt are close to the centre of this conflict.

Eichrodt's Old Testament theology, written in the 1930's in Germany, is part of a long tradition of textual work reaching back to Wellhausen. His Old Testament theology is his attempt to articulate and organize the theological insights of the Old Testament.³ He is interested, therefore, in the theological insight which a text offers.

He searches out the theology present in particular narratives. It is within the context of this purpose that his exegesis of Genesis 1:26-27 takes place. The exegesis is theological because it attempts to determine what the Priestly writer meant. It is theological because it rises above the usual preoccupation of textual studies with the origins of words, references useful to archeology, and analysis of literary styles. Eichrodt's work embodies that best and highest purpose of biblical studies, the search for the meaning of the text.

Karl Barth's exegesis takes place in the context of his Church Dogmatics, that is, in the midst of a work which sets forth the dogmatic theology of Protestantism. That this is the context of his exegesis is extremely significant. Barth never uses the Bible as a series of proof-texts for theological propositions. Rather, reflection upon theological propositions is the occasion for intense and serious examination and probing of the text. His exegesis is theological because it arises out of discussion of doctrine, and it is theological because it is exposition of the text with the goal in view of laying bare the theological insights present in the text.⁴

Both men, then, exegete the text in question within the context of a larger theological purpose. The goal of exegesis in both cases is to expound the theology of the text. This is the prime reason why their exegeses

are suitable for comparison. But secondly, it is of importance that the work of both men arises in the midst of the same scholarly tradition, within the same period of time, and as a reaction to the excesses of certain strains of that biblical criticism. Eichrodt distinguishes his purposes very clearly from those of current textual criticism.⁵ Barth's attitude to the excesses of textual criticism is famous, and the relationship of such scholarship to his own work he has delineated in several places.⁶

Yet, at the same time, Eichrodt is quite clear that the text in question can have only one meaning. Moreover, he maintains that only certain methods are appropriate for determining that one meaning. The analysis of his exegesis reveals these presuppositions of his work. Thus, while Eichrodt shares with Barth the goal of determining the theological content of the text, he arrives at an explication of the text very different from Barth's. Barth also is very definite about the meaning of the text, and his exegesis arises, according to his own claim, out of proper respect for the text as revelation and out of proper recognition of the significance of the biblical canon in the Church. It is at this point that it becomes clear that the issue about the meaning of the text must be settled on grounds distinct from and far removed from the text itself.

This issue is further clarified by the introduction

of a brief account of the exegesis of Gerhard von Rad. The problematics of the discussion between biblical scholars and theologians have been delineated until the nature of the impasse between them emerges. But it is essential to distinguish this discussion from a very different one which takes place among biblical scholars themselves. Von Rad's exegesis illustrates this discussion. He disagrees with Eichrodt, and the analysis of his exegesis makes clear that Eichrodt and Von Rad share much common ground. The purpose of this further analysis, then, is first to reveal more about the nature of exegesis by a biblical scholar, and second to distinguish sharply the discussion among biblical scholars from that between biblical scholars and theologians. Emphasizing this particular distinction may appear platitudinous, but it is essential when it is remembered that an easy distinction between 'exegesis' and 'eisegesis' calls into question the possibility of the latter kind of discussion and leaves the impression that discussion among biblical scholars constitutes the only legitimate examination of the text.

Now, the relationship between Old Testament studies and theological interpretation which emerges from the examination which will follow may be described with specific reference to the exegeses of Genesis 1:26-27 by Barth and Eichrodt. The Priestly writer is working through the tradition, written and oral, which has been handed

down to him -- the tradition which might usefully be labelled J, E, and D. In addition, he has before him what might be termed the theological corpus of prophetic thought, of Wisdom literature, of exilic thought, and he works at all this material in order to make a proclamation in his own circumstances. Now, in one very important way Barth performs in his exegesis the very same task. He has before him the canon of Old and New Testaments, the whole corpus of Christian theology, and the knowledge of intellectual developments from the Enlightenment to theological liberalism. Barth's task, like P's, is to expound and interpret, to exegete the text in the light of these many developments. Just as P must expound and interpret, so must Barth. Now Eichrodt's relationship to this exegetical task is the following. It is his role to reconstruct, to describe as accurately as possible what exactly P is doing. We shall see how he characterizes P's work. It is Eichrodt's task to provide Barth with insight into the nature of the expounding and interpreting which has preceded Barth's own exegesis.

Now, as the foundations of exegesis emerge, it will be clear that it is this account of the relationship between Old Testament studies and theological interpretation which underlies the accounts of both men. Such a working relationship is acceptable to both. However, we shall discover that certain expectations Eichrodt has about the range and strength of Old Testament studies are in direct conflict with this characterization of the relationship between

theological exegesis and exegesis which reconstructs what P was doing. Eichrodt will take exception to Barth's exegesis for very specific reasons which have to do with the text in question and which grow out of his historical and textual studies. That Eichrodt considers his argument against Barth to be compelling indicates certain assumptions he holds about the scope and range of his discipline. His criticism, in fact, challenges the conception of the relationship outlined above, and in that manner makes clear the impasse between contemporary Old Testament studies and theological exegesis.

It is important to note that both the complexity of the relationship between Old Testament studies and theological interpretation and the inadequacy of attempts to explicate the text which ignore this complexity have been recognized elsewhere. In particular, Brevard Childs' Biblical Theology in Crisis delineates clearly the inadequacy of exegesis which attempts only to determine the the meaning of a text in its original setting. He calls attention to the fact of the canon and to the Church's claim about the revelatory character of the biblical material and spells out how these factors must affect the scholar's approach to the Bible. He then devotes extensive space to the exegetical handling of particularly recalcitrant texts in an effort to illustrate what exegesis of a text in the full recognition of the theological facts

about the Bible does mean. What Childs attempts is theological exegesis which takes seriously both the theological nature of the biblical material and the historico-critical data about the text provided by biblical scholars.

In an article entitled "Karl Barth as Exegete, and His Influence on Biblical Interpretation",⁷ J. Wharton has characterized Childs' work as taking seriously "the larger confessional contexts in which biblical traditions of various origins receive a scientifically intelligible interrelationship."⁸ Wharton understands Childs to be following in the footsteps of Barth who, in his own exegesis, worked out a new relationship between theological exegesis and biblical studies. In his analysis of Barth's exegesis, Wharton emphasizes the theological context in which Barth's work arises, labelling Barth's work as 'confessional exegesis' while recognizing this confessional stance as Barth's determination to take the text seriously as revelation. In addition, Wharton claims that Barth's exegesis is in harmony with present claims about the manner of the compilation of the biblical material:

Barth's exegetical and theological approach is at least analogous to the tradition process by which contemporary critical exegetes are insisting that the Bible itself came into being, from the historical point of view. . . . He confesses himself a member of a traditioning community, shaped and sustained by its rumour of God, a community that stretches back in a partly parallel, partly inter-locking, partly successive chain of communities, to the communities that produced the Bible. It is a confessional/historical rather

than merely historical continuity with the biblical communities.⁹

Wharton recognizes that "Barth's confessional approach to exegesis can be seen . . . to possess a basic consonance with the inner character of the Bible itself."¹⁰

The relationship of this thesis to the above scholarship is the following. The two important characteristics of Barth's exegesis to which Wharton draws attention emerge clearly from the analysis of Barth's exegesis of Genesis 1: 26-27. That exegesis is theological in the sense to which Wharton points. And, it becomes clear that the foundations of that exegesis are consonant with the current understanding of the way in which the community of faith interpreted the revelation handed to it. Thus, the analysis of this one piece of Barthian exegesis serves to substantiate the characterization of Barthian exegesis which is set forth by Wharton in only general terms.

But secondly, the thesis takes up a question which is generally neglected by such studies as the above. Childs has recognized the impasse in the relationship between biblical studies and theological interpretation -- that is to say, he has called attention to the final barrenness of historico-critical investigations when explication of a text is called for. And he has subsequently attempted exegesis which would take cognizance of textual-critical matters and at the same time explicate the text in its

setting within the Church. What he has not done is to take up the question of the relationship to theological exegesis of Old Testament scholarship which considers itself to be theological interpretation and hence to be in sympathy with the interpretive task of the dogmatic theologian. It is this facet of the complex relationship which will be under discussion in this thesis. The thesis attempts to lay bare the foundations of exegesis performed in the context of Old Testament theology in order to question whether that kind of exegesis is, in fact, compatible with the exegesis of the theologian and with a proper understanding of the nature of the biblical material as it is present to the Christian community.

A word needs to be said about the organization of the thesis. The representation of the relationship between exegesis and Old Testament studies here outlined is the essence of Barth's own understanding of that relationship, and is accepted by Eichrodt as well. This fact affects the organization of the thesis. It has been necessary to begin with a description of Barth's exegesis and to continue with the attempt to lay bare certain of the presuppositions upon which that exegesis is based. And it is in this examination of the exegesis that Barth's own understanding of the exegetical task becomes clear. But, in addition, Barth's understanding of the relationship between his own exegesis and Old Testament studies does

not emerge until his exegesis is juxtaposed with Eichrodt's, and until we have what Barth has to say about such a different kind of exegesis. On the one hand, this situation involves the acceptance of a characterization of the relationship between Old Testament studies and theological exegesis which is never explicitly justified, but which emerges as the backdrop to the specific exegesis Barth produces and subsequently serves as the foundation for examining the ways in which Eichrodt's exegesis has overstepped the bounds of that relationship. On the other hand, it appears not only that a positive attitude towards Barth's position has been adopted but also that his position is being used to evaluate Eichrodt's exegesis.

But the thesis disavows this partiality. What this thesis attempts is not the presentation of Barth's view as the correct one, but rather the laying bare of those principles and presuppositions involved in theological exegesis. Any apparent prejudgment in favour of Barth's position is meant not so much as a commendation of Barth as a vehicle for the critique of Eichrodt's position. Eichrodt has left himself open to the possibility of such a critique because of his avowal of theological exegesis as his own task. And it is only in setting his own exegesis beside that of Barth that one sees certain problems with Eichrodt's exegesis. To be sure, Barth's exegesis is being used as a model of theological exegesis, but this in itself, is

never intended as a commendation of Barthian exegesis.

It is also the nature of Barthian exegesis that its inner structure can be laid bare only by this roundabout method. Much can be said about Barthian exegesis once an initial examination has been conducted. That is the task of section one. But certain other insights can be arrived at only when the juxtaposing of Barthian exegesis with that of Eichrodt has taken place. It is, for example, only when this juxtaposing takes place that it becomes clear that Barthian exegesis stands upon an assumption about the nature of the relationship between Old Testament studies and theological exegesis. It is the purpose of chapter three to make this clear. The character of Barthian exegesis must be described through the light which Eichrodt's exegesis provides, and, in addition, once the implications of such exegesis are understood, Eichrodt's exegesis must be described in the light of those Barthian assumptions about exegesis. Thus it is that discussion of each exegesis takes place in two places, in the section dealing with the specific exegesis in question and in the third section dealing with the light each exegesis can throw upon the other.

It now becomes clearer why it is that Eichrodt's exegesis is an essential part of the thesis. Part of the foundation of Barthian exegesis is its understanding of the place of Old Testament studies in the task of expounding

the text. In part, this very realization comes clear only when the exegesis of an Old Testament scholar is set beside that of Barth. Thus, Eichrodt must be used in order to get clear certain important facets of Barth's exegesis. But the further point is that it is important that the assumptions behind theological exegesis of the Old Testament solely from within the Old Testament be laid bare. One way of achieving this is to examine Eichrodt's exegesis as it is set within the framework of the relationship between theology and Old Testament studies as conceived by Barth. Such a framework may prove unfavourable to Eichrodt. Yet it serves genuinely to lay bare some important aspects of Eichrodt's exegesis. Thus it is possible to see what the bounds of the role of Old Testament studies are within the Barthian conception of the relationship. That Eichrodt's work should serve as the example of Old Testament exegesis is justified partly by the fact that he refers in his exegesis to Barth's exegesis and in his comments reveals much about his own assumptions. This again is an example of the light which comes when the juxtaposing of the two exegeses takes place. That Eichrodt effects voluntarily this juxtaposing makes his exegesis suitable for this thesis.

Thus, what the thesis attempts is the following. The thesis describes Barth's exegesis of Genesis 1:26-27, and attempts to lay bare the foundations upon which that

exegesis is built. In order to do this fully, it is necessary to describe Eichrodt's exegesis of the same verses in order to lay bare the assumptions behind his particular exegesis. In so doing, not only do further insights concerning the foundations of Barthian exegesis emerge, but at the same time Barthian exegesis makes clear the nature of the relationship between Old Testament studies and theological exegesis, the scope which Old Testament studies is permitted within such an exegetical framework, and the ways in which Eichrodt's assumptions about exegesis overstep the bounds of that framework. Thereafter, it is possible to raise the larger issues illuminated by the exposition of this relationship.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Exegesis - Eisegesis: Is there a Difference?", Theology Today, vol. XXX, no. 3, Oct. 1973, p. 218.
2. In Biblical Theology in Crisis, Westminster, 1970, pp. 141-2.
3. See Old Testament Theology, vol. I, pp. 27-8.
4. See J. Wharton's discussion of the relationship between the exegesis of I Sam. 25 and its dogmatic context in Church Dog. IV/2; in "Karl Barth as Exegete and his Influence on Biblical Interpretation", USQR, XXVIII, no. 1, Fall 1972, pp. 8-9.
5. See Old Testament Theology, vol. I, p. 27.
6. See, for example, Introduction to Commentary on Romans, second edition.
7. In USQR, XXVIII; see footnote 1, p. 6.
8. Ibid., p. 12.
9. Ibid., p. 9.
10. Ibid., p. 10.

CHAPTER I

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . ." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Gen. 1:26-27.

I. i. Description of Barth's exegesis.

At the outset of his exegesis of these verses, Barth says the following:

There can be no doubt that, notwithstanding the singularity of the divine being and the uniqueness of the divine work, it (Genesis) did not represent the creator as alone, and felt it important to say so at this particular point in the creation of man. . . . When man was to be the subject, it had to be said that the creative basis of his existence was and is a history which took place in the divine sphere and essence: a divine movement to and from a divine Other, a divine conversation and summons and correspondence to it. A genuine counterpart in God Himself leading to unanimous decision is the secret prototype which is the basis of an obvious copy, a secret image and an obvious reflection in the co-existence of God and man, and also of the existence of man himself.¹

In the first place, Barth focuses upon the plural form 'Let us make'. The Genesis text is making the point that the creator is not alone, and it is of prime importance that the text chooses to make this point about the creator precisely in connection with the creation of man. In the second place, the text is pointing to an essential link between acknowledgement of the divine Other and the nature of the man who is created. To put it as precisely as

possible, in order for man to be created, there is necessary within the Godhead 'a divine movement', a 'divine conversation and summons'. Put another way, man's basis is a history of creative movement within the Godhead among persons. In the third place, this manner of the creation of man bears directly upon the nature of man himself. That this is the case is demonstrated by the fact that following hard upon the 'Let us make' comes the phrase 'in our image'. At the most basic level there is the link between the two plural forms 'us' and 'our'. But far more important is the fact that the understanding of the phrase 'in our image' must be related fundamentally to the plural activity of the Godhead. The very action of God taking counsel with Himself before He creates man is the 'secret prototype' for man. Man is to be the 'obvious copy'.

Barth goes on to say the following:

'In our image' means to be created as a being which has its ground and possibility in the fact that in 'us' i.e. in God's own sphere and being, there exists a divine and therefore self-grounded prototype to which this being can correspond; which can therefore legitimate it for all that it is a heterogeneous imitation; which can justify its existence; and by which when existence is given to it, it will in fact be legitimated and justified. . . . The phrase 'in our image' is obviously the decisive insight of the saga.²

In general terms, the fact that man is created in the image of God signifies that there is a divine prototype for man. God serves as a model for the creation of man. Man's nature "is not a new nature to the extent that it has a

pattern in the nature of God Himself."³ Such an understanding of 'image' is only of the most general kind until it is given its decisive content by Barth;

In God's own being and sphere there is. . . a genuine but harmonious self-encounter and self-discovery, a free co-existence and co-operation, an open confrontation and reciprocity. Man is the repetition of this divine form of life, its copy and reflection. He is this first in the fact that he is the counterpart of God, the encounter and discovery in God Himself being copied and imitated in God's relation to man. But he is it also in the fact that he is himself the counterpart of his fellows and has in them a counterpart, the co-existence and co-operation in God Himself being repeated in the relation of man to man."⁴

There is self encounter in God. The text itself indicates this reality in its use of the plural forms. That man is made 'in the image of God' means that he reflects this divine reciprocity. The way in which man is the reflection of the divine reciprocity is carefully indicated. Man does not repeat in his own being the movement within God's own being. Rather, man is made in the image of God in the fact that he is created in relationship with God and with other men. It is not the case that man is created with a capacity for fellowship, a capacity which he may choose to exercise. Rather, it is an ontological fact of man's being that he is already in relation with God and with other man. That man is already in relationship is the essential fact -- that which determines man's essence.

One half of this reality about man -- namely that he is in relation with other men -- is indicated in the phrase:

'male and female He created them'. That man is created male and female indicates that man is "this being in differentiation and relation and therefore in natural fellowship with God."⁵ Mankind is a unity, as God is a unity. The reciprocity internal to the Godhead is reflected in the sexual differentiation in the precise sense that man confronts and meets himself as male confronts female. Barth puts it most succinctly in the following quotation:

Man is no more solitary than God. But as God is one, and He alone is God, so man as man is one and alone, and two only in the duality of his kind i.e. in the duality of man and woman. In this way he is a copy and imitation of God. In this way he repeats in his confrontation of God and himself, the confrontation in God.⁶

Thus, just as God remains a unity in the differentiation of Persons, so too does man remain a unity as man in his differentiation as male and female.

The other half of this reality -- that God is in relationship with man is expressed in the very fact that God is creator. This fact of relationship is taken as central to the concept of 'creator - creature'. And this fact of the relationship between God and man is the condition of the possibility of relationship among men. Man's being in relationship with other men is the essential condition of his own being, but it depends not upon some inherent component of his nature but upon the external fact of his being already in relationship with God. In

order to make this point Barth represents the likeness between God and man by means of the 'analogia relationis'.⁷ The relational reality within the Godhead is of God's essence: it is of the nature of God's being. But there does not occur in man, in virtue of his being in the image of God, a parallel essence of being. While the relational aspect of being is fundamental to both God and man, its foundation in God is very different from its foundation in man. In God, relationship is of the very nature of the Godhead; in man relationship is grounded in the fact that man from the very moment of his being created is already in relationship -- relationship with God. It is for this reason that Barth does not describe the likeness between man and God as occurring in their essence. Rather, the likeness occurs in the parallelism of relationships. It is best expressed as follows:

The relationship between the summoning I in God's being and the summoned divine Thou is reflected both in the relationship of God to the man whom He has created, and also in the relationship between the I and the thou, between male and female, in human existence itself. There can be no question of anything more than an analogy. The differentiation and relationship between the I and the Thou in the divine being in the sphere of the Elohim are not identical with the differentiation and relationship between male and female. That it takes this form in man, corresponding to the bi-sexuality of animals, belongs to the creatureliness of man rather than to divine likeness. It also belongs to his creatureliness that the relationship between the I and thou in man takes place only in the form of differentiation and relationship between two different individuals, whereas in the case of God they are included in the one individual. . . . The

correspondence of the unlike is what takes place in the fact that the being of man represents in the form of co-existence of the different individuals of male and female, a creaturely and therefore dissimilar repetition of the fact that one God is in Himself not only I but also I and Thou.⁸

Thus, in summary, the meaning of the text under discussion is that just as encounter and discovery take place within the Godhead, so does there take place encounter and discovery between God and man and between man and man. And it is this encounter and discovery between men that constitutes the image of God in man, and is the reflection of God.

One point among many with which Barth must deal is his deliberate refusal to consider God's granting of dominion over the creation to man as central to the exposition of the 'in our image'. The central role of the phrase 'male and female' in his exposition binds together as a unit verses twenty-six and twenty-seven. If the phrase 'male and female' is essential to the understanding of 'in our image', then the second half of verse twenty-six concerning man's dominion, simply in virtue of its following the phrase 'in our image' more closely than does the former phrase, must bear upon the understanding of 'in our image'. Barth must spell out clearly the nature of the insight which the second half of verse twenty-six holds for the phrase 'in our image', and he must make clear the nature of the relationship between the two phrases -- the

phrase concerning man's dominion, and the phrase 'male and female'.

For example, at first glance it would appear that because of the position of the phrase concerning man's dominion at the end of verse twenty-six, one ought to take it as an explication of the phrase 'in our image' at least to the same extent as one does the much later phrase -- 'male and female' -- which appears at the end of verse twenty-seven. It might even be argued that the phrase concerning man's dominion is more important than the phrase 'male and female' which appears to be peripheral in virtue of its position at the end of verse twenty-seven.

Barth argues to the contrary as follows. The decisive content for the phrase 'in our image' is to be found in verse twenty-seven. That this is the case is indicated by the fact of the precise and repetitious formulation of the verse. The repetition of the phrase 'in our image' emphasizes the fact that what is to follow is to be understood as the decisive content of the 'imago Dei'. A further confirmation of this judgment is to be found in the fact that when the event of creation is summed up in Genesis 5:1, it is the formula of verse twenty-seven which is repeated. For Barth, it is clear that existence in confrontation is what is important about man. Furthermore, the fact that one focus of the second account of creation is the relationship between man and woman reinforces this position. And

finally, Barth cites a number of other Old Testament and New Testament passages,⁹ commenting that such passages indicate that it is differentiation and relationship, and not reflection about spirituality and corporality which have the constitutive meaning for biblical man.

But in defense of his focusing upon the phrase 'male and female' as the content of the 'imago Dei', Barth also spells out the relationship of man's dominion to the fact that he is made in the image of God. Barth discusses man's dominion in the following manner. He says, "there can be little doubt that the two are brought together and that the 'dominium terrae' is portrayed as a consequence of the 'imago Dei', but the question remains whether a technical connection is intended."¹⁰ All that Barth will say is that the part of the verse dealing with man's dominion delineates man's distinguished position in relation to the rest of creation, but that such dominion is not the essence of the 'imago Dei'. Rather, the 'imago Dei' is the presupposition of man's position in relation to the rest of creation. The 'imago Dei' is a presupposition of man's dominion in the following way. What is most significant about man is that the only distinction among men is that of male and female. Otherwise man reflects the unity and lack of distinction within the Godhead. As in the Godhead, the only distinction is that among persons, so among men the only distinction is between male and

female. Such is not the case among animals who are distinguished as to species. For men, this lack of distinction indicates a superiority over the animals, and it is this superiority which is partially the meaning of that dominion of man over the animals. As Barth puts it:

The distinction of the sexes. . . is the only genuine distinction between man and man in correspondence with the fact that the I-Thou relationship is the only genuine distinction in the One Divine Being. . . . From this standpoint it may be appreciated that the dominion of man over the beasts already has its inner basis in his divine likeness.¹¹

In making these statements Barth distinguishes between the two phrases as to their capacity to give content to the phrase 'in our image'. The phrase concerning man's dominion is of secondary importance. It is a fact of man's position in the world which stems from the fact that man is made in God's image. It does not explain the nature of the image of God in man.

This is the core of Barth's exegesis of Genesis 1: 26-27.

- ii. Analysis of the exegesis as involving exposition of theology.

In attempting to understand the nature of Barth's exegesis it is important to note that in the first place there is distinct internal consistency to his exegesis. He notes carefully and takes seriously every detail of the verses. He sets the verses carefully within the

larger context of Genesis I, pointing out the momentous fact of the contrast between the way in which man is created and the way involved in the preceding acts of creation. He deals with the major difficulties of the verses. First, he expounds the significance of the plural forms in verse twenty-six. Then he dissents from other time-honoured interpretations giving his reasons. The best example of this is his discussion of the heavenly court theory.¹² He delineates carefully the relationship between man's dominion over the rest of creation and the 'imago Dei', stating why man's dominion cannot be the essential and characteristic content of the image of God in man. Finally he supports his exegesis by citation and exposition of the other Old Testament texts. Now it is these features which contribute to the inner consistency of the exegesis. Barth's account of the 'imago Dei' is cogent, consistent, and in a certain sense compelling. It can and does stand on its own.

But it is necessary to ask also about the deeper roots of this exegesis. In general, Barth's claim is that one must formulate a theological anthropology.¹³ Barth must expound a doctrine of man, quite simply because of the fact of Jesus Christ. He says:

Theological anthropology expounds the knowledge of man which is made possible and needful by the fact that man stands in the light of the Word of God. The Word of God is thus its foundation.¹⁴

In very concrete and precise terms, what this foundation of theological anthropology demands is that the question must be asked as to the import for man's nature that there is a man Jesus, apart from all men but among them. In fact, what the fact of the Incarnation means is that the man Jesus must be the criterion for theological anthropology. Barth spells out in detail what this means.¹⁵ This criterion means first, that every man must be understood in the light of the fact that the man Jesus comes from God and that God moves in him. It means, secondly, that because in Jesus is to be found the history of the deliverance of men, man is to be understood only in relation to the fact of his deliverance through Jesus. Thirdly, as the man Jesus demonstrates the lordship of God, so it is essential to the understanding of man that he be seen as standing under the lordship of God. Fourthly, just as Jesus is and has his being only in order that God's work may be done, His kingdom come, and His Word be spoken, so supposing even the slightest similarity between Jesus and other men, man is he who is bound up with God; his existence is an active participation in what God does. He is bound to God as God has bound Himself to man.

These are the limits within which we shall always have to move in search for a theological concept of man. . . but we shall discover it only as we compare man as such, and ourselves with the man Jesus, asking ourselves what it means for man that there is a man Jesus.¹⁶

Jesus is man. When we understand who Jesus is we then possess a body of theological facts, the light of which, when directed upon mankind provides insight into man's nature. The insight which the fact of the Incarnation affords is twofold. On the one hand, because Jesus is God the Son, there is demonstrated in the Incarnation, in the life itself of Jesus, the fact of the relational aspect of the Godhead -- that is to say, the believer witnesses the playing out of the relationship of God the Father to God the Son which is a primary fact of the nature of the Godhead. As Father of the Son and as Son of the Father, God is Himself I and Thou confronting Himself. Son is Son and Father is Father only in the essentiality of confrontation, relationship, and covenant. Jesus as Son of the Father is in covenant relation with the Father, just as essentially as he is being for others in relation to other men. Barth calls the relational aspect of the Godhead between Father and Son the covenant relationship. Jesus as God the Son is in covenant relationship with God the Father, and this relationship is Jesus' being.

But on the other hand, Jesus is also man. The covenantal reality which Jesus is in relation to God the Father manifests itself in the sphere of mankind in the fact that Jesus is he who is for other men. Jesus is being there for other men. The relationship of God the

Father to God the Son manifests itself to all men.

The Johannine discourses contain extensive expositions of the relationship of the Father to the Son, and the Son to the Father, but they do not attribute any independent aim to this relationship. In the strict sense they do not stand alone, but tirelessly aim to show that the man Jesus is for others, near and distant, disciples, Israel and the world, and to show what he is for them, and for man. What he is in his relationship as Son to the Father is not something which he is and has for Himself. He does not experience it or enjoy it as a private religious person. He is it as a public person. He manifests it in his relationship to his disciples and through their mediation to the whole world of men. It thus acquires at once the form of a specific action in relation to men and on their behalf.¹⁷

Jesus is man for others. And he is this primarily. What he is in his relationship as Son with the Father does not have significance in itself for him alone. That relationship is something which can manifest itself only in his relationship with other men. And this manifestation takes the form of being there for others. At its most thoroughgoing, being there for other men means the acceptance of their fate of death and punishment. Jesus' fate demonstrates his being for others. Jesus' humanity, his being for others is the earthly manifestation of the Godhead's eternal relationship with Himself.

Jesus' life demonstrates the covenant relationship between God and himself and the covenant relationship between Jesus and other men. But that life is of even greater significance. "There is an inner divine correspondence and similarity between the being of the man Jesus

for God and his being for his fellows. . . . The humanity of Jesus is the repetition and reflection of God Himself, no more and no less. It [the humanity of Jesus] is the image of God."¹⁸

In what way does Barth understand Jesus as the image of God?

Jesus is true man and in virtue of his humanity and, in virtue of being God the Son, is the criterion in understanding what man is. But in addition he is called the 'imago Dei', and he is the 'imago Dei' in virtue of being who he is. His humanity, his being for others manifest his being as God the Son. The fact that he is God the Son demonstrates the nature of the Godhead as what it is -- a relational reality. Thus it is that Jesus in his humanity is the manifestation of the Godhead. He is the 'imago Dei'. His being for others is the image of God's being for Himself, and it is the image of God's being for men. Barth presents a cogent theology. Arguing from the nature of Jesus Christ, he presents the nature of the Godhead as one of internal relationship with itself and of external relations with mankind. His perception of the nature of Jesus Christ causes him to make his formulations in the way he does. And his perception causes him to claim that in virtue of his humanity and in virtue of being God the Son, Jesus is 'imago Dei'.

The exegetical situation may be recapitulated in the following manner. The perception of the nearness of Jesus to God in the sense that Jesus most thoroughly and truly manifests the Godhead, this perception which can be expressed adequately only by saying that Jesus is 'imago Dei' does bear upon Genesis 1:26 which claims also that man is made in the image of God. The goal in exegeting Genesis 1:26-27 appears to be to define what it is about man which brings him as close to God as the phrase 'image of God' suggests. Put differently, the goal is to discover what it is about man which is the image of God, that in man which is closest to God. This goal of exegesis demands that the exegesis be primarily a matter of anthropology. It seems that man's nature and capacities are to be analysed in order to discover what it is in man which brings him so close to God. There operate here two assumptions. Firstly, there is present the assumption that what it is about man which brings him close to God will be in some way instantly recognizable. Secondly, there operates the assumption that whatever it is which constitutes the image of God will somehow be the highest or most 'sophisticated' of man's abilities or capacities. What this goal of exegesis attempts is to give content to the word 'man' as it appears in Genesis 1:26. Once the exegete knows something about man's nature, he is able to explain wherein lies the image of God. This goal of exegesis demands in addition

that something be known about God. This goal of exegesis demands that content be given to the word 'God' in Genesis 1:26.

Now Barth follows this pattern in exegeting Genesis 1:26. He brings to bear upon the text his knowledge of God, and his knowledge of man. And the evidence internal to the text about the nature of God and of man bear out his understanding. But what is of decisive importance is the source of Barth's knowledge of God and man. And that source, of course, is Jesus Christ. It is only through the decisive knowledge of God and man which Jesus Christ is that the exegete can begin to expound Genesis 1:26-27.

Therefore, it may be said that the body of theology about Jesus Christ informs the exegesis. It does this, firstly, because Barth brings to bear upon the verses his understanding of the Godhead. The God who speaks in Genesis 1:26 is the relational reality of divine I-Thou encounter. And the details of the verse -- specifically the plural forms -- indicate this fact about God. Secondly, because Jesus is the paradigm of humanity, the criterion of theological anthropology, and is 'being for others', a relational being, Barth can give a decisively relational content to 'man' as mentioned in verse twenty-six. Here again the text bears him out in the sense that the presence of the relational reality which man is is mentioned in the

phrase 'male and female'. And the paramount significance of relationship accounts for the fact that Barth must pass over as only subsidiary the detail concerning man's dominion. Thirdly, when Barth states that Jesus is the 'imago Dei', he testifies once again to the importance of encounter in God and in man. Jesus is 'imago Dei' because, in virtue of being in relationship with God as God the Father with God the Son, he reveals the essential nature of the Godhead; and in his manifestation of this divine nature in the fact that he is, as a man, totally man for others -- in covenant relationship with other men -- he reveals to men the essence of man's nature. His essence is to be for others. Because he is man, his life makes clear man's nature. Because he is God the Son, his life makes clear the nature of the Godhead. And in calling Jesus 'imago Dei', Barth is pointing to the most important and decisive insight about God, and to the most careful and thorough insight into the nature of man. Thus it is that when Barth exegetes Genesis 1:26-27, he understands already much about God and about man.

It is worth pointing out, at this juncture, that Barth goes about the task of exegesis in a way very different from that of Eichrodt. The fundamental underpinning of Barth's exegesis is the knowledge which comes through Jesus Christ. Because this is the case, he focuses upon expounding the nature of God and nature of man. One might

quickly characterise his exegesis as expounding the 'content' present in the words 'God' and 'man'. Eichrodt concentrates attention upon the words 'selem' and 'demut'. This is his starting point -- the fundamental fact out of which exegesis grows. This concentration demonstrates his expectation that the exegesis of the verse must depend upon an examination of the relationship between the two terms and of the original usages of the separate terms. His particular insights will stem primarily from philological study. The very different starting points of these exegetes can be indicated simply in the focus of their concentration: Barth upon 'God' and 'man', Eichrodt upon 'selem' and 'demut'.

FOOTNOTES

1. Church Dogmatics, III pt. 1, IX:41:2, pp. 182-3.
2. Ibid., pp. 183-4.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 184-5.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 186.
7. Ibid., p. 195.
8. Ibid., p. 196.
9. Ibid., p. 195.
10. Ibid., p. 194.
11. Ibid., p. 196.
12. See Barth's discussion, C.D., III pt. 1, IX:41:2, pp. 191-2.
13. This task is not performed in the body of the exegesis of Genesis 1:26-27. Rather it is a series of insights which arise from theological reflection and are made to inform the text when exegesis takes place. The exposition of theological anthropology takes place in the volumes on creation immediately after the exegesis proper. The purpose of such ordering of the material is to indicate clearly how the exegesis is informed by theological doctrines.
14. Church Dogmatics, III pt. 2, X:42:3, p. 20.
15. Ibid., III pt. 2, X:44:2, pp. 73-4.
16. Ibid., p. 74.
17. Ibid., III pt. 2, X:45:2, p. 209.
18. Ibid., p. 219.

CHAPTER II

II. i. Description of Eichrodt's exegesis.

Eichrodt sets his discussion of these verses in the context of his discussion of the place of man in the creation. His larger task is to expound the doctrine of man presented in the Old Testament. For him, the peculiar position of man in the creation and among the works of creation is worked out through the teaching present in three separate texts. These texts are Psalm 8, which sees man as 'a little lower than the angels', Genesis 2 in which man alone of all creation is created through the divine breath, and Genesis 1 in which man is made in God's image.¹ That Eichrodt chooses to discuss Genesis 1:26-27 in this context indicates his expectation that the text will yield important insights concerning the nature of man as he is presented in the Old Testament.

Much of his discussion centres around an understanding of the Hebrew terms which are usually translated 'image' and 'likeness'. Eichrodt is particularly at pains to understand these terms as they qualify one another and precisely as the Priestly writer uses them. He points out that the term 'selem' in its oldest usage means 'plastic image' or 'statue' and that this understanding of the term has come down to the Priestly writer by way of

an older tradition.² The Priestly writer then modified the meaning of this term by adding to it 'kidmutenu', representing a root used to express only similarity. His purpose, Eichrodt asserts, is to exclude the idea of an actual copy of God.³ That 'demut' serves this function is substantiated by the use of this same term in Ezekiel 1. That the concept of image ('selem') is capable of such qualification is indicated by the equivalent process taking place in Babylonian.

This suggests that the Priestly narrator no longer had any intention of taking 'selem' to mean a simple copy of God's outward form, but that what was in his mind was something for which the concept copy was only an inadequate description, a correspondence between God and man which could only figuratively be characterised as the endowment of man with God's image.⁴

What precisely then, is the nature of the qualification to 'selem' made by the addition of 'kidmutenu'? Eichrodt characterises the Priestly writer's work as a spiritualization, a spiritualization which accords with a whole pattern of spiritualization found in the Priestly writer's work.

It is he who better than any other writer knows how to convey vividly, both here and elsewhere, the absolute otherness and transcendence of the divine nature, he who eliminates all trace of anthropomorphism from his theophanies, and acknowledges no angel to mediate between God and man because of his strict refusal to bring the divine realm down into the sphere of the creaturely. It was no longer possible for such a writer to speak without demur of a physical copy of God; he was bound to try to comprehend 'selem'

in a wider sense, to advance from the idea of a tangible image to that of parabolic similarity.⁵

This understanding of the Priestly writer's task is supported by two further considerations. Firstly, there is the use of the plural forms in Genesis 1:26. Whether these plurals indicate an address to the heavenly court, a plural form of deliberation and reflection, or the wealth of God's powers, is clearly irrelevant to the main purpose of the plural form "which definitely aimed at avoiding an altogether too narrow connection with God's own form, and at changing the naively materialistic conception of earlier times into a more vaguely worded correspondence between the human and divine natures."⁶ Secondly, the use in Genesis 5:3 of the two concepts in the inverted order, when the writer describes the passing over of the image of God from Adam to his son Seth indicates "a deliberate intention of turning the reader's thoughts away from physical similarity. . . towards the spiritual definition of the human image."⁷

At this point, Eichrodt makes clear what the nature of his investigation must be. He says: "We cannot be content with lexical data, but first and foremost must ask in what form the divine nature was revealed to the Priestly writer."⁸ His answer to this question is as follows:

What Israel through God's self-communication in the covenant, had experienced as the fundamental

character of the divine nature, and had even more deeply comprehended as such in her historical experience of sovereignty, namely the personhood of God who thus dealt with her, the Priestly writer now succeeds in bringing vividly to life as the determining force behind the process of creation.⁹

The Priestly writer is conveying the personhood of God, the fact that in disclosing Himself as a divine Thou, He discloses His purpose to have fellowship with man. And man, in being the receptor of this divine disclosure must also be endowed with personhood, with the capacity to be open to the address of God.

ii. Analysis of the exegesis

(a) Use of lexical data.

It is necessary to attempt to understand the manner in which Eichrodt's exegesis proceeds. One major focus is upon the theological insights which are peculiar to the Priestly writer. Eichrodt holds a well-defined conception of the kinds of insights the Priestly writer conveys to the reader and of the goals which the Priestly writer had in mind in the writing of his account. In addition, there is operating a fairly clear chronology which organizes and legitimates Eichrodt's exegetical procedure.

If Eichrodt can take for granted his characterization of the Priestly source, then a great deal can be said about the goals of the Priestly writer in his creation account. In a word, P is engaged in a "creative reshaping

of traditional spiritual values."¹⁰ Such a characterization affects the handling of 'selem' and 'demut'. P is said to be working with more ancient material handed down to him, which he cannot ignore. The presence of the term 'selem' in the text is taken as evidence of the more ancient source. How Eichrodt arrives at such an assessment of the term is not stated clearly.¹¹ However, the judgment certainly appears to be based upon the present awareness of the Priestly writer as a 'spiritualizing writer'. The assumption seems to be that such a writer could not have employed such a term in its original sense of 'physical copy' and must have sought to modify in some manner the traditional sense of such a term. This he accomplished, according to Eichrodt, by the addition of the qualifying phrase 'kidmutenu' which is understood to represent a far more abstract conception. What has been assumed is that the term 'selem' is the older term which comes to the Priestly writer by way of an older tradition and that the phrase 'kidmutenu' is an innovation on the part of the Priestly writer.¹² And this assumption is based upon Eichrodt's understanding of the Priestly writer's goal as a spiritualizing of the tradition, as well as upon the lexical data which demonstrates that 'selem' is indeed an ancient term. Stated differently, it could be said firstly, that what is considered to be abstract terminology is to be attributed to the Priestly writer; what is much more

concrete terminology must evidence the remnants of an older tradition. Secondly, it could be said that both these attributions can be accomplished on the basis of the recognition of the Priestly writer's spiritualizing purpose.

Eichrodt is very certain about what it is which the Priestly writer is accomplishing. He emphatically suggests that lexical data "may certainly be appropriate for ascertaining the original meaning of the concept', but it can have "no significance for the usage of P, since here such expressions are not omitted by accident but are avoided from a clear sense of their inadequacy."¹³ Thus, the explanation of the phrases can be sought only in the fact that P is engaged in a reshaping of traditional spiritual values, and not in lexical data alone.

That this is the case becomes clearer as Eichrodt analyses the details of the verses. It evidences itself first in his assessment of the plural forms in the phrase 'let us make man in our image'. Here all the various theories which explain the plural forms are thrust aside in favour of the following explanation.

The reference to creation as 'in our image' instead of 'in my image' is definitely aimed at avoiding an altogether too narrow connection with God's own form, and at changing the naively materialistic conception of earlier times into a more vaguely worded correspondence between the human and the divine natures.¹⁴

The explanation is to be sought in terms of P's overarching purpose, the spiritual reshaping of the tradition handed down to him, which requires, among other things, a far less literalistic understanding of the resemblance between God and man.

Thus it is that the understanding of the Priestly writer's activity as a spiritualization of an older tradition guides in the evaluation of the terms 'selem' and 'kidmutenu', and in the proper assessment of the plural forms of verse 26.

(b) Use of P's theological insights in exegesis.

In the second place, when Eichrodt comes to face the question about the precise nature of the image of God in man, he asserts that all our knowledge of the theological insights of the Priestly writer must be brought to bear. Lexical data concerning the term 'selem' and the phrase 'kidmutenu' is no longer relevant. Instead the exegete must ask about the form in which the divine nature was revealed to P. Lexical data may make clear the original use of the terms, but the exegete must be clear about the nature of the Priestly writer's insights in order to determine what he wished to convey by the terms. Eichrodt claims that these insights may be summed up as the awareness of the personhood of God. "Israel, through God's self-communication in the covenant. . . comprehended the

personhood of God."¹⁵ It seems to be taken for granted that Israel's experience in exodus and in covenant may be characterized as the experience of the personhood of God. The difficulty is, however, that no justification of this characterization is offered. This notion of the personhood of God is based, presumably, upon careful examination of the P source, but in this exegesis there is no detailed examination of this source nor is there any justification of the insight of the P writer as insight into the personhood of God.¹⁶ This is a serious lacuna in the principles of exegesis.

But it is now on the basis of this characterization that Eichrodt proceeds to expound the nature of the image of God in man. It is on this basis that he proceeds to give content to the phrase 'in our image'.

In the light of the position allotted to man within the created order the creator is seen as a personal Thou who discloses Himself for the purpose of fellowship with His noblest creature; and from this personal Thou every being that wears a human face takes its stamp. For man to be created in the likeness of God's image can only mean that on him too, personhood is bestowed as the definitive characteristic of his nature.¹⁷

The argument runs: God is Person; man, in virtue of being made in the image of God, is person also, capable of response and love towards his creator. It is the image of God which gives man his personhood.

And one can see how an understanding of the Priestly writer's insights demands this understanding of the

'imago Dei'. The disturbing thing is that this insight about the personhood of God is so incredibly generalised. This is its weakness. It can barely be distinguished from the insights of any other of the sources in the Bible. Do we want to argue that the J source does not recognise God's personhood? If not, what then is distinctive about the Priestly writers insight? How does his distinctive insight inform our understanding of the 'imago Dei'? Perhaps it can be claimed that the overall insights of a writer can be used to expound his meaning in one verse to reveal the nature of his interpretive reshaping, but this exegetical procedure can be justified only when it is accompanied by a characterisation of a writer which is demonstrable. This is what is lacking. Therefore, it is impossible to raise the further and more pressing question: Can there be discovered a consensus characterization of the nature of the Priestly writer's task as he conceives it, and of his insights?

In summary, it must be said that when this concept is explained only as P's insight into the personhood of God, when the peculiar nature of P's insight into that personhood is never elaborated,¹⁸ and when there is offered no justification based on a consideration of the texts of the Priestly writer of personhood as being the central insight, then it has not been demonstrated that the exegete must rely upon such an insight as the key in

exegesis.

(c) Use of source material and chronology.

Yet, in some ways, the theoretical basis of Eichrodt's exegesis is highly respectable. Underlying the exegesis is a series of presuppositions which are thoroughly venerable. The major presupposition is the acceptance of the existence of a Priestly writer whose influence in the compilation of older sources can be traced carefully and reliably. There is a Priestly writer who exhibits at the very least a certain fairly definite and consistent literary style. His work can be distinguished from other writers with other fairly distinct literary styles. The P source is not J, E, or D. The acceptance of this major achievement of textual criticism sets the bounds within which Eichrodt's exegesis operates. When the problem of exegesis in relation to Genesis 1:26-27 becomes a matter of determining what the writer is saying about man and God, the exegete, in virtue of the assumption of these boundaries to his exegesis, is able to call upon his knowledge of the kind of theological insights which P exhibits throughout his work. The exegete is able to illumine the text with what can be called 'the Priestly writer's theological understanding of God'.

Moreover, this concept of 'the Priestly writer's understanding of God' is supported by what might be termed an assumption about chronology. Eichrodt has maintained

that the paramount feature of the Priestly writer's work -- his awareness of God's personhood -- depends upon P's understanding of Israel's historical experience of God,¹⁹ and upon "the form (in which) the divine nature was revealed to the Priestly writer".²⁰ The chronological assumption behind these assertions is that the Exodus and Sinai traditions are the most ancient, that by the time P came to record his theological insights there existed already a large body of tradition concerning the subsequent covenant between God and His people. Further, it is understood that the tradition about creation, whether that of J, E or P is chronologically subsequent to the Sinai and Exodus traditions. All of these assertions are supported in various places by textual criticism. But what is important is that all these insights legitimate Eichrodt's procedure in asking about the Priestly writer's theological insights in order to exegete Genesis 1: 26-27. It is taken for granted that when the Priestly writer came to set down the tradition about creation, he had formulated already his theological insights about God and must have been expounding these in the creation text in question. The assumption about chronology, which is based upon the results of textual criticism, serves in part as the justification for appealing to what has been termed 'the Priestly writer's understanding of God' when the exegetical problems of Genesis 1:26-27 arise.

iii. Description of von Rad's exegesis.

There are certain other features of Eichrodt's exegesis upon which it is necessary to focus, and these features emerge most clearly if we consider briefly what another Old Testament scholar, Gerhard von Rad, has to say about Genesis 1:26-27.

Briefly, what the juxtaposing of the exegeses of Eichrodt and von Rad achieves is clarity about the following distinctions. Eichrodt and von Rad discuss the text in terms of lexical data. They analyse words, root meanings, usages in related languages and in other parts of the Bible. Their discussion is, at this level, what shall be characterized below as 'public' discussion. On the basis of such discussion, Eichrodt then moves to exposition of the meaning of the phrase 'in our image', whereas von Rad finds reason in his own analysis for denying this possibility. Because von Rad refuses to shift from lexical analysis to exposition of content, he may be characterized primarily as linguistic scholar rather than as theologian. His position illustrates the way in which Eichrodt's own position may be understood as that of theological exegete, and the way in which his exegesis goes beyond the usual bounds of textual criticism. Eichrodt acknowledges the theological character of his own exposition, but in addition always insists upon its roots in careful 'scientific' analysis of the text. The juxtaposing of Eichrodt and

von Rad makes clear, in the first place, the extent to which their exegeses are 'public', and in the second place clarifies the sense in which Eichrodt understands his own task as theological exegesis.

The weight of von Rad's exegesis also falls upon an analysis of the terms 'selem' and 'demut', but his results differ markedly from those of Eichrodt. For von Rad, the essential term is 'selem' partly because it alone appears in verse twenty-seven, and again in Genesis 9:6. Attention must be focused upon this term. Von Rad points out that the predominant meaning of this term is 'plastic work', 'duplicate', sometimes even 'idol', and he cites I Samuel 6:5, Numbers 33:52, II Kings 11:18, Ezekiel 23:14, in support of this claim. But 'selem' is then "more closely explained and made precise"²¹ by the addition of 'demut'. What 'demut' does is to indicate that the image ('selem') "is to correspond to the original image (i.e. of the Creator God), that it is to resemble it."²² What von Rad means precisely becomes clear when he says the following:

The interpretations, therefore, are to be rejected which proceed from an anthropology which is strange to the Old Testament, and one-sidedly limit God's image to man's spiritual nature, relating it to man's 'dignity', his 'personality' or 'ability for moral decision'. The marvel of man's bodily appearance is not at all to be excepted from the realm of God's image. This was the original notion and we have no reason to suppose that it completely gave way in P's theological reflection to a spiritualizing and intellectualizing tendency.²³

Part of the reason why physical resemblance must not be discarded in the analysis of the two terms, has to do with the references to Ezekiel 28:12, and to Psalm 8 where man is made a little lower than the 'Elohim'. These texts indicate a resemblance between man and the 'Elohim', a resemblance which von Rad sees as partially a physical resemblance. That the image of God in man comes to man through the 'Elohim' is further confirmed for von Rad by the plural forms in verse twenty-six. "God includes Himself among the heavenly beings of His court and thereby conceals Himself in this majority."²⁴ Thus, man's resemblance to God is somewhat secondary. It comes about through his resemblance to the 'Elohim' who in turn resemble God, or it is a resemblance only to the assembled members of the heavenly court among whom God hides His own precise identity. In either case, the implication is that because it is indirect, the image of God in man refers to man's physical nature as well as to other things.

Finally, von Rad argues directly that God was thought of by Israel as having human form. There are various references to the prophets: Amos 4:13, 9:1, Isaiah 6:1, but the classic text is Ezekiel 1:26 which speaks of 'a likeness as it were, of a human form'. Of this text von Rad says:

The very carefully formulated statement in Ezekiel 1:26 is of particular importance. The light phenomenon of the 'glory of God' clearly displays human contours. It has rightly been said that Ezekiel 1:26 is the theological prelude to the 'locus classicus' for the imago doctrine in Genesis 1:26.

This text is taken as further confirmation that physical resemblance must constitute an undeniable part of the 'imago Dei' in man.

This emphasis upon the shades of meaning in the term 'selem' which suggests 'plastic image' is used once again in determining the relationship to the 'imago Dei' of the summons of man to rule over the earth. "The close relationship of the term for God's image with that for the commission to exercise dominion emerges quite clearly when we have understood 'selem' as 'plastic image'."²⁶ Von Rad sees here a parallel with the activity of ancient kings. Just as a king erected statues of himself as symbols of his power in distant provinces, so God sets man on earth, made in His Image, as "God's representative, summoned to maintain and enforce God's claim to dominion over the earth."²⁷ Using the emphasis upon plastic image, and arguing from parallel knowledge of kingship in the Ancient Near East, von Rad is able to assert that the Priestly writer is pointing out that the decisive things about man's similarity to God is his ability to dominate. Von Rad is not prepared to say that the image of God in man is his ability to dominate. Rather, he speaks of man's dominion as the

purpose and function which man has in virtue of being endowed with God's image. Von Rad is pointing out that the Priestly writer's interest is in man's task in the world, and not in the precise nature of the image of God in men.²⁸

Von Rad's exegesis, then, turns upon the care and attention he devotes to the shades of meaning of the term 'selem' which suggest 'plastic image'. All his specific citations which come from elsewhere in the Old Testament support his contention about 'selem'. His accounting for the various features of the verses twenty-six and seven, using this term as a pivot, is convincing. The plural forms in verse twenty-six are shown to support this understanding of 'selem'. The relationship of man's dominion over the earth to the 'imago dei' is expounded carefully, and vonRad's contentions that the function and purpose of man (his dominion) is of more importance than the nature of the 'imago dei' seems to be substantiated by what follows hard upon the announcement of creation in the image of God - namely man's role as exercising dominion.

The thrust of this exegesis seems to be entirely against that of Eichrodt. Whereas Eichrodt is at pains to emphasize the spiritualization and intellectualization of the tradition at the hands of P, and to discover the nature of the 'imago dei', von Rad concentrates upon a demonstration that even in the Priestly source a spiritualization is

not to be seen behind the qualification of 'selem' by 'demut'. While 'demut' does qualify the former term, von Rad demonstrates that the idea of a physical copy is not lost, but is in fact substantiated not only from other texts, but from the further details of the verses themselves. Von Rad is then led to ask, not about the nature of the 'imago dei', but about its consequence, man's dominion over creation, and he shows how it is that once one acknowledges the still-present physical connotations to 'selem', one must ask, not about the 'imago dei', but about man's function and purpose in creation.

iv. The contrast in exegesis indicates the 'public' nature of such exegesis.

This disagreement between Eichrodt and von Rad concerning the way in which 'demut' qualifies 'selem' can be characterized as a 'public' disagreement. By 'public', I intend to suggest that the issues involved can be weighed and evaluated by any scholar. The determination of the meaning of disputed terms takes place by means of considerations concerning the history of their meaning, the parallel usages in other languages and in other contexts in the Bible. Any disagreement concerns the meaning of certain words, the history of their meaning, the emphasis to be placed upon such words in the interpretation of a text, and the evaluation of certain other texts in terms of their relevance and meaning. All these things may be

determined without resorting to theological considerations. The faith of the exegete is not, at this point, brought to bear upon the text.

Unencumbered by theological considerations, any scholar may evaluate the lexical data as Eichrodt and von Rad have done. Von Rad presents most clearly the marshalled details of this approach. But Eichrodt is also moving in this world; he too employs the lexical data available to him. And to the extent that each remains at this level of dialogue, the discussion is a public one. It is open to any scholar to determine the weight which is to be placed upon a particular citation from elsewhere in the Old Testament. Anyone may evaluate the parallels with other Ancient Near Eastern languages. Discussion on this level is 'public', because theological considerations play no part in the examination of the use of words. This discussion is public because it already precludes raising the issue about what is entailed by considering the Bible to be revelation. In the present situation, no personal position concerning a doctrine of revelation interferes in the exegete's examination of lexical data. There occurs simply a discussion of the data as analyzed by the exegete.

In fact, there is some measure of agreement between Eichrodt and von Rad. They agree about the qualifying function of the term 'demut', although the nature of that

qualification is in dispute. They recognize the plural forms of verse twenty-six as an attempt by the writer to allow God to disappear behind His heavenly court in order that the resemblance between God and man may not be drawn too closely. And each affirms that while man's dominion is not to be seen as the essence of the 'imago Dei', it is, nevertheless, its consequence.²⁹ There the agreement ends. But the very measure of agreement and the fact of agreement about the bounds and nature of the material to be analyzed hint at the fact of the 'public' nature of the debate on this level.

The two exegetes part company. Eichrodt depends, as we have seen, upon the guidance afforded by his impression as to the purpose and character of the Priestly writer. He has maintained that the analysis of lexical data is never enough. His knowledge of the Priestly writer must guide in the evaluation of the terms 'selem' and 'demut' and provide him with indications as to the Priestly writer's intention in speaking of the image of God. Von Rad stays closer to the text, in the sense that he allows his analysis of the key terms to determine the bounds of his enquiry concerning the image of God. Von Rad claims that the proper analysis of the lexical data leads to the abandonment of the task of determining the meaning of the 'image' in man. Enquiry has reached its limits; further considerations are irrelevant. Here the two exegetes are on very different

ground. Eichrodt finds himself able to speak about the Priestly writer's experience of the divine nature. Von Rad speaks about the general Old Testament conception of God as sometimes presented in human form, as is suggested by the analysis of the key words; and he emphasizes the details of the verses which support the interpretation of the 'imago Dei' as, at least, partially physical. No more is he able to do.

What they disagree about is the bounds within which the characterization of the God of the Old Testament should take place. And because of this disagreement, they disagree about that very characterization of God. Are there ever-present 'physical' connotations when the whole of the Old Testament speaks of God, as von Rad contends? Can we arrive at a consensus as to the way the Priestly writer should be characterized, a consensus as to his peculiar concerns and theological insights, a consensus about God's nature, as Eichrodt does? Which considerations are the decisive ones? Is our knowledge of the Priestly writer more important? Does it outweigh considerations about the characterization of God from elsewhere in the Old Testament?

Now, in fact, even these issues are capable of resolution in a 'public' manner. The evidence which von Rad adduces in support of his claim as to the physical connotations of all thought about God can be examined by anyone. Each text can be weighed. There can be discussion about

the value of each piece of evidence. In principle, agreement can be reached because the evidence is available to anyone who cares to take the trouble. In addition, it seems to be the case that Eichrodt's characterization of the Priestly writer is open to such 'public' scrutiny. Determining the bounds of the Priestly source is a purely critical matter. Analysing the themes and emphases present in that material is a task open to any scholar. And with the results of such an analysis, the characterization of the Priestly writer is open to evaluation, to modification, and to correction. Thereafter, the debate about the decisiveness of the characterization of the Priestly writer for determining what is meant by the 'imago Dei' is a 'public' debate. It centres upon a claim about the relevance of knowledge about an author for the interpretation of his writings, and an opposing claim about philological continuity throughout the work of various Old Testament writers. Finally, there can occur public debate about von Rad's decision to abandon exegesis of the 'imago Dei' portions of the verse in favour of exegesis of man's 'dominion', based as that decision is upon the discovery of the 'physical' connotations of the term 'selem'.

The nature of Eichrodt's exegesis now emerges more clearly. On the one hand, his exegesis stands squarely upon the findings of sound textual criticism. Those findings determine the nature of the exposition of the text he will

undertake, and the bounds of that exposition -- that is, his lexical analysis determines what needs exposition and to what extent. In these matters his exegesis resembles that of von Rad and is 'public' in the sense here delineated. But, in addition, his is theological exegesis because he recognizes the necessity of theological insights for proper exposition of the text. Here he is moving in the sphere of what this thesis is calling 'theological' exegesis. The issue which now emerges concerns how clearly Eichrodt understands his exegesis to be theological and how carefully he has considered the relationship of his exegesis to that kind of theological exegesis represented here by Barth's exposition of the text.

FOOTNOTES

1. Old Testament Theology, vol. 2, pp. 120-2.
2. Ibid., p. 122.
3. Ibid., p. 123.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., pp. 123-4.
6. Ibid., p. 125.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 126.
10. Ibid., p. 124.
11. It must be asked whether certain progressivist assumptions are present behind this analysis. Once any suggestion of a modification has been made, there is immediately introduced the problem of distinguishing what is modified from what modifies. "Selem" is modified by 'demut'. This assessment is arrived at because 'demut' is an abstract term; 'selem' is a much more concrete term. But what prevents Eichrodt from claiming that the modification might be precisely in the opposite direction is, first, his awareness of P's theological intentions, and secondly, chronology, i.e. the identification of one term as more ancient than the other. Where 'progressivist' assumptions may appear is in this very assessment. Is 'selem' the older term because it is the more physical, concrete term? In other words, is 'selem' the more ancient term because it comes lower on some normative scale which determines that what is 'concrete' is earlier than what is 'spiritualized' and 'intellectualized'.
12. Op. cit., pp. 122-3.
13. Ibid., footnote 1, p. 124.
14. Ibid., p. 125.
15. Ibid., p. 126.

16. Elsewhere (vol. 1, p. 218), Eichrodt does point to the clarity with which P emphasizes God's transcendence -- an emphasis which results in the obliteration of naive anthropomorphisms. But the characterization of the whole of Israel's experience with God as recognizing God's personhood takes place as part of the exegesis of the 'imago Dei' and is supported nowhere else in the Theology where the character of the P writer is dealt with.
17. Op. cit., p. 126.
18. Wherever the special character of the P writer is handled, no mention of his insight concerning God's personhood is made. There are the references only in the context of the exegesis of the 'imago Dei'.
19. Op. cit. See particularly p. 126.
20. Ibid., p. 125.
21. Genesis: A Commentary, p. 56.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p. 57.
25. Old Testament Theology, vol. 1, p. 146.
26. Genesis: A Commentary, p. 58.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 57.
29. See Eichrodt, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 127, and von Rad, op. cit., p. 58.

CHAPTER III

III. i. Further discussion of Barth's exegesis.

Eichrodt comes close to the root of the difference between himself and Barth when he accuses Barth's exegesis of being 'alien to the Priestly thinker's picture of God'. In this comment is raised the issue as to what the text is saying. Do we arrive at what the text says because we know the character of the writer of that text and the kinds of theological insights he propounds elsewhere? Or is the exegete far more able to see the meaning of the text from a consideration of the whole corpus of theological insight about God and man. Barth, of course, advocates the second alternative, but the issue becomes most clearly acute when he characterizes his own exegesis as an attempt to deal with the text in question as revelation. What he is claiming is that exegesis must be theological -- that is it must take into account the corpus of theology -- because it is exposition of the Word of God. Because the exegete is dealing with revelation, it is insufficient to consider philological data and the characterization of the writer alone. Theology must inform exegesis. Because the text is revelation, the corpus of theology takes precedence as the interpretive tool over every other possible interpretive tool. It is the very heart of the claim that the Bible is

revelation to demand this place in interpretation for the corpus of theology.

Barth is able to exegete Genesis 1:26-27 only when he brings to bear upon the text the knowledge which he has gained about God and man which comes to him through the Incarnation. There is never any question that this knowledge should not be used in explicating the 'imago Dei'. Rather this knowledge is taken to be primary in the task of understanding the Genesis text. Moreover, the very fact of the Incarnation precludes the possibility of any other kind of exegesis. The nature of the Incarnation involves the claim that Jesus Christ is the source and centre of any knowledge the exegete may have about either God or man. This is what Barth points towards when he describes Jesus Christ as the criterion in theological anthropology. He is this criterion because he is true man, man under God's lordship, subject to God's command, performing His will, and participating in God's work in the world. But Jesus Christ is also God, and thus is the source of the exegete's knowledge about God. And because this is the nature of the Incarnation, it is obligatory that when the exegete is confronted with a passage like Genesis 1:26-27 which speaks of the relationship between man and God in terms of the 'imago Dei', he must expound the relationship indicated in those verses according to the knowledge with which the Incarnation provides him. It is the knowledge about God

and man which the Incarnation provides which must be used to give content to the phrase 'in our image'.

To exegete in this manner is to exegete theologically. Theological exegesis involves bringing to bear upon the text the body of knowledge which the exegete has derived from the Incarnation. And the corpus of theology is that body of knowledge expressed in a formalized manner.

Now, theological exegesis is obligatory not only because it is demanded by the fact and the nature of the Incarnation. In addition, it is understood to be the necessary and only possible exegesis when the true nature of the biblical documents is recognized.

The Bible is revelation. This claim can mean many things and has a great many implications, but the way in which this claim about the Bible affects the task of exegesis may be described in the following manner. What is meant when the Bible is spoken of as revelation is that there is within the Bible a continuity. Such continuity is present in the claim that the Bible speaks everywhere and always about Christ. Everywhere the Bible testifies to the Word of God. The continuity in the Bible occurs in its subject matter, for it always speaks about Christ, his work of salvation and his witness to the Father. Secondly, there is the continuity which comes about in exegesis of the text because of the operation of the Holy Spirit. Exegeting theologically depends upon, and must wait upon

the work of the Holy Spirit. The body of theology brought to bear upon the text has come into existence through earlier theological exegesis -- itself dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Present exegesis uses this corpus, and also produces its own results, all of which must be tested against the earlier corpus of theology. But the proper functioning of this exegesis and testing depends upon the present working of the Holy Spirit. In general, it can be said that theological exegesis is the expounding of the Word by the Word, through the exegete. To claim that the Bible is revelation is to point to the reality of the Bible as a witness to Christ in all its parts, and to point to the fact of the operation of the Holy Spirit in all exegesis.

This, then, is the other dimension of theological exegesis. Not only does theological exegesis bring to bear upon the text a body of theological propositions in the light of which a text must be explained. Theological exegesis takes seriously the fact that the Bible is revelation in its insistence that exegesis must arise out of the context of theology about Jesus Christ for the very reason that the Bible speaks only and everywhere about Christ, and for that reason that that very exegesis is dependent, through the Holy Spirit, upon the Word of God Himself. Thus it is that a proper understanding of the Incarnation and a proper recognition of the Bible as

revelation demands the kind of exposition of the Bible which Barth employs.

ii. Barth's comments on textual criticism.

Barth has the following to say about other kinds of exegesis. The intention of the non-theological exegesis has been to read the Bible as a collection of sources. The goal was to penetrate beyond and behind the biblical texts to the facts which lay behind the text as received. In such a case, Old Testament studies could concentrate upon the construction of a history of Israel extracted and pieced together from the information available in the Bible. One could go on to speak of Old Testament religion, gradually amassing the details which would make clear, for example, the major features of Israelite sacrifice or which would trace the rise and decline of cultic centres. The assumption behind such a methodology was that the truth was to be discovered beyond and behind the texts in the facts which they revealed about ancient practices, the frame of mind of the patriarchs, or whatever other subject might suggest itself. It was thought to be "the highest honour for the Bible to proceed from a study of the texts to the formation, with the help of observations gained from them, of a conception or conceptions of what is true and proper in them, of a form of the spirit, apart from the letter."¹ Barth characterizes this methodology as "the intention to subject

the Biblical canon to the question of truth as formulated in the sense of modern historicism."² And it is clear that what Barth sees as crucial in modern historicism is its understanding of truth as lying in factual material which is independent of the biblical text. What is important about historicism is the locating of the source of truth not in the biblical text itself but in factual event behind what is recorded. And demanded by such an understanding of the sources of truth is the task of distinguishing what is detail and embellishment from the factual material, identified as historical and thus verifiable event.

One form which this kind of exegesis takes is the attempt to distinguish passages which are genuine revelation from those which may be identified as only the peculiar opinions of the author.

How quick the exegete is to treat a matter as explained when it is said to belong to the religious thought, feeling, experience, conscience or conviction (of the writer).³

But any such explanation is inadequate and irrelevant to true exegesis, for the text has not been explained but only explained away.

Barth takes grave exception to this approach. He does so because "by obstinately putting this question of truth, by acting as though the interest in antiquities is the only legitimate interest, the true nature and character of the writings has been missed."⁴ Such criticism makes

the mistake of separating form from content.⁵ The content is the factual certainties which give rise to the text. The text itself is merely the form of communication, incapable of being judged true or false. But, in the case of the Biblical material, form cannot be separated from content. The question of truth cannot be asked of only an arbitrary fragment. The unity of the biblical material cannot be taken too seriously.

Such criticism of the Bible can take another form. In the preface to the second edition of his commentary on Romans, Barth describes the limits which textual criticism sometimes sets for itself.

Recent commentaries contain no more than a reconstruction of the text, a rendering of the Greek words by their precise equivalents, a number of additional notes in which archaeological and philological material is gathered together, and a more or less plausible arrangement of the subject matter in such a manner that it may be made historically and psychologically intelligible."⁶

But such scholarship can only be the most preliminary step in exegesis. Exegesis is much more than this. Of course, literary and historical questions must be asked of the text. "We can and must give the freest possible course to critical questions and answers as demanded by the character of the biblical witness as a human document and therefore a historical quantity."⁷ But free reign can be given to such questions only when it is understood that the goal of studying the biblical text, that is the examination of

revelation, is to be sought in them. "The biblical texts must be investigated for their own sake to the extent that the revelation which they attest does not stand or occur, and is not to be sought, behind or above them but in them."⁸

Thus, textual criticism, either by refusing to embark on exegesis at all by the blinkered concentration on philological detail or by using the results of such scholarship illegitimately in the task of separating revelation from cultural context, is "succumbing to the temptation to read the canon differently from what it is intended to be and can be read."⁹ The biblical text cannot be divided into 'revelation' and 'cultural embellishment'. The whole is revelation, just as the whole is a human document bound up with a variety of cultural milieux. And the biblical text requires, in virtue of being revelation, theological exegesis.

iii. Further discussion of Eichrodt's exegesis.

This is Barth's characterization of textual criticism. Its very limitations and the possibility of its abuse demand much more before true exegesis is reached. The present problem is to determine firstly, whether Barth's description of bare textual criticism applies to the exegesis of Eichrodt, and secondly whether Eichrodt does practise a kind of theological exegesis. Finally, can we ask whether Eichrodt fails to accomplish full theological exegesis and so, according to Barth, fails to take seriously

as revelation the biblical material?

- (a) as theological, but not in the sense in which Barth's exegesis is theological.

It cannot be denied that, in the case of Eichrodt, theological insights are the determining factor. His analysis of philological detail makes clear that a certain kind of qualification is being carried out in verses twenty-six and seven. But it is the theological insights which identify the nature of the qualification and grant to it its significance. Eichrodt does bring to bear upon the exegesis of a text a corpus of theology, but the corpus of theology he uses is the corpus of theological insights which the Priestly writer propounds. Furthermore, when one considers that the exegesis is carried out in the context of his Old Testament Theology and that certain references in the exegesis refer the reader to a further section of the book entitled 'God as Personal',¹⁰ it would be fair to say that the theology which informs his exegesis is a theology of the Old Testament. Further, it would be fair to note that the theological insights of P blend into the larger theological whole, and that, in fact, when Eichrodt speaks of the personhood of God he is echoing an insight of the whole of the Old Testament. This is indicated clearly in the section of the Theology dealing with 'Affirmations about the Divine Being'.¹¹ In this section, the particular contributions from the sources of

the documentary hypothesis blend with insights about God from elsewhere. Where Eichrodt does speak of the distinctive contribution of the P writer,¹² the insights are not those concerning 'personhood' which play the important role in the exegesis in Genesis. There is no real attempt to speak of the theology of the P writer, but rather to give an impression of unity as the various facts of God's character are brought together. Such a procedure is consonant with the general purposes of Old Testament theology, but it illustrates Eichrodt's failure to indicate in the body of his work the reasons for his theological characterization of the P writer -- a characterization which is the crucial element in the exegesis of Genesis 1:26-7. In the exegesis itself, the characterization is taken for granted. Its validity is demonstrated neither in the context of the exegesis, nor in other sections of the Theology.

Eichrodt's exegesis makes clear the point at which the exegete must go beyond lexical data in an appeal to theology for clarity. Lexical data raises the problem of the character of the qualification being made in the juxtaposing of the two terms 'selem' and 'demut'; the problem is then solved by an appeal to the known character and theological intentions of the Priestly writer. These insights about the Priestly writer 'inform' the text; they provide the guidelines for exegesis. And the justification for allowing these insights about the Priestly writer to

guide exegesis is twofold.

In the first place, it seems quite self-evident that knowledge of what an author writes in various parts of his work should be used to throw light upon a difficult passage. It is because the exegete knows who P was and the kinds of insights he set down that it is legitimate to use the body of P's insights, i.e. P's theology, to inform the text. This procedure appears self-evident for the additional reason that Eichrodt, by this methodology, claims to explain what in fact the text is saying. He knows from the analysis of lexical data that the Priestly writer who has taken over the ancient tradition is moulding and modifying it. And it seems quite straightforward to take as the heart of exegesis the explanation as to what the Priestly writer meant to say by his modifications.

In the second place, those insights of P which the exegete uses to inform the text are confirmed by Eichrodt's analysis of the rest of the Old Testament. The characterization of P and the formulation of his theology arise in the context of general Old Testament theology. Thus for example, the use of the general notion of God's personhood to inform the text is justified simply because it is a notion found throughout the Old Testament. Thus the complaint about the generality of those theological insights of P which are used to 'inform' the text is partly met in the fact that the whole of Old Testament theology is being

used to inform the text. The fact that P's insights harmonize with those of other writers is taken as the justification for bringing to bear in exegesis the whole of Old Testament theology. P as a distinct writer disappears into the background, but he has made his contribution to the corpus of Old Testament theology, however difficult it may be to trace it accurately. Thus, whether Eichrodt speaks of P's theology or of the theology of the Old Testament, he is still exegeting from within a theological context.

It is also worth calling attention to a general similarity in the exegetical procedures of Barth and Eichrodt. Barth's exegesis depends upon a knowledge of Jesus Christ and a characterization of Him as 'man for others'. Eichrodt's exegesis depends upon a knowledge of the Priestly writer which will justify characterizing his influence upon older traditions as 'spiritualizing' and 'intellectualizing'. Because this is the case, it would appear that the major battles in exegetical interpretation are to be fought a long way from the texts themselves. The most important issues to sort out are theological ones: whether a particular characterization of P's theology is accurate, and whether the main body of Christian theology can be said to understand Jesus Christ as 'man for others.'

Now, the corpus of theology to which Eichrodt appeals is not the corpus of theology Barth claims must inform exegesis. As far as Barth is concerned, the

foundation and legitimacy of the theology which he employs are quite different from those of Old Testament theology. His theology is based upon the Word of God, the event which has come to man. Whereas Old Testament theology depends upon an organization of impressions gleaned from the Old Testament, the theology which informs Barth's exegesis is the present actuality of the Word of God; it is the present speaking of the Holy Spirit about Jesus Christ. And as such, it is entirely different from the codification of impressions which Old Testament theology is. It is, finally and foremost, because Jesus is the Word of God that the theology which informs exegesis cannot be limited to 'theology of the Old Testament'. There is no exegesis which is not informed by the Word of God, and which is not exposition of the Word of God, and which can read the text without the 'informing' which takes place through knowledge of the Word of God, i.e., through theology about Jesus Christ. Because this is the case, when one speaks from the restricted context of Old Testament theology, the exegete has ignored the unity of the scriptures which is the fundamental supposition of theological exegesis. Exegesis can proceed only in the context of Christian theology.

In addition, the discussion about the adequacy of the theological characterization of Jesus Christ as 'man for others' is not parallel to that similar discussion

among Old Testament scholars as to the appropriateness of the particular characterization of the Priestly writer. This latter discussion is a 'public' discussion in the sense suggested previously. It is open to any scholar to characterize the Priestly writer in a particular way, to formulate the Priestly writer's theological insights, and to enter into discussion concerning the accuracy of those formulations. But the former discussion is not public in this sense. Rather, it is one facet of the most serious activity of all, the ongoing exposition of the actual presentness of the Word of God, of Jesus Christ, among men; and this activity can take place only among Christians and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the similarity between the tasks of determining the accuracy of Eichrodt's characterization of the Priestly source and Barth's characterization of Jesus Christ is only apparent. In fact, Barth's task is, from Barth's point of view, the only important one, for it is part of the exposition of the Word of God. And the exposition of the Word of God (i.e. a theology about Jesus Christ, a Christology), because of what it is, must inform exegesis in a way no other theology may.

- (b) as employing a methodology inadequate to the theological purpose.

One must speak as clearly as possible about Eichrodt's motive and purpose in writing an Old Testament theology,

based upon the kind of exegesis he has performed. The explanation and justification of his scholarly project is set forth in his introductory section.¹³ He places his own work within the context of a changing pattern of Old Testament studies. He sees an ancient orthodoxy which attempted the dogmatic organization of Old Testament theological insights according to the categories of dogma giving way to an historical school which organized all the material the Old Testament had to offer by means of "the magic formula of 'historical development'".¹⁴ The result was that "the essential inner coherence of the Old and New Testament was reduced to a thin thread of historical connection and causal sequence between the two".¹⁵ This historical movement, which at first proved so fruitful, resulted finally in the utter impoverishment of the conception of the relationship between the two testaments. "There was no longer any unity to be found in the Old Testament, only a collection of detached periods which were simply the reflections of as many different religions."¹⁶ The historical approach succeeded in destroying both the possibility of seeing the unity of the Old Testament and the possibility of recognizing the unity of Old Testament and New Testament.

Eichrodt understands the goals of Old Testament theology to lie in an exposition of the thought of the Old Testament which suffers neither from the

over-schematization of a dogmatic presentation organized in terms of alien categories of thought, nor from the emaciation resulting from the historical approach whose only categories are 'progress' and 'development'. Instead, there must be a careful reading of the Old Testament which delineates its central themes without the imposition of categories alien to Old Testament thought. Only in this way can the Old Testament be seen in its essential unity. If nothing else, the recognition of this unity within the Old Testament is manifested in Eichrodt's taking seriously the Priestly writer as one theologian. What Eichrodt means by the concept of the unity of the Old Testament is certainly evident in his decision to treat the work of the Priestly writer as an integrated whole. And, as we have seen, considerations about P's theology play a major role in exegesis. It is in this way that Eichrodt believes he is taking seriously the unity of the Old Testament.

In addition, Old Testament Theology must expound at every turning the unity which exists between Old Testament and New Testament. The comprehensive picture of Old Testament thought which is being built up must always take cognizance of the essential relationship between the Old Testament and the New. Precisely what is involved is the following:

In expounding the realm of Old Testament thought and belief, we must never lose sight of the fact that the Old Testament religion, ineffaceably

individual though it may be, can yet be grasped in this essential uniqueness, only when it is seen completed in Christ.¹⁷

Proper exposition of the Old Testament can take place only in the light of the 'fulfillment in Christ'. The Old Testament can be understood in its real character only as its 'fulfillment in Christ' is kept in view.

It is extremely unfortunate that Eichrodt has no more to say on this subject of understanding the Old Testament in the light of its completion in Christ. He seems to take for granted the clarity and indisputability of the concept of 'fulfillment'. He seems to see as self-evident that 'fulfillment in Christ' is an insight which aids in proper exposition of the Old Testament. No attempt is made to spell out how such an insight would influence a particular exegesis. There is, for example, no evidence of this insight's influence in his discussion of the P writer. In fact, it seems that acknowledgement of this insight really leaves the exegete free to expound the text on a quite different basis.

When we speak of Eichrodt's motive, it is important to recognize the similarity of intention between Eichrodt and Barth. Barth's enemy -- a too easy pre-occupation with historical details to the exclusion of all else -- is Eichrodt's enemy as well. Eichrodt rejects "the tyranny of historicism in Old Testament studies"¹⁸ which has lost sight of the proper task of Old Testament exposition. He

is certain that the approach which sees as important only the exposition of what can be determined as historical event and the tracing of a thread of development and progress is as impoverished an approach as was the rational schematization which preceded it. Instead, he calls for "the understanding of the realm of Old Testament belief in its structure and unity", and the recognition of the coherence of Old and New Testaments, in order "to illuminate its profoundest meaning".¹⁹

Eichrodt is concerned, therefore, with proper exposition of the text. Like Barth, he recognizes that much more than the rehearsal of historical facts and lexical detail is required. In addition, he returns to the themes of unity and fulfillment in Christ, recognizing that in some sense, both these insights are closely related to the task of getting at the 'profoundest meaning' of the Old Testament. Thus, he writes an Old Testament theology in an attempt to recover exposition of the text which has been lost through the sole concentration on historical detail -- an exposition which does full justice to the profoundest meaning of that text.

If then, his analysis of what has been lost in current exegesis, and his desire to get at the profoundest meaning of the text resemble closely the motive and purpose of theological exegesis as it is practised by Barth, it is nevertheless the case that the methodology adopted by

Eichrodt to achieve his purpose works against the achievement of that purpose. In fact, the most that can be said for Eichrodt's methodology is that it is suited to providing a certain kind of information which has some usefulness for theological exegesis. But for the theological goals Eichrodt has in mind, it is totally unsuited.

The nature of Eichrodt's criticism of Barth's exegesis makes clear the inadequacy of Eichrodt's methods. Eichrodt's criticism is as follows:

When, however, basing himself on his own peculiar understanding of the plural in Genesis 1:26, Barth connects the primal divine image with the I-Thou relationship which is given form in the mutual confrontation and support of man and woman; when he takes 'selem' and 'demut' as meaning 'prototype' and 'pattern'; and when he works out an 'analogia relationis' between human existence and the divine nature; then his exposition of the creation document cannot be said to have adequate philological foundation, and is alien to the Priestly thinker's picture of God as this can be established from other passages.²⁰

Not only is Barth wrong in his exegesis on philological grounds, but his exegesis is alien to the Priestly writer's picture of God.

What this criticism betrays is Eichrodt's assumption that the theological meaning of the text is to be determined by such tools as philological data and a characterization of the Priestly writer. What this means is that that theological meaning is a public meaning, that the theological meaning can be determined by any scholar using theologically neutral tools. Eichrodt's assumption is that the public

meaning of the text which is the one real meaning of the text, and the theological insight of the text are one and the same thing. Eichrodt has dedicated himself to laying bare the profoundest insights of the Old Testament. But the choice of interpretive tools is based upon the expectation that the text has a single publicly ascertainable meaning. His conscious decision that P's authorship is the most crucial insight for exegesis and demands consideration of the verses in the light of that decision alone is consistent with that prior expectation that there is only one public meaning for a text. Out of the general assumption grows the search for the specific tools by which the bounds of interpretation must be set. Eichrodt hits upon the practical limitation of considering only what one author has said. The possibility of such a method of limiting the bounds of interpretation has been opened up for him by the advances of textual criticism. It therefore appears quite self-evident that knowledge of an author's insights from elsewhere should be used in interpreting ambiguous passages. Only where the text can have but one meaning is it important to know what the author of the text says elsewhere.

This assumption is inconsistent with Eichrodt's avowed goal. If in fact there is a unity inherent in the Old Testament, and if in fact there is a unity between Old and New Testaments, then knowledge of the P writer is

neither the most important nor even an adequate interpretive tool. The setting of the boundaries of interpretation in terms of those texts which claim P's authorship denies the inherent unity of the Old Testament itself. Such an interpretive tool refuses consideration of the fact, for example, that these verses are part of a much larger account of creation which textual criticism has shown to have many authors but which the tradition has seen fit to hold together as one. This is one obvious way in which Eichrodt's interpretive tools work against his avowed goal. Even this assertion alone calls into question the legitimacy of drawing the interpretive boundaries in terms of P's authorship.

Behind this decision stands the more general assumption about the meaning of a text. Why is it self-evident that a text's only admissible meaning is that meaning which is determined by 'public' means?²¹ This assumption also works against Eichrodt's purpose. When Eichrodt speaks of the unity of Old and New Testaments, and when he acknowledges the fact that the depths of meaning in the Old Testament can be uncovered only as its completion in Christ is kept in view, he is surely speaking of a process of interpretation far more complex than his assumption about the public meaning for the text allows. Within the Jewish tradition itself, the assumption was never made that a text had only one meaning. With the

reading of the Old Testament by the early Church came a complex exposition of the Old Testament in terms of 'prophecy and fulfillment' and in terms of Christological typology -- a process which demonstrated even more clearly the complexities of the text. And when Eichrodt insists that the Old Testament must be read in the light of its fulfillment in Christ, he is calling for an exegesis far more complex than his actual methodological tools allow.

In addition, Eichrodt's use of such tools in criticising Barth betrays the further assumption that the two men are performing the same kind of exegesis. But this is precisely what theological exegesis denies. From the viewpoint of theological exegesis, Eichrodt can use these interpretive tools legitimately to establish what P must have meant and understood himself to mean. But while these tools are sufficient for that purpose, they are never sufficient to evaluate the exegesis which is an ongoing process in the Church. The proper role of Eichrodt's exegesis is to understand the form of revelation in a particular situation. It is the Old Testament theologian's task to provide theological exegesis with as clear an impression as possible of P's insights. The Old Testament theologian's task is descriptive and it does provide useful information for the exegete. But the task for which these tools are inadequate is the very task Eichrodt sets himself in writing an Old Testament theology. These tools

cannot illuminate that 'profoundest meaning' of the Old Testament which presents itself only as the essential coherence of the Old and the New Testaments is held in view. They are inconsistent with the nature of the Bible; they are tools which may be fitted for interpretation of other texts, but they are inappropriate to the true nature of the Bible.

iv. The place in theological exegesis for textual criticism and Old Testament theology.

Now, even if the exegete were to concede that within the Church Old Testament theology alone is never sufficient to inform true theological exegesis, is it not necessary to make clear what role Old Testament theology does play in theological exegesis? If Barth is right to claim such radical decisiveness in exegesis for the Incarnation, there occurs, nevertheless, a difficulty about the place in theological exegesis for the knowledge which Eichrodt attempts to uncover in writing an Old Testament theology. How does knowledge about the Priestly writer's meaning, about his self-understanding, about what more recent editors took him to be saying, about what the text does say -- how does such knowledge play a part in theological exegesis? What contribution does such knowledge make? How is such knowledge useful in expounding the text? Surely such knowledge is important. Such information certainly ought to make a difference for exegesis. Yet it is extremely

difficult to discover what impact either the findings of textual criticism or the formulations of Old Testament theology have upon theological exegesis.

To be sure, Barth acknowledges the rights of textual criticism to examine the texts carefully and thoroughly. He recognizes the human character of the documents and for that reason gives full scope to historical criticism.²² Yet it is unclear what influence the findings of such scholarship have upon his exegesis. Eichrodt accuses him of inadequate philological foundation for his exegesis and of inadequate knowledge of the character of the Priestly writer. Can theological exegesis ignore such criticism? Should not the knowledge which Eichrodt's investigations achieve influence Barth's exegesis? He is being told that the text does not say what he claims it says. This criticism illustrates succinctly the disagreement between the two in its most acute form.

Barth has suggested that his approach to the Bible is characterized by a 'tested critical naivety'.²³ In explaining what such an attitude involves, Barth distinguishes three elements which form part of the biblical narrative. A narrative includes material which can be historically substantiated -- that is the factual data which so exclusively preoccupies those scholars Barth characterizes as 'historicist'. Secondly, the narrative

includes elements that have the character of saga, and thirdly, there are the elements which have been consciously fashioned or invented by a later redactor of the material handed to him. Barth's suggestion is that the exegete must first listen to all possible criticism of the text in question. He must be aware of those elements which scholars recognize as being factual, or as being cast in saga form, or as the work of an editor far-removed from the original narrative. Taking cognizance of these things makes Barth's exegesis 'tested' and 'critical'. But once such scholarship has been taken account of, it is then that the exegete must recognize that the narrative, in the form in which it appears in the Bible, has been received, maintained and handed on within the tradition with the important and primary purpose of handing over a definite kerygmatic message. What is the 'historically' important fact for Barth is not that certain elements of any narrative can be singled out as in accord with known factual information about a certain period. Rather, the important historical fact is that the narrative, in its composite form, has been preserved and deliberately handed on within the community because of its kerygmatic message. And it is therefore essential to give attention to that narrative in its whole, undissected form. Barth's insistence upon the attention due the text as a whole is what he calls 'naivety' because this attitude takes most seriously the

fact that the narrative has been handed on intact within the faithful community and seeks therefore to pay closest attention to the kerygmatic sense of the text in question.

Barth would claim, then, that current biblical scholarship is important for the awareness it gives the exegete of how the text has come to be. In the case of the Genesis text, Eichrodt's research makes clear P's self-understanding and the revisional process he may have been performing. But such research is only secondary to the primary task of hearing the text as it speaks its kerygmatic message out of the context of the tradition. The exegete must listen not only to what P said, but also to the fact that P's work was recognized as part of the kerygma, then became part of the canon, and has been heard and commented upon during a subsequent two thousand years by the Christian community. To exegete in this manner is to proceed with 'tested critical naivety' and to take seriously as revelation the biblical material.

FOOTNOTES

1. Church Dogmatics, I pt. 2, III:19:2, p. 493.
2. Ibid., p. 492.
3. Commentary on Romans, preface second edition, p. 7.
4. C. D., I pt. 2, III:19:2, p. 493.
5. Ibid.
6. Romans, preface second edition, p. 6.
7. C. D., I pt. 2, III:19:2, p. 493.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 206.
11. Vol. 1, pp. 206-27.
12. Vol. 1, pp. 217-20.
13. "Old Testament Theology: the Problem and the Method", pp. 25-35.
14. Ibid., p. 28.
15. Ibid., p. 30.
16. Ibid., p. 30.
17. Ibid., p. 27.
18. Ibid., p. 31.
19. Ibid., p. 31.
20. Ibid., footnote 5, p. 129.
21. It is at this point that a parallel might be drawn between the use Eichrodt wants to make of the findings of Old Testament theology and the use of historical (i.e. factual) material which textual criticism makes in its examination of the bible. Barth has called attention to those attempts to establish the historical facts behind events described in the Bible, in

which, for example, scholars seek to penetrate behind the biblical account of Joshua's activities at Jericho in order to determine what really happened. This scholarship suggests that the 'bedrock' for which the scholar is searching is historical facts. Now, in much the same manner, if Eichrodt uses his examination of the text to characterize the Priestly writer in a particular way, and to explain what P is saying, and to claim that he has established the one true meaning of the text, then he too has found his 'bedrock'. That 'bedrock' is the expectation that the text can mean only one thing. It is in the assumption that the true goal of his exegesis is the discovery of the one true meaning of the text that his exegesis comes close to that similar project of searching out 'historical' data behind the text. Each has arrived at a factual certainty. But this particular kind of certainty theological exegesis rules out as irrelevant. The only possible 'bedrock' against which the exegete may test his exegesis is the fact of the Incarnation. Exegesis can test itself only against the Word of God Himself.

22. See footnote 7.
23. Church Dogmatics IV/2, p. 521. My debt is to J. Wharton for pointing this out.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the disagreement between Barth and Eichrodt does not concern the crucial role in exegesis for theology. The issue rather concerns, first whether it is adequate to the exegetical task to allow Old Testament theology alone to inform exegesis of the Old Testament. Secondly, it concerns the nature of the role in theological exegesis for the findings of textual criticism and of Old Testament theology. Thereafter, the larger issue centres around Barth's claim that when the Bible is understood properly as revelation, it follows that only theological exegesis in the Barthian sense is adequate to the exegetical task.

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