

are its "data," to which it for its part gives being and existence. The various religions are the various attempts of the world to make something out of the presence and revelation of God which is known to it but not recognized by it. In religion the world tries to domesticate the God who is known and yet also unknown and strange, to bring him into its own natural and intellectual sphere of vision and power. In religion, then, the world unwittingly and unwillingly confesses that God is known to it as well as unknown. Not recognizing him, however, it fashions for itself, in the form of what seems to it to be a suitable image, worship, and service of God, surrogates of his being and action, and of the human being and action demanded by him, believing that it can satisfy him with these surrogates and at the same time satisfy itself. It would be perverse to be incensed by atheism but to see in the religions paths or preliminary stages to the knowledge of God and of what he wills and does with man—to regard them, therefore, as suitable points of contact for the proclamation of the true and living God. It would also be perverse to give a positive rating to at least the so-called higher religions in this regard, in distinction from the so-called lower religions. In all religions, even the highest ones, or what are usually called the spiritual ones, we simply have surrogates in whose invention, use, and enjoyment the world thinks it can help to safeguard itself against, and to offer satisfaction to, the present God who is not known to it. They owe their origin to the great ambivalence that God is objectively known to the world as well as subjectively unknown. As surrogates they document the fact that he is unknown, not known. Because they do this positively, they do it in a much more illuminating, tempting, and dangerous fashion than any denial of God. In atheism the world defends itself against the threatening self-giving and self-declaration of God. In religion it tries to deal with him by establishing itself behind a wall of self-invented and self-made images of God, so that it may really be left to itself. This is why the angry protest of the biblical prophets is not directed against atheism but against the idolatry that characterizes the world around Israel, which may be seen in the religions of other peoples, and which is absolutely intolerable for Israel as the people of the true and living God.

There is, however, a desecration of the name of God which in comparison to that in atheism and that in the religions is even worse. This is the attempt of the world to exalt its own cause as God's or, conversely, to subject God's cause to its own, to make it serve it. In both forms one might call this an attempted "nostrification" of God. This attempt arises when the world, unavoidably confronted by God even though it does not know him, believes that he can be very useful and even indispensable to its own goals and aims and aspirations; so that, instead of denying him or coming to terms with him with a bit of religion, it takes the cleverer course of resolutely affirming him, affirming itself in and with him, affirming his deity as its own and its own as his. Now it may triumphantly dispense with both atheism and also the idolatry of religions. Now it integrates itself with God or God with itself. Now it equates God with itself or itself with God. It is not against God, as in atheism; it is not incidentally with him, as in the religions.

It is with him consistently and in fanatical earnestness and zeal. It thinks it can be an infinitely better, more effective, and more triumphant world if it is with him instead of being against him or only incidentally and partially with him. It even thinks that it can really be happy and certain about what it wills and does in politics, economics, law, and society, in work and leisure, in culture and education, in science and art, if it can understand and do everything in the radiance and dignity of the slogan: God wills it! God does it! It thinks its freedom of control is really ensured if God is the world-God and itself the God-world, if it may be secular in its piety and pious in its secularity. In every time and place there has been "nostrification" of this kind. When the world is really shrewd, as it is not in atheism or idolatry, it tries to help itself in this way over against God. Over against God! It is clear that this "nostrification" can be carried through only against the background and on the presupposition that God is objectively known to the world, that he is a problem for it with which it must wrestle wittingly and unwittingly, willingly and unwillingly. From this fact, however, one may not conclude that it knows him. If it did, it could not secularize him or deify itself any more than it could deny him or deal with him religiously. This third and most insolent and, if one will, most ingenious and eminent way of dealing with him points to what is, if anything, an even darker ignorance in which it moves in relation to him. How there can be a transition from this to the knowledge of God, it is difficult and even impossible to see.

There is one point, however, where the previously mentioned forms of the great ignorance of God and desecration of his name meet as at a kind of boiling point, where any appearance that they might be merely theoretical, principial, or programmatic vanishes, where all of them—as concrete, if finally unrealizable efforts—are eminently practical. The world or, better and more directly, man, who in virtue of his denial of God, his idolatry, and his foolish attempt to equate God with himself and himself with God, does not know God and in all these things desecrates his name—this man does not know his fellow man either. His ignorance of God culminates and manifests itself in his ignorance of his fellow man. He regards him as an object to whom he as subject may or may not be in relation according to his own free choice and disposal, whom he may pass by as he does so many other objects, or with whom, if this is out of the question, he may have dealings as it suits himself within the limits of what is possible for him. He does not know him as a fellow subject whom God has set unavoidably beside him, to whom he is unavoidably linked in his relation to God, so that apart from him he cannot himself be a subject, a person. He is not for him an indispensable, but in certain cases a dispensable, companion, associate, and fellow—not to mention brother. He can get along just as well without him as with him. By chance or caprice or free judgment he can just as well be to him a tyrant or slave as a free supporter, just as well a hater as an admirer, a foe as a friend, a corrupter as a helper. He can be one thing to one person and another to another, or now one thing, now another, to the same person. In relationship to his fellow man, also, he exists in total ambivalence. One may not say more than this. He cannot live without him

nor can he be wholly against him. Some connections, links, and relations always exist in the world between man and man. This is another sign that whether the world knows and wills it or not, it is confronted by the true and living God who acts and is revealed in Jesus Christ as both true God and true man. It is another sign that the true and living God is not completely unknown to it. But as it is capable not only of atheism and idolatry but also of identifying God with itself and itself with God, thus betraying that it for its part does not know the God who is well known to it (for if it did, it would not be capable of all these things), so there is no necessary and solid relationship between man and man but only incidental, arbitrary, and temporary connections. This is a sign that man does not know man either (for if he did, here too no alternatives would arise). This second ignorance derives directly from the first. The first manifests itself in it. If man knew the true and living God who himself became man in the one Jesus Christ, who in divine faithfulness gave himself to all men, and united himself with them, then only faithfulness (and not a faithfulness which is constantly accompanied and shot through with unfaithfulness) would be possible between his fellow man and himself, himself and his fellow man. (Recognizing themselves in the God who is true God and true man, man and fellow man can wish to live not without or against one another, but only with one another. If they can be and, in fact, always are so divided in their relationship to one another, if man can be important to man, a neighbor, friend, and helper, and yet at any moment indifferent, a stranger, enemy, and corrupter, if he can be and actually is to him more of a wolf than a person—all this is a manifestation of the ambivalence in the relationship to God. In it all there takes place a blaspheming of the name of God which is more dreadful, palpable, and unequivocal than anything the world may do in the form of atheism, accursed idolatry, or foolish self-deification. In it all, everything achieves full potency, concentration, and self-characterization, for everything now takes place as a practical, everyday event in world history, whether in big things, small things, or the smallest of things. Above all, it all takes place here as an expression of the world's stupendous ignorance of God even in face of his subjective as well as his objective self-declaration in Jesus Christ, so that not a vestige of rationality or excusability remains. If we wish to know what is the true and final point of the petition "Hallowed be thy name," and of the zeal of the honor of God that is demanded of us, when they are seen in this first relationship to the world, then we had better focus our attention on this one thing, on the evil fact that we humans, whose God in supreme mercy has taken up the cause of each person and all people in Jesus Christ, can be and are both everything and nothing to one another, both fellow men and wolves. Here in this chaotic contradiction the holy name of God is decisively and supremely desecrated in the world.

2. We must now speak of the knowledge and ignorance of God—of the hallowing and desecrating of his name—in the church. The church is also in the world. It does not merely have all the aspects of a worldly phenomenon; it is in fact—not exclusively but also—a worldly entity, unique, yet comparable with other worldly entities. At the same time it stands to the

rest of the world in an independent and distinctively critical and positive relationship. For it is not just one worldly entity among others. It also exists in a dimension in which the others do not. It is in the world as the people, the possession, and the sanctuary of God.

Here too we begin, as is proper, with what can be said in this sphere about the knowledge of God and therefore about the hallowing of his name. Being in the world, the church participates first in what is true of the world as such and as a whole. For it, too, God is well known by reason of the good nature of man by creation, of its hearing of its own witness, and, finally and especially, the divine self-declaration that is given in Jesus Christ both objectively by God and subjectively by man. But now we must immediately go on to emphasize the differences. God is known to the church in a way that is qualitatively as well as quantitatively quite different from the way in which he is known to the world. The completed self-declaration of God in Jesus Christ has not just happened for the church as it has for the world, as though its attitude toward it, even though it is directed to it, could still be an open question. The church has its origin in the completed self-declaration of God. As this took place in the world, it not only became true and actual that the whole world was confronted with it, but there arose within and across the other peoples of the world a people in which it took root, in which it was perceived and accepted. This people is the church. It is the people whose life is grounded in it. It is the people of Jesus Christ in the world, not separated from him as he is not separated from it. It lives as in it there sounds forth to the world God's Yes to man and also man's Yes to God, both spoken in Jesus Christ. It lives as this Yes is seen and takes shape. It lives from the very outset in and by the reception of this double Yes of Jesus Christ, in and by hearing his divine Yes and repeating his human Yes. As he lives, as he lives within it as its Lord and Head at the right hand of God, and as it lives with and by and under him, its only choice is to hear his divine Yes and repeat his human Yes. This is the basis and goal of its existence. This is its function in relationship to the rest of the world. It has the task of bearing witness to Jesus Christ: God as the God who in him has reconciled the world to himself and the world as the world which is reconciled to God in him, God as the God of man and man as the man of God. The church lives and has its being in virtue of this special origin and by having and discharging its special task. No other people has either this origin or this task. No other exists in this knowledge of God to which there is no alternative. Only the church, even in all its worldliness, lives and has its being in the necessary structure of this knowledge of God. For it there can be no question of the characteristic and distinctive ambivalence of the world with its knowledge of God and ignorance of God, with its hallowing of God's name and desecrating of his name. For it a positive attitude toward God's self-declaration is behind it and not still ahead of it. God's name is sanctified in it as it itself is sanctified. It is on this presupposition that it goes into the world and through the world. This is what distinguishes it from the world. "We know that we are of God"