

ETERNITY AND TIME IN THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH
An Essay in Dogmatic and Philosophical Theology

by

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Title of Thesis 'Eternity and Time in the Theology of Karl Barth - An Essay
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What has Karl Barth (considered by some to be the greatest theologian of the twentieth century) to say about the problem of time and thus eternity? Has what he wrote much significance and how does it relate to both the history of theology and philosophy as well as the modern era?

The Enlightenment conditioned the thought of the nineteenth century particularly as regards the possible foundations of systematic theological thought. The dialectic of antitheses (that is of eternity and time, finite and infinite) was subsumed in the complex agnosticism of Kant's transcendental idealism; resolved into overall monistic synthesis by Hegel; broken apart in Trendelenburg's critique; and, finally, reasserted in existential paradox by Kierkegaard. Barth in his early work extended Kierkegaard's precarious Christological Paradox to destruction in a logical reductio thus making a new theological starting-point an imperative need.

Barth posited this new beginning in the Word of God, the threefold occurrence of which is grounded upon God and thus the doctrine of God. The historicity of God's own being in his trinitarian life constitutes the 'possibility' of the 'reality' of revelation and as such contains within itself an understanding of time. It is this which is explicated in the main body of the thesis.

God's being in the Trinity is being in act and the temporal correlate of this fundamental reality is the doctrine of eternity. Given the exclusive source of the knowledge of God in revelation, the 'full contemporaneity' of the divine act assumes crucial significance because the basis of the time of revelation is to be given in revelation itself. The doctrine of 'God's time' (eternity) posits the active triumph of God's dynamic freedom in his unseparated past, present and future over the division and loss of 'before' and 'after' in time. The theological impulse of Barth's thought is expressed in the integration of God's being and his perfections.

The central doctrine of 'God's time' is exploited throughout the Church Dogmatics in the doctrines of God, election, incarnation, Christology, creation and of 'Man in his Time'. The latter passage, usually seen as Barth's definitive statement on time is in fact merely the overt consummation of a theological theory of time which has been used extensively. Barth's doctrine is a creative development of many strands to be found in the Christian tradition. It contains, however, certain flaws and ambiguities which reflect upon the whole theological structure of the Church Dogmatics. Most serious of these is the linguistic dialectic apparent in the negation of man's time and yet the creative derivation of 'God's time' from a selective analysis of common-sense concepts of time. This is the logical Achilles' heel of the finest theological theory of time in the history of the western tradition.

I declare that the following thesis is
entirely the product of my own research
and reflection.

Signed

Date...*6th March 1975*.....

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FOREWORD

I should like to acknowledge a particular debt to Professor T.F. Torrance for the opportunity to study and experience living dogmatic theology under his challenging supervision at New College as well as a continuing indebtedness to Professor D.M. MacKinnon for his lectures on theology and logical analysis delivered in the University of Cambridge in 1971. I should also like to thank the Rev. R.C. Morgan of the University of Lancaster for his consistent encouragement and unforgettable first introduction to radical theological thinking.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

What has Karl Barth (considered by some to be the greatest theologian of the twentieth century) to say about the problem of time and thus eternity? Has what he wrote much significance and how does it relate to both the history of theology and philosophy as well as the modern era?

The Enlightenment conditioned the thought of the nineteenth century particularly as regards the possible foundations of systematic theological thought. The dialectic of antitheses (that is of eternity and time, finite and infinite) was subsumed in the complex agnosticism of Kant's transcendental idealism; resolved into overall monistic synthesis by Hegel; broken apart in Trendelenburg's critique; and, finally, reasserted in existential paradox by Kierkegaard. Barth in his early work extended Kierkegaard's precarious Christological Paradox to destruction in a logical reductio thus making a new theological starting-point an imperative need.

Barth posited this new beginning in the Word of God, the threefold occurrence of which is grounded upon God and thus the doctrine of God. The historicity of God's own being in his trinitarian life constitutes the 'possibility' of the 'reality' of revelation and as such contains within itself an understanding of time. It is this which is explicated in the main body of the thesis.

God's being in the Trinity is being in act and the temporal correlate of this fundamental reality is the doctrine of eternity. Given the exclusive source of the

knowledge of God in revelation, the 'full contemporaneity' of the divine act assumes crucial significance because the basis of the time of revelation is to be given in revelation itself. The doctrine of 'God's time' (eternity) posits the active triumph of God's dynamic freedom in his unseparated past, present and future over the division and loss of 'before' and 'after' in time. The theological impulse of Barth's thought is expressed in the integration of God's being and his perfections.

The central doctrine of 'God's time' is exploited throughout the Church Dogmatics in the doctrines of God, election, incarnation, Christology, creation and of 'Man in his Time'. The latter passage, usually seen as Barth's definitive statement on time is in fact merely the overt consummation of a theological theory of time which has been used extensively. Barth's doctrine is a creative development of many strands to be found in the Christian tradition. It contains, however, certain flaws and ambiguities which reflect upon the whole theological structure of the Church Dogmatics. Most serious of these is the linguistic dialectic apparent in the negation of man's time and yet the creative derivation of 'God's time' from a selective analysis of common-sense concepts of time. This is the logical Achilles' heel of the finest theological theory of time in the history of the western tradition.

ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I 1

THE IMMEDIATE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF TIME IN THE CHURCH DOGMATICS

The problem of dialectic in nineteenth-century thought traced through the contrasting resolutions of Kant, Hegel, Trendelenburg and Kierkegaard presented an ontological vacuum to Barth. He posited a new beginning and a new method after destroying the old theological order in the Epistle to the Romans.

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THE WORD OF GOD, THE TRINITY, AND THE PROBLEM OF TIME IN THE CHURCH DOGMATICS

The doctrine of the Word of God explicates that reality given to man as a 'pure fact' and a novum. The 'contingent contemporaneity' of the act of God in his revelation is based upon the 'possibility' of God's own historicity and temporality in his trinitarian life and being. The contingency of revelation is the supreme contingency of God's own 'act' in the acts of revelation - the Jüngel hermeneutic.

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ACT AND ANALOGY

Barth's Church Dogmatics has presented a dilemma to subsequent theologians - Jenson secularises and Zahrnt eternalises. The basis of this work is the integration of God's act in his being as the overall ontological core of reality. God's act is **exp**licated by the doctrine of attribution - God's active perfections - which are one in the uniqueness and

simplicity of his actus purus et singularis. Eternity is the dynamic expression of God's being in act and freedom.

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ACT AND ETERNITY

God's active being is transcendent temporality - to be seen in his omniscience. Barth combines the biblical and dogmatic traditions - the Boethian totum simul and active God of the Bible. Cullmann's and Barr's critiques are anticipated and superseded. God's eternity (his 'time') is itself beginning, succession and end. As God is the prototype and fore-ordination of all being, so he is of time. This 'time' lacks the fleeting nature of the present, the separation between before and after. The being of God in act, expressed in eternity 'surrounds' and 'includes' time.

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ETERNITY AND TIME: PREDESTINATION AND RESURRECTION

God's act from eternity is in the election of Jesus Christ. Barth rethinks this doctrine in and through the centrality of Jesus Christ. The realisation of reconciliation in 'primal history' and in time leads to a tension and ambiguity. Is man saved in eternity or time? Is the scheme of eternal antecedence and temporal consequence compatible with the historicity of the incarnation and resurrection which is itself the active declaration and concrete fulfilment of time?

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The incarnation consummates God's act in election and the

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ETERNITY AND TIME: CHRISTOLOGY

The primary and irreducible unio hypostatica and the assumption of grace in divine condescension is the basis of the reconciliation of the 'natures' of the God-man Jesus Christ and thus of eternity and time. The mystery of the incarnation is realised in a dynamic Christology of integrated 'person' and 'works' in correlation with God's act in his being. Covenant and atonement co-inhere in the God-man Jesus Christ as the ultimate primacy of grace is established. Time and eternity, finite and infinite are subordinate to the 'Novum'.

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Origen and Athanasius - the problem of distinguishing God, Christ and creation. Florovsky's critique of the two fathers reveals the integration in Barth's thought of

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MAN IN HIS TIME: TRUE TIME

As Jesus Christ has been central to creation so he is to our understanding of the creature - 'Man in his Time'. True human nature is known in Jesus Christ and the fulness of temporal reality is likewise shown in him. The relation of Creator and creature revealed in him discloses in turn the relation of Creator and creation. God is supremely 'temporal' and his 'authentic temporality' is simultaneous and abrogates the succession of past, present and future. This conflicts with Jesus' contingent 'once-for-all' existence leading to an inner tension.

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The fundamental ontological framework of Jesus' time is 'given time' which overcomes the fragmented temporality of man as understood and expressed in the sceptics' arguments. The problem of the 'ontic' and the 'ontological' and the status of Barth's theory of time - has time fallen or merely man's being in time? We cannot know time outside of human existence and only in 'God's time'.

An ambiguity lies in Barth's positive theological solution to a problem arising out of an empirical scepticism. God himself provides the particular movement of my 'now' in a movement from past to future - Heidegger.

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MAN IN HIS TIME: BOUNDED TIME

The bounds in which man lives are temporal - he protests against this and craves for 'life' not 'duration'. God's time 'allots' man's time in which he is to find his proper fulfilment. The 'reality' of man's past, present and future is guaranteed by God's time. God is man's 'beyond' in death. So it is that all aspects of lost human time are restored by God's time. The central notion of divine eternity has been fully exploited but the difficulties remain - How can we conceive of the relation of created and re-created reality in the mature theology of Barth?

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CONCLUSION

The notion of 'God's time', that is 'eternity', is systematically exploited throughout the Church Dogmatics. Given the ontological source exploited in this work how adequate is this point of derivation for a doctrine of time? The ontology of the divine being explicated in the structure of God's time leads to a categorial reduction and implicit contradictions, which although resisted with vigour, are the basis of systematic ambiguity. There is an implosion of time and being. Barth's triumphant theological theory

of time preserves, however, the basic and irreducible duality of incarnation in time of the Word begotten from eternity which is consummated in the fulfilment of time in the resurrection.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of time (and thus its corollary eternity) has long lain at the centre of philosophical and theological thought. Since the Enlightenment the rise of historical consciousness and the widening gulf between philosophy and theology has caused the sphere of time to become an area of sharp conflict and complex interaction. It is against such a background that a theological work which has a very great deal to say about time and eternity cannot but have intrinsic interest. The work in question, the Church Dogmatics of Karl Barth has not merely theological importance but is beyond this nothing less than a total response to the deep dualisms and dichotomies of the thought of the nineteenth century. Barth attempted this through the uncompromising re-assertion of an ontologically based dogmatics which is grounded upon foundations that comprise both transcendence and concrete and particular historicity. There is much deep-rooted and often ill-informed prejudice abroad concerning the work of Barth and so in this study an attempt is made to penetrate into the core of the Church Dogmatics and to pursue this investigation along the axis of eternity and time. By approaching Barth's work in its historical context and from the standpoint of the antitheses of finite and infinite, time and eternity, it proved possible to appreciate the magnitude of his endeavour and accumulate the grounds for making a well-founded judgement. Barth strove to effect a reconciliation of these antagonistic elements within one thoroughly and unashamedly theological creative synthesis which resists arbitrary or illicit

reduction at all quarters.

Such a vast endeavour is the product of true genius and therefore presents considerable difficulties to the reader both in terms of sheer bulk but also as regards the extraordinary thoroughness and care taken in its argument. It remains possible to reveal the nature of Barth's theological integration and Christological resolution of the traditional antitheses by showing the crucial role undertaken by the theme of time in the Church Dogmatics. The exposition and analysis that is to follow is placed in an initial historical context and then continues with reference to those theologians and traditions of theological thought which appear to have had a notable influence upon the development of Barth's doctrines of eternity and time. In following this course fairly ruthless excision of less relevant materials had to take place. The range of background reading undertaken in the initial stages of research is indicated in the bibliographies and it was in the light of this that the writer of this dissertation felt that the particular line of approach to the problem of eternity and time that he took up reflected the essential thrust of Barth's thought on the subject. Not until the full extent and import of this, the greatest theological treatise with regard to time undertaken in this century had been appreciated, could it prove possible to draw parallels or comparisons with other areas of contemporary or past thought.

The central theme of this dissertation is pursued through the whole conspectus of the doctrines of God, attribution, election, incarnation, Christology, creation

and theological anthropology. In and through all these the axis of time and eternity is not merely a linking element but arguably the ontological backbone of the Church Dogmatics. It is this vertebral place of the theological theory of time in both the development and the full flowering of Barth's thought which is exposed in the following study. A full appreciation of the centrality and importance of this inner axis and its attendant 'logic' allows the reader to make some judgements about the nature of the Church Dogmatics itself. It is hoped that certain new insights into both the range and the limitations of Barth's thought will be forthcoming which will in turn cast light on the nature and possibilities of theological activity in the present day.

The writer chose to quote freely from the work of Barth where this was felt necessary rather than risk distortion or misrepresentation in paraphrase. The passages quoted do in fact form an intrinsic part of the argument of this thesis. It will soon become apparent why this study has had to part company with the notable interpreters of Barth's dogmatic achievement although it quite naturally borrows from or reacts against their work. This is because the writer wished to do justice both to the theological concerns of Barth and yet at the same time demonstrate an awareness of the language and conceptual structures in his thought, in that way managing to combine something of both dogmatic and philosophical method.

There are many issues which impinge upon full consideration of the problem of time in contemporary thought

and historical context. The transformation of basic categories wrought in the development of thought from Newton to Einstein as well as the related and highly significant debate between Leibniz and Samuel Clarke on the theories of relational and absolute space and time immediately spring to mind. These considerations do not figure directly in this work because they appeared to the writer peripheral to the most basic core of Barth's reaction to and development from the fundamental theological dilemmas with which he was faced at the outset. This in no way lessens the importance of these problems, it merely makes them consequent upon prior exposition and analysis.

The writer found himself drawn towards a recognition of the truth of T.F. Torrance's assessment of Barth's achievement, that it represents a 'thorough integration of the ontic and the dynamic' and a reinterpretation of 'the whole of Christian theology by setting it more squarely upon its proper foundations' but at the same time felt impelled to voice the dangers to which this appears to him to lead.

Finally, and upon a more personal note, the writer would like to say that in his opinion the Church Dogmatics contains the most consistent and comprehensive theological account of the relation of eternity and time that has graced the Christian tradition. Having attempted first and foremost to do justice to this achievement in an essay in dogmatic theology it then becomes possible, without undue reduction or distortion, to analyse the logic of Barth's theological concepts, thus providing those elements to the

following study which justify its title as an essay in philosophical theology. This Essay is therefore an attempt to expose the 'inner logic' of the Church Dogmatics as it is comprised in the axis of time and eternity and then analyse this 'theo-logic' in accordance with the criteria of ordinary logic. In this way we discover that in the context of massive and magnificently sustained theological thought there remains an unresolved and pervasive dialectic on the level of the temporal concepts and terms that Barth employs.

The reader will find that there is no simple or easily attained judgement to be made upon Karl Barth's understanding of time. In the following study there is a presentation of the argument upon which judgement might be based, giving full weight to the intentions of the author himself, yet allowing the reader to see Barth's work both in an informative context and under critical analysis. Beyond this the study of Barth demands both humility and a freedom from damaging preconceptions: neither of which virtue and state of innocence is easy to attain. Karl Barth's words in Evangelical Theology are nowhere more apt than when applied to the aspirant student of his own great work: 'There can be no theology without distress, but also none without courage in distress'.

CHAPTER I
THE IMMEDIATE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BARTH'S DOCTRINE
OF TIME IN THE CHURCH DOGMATICS

The relation of the thought of Karl Barth to the history of western theology and philosophy is extremely complex and, therefore, incapable of undistorted abbreviation. In view of this, and in order to secure both relevance and simplicity, a single central theme will be isolated in the context of a limited general discussion of Barth's theological method. The main theme is that of the dialectic of time and eternity which underwent a progressive development and transformation in the nineteenth century following Kant's 'Copernican revolution'. In his encounter with the culmination of the tradition of German idealism, and its critics in the thought of Trendelenburg and Kierkegaard, Barth was forced to develop a theological method which could transcend the ontological and epistemological deficiencies of the nineteenth century.

The dialectic of antitheses (finite and infinite, time and eternity and so on) underwent contrasting resolutions in the work of Kant, Hegel, Trendelenburg and Kierkegaard. Barth took up this dialectic and extended it to the point of self-destruction before effecting its Christological transformation in what he later called the 'dialectic of grace'.¹ In the context of Barth's reaction to Kantian strictures on the

1. Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century, First Complete English Edition, London, 1972, p. 420 (= Protestant Theology).

possibility of theological knowledge and his epochal study of Anselm, it is possible to detect the emergence of the crucially important theme of analogia fidei (or analogia gratiae) which informs Barth's creative and positive account of the divine perfections. The nature of Barth's doctrine of time and its correlate eternity is determined by this framework of analogy. In isolating and analysing these factors it will prove possible to demonstrate the continuity of Barth's thought with certain antecedent factors in his theological and philosophical background, yet reveal his creative and corrective response, which was both revolutionary and profound.

There are a number of ways in which Barth's mature theology may be interpreted. It can, for example, be seen as a sustained attack upon the Kantian, 'subjective' account of the categories of space and time in the doctrines of transcendental idealism.² Thus T.F. Torrance can compare the relation of Kant and Barth with that of Newton and Einstein in that both Barth and Einstein released their respective scientific disciplines from an alien conceptual bondage.³

2. Barth is in fact somewhat ambivalent on this point, see below, Ch. X.

3. Theological Science, London, 1969. This demanding study raises the complex questions surrounding the relation of the methods of science and theology. This study of time and eternity follows more closely the relation of Barth's treatment of these themes to its historical context.

Torrance moves from an analogy to a direct parallel:

'What Karl Barth has attempted to do in theology, then, is not unlike what several great physicists have been attempting in the development of a general field theory which will bring together and transcend the corpuscular and undulatory theories of light. But to say that is to indicate that Barth has brought classical theology to much the same point where natural science now stands poised.' ('Newton, Einstein and Scientific Theology', Religious Studies 8, 1972, 233-250).

Some comment on this is offered below, pp. 451-477

Again Barth's work may be seen as the consistent maintenance of realism (i.e. epistemological realism) over against the incipient idealism of the German tradition and the nominalism of much contemporary theological thought.⁴ The stand-point of this thesis is less committed as it seeks to present critically Barth's doctrine of time and eternity in a full context without any prejudgements, either positive or negative. The central, structural and fundamental theme of time and eternity is a category shared by both philosophy and theology. In exposing its role in the theology of Barth the very backbone of his thought is revealed, for the dual aspects of this category and its cosmic and anthropological universality raise profound problems for theological endeavour.

Before embarking upon exposition of the dialectic of antitheses in its historical context some reference to Barth's own explicit response to the nineteenth century is desirable. In Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century Barth hints obliquely at an aspect of Kant's insight into the nature of the theological task, which was ignored by his immediate successors. It is not perhaps too much to suggest that in Barth's comments there is a clue to his own theological undertaking.

'Be this, however, as it may: looking at the matter purely objectively there is just the one question as to whether, behind Kant's segregation of the philosophical and theological function, with or without irony, an insight lies hidden, which had and still has, a

4. These problems are dealt with in this thesis from the historical standpoint and in an examination in depth of Barth's claim that the time of God's revelation is 'real' time.

right to be heard, and insight which, it is true, was of no direct usefulness within the framework of Kant's undertaking, but one in which that determination of the place of theology might well have its deep and justified reason.'

(Protestant Theology, pp. 311-312).

This insight concerns 'biblical theology', practised, in Kant's words, by the 'biblical theologian' who 'proves that God exists by means of the fact that he has spoken in the Bible'.⁵ Given the Kantian critiques of reason and of religion 'within the limits of reason alone', there nevertheless remains, according to Barth's interpretation, a scientific living-space for theology in relation to its proper object. What is the proper object of theology? Barth does not set out to answer this question in Protestant Theology (originally delivered in the form of lectures in 1932-3) but in his notable study⁶ of Anselm's Proslogion, first published a year earlier (1930) at a crucial juncture in his life. In this work he posits a unified theological ontology and epistemology which serves precisely to give a positive impulse to the 'point of departure'.

'This...would, in a word consist in theology resigning itself to stand on its own feet in relation to philosophy, in theology recognising the point of departure for its method in revelation, just as decidedly as philosophy sees its departure in reason, and in theology conducting, therefore, a dialogue with philosophy, and not, wrapping itself up in the mantle of philosophy, a quasi-philosophical monologue.'

(Anselm, p. 107)

In Anselm there is to be found Barth's recognition of the point of departure of theological method in revelation.

5. cf. Protestant Theology, pp. 311-312.

6. Anselm:Fides Quaerens Intellectum, London, 1960. (=Anselm)

This is in a notable correlation between the critical and constructive aspects of his thought at an important stage in his theological development, just prior to the appearance of the Prolegomena (volume I/1) of the Church Dogmatics.⁷ Here Barth provides 'a vital key, if not the key, to an understanding of that whole process of thought that has impressed me more and more in my Church Dogmatics as the only one proper to theology'.⁸ There is a direct influence of this study upon the Church Dogmatics (to which he moved straight afterwards) which cannot be ignored if his treatment of the dialectic of time and eternity is to be correctly understood and its extensive and complex consequences fully grasped.

The most relevant feature of Barth's argument and interpretation in Anselm is his realisation of the unity of epistemology and ontology apparent in the basic doctrine of ratio fidei, that is:

'...the conception of a ratio peculiar to the object of faith and we can say: if the ontic ratio were to be proved by means of the knowing ratio of the human faculty of making concepts and judgements, after the object of faith is given by revelation, then this conception would not be correctly interpreted until we take into account that Anselm recognises a third and ultimate ratio, a ratio veritatis. Strictly understood the ratio veritatis is identical with the ratio summa naturae, that is with the divine Word consubstantial with the Father. It is the ratio of God. It is not because it is ratio that it has truth but because God, Truth, has it. This Word is not divine as word but because it is begotten of the Father--spoken by Him....Truth is not bound to it but it is bound to Truth.'

(Anselm, pp. 45-46)

This statement contains the very core of the positive

7. Church Dogmatics, The Doctrine of the Word of God, Edinburgh, 1936-, (= Church Dogmatics I/1 etc. in text, = CD I/1 etc. in Notes).

8. Anselm, p. 11.

theological hermeneutic exploited with tremendous power in the Church Dogmatics. God in his sovereign objectivity grasps our word in ratio and begets his own Word in the ratio veritatis. Human knowledge of God is the product of divine condescension, not speculative ratiocination. This is the starting point of analogia fidei and is not the source of an apparently static mode of quasi-mystical, direct acquaintance with divine being. It is, on the contrary, dynamic, because through this grasping of human reality in divine grace the insights of sola fide and sola scriptura are allowed full expression. The primal verity that Barth lays down in the first volume of the Church Dogmatics is this epistemological and ontological unity, for by God himself God is known, as 'It is in the Truth and by the Truth, in God and by God that the basis is a basis and that rationality possesses rationality'.⁹

A brief but sympathetic account of this fundamental parallel between the limitations of theological activity set out by Kant and the positive possibilities to be found in Anselm has been given as they are exploited by Barth. This does not imply agreement with such a doctrine of the knowledge of God but the whole-hearted appreciation of the fact that only on this basis can the mature oeuvre of Barth be understood. In the light of the unified impulse of his thought expressed in this doctrine it will be possible to assess and analyse the structural theological themes of time and eternity.

The initial reflections in this chapter have conveyed

9. Op.cit., p. 51.

some idea of the most fundamental theological impulse implicit in the Church Dogmatics which will underlie the ensuing study. By deliberate contrast the dialectical movement of nineteenth century thought will now be outlined, so as to reveal the ontological and epistemological poverty of a tradition in which the Christian theological gospel had become submerged and grossly distorted. Barth's fulcrum, the inception of analogia fidei, has been crystallised above. It is necessary to see how and why this response was forthcoming in his theological development.

As stated in the first paragraph of this chapter the theme of this whole thesis may now be examined as it is manifested in the dialectic of antitheses. The problem of time and eternity as the conflict of finite and infinite has been a feature of philosophical thinking since the pre-Socratic age. This will be appreciated in this thesis when reference is made to relevant philosophical background and the major influences made by philosophy and metaphysics upon the history of Christian theology, and, indeed, upon Barth. As Ronald Gregor Smith has said,¹⁰

'In Barth we have the last, and possibly the greatest, certainly an awe-inspiring, effort on the part of traditional theology to overcome the difficulty of relating 'God in his being for himself' with 'God for the world in Christ'. But if you begin with 'being', is there any way to the world of time and movement, the historical world where it takes its rise?'
(The Doctrine of God, p. 91)

10. The Doctrine of God, London, 1970. In these posthumous Warfield Lectures Ronald Gregor Smith shows himself to be one of the few to have grasped the significance of the doctrine of God in the Church Dogmatics, see especially Chapter III, 'God as Being'.

This assessment of Barth is redolent with theological, philosophical and metaphysical questions all of which will arise in the following pages. Gregor Smith goes on to remark in a footnote that 'Barth is so clearly part of the main theological picture of our time, and yet he is such a voluminous writer that it is very difficult to pin him down'. This study is precisely an attempt (if the wrestling analogy may be pursued a little further) to grapple with Barth's thought in the Church Dogmatics along the lines indicated in Gregor Smith's comments, by taking hold of the axis of eternity and time (divine being and world, and so on), and examining its role, structure and implications throughout this work. In doing this the relation of philosophical and theological thought is continually important, for in the axis of time and eternity, the temporal category spans both spheres.

The immediate context of Barth's theological development was deeply and pervasively influenced by idealism which grew on the ground originally ploughed by Kant and his understanding of the antithesis of time and eternity. In the following pages the pattern of nineteenth century thought as it developed in successive stages of agnosticism, synthesis and diastasis will be outlined from its radical basis in the critical thought of Kant.

Kant successfully challenged the accepted basis of metaphysical and speculative thought as he encountered it in the textbooks of Leibnizian metaphysics prepared by Christian Wolff. Kant accepted the 'strict method' of Wolff, 'the

greatest of all dogmatic philosophers' in the architectonic thoroughness of his work. Kant's criticism was not of the method, but of the faculty employed in the elaboration of any method; he offered a critique of 'the organ, that is of pure reason itself'.¹¹ In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant set out the doctrine of transcendental idealism which was grounded upon an examination and statement of the innate and inherent limitations of the human mind as reasoning faculty. The consequences of this basic statement in the first Critique are developed and applied in the successive Critiques of Practical Reason and of Judgment. The determinative core of his thought is found in the first Critique and it is this which influenced decisively the nature of the anti thesis of finite and infinite time series and thus the way in which the relation of time and eternity might be understood.

In the Transcendental Aesthetic of the Critique of Pure Reason Kant asserted that space and time were the forms¹² under which all appearances were mediated in sensibility, that is in outer and inner sense respectively. This account which determines 'all principles of a priori sensibility'¹³ has immediately consequences for natural theology and the possible knowledge and existence of God. Time and space are, Kant argues, the 'a priori conditions of the existence of things'

11. The Critique of Pure Reason, translated by Norman Kemp Smith, London, 1968, p.33. (= CPR).

12. Op.cit., p. 65.

13. Op.cit., p. 66.

and 'As conditions of all existence in general, they must also be conditions of the existence of God'.¹⁴ The epistemological limitations of Kant's theory of knowledge have, it is a commonplace to observe, distinct and inevitable ontological corollaries.

There is much in Kant's doctrines of transcendental idealism (for example, the intrinsic a priori status of Euclidean geometry in sensibility or the analogous structural role accorded to Aristotelian syllogistic in the schematism of the categories) which is dated and dubious, but the central message of the first Critique, in curbing the illusory pretensions of speculative reason by the delineation of the 'bounds of sense', had a salutary and persistent influence. In the crowning achievement of The Critique of Pure Reason, the Transcendental Deduction, Kant sought to prove that,

'The objective unity of all empirical consciousness in one consciousness, that of original apperception, is thus the necessary condition of all possible perception; and (this being recognised we can prove that) the affinity of all appearances, near or remote, is a necessary consequence of a synthesis which is grounded a priori on rules.'

(CPR, p. 145)

This is the core of Kant's arguments which are an attempt to prove the necessary unity and determined nature of human experience. A concrete example of this is the Second Analogy in which Kant extends his argument to the principle of causality, that had been decisively (and in Kant's opinion disastrously) disposed of by Hume. Here Kant

14. Op.cit., p. 90.

maintains that,

'Experience itself - in other words, empirical knowledge of appearances - is thus possible only in so far as we subject the succession of appearances, and therefore all alteration, to the law of causality; and, as likewise follows, the appearances, as objects of experience, are themselves possible only on conformity with the law.'

(CPR, p. 219)

The mutual parallelism of the conditions of thought and of experience may not appear directly relevant to the problem of time and eternity and the antitheses, but it is important to grasp the following facts first. Kant's treatment of the antinomies is not merely an arbitrary agnosticism based upon the equal validity of two arguments for finitude and infinitude respectively, but raises a more radical difficulty which determined the thought of the nineteenth century with respect to theological ontology and epistemology. Second, this reorientation of thought was based upon a theory of knowledge that was part and parcel of the so-called Copernican revolution which affected the structural basis of the conceptual preconditions of both thought and empirical experience. In so far as Kant was dealing with the conditions and not the results of any possible experience, he transformed metaphysics into psychology (albeit 'transcendental') and withdrew from the traditional arguments to criticise them from this fundamentally agnostic standpoint.

The 'dialectical play of cosmological ideas', of which the first, the antimony of finite and infinite space and time concerns the argument in this thesis, presents irresolvable metaphysical problems. Of course, great differences exist in the form of each antimony; Kant's architectonic zeal had

played its part in the organisation of this passage, and it is vital to appreciate that Kant sees them as imposed as problems upon the human mind by the nature of reason itself, not objective entities or experience.¹⁵ It is not merely the apparent equal validity of these conflicting arguments alone, which is fundamental to Kant's position but the devastating ascription of metaphysical puzzlement to the innate character of the human mind itself.

'We have now before us the dialectic play of cosmological ideas. The ideas are such that an object congruent with them can never be given in any possible experience, and that even in thought reason is unable to bring them into harmony with the universal laws of nature. Yet they are not arbitrarily conceived. Reason, in the continuous advance of empirical synthesis, is necessarily led up to them whenever it endeavours to free from all conditions and apprehend in its unconditioned totality that which according to the rules of experience can never be determined save as conditioned.'

(CPR, p. 422).

The legitimate pretensions of reason run up against insurmountable obstacles which impede any advance to the necessarily illusory speculative knowledge of the unconditioned, and thus the potentially infinite. It would be possible to examine Kant's arguments in detail but to do this would be to digress from the main concern of this chapter. What it has been necessary to show is that there is a deep metaphysical agnosticism in Kant's thought, which despite the 'practical' reassertion of metaphysical entities as heuristic fictions in ethics, had a deep influence not only in offering a challenge to Hegel, responded to in his philosophy of synthesis, but,

15. That is they concern synthetic a priori possibilities not a posteriori results of empirical experience.

as has been shown, in shaping the field of play for subsequent theology. Barth, as has been made apparent, was influenced by the latter factor, but it remains to be seen how he combats the deeper problems of ontology and epistemology on the macroscopic scale of the Church Dogmatics.

Kant turned the antithesis of finite and infinite into an antimony thus making an actual cosmologically significant problem into one which was in principle irresolvable owing to the necessary limitations of human reason. It would be possible to dwell much on Kant's epistemology and its consequent ontology (for example in considering the distinction of noumena and phenomena) but this brief and inevitably highly selective summary of Kant's thought places the reader in a position to grasp the root of this agnosticism, against which Hegel was to rebel in the reassertion of the dialectic of antitheses, and, what is most significant, their resolution in synthesis.

At the heart of Hegel's thought¹⁶ lies the positing of absolute knowledge, which is in direct contrast to Kant's metaphysical agnosticism. It is now desirable to give another brief yet relevant account, this time of Hegel, for, as in the case of Kant, his influence, albeit implicit rather than explicit, cannot be ignored. Once more in Barth's Protestant Theology a useful starting point is forthcoming, but the scale

16. A useful starting-point for Hegel's specifically theological doctrines are the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, London, 1895, and for the problem of time, the Philosophy of Nature, London, 1970. W. Pannenberg's article on Hegel's treatment of Christianity in Basic Questions in Theology, Volume III, proved helpful also. Cf. Bibliography at the end of this thesis.

of the problem involved in a full comparison of the two thinkers is truly vast.

The positing of absolute knowledge was realised in the 'dialectic' in which Hegel strove to overcome in synthesis, the antitheses of finite and infinite. In his dialectic Hegel reacted against Kant's elimination of absolute knowledge from the range of noetic human possibilities. Kant, as has been outlined above, by his distinction of noumena and phenomena, by his placement of the ideas of God, freedom and immortality outside the area of the knowable, as postulates of practical reason, and by the overall impulse of his doctrine of transcendental idealism, strictly limited the pretensions of human knowledge within a complex empiricism. In Hegel's dialectic it is precisely the subsumption of contradictory aspects of reality, including those of finite and infinite (and thus time and eternity), into a single overall process which is ultimately resolvable into pure thought, that runs directly counter to Kant's circumscription of possible human knowledge. In the dialectic thought and being enter into identity. The being of God and the being of man become one through the coming to self-consciousness of God through human self-consciousness.

Hegel's all-embracing synthesis presents a notable contrast with that of Barth's Christological synthesis. J.M.E. McTaggart has said of the Christian elements of Hegel's philosophy that 'The Incarnation is identical with the creation. To say that God is incarnate in the finite is misleading. We should rather say that the finite is the

incarnation of God'.¹⁷ It is important to note that Barth's dogmatic resolution of the antithesis of finite and infinite should escape such an identity and this problem will recur in the course of this thesis. Indeed Barth is well aware of the danger, for, in criticism of Hegel's doctrine of God, he argues that later theologians failed to grasp the positive notion of synthesis in his thought.

'Was it really impossible (Barth asks) to take up and make fruitful the entire Hegelian concept of the synthesis, so soon as it was taken seriously, more seriously perhaps than Hegel himself took it, with the realisation that it could be a question only of the incomprehensible synthesis of God?'

(Protestant Theology, p. 417)

Once more it is both interesting and important to note with some care Barth's explicit assessment of one of his most significant fore-runners. His comments in the Church Dogmatics cast little light on the importance of this encounter for, as with Kant, Barth's real response is in his actual theological construction,¹⁸ but, despite this, further hints are afforded in Protestant Theology. Barth presents a Hegel who threatened the theologians with a trinitarian renewal

17. J.M.E. McTaggart, Studies in Hegelian Cosmology, Cambridge, 1901, p. 218. This work and Studies in Hegelian Dialectic, Cambridge, 1896, remain most interesting despite their age and the caution that J.N. Findlay offers vis a vis both Bradley and McTaggart in his Hegel: a Re-Examination, London, 1958, p. 21; and on the so-called 'unreality of time', p. 146.

18. The point here is parallel to that made by T.F. Torrance with regard to the later response of Barth to Kierkegaard's relation of the possibility to the reality of the Incarnation, which is pervasive 'although the name of Kierkegaard is rarely mentioned in the subsequent volumes' (that is of the Church Dogmatics cf. Theological Science, p. 7.). Likewise here the relation of Barth to Hegel is 'implicit' and involves the content and structure of his whole work. Barth's references to Hegel are sporadic and unsystematic in the Church Dogmatics, but his response is total in its scale.

of theology which they did not want.¹⁹ Moreover Hegel overcame the dualism of transcendental and historical spheres of reality,²⁰ re-asserted a powerful (even if finally mistaken) doctrine of the Trinity²¹ existing, or rather subsisting, in act,²² and a grounding of philosophy and theology within one system of thought.²³ It has been said of Marx that he turned Hegel on his head. It might well be argued that Barth out-Hegels Hegel by a discrete but momentous shift in ontology.²⁴ There is much in Barth's mature thought that reflects Hegel in his understanding of the truth as 'movement' and the historicity of God's own being. In fact Barth sees in Hegel one who was able and willing to disturb the pedestrian logic of western thought and one with whom he can marginally identify himself. Would it be too much to suggest further that in Hegel Barth sees one who cries in the wilderness but who fails to recognise the coming One? Is there not in Hegel an agitation of the torpid rationalism that limited the logical capacity of an age that lay bound and unexpectant within its own (man-made) horizons?

'Hegel's demand consists...in the fact that he asserts the contradiction as the law of truth understood as history. It consists in the fact that he thought he could show that the dialectical method was the one which alone exhausted and comprised the truth. The truth is God, God, however, is God only in actu. This

19. Protestant Theology, p. 414.

20. Op.cit., p. 418.

21. Op.cit., p. 414.

22. Op.cit., p. 413.

23. Op.cit., pp. 412-414.

24. By asserting the ontology of created and uncreated being over against Hegel's complex but ultimately monistic ontological synthesis.

means for Hegel, only as the God who is free in One, the eternal process which consists in something distinguishing its parts, separating them, and absorbing them into itself again. Life itself is not a unity resting in itself, but a perpetual a=non a, in despite of the whole of western logic. It is, quite simply, life, and not the task of life to adapt itself to logic. The unity of truth - and no one fought for it more vigorously than Hegel - is the unity of contradictions, more, the reconciliation which is effected between them. It is in their reconciliation, but also the establishment of their basis, their necessity, and their adjustment and dissolving.'

(Protestant Theology, p. 413)

Hegel had made a partial discovery of the truth in a willingness to disrupt the logical pattern imposed upon reality; but he vitiated this by imposing his own pattern, the dialectic of triadic development, upon his doctrine of God. The freedom of God is contained and channelled into alien paths in an incomplete emancipation and a concatenation of syntheses ultimately resolved in a complex monistic identity. Barth's conclusion is significant in that it points the reader to his own later work and a possible principle of interpretation which may well help in understanding the Church Dogmatics.

'Hegel in making the dialectical method of logic the essential nature of God, made impossible the knowledge of the actual dialectic of grace, which has its foundation in the freedom of God.'

(Protestant Theology, p. 420)

Barth's attitude to Hegel is not without ambivalence. In asserting and developing at great length the 'dialectic of grace' he repudiates the 'dialectical method of logic' and places great emphasis, as will be seen in the following chapters of this thesis upon the freedom of God. At the same time Barth claims that Hegel introduces the notion of 'truth...as

a movement, as a history'.²⁵ In subsequent criticism of Hegel it is this alleged temporality or 'history' which is subjected to sharp criticism by Trendelenburg and, following him, by Kierkegaard. Does Barth in releasing the doctrine of God from another 'logic', that of dialectic, provide an adequate doctrine of time, so as to secure both the eternity of God and the temporality of the world and cosmos, the theatre of revelation? At least the starting-point is clear, Barth seeks an emancipation in Protestant Theology from the Hegelian logic imposed upon the Trinity. The new alternative that Barth provides will be the centre of attention in Chapters II and III, where his doctrine of the Trinity will be stated and examined in the light of these, and other questions pertaining to the doctrine of time and eternity. Barth thought that Hegel had confused the 'incomprehensible synthesis of God' with that implicit in the Hegelian dialectic.²⁶ In the Church Dogmatics there is Barth's answer to this in his account of the 'incomprehensible synthesis' and the 'dialectic of grace'. The student of Barth is confronted with a creation of awesome dimensions and intense ambition. It falls to this study to follow out, as mentioned, the temporal aspect of this, an aspect not, as will be seen, without its importance for the whole structure of the Church Dogmatics.

25. Op.cit., p. 412.

26. Compare CD II/1, p. 270. 'Hegel speaks forcefully of GodBut it is not a description of God, whose movement is infinitely more than our self movement even when the latter is hypostatized, i.e., projected into eternity, and by whose movement this hypostatization and projection is necessarily forbidden and prevented.'

Barth's critical observations on Hegel, for example, that Christian theology demands exegesis rather than the Hegelian type of system,²⁷ that God can have nothing to do with the absolutizing of human nature and being,²⁸ and, above all, that Hegel lost the real infinitude of God,²⁹ all direct attention forward to his own creative and innovatory response in the Church Dogmatics. An examination of the reconciliation of time and eternity, eternity and time in this putatively true synthesis and the exact nature of each arm of this category will constitute the core of this thesis. It carries the reader to the heart of both Barth's theological intentions, and, indeed, his achievement.

Barth's arguments and criticisms in Protestant Theology have been used in inaugurating this study of the doctrine of time because of the insight they offer into the probable motivation of his great constructive work. At the same time the actual development in the nineteenth century has been followed because it is in the context of the generalised movement of Kantian agnosticism, Hegelian synthesis and Kierkegaardian diastasis, that Barth's early theological work may be understood. Protestant Theology presents, as was noted earlier, the understanding Barth had just prior to the appearance of

27. CD I/1, p. 483. 'Therefore a biblical theology can never consist in more than a series of attempted approximations, a collection of individual exegeses.'

28. Cf. CD II/1, pp. 74-75.

29. CD II/1, p. 467. 'God's "infinity,"...is true infinity because it does not involve any contradiction that it is finitude as well.' Barth's treatment of infinity is properly speaking theological and positively reflects what has been called Kantian 'agnosticism' in this thesis, as the condition of theological freedom of exposition on the basis of which the freedom of divine being can be developed.

the Prolegomena to the Church Dogmatics. Barth reviews theological history in this former work, but in The Epistle to the Romans³⁰ and the Church Dogmatics, he himself was to make such history.

It is not possible to offer a general comparison of Barth and Hegel in the space available, even if this were desirable. Fortunately it is through the medium of time, or rather its criticism, that a link between Hegel and Kierkegaard exists which in turn connects the early work of Barth with this tradition. In examining this theme attention is diverted from generalities and brought down to a fine focus upon the temporal character of the Hegelian synthesis to which allusion has been made above. It is a difficult problem to work out exactly what Hegel meant by 'time.' This difficulty has been compounded by both F.H. Bradley and J.M.E. McTaggart who argued for the 'unreality' of time. Both placed a construction upon Hegel and this consequently raises very wide issues indeed.³¹ It is the case that Hegel's understanding of time has much more to it than such utterances as 'the being which, inasmuch as it is, is not, or which, inasmuch as it is not, is,'³² might immediately suggest, for it is the teleological aspect of his doctrine of time which is distinctly characteristic of his thought.

'In the positive sense of time one can therefore say that only the Present is, while what is before and

30. The Epistle to the Romans, translated by E.C. Hoskyns, London, 1933, (= Romans).

31. Hegel's understanding of time will of course recur as a problem later in this thesis.

32. Cf. Philosophy of Nature, pp. 78-86.

after is not. The concrete Present is, however, the result of the Past, and is pregnant with the Future. The true Present is therefore pregnant with eternity.' (Philosophy of Nature, p. 86)

This positive doctrine of Hegel does bear distinct similarities to that employed in the Church Dogmatics, at least superficially in the notion of a 'fulfilment' of the present by eternity. This will be referred to later in relation to Barth and it is in structural terms in relation to the overall movement of the system of each that their temporal doctrines emerge more clearly. The 'unreality' account of time made current by Bradley and McTaggart relies upon what can be termed the 'semantic argument' that exemplifies the much-denounced metaphysical methods of generating conclusions concerning what there is, from the 'surface' of language and paradox.³³ Both these contrasting accounts of Hegel must be put to one side at this juncture for the historical development of the critical reaction to Hegel in theology turned on the 'logical question in Hegel's system.' This critical reaction was initiated by Adolf Trendelenburg³⁴ and it is upon his work that this particular aspect of the theology of Kierkegaard and therefore Barth depends. On the larger scale the structural affinities of Hegel and Barth may be dimly discerned lying before the reader. To that pertains the positive development of the concept of eternity in relation to the

33. Both the themes of temporal 'fulfilment' and 'metaphysical argument' will occur later, see below, Chs. IX-XII.

34. Notably in his Logische Untersuchungen, Leipzig, 1870. The only English translation of Trendelenburg's work appears to be 'The Logical Question in Hegel's System', translated by Thomas Davidson, Journal of Speculative Philosophy, V (1871), pp. 349-59; VI (1872), pp. 82-93, pp. 163-175, pp. 350-361.

'Present' in time which will come to the forefront later. It is on the smaller scale, in the historical encounter of Kierkegaard with the thought of Hegel, informed by the achievement of Trendelenburg, that there is to be found the source of the new movement towards theological destruction and the possibility of renewal.

There are many facets to the encounter of Hegel and Kierkegaard which concern the conflict of the 'logical' and the 'existential' categories. Kierkegaard took deep exception to Hegel's assertion that the products of his thought-experiment actually corresponded with reality itself. Hegel's bold exploits with Aristotelian categories were exposed by Trendelenburg who brought to bear his critical and philological expertise practised on the text of Aristotle. Kierkegaard found that many of his own criticisms of Hegel, which were fundamental and pervasive, were confirmed by Trendelenburg, who had revealed the latter's misuse of Aristotle. In particular Trendelenburg exposed the deep Hegelian ambiguity produced by the radical confusion of categories which stemmed from the synthesis of incompatibles. This was not merely the sophisticated synthesis of finite and infinite (this is an extremely complex question in Hegel) but the danger of illusion resulting from the imposition of necessity, that is logical necessity, upon the historical process subsumed into dialectic.³⁵ The logical progression imposed upon the allegedly historical transition from possible

35. Cf. The Concept of Dread, Princeton, 1944, for example, p. 43, 'In logic no movement can come about for logic is and everything else logical simply is.'

to real, was, in fact, a denial of the Aristotelian concept of *κίνησις*, a real movement implicit in the change characteristic of time.³⁶ Thus despite Hegel's use of this notion, the conflict between logical necessity and its strict absence from the realm of temporal change, was fundamental and highly misleading. In simple terms real contingency was constantly in danger. Such a complete and comprehensive set of abstractions as was Hegel's system destroyed the genuine distinction of divine and human being.

It is upon this blurring and synthetic tendency in Hegel's thought that Kierkegaard spent much destructive effort in the positing of an 'irreducible diastasis'; thus using the logical tools forged by Trendelenburg to force apart the false and illusory categorial homogeneity of idealism. In Philosophical Fragments, Concluding Unscientific Postscript and the Introduction to The Concept of Dread this attack is presented.³⁷ Thus in, for example, the Postscript Kierkegaard argued on two main fronts insofar as his work relates to this study. First he asserted the overwhelming importance and indispensability of the category of personal existence, lost (so Kierkegaard would argue) by Hegel, and, second, he

36. Concluding Unscientific Postscript, translated by D.F. Swenson and W. Lowrie, Princeton, 1941, p. 306, (=Postscript) 'The transition from possibility to actuality is, as Aristotle rightly says, a *κίνησις* a movement. This cannot be expressed or understood in the language of abstraction; for in the sphere of the abstract, movement cannot have assigned to it either time or space which presupposes movement or are presupposed by it.'

37. The generalised account of Kierkegaard in this chapter is indebted to H. Diem, Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence, translated by H. Knight, Edinburgh, 1959, and James Collins, The Mind of Kierkegaard, Chicago, 1965. For additional bibliography see Bibliography below.

developed and sustained the absolute distinction of divine and human existence. In conjunction these factors are important for this introductory chapter because of their initial influence upon Barth's early work and then after that as the nodal point of the process^{of} rejection and self-correction which preceded the emergence of the Church Dogmatics.

In the Postscript Kierkegaard juxtaposes the subject (who exists in becoming) and truth, in a relation of contradiction. He therefore grasps the Hegelian state of alteration between being and non-being but at the same time discards Hegel's abrogation of the principle of non-contradiction. Thus:

'The existing subjective thinker is in his existential relation to the truth as negative as he is positive; he has as much humour as he has existential pathos, and he is constantly in process of becoming, i.e. he is always striving.'

(Postscript, p. 74)

Kierkegaard transforms 'dialectic' from 'quantitative' to 'qualitative'. The 'infinity' of the Hegelian dialectic is transformed into infinite certainty of personal existence. The danger of existence sub specie aeterni³⁸ is exposed, for

38. Postscript, p. 270. The 'contradiction' implicit in the divine-human encounter is disposed of by Hegel, 'Hegel is utterly and absolutely right in asserting that viewed eternally, sub specie aeterni, in the language of abstraction, in pure thought and pure being, there is no either-or. How in the world could there be, when abstract thought has taken away the contradiction, so that Hegel and the Hegelians ought rather be asked to explain what they mean by the hocus-pocus of introducing contradiction, movement, transition, and so forth, into the domain of logic.... the either-or of contradiction is ipso facto nullified when it is lifted out of the sphere of the existential and introduced into the eternity of abstract thought.'

(pp. 270-71)

it rests upon an elision of the true distinction of divine and human being. Existence as conceived in speculative thought is therefore strictly inauthentic and rests upon a move from real existence into false construction.

'Nothing historical can become infinitely certain for me except the fact of my own existence (which again cannot become infinitely certain for any other individual, who has infinite certainty only of his own existence), and this is not something historical. The speculative result is in so far illusory, as the existing subject proposes qua thinker to abstract from the fact that he is occupied in existing, in order to be sub specie aeterni.'

(Postscript, p. 75)

The disjunction of historical and eternal truths is absolute and can only be expressed in paradox and decision and overcome by a 'leap' made in the extremes of existential passion and pathos. 'The paradoxical nature of Christianity consists in its constant use of time and the historical in relation to the eternal',³⁹ whereas 'The systematic Idea is the identity of thought and being' but 'Existence, on the other hand is their separation'.⁴⁰ The most pressing problem was how it was possible for 'eternal truth...to be understood in determinations of time by one who as existing is himself in time'.⁴¹ The divine 'incognito' is of course part of the response Kierkegaard made to this, along with the doctrine of encounter. Christianity is, according to Kierkegaard, 'no doctrine concerning the unity of the divine and the human, or concerning the identity of subject and object' but 'the fact that God has existed'.⁴² Contrary to popular under-

39. Op.cit., p. 88.

40. Op.cit., p. 112.

41. Op.cit., p. 172.

42. Op.cit., p. 290.

standing of Kierkegaard's thought Christology is not paradox in a crude objective sense but in the actual encounter. Kierkegaard's position is well summarised in the following quotation which has significance for the final stage in this brief survey, a consideration of the early theology of Barth. It is Barth's re-emphasis and reinterpretation of Kierkegaard's notion of the divine-human diastasis which drove division to the point of final dissociation.

'When subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth becomes objectively a paradox; and the fact that the truth is objectively a paradox shows in turn that subjectivity is the truth....The paradoxical character of the truth is its objective uncertainty; this uncertainty is an expression for the passionate inwardness, and this passion is precisely the truth.... The eternal and essential truth, the truth which has an essential relationship to an existing individual because it pertains essentially to existence..., is a paradox. But the eternal essential truth is by no means in itself a paradox; but it becomes paradoxical by virtue of its relationship to an existing individual.'

(Postscript, p. 183)

Kierkegaard was concerned to state a new dialectic of existence and encounter which ousted the illusory constructs of the Hegelian dialectic in synthesis. This 'new' dialectic (if it may be so described) was built upon Trendelenburg's 'infinite specific difference of God and the world' and the irreducible diastasis could be bridged, or more accurately crossed, only in paradox. The encounter of time and eternity is in time and both Kierkegaard's Christology and doctrine of encounter are animated by an insistent emphasis upon temporality.⁴³ This unbridled notion of time

43. Cf. J. Heywood Thomas, 'Kierkegaard's View of Time', Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, Vol. 4 No.1, January 1973, pp. 33-40.

(unlike Hegel's doctrine of time, vitiated in Kierkegaard's eyes by 'the introduction of movement into logic' which is 'sheer confusion of logical sciences')⁴⁴ is to be understood as the arena of divine possibility in revelation, and for man.

'For as the eternal comes into the world at a moment of time, the existing individual does not in the course of time come into relation with the eternal and think about it(...), but in time it comes into relation with the eternal in time; so that the relation is within time.'

(Postscript, p. 506)

Eternity, as was seen above, is thought in relation to the individual and to time. Abstract notions of eternity are inimical to Kierkegaard for,

'The goal of movement for an existing individual is to arrive at a decision, and to renew it. The eternal is the factor of continuity; but an abstract eternity is extraneous to the movement of life, and a concrete eternity within the existing individual is the maximum degree of his passion....The eternity of abstract thought is arrived at by abstracting from existence. The realm of pure thought is a sphere in which the existing individual finds himself only by virtue of a mistaken beginning; and this error revenges itself by making the existence of the individual insignificant, and giving his language a flavour of lunacy.'

(Postscript, p. 277)

As with the other encounters of the great thinkers sketched out in this chapter it has only been possible to indicate the general movement of thought in the nineteenth century tradition rather than allow the central argument to disappear under a superfluous wealth of detail and complexity. Hegel reasserted a new and involved synthesis of both Aristotelian and Platonic philosophical elements (for example the doctrine of time and the identity of being, respectively). Kierkegaard broke this false and categorially reductive

44. Postscript, p. 99.

synthesis through the critique of categories of logic and existence and the consequent positing of paradox in real time. He achieved this by means largely clarified in Trendelenburg's work on Aristotle and his critical analysis of Hegel.

It is now time to ask once more how theological epistemology and ontology have fared in this development. Clearly Hegel, in his union of philosophy with theology in the dialectic, subsumed both these elements into an all-embracing realization of human and divine consciousness in the realm of pure thought and being. The illusory pretension of this was exposed by Kierkegaard. By his constant and searching concentration upon the passionate infinity of the qualitative dialectic in subjectivity Kierkegaard lost touch with ontology in the face of the overwhelming epistemological (and thus for Kierkegaard existential) question. Kierkegaard maintained that he accepted the orthodox Christological formulations once the problem of their actual appropriation in inwardness had been honestly faced.⁴⁵ The starting point of his theological impulse is, however, in the paradoxical encounter of subjectivity and Subject in time, and in despair. The Christological adequacy of this is doubtless a complex problem in purely exegetical assessment of Kierkegaard, but in the immediate history of theology Barth made destructive use of the stark antithesis of finite and infinite in destroying the precarious Christological equilibrium achieved in Kierkegaard's work.

45. J. Heywood Thomas, op.cit., p. 36, cf. also 'The Christology of S. Kierkegaard and Karl Barth', Hibbert Journal, 1954-55, p. 281ff.

As has been shown Kierkegaard exhausted the meaningful notion of the infinite (as opposed to Hegelian abstraction) in existential passion and inwardness. In his early work Barth was to take the second aspect of Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel (the acute diastasis of divine and human being as an ontological distinction) and force it into an unparalleled theological reductio ad absurdum, thus posing the question of theological ontology in its sharpest possible form. What was to be the basis of revelation and knowledge of God? Such questions were formed in Barth's mind later as was shown earlier in this chapter. By tracing Barth's own development it will be possible to grasp the significance of his reaction to, and use of Kierkegaardian insights as the fulfilment of the nineteenth century dialectic in a destructive consummation, but, beyond this, to see how this ground-clearance opened the way to his great constructive work. In pursuing the final sections of this investigation the innovatory genius of Barth will be revealed as he strove to re-establish Christian theology upon its own foundations in ontological and epistemological uniqueness and power. Whether Barth succeeds in avoiding the hazards and pitfalls that have threatened all such endeavours, ancient and modern, will be a central concern in the ensuing exposition and analysis of the doctrine of time and eternity in the Church Dogmatics proper.

There are many factors influencing the early thought of Karl Barth and indeed Henri Bouillard has argued that his first great work, The Epistle to the Romans is the most

difficult to analyse of all.⁴⁶ This may well be an exaggeration but it is true that this work is open to interpretation rather than subject to straightforward exegesis. The thought of Kierkegaard had a decisive influence upon the development of Barth's theology and this will be assessed prior to showing Barth's emancipation from Kierkegaardian concepts, particularly regarding the ontological and epistemological implications of the diastasis of time and eternity.

The Epistle to the Romans in its second and influential edition occupies a key position in the history of the theology of the twentieth century. It has been regarded by some as the theological expression of Spenglerian pessimism,⁴⁷ for others it 'fell like a bomb on the playground of the theologians.'⁴⁸ Undoubtedly its importance was decisive. All major interpreters of Barth consider with care the relation of this work to the mature masterpiece, the Church Dogmatics itself. Von Balthasar, Küng, Berkouwer and Torrance,⁴⁹

46. Karl Barth, Genèse et évolution de la théologie dialectique, Paris, 1957, p. 29. 'De tous les écrits de Barth, le Commentaire sur l'Épître aux Romains est le plus difficile à analyser.'
47. Cf. H. Berkouwer's account of the varieties of Barthian interpretation in The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth, p. 23 (=Triumph of Grace).
48. T.F. Torrance cites Karl Adam in his indispensable Karl Barth, An Introduction to his Early Theology, 1910-1931. I have taken an independent line from this and the other standard introductory works in considering the nineteenth century as ontological dearth answered by putative ontological plenitude in the Church Dogmatics. The doctrine of time and eternity has a vital structural role in this. (=Karl Barth:Early Theology)
49. Cf. H.U. von Balthasar, Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie Köln, 1951, (translated and abridged in an American translation by John Drury, The Theology of Karl Barth, New York, 1972); G.C. Berkouwer, The Triumph of

(Contd.)

for example, all point to a reorientation in Barth's thought and pursue this along specific lines in their respective accounts. Radicals like R.W. Jenson see the whole 'post-Christian' era in the light of this work which is for him 'the final triumph of platonic religion over the believing apprehension of history',⁵⁰ and prime mover in the theology of the 'death of God.' For the purposes of this study these approaches are noted, but eschewed, for there is to be found in Barth's work a coherent, progressive development and transformation concerning the theme of time and eternity in relation to the questions of fundamental ontology and epistemology.

Jenson rightly remarks that Karl Barth's dialectic is born of a basic contradiction between time and eternity.⁵¹ In the decisive edition of Romans which appeared in 1922 Barth states that if he has a 'System', then,

'...it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the "infinite qualitative distinction between time and eternity" - "God is in heaven and thou art on earth"....The relation between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy.'

(Romans, p. 10)

Contd.) Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth, London, 1956; H. Kung, Justification, The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection and T.F. Torrance's Introduction (see note 48) all develop a major theme or themes of creative and innovatory significance in the work of Barth. This thesis is centred on the problem of time and its dynamic correlate, eternity, and therefore follows an independent course dictated by the nature of the source material.

50. R.W. Jenson, God after God, The God of the Past and the God of the Future, Seen in the Work of Karl Barth, Indianapolis and New York, 1969, p. 19. This is the only full-scale study of the problem of time in the theology of Karl Barth known to me. It is, however, highly idiosyncratic and polemical and leaves room for the present study.

51. Jenson, op.cit., p. 11.

Barth continues,

'Philosophers name this KRISIS of human perception -
The Prime Cause: the Bible beholds at the same
crossroads - the figure of Jesus Christ.'
(Romans, p. 10)

In this analysis and account of the relation of Romans to Kierkegaard, and to the Church Dogmatics, it will be argued that although the very core and goal of Barth's thought is Jesus Christ as the intersection of divine and human reality, Barth's understanding of the fundamental ontology of the divine being in relation to human being changed dramatically. In the theology of dialectical diastasis Christology was to be destroyed by the 'infinite qualitative distinction', once this had been rendered unstable by the intrusion of radical eschatology which removed any feasible basis for creation and the relation of time and eternity (as a corollary of the other divine-human attributes) in the God-man Jesus Christ. By the rediscovery and reassertion of dynamic Christology upon the Anselmic basis, examined in the earlier parts of this chapter, Barth restored the ontological and epistemological powerbase of Christian dogmatics. In the sustained development of the true 'dialectic of grace' (lost, the reader will remember, in the Hegelian dialectic and false synthesis) time and eternity become the corollates of the reconciliation effected in the Christological synthesis of the unio hypostatica. It is their role at the very core of the Church Dogmatics which then becomes crucial in the new ontology of divine grace. So as to conclude this chapter the place of Romans in the demolition and renewal of Christian theology will now be traced in explication of the above-mentioned issues.

In Romans the dichotomy between time and eternity is absolute and, therefore, unmediated. Their 'relation' (this word is misleading here) is in the neo-Hegelian dialectical juxtaposition of the divine 'Yes' and 'No'. A mutual annihilation takes place for '...time is nothing when measured by the standard of eternity'.⁵² The dialectical Yes and No correspond to a comprehensive division of reality into the spheres of God's wrath and his righteousness, finite and infinite, time and eternity, and so on. The 'Krisis' of revelation, that is of eternity over time, is understood purely in terms of tangential intersection. Such 'Moments' of intersection, expressed in geometrical imagery (in common with Luther and Kierkegaard), can be traced through history as the 'crimson line' of points of the eschatological intervention of a timeless eternity, for, according to Barth, 'through all history there runs the line of intersection between time and eternity, between the present and the future world.'⁵³

Now it must be appreciated that there are both distinct affinities and marked discontinuities between the epochal commentary on the Epistle to the Romans and the Church Dogmatics. These are recorded elsewhere in the major commentators and interpreters of Barth as noted above. It is desirable, however, to record some of these thematic corollations in the progress of this exposition for they cast further light upon those questions most relevant to it. The

52. Romans, p. 43.

53. Op.cit., p. 47.

Epistle to the Romans broke, as is well known, with the culturally conditioned Liberal Protestantism personified in Adolf von Harnack. This was largely achieved by the assertion of irreducible diastasis and the rediscovered extreme eschatology Barth used to emphasise the judgemental aspect of revelation over against all human effort. The relation of time and eternity adumbrated in the last paragraph must now be seen in a fuller context informed by wider, but highly relevant, considerations.

Kierkegaard had, according to J. Heywood Thomas, a Christology of the God-man Jesus Christ for 'To believe is to believe the divine and human together in Jesus Christ'.⁵⁴ The point of relation of time and eternity is in Jesus Christ primarily, and, secondarily, in the divine-human encounter of faith. The centrality of Jesus Christ is maintained, however great the ultimate ontological weight placed upon the encounter as the determinant of infinity, in infinite passion. This Christological centrality is lost in The Epistle to the Romans in the following way, that is by allowing the consistent impulse of the dialectical tension of time and eternity to run free. There is the mere assertion of the relation, the identity, of the divinity and the humanity of Christ and this is overwhelmed by the power of ontological diastasis and the annihilation of time by eternity. Indeed '...time is nothing when measured by the standard of eternity.'⁵⁵ Human temporality is an affront to God as 'our duration consists in a

54. J. Heywood Thomas, art cit., p. 36, quotes Kierkegaard's Papirer IX, A101.

55. Romans, p. 43.

solemn affirmation of ourselves and of the world and a pious setting aside of the contradiction.⁵⁶ In this can be seen both the destructive move of Barth in opening the way to the annihilation of time by eternity, and yet beyond this the seed of an even deeper reorientation of his thought. This very destruction which has ontological implications for the temporal order is the preliminary purging, at a deeper level, of any human or earthly justification of man before God.⁵⁷ In other words an immense blast clears the way for justification by God himself, for justification by faith, the very quintessence of the message of St. Paul. This is a preliminary step on the path to the Church Dogmatics, the most consistent and comprehensive exposition of the Reformation insight, sola gratia, by grace alone. There is indeed, according to Barth, 'no magnificent temporality of this world that can justify man before God.'⁵⁸ The Epistle to the Romans betrays to the percipient reader the beginnings of Barth's ever-increasing theological transformation of all the categories of human existence, including, of course, that of time. In nuce, Barth kills to make alive; employing the negative insight of Kierkegaard, the infinite qualitative distinction and its theological corollaries, he makes possible the innovation and creative work which came later.

'The man of God is aware of the true and tragic and paradoxical state of affairs....The men of God know that belief is faith only when it is the product of no historical or spiritual achievement. They know that faith is the ineffable reality of God, that clarity of sight is no system, no discovery of research,

56. Op.cit., p. 44.

57. Cf. op.cit., p. 88, 'All the world is guilty before God.'

58. Op.cit., p. 56.

but the eternal ground of perception. They know also that in itself faith can be no more justified than any other human achievement. They do not escape from the paradox by making it another fragment of the concrete world. They do not evacuate the divine negation by too nearly accommodating it to their own human negation. They do not blunt the austerity of judgement by supposing it to be a temporal station through which they have passed in their spiritual pilgrimage (ordo salutis) and which they have left behind. They do not make of the dawning righteousness of the Gospel of salvation a hole into which they can creep or a fortress in which they can resist the attacks of others. They know the judgment of God to be according to the standard of truth; and if men are measured by the standard of the truth of God, who can withstand it? Can stability be attained anywhere or at any time?'
 (Romans, p. 58)

If all the grounds of man's boasting before God are to be removed then this includes his standpoint in time. Barth explodes human security by a dazzling application of theological insight to time. By this the reader is made aware that in the theology of Barth he is to encounter a theological conditioning, more than this, a theological constitution, of the problem of time of an unprecedented power and complexity. The theme of time lies at the heart of Barth's ongoing theological development and achievement, demonstrating the thoroughness and ultimacy of his thought. By studying the role of time in this the deepest intentions of Barth are revealed and, as will become apparent, the inner structure of his dogmatic and architectonic creation.

What it is most significant to realize about Barth's use of idealist dialectic, mediated through Kierkegaard from Hegel, is that his intention in the first instance is theological, through and through. The pattern of destruction, and consequent re-construction is effected through the medium of dialectic. Philosophy is subservient to theology. A

philosophical tool obeys a theological impulse in this instance, but the distinction that can be made between the two is far from obvious or clearcut when examined superficially. Once such an encounter is placed in its historical context, as has been attempted in this chapter and will be continued throughout this thesis, then this 'borderland' can be profitably explored. On this basis it will be possible to advance a critique of Barth's work, in particular, of the Church Dogmatics, which legitimately transcends that a priori theological purity of which he is accused by those who think of him as venturing upon fideism. In his development from Romans to the Church Dogmatics during a vital decade in theological history it will become apparent that Barth moved from this instrumentalist attitude to philosophical dialectic towards the systematic explication of the putative theology of Christian revelation. In Romans Barth's use of temporal concepts faithfully reflects his theological intentions but in the Church Dogmatics it allegedly crystallises the veritable 'inner logic'⁵⁹ of the being of God as it is known in revelation, his active being-in-becoming. The shift in reference is momentous and the implications extensive. Such is the subject matter of the following essay which moves along the paths of both dogmatic and philosophical theology.

Barth uses the diastasis inherited from Kierkegaard to consummate a theological via negativa of great severity, 'No

59. This way of thinking has been developed by T.F. Torrance, and the notion of 'inner logic,' as it is expressed in the temporal ontology of the Church Dogmatics, is subject to critical examination in the following pages of this work.

road to the eternal meaning of the created world has ever existed, save the road of negation.'⁶⁰ St. Paul's 'redemption that is in Christ Jesus' is 'the dissolution of history in history, the destruction of the structure of events within their own structure, the end of time in the order of time.'⁶¹ Jesus Christ is 'THE possibility which possesses all the marks of impossibility'⁶² and which proclaims the coming end in the 'disclosing...the timeless, necessary reality in the longitude of time.'⁶³ The temporal order is annihilated in the face of the eternal God and nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in the pneumatology of Romans. The Holy Spirit provides 'faith with content which is not a thing in time; if it were such a thing, it would be nothing but a void and a negation.'⁶⁴ The overwhelming theological impetus is from this consuming eternity,

'We know already what this duality in God means. We know that it involves no equilibrium, but that it is the eternal victory of election over rejection, of love over hate, of life over death. But this victory is hidden from us in every moment of time.'
(Romans, p. 347)

The diastasis of time and eternity is the victorious factor for it is with reference to this relation in dialectic and divine incognito that the theological structure in Romans is understood as a whole, 'The relation of the Church

60. Romans, p. 87.

61. Op.cit., p. 103.

62. Ibid.

63. Op.cit., p. 116.

64. Op.cit., p. 157.

to its theme is the relation between time and eternity, between men and God.'⁶⁵ The relation of time and eternity is, in the first instance, that of diastasis, a radical drawing apart, 'the distance, the separation, between God's ways and man's ways.'⁶⁶ Secondly it is dialectical, it is the temporal equivalent of the identity of the divine incognito posited in Jesus Christ. In a passage of considerable importance for Barth's doctrine of time as a whole this dialectic is presented succinctly:

'Between the past and the future - between the time/- there is a "Moment" that is no moment in time. This "Moment" is the eternal Moment - the Now - when the past and the future stand still, when the former ceases its going and the latter its coming.'

(Romans, p. 497)

The determination of the total theological realisation of the doctrine of justification by diastasis and dialectic places the ontological burden upon assertion, the divine fiat of justification and righteousness in eternity as opposed to human sinful existence in the sphere of time and finitude. In 'the absolute "Moment", the greedy dialectic of time and eternity,'⁶⁷ the diastasis is overcome by faith in the hope

65. Op.cit., p. 396.

66. T.F. Torrance, op.cit., p. 49.

67. Romans, p. 530. 'The theme of theology is grace, the absolute "Moment", the greedy dialectic of time and eternity.' Some indication of the pivotal importance of this nexus is given by Jenson who says,

'If one went through the Commentary on Romans and replaced the tangential intersection of time and eternity with the story narrated by the second article of the Apostle's Creed, he would obtain the theology of the Church Dogmatics.' Op.cit., p. 71.

A crude but dramatic summary; needless to say the actual temporal transformation of Barth's thought is rather more complex than this might suggest. See below.

of final eschatological realisation of the Kingdom of God by Jesus Christ, 'the enactor of death.' The juxtaposition of time and its antithesis, eternity, predominates despite the dialectic in faith and as such this radical and unmediated diastasis rules out any basis of the relation of the two arms of this category in creation and Christology. A Christological relation is posited but is explicated exhaustively in terms of the diastasis and the dialectic. The philosophical tool has proved to be a double-edged sword for in slicing away human pretension before God it reduces the basis of revelation to a series of points in time which shelter and disguise eternity under the divine incognito.

The truth of this argument is confirmed in the subsequent thought of Barth which is to be outlined very briefly. The transition in Barth's thought is apparent in his intermediate work, two examples of which will be referred to: The Resurrection of the Dead,⁶⁸ a commentary on I Corinthians published in 1924, and the abandoned Christian Dogmatics⁶⁹ of 1927. In The Resurrection of the Dead there remains the crisis of finite and infinite in the qualitative dialectic of time and eternity, but the new question of ontology is raised. By 'ontology' in this context is meant the problem of relating the being of the created order to that of God outside the bare antithesis characteristic of Barth's thought so far. The question of 'basis' arises and thus the being of the temporal order.

68. The Resurrection of the Dead, tr. H.J. Stenny, London, 1933.

69. Christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf, Die Lehre vom Worte Gottes, Prolegomena zur christlichen Dogmatik, München, 1927.

'And when he (i.e., St. Paul) speaks of history and of time end, he is only speaking of the end of history and the end of time. But once more of its end understood thus fundamentally, thus plainly, of a reality so radically superior to all happening and temporality, that in speaking of the finiteness of history and the finiteness of time, he is also speaking of that upon which all time and all happening is based. The end of history must be for him synonymous with the pre-history, the limits of all and every time and thus necessarily the origin of time.'

(The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 110)

Barth also implicitly criticises the tendency of eternity to annihilate time,

'But he will also be removed from the other temptation to confuse eternity with a great annihilation, and to make of the end of history an annihilation of history. That would in fact, not be real eternity, not even the eternity of God, which dissolves time into eternity instead of marking it as infinite.'

(The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 111)

Such statements reveal a change of emphasis and a movement towards a fuller notion of divine transcendence and of the ontology of the divine-human relation. There is a realisation that simple antithesis, diastasis and dialectic are inadequate as a basis (as opposed to the consequent expression) of theological insight. It is necessary that the knowledge that 'God's eternity sets a limit to the endlessness of the world, time, things and men must be made fruitful.'⁷⁰ In the Christian Dogmatics of 1927 Barth began to develop the emancipation of theology from extraneous factors by an increasingly exclusive concentration upon the Word of God as the source of the objective reality of God encountering man in event. The Christian Dogmatics was not totally successful

70. Ibid., p. 111.

because Barth failed, in the eyes of his critics, to purge existential and philosophical elements from a dogmatics which was ostensibly purified. T.F. Torrance reviews this transition in Barth's thought and in the following quotation he grasps with precision this positive movement.

'Moreover, it had become perfectly clear to him that the dialectical rejection of mysticism and dogmatism was not enough - the theology of the Word required positive doctrinal articulation adequate to the positive truth of the Word of God and yet appropriate to its nature as event and grace.'

(Karl Barth: Early Theology, p. 106)

This, the reader will remember, was achieved by the discovery and exposition of Anselm's ratio veritatis, but it is not enough to grasp the progress Barth sought and which he secures in the Church Dogmatics proper,

'The way forward must come from a concentration upon Christology, upon the Word made flesh, for therein there opened up the possibility of a dogmatics genuinely bound up with a form taken from the Word rather than from contemporary and temporal philosophies....with the concentration upon the Incarnation of the Word, upon Jesus Christ, God and Man in one Person, dialectical thinking had to fall away and positive thinking had to take its place. "Dogmatic thinking is from end to end thinking $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \tau\omicron\nu\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\nu$, or it is not dogmatic thinking at all!'

(Karl Barth: Early Theology, pp. 106-7)

There were many influences upon the development of Barth's thought and indeed many facets of that development itself. In this first chapter some particularly relevant themes in this early history of Barth's thought have been isolated and considered in the context of the history of the problem of time in German idealism traced from Kant. Such prolegomena have served to set the readers mind thinking upon those crucial problems which remain important throughout this study of the doctrine of time and eternity in the Church Dogmatics. In conclusion the contents of this chapter will

be briefly recapitulated and then the scene be set for the Church Dogmatics, Barth's magnum opus.

After some general introductory comments upon Barth's work reference was made to his reaction to Kant as both the limiter and liberator of theological activity and its frame of reference. Within the epistemological sphere of 'biblical theology' it proved possible for Barth to ground his theology upon the integrated theological epistemology and ontology of Anselm. After noting Ronald Gregor Smith's astute assessment of the nature of Barth's great constructive work attention was focussed upon the idealist tradition and its main source, the work of Kant, subsequently mediated through Hegel. (The work of Schelling and Fichte was ignored, for whilst being relevant to the development of the idealist tradition it did not pertain directly to the central issues in this chapter.) Kant's agnosticism was briefly outlined and then Hegel's resolution of the antinomies in synthesis was examined in the context of Trendelenburg and Kierkegaard's attack upon the 'System'. Finally Barth's Epistle to the Romans was analysed as the product of a mind largely influenced by Kierkegaard's notion of diastasis but which nevertheless was intended to express an immediate and profound theological truth, that of justification by faith alone. This work presaged a movement towards Christology and was not an aberration repaired in later thought, but a stage on the way to a dogmatics of which both the ontology and epistemology were to share the identical fons et origo, the Word of God revealed in the God-man Jesus Christ.

The argument of the first chapter of this thesis has

not been strictly chronological or merely expository. On the contrary it has combined discursive exposition and historical narrative. It has been more in the form of an overture than purely objective exegesis of the work of Barth. In it certain fundamental concepts and problems have been exposed and in the following pages a full examination and analysis of the dogmatic fulfilment promised in the early dialectical work will be provided along the lines indicated in the Introduction of this Essay. Barth's doctrine of time is intimately bound up with his deepest theological ambitions. Indeed there is an unparalleled integration of theological achievement and temporal structure even in the early work. The Church Dogmatics is therefore of potential fascination for both the theologian and the philosopher and an attempt is to be made in the ensuing study to do justice to both Barth's theological method and the legitimate insights of philosophy.

CHAPTER II

THE WORD OF GOD, THE TRINITY, AND THE PROBLEM OF TIME
IN THE CHURCH DOGMATICS

The thought of Karl Barth is deeply theological, both in Romans and, as will become increasingly apparent, in the Church Dogmatics. It is necessary to emphasise this element in Barth's work because the integrated and organic nature and structure of the Church Dogmatics are the expression of a coherent theological vision, which is theologically conditioned at all quarters. There is a systematic purging of alien factors in both method and execution of a theological programme which makes for extreme difficulty for the mind unprepared to think of God on what Barth conceives to be God's own terms, in revelation and comprehension. Thus it is not a mere truism to speak of Barth's theology as theologically conditioned but directs the reader's attention to the formidable internal cohesion of his thought which exists within the framework of divine grace and condescension. In Romans the judgement of God, the eternal One, silences the voice of man and the assertion of human reality including that of time. In the Church Dogmatics the grace of God in Jesus Christ is revealed on the basis of God's intra-trinitarian act from eternity, in the concrete expressions of creation, Incarnation, reconciliation and the final eschatological consummation, realised in hope by the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit, the manifestation of God's freedom. Following, with caution, the insight implicit in H. Vögel's comment¹

1. H. Vögel, Verkündigung und Forschung, 1951, p. 122. Cited by G.C. Berkouwer, Triumph of Grace, p. 49.

that in the first phase of Barth's theological development the emphasis falls on grace in the judgment, while the later development showed that he was more concerned to manifest grace in the judgment, it will be possible to see the massive elaboration of the latter. E. Jüngel has truly said of Barth,

'Barth denkt als Theologe. Dieser trivial anmutende Satz verliert alle Trivialität, wenn man bedenkt, dass für Barth "als Theologe denken" nichts anderes als "konsequent und ausschliesslich als Theologe denken" heissen kann.'

(Gottes Sein ist im Werden, p. 9)

Jüngel explores this 'consequence' and 'exclusiveness' in relation to God's being in his highly condensed 'paraphrase', showing the way in which Barth develops a doctrine of God's being in which the hermeneutical circle is grounded upon the ontological circle. 'God's being is in becoming' is the 'ontological localisation of God's being...in an attempt to think theologically in how far God is the living God'.² Jüngel's approach, which is in essence the provision of a schematic synthesis of the core and immediate implications of the doctrine of the divine being-in-act, remains of direct relevance, but of supplementary value, to this thesis.³ It will be referred to and some of its insights exploited but

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2. E. Jüngel, Gottes Sein ist im Werden (2. Auflage), J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1966. My study of this important book has been expedited by access to a draft translation by Horton Harris. Its main theme as far as this thesis is concerned (that is the concept of God's being-in-becoming) will be examined in Chapter III below.
 3. 'Temporal' is used in the following chapter to mean 'to do with the aspect or category of time'. Later it will denote a specific concept of time. In this chapter there is merely the broadly understood axis of time and eternity. Both are 'temporal' in ways to be specified.

the direction of Jüngel's synthesis remains different to that adopted below, which works within a wider historical perspective. Jüngel has cast light on a neglected area of Barth's thought and contributed to the fuller appreciation of his achievement which even now is partial, distorted, and incomplete in non-German circles. In the following chapters the temporal aspects of Barth's theological theory of time will be expounded. This demands a synthesis and analysis of the first two volumes of the Church Dogmatics as the foundation of Barth's thought.⁴

Before embarking on the initial stages of this examination of the fundamental dogmas of the Trinity and Christology and the consequent doctrine of eternity it is necessary to locate that feature of the evolution of Barth's thought, traced to its developed stage in Chapter I, which gave him the basis of a theological hermeneutic. Reference is made of course to his theological epistemology which is stated in its full form in the doctrine of the Word of God and of the Knowledge of God.⁵ It was earlier seen that this formulation was based upon a thorough-going mutuality of epistemology and ontology recovered from Anselm.⁶ Jüngel

4. Thus Chapter II is directed at CD I/1, Chapter III at CD II/1, Chapter IV at CD II/2 and Chapter V at CD I/2, IV/lff. On this basis the second half of this thesis explores the consequences of the primary theological concepts of the doctrines of God and Christ in creation and theological anthropology regarded from the standpoint of time. Thus the latter chapters will centre largely upon CD III.

5. In CD I/1 and II/1 respectively. The latter will be considered in the opening part of Chapter III in a brief consideration of the role of 'analogy' in the establishment of Barth's doctrine of eternity.

6. See above, Ch. I.

explores (in a manner and with results relevant to later stages in this study) the integration of the 'hermeneutical' and 'ontological circles' and the ultimate unity in God of his primary and secondary objectivity which escapes the false division often effectively made between the Deus revelatus and the Deus absconditus. More important this fundamental integration is grounded upon a dynamic unity of constituent parts, if the unity of act and being may be so termed. The basic postulates of the Church Dogmatics in the doctrines of the Word of God and the Trinity realised in the framework of analogia fidei, provide, in conjunction with Christology, the foundations of the theory of time expressed in this work. This is in both eternity in God's being, and also in time as a feature of the true natural theology implicit in revelation.⁷

Dogmatics does not begin with speculation or 'proof' after the manner of traditional natural theology. On the contrary,

'Dogmatics as an inquiry presupposes the ascertainability by man of the proper content of Christian language about God. It makes this presupposition because it believes, in the Church and with the Church, in Jesus Christ, as the revealing and reconciling approach of God to man. Language about God has the proper content, when it conforms to the essence of the Church, i.e. to Jesus Christ *εἴτε προφητίαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως* (Rom. 12,6.).'
(CD I/1, p. 11)

Barth's theological theory of time in the Church Dogmatics is the temporal enabling of such an understanding of the present reality of the dogmatic task. To demonstrate this it is necessary to 'prove', after the manner of the Anselmic

7. The question of how revealed and natural knowledge impinge upon one another is central in this thesis. See below, Chapters IX, X and XI.

'proof', how it is possible for God to be for man now, in Jesus Christ, the 'essence' of the Church. Behind this primary utterance there therefore lies a theory of God's being in its temporal aspect. The emphasis upon the actual divine presupposition underlying any true knowledge of God has decisive and immediate consequences for the dogmatic task and its appropriate method. 'Dogmatics exists only as the theologia crucis - that is, in the act of obedience which is certain in faith but for that very reason humble, which is always thrown back on the start and always opening up afresh.'⁸ In consequence dogmatic theology has, therefore, a dynamic basis over against the traditional Roman conception of dogmatics as the combination, repetition and transcription of 'truths of revelation' to be found in the 'deposit of faith'.⁹ Such is Barth's polemic which might well undergo modification in the light of recent developments, but these are irrelevant to this point. Any dogmatics which does not take its cue from the very nature of revelation itself is less than it should be. Indeed biblicism fails even as does the Roman approach for 'in dogmatics it can never be a question of the mere combination, repetition, and summarising of Biblical doctrine'.¹⁰ The dogmatic task is truly contemporary because God in Christ is contemporary, he is the 'essence of the Church' now. As Barth indicates that dogmatics must investigate the 'possibility' which informs the 'reality' of God, so in this study

8. CD I/1, p. 15.

9. Ibid.

10. Op.cit., p. 16.

the reality of the temporal 'now', implicit in the possibility of the dogmatic task itself, must be stated and analysed. Barth argues, '...dogmatics as such does not inquire what the Apostles and Prophets have said, but what we ourselves must say "on the basis of the Apostles and Prophets".'¹¹

Dogmatics cannot, according to Barth, take place outside the area of faith ('the determination of human action by the essence of the Church, that is by Jesus Christ')¹² for it is itself only possible as an act of faith 'in the determination of human action by listening, and as obedience towards Jesus Christ.'¹³ Because it is not man's will that determines faith but the 'gracious approach of God to man, the free personal presence of Jesus Christ in man's action',¹⁴ dogmatics as an act of faith is dependent upon God. Thus from the first both the method and goal of dogmatics is theologically conditioned as to its present possibility and reality by a direct dependence upon God. Such a reality making dogmatics possible demands an understanding of the nature of the presence of God which is at the least recurrent, and more ambitiously perhaps conceivable in trans-temporal terms. This is the elementary exposition of the dogmatic task which is made possible by the actual gracious condescension of God in Jesus Christ, as present in the Church,

11. Ibid.

12. Op.cit., p. 18.

13. Ibid.

14. Op.cit., p. 19.

for dogmatics 'depends from time to time upon God and not upon us, whether our hearing is real hearing, our obedience real obedience, whether our dogmatics is blessed and hallowed as knowledge of the proper content of Christian language, or is idle speculation.'¹⁵ This and the following sort of expression gave rise in early criticism of Barth to accusations of 'occasionalism'. Barth argues that dogmatics can only take place 'by trust in the absolutely uncontrollable presence-on-the-spot of the ground both of its reality and of its knowledge, upon God's promised revelation to the Church and upon the power of the faith that grasps the promise'.¹⁶ In the enlarged context provided by the doctrine of the Word of God, developed later in CD I/1, J. Hamer was to see in Barth's need of gracious divine intervention a spasmodic doctrine of the divine being, an 'occasionalism'.¹⁷ The general superficiality of Hamer's criticism becomes apparent in the face of full development of Barth's doctrine of God. His argument directs attention, however, to a potential danger in this conception of dogmatics as a venture of faith, made in direct response to the 'free personal presence of Jesus Christ.'¹⁸ In response to this implicit challenge enlargement of the theological circle must take place and the core of the doctrine of the Word of God be exposed in its temporal aspect.

The purpose of the 'Dogmatic Prolegomena' is to secure

15. Ibid.

16. Op.cit., p. 23.

17. J. Hamer, Karl Barth, London, 1962, pp. 33-5.

18. CD I/2, p. 19.



the unique basis of Christian theological knowledge, a reality ultimately made possible by a distinctive theory of time implicit in the doctrine of God that is to be examined. The whole theological 'possibility', the whole theological rationale of revelation rests upon 'the presupposition of evangelical faith,' which is 'the fundamental transcendence of all human possibilities.'¹⁹ Barth distinguishes his position from that he conceives of as the Roman Catholic doctrine of analogia entis by emphasis upon 'an objective principle of knowledge' which cannot be transformed into a 'continuously present relation between God and man.'²⁰ This highly distinctive 'personal act of divine approach'²¹ is quite basic to the whole Church Dogmatics for without it dogmatics would not be possible.

'The remaining possibility - on the presupposition of evangelical faith - of making dogmatic knowledge comprehensible is to draw a line on the left by renouncing the presupposition for the essence of the Church, on the right by renouncing the presupposition of a continuously present inherence of the essence of the Church in a creaturely form, in an "es gibt." On the left we say: the essence of the Church is actus purus, divine action beginning with itself, the source and means of its own insight, therefore action unpredictable on an anthropological basis. On the right we say: the essence of the Church is actus purus, free action, not a continuously present relation; grace is an event of personal approach, not a transferred tangible state of soul....., neither the precedence of an anthropological possibility nor the subsequence of a reality in the Church can be considered as the point from which to contemplate and to understand the path to dogmatic knowledge, but solely the present instant in which Jesus Christ Himself speaks and is heard, when the light divine is created in our hearts.'

(CD I/1, pp. 44-5)

19. Op.cit., pp. 43-4.

20. Op.cit., p. 44.

21. Ibid.

So Barth indicates the primal reality underlying the Christian Church and thus the very possibility of dogmatics. At this point his theology seeks to secure an utter distinctiveness in its critical reference to the Word of God and freedom from anthropology and ontology. The adequacy of Barth's conception does not impinge directly upon this thesis as a doctrine of revelation but solely as the starting-point of the theological theory of time. There is of course in Barth's position an implicit reaction to attacks made on the Christian Dogmatics of 1927 which still relied, in the eyes of critics, upon 'phenomenological' and 'existential' elements.²² The most important feature of Barth's argument is the fusion of so-called 'dialectic' and 'analogy' that characterises the first chapter of 'The Doctrine of the Word of God.' The place of time is at the centre of this intrusion of divine reality into the worldly order, and this reality is of grace, in sacramental proclamation which is known in the 'acknowledgement' of faith.

'Real proclamation thus means the Word of God preached, and the Word of God preached means in this first and outmost circle, man's language about God on the basis of an indication by God Himself fundamentally transcending all human causation, and so devoid of all human basis, merely occurring as a fact and requiring to be acknowledged.'

(CD, I/1, p. 101)

Barth then proceeds to specify the nature of this 'object of proclamation' which insofar as 'it is really proclaimed ceases to be the object of human perception.' Indeed

22. There is a useful account of this in James D. Smart, The Divided Mind of Modern Theology, Philadelphia, 1967, esp. Chapter X.

God's Word preached means,

'...man's language about God on the basis of God's self-objectification which is neither present nor predictable nor relatable to any design, but is real solely in the freedom of His grace, in virtue of which from time to time He wills to the object of this language, and is so according to His own good pleasure.'

(CD I/1, p. 103)

Barth uses the Christological analogy: 'As Christ became true man and also remains true man to all eternity, so real proclamation becomes an event on the level of all other events.'²³ At the outset three factors must be noted. First, the conceptual terminology used to describe the relation of the divine event with and in the order of human events is dialectical, in that it is ambiguous and affirms both aspects. Second, God as creator of humanity posits the human element for 'God is the subject from whom the human action must acquire its new, true name.'²⁴ In the doctrine of the Word of God as the foundation of real proclamation there lies an indication of the deeper truth of the Christological assumptio carnis. Third, this event of real proclamation is realised in grace, in a movement which will be traced to its source in God's act from eternity. These three facets of Barth's understanding of divine event in and with the human event apply equally to the temporal dimension. The 'Written Word of God' is for Barth standing proof that God is not a timeless foundation, 'temporarily hidden but peacefully abiding',²⁵ open to a Neoplatonic recollection or anamnesis. God's relation to the Church is

23. CD I/1, p. 105.

24. Op.cit., p. 106.

25. Op.cit., p. 112.

positive and expresses the proper tension of transcendence and immanence as the basis of the Church's preaching.

'The homecoming to her own being, on the ground of which alone she actually ventures to proclaim, of course means for her the reversion to her proper being, but to her being which transcends herself, to Jesus Christ her heavenly head, whom she confronts as His earthly body, bound to Him as such, and yet distinct from Him, who possesses the Church in Himself, but not the Church in herself, between whom and her there is no reversible, interchangeable relationship, as certainly as the relationship of master and servant is not reversible. He is immanent in her only because He transcends her. That is the fact which makes her recollection of God's past revelation different from one of reflection upon an essential ground timelessly her own; it hath pleased God to be her God, otherwise than in pure immanence.'

(CD I/1, p. 113)

The canon as the recollection of past events introduces another fundamental element into the structure of Barth's argument as soon from the standpoint of time. On the one hand proclamation of the Word of God is a present event, yet, on the other, it is bound to the record of past events. There is thus the way of analogia fidei (developed on the basis of Anselm) which operates in a contemporary dogmatic method but which must not become detached from the past represented in the record of the written Word of God. 'The Bible is the concrete medium by which the Church recalls God's revelation in the past, is called to expect revelation in the future, and is thereby challenged, empowered, and guided to proclaim'²⁶ but it is not in itself revelation, because when it is heard as God's Word it 'attests' (bezeugt) the past revelation. The Bible inescapably directs the Church

26. Op.cit., p. 125.

to history and certain events and resists any tendencies towards a timeless a-historical anamnesis.

The third and ultimate form of the Word of God is the 'God with us', who has happened in Jesus Christ, at a point in history. In the language of dialectic, Barth asserts the irreducible primal fact of the 'fulness of time.' By quoting Barth's words at length, it proves possible to establish several of the most crucial temporal themes in the Church Dogmatics. The temporal dialectic is used to illustrate the happening of the 'God with us.'

'In the midst of human history and as a fragment of this history, but, of course, not as fragments of this history usually happen, i.e., without any need of continuation or completion, without pointing beyond itself, without primarily striving for a distant goal, insusceptible of exegesis or of any, even the slightest addition or subtraction, incapable of changing its form, but in the midstream of becoming, being moved only by itself, in mid-ocean of the unsettled, changeable, and self-changing, the fixed event, the fulness of time.'

(CD I/1, p. 130)

Barth develops this notion of the 'fixed event' in a reference to the Protevangelium of James. A temporal hiatus occurs allegedly at the birth of Jesus, a moment in which history and time are frozen which provides a unique and final punctuation of history. The equation Barth then makes, 'This fulness of time, which is identical with Jesus Christ,' is a nodal point in the Church Dogmatics. It is a 'pure event in relation to which everything else is not yet an event or has ceased to be one.'²⁷ This 'Deus dixit, to which there are no analogies' is the 'invisible-visible

27. Op.cit., p. 131.

centre' of the Bible to be understood from its own, not the human, viewpoint. Barth's allusion to the New Testament Apocrypha is not intended to give the impression that the moment of the Incarnation implied a suspension of the temporal order, on the contrary, he is seeking to emphasise the uniqueness of 'fulfilled time', that is of moments of time which bear revelation, 'the unveiling of the veiled.'²⁸ The thread of continuity between the unique events and time of revelation, and the 'now' (νῦν) of revelation is not that of mere temporality, that is to say a succession of events or even a substratum immanent in the historical order, but the continuity of transcendence, the being of God himself. So Barth begins to develop what will prove to be the most theologically self-conscious doctrine of time in the history of Christian theology. By 'theologically self-conscious,' is meant a doctrine of time thought out on thoroughly theological principles. The historical order is bisected by the birth of Christ, there is the 'mid-point of time' but the continuance of revelation demands (if fidelity to true transcendence is to be preserved) a theological theory of the repeated events of revelation. The temporal recurrence of revelation cannot be understood from the aspect of the mundane temporal order. By corollary with the Bible, the Word of God, 'giving itself to be understood,'²⁹ as the temporal aspect of revelation has likewise to be understood from that standpoint. Given the identity of Jesus Christ and the Word of God as the content of revelation then all the

28. Op.cit., p. 133.

29. Op.cit., p. 131.

answers to theological questions, including that of time, can only be in the explication of that Word itself. It is this indication that leads the reader to the Trinity as the living basis of the temporal continuity of revelation. This can be seen in Barth's argument.

'Thus we must think of every state of revelation as a process of revelation, that is, as conditioned by the very act of revelation; of every happening in which revelation takes place as connected with what in this act happens once for all; of all fulfilled time as fulfilled by the fulness of this time. But revelation itself is connected with nothing different or higher or earlier than itself. Revelation as such is not relative. Revelation in fact does not differ from the Person of Jesus Christ, and again does not differ from the reconciliation that took place in Him. To say revelation is to say, "The Word became flesh"...if we mean by the word "revelation" "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us", then we are asserting something that is to be grounded only within the Trinity; namely, by the will of the Father, by the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, by the eternal decree of the Triune God, i.e. not otherwise than as knowledge of God from God, as knowledge of the Light in the Light.'

(CD I/1, p. 134)

Having spoken of the three 'forms' of the Word of God Barth proceeds to examine its 'content', as 'spiritual',³⁰ as 'fulfilled reality',³¹ as 'purposiveness' or 'address',³² and finally as the 'promise of Himself as the content of man's future'.³³ More significantly for the purposes of this study is Barth's first allusion to the relation of God to his act; in this case the relation of his language to his act. There is in fact no distinction between them for

30. Op.cit., p. 151.

31. Op.cit., p. 155.

32. Op.cit., p. 158.

33. Op.cit., p. 161.

Barth as 'The Word needs no supplementing by the act. The Word of God is itself the act of God.'³⁴ Barth asserts the positive characteristics of the Word that are based upon negation. The spirituality of the Word is 'spirituality as distinguished from naturalness, corporeality, from any physical event.'³⁵ This affirmation and denial is coupled with the assertion that, 'also there is no Word of God without a physical event.'³⁶ Preaching, the man Jesus Christ, the Church and the Word of God are in all their forms 'also natural and corporeal' because 'without that it would not be the Word of God directed to us men as spiritual-natural beings, really coming to us in the way in which we are real.'³⁷ Preaching and sacrament share this irreducible duality of reality, for the 'physical' is far from being an irrelevant accessory to the fact of revelation, but is a condition of its accessibility in principle. 'The Word of God is also natural or corporeal, because in the creaturely sphere which it enters as the Word to us men there is nothing spiritual which is not also natural or corporeal.' In second place, God's Word as 'fulfilled reality' has a 'perfectly definite, objective content': for Barth it is 'fulfilled reality' not the 'formal possibility of divine speech'.³⁸ Again as 'address' and 'promise' Barth is stressing the originality,

34. Op.cit., p. 163.

35. Op.cit., p. 151.

36. Ibid.

37. Op.cit., p. 153.

38. Op.cit., p. 155.

and yet the immediacy of the Word of God, as the Word of the Lord who meets man, 'through time as the End of all time, as the hidden Lord of all times'.³⁹

The fact of the Word in its 'spirituality' and its inevitable accompaniment by a 'physical event' can only be understood in the context of revelation, the mutuality of veiling and unveiling, as has been seen. As noted above the conception of God's act is introduced at this juncture and the notable integration of act and being, that Barth effects in the Church Dogmatics, emerges in its initial form. Barth refers to the Hebrew prophetic use of hayah (happen) and to Luther's Christ who 'effecteth all by a Word' and then expounds the distinction of the 'mere word' and an 'act'.⁴⁰ This latter distinction must be noted carefully, for later the integration of act and being will have an indispensable role in the foundations of the doctrine of God and the over-arching concept of eternity that binds the theological structure of the Church Dogmatics into one dynamic whole. Barth does not develop this basis here but spells out the consequences of the identity of Word and act in the three forms of the Word of God. First, however, the distinction of Word and act is argued as follows.⁴¹

39. Op.cit., p. 162.

40. Op.cit., p. 169.

41. Barth's argument bears affinities to R. Bultmann's in his essay 'What Does it Mean to Speak of God?' in Faith and Understanding, SCM, 1969. Bultmann likewise stresses the all-determination of God's word-act, though with an emphasis upon existence in faith, rather than Barth's 'an alteration and an absolute alteration of the world'.

'The difference between Word and act is that a mere word is the self-utterance of a person. An act is, over and above that, a relative alteration in the environment which proceeds from it. A mere word is passive. An act is, over and above that, an active participation in history. But for the Word of God these distinctions do not hold. For it is precisely as a mere word that it is an act. Nay, as a mere word it is the divine Person, the Person of the Lord of history, whose self-utterance as such is an alteration and an absolute alteration of the world, whose passio in history is as such an actio. What God does in speaking, pretty much, of course, like what He says, is insusceptible of general determination, either by reproduction or anticipation. We can only point to the concretissima among the acts attested in the Bible, which are also to be expected of God in the future.'

(CD I/1, p. 164)

The Word-act of God is therefore a unique phenomenon, as its intrinsic unity transcends the conventional distinction of mere word and act.⁴² Its consequences are important for the concept of time. Earlier Hamer's criticism of an alleged 'occasionalism' pointed an apparent flaw in Barth's understanding of the relation of the manifestation of the divine being in the 'free personal presence of Jesus Christ',⁴³ to historical human existence, a presence 'which may from time to time be given or else refused'. In reply to this, it was apparent that Barth maintains the temporal continuity and unity of revelation by theological means, for,

'To understand the Bible would mean, from beginning to end and from verse to verse, to understand how everything in it is related to that as to its invisible-visible centre. But because that is the point, we shall have to say that we are not in a position to

42. The distinction of word and act has of course undergone much criticism in contemporary philosophy as in the work of J.L. Austin, and in the philosophy of religion by D.D. Evans, The Logic of Self-Involvement, London, 1963, in which he follows many insights of J.L. Austin.

43. CD I/1, p. 19.

understand the Bible from our own standpoint. It can only be the case of the Bible giving itself to be understood, of us being brought to listen to the Bible as God's Word....as the human words of the Bible are the carriers of the eternal word, i.e. according as they are intended from this centre in turn to intend this centre in all they say. By itself being revelation at that time and in that way, the Bible founds the Church, it makes proclamation necessary and possible. The unity of the revelation guarantees the unity of the Biblical witness, in spite of and within its utter multiplicity, in fact contradictoriness. The unity of the Bible guarantees the unity of the Church, in spite of and within the variety in the measure of faith, in which the Bible becomes revelation to this man or that, and to this man or that to-day or to-morrow. But the unity of the Church thus founded guarantees the unity of the proclamation.'

(CD I/1, p. 131)

This somewhat involved statement is given concrete fulfilment in the inner unity of revelation itself. The unity of the Word of God is grounded upon the integration into identity, of act and being. Barth spells out this unity in the passage 'God's Language as God's Act'.⁴⁴ In examining later in this chapter the doctrine of the Trinity, and then further, in the next, the act and the eternity of God, penetration is made towards the inner ontological core of the Church Dogmatics, the ultimate foundation of this unity.

Barth asserts that 'God's word is God's act means first its contingent contemporaneousness' (seine kontingente Gleichzeitigkeit).⁴⁵ Once more a crucial concept is introduced into Barth's doctrine of time, for throughout the Church Dogmatics runs the theme of the unity in temporal

44. Op.cit., pp. 162-184.

45. Barth's use of this term reflects the etymology of 'con-temporaneousness', a kind of 'temporal togetherness' which will become clear in the theological exposition of this chapter and later in this thesis.

diversity of the inner theological basis of revelation.⁴⁶ What exactly does Barth mean by 'contingent contemporaneousness'? Barth argues that there are the times of the 'direct, original utterance of God Himself in His revelation, the time of Jesus Christ',⁴⁷ of prophecy and of apostolate, of the rise of the canon and of course of the Church. The unity, that is the temporal relation of these 'times', is not achieved by the dissolution of their distinctiveness into mere human history, 'i.e. merely by assessing the variety of the periods and their human contents as such',⁴⁸ but by stressing our 'togetherness with Christ'.⁴⁹ Barth argues, with some ingenuity, that the variety of the 'times', of what might well be termed 'Christian history', are greater than those in history outside the judgment of the Church.

'The Church of the present, however historically she may feel and think,...speaks the last word as heiress and interpretress of history, and, without the Word of God in the serious sense of the term, stands solitary by herself and pointed in on herself. If we insist that the concept of the Word of God means precisely that the Church does not stand solitary by herself and pointed in on herself, then we must abide by the orderly distinction between the times, and the contemporaneousness of present-day proclamation with Scripture and with revelation can certainly not be regarded as a thing to be introduced to us by levelling up this distinction, by incorporating Scripture and revelation in the life of humanity. It can only be regarded as an expression of the fact that the Word of God is itself God's act.'

(CD I/1, pp. 167-8)

46. That is in Barth's theological exegesis of the so-called Boethian concept of eternity.

47. CD I/1, p. 164.

48. Op.cit., p. 165.

49. Op.cit., p. 167.

Barth is concerned to argue his position against that of Lessing. This study has, therefore, to interpret his argument in order to show how it is that the basis in revelation unites history to provide 'contingent contemporaneousness', and yet that this 'unity', is not the abrogation of diversity, but its fulfilment. Anyone who imposes a simplistic reduction of temporal difference to unity, upon Barth's doctrine of 'contingent contemporaneousness', is deceiving himself. It is Barth's unending struggle to do justice to both temporal diversity and final unity which informs his doctrine of time and eternity throughout the Church Dogmatics. There is no simple, quasi-mystical de-temporalization of, for example, the relation of the Biblical witnesses to Jesus Christ (and by extension of the Church to him through the intervening ages) as might be found in the sermons of Meister Eckhart. Here time is but the manifestation of the ephemeral and eternity God's 'real Now-moment'.⁵⁰ In his account of the temporal bond of the Word of God Barth is concerned to assert and maintain a unity, but not a 'timeless', or de-temporalizing unity. He is therefore seeking to expunge any mystical (as with Eckhart and Boehme), or 'Platonic', abrogation of time and the historical succession of events. Precisely by his positing of the 'act of God', as the basis of this living basis of

50. 'God the Father and the Son have nothing to do with time. Generation is not in time, but at the end and limit of time.' Sermon by Eckhart quoted in Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist, London, 1957, by D.T. Suzuki. Suzuki's interpretation of Christianity is specifically 'timeless' and Kantian and is directed against any notion of incarnation in time.

unity in the Word of God, Barth hopes to escape the constant threat of a Platonic dissolution of time, evident in the thought of so many Christian accounts of 'eternity'. Final judgment on the success of this venture must come later, but Barth's initial presentation of this positive doctrine of temporal unity-in-diversity underlies his polemic against Lessing in the passage under examination.

The key to the solution of the hermeneutical problem of the contemporaneity of the Word of God is that 'something happens which in spite of all interpretative skill cannot be brought about by interpretative skill'.⁵¹ Barth refers to the act of God himself in his Word,

'...election, revelation, calling, setting apart, new birth - clear concepts which so to speak, shatter the immanence of the historical connection from within, so far as God Himself is the subject of the action indicated in them, so far as God's "good pleasure" (*εὐδοκία* Matt. II,26; Gal. I,15; Eph. I,8) as an altogether external truth first creates and then posits the altogether inner truth as such and by the free action described in these concepts; apart from all historical connections, though these undeniably exist, in these connections but not through them...we can only regard them as signifying free acts of God in the sense of the Biblical authors, or we do not understand them at all. They assert that without the removal of the difference the time of Christ is made contemporary with the time of the prophets and the apostles by the free act of God.'

(CD I/1, p. 168)

This last sentence is most important for the unity of the different temporal loci is secured by reference to the act of God in his Word:

'The Word of God in its quite different time area, with its quite different time-content compared with the Word of revelation, now reverts to its orderly

51. CD I/1, p. 168.

position; it is now described as the Word of the prophets and the apostles, and as such, as the witness to Christ and in its subordination to the Word of Christ, it simultaneously utters the Word of Christ Himself.'

(CD I/1, p. 169)

This affords a decisive clue as to what Barth means by the phrase, 'contingent contemporaneity'. He is in fact astonishingly precise, for what he is striving to achieve is both the retention of the contingency of the historical events, to which he makes reference, and their 'temporal togetherness'. He is not imploding the temporary distinction of events, by reduction to the simple unity of a divine 'Now', but achieving a unity on the basis, the dynamic ground, of the act of God. This of course makes it crucial to know what Barth means by an 'act of God' and how it is to be understood in temporal categories. It is exclusively by reference to Jesus Christ (who is, as will be seen, the reality of God's act) and the Trinity, that the trans-temporal unity and thus the hermeneutical interconnection of proclaimed, written and revealed Word, is achieved. The need for deeper investigation of the 'possibility', which underlies this 'reality', becomes pressing.

'Proclamation is only possible in this relation of understanding, just as prophecy and the apostolate only existed in a definite relation of understanding. But in this relation proclamation of the Word of God is achieved not through the individual components of this relation or the sum of them, and therefore, e.g., neither through philological acuteness nor through the most talented and refined feel of the author, but purely and simply through the power of the Biblical Word itself, which now makes a place for itself in a quite different period and becomes the content of this period, because in proclamation the stage is not held by Paul the religious personality, but by Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ, and in him

by Jesus Christ Himself. Because the Word of God in this act in this step from revelation to Scripture and to Church proclamation, i.e. in the full, strict distinction of times, it is one, it is contemporaneous (Heb.13).

(CD I/1, p. 169)

Barth asserts a twofold contingency, in the 'there and then' of the original relation of revelation and Holy Scripture and in the 'here and now' of the man who hears God speak. There is no clash or interaction of 'necessary' and 'contingent' truths. God's Word in act is a contingent truth precisely because it is an act. Barth stresses the particularity of the Word of God and in doing prepares the ground for a radical innovatory exposition of the doctrine of God.

'The problem of the Word of God consists in the fact that to this particular man to-day through the proclamation of this particular man by means of this particular Bible this particular manifestation of God is imparted, that a particular illic et tunc becomes a particular hic et nunc. The problem of the Word of God is thus from time to time a perfectly definite, once-for-all, peculiar problem, and of this problem we must say that it is solved by the Word of God itself, spoken by the mouth of God, being contemporaneous illic et tunc and (i.e. exactly as spoken illic et tunc) hic et nunc.'

(CD I/1, p. 170)

It has been necessary to attend carefully to Barth's actual arguments, rather than offering a mere summary, because of the precision and care with which he is preparing the ground for the theological explanation which constitutes the 'possibility' of the 'reality' of the Word of God in its threefold form. In concluding this initial stage of the examination of his treatment of time, as it features in the doctrine of the Word of God, an outline of the further elements will suffice. Barth continues in specifically theological terms to expound the meaning of God's Word is

God's act as 'power to rule' (that is as Lordship), and as 'decision'. Again themes are introduced in passing which are to become extremely important, such as, for example, the inclusion of God's potentiality in his actuality and the 'choice' of God in his self-positing in the humanity of Christ. Barth defends at all points the freedom of God in his Word, which is 'uncreated reality, identical with God Himself, therefore not universally present and fixable, nor possibly so'.⁵² For the purposes of this chapter it is crucial to note the importance of the Word of God as God's act, as 'a decision to which the hidden reality of the relation as subsisting between Jesus Christ and Peter, Jesus Christ and Judas assuredly and adequately corresponds, but which above all is justified in itself as the divine decision'.⁵³

One major unifying theme in Barth's initial exposition of the doctrine of the Word of God and the Trinity is the interface of these as 'reality', and as 'possibility', respectively. God's Word, as an 'uncreated reality',⁵⁴ is a 'Mysterium', that is, 'the veiling of God in which He meets us by actually unveiling Himself to us'.⁵⁵ Revelation is therefore utterly worldly, and supremely so in the incarnation, 'which means entry into this worldliness'.⁵⁶ The dialectic

52. Op.cit., p. 180.

53. Op.cit., p. 182.

54. Op.cit., p. 181.

55. Op.cit., p. 188.

56. Op.cit., p. 192.

of direct-indirect duality corresponds to an epistemological dialectic of faith, as 'responsible witness',⁵⁷ and as 'acknowledgement' of the revelation of God.⁵⁸ On the basis of the divine initiative,

'...acknowledgement of the Word of God must mean letting oneself continually be led, continually being in movement from the experience felt at one time, from the thought grasped at one time, to the opposite experience and thought, because having the Word of God always consists of a simultaneous hearing of the one in the other and the other in the one. In this movement, which cannot be brought to rest in any synthesis, a man acknowledges the mystery of the Word of God and he has Christian experience.'

(CD I/1, p. 237)

There is now a complex of dialectical movement in both the ontology of the Word of God and in the epistemology of faith which had displaced the dialectic of antitheses. The impulse towards the resolution of this complex comes from the Word of God and is expressed in the powerful doctrine of analogia fidei. The use of 'analogy' in the Church Dogmatics is extensive, and highly important.⁵⁹ Barth's general exposition of the 'reality' of the Word of God and the 'possibility' of the Trinity is informed, at the outset, by an 'analogy'.

'...the doctrine of the Word of God in its threefold form is itself the sole analogy to the doctrine which will fundamentally occupy us in unfolding the concept of revelation; the doctrine of the three-in-oneness of God.'

(CD I/1, p. 136)

57. Op.cit., p. 214.

58. Op.cit., p. 236.

59. The term 'analogia fidei' has been used in a number of related contexts in this chapter to denote in general terms God's own gracious confirmation of language about him. A short and specific account of this important theme will appear at the beginning of Chapter III.

The triplicity of revealed, written and proclaimed Word correspond to the names of the divine 'Persons': Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Barth attempts to use what he conceives to be the intrinsic structure of the Word of God to direct attention to its dynamic possibility, the Trinity. By this he has established a formal and a material starting-point for his examination of the Trinity, in that,

'The analysis of this fact (that God reveals Himself) as such can be nothing else than the explanation of what, in dogmatics of all ages, has played its distinctive part under the name of the doctrine of the divine Trinity.'

(CD I/1, p. 335)

In this statement of the important temporal implications of the doctrine of the Word of God, it has been seen, in general terms, how Barth develops his dogmatic method on the basis of the theological structures ostensibly revealed in his exposition. In other words, theology proper cannot be divorced from actual knowledge of God, for man, 'knows by being known of God'⁶⁰ and 'The knowability of the Word of God therefore really stands or falls with the act of reality knowing it, which is withdrawn from our disposal'.⁶¹ It is, therefore, on the basis of what has actually been revealed, and revealed in God's Word, that inquiry into the 'possibility' becomes a duty and a feasible undertaking. Having established this 'reality' in the opening pages of this chapter, it is now possible to turn with Barth to examine the temporal structure of the inner possibility of the statement, 'God reveals

60. CD I/1, p. 280.

61. Op.cit., p. 257.

Himself',⁶² the trinitarian foundation of the 'presence of the Word of God between the times'.⁶³

'It is the doctrine of the Trinity which fundamentally distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God - it is it, therefore, also, which marks off the Christian concept of revelation as Christian, in the face of all other possible doctrines of God and concepts of revelation.'

(CD I/1, p. 346)

With this categorical statement Barth commences his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. In the early stages of his argument Barth stresses the identity of God's Word with God himself⁶⁴ and the consequent assertion, that God's revelation has its reality and truth wholly and in every respect - i.e. ontically and noetically - within itself'.⁶⁵ In other words the fact that it is God who is revealed in his word means that there is no need to look elsewhere for him, for in revelation 'reposes and lives the fulness of the original being of the Word of God, existent in itself'.⁶⁶ The statement 'God reveals Himself as Lord' is to be regarded as an 'analytical judgment'. By this Barth apparently means that this statement is self-referring and explicable within its own bounds. Thus 'To act as Lord means to act as God in His revelation acts on man'.⁶⁷ The revelation of God is a novum, an original reality, uncreated being, not a derived or dependent entity.

62. Op.cit., p. 334.

63. Ibid.

64. Op.cit., p. 349.

65. Op.cit., p. 350.

66. Op.cit., p. 351.

67. Op.cit., p. 352.

'Lordship is present in revelation, just because its reality and truth are so utterly grounded in itself, because it need be actualised and legitimated in no other way than by the fact of its occurrence, because it is not in any relation to anything else, but is revelation by its own agency, because it is the self-contained novum we spoke of. Lordship means freedom.'

(CD I/1, p. 352)

The conclusion Barth derives from his 'analytical judgment' is that 'Godhead in the Bible means freedom, ontic and noetic independence.'⁶⁸ This stress upon the independence, freedom and integrity of the Godhead is most significant, for all that follows by way of exposition is to be understood within this context (including the temporal aspects of the doctrines of God and the Trinity). There is in the Biblical doctrine of revelation an 'indication of the doctrine of the Trinity',⁶⁹ based upon the historicity of revelation, in the sense that the divine self-veiling is each time a 'quite special event, and as such incomparable and irrepeatable'.⁷⁰ The unique, yet concrete, historical acts of God, known by man in the acknowledgment of faith, are the 'problem', with which the doctrine of the Trinity is occupied.

Barth repudiates the Augustinian notion of vestigium trinitatis (i.e. traces of the Trinity present and apprehensible in the created world even apart from Biblical revelation'⁷¹) because it endangers the revealed (as opposed to immanent or mythical) basis of the doctrine of the Trinity.

68. Ibid.

69. Op.cit., p. 383.

70. Op.cit., p. 375.

71. Op.cit., p. 385.

By this rejection Barth defends his theological foundations from 'alien' factors derived from the patterns of human psychology or the cosmos, which are all open to attack. In conformity with the fundamental impulse of his thought, traceable from Anselm, Barth argues that, 'revelation will not submit to illustration but only to interpretation'.⁷² The greatest danger is that of mythological interpretation, for, 'we can only venture an indication that the root of the doctrine of the Trinity lies in revelation and only in revelation, if it is not forthwith to be the doctrine of another, alien god, of one of the gods, the man-gods of this world, if it is not to be a myth'.⁷³ In concluding this section, we concentrate our focus upon what Barth conceives to be the real basis and origin of revelation, where he inverts the notion of vestigium trinitatis and posits a real vestigium trinitatis in creatura. This inversion, directly analogous to that of analogia fidei, is an unambiguous guide as to how and where the doctrine of eternity and of time is to be found, that is within the domain of revelation and its dynamic core the doctrine of the Trinity.

'There is, of course, and with this we conclude, a real vestigium trinitatis in creatura, an illustration of revelation, but it we have neither to discover nor to validate ourselves. According to our understanding of it as the real right meaning of the vestigia doctrine, it consists of the form which God Himself in His revelation has assumed in our language, world, and humanity. What we hear when with our human ears and concepts we listen to God's revelation, what we apprehend in Scripture (and can apprehend as men), what the proclamation of the Word actually is in our

72. Op.cit., p. 396.

73. Op.cit., p. 398.

life, is triply one voice of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. In this way God is present for us in His revelation. In this way He manifestly creates Himself a vestigium of Himself and so of His three-in-oneness. We add nothing to that, but say the same thing when we say that God for us is there in the threefold form of His Word, in His revelation, in Holy Scripture, in proclamation.'

(CD I/1, p. 399)

By this exclusive adherence to the single root of the Trinity Barth renders even more explicit the limits within which revelation may be understood. Thus the parameters within which his theological theory of time will function are also emerging from Barth's exposition. It is within the context of divine precedence that it is possible to comprehend temporal and mundane consequence. In this overall pattern, referred to under the general title of analogia fidei, the source and paradigm of all analogy is the Word of God in its various forms and realisations. In the light of this further specification of the range and nature of revelation, Barth's continued exposition of the Trinity may be examined. Through this, progress is made towards the inner core of the doctrine of God in God's being-in-act, that is, in his eternity.

Throughout the second chapter of this study Barth's ever-increasing concentration upon the most fundamental, yet mysterious doctrine, of the Trinity has been traced from the reality of the Word of God, in its threefold form, to its basis and possibility in the antecedent divine essence. In the doctrine of God it is to be found that temporal aspect of divine existence called 'eternity'. As Barth admits of no arbitrary distinction of 'form' and 'content' it is proper to follow the impulse of his thought and grasp the dynamic nature

of the trinitarian divine being, which exists in and from eternity, before drawing out from this the exact nature, in temporal terms, of this aspect of the divine being. Eternity is not a static attribute but the living temporal sphere of the Godhead, expressed in the 'perfections' of God. Thus in Chapter III below the detailed exposition of the being of God in act and the doctrine of eternity as a 'perfection' will be undertaken within the context of the basic structure of Barth's Church Dogmatics, which is theologically grounded upon the Trinity.⁷⁴ In obedience to these considerations the exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity will continue in such a way as to convey the overall structure and content of this 'possibility', whilst highlighting the eternal, and those features which are to remain of decisive importance. Only by such a continuing exposition can the integrated and unfolding freedom of Barth's thought be represented without alien and distorting strictures and categories being imposed.

The integration of the inner trinitarian distinction, and the revealed Subject encountered in faith, achieved in Barth's threefold exposition of God's Three-in-Oneness, is truly remarkable. As with all great creative work to attempt to tear it apart, is to risk destruction, because Barth has, in this instance, expressed with subtle skill the living interdependence of the various factors in his argument.

74. The problem of attribution is consequent upon the overall structure of the Church Dogmatics and is to be understood within this theological framework not under a separate head.

At the outset, therefore, the inseparability of divine existence and divine relation is established.

'The God who reveals Himself according to Scripture is One in three of His own modes of existence, which consist in their mutual relationships, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this way He is the Lord, i.e. the Thou who meets God's I and unites it to Himself as the indissoluble Subject, and who actually thus and thereby becomes manifest to him as his God.'
(CD I/1, p. 400)

Barth is primarily concerned to prove that, far from threatening the unity of God, the three-in-oneness establishes it. The doctrine of the Trinity is (as has been seen in the exposition of the Word of God) an 'explanatory confirmation' of the revealed name Yahweh-Kyrios, that of 'an unique entity, of a single, unique Willer and Doer, whom Scripture designates as God'.⁷⁵ So Barth identifies Being and the One who wills and acts and thus on this basis bridges the gulf existing between the ontological thinking of the Fathers and the revealing God of the Bible.⁷⁶

'We may unhesitatingly equate the concept of the lordship of God, with which we found the whole Biblical concept of revelation to be related, with what in the language of the ancient Church is called the essence of God, the deitas or divinitas, the divine οὐσία, essentia, natura, or substantia. The essence of God is the being of God qua divine being. The essence of God is the godhead of God.'
(CD I/1, p. 401)

This of course, following the pattern of Barth's thought, will be of central importance in the following chapters. The unity of the essence of God consists in the

75. CD I/1, p. 400.

76. This integration of 'being' and 'act' is most significant in the Church Dogmatics and its influence upon the problem of time will be traced through the major doctrines that Barth exposit.

threeness of the 'Persons'. The distinct names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit indicate three Persons, one in essence. In the threefold repetition God is one. The doctrine of the repetitio aeternitatis in aeternitate in the Trinity specifically confirms the knowledge of the unity of God. This is of course a unity (following Hilary) unbound by the limitations of singularity and isolation. The distinction in the essence of God and its 'arrangement' (dispositio or oeconomia) is of the three 'modes of being' in God.⁷⁷ This latter term Barth prefers to that of 'person', with its overtone of 'personality' and the Boethian-Thomist notion of 'single rational individual essence',⁷⁸ because it allows of an account of the three-in-oneness of God which safeguards the integrity of God in his acts.

'For whether it be a case of the inner content of the outer form of the essence of God, all that can be said may and must ultimately be said in like manner of Father, Son, and Spirit. There is no attribute, no act of God, which would not in like manner be the attribute, the act of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Of course, knowledge of the revelation of God means knowledge of various attributes which we cannot reduce to a single denominator, by which we can also thereafter make clear God's existence as Father, Son and Spirit. But just because it is of the essence of the revealing God to possess such and such attributes, in His essence they are also indistinguishably one, and not to be apportioned ontologically to Father, Son and Spirit.'

(CD I/1, pp. 415-6)

Barth illustrates the ontological mutuality of act and attribute with reference to Luther's exposition of the story of the baptism of Jesus. In this Father, Son and Spirit act in confirmation of the principle, opera trinitatis ad extra

77. CD I/1, p. 407.

78. Op.cit., p. 409.

sunt indivisa.⁷⁹ The unity of the revealed God 'stands apart from everything that may otherwise be termed unity',⁸⁰ and this realisation stems from obedience to the axiom, non sermoni res, sed rei sermo subjectus est, made in the face of the mystery of the Trinity. In, 'taking rational trouble over this mystery', as theology must do, Barth maps out the bounds of this mystery. The divine Persons exist in 'perichoresis(circumincessio, passing into one another)',⁸¹ and by this insight, inherited from John of Damascus, the dynamic living unity of the divine being is further explicated, insofar as this is possible. It asserts that, 'the divine modes of existence condition and permeate one another mutually with such perfection that one is as invariably in the other two as the other two are in the one'.⁸² So Barth seeks to safeguard the oneness of God, both inwardly and outwardly.

'... to the involution and convolution of the three modes of existence in the essence of God there corresponds most completely their involution and convolution (Ineinander und Miteinander) in His operation.As surely as Scripture is meant to be read in its context as the witness to God's revelation, as surely as e.g. Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost merely unite in asserting what they should assert, so surely we must declare that all God's operation, as we are bound to conceive it on the basis of His revelation, is a single act, occurring simultaneously and unitedly in all His three modes of existence. Of creation, past revelation and reconciliation, to the redemption to come it holds good, that He who acts here is the Father and the Son and the Spirit. And of all perfections to be asserted in view of this action by God it holds good, that they are as much the perfections of the Father as of the Son, or of the Spirit.'

(CD I/1, p. 430)

79. Op.cit., p. 416.

80. Op.cit., p. 421.

81. Op.cit., p. 425.

82. Ibid.

By the doctrine of appropriations (attributions, assignments), interpreted radically by Barth on the basis of Luther,⁸³ and by means of an analogical relation of inconceivable, eternal distinctions in God to those distinctions manifested in revelation, Barth builds the foundations in his doctrine of God, of the distinction of eternity and time, that is to be seen, in turn, exemplified and explicated in the doctrines of election, incarnation and creation. In the doctrines of perichoresis and appropriation, Barth prepares the way for the fully trinitarian operation of God in his 'single act' in these doctrines, through which runs the structural theme of eternity and time. The doctrine of the Trinity declares that, 'It is He who according to the witness of Scripture exists, speaks, and acts as Father, Son, and Spirit, in self-veiling and self-unveiling and self-impartment, in holiness, mercy and love, it is this and no other, who is God'.⁸⁴ God can be 'our God, because He is equal to Himself in all His modes of existence, is one and the same Lord'.⁸⁵ On this basis Barth begins the elaboration of the huge axis which is to be at the centre of interest in this thesis. The axis of antecedence and consequence, eternity and time, and so on, relies from the beginning upon the doctrine of God, and the unity in mutual, triple integrity of the modes of the divine Being, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Barth argues as follows: 'And this Lord can be our God, He can meet us and unite us to Himself, because

83. Op.cit., p. 429.

84. Op.cit., p. 439.

85. Op.cit., p. 440.

He is God in these three modes of existence as Father, Son, and Spirit, because creation, reconciliation, redemption, the entire being, language, and action in which He wills to be our God, is grounded and typified in His own essence, in His Godness itself'.⁸⁶ Herein lies the 'possibility' of the 'reality' of the Word of God, witnessed to in Scripture, where 'the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity is set'.⁸⁷

The final major section of the first half-volume of the Church Dogmatics is a statement of the doctrine of the divine 'modes', or Persons, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the context of divine antecedence. What God is in himself (i.e. in Barth's words what is 'grounded and typified in His own essence'⁸⁸) he is towards and for us. 'The one God reveals Himself according to Scripture as the Creator, that is, as the Lord of our existence. As such He is God our Father, because as the Father of God the Son He is so antecedently in Himself'.⁸⁹ Having established the unity of God in his 'single act'⁹⁰ of the three Persons in their fundamental being, Barth continues with an exposition of their distinct functions. There is a threefold parallel exposition of each Person, which, whilst sharing in the pattern of antecedence and consequence, gives to each a distinct role in the act of revelation, but one related intrinsically to the others. In outlining this exposition, attention will be drawn to the

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Op.cit., p. 441.

90. Op.cit., p. 430.

relation of eternity and time, and to those aspects of the function of each Person which will have significance for this distinction at later stages in this study.⁹¹

In a manner consistent with the foregoing exposition, Barth's understanding of the Persons is undertaken from the standpoint of God's revelation of himself as Lord.

'And this Lord can be our God, He can meet us and unite us to Himself, because He is God in these three modes of existence as Father, Son, and Spirit, because creation, reconciliation, redemption, the entire being, language, and action in which he wills to be our God, is grounded and typified in His own essence, in His Godness itself. As Father, Son, and Spirit God is, so to speak, ours in advance.'

(CD I/1, p. 440)

At once it must be said that Barth's insight is informed by Christology. In dealing 'as the Lord with man', God is not a being belonging to the kind and order of man and is not thus subject to human lordship, nor indeed is he aloof, 'as a being who exists and remains for Himself in His own kind and order'.⁹² What he becomes is finally the concern of Christology, but at this juncture the Lordship of God is understood in the functional reciprocity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Barth begins his exposition with an allusion to Harnack. The 'true and real divinity' is, in the first instance, ascribable to the Father, in the face of the 'true and real man', Jesus Christ.⁹³ Thus, 'The essence of the Divinity ascribed to Jesus is to make clear, impart, and

91. In fact attention is concentrated upon the Persons of Father and Son. The relation of the Holy Spirit to the problem of time will arise later in passing.

92. CD I/1, p. 441.

93. Op.cit., p. 442.

carry out who God the Father, God in the proper sense is, and what He wills and does for man, to represent this man'.⁹⁴ Unlike Harnack, however, Barth immediately stresses that 'He whom Jesus reveals as the Father is known absolutely in the death of man, at the end of his existence'.⁹⁵ The Cross and resurrection dispose of any simple optimism, for God, 'wills death in order to lead our life through to eternal life'.⁹⁶ In the light of this death and rebirth, prototypically enacted in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God the Father is revealed as Creator. The analogy of 'fatherhood' is broken and re-formed on the basis of the 'Fatherhood' of God. Barth thus realises doctrines of revelation and the Trinity in the actual life and death of Jesus Christ. At the very heart of this the crucifixion and resurrection are the turning-points, the foci of his theology.

'God our Father means God our Creator....And it should now have become clear that it is "in Christ," as "the Father of Jesus Christ," that God means our Creator. It is not a general truth, knowable antecedently or to be acquired by our own powers; it is the truth of revelation that God is our Creator. Only by what we otherwise know as the relation of father and son being broken through by the Word of Christ the Crucified and Risen, only through its being interpreted by this Word, i.e., in this case through its acquiring from this Word a meaning which on its own merits it could not have - only so do we come in sight of what Creation means. But in that way we can come in sight of it. The "Father of Jesus Christ," who according to the witness of Scripture is manifest in Jesus, His servant, possesses the attributes of a "Lord of our existence." The witness concerning Him leads us to the place where the miracle of creation can come into

94. Op.cit., p. 443.

95. Op.cit., p. 445.

96. Op.cit., p. 446.

view. It attests the holy God, the God who alone is God, the free God. It is this witness that we now have to understand by means of the fundamental positions of the doctrine of the Trinity.'
(CD I/1, p. 447)

It is, therefore, within the 'self-enclosed circle'⁹⁷ of the doctrine of the Trinity that the truth that God is Creator is known, as in the act of God, in his Fatherhood of Jesus Christ, the new life is brought out of death. It is a 'truth of revelation', not a 'general truth'. This assertion is another factor of great importance, because the whole catena of temporal doctrines must be understood in relation to the central revelatory events. The ontology of human existence is bound up with the 'Lordship' of God, which means, according to Barth, that 'our existence is held by Him, and only by Him, over the abyss of non-existence....It is real, so far as He wills and posits it a real existence'.⁹⁸ Our existence, Barth argues, is 'our will and ability to live in its (our existence's) limitations'.⁹⁹ This set of assertions introduces a potential ambiguity into Barth's thought, for 'existence' and 'reality' exist for man outside of faith, but it is only in faith, that is in the face of God's Lordship, that our existence is 'real so far as He wills and posits it a real existence'. At a very early stage in this study it must be asked if this argument does not put non-theological existence in a problematic position. Again this theme of ambiguity will recur in considering the problem of time in the Church Dogmatics.

97. Op.cit., p. 436.

98. Op.cit., p. 446.

99. Ibid.

The closest parallel between the accounts that Barth gives of the Persons of the Trinity lies in their mutual, eternal status. God can reveal himself as the Father of Jesus Christ, his Son, 'because He is Himself the Father in Himself, because Fatherhood is an eternal mode of existence of the divine essence'.¹⁰⁰ There is an 'inner possibility' in God of his eternal Fatherhood. In the light of this there is a three stage realisation of fatherhood which shows clearly the structure of knowing and of reality in the dynamic structure of 'analogia fidei'.

'God alone, as He whom He is by Himself, i.e. as the eternal Father of the eternal Son, is properly and adequately to be called Father. From the power and dignity of this alone proper name of Father, there flows by grace and for faith the improper - not, of course, therefore untrue, but really improper - name of Father for God as the Creator, and from this again the naming of the original intra-creaturely relation, the thing which is called fatherhood in heaven and on earth (Eph. 3,15); this too to be regarded as a true but improper appellation, dependent upon the power and dignity of the intra-trinitarian name of Father for God.'

(CD I/1, p. 451)

In the same mutuality of Father and Son 'Jesus is the revelation of the Father, and the revelation of the Father is Jesus'. The divinity of Jesus Christ is eternal divinity; that is 'when we assert that the Son come to us, the Word spoken to us, is antecedently the Son or Word of God per se, we thereby assert practically nothing else than simply the statement about the divinity of Christ is to be regarded not as a derivative, but as a fundamental statement'.¹⁰¹

100. Op.cit., p. 448.

101. Op.cit., p. 475.

Barth argues without compromise for the antecedence of Christ, this 'antedecedently in himself',¹⁰² which refers to his existence 'exactly as He posits and knows Himself from eternity and in eternity',¹⁰³ not to a supposedly untheological, metaphysical speculation. Those who take their cue from Melancthon's emphasis upon the beneficia Christi are mistaken for, 'The Reformers never dreamt of letting Christology resolve or dissolve into a doctrine of the beneficia Christi',¹⁰⁴ and they posit a similarly speculative notion of Christ 'for us', which is a total, not merely a partial loss. The only way that grace and the divine freedom are preserved is precisely by adherence to the divinity of Christ. This is contained most significantly in the so-called Symb. Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum. In Barth's exposition of the second article there is to be found his first substantial allusion to the nature of eternity itself. In this passage there is much of importance for the subsequent chapters of this thesis as will be seen.

Jesus is the 'one Lord' and 'his lordship for us in his revelation has no beginning and no end, it breaks over us with the unheard-of and incomparable fall of eternal truth and reality itself, it cannot be realised or inferred from any standpoint whatsoever, knowledge of it begins with the acknowledgment of it'.¹⁰⁵ In second place, he is 'the only-

102. Op.cit., p. 476.

103. Ibid.

104. Op.cit., p. 480.

105. Op.cit., pp. 485-6.

begotten'¹⁰⁶ and, thirdly, he is 'begotten of the Father before all time'.¹⁰⁷ The distinction Barth draws here along the lines of orthodox thought, between Jesus, who 'does not signify but (who) is God Himself',¹⁰⁸ and all other reality, is quite fundamental to the Church Dogmatics. This assertion must be defended consistently if the distinction of creation and re-creation (in Christ) is to be preserved. Barth argues that the phrase 'before all time' is not to be interpreted as excluding time. Indeed the phrase itself leads to the time-honoured puzzle of attempting to speak of 'before' time. Barth wants to show that 'before all time' excludes neither the 'there and then' of revelation nor the 'here and now' in which it becomes revelation for man in the present.

'It does not exclude, it includes time (concretely, this time, the time of revelation); and so with history. But this very fact that time (time of our time, the sinful creature's time and history - which is also the time and history of revelation) is included in a divine "before all time," - this does not go without saying, this is a grace, a mystery, a foundation to be recognised in the fear of God.'

(CD I/1, pp. 487-8)

Barth argues with great care at this point and it is therefore necessary to examine his thought in some detail. The Lordship of God is not explicable in terms of a metaphysics, but is a pronouncement about God who exists as Revealer and Reconciler, and who pre-exists 'for us' in the spheres explicated by the theology of the divinity of Christ,

106. Op.cit., p. 486.

107. Op.cit., p. 487.

108. Ibid.

and the incarnation, respectively. In the context of the 'inclusion' of time, that is, the times of revelation (concrete time) and 'time of our time',¹⁰⁹ there is the becoming-man of the Son of God, whose eternity is that of the Father, as he was 'begotten by the Father before all time'. Earlier in this chapter the dialectical concept of the interaction of eternity and time was referred to, where Barth states the temporal implications of 'The Revealed Word of God'.¹¹⁰ This was the 'Deus dixit' without analogies, the 'being moved only by itself, in mid-ocean of the unsettled, changeable, and self-changing, the fixed event, the fulness of time...which is identical with Jesus Christ'.¹¹¹ The terminology apparent in the whole passage alluded to above is reminiscent of the dialectic of Romans,¹¹² for Barth

109. Ibid.

110. Op.cit., pp. 130ff.

111. Op.cit., pp. 130-1.

112. 'This is what is meant by - knowing the time. Between the past and the future - between the times - there is a "Moment" that is no moment in time. This "Moment" is the eternal Moment - the Now - when the past and the future stand still, when the former ceases its going and the latter its coming... - this is the secret of time which is made known in the "moment" of revelation, in that eternal "Moment" which always is, and yet is not. Time, then, is irreversible; and of this the irrevocable hurrying away of the past and the relentless approach of the future are a parable. But a parable of it also is the completely hidden, unobservable, intangible present which lies "between" the times. Facing, as it does, each moment in time is a parable of the eternal "Moment". Every moment in time bears within it the unborn secret of revelation, and every moment can be thus qualified - This do knowing the time.' Romans, p. 497.

appears to juxtapose a timeless eternity ('incapable of changing its form...the fixed event') and a temporal flux ('mid-stream of becoming,...mid-ocean of the unsettled, changeable, and self-changing'). In Romans, 'Between the past and the future - between the times there is a "Moment" that is no moment in time'¹¹³ but this intrusion of the eternal is tangential, and, like the geometrical point or line, a heuristic construction. The 'parable' of the 'Moment' is 'the completely hidden, unobservable, intangible present which lies between the times'.¹¹⁴ Barth's use of dialectical language in the passage cited¹¹⁵ cannot be understood in the same way as in Romans, for, '"God is with us" has happened'. God has encountered time, but not in the annihilating timelessness of the 'greedy dialectic' and krisis. The dialectic of antitheses and the eschatological consummation in death has now become the dialectic of grace in the veiledness and unveiledness of revelation, in the worldliness of divinity. The 'absolutely marked events in time' are 'events within the created world'. The reality underlying Barth's language presupposes the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Word has become flesh, and, therefore, has become time.

'"Begotten by the Father before all time" means, did not come into being in time as such, did not come into being in an event within the created world. The Son of God's becoming man and recognition of him in his humanity as the Son of God by other men, are, although absolutely marked events in time, events within the created world. But this marked nature which they have

113. Romans, p. 497.

114. Ibid.

115. CD I/1, p. 130.

does not itself originate and proceed from time. Otherwise they would only be relatively marked events, of which there are many others of the kind. Just because they have divine power, because the power of the temporal is here the power of the eternal, the power of the immanence of God here the power of His transcendence, the Subject of it must be regarded as existing before all time, as the eternal Subject, as eternal as God Himself, himself as eternal as God. Jesus Christ does not first become the Son of God by being for us. He becomes so as the eternal Son of the eternal Father.'

(CD I/1, pp. 488-9)

The 'absolutely marked (i.e. distinguished) events in time' (schlechterdings ausgezeichnete Ereignisse) are moments in which the eternal 'enters' time. This is thus a theological interpretation of the eternal-temporal encounter, where the 'power' of the eternal God is identified, in the act of revelation, with the power of his immanence. The One who has been from eternity, is in time. The nature of the 'before' and 'after' is not a simple temporal precedence and subsequence because it underlies the events of revelation. Both time and eternity are the categories which structure this encounter, that can now be seen as the culmination of a theological development. This development is Barth's drive from the reality of revelation in the threefold Word of God, to its actual dynamic possibility in the Trinity. The explication of the specific nature of this axis, as it is realised in the mutual interconnection of eternity and time, is the goal of this thesis. It can now be seen that the dialectic of antitheses of Romans gave place to a dialectic underlaid by a new conjunction of transcendence and immanence. The most fundamental primary fact of the incarnation reveals the finality of the eternal God's involvement, his condescension in self-identity with man. So the eternal enters

time and time is 'marked', 'distinguished' by the imprint of the veiled and unveiled God. In this chapter our argument has penetrated towards the core of the Church Dogmatics, that is the characterisation of God's eternity, his true divinity in triune modal majesty which is the source and possibility of that movement God makes to reveal himself in his Word.

There remains much of interest and importance in the Prolegomena of the Church Dogmatics as regards both Son and Holy Spirit. To these this study will return at later stages.¹¹⁶ At this juncture the goal of this chapter has been achieved. In conclusion, recapitulation shows that the path of these reflections leads to the threshold of Barth's doctrine of God and thus to a full explication and analysis of his doctrine of time and eternity. Through the eyes of Jüngel the inner integrity of Barth's theological hermeneutic was revealed. Following a different path of analysis it was seen that the reality of the Word of God, the presupposition of 'the ascertainability by man of the proper content of Christian language about God',¹¹⁷ was dependent upon the grace of God, made known by God himself, in the actual ability of God to give himself to man. This identity of Giver with Gift is possible in his trinitarian being, the 'self-enclosed circle', which in the mystery of the incarnation demonstrates the all-sufficiency of God's loving and reciprocal self-sufficiency. At the core of this is the encounter of eternity and time, the theme and subject of this thesis.

116. Cf. Chapters Vff.

117. CD I/1, p. 11.

CHAPTER III

ACT, ANALOGY AND PERFECTION

In the first chapter of this study the ontological gulf of the nineteenth century was presented as the over-ridingly significant factor conditioning, in overall terms, Barth's 'positivism' of revelation and revealed reality. Then in Chapter II the initial steps in the development of the theological ontology of the Church Dogmatics was examined. The 'reality' of the Word of God was seen to be the gift of divine grace, instantiated by God on the basis of the 'possibility' of the Trinity. Eternity as the mode of God's being-in-act impinges upon time in the 'marked time' of revelation. In this context it is possible to see that eternity, as the mode of God's being in trinitarian unity and reciprocity, has potentially an extremely important part to play in the inner structure and dynamic of the Church Dogmatics. In fact it is quite crucial to the whole content and fabric of this work. The axis of eternity and time - understood as the interaction of divine and created being, the divinity and the humanity of Christ, and so on - is of pervasive importance. This is because only if the reality of both is maintained throughout, does the theology of Karl Barth transcend a reduction to one or the other. Thus R.W. Jenson can argue that Barth's theology in Romans is 'the perfected historicizing of platonic religion',¹ and the doctrine of God in the Church Dogmatics, as trinitarian dogma,

1. God after God, p. 27.

'becomes...a new proposal for the post and anti-religious understanding of God'.² Indeed for Jenson, Barth has re-discovered the Father's insight into the nature of the Christian religion; that it is, because of the Incarnation, 'a religion about an historical, temporal event'.³ In a quite contrary way H. Zahrnt sees the same development in Barth's thought as a movement towards architectonic insanity, a radical de-temporalisation of theology produced by a religious genius 'to madness near allied'.⁴

'The same Barth who in his struggle against natural theology, with its general concept of the divine, emphasises so strongly the concrete and historical figure of Jesus Christ, makes use of Jesus Christ in his analogical thought as a universal and supra-temporal principle which can reveal to him the reality of the whole universe - with the result that the reality of the universe evaporates.'
(The Question of God, p. 106)

This, it hardly need be emphasised, is a most serious charge. The mirror-image opposites of the critiques of Jenson and Zahrnt point to what must, at the very least, be an ambiguity in Barth's thought, for the former sees a 'historicizing' of revelation and the latter an 'eternalisation'. 'The basing of the events of salvation upon a timeless event in the perfect tense results for Barth in an irreparable loss of concrete historical reality.'⁵ So Zahrnt strikes his blows: Barth's 'monism' is 'close to Hegel'⁶ and

2. Op.cit., p. 97.

3. Op.cit., p. 19.

4. The Question of God, Protestant Theology in the Twentieth Century, Collins, 1969, p. 105.

5. Op.cit., p. 113.

6. Op.cit., p. 114.

his doctrine of election is the mere out-working of the pre-existence of Christ, not the event of the incarnation.⁷ In short 'there is virtually no theology with so little action, because all the action has taken place in eternity'.⁸ Clearly here 'event', 'reality' and time are central concepts, appearing under a number of guises. There is little point in lingering over individual treatment of these objections, for the problems they raise will underlie the following exposition and analysis. Again Jenson's critique, which is vigorous, polemical and highly individual, must remain in the background. In the light of the basic general analytical approaches introduced in Chapter I, under the headings of ontology and epistemology, it will prove illuminating to penetrate Barth's explication of the axis of eternity and time through a series of studies of major features of the Church Dogmatics. Thus if ontology and epistemology are broadly paired with being, as being-in-act (that is as the theological explanation of 'event') and analogy (as the realisation of man's knowledge of theological reality) respectively, then it is apparent that the title of this chapter directs attention to a most fundamental set of problems in the Church Dogmatics. This will become clear in the following analysis of the axis of eternity and time as it functions at the heart of the interface of the doctrines of the knowledge and being of God in CD II/1.

7. Op.cit., p. 112.

8. Op.cit., p. 113.

Having achieved this explication of the theological structure and the inner logic of Barth's argument, it will then prove possible to proceed to an analysis of the concept of eternity under the heading 'Act and Eternity'. Again, the second stage of this examination of Barth's doctrine of divine being will pay careful attention to CD II/1, where eternity is presented as a divine perfection, not in abstracto, but on the basis of the foregoing. This initial twofold study will carry this critique of the doctrine of eternity and time in the theology of Barth to the heart of his theological ontology in the doctrine of God's being, that is in eternity. Judgement upon the temporality and reality of the theology of the Church Dogmatics must begin with an analysis of God's being because this is where Barth begins. To check, however, any fears that this means adopting any sacrificium intellectus, the following may be noted. First, this path of analysis is extremely demanding, but it follows, and does not impose, trends that exist in Barth's thought. Second, by assessing exactly what Barth means by 'eternity' and 'time' in strictly temporal (as opposed to theological) terms it will prove possible to test the 'reality' of the ontology of uncreated and created being, God and universe. It is not possible to draw apart arbitrarily these themes, but by highlighting the exact nature and content of Barth's temporal concepts and language, within an understanding of the theological structure as a whole, the basis of the answers to many questions applicable to the Church Dogmatics will be exposed. It is the task of this thesis to attempt to build such a foundation.

Professor T.F. Torrance has argued that,

'Karl Barth's dogmatics is to be appreciated as a gigantic attempt to overcome the dualisms that beset medieval and Protestant theologies, and to think into each other the being of God in his acts and the acts of God in his being, in a thoroughgoing integration of the ontic and the dynamic, and then in the light of the inner organic connections that come to view, and the fundamental grammar of God's self-revelation as Lord, to interpret the whole of Christian theology by setting it more squarely upon its proper foundations.'

('Newton, Einstein and Scientific Theology', pp.247-8)

This is not a 'Christomonism' or a reduction, but what Torrance has called a 'recovery of ontology'. The fundamental issue that faces the student of Barth is whether this 'recovery' presages a consequent 'loss' or diminution elsewhere in the total scheme of reality. Following now the pattern of antecedence and consequence, reality and possibility, the exploration of the central doctrine of God's being-in-act will now begin.

'God is actually known in the Church' and it is through his Word that 'God is actually known and will be known again'.⁹ Barth takes up once more the stance that he learned from Anselm of Canterbury. This position has been noted in both preceding chapters of this thesis. The occurrence of the Word is not to be doubted, and any calling in question must be from within the Word of God itself. It is inadmissible to ask whether God is known or in fact knowable: 'Where God is known He is also in some way or other knowable'.¹⁰ In consequence, 'Where the actuality exists there is also the

9. CD II/1, p. 4.

10. Op.cit., p. 5.

corresponding possibility'.¹¹ This set of mutually related statements constitutes one of the fundamental presuppositions of the Church Dogmatics. Out of the assertion in God's Word of the reality of God flow the possibilities of Barth's 'theo-logic'. It follows, ipso facto, that questions concerning the knowledge of God are in concreto and a posteriori, and not in abstracto and a priori. Once more, Barth neatly inverts the received meanings of these terms as understood in traditional philosophy of religion. Whether this is right or acceptable is beside the point for what is of crucial importance is that there is no source of reality in a true theology outside of this framework. 'Reality,' is a term now bearing a considerable burden and it must be clarified. Barth is everywhere concerned to deny talk about 'being' as a generalised concept denoting the category shared by all existent entities. In fact Barth directs his argument against the hypostatisation of being, and he is always asserting the concrete contingency of that which is actual, of that which is. For Barth, 'the only legitimate and meaningful questions in this context are: how far is God known? and how far is God knowable?'¹²

'Just as the reality of the Word of God in Jesus Christ bears its possibility within itself, as does also the reality of the Holy Spirit, by whom the Word of God comes to man, so too the possibility of the knowledge of God and therefore the knowability of God cannot be questioned in vacuo, or by means of a general criterion of knowledge delimiting the knowledge of God from without, but only from within this real knowledge itself. Therefore it is quite impossible to ask whether God is knowable, because

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

this question is already decided by the only legitimate and meaningful questioning which arises in this connexion.'

(CD II/1, p. 5)

This argument is of decisive importance, for it poses a further question as to how it is that the reality of God, and knowledge of that reality, can impinge upon a reality external to that of revelation. Barth's answer appears to be that it cannot, except insofar as that 'reality' is produced from within the discrete sphere of revelation. In other words, given the exclusive source of revelation, emphasised in both the doctrine of the Word of God and the theological epistemology of CD II/1, then what can be the ontological status of non-theological reality? There are, as will be seen, no simple solutions to this problem. The ontological root of theological reality is eternity and not a doctrine of being, in, for example, static terms of 'substance'. Thus it is that the interaction of eternity and time affords a touchstone for testing the nature of both theological and non-theological reality. In fact this axis is an extremely sensitive instrument, for the truth of Christian theology is critically bound up with this distinction. Different aspects of this argument will be developed as the presentation of the role and nature of Barth's doctrine of eternity and time proceeds in relation to the Church Dogmatics. This adumbration indicates the direction in which Barth's reliance upon a single, exclusive presupposition is to guide these reflections. In very simple and preliminary terms the reader must ask if the 'borderlands' of theological explication which inevitably impinge upon non-

theological reality are a form of 'logical construction' and an ontology of inferred entities, or alternatively, actually correspond to, and correlate, divine and non-divine reality. This fundamental quest arises out of a deep and pervasive ambiguity in Barth's thought, the roots of which are being exposed. To do Barth's great work justice will involve us in a long and arduous task of exposition and analysis.

Barth asserts the positive knowledge of God, and, in doing so, he offers trenchant and sustained criticism of putative, but illusory rival attempts to sustain a distinct natural knowledge of God. His exposition also provides an informative survey of the theological landscape that is to be traversed, undertaken from the epistemological standpoint. All this serves to clear away any possible obstacles to a total appreciation of the act of God as the realisation of revelation. 'True knowledge of God is not and cannot be attacked; it is without anxiety and without doubt'.¹³ So Barth posits the knowledge coming from 'the real and original constraint by the Word' and which we cannot approach. In dynamic mutuality, God objectifies himself in his Word and 'by the Holy Spirit He makes the human subject accessible to Himself, capable of considering and conceiving Himself as object'.¹⁴ God is known in faith and not in 'timeless and non-objective seeing and hearing'¹⁵ as in Augustine's

13. Op.cit., p. 7.

14. Op.cit., p. 10.

15. Op.cit., p. 11.

encounter with timeless Wisdom recounted in the 'beautiful but also most dangerous passages in the Confessions'.¹⁶ Faith is the 'total positive relationship of man to the God who gives Himself to be known in His Word. It is man's act of turning to God, of opening up his life to Him and of surrendering to Him'.¹⁷ The very particularity and distinctness of God's objectivity is manifested, as 'faith in God occurs by way of separation'.¹⁸ God makes himself known and in doing so 'sanctifies Himself, i.e., makes Himself known as distinct from all other objects'.¹⁹ There are two immediate consequences of this act of divine self-objectification. First, God has a knowledge of himself (his 'primary objectivity') and, second, he makes himself known and knowable to us (his 'secondary objectivity'). As a result, 'God is objectively immediate to Himself, but to us He is objectively mediate'.²⁰ This last conclusion leads to an important correlation in the doctrine of the knowledge of God with the modified temporal dialectic noted at the end of Chapter II. There it was argued that 'marked time' bore, in some (as yet unspecified) way, the imprint of eternity. Barth now begins his exposition of the 'indirect knowledge' of God. This characterisation of the interaction of creaturely reality and God is most significant for it reveals the theological rationale which is to underlie much temporal language used in the

16. Op.cit., pp. 10-11.

17. Op.cit., p. 12.

18. Op.cit., p. 15.

19. Ibid.

20. Op.cit., p. 16.

area of revelation.

'In the encounter the reality of this piece of (man's) environment does not cease to be a definite, creaturely reality, and therefore it does not become identical with God, but it represents God. That is to say, it represents God in so far as it is determined, made and used by God as His clothing, temple, or sign; in so far as it is peculiarly a work of God, which above and beyond its own existence (which is God's work, of course) may and must serve to attest the objectivity of God and therefore to make knowledge of God possible and necessary.'

(CD II/1, p. 17)

The supreme exemplification of the indirect knowledge of God is in the God-manhood of Jesus Christ. It is in 'the whole world of His work and sign', that is, 'in the witness of the Scriptures, in the visibility of the Church, in the audibility of preaching, in the operation of the sacraments', as well as in Jesus Christ himself, that the infrangible bond of primary and secondary objectivity is rendered concrete. The dualism of a revealed and a hidden God is prevented by the unity of act and being underlying the distinction of objectivities.

'It is and remains God's free grace when he is object for us in His primary and secondary objectivity. He always gives Himself to be known so as to be known by us in this giving, which is always a bestowal, always a free action. How could it be His objectivity if this were not so? How could He be our Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer, how could He be the living Lord, if it were not so, and if His being for us were ever to be separated from His activity, so that a direction of man to God's being could exist that was grounded in something other than his being directed by God's activity? Faith stands or falls with the fact of man being directed by God's action, by the action of His being as the living God.'

(CD II/1, p. 22)

The inner key to the meaning of God in primary objectivity is God's eternal triune being. God is 'Lord of the event which we call the knowledge of God'.²¹ It is

21. Op.cit., p. 67.

the nature of this event in the doctrine of God which concerns this study, for it underlies not only the whole exposition of the knowledge of God but also the inner temporal continuity which is needed as the counterweight to Barth's constant stress upon the sheer freedom of God. The whole fabric of his exposition ultimately refers inwards from the event of revelation to the act of God in his being, although in reality there is no real distinction. 'Grace is the majesty, the freedom, the undeservedness, the unexpectedness, the newness, the arbitrariness, in which the relationship to God and therefore the possibility of knowing Him is opened up to man by God Himself.'²² The utter exclusivity of revelation in grace therefore precludes, as has been shown, other bases of knowledge of God, including recourse to analogy. There is no analogy that man possesses, 'on the basis of which the nature and being of God can be accessible to us',²³ with regard to God as Lord, Creator, Reconciler or Redeemer. This parallels Barth's arguments earlier with regard to the Trinity. The polemic against analogia entis is well-trodden ground, both as regards the Roman response to this attack and criticism of Barth's own notions. As H. Bouillard points out, the target of Barth's criticisms was not in fact St. Thomas, but his successors, and of course E. Przywara. In fact Barth's plan of action is perfectly consistent with that impulse observed early on in Romans, in which he denied the whole cosmos any right to justify itself before God. Indeed

22. Op.cit., p. 74.

23. Op.cit., p. 75.

'no flesh may glory in itself' in the Church Dogmatics.

Even the response of man to God and his 'readiness' is 'in the reality of Jesus Christ alone'.²⁴ The ambiguity of reality is again evident in this paring away of accretions, which whilst undertaken from the Christological and soteriological standpoint, cannot but have overall ontological consequences.

'Man never at all exists in himself. And the Christian man is the very last to try to cling to existing in himself. Man exists in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. The being and nature of man in and for themselves as independent bearers of an independent predicate, have, by the revelation of Jesus Christ, become an abstraction which can be destined only to disappear.'
(CD II/1, p. 149)

In effect, grace is consuming nature, as the Pauline understanding of Christian existence is interpreted in full ontological and epistemological terms. Even more radically Barth argues that 'The vitality of natural theology is the vitality of man as such'.²⁵ Is the conclusion that Barth then draws the 'holy boldness' of the writer of Romans with his purging and annihilation of man, exulting in glittering theological rhetoric, or is it to be taken in all seriousness in the fuller sense indicated above?

'On the contrary, the presupposed independent existence of a man as such is an illusion. It is a powerful, illuminating and (if we want to leave out Jesus Christ) unconquerable illusion.'
(CD II/1, p. 165)

The explanation of this extraordinarily uncompromising theological insight is, of course, to be understood in

24. Op.cit., p. 149.

25. Op.cit., p. 165.

relation to, and in consequence of, the events surrounding the Person of Jesus Christ. This is the theological rationale, but as will be seen, the elimination and re-assertion of the human on the basis of an act of God, has certain difficulties. The identification of God with, and in man in Jesus Christ, and the representation of God to man in the veiledness (which is God's unveiling in him) manifest transcendence in utter indirectness. In relation to time the distinction of time and eternity must undergo a parallel resolution. The events alluded to in the following quotation in this introduction to the primal doctrine of God's being-in-act express the explicit and visible concrete particularities of God's intervention in Jesus Christ. The irreversible events of revelation and salvation have taken place. In and 'behind' them is God's 'single act' in his triunity in unity. It is to this we must penetrate.

'The event of Good Friday and Easter Day would have to be wiped out, the eternal event between the Father and the Son, the work of the Holy Spirit as the temporal form of this eternal event, would have to be arrested, faith as our relationship to this event, realised by the Holy Spirit, would have to be annulled, and the Church, as the unity of faith realised by the same Holy Spirit, would have to be shattered, if even for a single moment man could and should again exist as such independently....'

(CD II/1, p. 165)

The bond of the primary and secondary objectivity of God and of God's own work in creating the readiness of man's receptivity, underlies all the apparent activity of God in Jesus Christ (the 'essence of the Church') as the enactor of the covenant and creation as well as the creator of knowledge of himself. Such knowledge of God is 'only an event enclosed

in the mystery of the divine Trinity'.²⁶ This event is the dynamic and is, according to Barth, the only manifestation of the knowledge of God. It is to this 'act' and to the being of God to which we now turn, having seen its constitutive significance for the Church Dogmatics.

Barth has stripped away any basis of human knowledge of God accumulable on the ground of 'analogia entis'. For the purposes of this thesis it is Barth's positive assertions which are of most significance. He begins his explication of the divine nature (this term is used purely informally here) with the positing of the circulus veritatis, the theological circle. The divine reality of the circulus veritatis Dei is Jesus Christ himself, for 'we let the place of our knowledge of God be that in which God's temptation and God's comfort have come to pass for us and from which the temptation and comfort of faith come to us'.²⁷

'In Him who is true God and true man it is true that in His true revelation God gives to man a part in the truth of His knowing, and therefore gives to man's knowing similarity with His own and therefore truth. On the basis of the grace of the incarnation, on the basis of the acceptance and assumption of man into unity of being with God as it has taken place in Jesus Christ, all this has become truth in this man, in the humanity of Jesus Christ. The eternal Father knows the eternal Son, and the eternal Son knows the eternal Father. But the eternal Son is not only the eternal God. In the unity fulfilled by the grace of the incarnation, He is also this man Jesus of Nazareth. It is not our knowledge of God, but the knowledge which is and will be present in this man Jesus, that we have described in our description of its reality, its possibility, and now finally its limits.'

(CD II/1, p. 253)

26. Op.cit., p. 181.

27. Op.cit., p. 252.

The dynamic of theological knowledge is from Jesus Christ's own resurrection and exaltation, 'We must believe with the risen Christ',²⁸ and not merely 'in' him, confident in the knowledge that 'In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col. 2,3). Behind and beneath this standpoint, which is 'in the sphere of Jesus Christ',²⁹ there is the 'God who is in the act of His revelation'.³⁰ In the foregoing pages Barth's account of the 'fulfilment, the possibility and the limits of our knowledge of God' has been very briefly outlined because in particular these limits have an important part to play in the doctrines of time and eternity. Barth's main concern in the latter half of this part-volume is to show how this central insight into the being of God in freedom conditions the positive affirmation of the divine perfections; one of which is eternity and thus the antecedent divine pole of the axis at the very centre of this study.

The fundamental integration of being and act which underlies the Church Dogmatics is a doctrine of being but only as a doctrine of the being of God. God's being is not 'beyond being' but God's own particular being, which as will be seen is in his act. The most basic statement of God's being is 'that God is who He is in His act of revelation'.³¹ God declares his reality in the act of his revelation, both

28. Ibid.

29. Op.cit., p. 254.

30. Op.cit., p. 257.

31. Op.cit., p. 262.

his reality for us and 'at the same time His own, inner, proper reality, behind which and above which there is no other'.³²

What is God's act? This is a crucial question, for an understanding of this 'act' will determine the temporal concepts employed in this area. Barth argues as follows:

'If we follow the path indicated, our first declaration must be the affirmation that in God's revelation, which is the content of His Word, we have in fact to do with His act. And first, this means generally - with an event, with a happening. But as such this is an event which is in no sense to be transcended. It is not, therefore, an event which has merely happened and is now a past fact of history. God's revelation is, of course, this as well. But it is also an event happening in the present, here and now. Again, it is not this in such a way that it exhausts itself in the momentary movement from the past to the present, that is, in our to-day. But it is also an event that took place once for all, and an accomplished fact. And it is also future - the event which lies completely and wholly in front of us, which has not yet happened, but which simply comes upon us. Again, this happens without detriment to its historical completeness and its full contemporaneity. On the contrary, it is in its historical completeness and its full contemporaneity that it is truly future. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and for ever" (Heb. 13.8). This is something which cannot be transcended or surpassed or dispensed with. What is concerned is always the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, always His justification of faith, always His lordship in the Church, always His coming again, and therefore Himself as our hope. We can only abandon revelation, and with it God's Word, if we are to dispense with it. With it we stand, no, we move necessarily in the circle of its event or, in biblical terms, in the circle of the life of the people of Israel. And in this very event God is who He is. God is He who in this event is subject, predicate and object; the revealer, the act of revelation, the revealed; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is the Lord active in this event. We say "active" in this event, and therefore for our salvation and for His glory, but in any case active. Seeking and finding God in His revelation, we cannot escape the action of

32. Ibid.

God for a God who is not active. This is not only because we ourselves cannot, but because there is no surpassing or bypassing at all of the divine action, because a transcendence of His action is nonsense. We are dealing with the being of God: but with regard to the being of God, the word "event" or "act" is final, and cannot be surpassed or compromised. To its very deepest depths God's Godhead consists in the fact that it is an event - not any event, not events in general, but the event of His action, in which we have a share in God's revelation.'

(CD II/1, pp. 262-3)

There is in this characterisation of the divine act a certain temporal elasticity. Clearly ordinary assumptions are stretched and indeed broken. God's act is an 'event,... a happening'. This event cannot be 'transcended' in historical terms, that is left behind as a past fact of history. At this point the ambiguity of Barth's doctrine of act is apparent, as it was indeed in his doctrine of revelation and the knowledge of God. God's act (which is his revelation) is a past fact of history but it is also 'an event happening in the present, here and now'.³³ God's act happens, has happened and indeed will happen; but it is each of the three, without abrogation of any, its being an 'accomplished fact'. The adherence to both 'historical completeness' and 'full contemporaneity' is extremely important in Barth's exposition. Without it his account would slide on the one hand into secularism (the theology of secularity takes up this horn of the Barthian dilemma) or, on the other, it would move into an eternalisation. The contrasting critiques of Jenson and Zahrnt represent such conflicting resolutions, which are more truly to be seen as reductions. Again as will be seen the impulse in this assertion of both the

33. Ibid.

historicality of God's act and its 'full contemporaneity' is provided by Barth's concept of eternity, which stresses this mutuality of contingency and what will be called 'temporal transcendence'. As noted earlier³⁴ Barth uses the concept of 'contingent contemporaneousness' to provide the continuity of revelation over against discrete 'happenings' of the Word of God in the history of the Bible and the Church. The ground of this is now found in the doctrine of God as predicted earlier. Its inner clue will be seen in the doctrine of eternity. The very stability of Barth's theology in the Church Dogmatics depends upon the inner tension expressed in these conceptions. This is the fulcrum around which the axis of eternity and time as the encounter of divine and human life is to turn. It is possible to advance an illuminating critique of Barth's thought from the standpoint of time, for as has been shown, we are thrust into the heart of the Church Dogmatics and also into consideration of the most essential factors affecting the truth and possibility of Christian theological claims.

The act of God cannot be transcended or by-passed, God is, and is therefore to be found in his act. The diversity implied by the need for any such evasion is overcome by the Word of God in his own act. As noted earlier the three modes of God's Person are active in this event, but now Barth is to explicate the nature of the act, in which God, as 'subject, predicate and object; the revealer,

34. Cf. CD I/1, p. 164ff.

the act of revelation, the revealed; Father, Son and Holy Spirit'³⁵ is mutually to participate. The ambiguity of Barth's thought results from the inherent strain upon any language which is to be used to convey the distinct, and different, realities of God and man, God and cosmos. In purely theological terms Barth is describing the 'life' that is God's being, for 'Only the Living is God'.³⁶ Again it must be remembered that Barth is not engaged in architectonic extravagance, but in giving theological understanding to such fundamental New Testament insights as Hebrews 13.8, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and forever'. Whereas it may prove true that Barth's account enters difficulty in conceptual and linguistic terms, it must be granted at the outset that he strives constantly to reflect the direction taken by the Old and New Testaments in respect of eternity and time. Besides this, it must be remembered that in speaking of the living God, of the essence of God,

'we are concerned with an act which utterly surpasses the whole of the actuality that we have come to know as act, and compared with which all that we have come to know as act is no act at all, because as act it can be transcended.'

(CD II/1, p. 263)

In his critique of the theology of crisis (that is of the Barth of the Christian Dogmatics, of 'Schicksal und Idee in der Theologie' and the first volume of the Church Dogmatics) Bonhoeffer advances a notable analysis of what came to be regarded as Barth's actualism. Bonhoeffer sees

35. CD II/1, p. 263.

36. Ibid.

in 'Schicksal und Idee' a pattern of act and consequent dialectic that is again to be found in CD II/1. He maintained that in the light of the assertion that 'God reveals himself only in acts freely initiated by himself',³⁷ and that God creates the hearing and belief in man as an act of God in grace, that then this results in an acute de-temporalisation of God's being. Because God's being is solely act, and is consequently in man only as act not only is rational conceptualising of such acts, ex post facto, bound to fail, but more significantly as regards the Church Dogmatics this act is outside time. Bonhoeffer's argument in the following passage applies to work earlier than that at present being considered in this study, but to parallel works in terms of content.

'It follows that although Barth has no hesitation in making use of temporal categories (moment, here and now, before, after, etc.) his use of the act must not be regarded as temporal. The freedom of God and the act of belief are essentially supratemporal; if Barth nevertheless stresses the act which, recurrently "beginning at the beginning", is at all times free, so that there can be no inference from one act to the next, we must understand that he is endeavouring to translate the transcendental concept of the act into terms of the geschichtlich.

(Act and Being, p. 82)

Because Barth further denies the capax infiniti of any 'historical' moment the empirical action of man points to God, and not to the actual faith and obedience of man himself. Now the important aspect of this characterisation of Barth for this thesis is the accusation of a non-temporal act in God and the purely parabolic use of temporal language to describe such acts. Bonhoeffer wrote in 1931 and refers to 37. Act and Being, Collins, 1962, p. 82.

the works cited above, which do not include the later volumes of the Church Dogmatics following CD I. Barth reflects Bonhoeffer's analysis in CD II/1 inasmuch as act precedes a dialectical exposition of the event of God's act and of events or happenings in nature or human history. Where Barth and Bonhoeffer's account of the 'early' Barth differ is in the former's insistent use of temporal language and ultimately in his direct contrast and relation of eternity and time which is to be temporally understood. Bonhoeffer has been canonised as the saint of secular theology (whether mistakenly is not relevant here) and part of this may be attributable to his trenchant criticism of Barth, which certainly sees in him a danger of a dissolution of time into a reborn idealist transcendence. It seems to the writer of this thesis that Barth is out to posit and sustain a consistent double-aspect theory of the relation of eternity and time in the light of the incarnation. Because of this fundamentally orthodox impulse in his thought there may indeed be great strains in the exposition of God's being in act, but he is striving nevertheless to maintain the two realities in intimate relation.

Bonhoeffer's conclusion is negative and presages his move towards a totally concrete form of revelation without any metaphysical 'danglers'. 'The whole situation impels one to ask whether a formalistic understanding of God's freedom in contingent revelation, conceived wholly in terms of the act, is really the proper groundwork for theology.'³⁸

38. Op.cit., p. 90.

Given the duality of God in himself and God in revelation, Bonhoeffer unequivocally chooses the latter.

'In revelation it is a question less of God's freedom on the far side from us, i.e. his eternal isolation and aseity, than of his forth-proceeding, his given Word, his bond in which he has bound himself, of his freedom as it is most strongly attested in his having freely bound himself to historical man, having placed himself at man's disposal. God is not free of man but for man. Christ is the Word of his freedom. God is there, which is to say: not in the eternal non-objectivity but (looking ahead for a moment) "haveable", graspable in his Word within the Church. Here a substantial comes to supplant the formal understanding of God's freedom. If it should prove itself, it will suggest a redirection of our attention from revelation seen in terms of the act towards ontological ideas.'
(Act and Being, pp. 90-91)

Barth provides precisely such an integrated doctrine of act in being and being in act demanded by Bonhoeffer's critique in the Christological and trinitarian synthesis of the Church Dogmatics. This goes far towards meeting Bonhoeffer's criticisms by means of an unprecedented theological integration of the dichotomy of the Deus in se and the Deus revelatus characteristic of post-Reformation Protestant dualism. Few have fully appreciated this aspect of Barth's achievement which is informed and structured by the doctrine of time and eternity. Barth continues his exposition as noted above with a reassertion of dialectic, that is of 'dialectical transcendence'. Again an extensive quotation of Barth is given for in this passage he struggles with the intrinsic ambivalence of the likeness and unlikeness of God's act to all other actuality.

'But we must be more precise. When on the basis of His revelation we always understand God as event, as act and as life, we have not in any way identified Him with a sum or content of event, act, or life generally. We can never expect to know generally

what event or act or life is, in order from that point to conclude and assert that God is He to whom this is all proper in an unimaginable and incomprehensible fulness and completeness. When we know God as event, act and life, we have to admit that generally and apart from Him we do not know what this is. So then, when we know God as event, act and life, He is definitely something different - to be distinguished from what we are accustomed to understand by these views and concepts. God's revelation is a particular event, not identical with the sum, nor identical with any of the content of other existing happenings either in nature or in human history. It is a definite happening within general happening: so definite that, while it takes part in this happening, it also contradicts it, and can only be seen and comprehended together with it in its contradiction, without the possibility of a synthesis, apart from the synthesis proclaimed and already fulfilled in itself. So, too, the action of God that takes place in revelation is a particular action, different from any other happening, even in contradiction to it. Actus purus is not sufficient as a description of God. To it there must be added at least "et singularis." The fact that in God the source, reconciliation and goal of all other happenings are together real and discernible, is another matter, which as such is only true in the separation of this action from every other happening. God is also the One who is event, act and life in His own way, as distinct from everything that He is not Himself, even though at the same time He is its source, reconciliation and goal. God is not merely differentiated from all other actuality as actuality generally and as such, or as its essence and principle, so that, while He is differentiated from all other actuality, He is still connected to it - and the idea is both immanent in the phenomenon and transcendent to it. He is, of course, differentiated from it in this way too. His work in the creation and preservation of the world can also up to a point - but only up to a point - be described in this way. But the particularity of His working and therefore His being as God is not exhausted by this dialectical transcendence which, however strictly it may be understood, must always be understood with equal strictness as immanence. On the contrary, without prejudice to and yet without dependence upon His relationship to what is event, act and life outside Him, God is in Himself free event, free act and free life.'

(CD II/1, p. 264)

There are, in this passage, the themes we have noted in the course of this study which are characteristic of the

Church Dogmatics as a whole. Barth's argument is readily understandable on the basis of the foregoing doctrines of revelation in directness and indirectness and the mutuality of immanence and transcendence. In the doctrine of eternity is specified that relation of 'definite happening' and 'general happening' alluded to here. Elements of this account are now developed in depth. The distinction of divine and non-divine happening is not a dualism of nature and grace, soul and body, and so on.³⁹ The unspecifiable relation of divine with non-divine being must be approached from the standpoint of the being of God. 'The divine being must be allowed to transcend both spirit and nature, yet also to overlap and comprehend both, as attested in His revelation according to the testimony of Holy Scripture.'⁴⁰ Barth moves from a consideration of event to enquire into the event and life of God. Following Barth's lead, there follows a brief exposition of his doctrine of God which will precede an eventual return to consideration of the perfection of eternity in the context of the dynamic and positive doctrine of attribution. The dialectic in the relation of the 'event of revelation' to its 'natural, bodily, outward and visible component'⁴¹ must rest till then, for it is in the specified relation of eternity and time that this mysterious identity and distinction is given clarity and resolution.

Barth's ostensibly non-metaphysical ontology of God begins with a denial of the 'purely spiritual' interpretation

39. CD II/1, p. 265.

40. Op.cit., p. 266.

41. Op.cit., p. 265.

of the divine being. This is the first stage in a positive exposition directly polemically against the depersonalising tendencies of the Hegelian doctrine of absolute spirit, applied in the theological sphere of the Trinity. For Barth the 'particularity of the divine event, act and life is the particularity of the being of a person'.⁴² What Barth terms 'the world of nature and sense' is strictly subordinate to the 'peak of all happening in revelation', which is God's address, as an I to a thou, and 'the whole content of the happening' in the Word becoming flesh.⁴³ The fundamental postulate of God's being is the assertion of his being in act. The corollary of this is its revelation as being which is self-moved, in contradistinction to being in both 'nature' and 'spirit'.⁴⁴ Against Hegel, God's being is not merely hypostatised self-movement but 'It is His executed decision - executed once for all in eternity, and anew in every second of our time, and therefore in such a way that it confronts what is not divine being, not as a mere possibility, but always as a self-contained, self-containing reality'.⁴⁵ God is the divine person. The divine person is distinguished from other persons by the fact that God's being is 'absolutely its own, conscious, willed and executed decision',⁴⁶ whereas man can only falsely and sinfully ascribe this to himself. On the assumption that

42. Op.cit., p. 267.

43. Ibid.

44. Op.cit., p. 268.

45. Op.cit., p. 271.

46. Ibid.

person is being in act then it follows that God is the true being of a person. 'Being in its own, conscious, willed and executed decision, and therefore personal being, is the being of God in the nature of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.'⁴⁷ The person of God is prior to all other persons and personhood. So Barth concludes his exposition of God's being as actus purus et singularis, which is therefore 'real person'.⁴⁸

God's being whilst independent is not indifferent, subsisting in a holy isolation. Without necessity or constraint from outside of himself God loves in an 'overflow of His essence'.⁴⁹ God's love is concerned with the creation of 'fellowship for its own sake' and is unrelated to worth on the part of the loved.⁵⁰ Moreover, 'God's loving is an end in itself' for 'All the purposes that are willed and achieved in Him are contained and explained in this end, and therefore in this loving in itself and as such'.⁵¹ God 'loves to eternity', and is 'necessary' as the 'being, the essence and the nature of God'.⁵² God's grace is grounded in fact; according to Barth, 'it takes place in the whole intervention of the divine action and being'.⁵³ This 'event'

47. Ibid.

48. Op.cit., p. 272.

49. Op.cit., p. 273.

50. Op.cit., pp. 276, 278.

51. Op.cit., p. 279.

52. Op.cit., p. 280.

53. Op.cit., p. 281.

of God's love is final and is the theological bedrock upon which our spade turns: 'We cannot go back behind this event'.⁵⁴ God's loving is his being in time and in eternity; for '"God is" means "God loves"'.⁵⁵ Barth therefore relates act, being, love and person in a theological exposition of the being of God. The actual and crucial focal point of this is,

'The One, the person, whom we really know as a human person, is the person of Jesus Christ, and even this is in fact the person of God the Son, in which humanity, without being or having itself a person is caught up into fellowship with the personality of God. This one man is therefore the being of God making itself known to us as the One who loves.'

(CD II/1, p. 286)

Barth thus combines the gift of humanity to man as a person, with the act of the incarnation, so that in coming to be a person in Christ the love of God is made known. Indeed Barth points forward to the Christological resolution of the categories of divine and human existence. This series of statements demonstrates how far it is that he has moved from the dialectic of antitheses of Romans towards what is now found to be a dialectic implicit in the revelation of God's being and its possibility. In the context of an opposition of 'absolute' and 'personality' Barth argues as follows.

'No: the (to us) inexplicable paradox of the nature of God is the fact that He is primarily and properly all that our terms seek to mean, and yet of themselves cannot mean, that He has revealed Himself to us in His original and proper being, thus remaining incomprehensible to us even in His revelation, yet allowing and commanding us to put our concepts into

54. Ibid.

55. Op.cit., p. 283.

the service of knowledge of Him, blessing our obedience, being truly known by us within our limits. It is the paradox of the combination of two for us irreconcilable concepts. Recognising the true, divine paradox, we shall not see together or put together God's personal-ness in the way that we are often forced to do, with and without logical contradictions, when we describe created realities, but we shall hold to the fact that God has revealed Himself to us as He who is, that is as the One who loves and therefore as One-person.'
(CD II/1, p. 287)

Barth effectively builds the divine side of the movement which finds its fulfilment in the subsequent Christological exposition that will feature later in this thesis.⁵⁶ Barth concludes his analysis of God's being as 'He who lives and loves is being in freedom'.⁵⁷ His freedom is such that 'He is the one, original and authentic person through whose creative power and will alone all other persons are and are sustained'.⁵⁸ The lordship of God thus culminated in the freedom of God offers the key to Barth's understanding of transcendence which will underlie the positive account of the perfections of God and thus eternity. The weight of Barth's exposition now shifts from the distinction of being represented in dialectic to the 'biblical idea of God',⁵⁹ guaranteed by God's aseity or 'independentia' considered as the 'positive aspect of God's freedom to exist in Himself'.⁶⁰ This conception of transcendence is the final stage in the initial description of the being of God in act which is the foundation of the

56. Cf. Chapters VII & VIII.

57. CD II/1, p. 301.

58. Ibid.

59. Op.cit., p. 302.

60. Ibid.

ensuing doctrine of attribution to be considered in the third and concluding part of this chapter. Barth notes the Protestant scholastic failure to grasp the positive aspect of God's aseity shown in its almost exclusive emphasis upon the negative aspect of God's freedom from all external conditions. The doctrine of being in act which has been examined above, constitutes the basis of what is to follow. The circulus veritatis is the dynamic springboard of the overall scheme that ensues as it is to be explored in the doctrines of eternity, election and the incarnation itself. Later, at the very end of this chapter we shall return to this theme, relating Barth's understanding of transcendence and infinity to a study of the doctrine of eternity that follows in Chapter IV. It is in the context of Barth's concepts of divine absoluteness and transcendence that the problem of finitude and infinitude and the response in the doctrine of eternity may best be set. Suspending the immediate discussion that has been developed above, concerning the interpretation and statement of the doctrine of being in act in the Church Dogmatics, the goal of eternity may now be approached through Barth's positive exposition of the divine perfections.

Barth's doctrine of attribution begins with the fact of God's love in his freedom which is his perfect being. God's being is 'itself perfection and so the standard of all perfection'⁶¹ without any lack or deficiency. God is there-

61. Op.cit., p. 322.

fore both perfection and plenitude. At the outset Barth vigorously asserts the unity of God in the multiplicity of his perfections, 'The one perfection of God, His loving in freedom, is lived out by Him, and therefore identical with a multitude of various and distinct types of perfection'.⁶² In a direct parallel with the doctrine of the Trinity in unity Barth asserts the 'perfections of the life of the One who loves in freedom, 'Since God is Father, Son and Holy Ghost, i.e., loves in freedom, every perfection exists essentially in Him'.⁶³ God is not known apart from his perfections and the perfections are not known apart from God. This realism is grounded upon the identity of God with his revelation; and to 'attest this biblical unity of the Lord with His glory is the business of the divine perfections'. That is, God does not acquire his glory, the glory of his perfections, in relation to us, thus opening his being to 'punctual or linear' interpretation (reminiscent of the danger of 'occasionalism') or indeed become a 'collection of mighty potencies'. On the contrary the perfections of God are dynamically co-existent and consubstantial.

'The attributes or perfections of God are as it were the letters of the divine Word. It becomes a Word only through the sequence and unity of these letters. But again, it is only in this sequence and unity that the letters can constitute the Word. In the same way the doctrine of God's perfections consists at every point only in the development and confirmation of the doctrine of His being. We can in fact only continue to say that He is the One who loves in freedom. Yet in the doctrine of God's perfections there must be this development and confirmation of the doctrine of His being. It must therefore tread this path.'
(CD II/1, p. 327)

62. Ibid.

63. Op.cit., p. 323.

Barth strikes out once more in an integrated account which is set against the dualism of a doctrine of pure being distinct from the divine attributes. This exposition is a 'continual recognition and confirmation of the plenitude and richness of this one being of God'.⁶⁴ In the assertion of the multiplicity in unity of God Barth strives to overcome a whole series of problems characteristic of the western tradition, as, for example, manifested in the tension of nominalism and realism. As we have seen Barth is concerned to understand 'the attributes of God as those of His special being itself and therefore of His life, of His love in freedom'.⁶⁵ The dialectic of self-disclosure ('God is for us fully revealed and fully concealed'⁶⁶) and its corollary in human knowing and not knowing is not transcended but intrinsic; for 'God's reality is of such a character that the one exists with the other, in the other, alongside of and after the other, an eternal simultaneity and successiveness'.⁶⁷ This dialectic corresponds to the unity and distinction in God's own being between his love and his freedom. From this is derived the distinction in God's perfections between those of divine love and those of divine freedom. So Barth integrates the traditional distinction of attributa incommunicabilia and attributa communicabilia under the overall dialectic, which in turn overcomes the dangerous tendency to separate attributes on the basis of the via eminentiæ and the

64. Op.cit., p. 371.

65. Op.cit., p. 337.

66. Op.cit., p. 341.

67. Op.cit., p. 343.

via negationis. Barth's new assertion of dialectic in the knowledge of God's perfections is a 'very special dialectic of the revelation and being of God'.⁶⁸ What Barth sets out to achieve is the thorough-going pre-empting of the separation of God's being in general from his triune being, of his being outwards and in himself, and of an impersonal absolute and personal loving nature. This is to be achieved by the revelation of the God who is in his perfections.

'In God's revelation the disclosure of God is in fact the first and last, the origin and end, of the ways of God. God's revelation is first and last a Gospel, glad tidings, the word and deed of divine grace. Not without concealment, for in His revelation God shows Himself to be the secret of all secrets; not without the revelation of His omnipotence and eternity, of His hidden majesty; not without the Gospel becoming for us Law and judgment; not without exposing our sin and helplessness, our distance from God and therefore the transcendence of God over all that He Himself is not....Only as God reveals Himself does He also conceal Himself. Only as God speaks and acts do His omnipotence and eternity become real to us. Only as He gives Himself to us as the One who loves does He withdraw from us in His holy freedom.'

(CD II/1, p. 349)

God's attributes (including that of eternity) are not divided even if they are in a special sense distinct. They are unified in the act of God who loves in his freedom, unconditioned yet conditioning all else. He is (and as has been seen this is a dynamic 'is') in his majesty, omnipotence, and eternity. The scholastic appearance of Barth's exposition has a deeply positive cast as it is built upon the foundations that have been developed in the doctrines of the Word of God and the Trinity. The first set of divine perfections (those of the divine loving) are the grace and

68. Op.cit., p. 348.

holiness, the mercy and righteousness and the patience and wisdom of God. They do not concern the main theme of this chapter, but point to the essential nature of a God whose perfections are revealed in his attitude to man's intransigence and hostility. The ground of God's moral attributes is the basis of his gracious revelation and continuing providence and this consists in his 'loving'. It is in regard to the perfections of the divine freedom that we finally draw close to our goal the eternity of God in its theological context.

Barth's statement of the perfections of the divine freedom is extremely important as a prelude to his doctrine of eternity, which is to be considered at some length in Chapter IV. Upon the basis of this theological exposition it will be possible to set the analysis of 'God's time', that is eternity, in a fuller perspective. As is now apparent setting out this context is no easy task for Barth's thought is both extensive and complex and beyond this open to varied interpretation. In the passage leading up to the discussion of eternity itself it is necessary to concentrate attention upon the problem of finitude and infinitude. The stance of Barth's doctrine of divine perfections vis à vis this anti-thesis gives insight into the ontological status of the doctrine of eternity. In turn this will cast light upon the whole structure of the axis of time and eternity in the Church Dogmatics.

Barth makes the assertion of God's unity the basic proposition of the doctrine of God's freedom. This unity

is to be understood as both uniqueness (singularitas), and simplicity (simplicitas). The latter is most important for this study, for in it Barth lays down a postulate of significance for the resolution of temporal distinction in eternity within the unity of the divine being.

'Being simple in the sense described, God is incomparably free, sovereign and majestic. In this quality of simplicity (i.e. At no time or place,...is He divided or divisible) are rooted, fixed and included all other attributes of His majesty: His constancy and eternity, His omnipresence, omnipotence and glory. Nothing can affect Him, or be far from Him, or contradict or withstand Him. because in Himself there is no separation, distance, contradiction or opposition. He is Lord in every relationship, because He is the Lord of Himself, unconditionally one as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in the whole real wealth of His being. For every distinction of His being and working is simply a repetition and corroboration of the one being and, in the one being, of all that He was from eternity and therefore from all time, and of all that He will be in eternity and therefore for all time.'

(CD II/1, p. 445)

The temporal aspect of the divine being must not contradict this perfection of divine simplicity. In fact this simplicity distinguishes world and God most effectively for God does not divide himself in 'effluences, emanations, effusions or irruptions of God into the world'.⁶⁹ In neither creation nor incarnation does God mix or identify himself with the world. What is this simplicity which distinguishes uncreated from created being? Not surprisingly God's unity is quite unique and exemplary in the sense that his simplicity is absolutely simple, whereas all else is merely relatively simple. Although Barth's doctrine of attribution has aspects reminiscent of exemplarism, and certainly, as has

69. Op.cit., p. 446.

been seen, exhibits the pattern of divine antecedence in plenitude and perfection, his actualist doctrine of God's being informs this structure in a remarkable way. Constantly the tendency towards abstraction is resisted with vigour as even the unity of God is regarded as a dynamic attribute, or as Barth prefers a perfection.

'We understand the concept of the unity of God in the first instance as a designation of His freedom, of His being as it is self-grounded and therefore absolutely superior to every other being. When we say that God is one, unique and simple, we mean something different from when we ascribe unity to any other quantity. Anything else to which we can ascribe unity is one side by side with one or many others which are comparable with it and belong with it to a species. It is one instance in a genus. It is, therefore, only relatively unique. But God is an instance outside every genus. God is, therefore, absolutely unique, in a way that is itself unique and cannot be denoted by any concept.... Everything else is only relatively simple. But God is simple without the least possibility of either internal or external composition. God is completely individual. He is absolutely simple.'

(CD II/1, p. 447)

Parallel with other parts of his exposition Barth argues that God's simplicity and freedom from complexity is not an absolutised notion of man, but a revelation of God's love. In the choice of man in the two-fold election of God, God's uniqueness is made known, 'It is in this event as such that the love of God reveals itself and acts with an incomparability to which the only appropriate response is the confession of God's uniqueness'.⁷⁰ Contrary to the theology of Neoplatonism and apophaticism Barth argues in positive terms that 'In Scripture the utterly simple is "simply" God Himself in the actuality, the superior might,

70. Op.cit., p. 451.

the constancy, the obviousness, or even more simply, the factuality, in which He is present as God and deals as God with the creature, with man'.⁷¹ Barth notably avoids the 'logical and mathematical reflections' of the orthodox dogmatics. It is on the basis of God's unity and simplicity that Barth argues for his omnipresence and with this move this study is brought into the sphere of divine spatiality, and, following this, the problem of eternity and time. It is at this juncture that many new issues emerge concerning the nature of Barth's affirmation of the spatiality and temporality of God.

Barth's argument is from within the circulus veritatis and consists of the presentation of a series of interlocking and mutually valid statements.

'Because and as God is one, unique and simple, He is for this reason omnipresent. Omnipresence is certainly a determination of the freedom of God. It is the sovereignty in which, as the One He is, existing and acting in the way that corresponds to His essence, He is present to everything else, to everything that is not Himself but is distinct from Himself. It is the sovereignty on the basis of which everything that exists cannot exist without Him, but only with Him, possessing its own presence only on the presupposition of His presence.

(CD II/1, p. 461)

This is based, as has been seen, upon the doctrine of God's act in his being. From, and upon this foundation, both the critical and the constructive aspects of the doctrine of eternity and time are derived. In consequence:

'...eternity in itself and as such is to be understood as a determination of the divine freedom. Like the unity and constancy of God, it primarily denotes the absolute sovereignty and majesty of God in itself and

71. Op.cit., p. 457.

as such, as demonstrated in the inward and outward activity of His divine being and operative in His love as His the eternal love. God's love requires and possesses eternity both inwards and outwards for the sake of its divinity, its freedom. Correspondingly it requires, creates and therefore possesses in its outward relations what we call time. Time is the form of creation in virtue of which it is definitely fitted to be a theatre for the acts of divine freedom.' (CD II/1, pp. 464-465)

The nub of Barth's doctrine of eternity is presented here insofar as it is an expression of the divine freedom, and thus of the fundamental theological ontology of the Church Dogmatics. On this basis Barth is able to secure his doctrine of eternity in a truly theological starting-point and, therefore, to distinguish it from the traditional association of omnipresence and eternity with infinity. As Barth has remarked earlier God's being lies outside the dialectic of finite-infinite limitations⁷² and this has consequences spelt out at this later point in his exposition.

The eternity of God is classified as a perfection of the divine freedom and we commence our analysis proper with Barth's highly illuminating distinction, between his own, and the traditional doctrine, of God's omnipresence and eternity. In this excursus⁷³ some of the most characteristic features of Barth's theology of time and eternity are exposed in the way that he conceives the relation of omnipresence and eternity to space and time. Barth attacks the parallelism between omnipresence and eternity apparent in the Loci of J. Gerhard and taken up in Kantian thought. It is this scheme, which understands space and time as 'the limits within

72. Op.cit., pp. 188-9.

73. Op.cit., pp. 464-468.

which we exist and within which the world exists for us' and the eternal and omnipresent God as 'the supreme principle of existence and the universe, which is not itself bound by these limits and conditions, but posits and embraces them',⁷⁴ that does not represent 'a true outworking of the Christian knowledge of God' but an account based upon the problems raised by the created world and human existence.

In Barth's previous argument God's omnipresence is presented as:

'a determination of His love, insofar as God is not only One, unique and simple, but as such is present to Himself and therefore present to everything which by Him is outside Him'.

(CD II/1, p. 464)

Eternity is to be understood primarily as a determination of the divine freedom' as qualified by His love and,

'Like the unity and constancy of God, it primarily denotes the absolute sovereignty and majesty of God in itself and as such, as demonstrated in the inward and outward activity of His divine being and operative in His love as His, the eternal love. God's love requires and possesses eternity both inwards and outwards for the sake of its divinity, its freedom. Correspondingly it requires, creates and therefore possesses in its outward relations what we call time. Time is the form of creation in virtue of which it is definitely fitted to be a theatre for the acts of divine freedom'

(CD II/1, pp. 464-5)

On the basis of this active divine being, Barth distinguishes eternity from the temporal creation; for if creation were eternal (as God is) then God would be bound to his creation and not its free and sovereign Lord. There is, according to Barth, as a consequence of his analysis of the divine perfections, no direct parallel between omnipresence

74. Op.cit., p. 464.

and eternity (as between eternity and time in Kantian thought) but a more profound unity in the divine essence, as explicated in God's freedom and love. Thus Barth understands the problem of eternity as a dynamic perfection of God not as a static attribute, a negation of the temporal, characteristic of the dualism and apophaticism of scholastic theology.

Barth then proceeds to question the notion of infinity used in older theology to denote the eternity of God. This notion is generated out of negation and human limitation as 'It speaks of the non-finiteness, the non-limitedness or non-limitableness, and therefore the timelessness and non-spatiality of God'.⁷⁵ Time and space, timelessness and the non-spatial exist within the reality distinct from God and their relations must not be confused with the relationship between man and God. Thus God truly transcends the antithesis of finite and infinite which characterises the world and human existence. This antithesis was synthesised in the dialectic of Hegel and then destroyed in the criticism of Feuerbach. In fact God could in his essence be both finite and infinite for:

'The infinity which as a concept stands in antithesis to finitude, and therefore to this extent the isolated concept of infinity, is quite insufficient to describe what God is in relation to space and time. God's "infinity", if we want to use this expression, is true infinity because it does not involve any contradiction that is finitude as well. For there is no reason why God in His essence should not be finite in the same perfect way as He is infinite....If we call God infinite, measureless, limitless, spaceless and timeless, this does not mean that we will try to exclude, deny or even question that He is the One who in His whole action posits beginning and end, measure and limit, space and time.'

(CD II/1, p. 476)

75. Op.cit., p. 465.

Firstly, according to Barth's argument, 'God does not do anything which in His own way He does not have and is not in Himself'.⁷⁶ Secondly, how could a God bound by the strictures of a negative infinity be 'the Lord, the Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer?'⁷⁷ Thirdly, according to Barth:

'God is certainly infinite, i.e. He has no basis which is not Himself, no goal which is not Himself and no standard or law which is not Himself. But He is also finite - without destroying, but in His infinity - in the fact that as love He is His own basis, goal, standard and law. It is in this way - and not in that abstract infinity - that God is eternal and omnipresent.'

(CD II/1, p. 468)

The dialectical tension of finite and infinite is a totally inadequate vehicle for comprehending divinity, and when it is imposed, prevents precisely that freedom of God which is realised in his incarnation in Jesus Christ and in the true dialectic of transcendence and immanence understood from the standpoint of grace. In summary, Barth argues that God is not bound to space and time as the forms and limits of creation. God's infinity is (as are all his attributes, according to Barth) his own, divine, infinitude which places him outside the confinement of the mutual antitheses of finite and infinite, time and timelessness, spatiality and non-spatiality. Thus it is that God's 'infinity' is a 'perfection' which does not imply the exclusion of finitude. On the contrary, the denial of finitude to God implied by the assertions that he is 'infinite, measureless, limitless, spaceless and timeless'⁷⁸ does not prevent him from being the

76. Op.cit., p. 467.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

'One who in His whole action posits beginning and end, measure and limit space and time'.⁷⁹ Barth's question that follows finds its answer in the total response of the Church Dogmatics expressed in the combined structure of a dogmatics which synthesises, as will be seen, both biblical concepts and notions inherited from philosophical theology which are dynamically reinterpreted. Barth asks, 'If He did not do this (remain 'infinite' yet posit finitude) but was absolutely infinity as the older theology presupposed, how could He be God, love living in freedom, the Lord, the Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer?'⁸⁰ Infinity in respect of God must therefore be understood in this special sense (which comprises finitude and infinitude) not as a general concept under which omnipresence and eternity may be subsumed. For Barth, 'God is certainly infinite, i.e., He has no basis which is not Himself and no standard or law which is not Himself. But He is also finite - without destroying, but in His infinity - in the fact that as love He is His own basis, goal standard and law. It is in this way - and not in that abstract infinity - that God is eternal and omnipresent'.⁸¹

In this, the first of two fundamental chapters on the basis and nature of Karl Barth's doctrine of eternity, we have seen how his thought is open to diverse interpretation, as was instanced by Jenson and Zahrnt. Taking up a hint offered by T.F. Torrance our attention was concentrated upon the doctrine of divine being underlying and informing the

79. Ibid., p. 468.

80. Ibid.

81. Op.cit., p. 468.

Church Dogmatics. God is the source of his own reality for us and is therefore his own interpreter. Natural theology in its vicious form is but the machination of man as he understands himself falsely outside of Jesus Christ. Thus the repudiation of natural theology directs attention to Christ and the real basis of anthropology. The inner dynamic of this is God's act which expresses, in nuce, the tension of event in God and event in time. This in turn as 'full contemporaneity' directed us towards the doctrine of eternity as the explication of this temporal elasticity. Reference was made to Bonhoeffer's critique of Barth in Act and Being and it is suggested that in fact Barth goes far in securing both act and ontology without severance of God as he is in himself and God as he is in revelation. The 'event' of God's love is final and is realised in Jesus Christ; there can be no dichotomy or gulf in this 'paradox of combination'.⁸² It is upon this unique and prototypical act that Barth bases his doctrine of the divine perfections. 'The doctrine of God's perfections consists at every point only in the development and confirmation of the doctrine of His being.'⁸³ The circulus veritatis is the ground of Barth's argument and the foregoing exposition of this has served as a context to our detailed examination of the doctrine of eternity which is to follow. There can be no compromise in terms of either epistemological or ontological source when it is a matter of God's infinity and thus his eternity. So Barth establishes

82. Op.cit., p. 287.

83. Op.cit., p. 327.

his foundations and grounds them upon the ontology of God, not the human ratiocination of the immanent dialectic of antitheses. This inner structure is inevitable and pervasive in the Church Dogmatics. The tensions ostensibly resolved in it are most clearly manifested in the doctrine of eternity to which we may now turn.

CHAPTER IV

ACT AND ETERNITY

Barth's doctrine of eternity is the temporal explanation of the consistently developed doctrine of the divine perfections, which is everywhere the fulfilment and realisation of the dynamic divine being. Thus Barth argues, with regard to the perfections most closely allied to eternity in this study, 'by constancy we denote first the perfect freedom of God and by omnipotence the perfect love in which He is free'.¹ The freedom of God is, as has been seen, intimately bound up with this exposition and is grounded upon the unique and determinative act of God that was analysed in Chapter III. Once more it is necessary, as with spatiality, to break free from pre-conceived notions by invocation of this essentially dynamic and non-static theological ontology.

'The one, omnipresent God remains the One He is. This is His constancy. It is not in conflict with His freedom and His love. On the contrary, both His freedom and His love are divine for the very reason that they are the freedom and love of the One who is constant in Himself: from whose freedom nothing else is ever under any circumstances to be expected but that again and again He will be Himself and demonstrate and confirm Himself as such,...The constancy of God is not, therefore, in conflict with the life of God either. The one omnipresent God is the living God. But as the living God, He is not Himself subject to or capable of any alteration, and does not cease to be Himself. His life is not only the origin of all created change, but is in itself the fulness of difference, movement, will, decision, action, degeneration and rejuvenation. But He lives it in eternal self-repetition and self-affirmation. As His inner life and His life in all

1. CD II/1, p. 490.

that is, it will never sever itself from Him, turn against Him, or possess a form or operation alien to Him. In all its forms and operations it will be His life.'

(CD II/1, pp. 491-2)

It would be most interesting but strictly irrelevant to our purposes to trace Barth's assertion of this renewed understanding of divine constancy and omnipotence in anything but a bare outline, for as the above quotation has shown, it is the fulness of the divine being and its resolution of the apparently incompatible, that is of major concern to us. This resolution of tensions is of prime importance in the doctrine of eternity and its corollate, time. It is towards this crucial area that this study will now move by means of a brief description of the immediate context of this doctrine, which has already been explored at length with regard to its most basic theological foundations.

God's own vitality is expressed and confirmed in his positing and maintenance of a reality distinct from himself. The proof (this word must be treated with circumspection) of God's constant vitality is his 'real history', the 'history of the reconciliation and revelation accomplished by Him, by which He leads the world to a future redemption'.² This history is of central significance in the Church Dogmatics for,

'It is this very history which reveals in what sense He is the Creator and Lord of the world and in what way the world is actually posited by His free love, in what way it is really in Him by Him. For the beginning and end and quintessence of this history, at all events on the one hand, is always that the

2. Op.cit., p. 502.

created world is by God, that it never escapes His control by reason of its own reality or autonomy, but that it is wholly and utterly under His domain and in His hand. And on the other hand, it is also that this world is in God, which means that in its reality, which is distinct from the divine reality, it is always upheld by God, that it never falls out of His hands in this reality and autonomy. This is so because He never ceases to act in His connexion with it, giving Himself wholly in love to this connexion, without detriment to His freedom. So far from contradicting Himself God confirms Himself as the Creator of the world by having a special history with it in His work of reconciliation and revelation.'

(CD II/1, p. 503)

This insight is of decisive importance, for in the above quotation is to be seen the paradigmatic role of the history of God's acts, which demonstrates the act of God's love in his freedom. Knowledge of the original relation in the time of God's 'general speaking' is lost and restored only by the 'special work' of the God of Holy Scripture, for 'God so surpasses Himself in this new work that it is only here that He can really be known, as it were retrospectively, as God the Creator'.³ The core of this history is Jesus Christ, 'the meaning and secret of the history of salvation',⁴ and so the 'general truth' of God's Lordship and work of creation is made known as a result of free and active grace revealed supremely, and in an ultimate sense exclusively, in Jesus Christ.

Once more Barth's consistent repudiation of abstraction is to be noted as he repeatedly asserts the actuality of the divine attributes as they are manifested

3. Op.cit., p. 507.

4. Ibid.

in revelation and Holy Scripture. Such perfections as Barth develops, are the legitimate constructions made on the basis of what is perceived to be God's act in history. They are not the imported abstractions of protestant scholasticism which are in turn the inheritance of an alien tradition of Neoplatonic origins. Barth specifically rejects Schleiermacher's identification of omnipotence and omnicausality which had lost the distinctive freedom of God's act. This freedom is again safeguarded in Barth's thought by the doctrine of eternity, as will be seen. The significance of the distinction is perhaps most clearly developed in the doctrine of election and the divine decree, which is open to mechanistic interpretations when understood in a causally determined doctrine of predestination. All these critical comments, which feature at length in the latter parts of CD II/1, serve to compel the reader to appreciate ever more fully Barth's primary insight that has characterised his thought from the outset, 'All Christian knowledge of God has its source in the revelation of God'.⁵ In the light of this Barth's exposition is suitably modified and reveals that indirectness so apparent in the overall structure of his thought. In more precise terms the fundamental postulate that has been traced through Barth's thought is that the 'two statements "God knows" and "God wills"' describe the 'one total essence of God'.⁶ This means that the whole theological spectrum is derived from this one shaft of

5. Op.cit., p. 545.

6. Op.cit., p. 549.

light, which undergoes refraction and reveals, comprised within itself, the diversity of theological colours. Put more precisely, the dogmatic impulse in the doctrine of God provides the substance of all theological assertions, as it is realised in the act of God, that is in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Word of God from eternity.

Barth draws a direct parallel between God's knowledge and his omnipotence. The latter is founded upon his willing, which is positive and ontological; 'God's willing something can therefore mean that He loves, affirms and confirms it, that He creates, upholds and promotes it out of the fulness of His life'.⁷ Barth's further characterisation of this is in the ascription of foreknowledge to God, conceived in terms which lead directly to a consideration of eternity as the temporal enabling of such a flexible and unfettered notion of praescientia. It is necessary to note his exact words, for the whole structure and theological possibility of the Church Dogmatics rests, as is becoming apparent, upon this central and indeed pivotal concept of eternity.

'God's knowledge does not consist only in His knowing all things before they are and have been, in His actually knowing them when they are still future. It does, of course, consist in this. But the decisive thing is that God and therefore His knowledge of all things is what it is in temporal superiority to all things and eternal independence of all things.... It is not that God knows everything because it is, but that it is because He knows it. For primarily, in the basis and origin of its being, everything does not exist in itself but in God, in His knowledge of its possibility and its actuality. Thus the "fore" in the divine foreknowledge denotes the absolute priority and superiority of God Himself to every possible existence

7. Op.cit., p. 556.

distinct from His own, His dignity as the Creator of being and as the Lord and master of non-being.... Everything that exists outside Him does so because it exists first and eternally in Him in His knowledge. It is for this reason that His knowledge is not actually tied to the distinction between past, present and future being. For this reason, too, all things in all ages are foreknown by God from all eternity, or, put in temporal terms, always - no less and no differently in their future than in their present and past.'

(CD II/1, pp. 558-9)

The 'temporal superiority' denotes what is termed in this study 'temporal transcendence', and the pattern of eternal antecedence that is clearly displayed in the above passage is to have a central place in the exposition of election, incarnation and Christology, as well as of eternity itself. Corresponding to the eternal Lordship of God is the revelation of his power which is in time. Indeed knowledge of this is dependent upon the fact that 'God has a definite location in history distinct from other places, a concrete temporal centre from which God knows and wills and from which he exercises His power in all ages'.⁸ The temporal transcendence of God's omniscience is bound irrevocably to time in a special way. The temporal corollate of the eternal being of God is God's own temporal being. As will be seen, the 'dialectic of grace' is now exemplified in the divine tension of eternity and time within God, for God is, as will be seen, both eternal and temporal: God's time is eternity.

'It is the existence of this place which marks out and characterises the testimony of the Bible to the omnipotence of the personal God as testimony to the

8. Op.cit., p. 604.

true and living God....But just because it is aware of this as personal omnipotence, it ascribes a concrete temporal centre to it, and it always points and refers back to this centre, to a definite place, from which God exercises His power in all other places too, in the strength of the knowing and willing which proceeds from this place. It is from this centre that He loves the world. For He Himself is this centre. This centre is His omnipotent Word by which He created and governs and upholds the world, withstands its rebellion and restores it to Himself, not only calling it back from all sides, but omnipotently bringing it back to peace with Himself.'

(CD II/1, pp. 604-5)

The focus of the biblical testimony is upon Jesus Christ, 'the One who is born in His own time as the fulfilment of all time, the crucified and risen Son of God and Son of Man'.⁹ The Logos of God, as Lord of the Exodus and Lord of the consummation of the Church, lies at the centre of Barth's doctrine of time and eternity. As has been noted in our opening chapters Barth's theological inspiration is always the self-giving and self-existent God as he unfolds his being in revelation. The being of God in eternity is at once the power-base of the Church Dogmatics and the nodal-point of the reconciliation of the dialectic of antitheses implicit in our conception of time. From the outset of Barth's exposition of eternity (to which we now turn) these considerations are central and of crucial importance.

In the exposition of eternity, The Eternity and Glory of God, Barth comes to terms with the most troublesome aspects of the doctrine of eternity by adopting and developing the Boethian concept of eternity, in the context of a dynamic exposition of the divine perfections and the being

9. Op.cit., p. 605.

of God. Thus:

'God's eternity, like his unity and constancy, is a quality of His freedom. It is the sovereignty and majesty of His love in so far as this has and is itself pure duration. The being is eternal in whose duration beginning, succession and end are not three but one, not separate as a first, a second and a third occasion, but one simultaneous occasion as beginning, middle and end. Eternity is the simultaneity of beginning, middle and end, and to that extent it is pure duration. Eternity is God in the sense in which in Himself and in all things God is simultaneous, i.e. beginning and middle as well as end, without separation, distance or contradiction. Eternity is not, therefore, time, although time is certainly God's creation or, more correctly, a form of His creation. Time is distinguished from eternity by the fact that in it beginning, middle and end are distinct and even opposed as past, present and future. Eternity is just the duration which is lacking to time, as can be seen clearly at the middle point of time, in the temporal present and in its relationship to the past and to the future. Eternity has and is the duration which is lacking to time. It has and is simultaneity.'

(CD II/1, p. 608)

The above sets the scene for the study of Karl Barth's doctrine of eternity as it is to be found in the section on The Eternity and Glory of God. This passage is of considerable complexity because in it Barth attempts to reconcile within one synthesis the highly diverse and a priori incompatible elements which have afflicted theological thought about this central problem. Besides this misconceptions abound in this area and great care must be exercised in distinguishing these themes and questions so as to show what Barth says without prejudgement or distortion. There are, therefore, the following questions to be taken into account. First, what is Barth really attempting in this account of eternity? Second, in what way do biblical words for eternity relate to his argument? Third, what are the major influences upon Barth in historical terms? Fourth and finally, given

the linguistic, philosophical and theological factors, in what sense can Barth's doctrine of eternity be understood as a success or failure?

In the quotation given above several points emerge. The 'biblical' theme of God's freedom, sovereignty and majesty is to be married with the notion of 'pure duration' characteristic of the Augustinian, and ultimately 'Platonic' tradition, originating in Parmenides¹⁰ and taken up by Plato,¹¹ Plotinus,¹² Augustine,¹³ Boethius¹⁴ and Thomas Aquinas.¹⁵ W. Kneale¹⁶ clearly traces this line of thought in his articles and again F.H. Brabant¹⁷ and E. Bevan¹⁸

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10. Cf. Fragment 8, 'Neither was nor will be; it is all simultaneously one.' R.W. Jenson gives considerable attention to Parmenides in relation to Barth's early theology in God after God, but his outlook and conclusions differ from those informing the present study.
 11. Cf. Plato's sophisticated discussion of the One and the many in the Parmenides besides the highly influential passage of the Timaeus 37d.
 12. Enneads. In the third Ennead Plotinus defines eternity as 'such a life possesses everything as present, not this at one time and afterwards another...that which neither was nor will be, but alone is, stable, possessing its being, total and full...a life infinite because it is all, nothing of which is consumed...all things at once...It now possesses that which it ought to be'. It will be obvious in the following chapter that Barth's conception of eternity has distinct affinities with this notion of simultaneity. It is the theological context and actual function of eternity in the Church Dogmatics that constitutes its defence when interpreted in its Boethian form in a dynamic theological ontology.
 13. Augustine's Confessions, Bk. XI, and City of God, Bk. XI are most relevant to this study.
 14. The Consolations of Philosophy, Bk. V, Ch. 6, contains the famous passage stating the influential 'nunc stans'.
 15. References are made to the Summas as and when relevant.
 16. W. Kneale, 'Time and Eternity in Theology', P.A.S., 1961, pp. 87-108; cf. also M. Kneale, 'Eternity and Sempiternity', P.A.S., 1968, pp. 223-228.
 17. Time and Eternity in Christian Thought, Bampton Lectures, 1936.
 18. Symbolism and Belief, Gifford Lectures, 1933-4; cf. lectures on 'Time'.

explore the central notion which is specifically repudiated by O. Cullmann in Christ and Time.¹⁹ We will now examine Barth's statement in the light of this tendency towards synthesis in which he overtly embraces the Boethian concept of eternity, the 'Interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio', as the basis of his exposition, which is to be made within the dynamic context of the divine freedom.

The term 'pure duration' denotes 'one simultaneous occasion as beginning, middle and end',²⁰ and this concept rests upon the apparently paradoxical assertion that God's eternity is such that, 'in Himself and in all things God is simultaneous, i.e., beginning, middle as well as end, without separation, distance or contradiction'.²¹ Time itself is 'a form of creation'; it is 'distinguished from eternity by the fact that in it beginning, middle and end are distinct and even opposed as past present and future'.²² There is therefore no simple opposition or direct negation between time and eternity but a more complex relation; for 'eternity is just the duration which is lacking to time'.²³ Eternity is of great significance for time, in fact its role is constitutive and vital, for, as we shall see, 'Time can have nothing to do with God',²⁴ and, consequently, with eternity'.

19. Christ and Time, London, 1962, cf. pp. 61-68.

20. CD II/1, p. 608.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

Thus although Barth maintains that first it is necessary to understand this distinction between time and eternity as a 'clear antithesis', it is apparent that this is, in fact, only a one way exclusion when it is rightly understood in the light of his doctrine of God as a whole.

In the first excursus in this section of the Church Dogmatics on eternity, Barth attempts to draw a direct parallel between the concept of eternity implicit in the quotations he makes from Augustine, Anselm, and Polanus, and that in the Bible, with its basis in the Old Testament and its exploit^{ation} in the New. In Barth's words,

'"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting to everlasting thou art God" (Ps. 90,2). The final duplication, "from everlasting to everlasting," which is so common in both Old and New Testaments, may be regarded as particularly significant. It can be taken to mean from duration to duration, that is, in pure duration. That is how God exists in distinction from us who exist from one time to another, but never in pure duration.'

(CD II/1, p. 609)

This 'can be taken to mean' in fact spells out a fundamental and methodological identity in Barth's mind between the dogmatic formulae he is to utilise and the biblical concepts hinted at in Is. 43; Ps. 90; 2 Pet. 3,8; Ps. 102. At this point the critiques of O. Cullmann and J. Barr²⁵ press in upon Barth and so some consideration must be given to the linguistic and semantic problems that affect the creation of a 'biblical theology'. In reality Barth's conception of dogmatic theology is so structured as

25. Cf. Biblical Words for Time, London, 1969, and The Semantics of Biblical Language, London, 1961.

to avoid the charges made by Barr, given the weighty theological hermeneutic of the Church Dogmatics, paraphrased, for example, in the work of Jüngel.²⁶

The critiques of Cullmann and Barr impinge upon the Church Dogmatics in relation to the literalism or, as it has been termed by T.F. Torrance, the 'nominalism' of a theological theory of language bound by the limitations of a resolution of semantics into syntactics. Cullmann argues that the biblical concept of time is governed by a contrast of endless duration over against the limited time of human and worldly existence. Any deviation into 'philosophical' notions, advancing a 'qualitative' as opposed to a 'quantitative' distinction of time and eternity is inadmissible. Barth relapses into such a deviation by retaining 'alien' philosophical elements. Barr²⁷ argues against Cullmann that he relies upon a faulty methodology, in that along with J. Marsh²⁸ and J.A.T. Robinson he generates a 'biblical concept' on the basis of word usage. This is generalised and used in the construction of a theology that makes little reference to the actual context of use, of the individual words so utilised. As we have seen Cullmann and Barth disagree about the relation of time and eternity, for, in effect, Cullmann denies the possibility of real temporal transcendence in terms of divine freedom in the classical but dynamic sense, maintained by Barth in his

26. Cf. Gottes Sein ist im Werden and Chapter II of this thesis.

27. Biblical Words for Time, p. 180ff.

28. The Fulness of Time, London, 1952, is the target of Barr's most pungent attacks.

doctrine of eternity. What is even more significant is that Barth is outside the lexical stocks fallacy on the admission of Barr, who states that, 'Theological treatments of time which make no attempt to take a lexical structure as their basis already exist, and exist among theologians who would certainly claim to be observing biblical authority in the highest degree'.²⁹ In reality Barth is striving to adumbrate the 'Christo-logic' and 'theologic' which he understands to be the foundation of true dogmatic theology. Its prime goal is semantic reference and not a nominalism of biblical semantics resolved into syntactics.

In accordance with his realism, a probing beyond the dictates and limitations, set by the histories of 'concepts' in biblical thought, Barth is able to use both biblical and philosophical concepts in an open-ended and not a closed manner. Hence Barth draws together biblical language, the 'from everlasting to everlasting', and the idea of 'pure duration'. These cannot be directly equated on the basis of the exact extension and connotations of their meaning, but they can be used together in the context of analogia fidei and the doctrine of God. Such terms do not exhaust the concept of God's eternity, but are instrumental in an exposition, which is, in figurative language open upwards, for from God himself comes the depth and the validation of theological concepts, including that of eternity. Barth works with a freedom which, on his own terms, allows him to identify theologically (that is as grounded in God) biblical

29. Biblical Words for Time, p. 143n.

language and a dogmatic formula which crystallises the impulse of theological thought. Whilst this is what Barth is in fact doing we might still criticise the results in terms of their biblical fidelity and theological adequacy.

The study of Old Testament languages, and thus the crucial words ultimately standing for 'eternity' in contemporary theology, was largely inspired by the rise of philology as a scientific discipline in the nineteenth century. The work of C. von Orelli³⁰ was determinative in the dispute that has surrounded biblical words for time. Perhaps one of the most balanced studies of these words is given by H. Wheeler Robinson who followed von Orelli³¹ with regard to the most important word 'olam, and the subsidiary words 'adh and nezah, which are used to denote a remoteness of time that tended towards transcendence in subsequent religious experience. This developed into a difference of temporal quality which became involved in later times with the consummation of history in eschatology. All parties tend to agree (Barr, Wheeler Robinson, Boman and their predecessor von Orelli) that the Hebrew time-consciousness is based upon the concrete events of the natural world as well as God's involvement directly in time (in his actions and in the scheme of promise and fulfilment). The growth of eschatological hopes on the grounds of earthly disappointment

30. Die hebräischen Synonyma der Zeit und Ewigkeit genetisch und sprachvergleichend dargestellt, Leipzig, 1871.

31. Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, O.U.P., 1946, p. 119. Chapter VIII is most relevant, entitled 'Time and Eternity'.

(as in Daniel), the influence of the so-called 'un-Hebraic' thought of Qohelet in the Wisdom literature, and the Hellenising of the LXX translation with regard to the understanding of the concepts of time and eternity, are specialist matters in themselves. They serve at this point in our analysis of Barth's Church Dogmatics to remind us that as Barr rightly argues, theological conclusions should rest upon the proposition and context of meaning not the putative 'biblical concept' attached to a particular word. In fact Barth's thoroughly actualised doctrine of eternity and time is a true reflection of the concrete and historical character of Hebrew thought. Few of Barth's critics seem to have realised this which is the result of his consistent efforts to maintain and assert temporal transcendence in and through historical acts and events. The breadth of his vision is so great as to comprise both the traditional emphasis upon transcendence in dogmatic theology as well as the concrete historicity of the central facts of the Christian faith. As was stated at the beginning of this chapter the focus of the biblical testimony, and of Barth's reflections thereupon, is Jesus Christ. Whilst this emphasis is certainly present, the fundamental problem of the 'historical' and the 'temporal' still remains, as is apparent in the following chapters of this thesis.

As we have argued Barth identifies the biblical and dogmatic themes of God's freedom and pure duration, for, 'In this duration God is free'. He here inaugurates a theme of importance which must be borne in mind with a view to making

some final assessment of his work. In this alliance of theology and philosophy within dogmatics there is, as will become apparent with regard to the problem of time itself, an incipient theological imperialism which perhaps oversteps the limits Barth set for himself. Judgment of this must await the completion of a full perspective on his work. God's freedom³² to be constant and thus worthy of our faith and trust is permitted by the fact that 'time has no power over Him' and 'As the One who endures He has all power over time'.³³ God's eternity is not, therefore, unmoved and remote in its transcendence, but is motivated and rendered dynamic by his love, which allows God to 'exalt something else to share His eternity'. Eternity is thus the 'principle of the divine unity, uniqueness and simplicity' and a 'final word concerning the divine freedom'.³⁴ As noted earlier the freedom of God depends upon his ability to bind himself to creation, not upon his being bound to creation by the relations and limitations of space and time. Therefore in consequence:

'Time - which is in a sense the special creation of the "eternal" God - is the formal principle of His free activity outwards. Eternity is the principle of His freedom inwards. As the eternal One God is the One who is unique and one with Himself. He is also present to Himself and therefore omnipresent. Again, as the eternal One God is constant, and He is also the One who omnipotently knows and wills.'
(CD II/1, p. 609)

Barth has decisively established the freedom of God in

32. CD II/1, p. 609.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

an eternity which is ostensibly not subject to the limitations, fragmentation, and division characteristic of time. Immediately there arises the implicit problem of how in reality this God, in his eternity and distinction from the human realm of existence, relates himself to man. Prima facie for Barth, God's freedom is the necessary condition of his presence to man, for only in such freedom can he both be himself and be 'utterly present to man' and thus have 'complete power over him in his own person'.³⁵ We have examined the dynamic pulse of Barth's doctrine of eternity which is the 'biblical' aspect of God's relational perfection and the movement from eternity in creation and reconciliation, that is 'presenced' in a unique way by means of the Boethian notion of temporal simultaneity. Before we pass to a consideration of this factor and of Barth's historical antecedents there is a highly important aspect of doctrine of eternity that we must note. This reveals the basis of the relation of theological and philosophical categories in his thought, and, moreover, a tension between his avowed intention and an actual tendency in his theology. In the following quotation the most fundamental categories of philosophy and theology are juxtaposed and the priority of 'eternity' over 'being' is established. This priority has consequences which conflict with the assumption that theology and philosophy have mutual independence and autonomy.³⁶

35. Op.cit., pp. 609-10.

36. This thesis is concerned precisely with the relation of fundamental and interrelated philosophical and theological issues in the Church Dogmatics. The point of greatest

(Contd.)

'Eternity is the source of the deity of God insofar as this consists in His freedom, independence and lordship. At the very place at which later theology fell under the influence of Greek philosophy and made the concept of being predominant, the Bible speaks of the eternal God. According to the Bible it is not being as such, but that which endures, duration itself, which is the divine...Eternity is before and after, above and below being. Being does not include eternity, but eternity includes being. The genuineness of being is examined and weighed and measured and tested by eternity. It is being or non-being according to its relation to eternity. God Himself is eternal, and for that reason and in that way He is.'

(CD II/1, p. 609)

It is of course precisely Barth's renewal of theological ontology which informs his stand against notions of 'self-subsistent being', which are fundamentally static. This contrast is between God's true being, which is being-in-act and his act in Jesus Christ, and being qua being, as a universal genus, comprising both being qua God, and being qua man and cosmos. The dynamism of Barth's position is conveyed by his assertion that 'Being does not include eternity, but eternity includes being'. This, as has been shown in the course of this thesis, is the prime burden of the theological ontology of the Church Dogmatics.

'This means that it is a poor and short-sighted view to understand God's eternity only from the standpoint that it is the negation of time. That it is duration without separation between beginning, succession and end is true only against the background of the decisive and positive characteristic that as true duration, the duration of God Himself is the beginning,

Contd.) tension is reached when the theological impulse is used, as will become apparent later, as the exclusive source of veridical knowledge and reality leading to inevitable conflicts with other sources in human experience, as mediated through philosophical and ontological argumentation.

succession and end. That it does not possess beginning, succession and end is true only to the extent that it is not "possessed", qualified, dominated, and separated by them as by a general principle of being foreign to itself. Insofar as it is itself the sovereign God it does also possess beginning, succession and end. These are grounded and made possible and limited in it as true duration. It decides and conditions all beginning succession and end. It controls them. It is itself that which begins in all beginnings, continues in all successions and ends in all endings. Without it nothing is or begins or follows or ends. In it and from it, in and from eternity everything is which is, including all beginning, succession and end. To that extent it is and has itself beginning, succession, and end.'
(CD II/1, p. 610)

True duration, the primary characteristic of eternity, is not merely the negation of time, that is a 'duration without separation between beginning, succession and end', but more positively, 'the duration of God Himself is the beginning, succession and end'.³⁷ Barth is positing a reality beyond all categories and at the same time advancing beyond the limits of the normally intelligible use of language. True duration, eternity, is God himself and as such it is not subject to 'any general principle of being foreign to itself', for, as the sovereign God, eternity is itself able to 'possess beginning, succession and end'.³⁸ The language of 'possession' would be deemed 'figurative' by Cullmann³⁹ yet for Barth this asymmetrical use of the distinction of beginning, succession and end, and the 'separation' of time in relation to God, is absolutely vital in his extension of the power and sovereignty of God to all that could lie in

37. CD II/1, p. 610.

38. Ibid.

39. Christ and Time, p. 63.

time, yet without subjecting God to time. This has been the aim of those theologians of the Augustinian tradition, who have sought to relate time and eternity in such a way as to express the omniscience and omnipotence of God in the contingent temporal order without dissolution of the qualities of either. The theological ontology which underlies and inspires Barth's conceptual apparatus and distinctions can scarcely be over-emphasised at this juncture. This has been demonstrated by the indispensability of these notions to the fulfilment of the dogmatic structure which has been developed at length on the basis of the doctrine of God.

The fundamental theological impulse underlying these developments does not of course entirely free Barth from difficulties, some of which feature below. Eternity is the prototype of time, pre-existent in God, but its very perfection consists in the abrogation of that feature most characteristic of the time order as normally experienced. In short this is the irreversibility of the time order and the distinction of past, present and future. As is remarked later by Barth, eternity is bound neither by irreversibility nor the separation of temporal past, present and future seen here.⁴⁰

Much might well be said about this distinction between eternity and time. One comment is, however, particularly

40. Cf. Chapter VI below and CD I/2, p. 53, 'the Lord... before whom the irreversibility of time is not for one moment an irreversible position.'

relevant and this exposes the tendency of this conception towards a 'timeless' understanding of God's temporal existence. In The Nature of Existence, J.M.E. McTaggart⁴¹ attacked the idealist contrast of what he called the 'A series' of earlier and later moments and the 'B series' of past present and future moments. McTaggart rejected this distinction, but Barth's attitude is curiously ambivalent. He strives to defend the unity in 'pure duration', of God's time, yet also to preserve the historicity and temporality of God's acts 'from eternity'. God has a past, but he is 'simple' and thus not alienated from his past acts or his future events. Barth appears to use a distinction parallel to that rejected as inadmissible by McTaggart. It could be argued, as did Wittgenstein, that such a juxtaposition of temporal orders is a blatant example of deception by the surface analogies of temporal and non-temporal expressions.⁴² This, however, would be an extremely superficial criticism to make of Barth as a theologian for, despite the idealist and Hegelian origins and use of the

41. The Nature of Existence, Cambridge, 1927, Vol. II, Bk. V, Ch. 33. This passage, and corresponding articles in Mind, led to extensive discussion of McTaggart's arguments, cf. The Philosophy of Time, London, 1968, edited by R.M. Gale in which some of this discussion is collected. I have used McTaggart merely to clarify the implications of Barth's concepts at this point.

42. Philosophical Investigations, Blackwell, 1968, cf. I, 90. The sort of distinction Wittgenstein draws in I, 664 between 'depth' and 'surface grammars' has a certain suggestive affinity with that in Barth's thought between the 'theologic' of the dogmatic impulse and the apparent inadequacy of the temporal locutions employed to characterise the contrast and relation of eternity and time.

distinction, it can plausibly be argued that it is an apposite and defensible conceptual vehicle for a profound theological contrast. The implications of this contrast are extensive despite pleas in its defence from the dogmatic standpoint.

The positive function of the interacting and inter-related concepts of eternity and time is extremely important and is present at each theological encounter of divine and human reality. In Barth's theological creativity his originality is demonstrated with regard to time by his exposure of the inadequate exploitation of the nunc stans in theology, precisely by providing a fuller and more consistent account that escapes the confusion of eternity and being. His thoroughgoing repudiation of analogia entis correlates with the polemic that is initially directed against Thomas Aquinas' use of the nunc stans. This is apparently vitiated by the failure to make an adequate distinction between the eternity of God and the being of other existents.

It is in accordance with the Bible, Barth claims, that the positive notion of eternity is prior in importance to the 'abstract qualification of eternity as non-temporality'.⁴³ This positive eternity is not mere 'naive, Semitic realism' (as with Cullmann?) but the definite ascription to God of years and days described as 'eternal'. For Barth, 'By the terms 'olam and αἰῶν the Bible understands a space of time fixed by God, and eternity is generally

43. CD II/1, p. 610.

ascribed to God under the categories of beginning, succession and end'.⁴⁴ In confirmation of our account we see Barth argue as follows:

'The biblical writers do not hesitate to speak of God's years and days, or to describe these as eternal. In God actual years and days are enumerated before numbers existed and when He did not need them. Years and days could not exist if this were not the case, if, without being bound to them, God were not their beginning, succession and end, and did not possess them in Himself. This positive quality of eternity is finely expressed in the definition of Boethius which is classic for the whole Middle Ages: Aeternitas est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio (De consol. phil. V, 6). This goes farther and deeper than the statements of Augustine and Anselm, which are far too occupied with the confrontation between eternity and time. It is surprising that although later this statement of Boethius was constantly quoted as authoritative it was never properly exploited.'
(CD II/1, pp. 610-611)

It is precisely such a 'proper exploitation' that Barth sets out to provide in the ensuing pages of the Church Dogmatics and which is realised in his doctrine of eternity and its correlate, time.

Central to Barth's concept of eternity is the juxtaposition of the nunc stans, 'the "now", the total and simultaneous present (my emphasis) of His life',⁴⁵ and the notion of possessio vitae, 'the total, simultaneous possession of unlimited life'. This juxtaposition reflects the duality explicit in the merely negative 'now', an 'unmoving, persistent present' and its contrary, in the 'fluid, fleeting present, which can be understood only as a mathematical point',⁴⁶ of human experience. The positive

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Op.cit., p. 611.

concept of the possessio vitae is not a party to this duality for it is unrelated to the fluere of transient time and the nunc of our own problematic time. Eternity is indeed qualitatively different to time for it transcends time and that far from being the mere negation of time eternity is the pattern for time. Barth develops at this point the systematic motif of prefigure and consequent figure into his understanding of eternity and time. The inclusive, positive and primary concept of eternity comprehends but does not annihilate time, for it possesses the unbroken and durational 'virtues' of time, but not the fragmentary and divisive 'vices' that afflict time. God's eternity is not utterly unlike time, but time is unlike eternity, in that it is part and parcel of the dialectic of finite and infinite temporal categories and the fleeting and unsatisfying present of human experience. Eternity is not in its primary, real nature negation of time and thus the product of immanent speculation, but is the positing of the knowledge of God.

'God's eternity is itself beginning, succession and end. To this extent it also has them, not conditioned by them but itself conditioning as beginning, succession and end. It has them actively, not passively, not from another being or from time, but from itself and therefore in itself. God is both the prototype and the foreordination of all being, and therefore also the prototype and foreordination of time. God has time because and as He has eternity. Thus He does not first have it on the basis of creation, which is also, of course the creation of time. He does have time for us, the time of revelation, the time of Jesus Christ, and therefore the time of His patience, our lifetime, time for repentance and faith. But it is really He Himself who has time for us. He Himself is time for us. For His revelation as Jesus Christ is really God Himself.'

(CD II/1, p. 612)

The importance of the above set of statements for the theology of eternity and time in the Church Dogmatics can scarcely be exaggerated for they contain the essence of what is to follow, stated in nuce. In this synthesis Barth is clearly poised to overcome the traditional problem of timelessness and eternity by a skilful fusion of a dynamic and positive interpretation of the Boethian concept of eternity with a similarly dynamic 'Augustinian' structure reminiscent of archetypes.⁴⁷ In case the reader should doubt Barth's originality, we may immediately note that he exploits the two insights we have drawn out here in precisely the way their originators did not. The positive aspects of the Boethian concept of eternity are taken from the original preoccupation with the Aristotelian discussion of future contingent statements and transformed by the impulse of Barth's movement towards positive perfections in his doctrine of God into an 'inclusive' theory of eternity, beyond the realm of being qua existents in Thomas Aquinas' utilisation of the nunc stans. Likewise Barth energizes the prototypical and quasi-Augustinian structure of his doctrine by the movement implicit in his theology from the eternal God to man. Time is not merely the 'moving image of eternity';⁴⁸ for although modelled in a special way on the prototype of eternity it is in itself the medium of

47. There is here a pattern of thought similar to that of Polanus' distinction of 'archtypal' and 'ectypal' theology.

48. Plato, Timaeus 37d. Barth's theological unlikeness to the 'Platonic' relation of 'forms' to sensed reality is obvious in this chapter. There is, despite this, a pattern of 'prototype' and type which retains a structure analogous to that implicitly criticised by the pervasive actualism and ontological recovery displayed in Barth's work.

God's being and revelation. In this way it is to undergo affirmation and not negation in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

In his doctrine of eternity Barth's temporal notions owe much to Augustine's Confessions, in particular Chapter XI. He also makes specific and unmistakeable allusions to Boethius and we have investigated this obvious parallel. Augustine's concept of eternity, whilst anticipating in many respects (notably in the 'sublimity of an ever-present eternity'⁴⁹) that of Boethius, reveals some of the implicit aspects of Barth's doctrine of eternity and time. To be noted at this stage is Augustine's emphasis upon the creation of time with the world, the 'fleeting present' of his analysis of time and above all the thoroughly problematic nature of time and the utterly futile nature of any theological structure based upon the time of human existence. We shall return to Augustine in considering Barth's account of the incarnation at a later stage⁵⁰ in this thesis but his influence upon the latter's concept of eternity is so far implicit even if not acknowledged, as with the Boethian formula. The structure of the remainder of this section of the Church Dogmatics being presently examined is, however, strongly reminiscent of the Confessions, as will be seen.

Barth's own exposition now develops upon truly dogmatic lines as the inner core of his doctrine of eternity becomes the nodal point of a series of related doctrines. God 'includes' time in his duration as his unity and

49. Confessions, Bk. XI, Ch. xiii, Par. 16.

50. Cf. Chapter VI below.

constancy 'include' multiplicity and movement respectively.

'...God does not first create multiplicity and movement, but He is one and simple, He is constant, in such a way that all multiplicity and movement have their prototype and pre-existence in Himself. Time, too, pre-exists in this way in Him, in His eternity, as His creation, i.e., with space, the form of His creation. The form of creation is the being of God for a reality distinct from Himself. But the form of God's being for us and our world is space and time.'

(CD II/1, p. 612)

As the theological movement in Barth's thought is from God to man, so the traditional arguments of natural theology and causality of Aristotelian inspiration are pre-empted. The difficulties of attributing to and positing time of a God who is unlike us in his nature are raised by a process of retrospective qualification in the via negativa, via eminentiae and the complexities of analogia entis of the tradition of Thomas Aquinas and Cajetan. Barth characteristically works from the basis of revelation in God and derives from this reservoir the structure and content of his doctrine. Thus:

'If God in Himself is the living God, this prototype, too, (i.e., His eternity in regard to time) is in Himself identical with His eternity. The fact He is the enduring God, duration itself, does not prevent God from being origin, movement, and goal in and for Himself. What distinguishes eternity from time is the fact that there is in Him no opposition or competition or conflict, but peace between origin, movement and goal, between present, past and future, between "not yet", "now" and "no more", between rest and movement, potentiality and actuality, whither and whence, here and there, this and that. In Him all these things are simul, held together by the omnipotence of His knowing and willing, a totality without gap or rift, free from the threat of death under which time, our time, stands. It is not the case then, that in eternity all these distinctions do not exist.'

(CD II/1, p. 612)

By these extensive quotations we have sought to show how Barth postulates an extremely powerful doctrine of eternity and that this doctrine is the basis of his understanding of time in the Church Dogmatics. In turn his understanding of time as fallen and thus defective time is very similar to that of Augustine in the Confessions.

'Eternity simply lacks the fleeting nature of the present, the separation between before and after'⁵¹ is a formulation directly reflecting the tenor of Augustine's analysis of time that 'The present has no space'.⁵² This formula has had a definitive influence upon the history of philosophy as well as theology. Eternity is the negation of time only insofar as eternity does not share the negative and vicious characteristics of time. Eternity is the ultimate yardstick by which we measure the nature of time and not the reverse, for time is 'absolutely presupposed' in eternity:

'Eternity is the negation of time only because and to the extent that it is first and foremost God's time and therefore real time, in the same way as God's omnipresence is not simply the negation of our space, but first and foremost is positively God's space and therefore real space.'

(CD II/1, p. 613)

In consequence the problem of faith and revelation is not the escape from time into eternity or timelessness but the intrusion of real time into the imperfection of our human time. In this context Barth explicates his concept of sempiternity, the temporal, and as we have seen, the

51. CD II/1, p. 613.

52. Confessions, Book XI, Ch. xvi, Par. 20.

positive aspect of his doctrine of eternity. As this theme is absolutely fundamental to all that follows in regard to time in the Church Dogmatics we must, at the risk of tedium, take great care to provide a full statement of what has already proved lengthy and detailed. Barth now proceeds to explore the implications of his primary thesis concerning God's eternity, that is his own time which is 'real duration, real beginning, continuation and ending'.⁵³

This 'real duration' exists in an 'imperfect and intrinsically unintelligible way, yet with relative reality in the form of created time, as the form of our existence and our world' because it 'has its basis (in its relativity and also in its reality) in the decree of the will of God in creation and providence'.⁵⁴ This series of assertions means that we experience created time as our time. This is important because later on we shall see how revelation comes in its own time yet remains, if the New Testament is to be taken seriously, an eschatological 'hope', given by the Spirit, an 'earnest' of things to come. We are certain, as a matter of common experience, of this time of 'our existence and our world', but in what way this 'real time' can relate to our own time and act as its fulfilment is a matter of some importance which can only be answered adequately as we probe into the temporal elements of Barth's Christology and pneumatology. At the outset of our study we find, according to Barth, that:

53. CD II/1, p. 613.

54. Ibid.

'The presupposition of this basis in God Himself is His eternity. As the eternal One who as such has and Himself is absolutely real time, He gives us the relatively but in this way genuinely real time proper to us. As the eternal One He is present personally at every point of our time. As the eternal One it is He who surrounds our time and rules it with all that it contains.'

(CD II/1, p. 613)

Having established this basic notion of perfect 'real time' Barth proceeds, as in the case of 'pure duration' and 'from everlasting to everlasting', to draw a direct parallel between the dogmatic formula and biblical evidence for it. The 'eternal One...who surrounds our time and rules all it contains' is the God of whom it can be said 'My times are in thy hands' (Ps. 31,15) in a sense which is 'to be taken literally'.⁵⁵ Having once more drawn a parallel, Barth again proceeds to qualify his own understanding of the co-existence of time and eternity as they impinge directly apart from any trinitarian, Christological or pneumatological considerations. Once more the question of ontological priority is raised. In this relation, as before, there is the one way implication which we now examine.

The relation of time and eternity has been illustrated (e.g. in Protestant scholasticism) by such images as the unmoved tree by the flowing river or the Pole Star in the zenith of the night-sky, but these are totally inadequate in face of the dynamic creative activity of God, who cannot be understood as a static pole in the eternity-time relation. As Barth maintains:

'For God is the Creator and Lord of our time, and therefore eternity is the tota simul et perfecta

55. Ibid.

possessio vitae, and co-exists with time and all it contains with a superiority which a tree cannot have over the river or the Pole Star over the vault of heaven or the ocean over the continent. Consequently the statement that God co-exists with our time cannot be reversed as is possible with elements in the illustrations.'

(CD II/1, p. 614)

God's existence has intrinsic and overriding priority. Thus by his dogmatic ontology Barth establishes the one-way relation of God to time, but not the opposite, that time may co-exist with eternity. Such an assertion is questionable on the level of mere language and the mutual entailment of temporal concepts, but for Barth this is an ontological priority. Some of the philosophical difficulties with regard to Barth's thought have been raised above. But whilst reminding ourselves that this is again the matter of the dynamic 'contrapuntal' relation, of time and eternity we may grasp Barth's position from the polemic that follows. This is directed against Roman Catholic theology (in this instance the work of the dogmatician F. Diekamp) which supports an 'equilibrium between the being of God and the being of creatures',⁵⁶ allowing both that the eternal God may co-exist with time and also that time may co-exist with eternity. Although this charge might be sustained against Diekamp it is doubtful if the same could be held against Thomas Aquinas. It is in itself notable that Barth attacks the former and not the latter. Aquinas' distinction of time and eternity is bound up with the presence and absence of movement and change in relation to the (in Barth's view

56. Op.cit., p. 614.

inadequately exploited) Boethian eternity of the simultaneous whole.⁵⁷ In fact the objection put to Diekamp could not be easily argued against Aquinas because his account of the distinction is clearly Aristotelian and bears a close relation to arguments in the Metaphysics of Aristotle.⁵⁸ The contrast of permanent and changeable being is central and forms the basis of the explicit assertion (against Barth's criticism of Diekamp) that 'eternity is not the same as the now of time'.⁵⁹ It remains to be asked if there is not a dangerous ambiguity involved in this contrast of temporal and ontological categories, in that both Diekamp and Aquinas rest upon the hypostatisation of 'being'. As regards Roman Catholic theology Barth's objections are not a matter of mere definition but raise fundamental ontological problems and expose a deep-seated contrast in theological method and priority of being exposed at length in this thesis.

The great strength of Barth's synthesis is that whilst it is on the one hand Augustinian, prototypical and Boethian it is on the other 'biblical' and 'dynamic'. It does not share in the Augustinian conception of 'ideas in the mind of God', as in Augustine's term 'eternal truths', or Aquinas' statement that 'the divine essence contains in itself the excellences of all beings, not indeed by way of composition, but by way of perfection'.⁶⁰ This issues forth in the traditional problem of how their multiplicity is compatible with God's simplicity and unity. Barth overcomes this in

57. Cf. S. theol. I, qu.10,art.4.

58. Book Lambda, esp. 1071b ff.

59. S. theol. I, qu.10,art.4, reply to objection 3.

60. C.gent. I, Ch. 54.

the first instance by the unity of God in his act and his being. In other words the tension of time and eternity is not set in the context of pure exemplarism. On the contrary this tension and movement of thought we have characterised as prototypical is set in the very centre, not on the periphery of the doctrine of God. The doctrine of eternity and the relation of eternity and time are not a mere addenda to dogmatics but lie at the heart of Barth's thought. The Church Dogmatics is grounded upon a systematic exposition of the indivisible unity in duality of divine act and being which is implicit in the following quotation further demonstrating the theological integration of the thought of Barth.

The difficulty that is to be found in stating Barth's work in concise analysis arises not from prolixity or obscurity but from the extraordinary integration of his thought. In this quotation we see not only the underlying union of act and being in the interaction of his grace and creation but also the outflow of other doctrines from this centre.

'From the fact that God's eternity in its eternal Now embraces and contains all parts of time and all things in itself simultaneously and at one moment, we cannot deduce the general truth that things are present to God either in physical reality or even in intention in a nunc aeternitatis and therefore from eternity. God knows them and wills them. In this way they are certainly present to Him from eternity, enclosed in the Now of eternity even before their existence and without it. But they have their existence and also their co-existence with God only in the positive act of the divine creation, which can only be understood in its character as an act of divine grace if we refrain from finding a partner for God's eternity in the co-existence of the result of this act, in the co-existence of the creature.'

(CD II/1, p. 614)

We have now come full circle in our study of Barth's doctrine of eternity as a necessary prelude to the analysis of his understanding of time. We began with the axis of reality and possibility in the Word of God and the Trinity, and further explored the expression this finds in the act and in the perfections of God in his freedom and lordship. Barth now returns to the root of eternal life in the mutuality of the Trinity, that mode of existence alien to all abstraction. God is 'eternally' Father, Son and Holy Spirit and,

'It is this "all", this God who is the eternal God.... For this "all" is pure duration, free from all the fleetingness and the separation we call time, the nunc aeternitatis which cannot come into being or pass away, which is conditioned by no distinctions, which is not disturbed and interrupted but established and confirmed in its unity by its trinity, by the inner movement of the begetting of the Father, the being begotten of the Son and the procession of the Spirit from both. Yet in it there is order and succession. The unity is in movement....God has and is Himself time, and the extent to which this is so, is necessarily made clear to us in His essence as the triune God. This is His time, the absolutely real time, the form of the divine being in its triunity, the beginning and ending which do not mean the limitation of Him who begins and ends, a juxtaposition which does not mean any exclusion, a movement which does not signify the passing away of anything, a succession which in itself is also beginning and end.'

(CD II/1, p. 615)

In this extensive quotation Barth expresses the identity of the 'pure duration' of eternity with 'the absolutely real time' that is 'the form of the divine being in its triunity'.⁶¹ By this he grounds the exposition of the positive nunc stans in the trinitarian base of the theology of the Church Dogmatics. The divisionless pure duration of beginning,

61. CD II/1, p. 615.

succession and end is truly real in the modal relations of the Trinity. The time of God is concrete in his intra-trinitarian reciprocity and it is this life which is extended towards man in creation and reconciliation. The giving of eternity to time is its fulfilment, as was seen earlier in the exposition of the Revealed Word of God⁶² and the 'fulness of time which is identical with Jesus Christ'. Christology is therefore central to revelation but consequent upon the doctrine of the Trinity in the order of theological priority. Correspondingly the thorough-going implantation of eternity in time in Christ is essential. In the incarnation of the Word of God:

'The fact that the Word became flesh undoubtedly means that, without ceasing to be eternity, in its very power as eternity, eternity became time. Yes, it became time. What happens in Jesus Christ is not simply that God gives us time, our created time, as the form of our own existence and world, as is the case in creation and in the whole ruling of the world by God as its Lord. In Jesus Christ it comes about that God takes time to Himself, that He Himself, the eternal One, becomes temporal, that He is present for us in the form of our own existence and our own world, not simply embracing our time and ruling it, but submitting Himself to it, and permitting created time to become and be the form of His eternity.'

(CD II/1, p. 616)

God is finally proved not to be timeless in Jesus Christ, who in reconciling had to assume our being and, therefore, had to 'take time' in order to conceal and reveal His eternal being in it. This was not achieved through a kenosis but through a display of the 'true and fullest power of deity...in the fact that it has such power over itself and its creature that it can become one with it without detriment

62. Cf. CD I/1, pp. 131-132 and analysis of this in Chapter II above.

to itself'.⁶³ Jesus Christ appeared in the historical passage of time and then departed, and his return is now hoped for. There is therefore a 'before' and 'after', a 'not yet' and a 'no more' with regard to the incarnation. We shall explore and map the consequences of this bilateral movement of God to man in Christ and reconciling return in its temporal consequences, in the following chapters. It now remains to us to note how Barth continues and concludes his exposition of the perfection of the eternity of God in a continued polemic against 'timelessness' and the corresponding danger of God becoming a pious fantasy in the religious imagination.

In the remainder of this section of the Church Dogmatics Barth explores the positive yet distinct role of eternity in pre-, supra-, and post-temporality, as the outlook peculiar to the Bible. Thus he argues⁶⁴ that much depends on this. Only if God 'was, is and is to be' in relation to creation, reconciliation and redemption can the Christian message avoid becoming myth or dream; for 'Without God's complete temporality the content of the Christian message has no shape'. Its proclamation is only an 'inarticulate mumbling'.⁶⁵ The threefold form of God's temporality vis à vis our temporal order is the 'positive relationship to time' of eternity. Indeed,

'What is certain is that God and eternity must be understood as the element which surrounds time on all sides and therefore includes its dimensions. It

63. CD II/1, p. 616.

64. Op.cit., p. 620.

65. Ibid.

is the element which is able to comprehend time, to create it and control.'

(CD II/1, p. 619)

The concepts of pre-, supra-, and post-temporality put God's existence in relation to man's existence in terms of absolute precedence, full contemporaneity and final consequence. First of all God's pre-temporality, 'the pure time of the Father and the Son in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit',⁶⁶ precedes our existence and the existence of all things. Second, God's supra-temporality is the 'accompaniment of our time by His eternity, of the height in which He has His glory, to which our peace may correspond'.⁶⁷ Third, God in his post-temporality may judge the totality of the time process, for it is in the bosom of his eternity 'like a child in the arms of its mother'. It is crucial to note that in this threefold relationship God's eternity remains undivided for 'God endures in His pure and perpetual duration as we have our confused and fleeting duration'.⁶⁸ Time is separated from its own beginning and end in the normal course of events, but in being accompanied by eternity it is not 'separated from its beginning and end in God's eternity',⁶⁹ as it is 'the divine life which bears time', 'preserves' and 'keeps' time. The question concerns the resolution of this antimony of time and eternity as to whether in fact the tension remains an antithesis and diastasis or whether, on the other hand, there is a monistic resolution in either

66. Op.cit., p. 622.

67. Op.cit., p. 624.

68. Op.cit., p. 623.

69. Ibid.

direction. We shall thus examine this synthesis that Barth appears to effect as we proceed in our exposition and analysis of the Church Dogmatics.

Barth examines in passing the historical over-emphases that have taken place with regard to the threefold temporality of God. As can now be seen, he is setting out to provide an analysis of eternity and time which avoids all the excesses of Protestant scholasticism with its pre-occupation with the pre-temporality of election, Enlightenment theology's preoccupation with the present concerns of man, and Liberal Protestantism's reversal in radical eschatology. Thus Barth enters into self-criticism of the understanding of time and eternity he propounded in the Epistle to the Romans which, as was seen in Chapter I of this thesis, consisted in confrontation of time by eternity in 'the moment which confronts all moments in time as the eternal "transcendental meaning" of all moments in time'.⁷⁰ Barth there 'missed (in reference to Romans 13,11ff.)...the teleology that it ascribes to time as it moves towards a real end'.⁷¹ In other words, the naked confrontation and 'greedy dialectic' of time and eternity allowed no basis for Christology or creation and thus for no real eschaton and parousia. The marked contrast between what has just been examined and the early thought of Barth is only understandable in terms of a rediscovery of the fundamental possibilities of conditioning and synthesis provided by the insights, and most importantly,

70. Op.cit., p. 635.

71. Ibid.

the ontology of classical and orthodox protestant, trinitarian and Christological dogma, realised through the theological epistemology of Anselm.

On the basis of the dynamic Trinity and the axis of reality and possibility expressed in the doctrine of analogia fidei Barth organises a systematic integration of dogmatic and biblical theology around a 'proper exploitation' of the Boethian notion of the 'nunc stans'. It is now clearly seen that Barth's doctrine of time cannot be divorced from its theological foundations. In the opening pages of this chapter Barth asserted the constancy and omnipotence of the living God whose life is 'not only the origin of all created change, but is itself the fulness of difference, movement, will, decision, action, degeneration and rejuvenation'.⁷² This theological primacy is the outcome of the dogmatic foundations explored at length in earlier chapters. The inner logic of the doctrine of God dictated by his love and freedom demands a concept of eternity which stands in judgment upon any abstractions generated from within the framework of an immanent dialectic. Barth's excursus on God's foreknowledge shows eternity to be temporal transcendence; the perfect unity of God is not to be broken by the succession of past present and future. This theological unity is, however, not vouchsafed to a remote, timeless God but is witnessed to in Holy Scripture, for God's act in Jesus Christ is the 'fulfilment of all time'⁷³ in time and

72. Op.cit., pp. 491-2.

73. Op.cit., p. 603.

history. Thus it is that the touchstone of Barth's theology is Christ and Christology, and it is in this area that the reality and formal structures of eternity and time are to be resolved.

CHAPTER V

ETERNITY AND TIME:

PREDESTINATION AND RESURRECTION

In Chapter III we saw how Barth's concept of eternity is of fundamental importance to the dynamic and 'kinematic' ground of God in the Trinity and revelation. The primary expression of God in revelation is in the election of Jesus Christ and the final realisation of this movement is in the resurrection. In this chapter we will therefore examine Barth's doctrine of predestination or, as he prefers to call it, election, as a preliminary to our study of the incarnation and Christology from the standpoint of time. Thus in relation to this first aspect of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ stated primarily in CD II/2 we find Barth's account of the inclusive movement of God towards man, eternity towards time. In the incarnation and Christology there is the explication of this in terms of the divine and human natures of Christ in the encounter and union of time and eternity. By approaching these themes in this way a continuity is preserved in our exposition as we expose a point of relation in the thought of Barth and in any theology, which is of vital import. We wish to penetrate into the axis (stated with succinctness by Barth in relation to Calvin and Thomas Aquinas) which we will use as an interpretative instrument in the following analysis.

'Where the parting of the ways comes is in the question of the relationship between predestination and Christology. Is there any continuity between the two? Is there a continuity between the

Christological centre and telos of the temporal work of God which was so clearly recognised by the older theologians, and the eternal presupposing of that work in the divine election which was no less clearly recognised by them? Is there the continuity which would mean necessarily the expounding of predestination in the light of Christology and the understanding of Jesus Christ as the substance of predestination. If the witness of divine revelation is rightly received, is it possible to understand the eternal presupposing of God's temporal work in the light of the central point in that work?'

(CD II/2, p. 149)

It is precisely such a question we shall put to Barth's doctrines of predestination and Christ in asking whether the concept of time governing the eternal status of the former, allows the full temporal realisation implicit in the latter, demanded in the dogma that 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (John I:14). In other words, does the elected One from eternity really enter time and having done so in the incarnation, does Barth's use of the doctrine of the divinity and the humanity of Christ express a true unity and duality of eternity and time thus preserving the validity of both, and, therefore, the soteriological possibilities of the life and death of Jesus Christ? To this end we will now state Barth's doctrine of election from the standpoint of the problem of time and attempt to isolate the primary difficulties facing Barth's account.

The theology of Barth in the Church Dogmatics has been likened to a series of concentric circles all of which contain within them one point, and, furthermore, his style has been described as a constant spiralling around his subject-matter. Nowhere is this truer than in the temporal structure of

Barth's thought. Here we move from the doctrine of eternity per se, the realm of trinitarian reciprocity and the perfection of God's freedom and lordship, to the decision of God in Jesus Christ and his election from eternity. We thus introduce a new layer of temporal complexity, the first we must add, of several. In this context we find that the decision of God in Jesus Christ is the basis of Christology and thus of soteriology and redemption. The doctrine of election begins with Jesus Christ for:

'Theology must begin with Jesus Christ, and not with general principles, however better, or, at any rate, more relevant and illuminating, they may appear to be: as though He were a continuation of the knowledge and Word of God, and not its root and origin, not indeed the very Word of God itself. Theology must also end with Him, and not with supposedly self-evident general conclusions from what is particularly enclosed and disclosed in Him...'

(CD II/2, p. 4)

Given that in Jesus Christ there dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9) then a doctrine of God must be fully Christian and not a generalised abstraction. In the One in whom such a 'dwelling' exists God has made a decision and thus:

'Jesus Christ is indeed God in His movement towards man, or, more exactly, in His movement towards the people represented in the one man Jesus of Nazareth, in His covenant with this people, in His being and activity amongst and towards this people. Jesus Christ is the decision of God in favour of this attitude or relation. He is Himself the relation.'

(CD II/2, p. 7)

Jesus Christ is central and primary for both our knowledge of God and our reconciliation with him in this movement. The soteriological and epistemological possibility opened for man in Jesus Christ depends upon 'primal history' in which

the relation of God and man is established (whether it is re-established is another question) in the interaction of God and Jesus Christ in eternity. This is in conformity with the structure characteristic of Barth of divine priority and of all else being secondary to this.

'Everything that comes from God takes place "in Jesus Christ", i.e., in the establishment of the covenant which, in the union of His Son with Jesus of Nazareth, God has instituted and maintains and directs between Himself and His people, the people consisting of those who belong to Him, who have become His in this One.'

(CD II/2, p. 7)

This covenant is established in primal history and this is 'played out' in eternity, and because the 'history between God and the world' takes place 'in the interests of the primal history', it is secondary. The same is true of the human race for,

'The partner of God...is neither "man" as an idea, nor "humanity" nor indeed a large or small total of individual men. It is the one man Jesus and the people represented in Him. Only secondarily, and for His sake, is it "man" and "humanity" and the whole remaining cosmos.'

(CD II/2, p. 8)

The words of Professor D.M. MacKinnon are apposite, for Barth through Christological categories, overthrows, or rather transcends, the contradictions of the Augustinian tradition which postulates a concrete number of the elect over against the reprobate. The election of man is pre-temporal because the election of Christ is effected in 'primal history'. This is concisely summarised on page 76 of Volume II:2 of the Church Dogmatics where we are assured that the God whose attributes we have examined previously is the electing and elected God:

'...we maintain of God that in Himself, in the primal and basic decision in which He wills to be and actually is God, in the mystery of what takes place from and to all eternity within Himself, within His triune being, God is none other than the One who in His Son or Word elects Himself, and in and with Himself elects His people.'

(CD II/2, p. 76)

The God whose perfections in and from eternity we have examined earlier is the God whose being and perfections are fulfilled and realised in the election of grace. In this the love and freedom of God are exercised in 'the choice which God makes in His grace, thus making this movement, and in instituting, maintaining and directing this covenant'.¹ As we are concerned with the temporal structure that is involved in Barth's thought at this point we do not propose to enter into the architectonic detail of Barth's exposition but to establish the exact status of the stages of his thought on election. Thus nothing in the first place can precede God's grace, 'whether in eternity or time, whether from the beginning or in the process of development'.² 'The election of grace is the sum of the Gospel' and from this standpoint the work of Augustine, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin is criticised as it puts the two categories of election and rejection together as species within the same genus of predestination. Barth on the other hand argues that the election of grace is 'the choice of God which, preceding all His other choices, is fulfilled in the eternal willing of the man Jesus and of the people represented in Him', for this is the

1. CD II/2, p. 9.

2. Op.cit., p. 11.

'primal and basic act of God'. In other words we cannot probe or speculate in any way beyond the eternal choice of God that has in fact already been made in God's act. Christ is quite literally fundamental to election (not merely instrumental) and effects an election of those predestinated to salvation as in the tradition of Augustine and Calvinism.

What exactly is the temporal status of primal history? Barth rejects the causal theory of predestination (as presented in the Reformed Doctrine of Predestination by L. Boettner) in which God's eternal will is manifested through a determinism of absolute divine sovereignty. This scheme is readily understandable in terms of a primary and secondary causality in which primacy is accorded to the eternal will of God so that 'everything that happens does so exactly as God has prescribed'. Secondary causes appear in the more Aristotelian doctrines of predestination in respect of human willing giving a place to human freedom in the face of determinism. Barth in his own doctrine (which pre-emptly the traditional doctrine as we have seen asserts) argues that the eternal decision to elect Jesus Christ and to elect man in solidarity with him is realised in time. In this thought we have once more the pattern of eternal antecedence and temporal consequence and in election the bridge is built between the two.

'Jesus Christ. It is in this name that we discern the divine decision in favour of the movement towards this people, the self-determination of God (i.e. in eternity, understood as prior to temporal realisation)And in this name we may now discern the divine decision as an event in human history and therefore as the substance of all the preceding history of Israel and the hope of all the succeeding history of

the Church. What happened was this, that under this name God Himself became man, that He became this particular man, and as such the Representative of the whole people that hastens towards this man and derives from Him. What happened was this, that under this name God Himself realised in time, and therefore as an object of human perception, the self-giving of Himself as the Covenant-partner of the people determined by Him from and to all eternity.'

(CD II/2, p. 53)

It is clear that at this point Barth is arguing for the mutual reality of both the eternal decision made in 'primal history' and the concrete particularity and historicity of the revelation of God which is associated with the history of Israel and the incarnation itself. The question that emerges is whether the pre-temporal decision of God in election (which is consummated in eternity and in 'primal history') need in fact rely for its basis upon the historical man Jesus Christ. Can Barth truly preserve the integrity of eternity and time in this doctrine? In short does this concept imply what has been called an 'inverted analogia entis'? Do we have here the initial steps in the formulation of a Christology in which the God-became-man is, despite Barth's protestations, a 'timeless principle of temporality' in God?

It is contended that a priori the notion of 'primal history' poses a problem, because in eternity where this is 'played out', there is the 'perfect presence' of God which is pre-, supra- and post-temporal, whereas the election of God depends upon the actual historicity of the incarnation. In other words could the incarnation really be the decisive event it is purported to be in the New Testament if it is consummated in primal history? Does Barth's scheme survive in the eternity-to-time movement of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? It seems that this question

can only be finally answered by the analysis of Barth's Christology of divinity and humanity in its temporal aspect. Indeed beyond this immediate analysis other questions with regard to time become pressing which can only be answered on the basis of this study. For example, the relation of the time of God, as both eternity and the time of the man Jesus Christ, to extra-theological understandings of time will arise in the context of a contrast of created, 'fallen' time and the time implicit in revelation. There is, moreover the role of the Holy Spirit as the freedom of God to be present to the creation and realise the relation of the creation to himself which has an important relation to time and the fulfilment of creation.

At this juncture it is necessary to formulate and bear in mind the question as to whether the scheme of antecedence and consequence is compatible with the historicity of the incarnation and the unity of the truly divine and truly human in Jesus Christ. In correspondence with these problems and the emergent structure we shall proceed as follows. First, in this chapter we shall continue our investigation of the doctrines of election and the resurrection. Second, we shall pursue the Christological question in Chapters VI, VII and VIII. Third, we shall examine time in its overall multiplex complexity in the final Chapters IX, X and XI. In this way we shall continue our own movement following the structure of the Church Dogmatics from eternity, by way of the relation of time and eternity, to time, and from time to its conclusion in the Eschaton.

Before we turn once more to Barth's doctrine of election let us crystallise our objection. The election of Jesus Christ is consummated if not actually realised in 'primal history', that is in eternity. Eternity does not admit of division although it does, according to Barth, contain beginning, middle and end. There is thus no real distinction of past present and future as the essence of eternity in the nunc stans and without division there is no 'before and after'. If the incarnation is historical and temporal and its significance is gained from a victory, a life and a death in time of an unrepeatable nature, then the words, 'It is finished!' imply an absolute discontinuity in the temporal order. They refer to an event the importance of which is determined precisely by the fact that a change has taken place which is irreversible, unique and particular. Given the eternity of election and the strange temporal notions implied by such phrases as, 'the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world',³ then there is a congruence of Christology, soteriology and predestination in eternal terms, but a problem, a discontinuity, with regard to its concrete historicity and temporality. Barth has to ensure that his Christology can contain or rather honour this discontinuity in unity in the incarnation and ensure that it does in fact take place in time itself. It was noted in the previous chapter that Barth's resolution of the contrasting temporal orders in eternity and time rests upon the ontological integrity of his doctrine of God but that linguistic

3. Rev. 13,8.

problems remained despite this. The ultimate theological solution is to be found in Christology. In brief the dogmatic exploration and relation of Christian dogmatic concepts in regard to the problem of time is complex and stretches the term employed, but more seriously, there appears to be an unresolved dialectic at this point existing between the eternal ground and actuality of election, and its temporal realisation in incarnation and Christology.

We shall have to decide whether the concept of eternity Barth elaborates (which appears sufficient to satisfy the demands made in a doctrine of eternity) is in fact adequate in relation to the temporal structure of Christology and the incarnation. Is Barth caught in a nominalism with regard to eternity despite his ontological power? Barth seems to cut the normal concept of time in half as we have seen, and by what could be a dangerous ambiguity, he puts the continuity (without division) on the side of eternity and the division (without continuity) on the side of time. This may as we shall see in our study create a dialectic despite the immense ontological grounding of the Church Dogmatics. Cullmann's argument that an 'alien' strand of philosophical thought infects the Church Dogmatics may be true in the sense that on a linguistic level Barth has possibly not found a conceptual tool of enough strength and flexibility to bear the weight of the real discontinuity of time and eternity. Cullmann's answer is quite inadequate as we have noted earlier for he scarcely raises Christological and soteriological questions except upon what may be regarded as

a one dimensional plane in terms of duration.⁴ As Barth's concept of eternity and time stands it is not, a priori, free of a dialectic, a tension of incompatibles that originates in the language of eternity and which is exposed in the encounter of eternity and time. This conflicts with Barth's avowed intention to give priority to revelation in the context of the interaction of real time and real eternity. There emerges from Barth's thought despite and contrary to his intentions a dialectic and a choice. The possible alternatives are, as instanced in the theology following Barth, whether to eternalise theology or, alternatively, to temporalise and thus secularise theological assertions.

The ambiguity in Barth's thought which is reflected in the contrasting interpretations of Jenson and Zahrnt⁵ is a complex phenomenon that has resisted any easy resolution of simple reduction. In pursuing the central themes of the Church Dogmatics from the standpoint of the encounter of eternity and time it is in the incarnation and in Christology that the real proving ground of Barth's theology will be found. Barth has stressed the ultimate and constitutive

4. Cf. H. K ung's comments in Justification on the indispensability of consideration of Christ's pre-existence in Christology. By contrast this hardly features in Cullmann's Christ and Time where he accuses Barth of confusing time with the 'division of time' (p. 75). The themes that stir in this chapter increasingly reveal the immense differences that exist between Cullmann and Barth. K ung is one of the few writers to grasp the importance of the interaction of eternity and time in dogmatic theology (cf. p. 274 of Justification) and his comments in the Excursus (op.cit., pp. 272-288) on 'The Redeemer in God's Eternity' reveal an unusual grasp of the issues that emerge in the theology of time.

5. Cf. the opening pages of Chapter III above.

status of eternity. We have also noted the implicit conceptual and linguistic difficulties analysed in reviewing the overall structure and nature of Barth's doctrines of time and eternity. Now, however, a further problem appears because in the process of developing his doctrine of pre-destination Barth begins to shift the primacy from eternity and the scheme which has so far confronted us, to the person and work of Christ himself. The weight of emphasis shifts from the foundations alluded to above onto the particularity of Jesus Christ as the movement from the primal history of eternity is realised in time. By this we literally mean rendered in re in time for it is already in re with respect to eternity, as the election of man is concluded in Jesus Christ, who is the elect One of God. We must ask of Barth's Christology whether it can bear this weight and how it reflects the intrinsic duality in unity and in distinction of eternity and time and of the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

'It is in the utter particularity of His activity, and therefore of His volition, and to that extent of His self-determined being that He is the electing God. He is so at the one point upon which Scripture concentrates our attention and thoughts. He is so in that He is the Lord and Shepherd of His people. He is so in Jesus Christ, in His only-begotten Son, and therefore from all eternity in Himself. To put it the other way round: if we would know who God is, and what is the meaning and purpose of His election, and in what respect He is the electing God then we must look away from all others, and excluding all side glances or secondary thoughts, we must look only upon and to the name of Jesus Christ, and the existence and history of the people enclosed within Him. We must look only upon the divine mystery of this name and this history, of this Head and this body.'

(CD II/2, p. 54)

It is the juxtaposition of historical particularity and

the 'inclusion' of the 'history of the people' in Christ that presents difficulties if we are really aware of the tension of time and eternity. Barth continues his exposition with an emphasis upon the double movement of election in that:

'It is the name of Jesus which, according to the divine self-revelation, forms the focus at which the two decisive beams of the truth forced upon us converge and unite: on the one hand the electing God and on the other the elected man. It is to this name, then, that all Christian teaching of this truth must look, from this name that it must derive, and to this name it must always strive. Like all Christian teaching, it must always testify to this name. On the way before us we must never allow this name to fade or to be blurred in favour of abstract pre-suppositions concerning God or man, or of the abstract consequences of such abstract presuppositions. We can advance on this way only if in conformity with our attempted survey we confirm and develop the pre-suppositions which in respect of the divine election are contained in the name of Jesus Christ.'

(CD II/2, p. 58)

Our attention is drawn from the eternal basis of election as it is realised in history and directed towards the man Jesus Christ. Are we to consider the eternal basis of election, its pre-temporal consummation in 'primal history', as the primary nodal point in our theological ontology or, as Barth now claims, its realisation in the temporal life and death of the man Jesus Christ? As we become aware of a certain problem in reconciling the two then we then locate an intrinsic tension in the Church Dogmatics. This reflects difficulties in the related concepts of time and eternity which originate in their mutual derivation from the original and problematic Augustinian conception of time, understood as the fleeting present over against God's perfect presence. Barth has of course transformed this notion by his creative

and dynamic synthesis in a theological ontology but later in this study we shall note his difficulties in accounting for the actual discontinuity between 'real' time and human fragmented time. In this chapter it is possible to appreciate the theological continuity of Barth's account of the election of God and the resurrection grounded upon the act of God. This emerges more clearly when we see that although the notions of time implied by the terminology and logic of Barth's concept of time and eternity may create difficulties, the structure and impulse of his thought may in reality transcend these limitations.

The Lutheran resolution of the problem of time in predestination attracts Barth, for 'God's consideration of the work of Christ in time'⁶ belongs on this view to 'the divine decree of election itself, so certain is it that that decree is identical with God's eternal resolution to provide salvation for man in that work'. (Barth quotes J. Gerhard the Lutheran scholastic). Barth seeks to exploit the Lutheran insight⁷ by effecting a synthesis of the Christological basis of the Lutherans with the Reformed emphasis upon free grace, and beyond this to enter into the realisation that 'we have to do not only with elected man but with the electing, the truly and freely electing God.'⁸ Thus although there are indeed some historical precedents of Barth's doctrine, notably in Athanasius, and even seeds sown in the

6. CD II/2, p. 71.

7. Op.cit., p. 75.

8. Ibid.

work of Calvin, the originality of his work consists precisely in a systematic fusion of the eternal thrust of God in election, that is the election of Jesus Christ who 'In the beginning was the Word' (John I:1) with the Word who 'became flesh' (John I:14). At the very core of Barth's thought he strives to retain this unification of eternal ground and temporal realisation, expressed in the doctrine of the two natures from which all soteriological possibilities flow. It is of the utmost importance that the incipient dialectic of time and eternity is somehow contained and overcome in the related areas of Christology and soteriology.

Barth states the following in which he allows the doctrine of election to unfold out of the dilemma implicit in his presuppositions which we have briefly analysed.

'We can advance on this way (faithfulness to the name of Jesus Christ in theology) only if in conformity with our attempted survey we confirm and develop the presuppositions which in respect of the divine election are contained in the name of Jesus Christ. In the measure that we hold fast to this principle, we shall find ourselves on solid ground as we advance into this as every other sphere of dogmatic enquiry and presentation.'

(CD II/2, pp. 59-61)

Barth is indeed faithful to this self-directive for he proceeds in conformity with his initial postulates, which contain the problems outlined above and which are not resolved within the doctrine of election, precisely because of this fidelity. Insofar as God's works are done 'in time, they rest upon the eternal decision of God by which time is founded and governed'.⁹ Grace precedes creation for:

9. Op.cit., p. 99.

'In the beginning, before time and space as we know them, before creation, before there was any reality distinct from God which could be the object of the love of God or the setting for His act of freedom, God anticipated and determined within Himself (in the power of His love and freedom, of His knowing and willing) that the goal and meaning of all His dealings with the as yet non-existent universe should be the fact that in His Son He would be gracious towards man, uniting Himself with him. In the beginning it was the choice of the Father Himself to establish this covenant with man by giving up His Son for him, that He Himself might become man in the fulfilment of His grace. In the beginning it was the choice of the Son to be obedient to grace, and therefore to offer up Himself and to become man in order that this covenant might be made a reality.'

(CD II/2, p. 101)

Besides this the grace and election of God precede creation for:

'In the beginning it was the resolve of the Holy Spirit that the unity of God, of the Father and Son should not be disturbed or rent by this covenant with man, but it should be made the more glorious, the deity of God, the divinity of His love and freedom, being confirmed and demonstrated by this offering of the Father and this self-offering of the Son. This choice was in the beginning. As the subject and object of this choice, Jesus Christ was in the beginning.'

(CD II/2, p. 102)

Barth makes creation and covenant inseparable corollaries and both have as their central point Jesus Christ, who was at the 'beginning of God's dealings with a reality which is distinct from Himself'.¹⁰ Jesus Christ is both elector and elected, very God and very man.¹¹ The close interrelation of these factors makes it imperative that they are understood from the standpoint of their fundamental unity. This unity from the temporal aspect is the unity of

10. Op.cit., p. 102.

11. Op.cit., p. 103.

the doctrine of eternity understood as God's act in Jesus Christ, the eternal decision of God. Barth's overriding concern is to perceive the continuity between predestination and Christology for without this the eternal work and temporal event fall apart. In our next chapter we shall proceed on the basis of election as the presupposition of Christology. It is this further relationship of divinity and humanity as expressed in the problem of eternity and time that will be our chief concern, for in this resolution we encounter one of the major cornerstones of the Church Dogmatics.

Before, however, we can move towards a consideration of Christology and the problem of time itself we must sketch out very briefly the shape of the doctrine of eternity with regard to predestination. Barth's own assessment of the relation of time and eternity is determined by the intrusion of the eternal election into time in the concrete particularity of Jesus Christ. In Volume II:2 of the Church Dogmatics Barth elaborates his doctrine of election in the election and the rejection of God Himself in Jesus Christ from eternity.¹² This decision is fully trinitarian in that 'All God's willing is primarily a determination of the love of the Father and the Son in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost'.¹³ The primal determination of God is towards man who is 'the outward cause and object of this overflowing of the divine glory'.¹⁴ As a consequence of this foreordination 'man exists in the beginning of all things, in the decree of

12. Op.cit., p. 167.

13. Op.cit., p. 169.

14. Ibid.

God with God'.¹⁵ Whether this implies the existence of humanity in God prior to the incarnation is again a question of fundamental importance in relation to Christology. Clearly such a position would correlate with Barth's insistence upon the ultimate priority of the eternal (and all that is implied by the eternal) over time. In the election and rejection of Jesus Christ sin is overcome and, therefore, 'In Jesus Christ we can see and know this sphere of evil as something which has already been overcome...which has been destroyed by the positive will of God's overflowing glory'.¹⁶ In contradistinction to this destruction is the constitution of the new future for:

'In the eternal election of the one man Jesus of Nazareth, God, merciful in His judgement, appoints for man a gracious end and a new gracious beginning. He makes him die in order that he may truly live. He makes him pass in order that he may acquire a real future.'

(CD II/2, p. 259)

This future is bound up with the overall temporal structure of the Church Dogmatics, and particularly concerns eschatology. We may see at this point that the incursion of election, that is of the elected One into time, is determinative and totally significant. At the very core of Barth's doctrine of election there is what we will term the need for 'noetic realisation', as:

'The witness of the community of God to every individual man consists in this: that this choice of the godless man is void; that he belongs eternally to Jesus Christ and therefore is not rejected, but elected by God in Jesus Christ; that

15. Ibid.

16. Op.cit., p. 172.

the rejection which he deserves on account of his perverse choice is borne and cancelled by Jesus Christ; and that he is appointed to eternal life with God on the basis of the righteous, divine decision.'

(CD II/2, p. 306)

By 'noetic realisation' we mean that the completeness of election is such that we do not add to some unspecified or indeed specified number of the elect; there is no individual 'new creation' but the response to and entry into that which is already accomplished in Jesus Christ from eternity. In the following passage the corresponding transcendence that this implies is made very clear. The man who rejects Christ turns his back on his 'proper' life and in effect embraces the void life of the godless man.¹⁷ On the other hand those who hear and believe the promise of their election realise in their affirmation the completedness of the election of man made in Jesus Christ. This passage endorses our understanding of election as grounded in eternity, but renders even more acute the problem as to how this is to be thought of as bound up in the concrete history of the life and death of Jesus Christ.

'The fact that (men) are elect does not transcend only their hearing and faith, or the promise addressed to them as such, or the existence of the community which brings it to them. Transcending their own being, it also transcends the being of everything which God has created and which is distinct from Himself, with the exception of the one man, Jesus of Nazareth. They are elected by the will and decree of the triune God. They are therefore elected on the far side of their life, and hearing, and faith, and the community, and the promise delivered by it, in the origin and object of the promise, in the Word of God which willed to become and did actually become flesh, and only in Him. Election is the eternal basis, the eternal anterior reality, the eternal presupposition of the existence

17. Op.cit., p. 322.

of those who may live as the elect. It is identical with the fact that the elect Jesus Christ elected them also, and that this happened to and not in their human nature and its possibilities, to and not in their human history and its development, as is correspondingly true also of their rejection.'
(CD II/2, p. 321)

Barth argues that men's 'special calling simply discloses and confirms the fact that they already are the elect',¹⁸ and this is extended in the 'rejection borne eternally and therefore for all time by Jesus Christ in the power of divine self-giving',¹⁹ which means that the 'rejected man' only exists as the 'object of the divine non-willing'.²⁰ Thus on all quarters primacy is given to the eternal in election yet this is actualised in a divine decree (which Barth conceives Christologically) that is really and most truly realised in Jesus Christ for:

'We have interpreted the concept of the divine decree—according to the rule that God is no other than the One who reveals Himself — by the main articles of Christology: the unity and difference of the divine and human nature, the humiliation and the exaltation, the prophetic, high-priestly and kingly office of Jesus Christ. We have understood Jesus Christ as the one Elector and Elect (in whom the many are elect), and again as the one Rejector and (in whom the many are not rejected).
(CD II/2, p. 325)

What indeed can be made of this as regards the problem of time? We have indicated our projected examinations of Christology and of time itself which we shall enter into in later chapters, but at this point and to continue this Chapter, we now turn to Barth's own approach to this problem which is summarised on pages 181-188 of Volume II:2 of the

18. Op.cit., p. 341.

19. Op.cit., p. 450.

20. Ibid.

Church Dogmatics. How in Barth's eyes is eternity in the election of Jesus Christ related to time as theatre of human activity? In answering this question it is first necessary to see how Barth conceives of the divine decree of election. Divine predestination is a 'living act' not a decree made and then rigidly worked out from a divine act of will made solely in the distant past.²¹

'We can only understand and describe it as an act because in itself it is solely and entirely an act.... We can view it as whole only as we view the living person of Jesus Christ.... as an event which in its entirety is as such the will of God and encloses as such man and the will and decision of man and the autonomous existence of man. This divine will in its entirety was in the beginning with God. This divine act of will is predestination.'

(CD II/2, p. 181)

The key to Barth's doctrine of predestination is that it is 'the divine act of will itself and not an abstraction from or fixed and static result of it'.²² From this standpoint he is able to criticise the traditional position which appears to him to be an anthropomorphism based upon the human notion of a decree in law. Thus on this latter view there was only one occasion on which 'God willed, in the pre-temporal eternity when the decree was conceived and established',²³ and as a result:

'The living quality of this action is something perfectum, belonging to the eternal past. It is not an action, an electing and deciding, which is still continued in time. God's living action in the

21. Op.cit., p. 180. Barth summarises what we have been saying in CD IV/2, pp. 344-345, where the history of the 'closed circle' prefigures the incarnation. The triune life of God is the basis of the election and covenant.

22. Op.cit., p. 181.

23. Ibid.

present consists only in the execution of this decree, the fulfilment of an election and decision already made. For us then, who exist in time, the living God is perceptible and meaningful and active only in the execution and fulfilment of His predestination, not in predestination itself. What we may see in predestination itself and as such is in some degree the monument of the living God, of the God who is meaningful and active in practice. In it God is for us no longer the living God. He surrendered this quality by translating it into act. In His work in time He is the living God for us only to the extent that He is no longer the living God in that pre-temporal eternity. His speech and activity in the temporal present are only an echo of the note which was struck in His eternal decree.'

(CD II/2, p. 181)

The radical conclusion that Barth draws concerning the traditional position is that 'God was' for, 'in time He predestinates no longer'.²⁴ It is in this way that the seeds of Deism are sown because God is no longer the electing and deciding God. In other words by an absolute decree made from eternity God ties his own hands vis à vis the present time and has rendered himself superfluous to the outworking of salvation. Barth argues that as the decree is a 'living decree' so both the freedom and the constancy of God may be preserved by the radical understanding of the living will of God that he propounds. On page 183 we find that once more at the centre of Barth's thought is his doctrine of eternity. We remember in our previous Chapter how Barth criticised the Reformation for its undue emphasis upon the 'pre-temporality' of God and at this point, consistent with this insight, he remoulds the doctrine of election in accordance with the pre-, supra- and post-

24. Op.cit., p. 182.

temporality of God. In conformity with God's supreme actualism, his being as actus purus, he 'Before time and above time and at every moment...is the predestinating God, positing this beginning of all things with Himself, willing and ordaining, electing and deciding, pledging and committing'. As a result 'The predestination of God is unchanged and unchangeably God's activity'.²⁵ In Barth's understanding of election predestination ceases to be an apologia for God's absence but becomes the means of his presence in time. Nowhere is the essence of Barth's actualism more clearly revealed for God is in his activity; and all his activities demonstrate that his being is neither isolated nor static.²⁶

Although we have demonstrated in turn Barth's self-consistency in that his doctrine of God's act structures his ontology of God we have not come much closer to understanding how it is that eternity and time relate other than upon the level of sheer assertion. Again Barth's ontology of God, as being in act, conditions his doctrine of election. We are presented with the contemporaneousness of God in accordance with the pre-, supra- and post-temporality of God in his dynamic eternity. The question that now confronts us is whether this contemporaneousness is truly contingent contemporaneity. We acknowledge that in Barth's words, 'praedestinatio, like creatio and reconciliatio, like vocatio, justificatio, sanctificatio and glorificatio, describe a divine activity' and is thus an 'eternal happening'²⁷ for they

25. Op.cit., p. 183.

26. Op.cit., p. 184.

27. Ibid.

have in theological terms the mechanism of contemporaneity provided by the eternal foundation of being in act and thus by the 'perfect presence'. If this can allow election and the whole scheme of divine activity to be present to us in terms of its own inner logic or rationale then how does Barth conceive of the actual relation that must exist between time and eternity? With this question we come to the goal at which we have directed our efforts in the opening chapters of this thesis. In stating Barth's response we will set out our problem for the following chapters on the incarnation and Christology.

We began this Chapter with an allusion to the question of the relation of predestination and the incarnation which is of fundamental importance as it points to the relation that must exist between the temporal and Christological work of God and its eternal presupposition in divine election. We have noted how the reconciliation of God and man in Jesus Christ takes place in 'primal history', in accordance with Barth's scheme of divine antecedence and temporal consequence. This is ambiguous, for is the priority of God over man temporal or in a deep sense ontological? It is temporal in that grace (and thus 'primal history') 'precedes' everything and 'the eternal willing of the man Jesus and of all the people represented in Him' is 'the choice of God preceding all other choices'. It is, therefore, on the one hand an ontological priority but is also, on the other hand bound up with the peculiarities of the concept of eternity, in the distinction between duration and division.

We argued that this distinction, which maintains duration without division as the temporal attribute of eternity (and the reverse for time) conflicted with the ineradicable division of time implicit in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the unrepeatable 'before' and 'after' that this involves. As long as the terms are dictated by revelation then we see in the doctrine of election eternity brought into time in the 'concreteness', the 'particularity' and the eventhood of the being of God that is manifested in the 'living decree' of divine election. In other words election as the contemporaneous and actual will of God is spelt out in terms of the doctrine of eternity we explored in Chapter IV, that is as the pre-, supra- and post-temporality of God.

Barth's doctrine of predestination is congruent with his overall theological stance and is radically structured by his concept of eternity. This lends credibility to our basic assertion in this thesis that Barth's understanding of eternity (and thus time) is informed and motivated by the putative ontological recovery that is the most striking feature of the theology of the Church Dogmatics. In concluding this chapter Barth's account of predestination as a divine activity will be recapitulated in nuce, as the act and activity of God, in conjunction with the account given of the resurrection, most clearly stated in CD IV/1. In this comparison it is possible to examine Barth's resolution of the two aspects which displayed an apparent tension in his thought as it is expressed in the doctrine of election. The act of God in eternity and election is

matched by the act of God in time, the resurrection. In the foregoing pages many questions have been raised concerning this incipient tension; and whilst it will prove possible to resolve this fully only by the study of the incarnation and Christology which is to follow, the immediate contrast to be presented is both illuminating, and indeed exposes an important and intrinsic aspect of the Church Dogmatics.

Election is not static, 'This history, encounter and decision between God and man was in the beginning with God, and is identical neither with the one nor the other'.²⁸ Thus 'primal history' prototypically prefigures and parallels history as the 'secret' of world history. Eternal predestination is made manifest in the history of salvation, not hidden in an 'inaccessibly distant past eternity'.²⁹ There is, according to Barth, no separation of the temporal and the eternal and, as has been seen earlier in Chapter IV, such a separation would deny the theological constitution of the relation. Predestination as the presupposition of revelation is both hidden and revealed for,

'it is an act of divine life in the spirit, an act which affects us, an act which occurs in the very midst of time no less than in that far distant pre-temporal eternity. It is the present secret, and in the history of salvation the revealed secret, of the whole history, encounter and decision between God and man. It takes place in time. It is revealed, and yet it still remains a secret, and is recognisable recognised as such. It takes place in the proclamation of God's Word. It takes place in the foundation and existence and guidance of Israel and the Church. It takes place in the calling, justification, sanctification and glorification of man. It takes place in our awakening to faith and hope and love. What

28. Op.cit., p. 185.

29. Ibid.

else are these things but the movement of the eternally electing God, the God who exercises His free love in the beginning?'

(CD II/2, p. 186)

On this basis the 'predestination which we know in the person and work of Jesus Christ is undoubtedly event, the history, encounter and decision between God and man'.³⁰ The ambivalence of Barth's position is intrinsic and methodologically deliberate; Jesus Christ is both a concrete person and the decision of the eternally living God. The temporal basis of this lies in the doctrine of the pre-, supra- and post-temporality of eternity which in turn is built upon the doctrine of God's dynamic being. In the resurrection and the forty days God is revealed unequivocally.

'For the first community founded by this event, the event of Easter Day and the resurrection appearances during the forty days were the mediation, the infallible mediation as unequivocally disclosed in a new act of God, of the perception that God was in Christ (2 Cor. 5,19), that is, that in the man Jesus, God Himself was at work, speaking and acting and suffering and going to His death, and that He acted as, and proved Himself, the one and true God, not in spite of this end, but on this very way into the far country which He went to the bitter end, in this His most profound humiliation, at the place where an utter end was made of this man.'

(CD IV/1, p. 301)

The fulfilment of eternity is in time; such is the extent of divine condescension in the incarnation culminating in the resurrection. The end and goal of predestination is achieved in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the following passage Barth presents the resurrection as the completion of the incarnation. Eternity is realised in time when the boundary is broken and temporal transcendence is

30. Op.cit., p. 187.

established in the 'forty days'.

'The resurrection of Jesus Christ tells us...that as the Crucified "He lives and reigns to all eternity" (Luther), that as the One who was, having been buried, He is not of the past, He did not continue to be enclosed in the limits of time between His birth and death, but as the One who was in this time He became and is the Lord of all time, eternal as God Himself is eternal, and therefore present in all time. But the fact that He has risen to die no more, to be taken from the dominion of death (Rom. 6,9), carries with it the fact that His living and speaking and acting, His being on the way from Jordan to Golgotha, His being as the One who suffered and died, became and is as such His eternal being and therefore His present-day being every day of our time. That which took place on the third day after lifted up the whole of what took place before in all its particularity (not in spite of but because of its particularity) into something that took place once and for all. It is in the power of the event of the third day that the event of the first day - as something that happened there and then - is not something which belongs to the past, which can be present only by recollection, tradition and proclamation, but is as such a present event, the event which fills and determines the whole present.'

(CD IV/1, p. 313)

The resurrection is the completion and realisation of the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics inasmuch as God's act in time makes time the vehicle of eternity as the triumph over the brokenness and limitation of a single life. This one life has become the eternal life of the 'present event', the 'Lord of all time', the One who is 'eternal as God Himself is eternal, and therefore present in all time'.³¹ In this way Barth unites his theology on the basis of Jesus Christ, and as he is God so he is God's act supremely when raised from the dead. He breaks the bonds of time, restoring in terms of Barth's doctrine of eternity, the original time of creation. It was noted earlier that

31. CD IV/1, p. 313.

Christian theology is irreducibly temporal in that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is an irreversible historical event which took place in time. This Barth realises as he argues for the unity of the act of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

'...who was put to death for our transgressions, but who now lives for our justification as the guarantor and giver of our life, having been raised from the dead in our mortal flesh. It is a unity which is securely grounded. It is the unity of an irreversible sequence. It is a unity which is established teleologically. Jesus Christ as attested in Holy Scripture is the One who exists in this unity.'
(CD IV/1, p. 346)

In this contrast of the impulse of predestination and its fulfilment in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ eternity and time meet and are transformed in the mutuality of the incarnation. In this brief comparison our exposition has been in effect short-circuited for there is much ground to be trodden before it will be possible to complete this study. What is apparent is the inner theological integrity of the concepts of eternity and time Barth is exploiting in attempting to do justice to the complexity of the temporal structure of Christian theology. In this chapter we have but sketched Barth's doctrine of the resurrection, but sufficient has been said to show that the pattern of temporality in eternity (and thus in 'primal history'), the succession of past, present and future without division or limitation which informs the act of God in election, is fulfilled in the resurrection. Here the act of God in Jesus Christ's triumph over death is the breaking of the limitation of time, as divided into irrecoverable past and distant future

by the order of 'before and after'. This presupposes the incarnation to which our attention is about to turn but it is now possible to appreciate how Barth has unified the extremities of the event of Jesus Christ in terms of his overall, and we would assert crucial and structurally fundamental doctrine of eternity and time.

As observed above the extremities of Barth's resolution of the tension of eternity and time have been isolated. Both predestination (or election) and the resurrection have an explicit temporal basis which is grounded upon the doctrine of the act and event of God. This is in turn explicated in terms of the contrast of eternity and time as it was expounded in Chapter IV. It is therefore possible to see the unity of Barth's overall theological stance in that election and resurrection are interrelated and mutually fulfilling. Jesus Christ as the subject of both is as always central to Barth's theological reflection, not in abstracto but on the profound but concrete ontological basis explored in Chapters II, III and IV. We now turn to the areas of incarnation and Christology in which eternity and time interact in the veiledness of the events of revelation. In this context Barth resolves the antithesis of eternity and time in the provisional yet universally valid unity of the God-man. The central theses of the Church Dogmatics can now be understood in the context that has been elaborated in the opening chapters of this study. A fundamental ontology is the basis of the events and activity of the incarnation of Jesus Christ in time, which is willed by God in and from eternity in the decree of election.

CHAPTER VI
 ETERNITY AND TIME:
 INCARNATION

The problem of time in the theology of the Church Dogmatics is both pervasive and complex. This much we have learnt from Barth. If we respond with serious attention to the primal themes of his theology we can see how his doctrine of eternity and time expresses the fundamental structures of his thought and is an integrated, not an extraneous item, upon Barth's theological agenda. Thus Barth offers a contrast to Augustine who, in De Trinitate,¹ struggles with the timelessness of Neoplatonism.² Barth brings in his actualistic doctrine of God the two aspects of incarnation and atonement into infrangible interconnection. We are not therefore faced with static categories in a dialectic of the two natures, human and divine, corresponding to time and eternity, but an active and creative unity and distinction. We have seen how in Barth's thought he seeks to overcome timelessness by his trinitarian doctrine of eternity and how in election God acts from eternity, an eternity which is in fact not the negation of time but its fulfilment. We cannot pretend this is without difficulties because in essence the terms and concepts he employs cannot perhaps bear the full weight of theological inspiration set upon them.

1. Tr. On the Trinity, A.W. Haddon, Edinburgh, 1873.

2. Cf. Le temps et l'éternité chez Plotin et St. Augustin by J. Guittou, 2nd Ed. Paris, 1955.

At this juncture an ocean of material confronts us and could overwhelm the student of Barth when he considers the place of time in creation, Christology, reconciliation and eschatology. In our previous chapters we have followed the intrinsic structure of Barth's thought and inner logic of the movement from the living freedom of God's trinitarian eternity in CD I/1 and II/1 to the election of Jesus Christ. That is from eternity and 'primal history' to the resurrection as we find them set out in CD II/2. We have looked in detail at Barth's doctrine of eternity and found certain difficulties both in logical and theological terms which we will explore further in our overall analysis of Barth's theological theory of time. Having seen the movement of God from eternity we may now turn to examine Barth's account of the actual entry of God into time in the incarnation, the veritable focal point of Barth's theology. We shall undertake this task in two interconnected steps in response to the pattern of Barth's thought. First we shall examine the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the entry of eternity into time, and, second, we shall trace out the implications of the incarnation in Christology. This inter-related reality of Christology and soteriology finds its root in the treatment of the incarnation in CD I/2 and its explication in soteriological development in CD IV. There is a sharp discontinuity in the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics which is made by the resurrection. The most extensive passage on time in this work concerns the temporal consequences of this event for theological anthropology. We will therefore explore the sequence of created and

post-resurrection time³ in later chapters on 'Man in his Time' because theological anthropology as it directly concerns us (that is in existential terms) is posterior to the understanding of time and eternity implicit in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the prototypical man. If we are to be faithful to Barth then we move from that which is ontologically and epistemologically prior, to that which is secondary, in the overall context of analogia fidei and the actual reality of the incarnation, the resurrection and the corresponding possibility of faith. Incarnation and reconciliation in the total arena of Christology must precede the realisation of the fact of creation in the mind of faith. We justify our procedure in the words of Barth before we state and analyse the fundamental theological axis of incarnation and reconciliation in its temporal dimension.

'The insight that man owes his existence and form, together with all (i.e. including the temporal dimension) reality distinct from God, to God's creation, is achieved only in the reception and answer of the divine self-witness, that is, only in faith in Jesus Christ, i.e. in the knowledge of the unity of Creator and creature actualised in Him, and in the life mediated in the present mediated by Him, under the right and in the experience of the goodness of the Creator towards His creature.'

(CD III/1, p.3)

In view of this we shall later draw together the insights of CD I/2 on the incarnation and those of CD IV on reconciliation as they concern the problem of time so as to reveal the temporal basis of Barth's thinking in this area.

3. Allusion is made to the resurrection at the end of Chapter V above and to its consequences in Chapters IX, X and XI on the theological anthropology of time.

This will also set the theological scene for our analysis of man in time as the creation of God.

The possibility of faith rests upon the reality of the Word made flesh and in this faith we recover our knowledge of creation. Thus the ontology of the incarnation underlies our epistemology of faith. The incarnation is the starting point of revelation and Jesus Christ is, in Barth's understanding, the fullness of God in the history of this contingent and particular man. Owing to the oneness of being and act in incarnation - a unity of incarnation and redemption - we have to approach the problem of christology (of the two natures: human and divine) as a factor within this soteriological activity and not as a mere encounter of abstracted 'natures'. Nevertheless we are bound to explore the temporal implications of this problem so as to expose the relation between the time of revelation in Jesus Christ and the time experienced by man and expressed in his thought, both theological and philosophical.

As we have noted we cannot divorce the incarnation from the saving activity of God which it embodies. At the outset of Barth's account of the incarnation itself in CD I/2 the problem of time emerges in such a way as to cast light on the whole status of his theological account of time. In this passage⁴ we become once more aware of the strength and weakness of Barth's theology in that whilst the key to all reality lies in revelation and in its priority, the corollary of this is the danger of isolation and possible

4. CD I/2, pp. 45-101.

illusion. This is one point at which the revealed and the natural reality enter into close proximity and so in analysing this we cast light not merely upon the problem of time but upon the relation of the theology of the Church Dogmatics to philosophy and thus to any form of natural theology or theological anthropology generated upon the basis of human experience and understanding of time. What follows immediately is a critical examination of Barth's doctrine of time as it is developed in the Incarnation in relation to contrasting insights of O. Cullmann and St. Augustine. This will reflect those issues we have outlined above, both in the contemporary context of Christ and Time and also in the major emphases of patristic thought. It will become apparent that it is in relation to the theological and christological ontology of the fathers that Barth must be understood. Thus whilst we draw negative contrasts with Cullmann and Augustine in our initial consideration of the incarnation, we draw on the contrary a positive parallel between Barth and Athanasius in the major sections on christology⁵ and the dynamic understanding of incarnation as the fulfilment of redemption. This is achieved through the mutual activity of the divine and human natures of Christ and their correlates, eternity and time.

Once more in his exposition Barth asserts reality over possibility as the incarnate One is the concrete expression of God's freedom. This is fully consistent with his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. Barth separates

5. That is in Chapters VII and VIII below.

the incarnation as an answer to the question: 'How does the encounter of His revelation with man become real in the freedom of God?'⁶ from Christology as the doctrine of the person and work of Christ, which pertains to the doctrine of reconciliation. We will respect this distinction, insofar as we find it illuminating, but conflate the dual aspects, inasmuch as we are to understand the dynamic unity of soteriology and Christology in the Church Dogmatics as a systematic even if chronologically developed whole. We are thus granting a unity of vision to Barth even if this (not unnaturally) underwent a progressive realisation during its development. Once more we cannot ignore Barth's creative encounter with Anselm which has much influenced his methodology and epistemology. The fact of the incarnation precedes interpretation⁷ and therefore,

'credo ut intelligam means that in view of the fact that in faith God's objective truth has met and mastered me, I am determined under the instruction of this truth alone to give an account of the encounter in thought and speech.'

(CD I/2, p.9)

It is in the light of this that we must understand the 'simple' fact of the 'simple reality of God'⁸ as he is revealed in Jesus Christ in his own time, that is to say, 'God's time'. On the following page we encounter a sketch of 'revealed reality' and this will now be quoted in full because it demonstrates the integral nature of Barth's doctrine of time with his understanding of revelation. This

6. CD I/2, p. 3.

7. Op.cit., p. 7.

8. Op.cit., p. 11.

is the basis of his exposition and explication of the God-man Jesus Christ.

'The simplicity of revealed reality is not that of a repeated or general event, like that of an event formulated in the law of causality. It is the simplicity of a definite, temporally limited, unrepeated and quite unrepeatable event. According to the prophecy and recollection of Holy Scripture, there is an authentic witness and legitimate proclamation of this event. In this way other, earlier or later, times are given to participation in this event. Finally this event is to be understood both in principle and in fact as future, as the end of all time. In other words, Jesus Christ who has come is also the One who is yet to come. But there is no anticipation or repetition of this event. The reality of revelation is not a determination of all history or of a part or section of the whole of history. It is history, this very definite history, which has not happened before and will never happen again, which happened once for all, not once in every age or once in many, but quite literally once for all. Before Christ there was an age of prophecy about Him, and after Christ an age of witness about Him, but that before and after are governed by relation to the name of Jesus as the midpoint of time. Thus the real temporal pre-existence of Jesus Christ in prophecy and His real temporal post-existence in witness are identical with this once-for-all existence of His as the midpoint of time. The midpoint of time - which, after all, belongs to time - is the fulfilment of time. That is what distinguishes it from all other times. That is what it has in common with the end (and from this point of view, with the beginning) of all time.'

(CD I/2, p. 12)

This passage is crucial for in it in nuce are the diverse seeds of conflict which were indicated earlier in our thesis for, at the very least, the strange contrast of duration and division is apparent. This contrast is on a 'linear' basis and it once more obliges us to place this account in relation to Cullmann. At this point Barth is making a decisive and unmistakable assertion of the division of time by the once-for-all event of Jesus Christ into a 'before' and an 'after'. We have previously noted the

trenchant criticism of Barth offered by Cullmann. It is now possible to see how Barth asserts the 'midpoint of time', as indeed does Cullmann; but clearly Barth affirms a very great deal more, as has been apparent in our examination of the doctrine of eternity in the Church Dogmatics. As the following comments make clear, Barth prefigures Cullmann who excises the former's surplus 'Platonic' materials that in his view generate a 'qualitative', rather than a purely linear or 'quantitative' distinction between time and eternity. The methodological contrast between Barth and Cullmann is so great that direct comparison is difficult. In earlier chapters, however, an antithesis of time and eternity in linguistic and conceptual terms was apparent and this represents part of Barth's desire to overcome the incipient 'timelessness' of a transcendent eternity which enters time, fulfilling and upholding it. In the characterisation of Cullmann that is now made it is possible to see the affinities that exist, yet also the obvious fact that Barth is attempting theological thought in a different dimension to the former. In this the contrast between the 'semantic generalisation' of New Testament words into concepts of universal theological application made by Cullmann and the contrasting profound 'commentary on the text'⁹ offered by Barth in the Church Dogmatics stands out clearly.

According to Cullmann there is in the New Testament a continuous time-process embracing past, present and future which takes the form of an ascending time-line. This is a

9. Op.cit., p. 13.

'straight', as opposed to a 'cyclical' and Greek metaphysical conception of time in which salvation is found through participation in a 'timeless beyond'. There remains without a doubt in Cullmann's mind the threat of radical ahistoricity with regard to Barth, as the dialectic of the eternal and temporal has yet to be resolved. Cullmann resolves the dilemma by eliminating transcendence, in the sense of putting eternity and time in parallel, as finite (limited) and infinite (unlimited) duration. Barth, in asserting and defending the trinitarian basis of his dogmatics and thus the power and sovereign freedom of God, is bound to assert a temporal transcendence. Thus in his Christology and initially in his account of the incarnation Barth is faced with the extreme contrast of the One who inhabits eternity, entering time. In this the transition is made between the divisionless duration of eternity with its 'past, present and future' and the determinative division of time effected in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Whereas Barth and Cullmann both, therefore, share an interest in the importance and overwhelming decisiveness of the 'midpoint', the latter exhausts the significance of the New Testament view of time as he interprets it into these categories. Cullmann argues that examination of the words *ἡμέρα*, *νῦν*, *ώρα*, and *σήμερον* shows that the New Testament concentrates the qualities of temporal factuality and 'once-for-allness' upon the events of the mid-point of time. The highly fruitful (or perhaps also at times deceptive?) distinction between *καιρός*, as the 'fulfilled' or significant time of divine decision, and *χρόνος* representing mundane

durational time complements the further dichotomy that Cullmann explicitly elaborates between history and 'salvation history', that is between 'Historie' and 'Geschichte'. Time becomes charged with the overtones of καιρός when the events of redemption take place. The duality between limited time periods and the undefined incalculable duration to be understood as eternity, is, according to Cullmann, irreducibly characteristic of the New Testament. Elsewhere in this study it has been noted how Barth cannot accept such a striving after the infinite,¹⁰ as this represents immanent speculation, not the nature of the true God known only through revelation. In Cullmann's view there is no 'qualitative' distinction between time and eternity manifested in time, but the juxtaposition in eschatological terms of this 'present age' (αἰὼν οὗτος or ἐνεστῶς) and the 'coming age' (αἰὼν μέλλων). The contrast is not between temporality and timelessness but of time over against unending time, and between the age of fallenness and the coming age in which the evil powers have been conquered by the 'midpoint'. In consequence Cullmann interprets the New Testament redemptive drama as comprising three 'times': the entire unending extension of 'eternity'; the limited time between creation and the commencement of the eschatological consummation; and time periods limited in one direction (that is time periods limited in one direction, before creation and after the end of the present age).

The question which arises with regard to Barth is

10. Cf. Chapter III, n. 81 in reference to CD II/1, p. 467.

the following. Is the 'mid-point' really truly temporal, does it in fact determine our time or is it a theological construction emanating from the revelatory basis of 'God's time' in eternity? If the mid-point is not truly temporal then the whole structure and content of Barth's Church Dogmatics is an ahistorical ideological illusion.¹¹ If it is truly historical then how can the transcendent enter time without irredeemable loss and capitulation on the part of the eternal and glorious God? This is the series of implicit questions which Barth attempts to answer, but which Cullmann precludes by his reductive approach undertaken from the standpoint of the theological presuppositions governing his New Testament exegesis and apparent biblicism. The questions raised demand the patristic response and a unified approach in theological thinking that Barth attempts to provide, and in examining his thought we must bear in mind the scale and nature of his undertaking. We may not in the final count allow the complete autonomy of Barth's theological method because the problem of time necessarily puts the theological categories in relation to the non-theological categories. Thus the links of any incipient chain of total theological self-sufficiency may be broken when eternity encounters time in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Having made this excursion we may now return to our exposition of Barth's thought having clarified, by reference

11. That is if it is to avoid becoming a 'dream', a word H. Bouillard uses (in The Knowledge of God, Herder, 1968, p. 61) which in his opinion characterises a theology entirely freed from philosophical reflection.

to Cullmann, some of the major issues that face a theologian who in Christology is to do justice to the encounter of time and eternity, postulated in the event of Jesus Christ. Basic to the New Testament witness, according to Barth, is the 'name of Jesus Christ itself' and secondary to this are statements about the divinity and the humanity of his so-called 'natures'. Thus the basis of Christology and Christian faith is not a set of generalisations or abstractions but 'the name of Jesus Christ, or of the simple, once-for-all reality indicated by this name'.¹² In consequence the 'objective reality of revelation' is given, and is not a reconstruction or inference. Thus in correspondence with his overall theological priority it is,

'From the reality of Jesus Christ we gather that revelation is possible on God's side, that God is free for us, in such a way that His Word by becoming Man at the same time is and remains what He is, the true and eternal God, the same as He is in Himself at the Father's right hand for ever and ever. The kenosis, passion, humiliation which He takes upon Himself by becoming man, signifies no loss in divine majesty but, considered in the light of its goal, actually its triumph. We may and must, of course, speak of a veiling of the divine majesty. By becoming flesh the Word enters the hiddenness, the 'servant form', which in respect of the knowability of God undoubtedly signifies an 'externalisation' (kenosis) compared with the 'divine form' in which God knows Himself, in which the Father knows the Son and the Son the Father. It is in this veiling - which after all is a veiling in a form familiar to man - that the Majesty can meet man and so far make knowledge of itself possible through men. But it may also fail of recognition in this its 'servant form'. Its actual exposure to this failure to be recognised is the 'externalisation' which the Word allows to befall itself in becoming flesh. Knowledge of it becomes real to men only in virtue of a special unveiling through Jesus' resurrection from the dead, or through all the sayings and acts of His life so far as they were signs of His resurrection. Thus God's becoming man means undoubtedly in the first instance that His divinity becomes latent.'

(CD I/2, pp. 37-8)

12. CD I/2, p. 14.

In this lengthy quotation there is laid out the ground-work of Barth's understanding of the incarnation as God in his freedom retains his divinity whilst humbling himself in Jesus Christ, for,

'By becoming flesh the Word is no less true and entire God than He was previously in eternity in Himself. Incarnation of the Word means neither wholly nor in part any changing of the Word into something else, but the becoming flesh of the Word that remains the Word, the Wordness and the fleshness of the Word simultaneously.'

(CD I/2, p. 38)

In the reality of Jesus Christ, God's Son or Word has become Man. 'He becomes what we ourselves are' and this is 'flesh'. 'Flesh' is or signifies humanity or man-ness but most fundamentally 'finally and exclusively distinguishes man as he stands before God',¹³ Barth argues that it is this humanity that the Son of God has assumed and that 'The act of the triune God in the reality of Jesus Christ is that in this reality He was not only what He is in Himself in eternity. He was also with us and among us. He was also what we are. He was also flesh'.¹⁴ In Barth's own summary we find in the incarnation that:

'We have thus spoken of the possibility of revelation, and of that only, which is to be read off from its its reality. Essentially this is the (only possible) answer to the question: Cur Deus homo? and the only legitimate fulfilment of the programme: Credo ut intelligam.'

(CD I/2, p. 44)

We once more note the systematic outworking of Barth's fundamental motifs of divine priority, the freedom of God and the pure reality of revelation that arrives on its own

13. Op.cit., p. 40.

14. Ibid.

terms and criteria. Once more entry is made into the theological circle, for in taking 'flesh' or human nature Jesus Christ takes up that which is primarily defined as position of man as he stands before God. Thus 'flesh' is not an 'objective' (by this we mean universally intersubjective, i.e. a shared reality) but is derived from and defined in terms of criteria implicit in revelation. In short this definition is consistent with Barth's rejection of 'natural theology'.¹⁵ In turning to examine the problem of time in the context of the incarnation we must bear in mind this theologically based notion of 'humanity'; a humanity which 'became different' from ours, 'for sin, man's strife with God, could not find any place in Him'.¹⁶

Having laid out the groundwork of Barth's initial thought on the incarnation and noted how there is a systematic integration of fundamental structure (which makes the relation of eternity and time an aspect of the movement of God towards man in Jesus Christ) a few comments upon Augustine must be made. Barth's doctrine of eternity and the corresponding theory of time enter a new dimension of richness (in CD I/2, God's Time and Our Time). In the context of the initial Christological thought of The Incarnation of the Word this will provide the basis of further exploration of Christology in terms of reconciliation. The

15. This is of course a qualified rejection inasmuch as Barth's Church Dogmatics is a massive re-assertion of natural realities on a theological basis. T.F. Torrance points to this neglected aspect of Barth's thought in 'Natural Theology in the Thought of Karl Barth', Religious Studies, Vol. 6, pp. 121-135.

16. CD I/2, p. 40.

themes of importance multiply dramatically at this point, although the underlying movement of Barth's thought on eternity entering time remains in full correlation with his fundamental theological postulates. Barth effects an integration notably lacking in Augustine. This is despite the fact that the former's limitations do perhaps owe something of their origin to those same themes of impassibility and timelessness that underlie the Augustine's comments in De Trinitate. Barth does reflect Augustine's analysis of time in his account of time and eternity in revelation and thus the incarnation in CD I/2, but he responds negatively as well as positively, as we shall see. Before this, let us note the similarities and differences between Barth, as an Augustinian in terms of his Reformed heritage, and Augustine as we find him in De Trinitate. To elaborate this relation in detail would require a thesis in itself and so we confine ourselves to drawing out the more immediately obvious factors, which set the originator of antithesis of categories in the western tradition against the creator of the most powerful christological synthesis since Athanasius.

One clue to Barth's attitude to the relation of time and eternity (or rather the reverse in order of priority) is given in Augustine's cryptic comment which he repeats twice:

'The truth stands to faith in the same relation in which eternity stands to that which has a beginning.'
 (De Trinitate, Bk. IV, Ch. XIX, p. 134)

The eternal is prior to the temporal in both theologians, but the context of thought differs greatly in respect of the path to Truth, and thus in the nature of that Truth itself. Augustine characterises the incarnation and the

human response to Christ as follows:

'-the Truth itself, co-eternal with the Father, took a beginning from earth, when the Son of God so came as to become the Son of man, and to take to Himself our faith, that He might thereby lead us on to His own truth, who so undertook our mortality, as not to lose His own eternity. For truth stands to faith in the relation in which eternity stands to that which has a beginning. Therefore, we must needs be cleansed, that we may come to have such a beginning as remains eternal, that we may not have one beginning in faith, and another in truth. Neither could we pass to things eternal from the beginning, unless we were transferred, by the union of the eternal to ourselves through our own beginning, to His own eternity.'
(De Trinitate, Bk.IV,Ch.XIX,pp.134-5)

The priority of the eternal, the solidarity of men with Christ, and the movement of God to man are present, but underlying this is a doctrine of eternity which exhibits the influence of Neo-platonism. 'Since truth remains immortal, incorrupt, unchangeable. But true immortality, true incorruptibility, true unchangeableness, is eternity itself.'¹⁷ Augustine's vision remains intrinsically 'static', because although the mission of the Son of God is fully motivated from eternity (as indeed it is in the thought of Barth) its consequence is an overt negation of the temporal in the interests of the eternal.

'Behold, then, why the Son of God was sent; nay, rather behold what it is for the Son of God to be sent. Whatever things they were which were wrought in time, with a view to produce faith, whereby we might be cleansed so as to contemplate truth, in things that have a beginning, which have been put forth from eternity, and are referred back to eternity, these were either testimonies of this mission, or they were the mission itself of the Son of God.'

(De Trinitate, Bk.IV,Ch.XIX,p.135)

17. De Trinitate, Bk.IV, Ch.XIX, p.135.

In other words there is in Augustine (as in Barth) a priority of the eternal. Whereas there is 'movement' in the incarnation (and thus the implication of temporality) the changelessness of God apparent in the former's notion of eternity once more raises the question of whether there is ultimately a reduction of categories. Augustine in his understanding of the path to be taken to knowledge of God would imply a negation of time, despite the positive and affirmative impulse implicit in the incarnation of the Son of God. The goal achieved by the incarnation is the possibility of the appropriation of a way to the changelessness of eternity. There is a fundamental conflict that emerges between the doctrine of God and eternity in which he 'Who fashions all things unchangeable, yet without any change in Himself, and creates things temporal, yet without any temporal movement in Himself', which calls us to 'purge our minds, to see ineffably that which is ineffable'¹⁸ and the inescapable and intrinsic temporality of the incarnation. In the incarnation Augustine argues that,

'when this fulness of time had come, "God sent His Son, made of a woman", that is made in time, that the Incarnate Word might appear to men; while it was in that Word Himself, apart from time, at what time this was to be done; for the order of times is in the eternal wisdom of God without time.'

(De Trinitate, Bk.IV, Ch.XIX)

This short passage illustrates the Augustinian dilemma of an atemporal God establishing himself in time in the historical life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The dilemma may become acute once the doctrine of

18. Ibid.

changelessness is embraced with vigour, as in the case of Augustine. When, furthermore, we see the account of time Augustine offers elsewhere¹⁹ we have the groundwork of the western antitheses, laid down in the conflict of the Platonic tradition and realised in the tension and ultimate triumph of the ideal over the real, the immutable over the mutable, which is now irrevocably sharpened by the radical historicity and temporality of the Christian incarnation. In brief the Christian revelation depends upon the temporal and denies any resolution of time in terms of a timeless eternity or an ideal world. The task Barth faces is to affirm the eternal and the temporal because God is presented in Holy Scripture as acting from eternity and yet those same writings demand the temporal consummation of that action on the cross and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This may appear an obvious point to make but it seems to us that Barth attempts to embrace this dichotomy and it is, and has been our task, to evaluate his account of the majesty of God, who, from eternity, condescends to man in Jesus Christ in his actual life and death in its manifest historicity and temporality.

The preliminary studies undertaken for this thesis indicate that it is this basic dilemma - to be detected so clearly in the works of Augustine - that is decisive as regards our assessment of the temporal aspects of Barth's account of the incarnation. If we take the two wings of Augustine's thought in his account of the incarnation in

19. Cf. De Civ. Bk. XI, and Conf. Bk. XI.

relation to a basically timeless doctrine of God, inherited from Neoplatonism, and his analysis of time as ungraspable then we can see two of the major problems that Barth is constantly striving to overcome in the Church Dogmatics, especially in the section to which we are about to turn in I/2. We might regard Barth's work here as a notable movement in the process of 'doctrinal development', for he is facing up to a series of antinomies which have re-emerged repeatedly in the history of western theology (and philosophy) and which as late as the nineteenth century afflicted theological and philosophical effort, as we have shown in our first chapter. Thus in his attempt to do justice to John I,14, 'the Word became flesh', Barth is engaged in an appraisal of momentous proportions, the full dimensions of which only become apparent when we begin to set his work in its historical perspective. Thus it is one of the primal assertions of this thesis that Barth's doctrine of time and eternity is an extended commentary and a considered and creative progression beyond the flawed foundations laid by Augustine to the Western understanding of this problem. By this we do not lessen the undoubted achievement of Augustine, because his statement of the problem of time and eternity, far from being 'naive',²⁰ has remained without real answer until Barth's attempt to question the very basis of this antimony. The problem is to assess whether Barth went far

20. Ronald Suter's verdict on Augustine's theory of time in 'Augustine on Time with Some Criticisms from Wittgenstein', Rev. Int. de Phil., 1962, pp. 378-94.

enough and, moreover, whether he took the right direction in his constructive Christological synthesis.

In the foregoing sections we have seen how Cullmann effectively eliminates the transcendent by rendering eternity one-dimensional as the infinite, unbounded extension of human time, and human time-scales, and how conversely Augustine gives determinate weight to a timeless transcendence at the expense of the ultimate or irreducible reality of time. Barth, we are to maintain, is to tread a path between these extremes and is to be assessed in terms of an attempted Christological resolution of these dichotomies. The outworking of this Christological resolution in Barth's doctrine of the Person and work of Christ in volume IV of the Church Dogmatics will be traced in Chapters VII and VIII of this thesis. Having made two short excursions so as to provide ourselves with criteria of evaluation we are now ready to analyse Paragraph 14 of CD I/2, The Time of Revelation and in particular God's Time and Our Time, its first section. This will conclude our chapter on the incarnation and open our way to a fuller assessment of Barth's integrated Christology and soteriology.

Barth, as we have seen, asserts that the primary meaning of the term 'flesh' denotes man's standing before God and by this he defines humanity in relation to theological criteria, eliminating any abstraction or generalisation grounded upon immanent categories. The concept of time as, in Kantian terms, a condition of any possible human experience (that is to say in Kant's words a condition of

'inner sense' as well as 'outer sense'), has an intrinsic presuppositional role in all human experience. Thus as a general category, as it is understood to manifest itself in philosophical analysis, the concept of time is irreducible even if difficult to specify. It is a truly basic concept although a very puzzling one.²¹ It is not possible to 'cash out' temporal categories without great difficulties (the work of J.J.C. Smart illustrates this)²² because reductive accounts of time as movement or change, for example, or the even more ruthless elimination of temporality in describing the passage of time as arbitrary in its order of before and after, manifest their inadequacies when compared with the phenomenological analysis of time. In fact the analyses of time offered by Augustine and Heidegger stand out in stark contrast to positivist and reductive accounts of time. Indeed it is these two accounts which Barth uses as the point of departure for his own theory of time. Barth is in potential difficulty here because whereas he offers theological rationales for 'humanity' and 'being', in, as we have seen, the categories 'flesh' and 'eternity' (which pertain to the spheres of human experience and theological reality, respectively) time is intrinsic to both areas. The analogy of being is denied and analogia gratiae or analogia fidei is made the ground-motive of revelation in that divine, revealed reality is the source of our true

21. This begs many questions but in general terms I adopt the 'paradigm-case argument' stance.

22. Cf. Philosophy and Scientific Realism, London, 1963, Ch. VII, is an extreme example of a reductive account of time.

knowledge. Barth, as we see in what is to follow, argues in an exactly similar way for time.

'If by the statement, "God reveals Himself" is meant the revelation attested in Holy Scripture, it is a statement about the occurrence of an event. That means it also includes an assertion about a time proper to revelation. If stated with reference to this, it is equivalent to the statement, "God has time for us". The time God has for us is just this time of His revelation, the time that is real in His revelation, revelation time. Moreover in the interpretation of the concept of this time which is now our task, we shall not have to take as a basis any time concept gained independently of revelation itself. If our consideration of the question as to the time of revelation is serious, we shall at once be aware (1) that we have no other time than the time God has for us than the time of His revelation. Thus we must let ourselves be told what time is by revelation itself, and only then, and with that reference, form our idea of revelation as such.'

(CD I/2, p. 45)

God's being is eternity, this has been established and now, according to Barth, 'God's revelation in the event of the presence of Jesus Christ is God's time for us'.²³ With this the theological circle is made so many more degrees of arc complete, for God, from eternity, reveals himself in his own time. This lengthy quotation must be understood as the corollary of 'the simplicity of revealed reality',²⁴ and the consistent expression of Barth's postulates from which he systematically works out his theological structure.

In the light of his assertion of the primacy of God's time Barth subordinates 'the investigation here instituted to the revelation attested in Holy Scripture'.²⁵ He argues

23. CD I/2, p. 45.

24. Op.cit., p. 12.

25. Op.cit., p. 45.

that, 'Theologically the only sensible way of putting and answering the question as to the time of this revelation is to assume the special concept of this special time'.²⁶

Now given the determined status of the time of revelation we might expect this to remain a condition of, or factor, within revelation itself. What is most important is that Barth does not do this but uses the theological time he is to develop as the basis of judgement of other theories of time. In this important section²⁷ he argues as follows, 'But incidentally and without prejudice we may also indicate that time concepts gained otherwise are unsatisfactory, if our concern is to understand the time of revelation'.²⁸ The proviso that Barth adds is intended to keep our attention upon his positive exposition, but in offering judgement Barth is about to move from the sphere of revelation into an area of 'philosophy' in which his theory of time is to have quasi-empirical consequences. By this is meant that the theory of the 'special time' of revelation impinges upon and in effect transcends²⁹ the analyses of time offered by

26. Ibid.

27. Op.cit., pp. 45-6.

28. Op.cit., p. 45.

29. The impact of Barth's theological ontology in the incarnation is of great importance. T.F. Torrance (art. cit., p. 131) states the implications of the incarnation, 'Thus Barth's understanding of the Incarnation as the Truth of God incarnate in space and time, encountering us in space and time, encountering us objectively in Jesus Christ, had the unavoidable effect of calling into question any idea that the truth about God arises within us'. In fact what becomes apparent is a calling into question of any idea that the truth about the natural world arises in us. This can be plausibly argued with regard to time as in Chapters IX to XI of this thesis.

Augustine, Heidegger and Kant. Whereas in other areas the sovereignty of revelation lies over its own territory and stands in judgement over others as, for example, when the category 'flesh', understood as the 'man-before-Godness' of man, has an overall supremacy over other human categories as it is essentially 'unbound'. If the category 'flesh' is declared (in the sense we have specified) to be the characteristic, even the defining attribute of humanity, it remains a postulate of revelation. It would not be possible to argue on Barth's presuppositions that because man had an existential yearning after God, his experience of God could prove its validity. Only revelation can provide knowledge of God which is veridical. Other cosmic or existential categories are not bound to 'flesh', because flesh is not answerable to any determining criteria outside those of revelation. By using the theological theory of time as one which transcends other theories Barth, as we shall see, cannot preserve the unboundness that 'flesh' retains. There is not merely a one-way relationship of the supremacy analogous to that of a genus to species, for the nature of time as reflected in human experience and thought, shows flaws and difficulties only to be answered in the theology of time. Thus the utter distinctiveness of 'flesh' and its determination by revelation alone preserves it from an experiential and inferential basis in human experience. This is not the case with time, for, if it were, insuperable difficulties for Christian theology would result. This argument will now be clarified and made concrete in our exposition of the relevant passage of the

Church Dogmatics.

There are two major elements worked out in this passage. First, the elaboration of the theological and revealed nature of God's time and, second, an implicit dialectic between this and other non-revelatory notions of time, which Barth attempts to resolve in relation to the former pattern of thought. The clue to the solution that Barth develops is to be found in the article Das Sein in der Zeit of 1933 written by his brother Heinrich Barth.³⁰ In this the dialectic of antitheses is overcome on the basis of a dynamic interpretation of eternity over against time. The notion of 'Ewige Zeit' is developed as the 'eternal time' which is the 'Vergebung und die Erfüllung', the 'bestowal and the fulfilment' of time which is flawed and transient in human experience. This is of course inspired by Augustine's meditations in the Confessions. In the Church Dogmatics Barth uses this insight afforded by Heinrich Barth in a positive way. Augustine's analysis explicitly argues on the level of the human experience of fleeting time for a mental theory of past and future held in memory and expectation.³¹ The implicit theory which is pointed out by Heinrich Barth and exploited systematically by Karl Barth is the radical application of the doctrine that:

'in the Eternal nothing passeth, but the whole is present; whereas no time is all at once present: and that all time past, is driven on by time to come,

30. CD I/2, p. 45ff.

31. Barth's use of this pattern of argument is important later in theological anthropology, cf. Chapter IXff.

and all to come followeth upon the past; and all past and to come, is created, and flows out of that which is ever present.'

(Confessions, Bk.XI, Ch.13)

Augustine posits the following question which remains basic but rhetorical:

'Who shall hold the heart of man, that it may stand still, and see how eternity ever still-standing, neither past nor to come, uttereth the times past and to come? Can my hand do this, or the hand or the hand of my mouth by speech bring about a thing so great?'

(Confessions, Bk.XI, Ch.13)

The real answer is given later when Augustine finds that the seat of duration, the constancy of the present, is not to be found in time as he reflects upon it, but in the One. In the following passage from the Confessions the germ of Barth's theological theory of time is apparent in the healing of time that takes place in faith in the eternal God. Besides this are to be seen the acute problems that Barth immediately inherits from such an account. The God of Augustine is the One whose 'years stand together', whose 'Today, is Eternity' and One who approached in faith may provide the 'present' that is lost to man. In this passage there is an intricate fusion of biblical and neoplatonic thought underlying the pious utterance.

'But because Thy loving kindness is better than all lives, behold, my life is but an distraction, and Thy right hand upheld me, in my Lord the Son of man, the Mediator betwixt Thee, The One, and us many, many also through our manifold distractions amid many things, that by Him I may apprehend in Whom I have been apprehended, and may be re-collected from my old conversation, to follow The One, forgetting what is behind, and not distended but extended, not to things which shall be and shall pass away, but to those things which are before, not distractedly but intently, I follow on for the prize of my heavenly calling, where I may hear the voice of Thy

praise, and contemplate Thy delights, neither to come, nor to pass away....And Thou, O Lord, art my comfort, my Father everlasting, but I have been severed amid times, whose order I know not; and my thoughts, even the inmost bowels of my soul, are rent and mangled with tumultuous varieties, until I flow together into Thee, purified and molten by the fire of Thy love.'

(Confessions, Bk.XI, Ch.39)

We are now in very deep waters and must carefully distinguish between what we conceive Barth to have done and what he says his attitude is. This is by no means easy to achieve but as in the early chapters of this thesis we have to perceive the movement of thought underlying the massive creative structure of the Church Dogmatics. The statement that is offered here in a very brief compass is merely intended to set out the less obvious aspects of Augustine's thought on time. This is usually focussed upon his analysis of fleeting time and the human inability to isolate the present moment, and is a concern that is again reflected in much later discussion which will pass once more over Augustinian ground. We shall eventually turn to examine Barth's account of Augustine which emphasises these philosophical arguments and their manifest futility that places them on a level with those of Kant and Heidegger. The argument of Barth follows what has been called the explicit view of Augustine whereas the structure of his theological riposte follows the implicit answer the latter provides.

Augustine, as we have seen above in Confessions Bk.XI, provides a Platonic (that is Neoplatonic) exegesis of biblical material in which the ephemeral character of life contrasts with the One whose simple unity is the converse of

'us many'. It is accurate to say that self-identity is dependent upon God, 'that by Him I may apprehend in Whom I have been apprehended'³² for without God my perception of the present is impossible for it is stored in future moments or receding into the past and thus apperception is grounded upon 'my comfort, my Father everlasting'.³³ The antitheses of One and many, 'manifold distractions' and 'those things which are before' and the 'divided self' ('I have been severed between times') opposed to the perfect continuity of 'until I flow together into Thee' are Neoplatonist categories expressed through the biblical language of 'Thy loving kindness',³⁴ and so on. Within the thoughts here expressed there lie elements of the so-called 'Boethian' doctrine of eternity and in it there is the implication of timelessness that the former has in its undeveloped form (e.g. in the 'all things together and eternally' of Book XI, Chapter 9). This tendency towards timelessness is manifest in the antithesis of division in time and the ungraspable present, and the eternity of a God of whom Augustine says:

'Nor dost Thou by time, precede time: else shouldst Thou not precede all times. But Thou precedest all things past, by the sublimity of an ever present eternity; and surpassest all future because they are future, and when they come, they shall be past; but Thou art the same, and Thy years fail not. Thy years neither come nor go; whereas ours both come and go, that they may all come. Thy years stand together, because they do stand; nor are departing thrust out by the coming years, for they pass not away; but ours shall all be, when they shall no more be. Thy years are one day; and Thy day is

32. Conf. Bk. XI, Ch. 39.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

not daily, but To-day, seeing Thy today gives not place unto tomorrow, for neither doth it replace yesterday. Thy To-day, is Eternity;
 (Confessions, Bk.XI, Ch.16)

There is here a clear declaration of the freedom of God from temporal limitations which could be interpreted as timelessness in terms of the antithesis that exists between this state and the time of human existence. What we do have is the initial groundwork of Barth's doctrine that God is not bound by temporal limitations, but is their Creator. The passage quoted above must now be borne in mind for Barth exploits this temporal transcendence in the incarnation when he is to effect (as we have seen with regard to the doctrine of election) a Christological and trinitarian conditioning of the Augustinian tradition. It would be possible to dwell at great length upon the relation of Barth and Augustine but it is clear that the former is concerned to eliminate the traces of Platonism in the basic categories of the doctrine of God which are all too apparent in the Confessions and elsewhere. Barth draws, as we have become aware, the Trinity and Christology closely together so as to render the life of God that of the Trinity in eternity, and the decision of God towards man in his election of Jesus Christ from eternity. Thus these are not Christian afterthoughts adhering to a pre-existent set of theological categories, as is the danger in Augustine's Christology when it is seen from the standpoint of the problem of eternity and time. There is an unresolved tension in Barth's thought inherited from Augustine, yet there are also the seeds of a positive and thorough develop-

ment of this strand of thought. We shall now be able to trace this constructive response and purgative reform as it occurs in Barth's continued exposition of God's Time and our Time, for it is against such a background that his work stands out as the most significant treatment of the problem of time in modern theology, or even perhaps, in the whole history of Christian theology. Although Augustine has themes of timelessness in his doctrine of God he also has those positive and creative elements which are to flower in Barth. The latter in turn subjects the eternal and temporal aspects of his doctrines of God and Christ to radical reform in terms of their own fundamental postulates, thus liberating them from what Cullmann has called 'alien presuppositions'. Our task in this thesis is of course to probe and penetrate the Church Dogmatics so as to assess Barth's degree of success in this undertaking by continuing to expose the temporal structure of his theology in full.

Having laid out our groundwork it is now possible to return to Barth's exposition of the relation of philosophy of time and the time of revelation. We have indicated that we do not believe that what he has to say tells us the whole truth but only the explicit aspect revealed in his reaction to the Augustinian theory of mental time and the Heideggerian notion of 'Zeitlichkeit'. Both Augustine and Heidegger have, in Barth's view, thoroughly secular concepts of time which are the products of human reflection, 'which originate in the act of man's spirit'.³⁵ For Barth,

35. CD I/2, p. 46.

'if we are to understand revelation time, time cannot be regarded merely as the product of man's existence interpreted as a distentio; it must be regarded as a proper reality, as accessible to God as is human existence. A time concept which denies this cannot be of service to us.'

(CD I/2, p. 46)

Besides this, according to Barth, both Augustine and Heidegger regarded time 'definitively and conclusively as a conditioned reality, conditioned by being a determination, indeed a self-determination of man's existence as creature'.³⁶ Barth stresses those aspects of Augustine's thought which are subjectivist and interprets his account of reality entirely in the light of its being 'an act of man's animus'. The kernel of Barth's critical argument does not at this stage adequately take account of the potential of Augustine's account of eternity in the Confessions that we quoted previously, which culminates in the assertion that, 'Thy To-day, is Eternity'.³⁷ In effect Barth reacts negatively to what has been called the 'explicit' argument in Augustine's subjectivism with regard to time, but, as it is one of the overall goals of this thesis to demonstrate, he exploits the 'implicit' argument of Augustine in the dynamic doctrine of eternity. In the Church Dogmatics Barth is providing an extended and systematic elaboration of the Augustinian-Boethian concept of eternity. This he is to do by constant efforts to render the whole insight supremely objective and truly temporal. The doctrine of eternity which is really a concept of God's freedom over time is to triumph over both

36. Ibid.

37. Conf. Bk.XI, Ch.16.

the intrinsic threat of timelessness in eternity Augustine inherits from neoplatonism and the subjective timelessness of the fleeting ungraspable present. Thus the factor of supereme value to Barth in Augustine is the temporal freedom of God in eternity as it is elaborated in the Confessions. Thus it is the dynamic basis of an eternity that can be the fulfilment of time. In the Church Dogmatics Barth is to render this temporality of eternity as fully temporal as possible whilst retaining the transcendence of God's being in eternity. There is thus a profound but not obvious dialectical appreciation of, and yet confrontation between, Barth and Augustine in the Church Dogmatics. As with Hegel what he actually says is only an inadequate indication of what is taking place in the inner recesses of this work. It is not therefore possible to isolate any simple dependencies of Barth upon others (for example Anselm or Athanasius) but, as in his relation to Augustine in particular on the problem of time, we must search for the traces of the wave that has passed beyond previous waves and which has washed even closer to the base of theological truth.

Barth begins his argument for revelation time by denying that we can know time on the basis of its being created by God. The 'Fall' is interposed and therefore the time we pretend to know is produced by us, that is by fallen men. Only revelation can enlighten us:

'If on the basis of God's Word being in this time of ours we believe that God created time, this belief does not sidetrack our time; yet we cannot in any way identify our time with the time created by God. Our time, the time we know and possess, is and remains lost time, even when we believe that God is the Creator of time. God-created time remains a

time hidden and withdrawn from us. If God's revelation has a time also, if God has time for us, if we really (in a theologically relevant sense) know and possess time, it must be a different time, a third time, created alongside our time and the time originally created by God.'

(CD I/2, p. 47)

It would be possible to make a number of more or less sophisticated philosophical criticisms of this argument for it raises hoary questions about knowing something which we have no means of recognising (such as occur in Plato's Meno). These will be eschewed because in the terms of his theology Barth postulates an epistemology of faith inseparable from the ontology of the object of faith. One problem is that although the primary reason for the confinement of knowledge of 'real time' (that is God's revelation time) stems from the overall understanding of revelation that he employs, he justifies this on secondary grounds. If in the light of the following quotation we are convinced of the 'hiddenness' of time then there must be some analogy between this flawed temporal existence and God's time in revelation. Barth is ambiguous at this point for the new time is 'different', yet it is somehow related to our lost time, for our experience of this latter, and our reflection upon it, tells us how lost it indeed is. It has something of the character of a negative sign of transcendence for we are told:

'How hidden and withdrawn from is that first real time which God created, and how problematic the time actually is which we think we know and possess, may be illustrated - once more incidentally and without prejudice - by the three great difficulties in the common concept of time, which continue to be questions even when contrasted with the time concept of an Augustine or a Heidegger.'

(CD I/2, p. 47)

These aporiae are of course: the problem of the ungraspable present opposed to the past and future; the Kantian antimony of the finite termination or infinite non-termination of time; and the relation of time and eternity. In fact all these problems occur in their theological guise in the Church Dogmatics but Barth's assertion is that revelation provides the answer in the categorical transformation of time by the introduction of a radically new element into the situation. Revelation theology is able to 'assert the reality of time in face of and in spite of these difficulties without the desire or ability to set them aside'.³⁸ The ambiguity in Barth's thought again shows in that we can detect the 'lostness' of time by reflection upon it (see the above quotation) but the theological solution remains aloof insofar as it remains bound by the confines of revelation. In other words is it 'empirical' in its consequences, or 'objective' in the theological sense? Is it the former as indicated by the place of aporiae, or is it the latter and part of the sphere of revelation reality alone? If it belongs to one or other then it must fail. If the time of God's actions is not empirically in time then the incarnation happened only in eternity or some private time of God. If on the contrary it happens in both, then can the incarnation be adequately expressed as an aspect of God being in Christ reconciling the world to himself? How does Barth's God really enter time and what time does he enter? Can Barth unite time and eternity in

38. CD I/2, p. 49.

the incarnation and is the antithesis overcome, as it must be, if the eternal God is to act in time in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

We must now drive along this line of investigation as we continue to state Barth's doctrine in which he responds to our suspicions by the following defence. Our problem is to decide if the assertion of the identity of God's time and our time is merely an assertion (and if so, on what basis it may be defended) or if this identity is an inference, what train of argument underlies such a putative identity.

'But this different time is the new, the third time, which arises and has its place because God reveals Himself, because He is free for us, because He is with us and amongst us, because in short, without ceasing to be what He is, He also becomes what we are. God's revelation is the event of Jesus Christ. We do not understand it as God's revelation, if we do not state unreservedly that it took place in "our" time. But conversely, if we understand it as God's revelation, we have to say that this revelation had its own time; in this event it happened that whereas we had our own time for ourselves as always, God had time for us, His own time for us - time, in the most positive sense, i.e. present with past and future, fulfilled time with expectation and recollection of its fulfilment, revelation time and the time of the Old Testament and New Testament witness to revelation - but withal, His own time, God's time; and therefore real time.'

(CD I/2, p. 49)

This must be judged in the light of Barth's statement preceding that 'we can only believe in the creation of time by God, as we believe in the creation itself, but we cannot know it'. (This of course reflects a New Testament insight, cf. Hebrews 11,13). The structure of Barth's position is dictated firstly by the theological rationale of revelation from the side of God's time in the event of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, and secondly, by a negative inference from

the problematic 'lost time' of human experience and reflection. This connecting point has been laboured because in the incarnation a concrete situation occurs which is not entirely to be explained in relation to theological criteria, but has what have been called quasi-empirical consequences. Thus although revelation comes as a gift to be acknowledged in being known³⁹ it has, in its temporal aspects, a role as the fulfilment of 'lost time', which involves the 'healing' of this fragmented, fleeting, fallen time.

From the standpoint of revelation God has time for us. This is positive time of present, with past and future, which is 'fulfilled time' with the expectation and recollection of its fulfilment characteristic of 'real time'. God's time is 'His becoming present to us in Jesus Christ, i.e., a present with a past behind it and a future in front of it, like the temporal moments in the sequence of which we exist ourselves'.⁴⁰ Barth sets out in contrast to Romans the implications of 'The Word became flesh' for the problem of time, in defence of the claim that revelation is eternal but not timeless.

"The Word became flesh" also means "The Word became time." As revelation is the lifetime of a man then it is also 'a section of what we call "historical time" or world history and its prehistorical time'.⁴¹ The dialectic of time and eternity is resolved because in Jesus Christ they

39. This argument presupposes the material of Chapters II and III, especially with regard to The Doctrine of the Word of God in CD I/1.

40. CD I/2, pp. 49-50.

41. Op.cit., p. 50.

are in the one man, the Word become flesh, for,

'Revelation in the sense of Holy Scripture - this is quite unambiguous in its proper form in the event of Jesus Christ as well as in the two-fold witness - is an eternal but not therefore a timeless reality. It is also a temporal reality. So it is not a sort of ideal, yet in itself timeless content of all or some times. It does not remain transcendent over time, it does not merely meet it at a point, but it enters time; nay it assumes time; nay it creates time for itself.'

(CD I/2, p. 50)

In the first chapter of this thesis Barth's Christological realisation was briefly traced and in it was seen how he abandoned the antitheses of Romans in favour of the centrality of Christology which was to have priority and not be subordinated under, or secondary to, other theologically extraneous factors such as the dialectic of time and eternity. Barth now refers to this, claiming that Romans did not do justice to John I:14, for in fact 'revelation has its time, and only in and along with its time is it revelation'⁴² and for this reason it cannot be found by abstraction made from time to a timeless core. The intrinsic temporality of revelation is emphatically present in the Old and New Testament, where, for example, 'time data' are of great importance in the dating of the incarnation of the Word. Indeed,

'Revelation is thus and not otherwise localised. In the event of Jesus Christ, as in the various events in anticipation and recollection, it is as genuinely temporal and therefore as temporally determined and limited as any other real events in this space of ours.'

(CD I/2, p. 51)

The exact relation of God's time in Jesus Christ with the time into which it entered is not mere confrontation of

42. Ibid.

categories but truly Christological and corresponds to the Patristic insights Barth is to develop.

'...we must...go on to say that the time we mean when we say Jesus Christ is not to be confused with any other time. Just as man's existence became something new and different altogether, because God's Son assumed it and took it over into unity with his God-existence, just as by the eternal Word becoming flesh the flesh could not repeat Adam's sin, so time, by becoming the time of Jesus Christ, although it belonged to our time, the lost time, became a different, a new time.'

(CD I/2, p. 51)

In this way Barth is to amplify the parallel between the redemption of the flesh wrought through the incarnation and the time in and through which that redemption was brought about. In revelation time we become contemporary with Jesus Christ and the veiledness and unveiledness, characteristic of revelation, applies no less to time.⁴³ The victorious assumption of the 'old time, our time'⁴⁴ is consummated in the resurrection as the commencement of the new aeon. In consequence Barth argues that history is a predicate of revelation, not revelation a predicate of history for,

'If we regard the presence of Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of time, if we therefore say His time is the light of new time in the midst of old time and for the whole of old time, that cannot mean that we are in a position to see through and regard any part of this old time as new, fulfilled time.'

(CD I/2, p. 58)

Only revelation can be revelation, for in 'fulfilled time' God does as it actually pleases him to do in his freedom in time and history.⁴⁵ In renewal God fulfils time

43. Op.cit., p. 55.

44. Op.cit., p. 56; cf. also the end of Chapter V above.

45. Op.cit., p. 60.

(Barth alludes to Eph. I:9f.) and at the core of this excursus we find the doctrine of eternity entering into revelation as our time (time which is inaccessible to us and the problematic source of aporiae) is the object of renewal and transformation. This chapter, which has stated in some detail the basis of Barth's treatment of the incarnation, will conclude with a lengthy quotation from the Church Dogmatics, in which he presents the undertaking of time by eternity whereby this fulfilment comes about.

'...the special thing about the time of Jesus Christ is that it is the time of the Lord of time. Compared with our time it is mastered time and for that very reason real, fulfilled time. Here the dilemma does not arise between a present that disappears midway between past and future, and a past and future that dissolve for their part into a present. Here there is a genuine present - and not now in spite of it but just because of it, a genuine past and future. The Word of God is. It is never "not yet" or "no longer". It is not exposed to any becoming or, therefore, to any passing away, or, therefore, to any change. The same holds also of the Word of God become flesh and therefore time. In every moment of His temporal existence, and also at every previous or subsequent to His temporal existence, in which He becomes manifest as true God and true man and finds faith and witness, Jesus Christ is the same. The Word spoken from eternity raises the time into which it is uttered (without dissolving it as time), up into His eternity as now His own time, and gives it part in the existence of God which is alone real, self-moved, self-dependent, self-sufficient. It is spoken by God, a perfect without peer (not in our time, but in God's time created by the Word in the flesh, there is a genuine, proper, indissoluble, primal perfect), and for that reason there is coming into the world a future without peer (for not in our time but rather in this God's time created by the Word in the flesh there is a genuine, proper, indissoluble, primal future). And so it is a present that is not a present without also being a genuine perfect; and a perfect and a future, the mean of which constitutes a genuine indestructible present. Yet it is not any present, collapsing into a "not yet" or a "no longer" like every present in our time. It is Deus praesens, who always was and will always be and for that very reason has a genuine before and after; in other words the active Lord of time, who in His action creates and

sustains His own time out of the wretched span of this lost time of ours, the Lord before whom time can have no legality of its own, before whom the longest time is the shortest and the shortest the longest, before whom the irreversibility of time is not for one moment in an indestructible position. This mastered, this fulfilled time is the time of Jesus Christ.'

(CD I/2, pp. 52-53)

In this passage we find that the 'perfect presence' of eternity has entered time as its dynamic and renewing basis. The incarnation is not a collision of incompatibles but the recreative and restorative encounter of living eternity, God in His freedom, love and power, and lost, broken, human time. In the sections, The Time of Expectation and The Time of Recollection which follow this passage we have examined at length, Barth draws out the consequences of this central underpinning and recreation of time in revelation in relation to the central determination of the Christ-event. 'The Old Testament is the witness to the genuine expectation of revelation'⁴⁶ and the New Testament is likewise recollection of (that is the witness to) 'a togetherness of God and man, based on and consisting in a free relating of God to man'.⁴⁷ These developments and consequences depend upon the foundations we have seen Barth lay. The doctrine of eternity grounded in the life of God, which is in fact, eternity as the characterisation of God's existence, enters time as its 'fulfilment'. The reconciliation of God and man effected in the taking up of man's flesh is directly paralleled in the assumption of time and

46. Op.cit., p. 70.

47. Op.cit., p. 103.

its transformation and perfection. As in the case of human flesh which was restored in the One willed by God in and from eternity so it is with time.

In this chapter we have ranged far in setting out the basis and examining the consequences of the Christological resolution of time and eternity as set out in the initial exposition it receives in Barth's treatment of the incarnation. We have seen how Barth's account can be set apart from that of Cullmann, and seen in relation to that of Augustine. Above all we are aware that in the incarnation the One who becomes temporal is the One who from eternity has enjoyed the time of God, who was 'begotten not created' and who can therefore bring about the healing of time as humanity searches for it. The conflict of eternity and time is seen not as an element that may condition or distort Christology but as a vital facet of the Christological reconciliation itself, and thus an intrinsic factor in the encounter of the eternal God and human flesh in the life and death of Jesus Christ. Barth's doctrine is the coherent correlate of the being of God, the nature of revelation and the act of God from eternity in Jesus Christ, for the problem of time and eternity is worked out in and through these doctrines, not ad extra or in abstracto.

CHAPTER VII
 ETERNITY AND TIME:
 CHRISTOLOGY

In Chapter VI we saw how the incarnation is the in-breaking of God's time in the 'simple, revealed reality' of Jesus Christ. The 'midpoint' of time for Barth is both the fulfilment of time and the realisation of eternity ('God's time') in time and history. In this Barth's position differs markedly from that of Cullmann yet represents a notable development from that held by Augustine. In this chapter we will examine the temporal axes in the integrated Christology-soteriology presented by the fundamental logic of Volumes I/2 and IV/1,2,3 (Part I) of the Church Dogmatics. On the basis of an examination of the theological architectonic evident in the doctrines of time and eternity we will then be able to proceed to a further study of the doctrines of creation and ultimately theological anthropology.

The ground of the incarnation which is revealed by the Holy Spirit in us and which is attested in Holy Scripture is the Trinity, as 'the God who, as Lord, is the Father from whom it proceeds, the Son who fulfils it objectively (for us) and the Holy Spirit who fulfils it subjectively (in us)'.¹ As has been seen Barth is concerned in the earlier part of his Christology to show how the reality and possibility of revelation take place in the freedom of God.² Following the

1. CD I/2, p. 1.

2. Op.cit., p. 3.

order in Holy Scripture Barth has first asked about God (and this thesis has followed his priority) on the basis of his reality and this permits questions to be put as to his possibility. Likewise the approach to Christology is affected by the realisation that 'first we have to put the question of fact, and then the question of interpretation'.³ Barth argues more precisely in a way that must condition this study of his work that,

'we must first understand the reality of Jesus Christ as such, and then by reading from the tablet of this reality, understand the possibility involved in it, the freedom of God, established and maintained in it, to reveal Himself in precisely this reality and not otherwise, and so the unique possibility we have to respect as divine necessity.'
(CD I/2, pp. 7-8)

We have spoken of this 'simple reality' in our previous chapters as the once-for-all event, the mid-point of time which provides an affinity with Cullmann, and irreversibly divides the time of history and human existence into a 'before' and an 'after'. In the incarnation there is not only this division of time but also its transformation in the life of the God-man Jesus Christ. This transformation which is the 'fulfilment' of time in the encounter of time and eternity can only be understood in the context of Barth's dynamic fusion of the unity of the two natures and the reconciling life of Jesus Christ in a profoundly actualistic doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ which is to be understood in its totality as an act of God. It is this moment in Barth's thought which must be captured for in it he reflects the structure of the subject matter and provides

3. Op.cit., p. 7.

a most striking union of theological form and content.

Barth lays great stress (that is not an exclusive but an inclusive stress) upon the incarnation as the true and utterly indispensable starting point of revelation and thus of theology. This is made quite clear later on by Barth's insistence upon the Christological determination⁴ of a church dogmatics that becomes a possibility on the basis of the reality of revelation posited in the early part of CD I/2. It is possible, so Barth argues, to make a series of inferences from the reality of revelation which reveals God as 'Lord of eternity'.⁵ Primarily God's freedom is made known to us in that 'God, whilst remaining God in Himself, becomes in and among us',⁶ in that 'He, that is His Son, becomes a man',⁷ and that in consequence 'He can become cognisable by us by analogy with other forms known to us'.⁸ At this juncture many problems intrinsic in Patristic theology and thus present in Barth's return⁹ to these categories become pressing, especially as regards the ground of unity-identity

4. Op.cit., p. 123.

5. Op.cit., p. 29.

6. Op.cit., p. 31.

7. Op.cit., p. 33.

8. Op.cit., p. 35.

9. This 'return' is of course a complex interpretation and creative re-thinking of orthodox categories on the basis of both patristic and later Protestant insight.

in Jesus Christ. Barth's relation to Athanasius and Basil is important here. With regard to the former, for example, Barth follows the Athanasian argument: God as man, and therefore in consequence God is Jesus, Jesus is God. This bases the identity upon an assumption of grace not an identity by nature of God and man as such, an affinity of being or analogia entis. If Barth does not ground the incarnation upon any such affinity of being between God and man, the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, then the basis must be found and stated, for without this our search for the actual point of contact of time and eternity in Barth's theology will be frustrated. The answer lies in the integration of Christology and soteriology that Barth effects. In this the natures of Christ, human and divine, are not left in isolation in the mere assertion and laboured explanation of contiguity in the man Jesus Christ but are the interacting aspects of God's actual movement in grace in the assumption, and thus the perfection, of human nature in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Word and Son of God does not present a problem in relation to His human nature in the incarnation but a mystery explicable (insofar as it is open to explanation) within the dynamic scheme of reconciliation, a movement willed from eternity in God's own being. The problem of time and eternity is in fact the arena or overall context within which this contiguity of natures presents itself, for what we might term the 'macro-theological' and the 'micro-theological' are in infrangible inter-relation. Thus what Barth presents as 'the Problem of Christology', the

so-called 'two-natures' is not a linguistic or conceptual puzzle but the expression of the freedom and grace of God. As a result Barth's initial elaborations in CD I/2 and later at greater length in CD IV are the exploration and careful statement of the following, that:

'The mystery of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ consists in the fact that the eternal Word of God chose, sanctified and assumed human nature and existence into oneness with Himself, in order thus, as very God and very man, to become the Word of reconciliation spoken by God to man. The sign of this mystery revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the miracle of His birth, that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.'

(CD I/2, p. 122)

In earlier chapters it was hinted that Barth might be harbouring an eternity beyond being which might even be termed a lapse into some kind of Gnostic or Neoplatonic notion.¹⁰ Although this raises the problem of the distinction of created and uncreated being, with regard to the actual relation of time and eternity in the area of Christology Barth's answer is unequivocal and decisive. Again a further criticism of Barth might be that he reverts to an inverted analogia entis in his Christology, but at the outset he provides the beginning of a possible answer to this charge. Such questions are strictly peripheral to our main aim in exploring Barth's doctrine of time, but reference to them will serve to illustrate the originality and developmental power of his Christology as it conditions the problem of time and eternity and structures his solution of it. In Chapter VI the status of 'God's time' as it

10. Such thoughts are banished in the light of Barth's massive and sustained assertion of the divine being as act and eternity. We have sought to show the cruciality of this for Barth's understanding of time.

comes in Jesus Christ was examined in relation to a number of factors both those raised by Barth himself and those brought in additionally. This time is the reality of a time implicit in and borne with revelation and as such it is the 'reality' to which there corresponds a 'possibility' which can now be analysed as an aspect of Barth's dynamic (in the sense of actualistic) Christology. In effect by following this order in Barth's thought we have stated the consequence, knowledge of which is a condition of ascertaining and understanding the antecedent factors. The crucial passage to which critical importance was attached in our last chapter expresses, under the heading God's Time and Our Time, this reality to which the Christology of I/2 and IV offers the interpretation or 'possibility'. In Chapter VI we examined this initial statement of the putative reality of 'God's time' and its immediate consequences in terms of its entry into the historical process.

Barth puts the 'mystery of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ' on the very highest level for the 'very God and very man' is 'the sole point in which the New Testament witness originates'.¹¹ If we are to be true to Barth's theological method then the injunction he makes must be obeyed in our study of the interaction of time and eternity: 'We do not look for some higher vantage point from which our statement can derive its meaning, but we start from this point itself'.¹² This is to be pure theology, a theology

11. CD I/2, p. 124.

12. Ibid.

which is to be its own interpreter, because one which fails to observe the 'necessary connexion of all theological statements with that of John I,14' is prey to the 'devastating inrush of natural theology'.¹³ In fact this absolute distinction is difficult to maintain especially with regard to time as has been argued in our last chapter. Then this distinction was questioned whereas now it is to be granted so as to allow entry in to the theological possibility underlying the actual reality of the incarnation of the God-man Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh. If we concede as Barth would have us do that, 'Christ is the datum upon which we can reflect and speak upon as the beginning of all Christian thought',¹⁴ then this will condition our understanding of the reconciliation of finite and infinite and of time and eternity. In our last chapter finite and infinite as speculative postulates remained immanent and the product of human ratiocination for Barth, whereas time and eternity must remain of primal significance in both the overall structure and innermost content of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

The task of Christology is to 'deal with the revelation of God as a mystery'.¹⁵ This mystery of the One who is very God and very man must be confronted and acknowledged. It is irreducible mystery and cannot be explained in the concepts or categories other than those derived from itself. So

13. Op.cit., p. 123.

14. Op.cit., p. 129.

15. Op.cit., p. 131.

Barth judges¹⁶ the nineteenth century and signals a return to the primitive Christology which did not commit this error for it preserved the mystery that it detected and so 'for this reason we must emphatically take its side both at the outset and in principle'. In these pages we have taken our bearings and are now ready to exposit the primary Christological axis of the Church Dogmatics as the structure and functional organic theological whole which will, in its overall nature, allow us to trace the relation of time and eternity in the reconciliation of God and man that was wrought for man in the man Jesus Christ. The consequences of this chapter will be of fundamental and determinative significance for our study as from this central, and as we have seen Barth would argue, constitutive reality, the other aspects of the problem of time in creation, pneumatology and eschatology flow in response to this most crucial point. Thus in our thesis we show that God's being in becoming, his act from eternity is realised in Christology and that in turn the reality of this revelation in Jesus Christ is the necessary and perhaps even the sufficient condition and foundation of the attendant realities. These are in turn realised by the Spirit who is the freedom of God to be present to the creation and to realise the relation of the creation to Himself, bringing it to the fulness of its creaturely purpose. We now turn to this primal fact of Jesus Christ and its explication in Christology which in its very existence instantiates the reconciliation of God and

16. Op.cit., p. 132.

man, Creator and creation.

Jesus Christ is 'very God' which means 'the one, only, true, eternal God'¹⁷ and he was made flesh 'in the entire fulness of deity, which is also that of the Father and of the Holy Spirit'.¹⁸ As the Word shares in the triune being of God so can he be the bearer of eternity, the 'fulness of time', and the utterly legitimate expression of God's freedom. The Word becoming flesh must be regarded as a 'new creation' and the free realisation towards men of a love already 'free and unconstrained in God Himself'.¹⁹ Most significantly the order 'very God and very man' is to be maintained for 'even as incarnate He derives His being to all eternity from the Father and from Himself and not the flesh' and (following John of Damascus) 'The flesh is mortal on its own account and quickening because of its hypostatic union with the Word'.²⁰ In the Virgin Birth both the fact of divinity is established, 'He who was born in time is the very same who in eternity is born of the Father',²¹ and that of His solidarity with humanity for 'He became man, true and real man'.²² Barth in conforming with the Patristic impulse is concerned to establish and preserve both 'the mystery of revelation, the happening of

17. Ibid.

18. Op.cit., p. 133.

19. Op.cit., pp. 134-5.

20. Op.cit., p. 136.

21. Op.cit., p. 138.

22. Op.cit., p. 147.

the inconceivable fact that God is among and with us'²³ implied by 'The Word became flesh' and the true humanity of Jesus Christ which is undertaken by the Word. In the following highly important passage lies the core of Barth's thought, reflecting the Athanasian 'assumption of grace', for in it we are not encountering a merely contingent or accidental co-location of attributes but an act of God in Christ, a becoming and movement of the Word.

'His becoming is not an event which in any sense befalls Him, in which in any sense He is determined from without by something else. If it includes in itself His suffering, His veiling and humiliation unto death - and it does include this in itself - even so, as suffering, it is His will and work. It is not composed of action and reaction. It is action even in the suffering of reaction, the act of majesty even as veiling. He did not become humbled but humbled Himself. Accordingly we have to give a closer explanation of the act peculiar to this miracle, the incarnation of the Word. As the Word of God becomes flesh He assumes or adopts or incorporates human being into unity with His divine being, so that this human being, as it comes into being, becomes as a human being the being of the Word of God.'

(CD I/2, p. 160)

The last sentence expresses this vital insight which through the medium of the dynamic interaction of the two natures (we use this word informally here) offers the fusion of Christology and soteriology of which we shall become increasingly aware. The fundamental unity of God and man is hypostatic and that of the natures secondary to this. That is to say the unity of Word and flesh is the primary centre for Christology. In the theology of Reformed scholasticism this meant that the 'unio naturarum' is decidedly

23. Op.cit., p. 159.

always regarded from the standpoint of the unio personalis'.²⁴ The central unity of God and man in Christ is 'the act of the Logos in assuming human being'.²⁵ Following the Athanasian impulse Barth argues that Christ's manhood is 'only the predicate of His Godhead', that is 'only the predicate, assumed in inconceivable condescension, of the Word acting upon us, the Word who is the Lord'.²⁶ The implications of this position will be explored in the following chapter in relation to the distinction of created and uncreated being, comparing Barth, Athanasius and Origen. Indeed that which is on occasion condemned in Barth, the centrality of Christ in revelation in making God known and 'declaring' Him (in correspondence with John I, 18 *ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο*) is itself precisely an insight dependent upon taking with the utmost seriousness Athanasius' arguments in, for example, the Contra Gentes. Here the explicit distinction between created and uncreated being is fundamental both to the distinction of God and creation (a theme to which we will turn in Chapter VIII) as well as the revelatory possibility and actuality of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. This can be appreciated in the following passage. In it, Athanasius, who is reflecting upon Paul's argument in Romans I, 20, provides us with a key to Barth's thought (which grasps with quite unparalleled vigour the essential unity of the being and acts of the incarnate Word).

24. Op.cit., p. 161.

25. Op.cit., p. 162.

26. Ibid.

'God, who is good and loves men and who cares for the souls he has made, since he is by nature invisible and incomprehensible, being above all created being, and therefore the human race would fail to attain knowledge of him in that they were made from nothing while he was uncreated - for this reason God so ordered creation through his Word that although he is invisible by nature, yet he might be known to men from his works.'

(Contra Gentes 35,1ff.; cf. 2,6)

Given the Fall and the loss of the image of God in man, then this pattern of being made known in act is repeated in Christology. For Athanasius the divinity of the man Jesus Christ is demonstrated in His mighty works, whereas Barth, in the Church Dogmatics radicalises this thesis making the life and existence of Jesus Christ itself the act of God. There is no direct deduction to be made from Athanasius to Barth, for, as in the case of Augustine, Barth as a truly original and re-creative theologian, embraces and moves beyond the thought of his predecessors. What we do see is a systematic development which transcends any simplistic genetic derivation. Given, therefore, the outright rejection of natural theology then God can only be made known by His own acts, for creation can tell us nothing. This absolute distinction between fallen creation (which is unable to inform fallen man about God) and the new creation in Jesus Christ is difficult to maintain with regard to time, as was argued in Chapter VI. Whereas this distinction is tenable with regard to flesh it breaks down vis à vis time. This is in turn reflected in Barth's 'natural theology' of fallen time which is imperfectly known in human experience and speculation but which is 'fulfilled' by the perfect presence of eternity or 'God's time' manifested in revelation.

At this point the question of the relation of creation and recreation arises once more for it is the status of natural reality that becomes problematic, as will be seen. It remains to say that there is in Barth's Christology a creative development of the Athanasian distinction of created and uncreated being, in which the latter can only reveal itself to or in the former by its acts. In Christ this pattern is crystallised for intractable flesh or humanity becomes once more the vehicle of revelation in being the act of God in the assumption of grace and in the Christological outworkings implied by the reality of revelation.

In building the foundations of his Christology Barth exploits the traditional categories of Patristic and orthodox (mainly Reformed) Christology but with an amazing degree of vital reinterpretation. His starting point is, as has been shown, the supreme loci of the union of God and man in the Word become flesh. Other categories are subordinate to this central point and therefore the relation of time and eternity does not predominate and constitute an antithesis, as in early thought of Barth (as we saw in Chapter I), but is consequent upon the divinely-instantiated reconciliation of the God-man Jesus Christ. The relation of God and man in Christ is dynamic for, as we have seen in relation to Athanasius, it is an active assumption of grace. This positive bond is expressed through Barth's unrivalled rehabilitation of the seemingly obscure, but in fact crucial doctrine of an- and enhypostasis. The being of God in act is his being-in-becoming, which in revelation is his freedom

to assume human nature by grace. This is therefore inseparable in Christ from the doctrine of the so-called 'two natures' in unity. From this standpoint dualism is banished.

'But from the utter uniqueness of this unity follows the statement, that God and Man are so related in Jesus Christ, that He exists as Man so far and only so far as He exists as God, i.e. in the mode of existence of the eternal Word of God. What we thereby express is a doctrine unanimously sponsored by early theology in its entirety, that of the anhypostasis and enhypostasis of the human nature of Christ. Anhypostasis asserts the negative. Since in virtue of the ἐγένετο i.e. in virtue of the assumptio, Christ's human nature has its existence - the ancients said its subsistence - in the existence of God, meaning in the mode of being (hypostasis, "person") of the Word, it does not possess it in and for itself, in abstracto. Apart from the divine mode of being whose existence it acquires it has none of its own; i.e., apart from its concrete existence in God in the event of the unio, it has no existence of its own, it is ἀνυπόστατος. Enhypostasis asserts the positive. In virtue of the ἐγένετο i.e., in virtue of the assumptio, the human nature acquires existence (subsistence) in the existence of God, meaning in the mode of being (hypostasis, "person") of the Word. This divine mode of being gives it existence in the event of the unio, and in this way it has a concrete existence of its own, it is ἐνυπόστατος "The Word of God Himself became the mode of being of the flesh" (Joh. Damascenus, Ekd. 3,2).'
(CD I/2, p. 163)

The consequences of this fundamental doctrine are highly significant for the theology of the Church Dogmatics in general and, in particular, for the problem of time and eternity in terms of a possible Christological resolution. Christ's flesh has its existence 'through the Word and in the Word who is God Himself acting as Revealer and Reconciler'.²⁷ As indeed Barth notes, Christ's personalitas is not referring to 'personality' (that is in the sense of

27. Op.cit., p. 164.

individualitas) but is 'existence or being'.²⁸ This is the ontological ground of his Christology and in this is established the starting-point of our comprehension of the temporal resolution.

'Understood in this its original sense, this particular doctrine (i.e. an- and enhypostasis), abstruse in appearance only, is particularly well adapted to make it clear that the reality attested by Holy Scripture, Jesus Christ, is the reality of a divine act of Lordship which is unique and singular as compared with all other events, and in this way to characterise it as a reality held up to faith by revelation. It is in virtue of the eternal Word that Jesus Christ exists as a man of flesh and blood in our sphere, as a man like us, as an historical phenomenon.'

(CD I/2, pp. 164-5)

This rediscovery (it is nothing less) turns what might be regarded as a theological linguistic archaism into the basis of a theological ontology. The section Very God and Very Man has an importance which can scarcely be exaggerated in the Church Dogmatics for in it God's act and being coincide in the very heart of revelation. The unity of Godhood and manhood is established upon its own basis and therefore according to its own unique criteria. This basis is the 'Eyévevo', the 'event of the incarnation of the Word' which 'has to be understood as a completed event, but is also as a completed event'.²⁹ God's being in the incarnation is 'in becoming' and in the doctrine of an- and enhypostasis the absolute unity and strictly unique identity of being (to be understood as the 'person' of Christ) and act (that is his 'works') is secured, allowing its implications to be developed at length.

28. Ibid.

29. Op.cit., p. 165.

As we are concerned most of all to establish the most elemental structure of the Church Dogmatics in relation to Christology we must note at this juncture, but refrain from digression into, the following problems. Firstly, great care must be exercised with respect to Barth's notion of the divine 'act' both in relation to the doctrine of God per se and in Christology. In this fundamental identity we find the fulfilment of the doctrine of God's act. Secondly, Barth's use of the unio hypostatica as an interpretative ontological principle might most interestingly be compared with neo-Chalcedonian Christology, in particular that of Maximus the Confessor who made extensive cosmological and anthropological application of the concept of hypostasis. This is a purely theological comparison for both assume and assert the constitutive significance of this notion for Christology; they do not question its relevance. Thirdly, the issues raised by the interaction of 'finite' and 'infinite' to which Barth alludes as regards Lutheran Christology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could be most profitably explored in comparing Barth's response (which is here inexplicit but nevertheless present) to the nineteenth century 'kenotic controversy'.

These issues are to be passed by at this point because Barth sets himself squarely upon the orthodox ground laid down by Athanasius (De Inc. 17), Gregory of Nyssa (Or.Cat. 10), and John of Damascus to name but three examples. The incarnation does not on this account involve either a reductive kenosis or the confinement of the infinite within the finite bounds of individual humanity but the trinitarian

conception of a graceful condescension. In the words of John of Damascus:

'Without separating from the Father's bosom, the Word dwelt in the bosom of a holy virgin...thus in all and over He was Himself, when He existed in the bosom of the holy bearer of God.'

(Ekd. 3,7)

The miracle of the incarnation, an 'objective fact', is the 'mystery' of the hypostatic union and it is upon this that the logic and ontology of Barth's Christology is built. God does not negate or limit Himself in either a Hegelian or a kenotic sense but fulfils His own will (which we have seen is his from eternity, with all that implies) in the unique, and uniquely apposite, manner posited by the incarnation itself. In his exposition of the Virgin Birth Barth establishes the thoroughly trinitarian activity in the incarnation. This is undertaken in the light of his overall theological postulates over against Brunner's 'biological inquisitiveness'. The incarnation is both realised and represented in recollection after the events of Easter by the Holy Spirit who is:

'God Himself in His freedom exercised in revelation to be present to His creature, even to dwell in Him personally, and thereby to achieve his meeting with Himself in His Word and by this achievement to make it possible. Through the Holy Spirit and only through the Holy Spirit can man be there for God, be free for God's work on him, believe, be a recipient of His revelation, the object of the divine reconciliation.'

(CD I/2, p. 198)

The implications of pneumatology for Barth's understanding of time are most considerable and will be raised explicitly in Chapter IX at a later stage in this thesis. What concerns us here (and this is the significant conclusion of this first section of this chapter upon which we will build)

is that the relation of time and eternity is in correspondence with the unity of God and man achieved in the incarnation itself. There is an 'identity' of time and eternity which is not simple but based upon this functional and unique co-location of God and man in the unio hypostatica. Barth, in referring with approval to Polanus' insight, provides an explicit allusion³⁰ which confirms our inferences:

'...the recognition...of the enhypostasis of the human nature of Christ, namely, that He also exists as a man, not in virtue of a possibility of existence proper to his humanity, but solely in virtue of His divine existence in the eternal mode of being of the Word or Son of God. His existence in time is one and the same as His eternal existence as the begotten of God the Father.'

(CD I/2, p. 193)

It is upon this basis that Barth may argue in the context of both the incarnation and the Easter event that:

'Now it is no accident that for us the Virgin birth is paralleled by the miracle of which the Easter witness speaks, the miracle of the empty tomb. The two miracles belong together. They constitute, as it were, a single sign, the special function of which, compared with other signs and wonders of the New Testament witness, is to describe and mark out the existence of Jesus Christ, amid the many other existences in human history, as that human historical existence in which God is Himself, God is alone, God is directly the Subject, the temporal reality of which is not only called forth, created, conditioned and supported by the eternal reality of God, but is identical with it.'

(CD I/2, p. 183)

Within this organic and functionally integrated scheme of events and theological interpretation (or, with more fidelity to Barth's theological method, their explication) the identity of time and eternity is asserted not as a mere

30. Cf. also CD III/2, pp. 51,66: '...but that it is His very participation in the divine which is the basis of His humanity'.

contiguity of natures or attributes (or moreover as a antithesis of finite and infinite) but as the direct corollary and consequence of the Christological postulates comprised in the unio hypostatica. In the vere Deus vere homo of the incarnation that impulse of God's freedom and grace - which we have seen stems from 'primal history' and God's eternity - fulfils itself in the humanity of Jesus Christ that is given its ontological ground in the Word of God's assumption of that flesh. Correspondingly the 'temporal reality' of this humanity, the basis of soteriology as that with which man may enter into solidarity, is 'called forth, created, conditioned and supported by the eternal reality of God' and above all 'is identical with it'.³¹

Thus the relation of time and eternity is truly Christological in the Church Dogmatics as it is implicit within the unique identity of God and man in the incarnation. This is a 'pure fact', a 'Novum' in Barth's view, which cannot be deduced from other postulates or inferred from material outside the reality of the Incarnation itself in its utter singularity. The 'self-enclosed circle' of the events of revelation bounded by the Virgin birth and the empty tomb is the self-identification of God with man and of eternity with time in a unique collusion which constitutes the basis upon which we may unfold the theological architectonic of Volume IV of the Church Dogmatics. In the first part of this chapter the primary postulate of Barth's Christology has been exposed. The pure reality which Barth asserted in

31. CD I/2, p. 182.

God's Time and Our Time has undergone an initial investigation and clarification.

As we have seen Barth establishes the absolute primacy of Jesus Christ as the basis of Christology through the assertion of the hypostatic unity of the divinity and humanity, the ontological correlation of God and man. In Volume IV the doctrine of reconciliation (Versöhnung) is a soteriological elaboration of the primary Christological postulates of I/2. In Barth's own estimation he has:

'... "actualised" the doctrine of the incarnation, i.e., we have used the main traditional concepts, unio, communio and communicatio, as concentrically related terms to describe one and the same ongoing process. We have stated it all (including the Chalcedonian definition, which is so important in dogmatic history, and rightly became normative) in the form of a denotation and description of a single event. We have taken it that the reality of Jesus Christ, which is the theme of Christology, is identical with this event, and this event with the reality of Jesus Christ.'

(CD IV/2, p. 105)

This representation of Jesus Christ 'as His being in His act'³² is the consummation of the union Barth achieves between his profound actualism (in both his doctrine of God and Christology) and the whole-hearted adoption of patristic theological ontology. In this Barth has absorbed positive aspects of a traditional theological dichotomy and moved beyond the antitheses of 'person' (ontology) and 'works' (actualism).³³ The fulfilment of the covenant in the atonement which is the central doctrine of Christian theology

32. CD IV/2, p. 105.

33. Here we see the fulfilment of T.F. Torrance's evaluation of Barth quoted above at the beginning of Chapter III, p.95. God's being is being thought into his acts and God's acts into his being.

rests upon this dynamic appropriation of the unique identity of God and man in the unio hypostatica. The identity which is to be understood as existing between eternity and time in Jesus Christ is secondary to this initial unity and identity. We will now state and analyse the role of this relation in Volume IV which underlies the massive complexity of Barth's exposition and only yields to thorough study based upon provisional acceptance of his initial postulates and systematically applied methodology.

Volume IV of the Church Dogmatics is massive in conception and intricately detailed in execution. Because of this the final section of this chapter will be concerned with the basis of the unity of time and eternity exclusively. In this volume Barth achieves the synthesis of the doctrine of God elaborated in CD I/1 and II/1 and in the Christology of CD I/2. This is shown clearly by E. Jüngel³⁴ and the following exposition owes a debt to his insights which carry critical understanding of the doctrine of God in the Church Dogmatics as 'God's being in becoming', to an unprecedented level of difficulty and penetration.

The centre of the subject-matter of the Church's dogmatics is in Barth's view, 'the covenant fulfilled in the atonement';³⁵ and the most general description of this centre is 'God with us', that is,

'the description of an act of God, or better, of God Himself in this act of His. It is a report, not therefore a statement of fact on the basis of general

34. That is in Gottes Sein ist im Werden, referred to above in Chapters II and III. See relevant notes.

35. CD IV/1, p. 3.

observation or consideration. God with us, or what is meant by these three words, is not an object of investigation or speculation. It is not a state, but an event. God is, of course, and that in the strictest originally and properly, so that everything else which is, in a way which cannot be compared at all with His being, can be so only through Him, only in relation to Him, only from Him and to Him. Now even when He is "with us", He is what He is and in the way that He is; and all the power and truth of His being "with us", is the power and truth of His incomparable being which is proper to Him and to Him alone, His being as God. He is both in His life in eternity in Himself, and also in His life as Creator in the time of the world created by Him; by and in Himself, and also above and in this world, and therefore according to the heart of the Christian message with us men.'

(CD IV/1, p. 6)

This fundamental duality of the 'event', the 'act of God' is 'an activity, both in eternity and in worldly time, Both in Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in His relation to man and all creation'.³⁶ This has its roots in the doctrine of God as 'actus purus et singularis' in Barth's radically dynamic account in CD II/1.³⁷ Again the overcoming of the distinction of Deus revelatus and Deus absconditus in the Church Dogmatics, as demonstrated by Jüngel has its foundations in the doctrine of God, its development in the doctrine of election (CD II/2) but is expressed in Christological terms in CD IV.

Barth's exposition of the relationship of eternity and time and its expression in the fulfilment of time in Jesus Christ is founded upon the unio hypostatica, which is the absolute, yet historically contingent mystery given in the 'simple reality' of God's revelation. That it is in fact

36. Op.cit., p. 7.

37. Cf. Chapter VI of CD II/1, The Reality of God and Chapter III of this study.

God who is 'with us' is established by the assertion that Jesus Christ is truly God in his Word, who from eternity has a common history with man. This of course raises the question as to how far Barth's Christology implies the retrojection of a timeless principle of humanity into God. In this thesis we shall reflect Barth's own fidelity to the New Testament and the Fathers seen in Christ's 'begottenness', the keystone to understanding the relation of creation and the incarnation in temporal terms. Barth argues as follows:

'From all eternity God elected and determined that He Himself would become man for us men. From all eternity He determined that men would be those for whom He is God: His fellow men. In willing this, in willing Jesus Christ, He wills to be our God and He wills that we should be His people. Ontologically, therefore, the covenant of grace is already included and grounded in Jesus Christ, in the human form and content which God willed to give His Word from all eternity. The order of cognition cannot be disobedient to, but must follow, the actual order of things.'

(CD IV/1, p. 45)

The covenant of grace is the presupposition of the atonement, the basis of the reconciliation of men to God and the fulfilment of creation and its priority is secured through God's own self-determination. This self-determination is the soteriological counterpart of the primal history of the election of the man Jesus Christ for in him we do not merely encounter the Lord and Head of the Church, the 'One who has saved us from death' who was 'born in time, at His own time'³⁸ but the One who is:

"the first-born of all creation" (Col. I,16) - the first and eternal Word of God delivered and fulfilled in time. As very God and very man He is the

38. CD IV/1, p. 48.

concrete reality and actuality of the divine command and promise, the content of the will of God which exists prior to its fulfilment, the basis of the whole project and actualisation of creation and the whole process of divine providence from which all created being and becoming comes.'

(CD IV/1, p. 48)

As we may now see that the divine pole of the God-man Jesus Christ is essentially the identity spelt out in 'that Jesus Christ, very God and very man, born and living and acting and suffering and conquering in time, is as such the one eternal Word of God at the beginning of all things' and that 'as the beginning of all things the presupposition of the atonement is a single, self-sufficient, independent free work of God in itself, which is not identical with the divine work in creation or the divine creative will realised in this work'.³⁹ This axis of eternal will and temporal work (these categories are not employed exclusively but merely indicatively) is of decisive significance in relating together Christology, the incarnation and creation, and in therefore preparing the ground for analysis of man in the context of creation, that is of 'Man in his Time'. The basis for Barth's arguments at this juncture is as we have seen not to be found in the immediate context but is the product of his fundamental conception of God which has been explicated at length from the temporal aspect.

The ultimate primacy of the eternal, that is of grace, is such that man is confronted with the 'free covenant of grace' which he may 'perceive and accept' only in the 'first eternal Word of God as spoken to him in the atonement

39. Op.cit., p. 49.

accomplished in time in Jesus Christ'.⁴⁰ The identity of God and man in Jesus Christ is constitutive and orders our understanding of the relation of God, grace and creation. The incarnation is the touch-stone of Christian theology and its theological possibility and rationale lies in the doctrine of God and the Trinity and its fulfilment in the realisation of Christology-soteriology. The axis of covenant and atonement points therefore to the heart of the matter, for given that 'this grace is truth, the first and final truth behind which there is concealed no other or different truth' then 'the presupposition of the atonement revealed in the atonement' is the 'first and eternal Word of God as spoken to him in time'.⁴¹ In consequence,

'The first and eternal Word of God, which underlies and precedes the creative will and work as the beginning of all things in God, means in fact Jesus Christ. It is identical with the One who, very God and very man, born and living and suffering and conquering in time, accomplishes the atonement. It is He alone who is the content and form of the gracious thought and will and resolve of God in relation to the world and man before ever these were and as God willed and created them.'

(CD IV/1, p. 51)

In other words grace precedes creation and, contrary to popular understanding, grace does not repair or merely reconstitute 'nature' or the created order but lies at the very heart of God's own being and will in Jesus Christ, the dynamic self-interpretative Word of God whose being lies in the 'inner basis and essence of God'.⁴² Eternity and time

40. Op.cit., p. 51.

41. Ibid.

42. Op.cit., p. 52.

are the temporal counterparts of God's scheme of promise and fulfilment wrought in the eternal Word of promise which effects the atonement in time. This priority of eternity is not the cause of a distinction between time and eternity which could lead to a dialectical tension or dualism because the eternal Word cannot be conceived of apart from his humanity. We may not abstract from 'the eternal Son of God as He lived and died and rose again in time' so as to postulate a *λόγος ἄσώματος*, a second 'person' of the Trinity, a so-called 'eternal Word of God in abstracto'⁴³ The important passage in which this quotation occurs⁴⁴ again calls our attention to Barth's doctrine of God and the Trinity. As regards our main concerns with the problem of time, we find that our conceptions of time are being stretched and transformed far beyond any merely dialectical tension of time and eternity. The truly theological and Christological structure of Barth's thought is exposed which conditions and indeed constitutes his doctrine of time.

This passage is worthy of examination for in it Barth shows where exactly he is to place the balance, in Christological terms, between eternity and time as temporal counterparts of his theological integration of act and being. Insofar as it points backwards to the doctrine of the Trinity it refers us to that stage in this investigation of Barth's understanding of the problem of time in which he discusses the activity of the triune God in veridical self-representation

43. Ibid.

44. Op.cit., pp. 52-3.

as he himself posits himself in revelation.⁴⁵ Barth crystallises our present problem in the establishment of the divinity of Jesus Christ without allowing him to become λόγος ἄσχετος. In this the earlier foundations are reflected positively; thereby the peculiarly Lutheran and Reformed distinction of Deus revelatus and Deus absconditus is overcome. The focal point of Barth's gaze is upon what God is seen to have actually established as a matter of theological fact. For: 'According to the free and gracious will of God the eternal Son of God is Jesus Christ as He lived and died and rose again in time, and none other. He is the decision of God in time, and yet according to what took place in time the decision was made from all eternity'.⁴⁶ As in Barth's words, we cannot go back on this, let us then look at what he achieves with this central and irreducible fact of Jesus Christ, the decision of God in time, made from eternity.

We recall at this point the apparent tension that might exist in the Church Dogmatics between the act and will of God in and from eternity and its temporal realisation in the incarnation. This was initially considered in relation to the contrasting concepts of time employed which lead to a linguistic tension of 'duration' and 'division'. Having left this superficial level to probe the theological structures which dictate such linguistic formulae the following related questions must inform assessment of the

45. Jüngel has pointed to God's self-interpretation and the resultant hermeneutical method.

46. CD IV/1, p. 52.

passage we are to quote at length. How are we to understand the contingent yet absolute identity of the eternal One with the One who became flesh and dwelt amongst us? Given the intrinsic relation between the two expressed in the unio hypostatica how are we to conceive the distinction between the mutual indispensability (if it is such) of the categories of eternal being-in-act and the temporal atonement? Such a broad question resolves itself into more specific problems. How far is the temporality and humanity to be conceived of as existing as an eternal timeless principle in God as a counterweight to the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$? What significance does the temporal activity of Jesus Christ in the atonement wrought in time (that is our time and history) have for understanding of his divinity? As a corollary to this how is it possible for an act of grace of pre-temporal status to be fulfilled in time and yet at the same time have this eternal significance? Further to this, in what way, other than as mere Christological assertion does humanity secure its solidarity with Jesus Christ in the atonement? More specifically, if man is already in such solidarity what change took place in the atonement and what change may be understood to happen upon conversion? All these questions hang upon Barth's answers given in his basic exposition in the passage that is referred to in the following paragraphs.

God reconciles man (that is the man Jesus Christ) to himself in his will as from eternity and sets his seal upon this in the atonement. Through the truly human flesh of Jesus Christ and his activity in our time the eternal

Son of God opens the atonement to man. Only through the mysterious, miraculous and unique bond of the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ in the unio hypostatica can the universality of God's will and the openness to humanity of the incarnation and the atonement be posited and maintained. This is the primal fact and ontological key to the Christology and soteriology of the Church Dogmatics. In the passage that follows there occurs the primary and central goal of the impulse, the movement of which we have traced through the thought of Barth. This movement of God from eternity to reveal himself - rendered concrete in the election of Jesus Christ in 'primal history' - has been followed out from its basis in God's dynamic being in the doctrine of the Word of God, through the doctrines of eternity and election, to the incarnation (in Chapters II-VI of this thesis). In the following statement Barth places the Christological core in its place as the basis upon which God and man are open to each other on the ontological foundations of the incarnation.

'But if Jesus Christ is the content and form of the first and eternal Word of God, then that means further that the beginning of all things, of the being of all men and of the whole world, even the divine willing of creation, is preceded by God's covenant with man as its basis and purpose: His promise, in which He binds and pledges Himself to man, and His command by which He pledges and binds man to Himself. At the beginning of all things in God there is the Gospel and the Law, the gracious address of God and the gracious claim of God, both directed to man, both the one Word of the Deus pro nobis who is the one God and beside whom there is no other. For Jesus Christ - not an empty Logos, but Jesus Christ the incarnate Word, the baby born in Bethlehem, the man put to death at Golgotha and raised again in the garden of Joseph of Aramathea, the man whose history this is - is the unity of the two. He is both at one and the same time. He is the promise and the command, the Gospel and the Law, the address of God to man and the claim of God upon man. That He is both as the Word of God spoken

in His work, as the Word of God which has become work, is something which belongs to Himself as the eternal Son of God for Himself and prior to us. In this He is the pre-existent Deus pro nobis. He alone is at once and altogether very God and very man. To that extent He alone is there at the beginning of all things. As the basis and purpose of the covenant He and He alone is the content of the eternal will of God which precedes the whole being of man and of the world. But that which He is for Himself and prior to us He is with a view to us. He is, therefore, the concrete reality and actuality of the promise and command of God, the fulfilment of both, very God and very man, in one person amongst us, as a fellow-man. This first and eternal Word of God is not spoken in the void, but addressed to us, Therefore the event of the atonement is clearly His being for our sake, for our salvation, for the restoration of our relationship with God interrupted by sin. It is, therefore, this relationship with God, grounded on God's relationship with us, which in His person, that is so different and yet directed to us and in its humanity so near to us because perfectly identical with us, is revealed as the basis of the atonement and made effective for us - the pre-existent Deus pro nobis.'

(CD IV/1, pp. 53-4)

It would be possible to question this passage in several ways. Following Wingren⁴⁷ the pretemporal location of Gospel and Law 'at the beginning of all things in God' might well be queried in relation to the alleged sin-interrupted relationship with God which is subsequently healed by the atonement. Again the role of the Holy Spirit in this context might well be examined and the adequacy of Barth's doctrine at this point assessed. For our present purposes in positive terms we note that Barth forges the links of his ontological chain which, when understood through the categories of time and eternity, form the inmost structure of the Church Dogmatics

47. Cf. G. Wingren, Creation and Law, Edinburgh, 1961, is a trenchant attack upon Barth's alleged elision of the distinction of 'Creation and Gospel', cf. pp. 13-14 etc. This relates to our study inasmuch as we are investigating the structure of Barth's temporal distinctions and the priorities implicit in traditional thinking about this distinction.

as an integrated account of God, Christ and creation. The logic of Barth's argument is indeed an 'ontologic' and it runs as follows.

A divine-human reciprocity is established according to the eternal (that is pre-temporal) will of God in the pre-historical 'primal history' of election. This becomes contingent and historical in the God-man Jesus Christ, who bears in himself God's 'address' to us as well as his 'claim' upon us. Jesus Christ is in himself the promise and the command of God. In that he is vere Deus and vere homo he is able to fulfil with perfection the promise of 'Gospel' and the command of 'Law'. The reconciliation of God and man is open to us because his humanity is identical with our humanity and on this basis our response has become a possibility open to us for the covenant-promise has been fulfilled in the atonement-life of Jesus Christ.

Barth proceeds to explicate the activity of the vere Deus, vere homo in another highly important passage which we again quote at length so as to grasp without misunderstanding the precision of Barth's thought at this point, for the relation of eternity and time rests upon a correct grasp of this. The fulfilment of the covenant in the atonement does not produce a merely static openness of being, but on the basis of the true dual identity, a living, dynamic work establishes the way of reconciliation. The bridge is built from God to man: we do not add stones but walk over it.

'He and He alone is very God and very man in a temporal fulfilment of God's eternal will to be the true God of man and to let the man who belongs to Him become and be true man. Ultimately, therefore, Jesus Christ alone is the content of the eternal will of God,

the eternal covenant between God and man. He is this as the Word of God to us and the work of God for us, and therefore in a way quite different from and not to be compared with anything we may become as hearers of this Word and those for whose sake this work is done. Yet in this difference, in the majesty with which He confronts us, but does confront us, He is the Word and work of the eternal covenant. In the truth and power of this eternal Word and work He speaks the Word and accomplishes the work of the atonement in its temporal occurrence. And as we look at this Word and work, and trust in it and build upon it, we can be assured of the atonement which in it has been made in time. And since Jesus Christ is not only the subject but also the eternal and primary basis of this act of atonement, this act is definitively distinguished from all others. It demands our unconditional recognition. It lays claim to our regard. And we can have the certainty and the joy and freedom of the faith that in spite of our sin and all its consequences it has taken place once and for all. All this depends on a right recognition of the presupposition of the atonement in the counsel of God, and especially on the fact that we perceive and maintain the content and form of the eternal divine counsel exactly as it is fulfilled and revealed in time.'

(CD IV/1, p. 54)

God eternally wills to be the true God of man in his covenant made in Jesus Christ, vere Deus, and to allow man to become and to be true man in the atonement wrought in the vere homo of that same Jesus Christ, who is in himself the Word and work of God. Jesus Christ is, yet in the divine condescension and glorification, he becomes in time, in the accomplishment of the atonement. In this unique act of atonement he is both subject and basis in a work of the Word which has divine validity yet human fulfilment. As a universal, but nevertheless contingent act it demands our unconditional recognition. The significance of this being and becoming-in-act is maintained by its origin in the eternal will of God. Its relevance to man (that is to ourselves) is upheld by the fact that it is true humanity

that is reconciled to God in the atonement. As Barth argues in the last sentence of this quotation, the balance of eternity and time must be maintained for they are mutually necessary. Neither the divine and, therefore, eternal being of God in covenantal promise and intensionality nor the fulfilment in temporal action can be weakened. Both must inter-subsist if the covenant is to be fulfilled in the atonement on the basis of the God-man Jesus Christ as the revelation of God. This identity which is unique, yet of universal import, is manifested in the mutual, but distinct equilibrium and interaction of the Godhood and manhood of Jesus Christ. It is the core of Barth's Christology from which flow the beneficia Christi and the architectonic of divine movement in The Way of the Son of God and The Homecoming of the Son of Man. On the foundation of a truly dynamic understanding of the unio hypostatica the being and act of God are integrated in a Christology which is soteriology, and in a soteriology which is wholly Christological.

In this integration of Christology and soteriology Barth has once more taken up and developed seeds of thought latent in earlier theology. Here Barth refers particularly to the Federal theology of Coccejus and the attempt to historicise the activity and revelation of God. The notion of the 'covenant of grace' originating in Zwingli and Bullinger and present in the two chapters of Calvin's Institutes II, 9-11 (which are untouched by his doctrine of predestination) forms the clue to Barth's reflections. In the degeneration

of Protestant scholasticism an excessive tri-personalism in God was expressed in the growth of the 'inter-trinitarian pact'. This 'mythology' was matched by an attendant atrophy in the 'covenant of grace'. On the one hand Barth's emphasis on the unity of God is a protest against this 'mythology' (this is borne out by Jüngel's interpretation of his doctrine of the Trinity) and on the other his Christology is the conscious rejection of the gulf that developed between the doctrine of Christ and the temporal outworking of the decretum absolutum of the eternal but distant God. That is the alleged gulf between the nature of God in himself and his revelation in Christ. In the context of the unity of God (that is the revealed God is the hidden God) the doctrine of reconciliation is to be developed.

In these two chapters an attempt has been made to provide an account of Barth's understanding of the interaction of eternity and time in the incarnation. At this juncture the vast architectonic of his doctrine of reconciliation opens before the reader of the Church Dogmatics in which the apparent paradoxes (a whole series of them) of humiliation and exaltation are developed on the foundation provided by the true God, true man, and actual God-manhood of Jesus Christ. The basis which has been stated above is most crucial to this study for in it can be seen the consistent outworking of the fundamental theological postulates that have structured Barth's doctrines of God, revelation and election. So as to complete our Christological quest we now examine the nodal point of contact of time and eternity which is a development of the relation that

was noted in the first part of this chapter. Here eternity was seen to apprehend time in a manner commensurate with the doctrine of the enhypostasis and anhypostasis of Jesus Christ.

Barth reacts against kenotic theories and makes a full statement of his own position which has been apparent before in adumbration. This must be presented in some detail in the concluding part of this chapter for it is only by means of this that we may understand how Barth is to relate finite and infinite categories. An understanding of the antitheses of finite and infinite attributes in terms of paradox and antimony or contradiction underlies the kenotic position which Barth presents in brutal generalisation. In the light of the contrast that Barth himself draws we will be able to crystallise this encounter and so open a path to an examination of the temporal implications of the theological impulses that structure the Church Dogmatics.

How can God give himself and not in Barth's words, 'give himself away'? According to the kenotic theory we have in the incarnation, 'what is noetically and logically an absolute paradox, with what is ontically the fact of a cleft or rift or gulf in God Himself, between His being and essence in Himself and His activity and work as the Reconciler of the world created by Him'.⁴⁸ In direct contrast to this, Barth, as we have seen, has been at all points concerned to avoid the reading-back of dichotomies in being into God's own being. The kenotic conclusion drawn without prevarication or equivocation postulates just such a radical

48. CD IV/1, p. 184.

dichotomy, for on this account:

'It therefore pleased Him in this latter, for the redemption of the world, not to alter Himself, but to deny the immutability of His being, His divine nature, to be in discontinuity with Himself, to be against Himself, to set Himself in self-contradiction. In Himself He was still omnipresent, almighty, eternal and glorious One, the All-Holy and All-Righteous who could not be tempted. But at the same time among us and for us He was quite different, not omnipresent and eternal but limited in time and space, not almighty but impotent, not glorious but lowly, open to radical and total attack in respect of His righteousness and holiness.'

(CD IV/1, p. 184)

This a determination of 'God against God', and although Barth grants that no kenoticist would readily consent to such a bald characterisation of his position, this is its logical reductio. The opposite is the only possible alternative. Barth develops an account which is supremely actualistic in the sense of being a functional interpretation of the relation of the so-called 'two natures', which, as we have noted previously, is determined by the unity of hypostases, and upon which the relation of other categories depends.

'God gives Himself, but He does not give Himself away. He does not give up being God in becoming a creature, in becoming man. He does not cease to be God. He does not come into conflict with Himself. He does not sin when in unity with the man Jesus He mingles with sinners and takes their place. And when He dies in His unity with this man, death does not gain any power for Him. He exists as God in the righteousness and the life, the obedience and the resurrection of this man. He makes His own the being of man in contradiction against Him, but He does not make common cause with it. He also makes His own the being of man under the curse of this contradiction, but in order to do away with it as He suffers it. He acts as Lord over this contradiction even as He subjects Himself to it. He frees the creature in becoming a creature.'

(CD IV/1, p. 185)

The priority of the dynamic union is not exclusive but is certainly primary in Barth's thought. (Some, notably N. Smart, would argue that Barth evades the more 'philosophical' issues of finite and infinite categories and so on in his Christological resolution).⁴⁹ It is only in the light of the reconciliation initially wrought in Jesus Christ, which is in and from eternity, that world and God are reconciled 'in Him'. In virtue of his doctrine of God with its great emphasis upon the divine freedom Barth embraces the distance of world and God within the infinite potential of the divine being revealed in Jesus Christ. H. Hartwell's judgement is correct that in Barth's Church Dogmatics Jesus Christ is the key to understanding the universe and man.⁵⁰ Once more we turn to the words of Barth for in them can be seen the subordination of attributes of divinity (and the categories of 'finite' and 'infinite' into which they fall) to the actual interaction of God and man declared in Jesus Christ, the revelation of God. It is as always as a corollary of the central reconciliation in Jesus Christ that the relation of eternity and time is to be understood.

'We have to think after the following fashion. As God was in Christ, far from being against Himself, or at disunity with Himself, He has put into effect the freedom of His divine love, the love in which He is divinely free. He has therefore done and revealed that which corresponds to His divine nature. His immutability does not stand in the way of this. It must not be denied, but this possibility is included in His unalterable being. He is absolute, infinite, exalted, active, impassible, transcendent, but in all

49. Article, 'Karl Barth' in the Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, edited by Paul Edwards.

50. The Theology of Karl Barth: an Introduction, London, 1964, p. 96.

this He is the One who loves in freedom, the One who is free in His love, and therefore not His own prisoner. He is all this as the Lord, and in such a way that He embraces the opposites of these concepts even while He is superior to them. He is all this as the Creator, who has created the world as the reality distinct from Himself but willed and affirmed by Him and therefore as His world, as the world which belongs to Him, in relation to which He can be God and act as God in an absolute way and also a relative, in an infinite and also a finite, in an exalted and also a lowly, in an active and also a passive, in a transcendent and also an immanent, and finally, in a divine and also a human - indeed, in relation to which He Himself can become worldly, making His own both its form, the forma servi, and also its cause; and all without giving up His own form, the forma Dei, and His own glory, but adopting the form and cause of man into the most perfect communion with his own, accepting solidarity with the world.'

(CD IV/1, pp. 186-7)

As regards the problem of time the relation of contrasts is consistent with this mutual realisation of the forma servi and forma Dei in God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Barth argues that, 'The eternity in which He Himself is true time and the Creator of all time is revealed in the fact that, although our time is that of sin and death, He can enter it and Himself be temporal in it, yet without ceasing to be eternal, able to be the Eternal in time'.⁵¹ This resolution of the antithesis of eternity and time is perfectly consistent with the presuppositions that we have explored, stated and analysed at length. God's eternity has been thought of as an integral factor in his nature and being, not, as we have said before, an extraneous item on the theological agenda for a doctrine of God. God's eternity is not the contradiction or annihilation of time but its fulfilment. God is both Creator and Reconciler

51. CD IV/1, pp. 187-8.

through Jesus Christ. In entering into our time God reconciles and fulfils it in the fullness of his eternity, that is 'God's time'. This reconciliation is worked out in and through Jesus Christ and so it is no surprise to us that in his Christology Barth presents an understanding of time which is the product of a fully consistent integration of doctrines of God, as being-in-act and in triunity, of eternity as the expression of God's power and freedom, and of Christ as the unio hypostatica of vere Deus, vere homo.

The 'greedy dialectic' is resolved by a comprehensive integration of Christian theology of great power, cohesion and consistency. Thus if we call into question Barth's understanding of time we must respond on an extended front to the total scheme of his endeavour. Such criticisms as that of Cullmann in respect of Barth having remnants of 'alien presuppositions' do not impinge upon the mere definitions employed in his temporal language but upon the total structure of his theology as we find it in the Church Dogmatics. We have shown that to treat of time or eternity apart from this total theological effort is strictly meaningless if any respect is to be accorded to the purpose of Barth's work and its execution. In conclusion we shall summarise the contents of this chapter and indicate the direction to be taken as we continue to explore and analyse Barth's theological doctrine of time.

In this chapter we began with an examination of the assumption of grace and Barth's appropriation of the classical doctrine of enhypostasis and anhypostasis as it is to be found in Volume I/2 of the Church Dogmatics. This was

shown to be the basis of the dynamic and functionally realised Christology of CD IV. The centrality of the Christological resolution of the utter distinction, yet unity in identity, of the God-man Jesus Christ as the basis of the relation of eternity and time. Thus we saw how the problem of time and eternity in the Church Dogmatics is intrinsically and irreducibly theological in its form and solution. Barth has taken with thorough-going seriousness the insights of John I/14 and Colossians II/9. The Word of became flesh and dwelt among us in the fullness of the Godhead. The central act of graceful condescension is explicated along the radical lines foreseen only by Gregory of Nyssa who stated 'that the descent to humility which took place in the incarnation of the Word is not only not excluded by the divine nature but signifies its greatest glory'.⁵² Creation is as we have seen consequent upon,⁵³ rather than temporally (or eternally) prior to the election of Jesus Christ who is both the 'creative actualisation of being, yet also and with it creaturely actualisation'.⁵⁴ In this area the problem of time becomes acute where creation and actualisation are in direct proximity. The threads of theological theory converge in the most considerable passage (in terms of length if nothing else) on time in the Church Dogmatics. Creation is the theological theme (related as always to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ) which will lead us to an analysis of Man in his Time.

52. Or.Cat., 24, quoted by Barth in CD IV/1, p. 192.

53. CD IV/3, Part 1, p. 40.

54.

CHAPTER VIII
CHRIST AND CREATION

In this thesis we have pursued the impulse of Barth's thought in the Church Dogmatics in accordance with its theological structure and movement. This meant that we placed Christology as it is found in CD I/2 and CD IV before our consideration of creation. Only in the light of revelation, that is God's revelation in Jesus Christ, can we come to a knowledge of our own creaturely existence. In this chapter a new level of complexity is added to our investigation of the problem of time in its theological context because as was seen in Chapter VII, the disjunction of uncreated and created being is reflected in the distinction of eternity and time made in the Christian affirmation of creation. Thus we are to approach the problem of creation in relation to the fundamental but contrasting impulses of Origen and Athanasius. Having outlined and examined Barth's doctrine of creation in this context we are then to turn to Barth's exposition of Man in his Time, where the (fallen) time of creation in which man exists is encountered by the time of revelation, God's time, both in the history of Jesus Christ and in the existence of man. Thus in the second part of the chapter the threads we have followed in this thesis are woven into a single cord. Whereas in Christology the heart and pulse of Barth's Church Dogmatics is to be found, the contents of the passage usually taken as Barth's definitive statement on time (i.e. in III/2, Man in his Time) is the product of what has gone before, not an

isolated account which can be taken apart from the dogmatic presuppositions that underlie it. Bearing this in mind we now proceed to a statement of Barth's understanding of creation and time, and of man as the subject of creation and redemption in time.

'The insight that man owes his existence and form, together with all the reality distinct from God, to God's creation, is achieved only in the reception and answer of the divine self-witness, that is only in faith in Jesus Christ, i.e., in the knowledge of the unity of Creator and creature actualised in Him, and in the present mediated by Him, under the right and in the experience of the goodness of the Creator towards His creature.'

(CD III/1, p. 3)

Barth's understanding of creation cannot be divorced from his doctrines of Christ and of God. Barth places Christology and creation in close relation for 'creation is the external basis of the covenant' and 'the covenant the internal basis of creation'. The great initial crisis of Christian theology with regard to creation was to distinguish the being of God and that of the created order and at the same time to preserve the divinity of the Son in the eternity of his divine generation, whilst not infringing upon the integrity of the doctrine of God. So as to allow Barth's solutions to emerge a brief characterisation of the patristic debate on creation will be given. This will provide the criteria and norms by which the achievements of Barth's supremely integrated theology may be judged.

The main emphasis of the Christian faith inimical to the Greek mind was its doctrine of creation which denied the eternity of the world and implied its creation ex nihilo. Over against the Greek understanding of the eternal cosmos

as being necessarily existent (for its non-existence was inconceivable) the Christian belief in the creation of the cosmos ex nihilo implied a two-fold contingency. First, the cosmos could have not existed at all. Second, the Creator could have not created. The creation had been brought into existence and sustained by the sovereign will of God. The radical transcendence of God in his trinitarian being could not emerge into freedom until the Greek philosophical hierarchy of divine being and self-disclosure in creative and redemptive activity had been overcome. This difficulty beset the Apologists who, in the words of Florovsky, 'could not distinguish consistently between the categories of the Divine "Being" and the Divine "Revelation" ad extra, in the world'.¹

If we compare the parts played by Origen and Athanasius in this controversy over the ontology of God, Word and cosmos then we may see how Barth once more strives towards an articulation of the truth which penetrates into and beyond the tensions and antitheses presented in Christian antiquity. As we shall see Barth presents aspects of creation and Christology which pertain to both Origen and Athanasius yet he achieves a dynamic synthesis over against the contrast between them and the actual confrontation evident in theological history.

Origen argued that God could never become anything that he has not always been for (in the words of Florovsky)

1. 'The Concept of Creation in St. Athanasius', Studia Patristica, Volume 6, 1962, p. 38. In this fine article G. Florovsky provides a highly relevant comparison of Athanasius and Origen which I have used in the early part of this chapter.

'There is nothing simply "potential" in God's being, everything being eternally actualised'.² In consequence, so Florovsky argues, Origen held that:

'God is always the Father of the Only Begotten, and the Son is co-eternal with the Father: any other assumption would have comprised the essential immutability of the Divine Being. But God is always the Creator and the Lord. Indeed, if God is Creator at all - and it is an article of faith that He is Lord and Creator - we must necessarily assume that He had always been Creator and Lord. For, obviously, God never "advances" toward what He had not been before. For Origen this implied inevitably also an eternal actualization of the world's existence, of all those things over which God's might and Lordship were exercised.'

(Florovsky, p. 39)

If God had been (following Origen's interpretation of the Septuagint) Πεντοκράτωρ from eternity this could only be so if τὰ πάντα had also existed from eternity. This could allow no qualitative distinction between the being of the Holy Trinity and the being of the world or between the being of Christ and that of other creatures. In the eternal actualisation of the world, temporal sequence, with its traditional implication of change, was excluded. The world must always be co-existent and therefore co-eternal with God. This 'world' was the primordial world of spirits which formed part of the one eternal hierarchical system of being characteristic of Middle Platonism. Despite the apparent monism of Origen's system with regard to the resolution of the tension of eternity and time in favour of the former, he nevertheless distinguished between the 'will' and 'being' of God in relation to the generation of the Son. This safeguarded the divine essence from division or separation, but

2. Art. cit., p. 39.

in attributing both the generation of the Son and the creation of the world to the will or counsel of the Father, Origen placed the Son in the category of creatures. The created order as a whole was not, however, contingent but necessary in the sense of being eternally generated. Clearly the problem of time and eternity is deeply enmeshed in this, as we shall see when we compare Origen with Barth.

The tensions in Origen's teaching were exploited by the Arians, for he left but two options: either the eternity of the world was to be rejected or the eternity of the Logos was to be contested. If the world was temporal then the eternity of the Logos was endangered and if Origen's postulates were accepted the opponents of Arius could not deny this temporality. God, in his 'unfathomable and incomprehensible Being' was for Arius, Creator and the Logos a privileged 'creature'. Only God could be truly ἀνάπαυτος in Origen's primarily cosmological scheme.

Manifest flaws in the thought of Origen appeared when it was exploited in Arian subordinationism for the being of Creator, Christ and creature appeared at different levels upon one extended hierarchy of being. The relation of Father and Son was problematical and a wedge was driven between them by the Arian arguments directed at the Origenist position. Before we continue by stating Athanasius' repudiation of this fundamental monism we must note one danger which might threaten the stance adopted by Barth. Does Barth in his consistent and decisive emphasis upon the movement of God from eternity in creation and reconciliation

distinguish sufficiently between the being of God and that of creation? Does he restrain sufficiently the impulse of eternity to preserve the reality of time itself in the face of his theology which is prima facie the most thoroughly integrated Christology and potentially apocastatic doctrine of Christ and creation since Origen's synthesis? We must retain these questions in mind when we now examine the Athanasian reaction to Origen.

By direct contrast to Origen Athanasius held even in his early theology to an 'ultimate and radical cleavage or hiatus between the absolute Being of God and the contingent existence of the world'.³ This distinction of created and uncreated being is quite vital to the retention of the mutual, but utterly distinct realities of God and the world which must be correctly related, yet equally importantly distinguished, without false disjunction or reductive synthesis. Athanasius therefore asserted two modes of existence; the being of God (eternal, immutable, 'immortal' and 'incorruptable') and the flux of the cosmos (mutable, 'mortal', liable to change and 'corruption'). The existence of created things was precarious but ordered and bound together by the Logos. Athanasius rejected the doctrine of immanent present in things for 'Creation stood only by the immediate impact of the divine Logos'.⁴ The cosmos was created ex nihilo by divine fiat and maintained in existence solely by the Creator.

3. Art.cit., p. 45.

4. Art.cit., p. 46.

Despite the superficially 'Platonic' cast of Athanasius' thought with regard to mortal man's participation in the Logos, this Logos was in fact 'the Only-begotten God', for, 'There was an absolute dissimilarity between the Logos and the creatures'. The distinction of the 'essence' and the 'power' of the Logos (inherited from the Neoplatonic tradition and Clement of Alexandria) was used by Athanasius to establish a thoroughly Christian ontology so as 'to discriminate strictly between the inner Being of God and His creative and "providential" manifestation ad extra, in the creaturely world'.⁵ By contrast in Origen there is an apocastatic impulse apparent in the unity and the universality of the divine decree. Both the drive to distinguish God's being in its sovereign primacy characteristic of Athanasius, and the actualisation of God in a unity of creation and redemption notable in Origen, are present in the Church Dogmatics. Can Barth have both elements or must one always triumph at the expense of the other? In the thought of Athanasius the distinction of uncreated and created being manifested in the radical contingency of the cosmos and its dependence upon God is quite decisive and is summed up as follows by Florovsky:

'The world owes its very existence to God's sovereign will and goodness and stands, over the abyss of its own nothingness and impotence, solely by His quickening "Grace" - as it were sola gratia. But the "Grace" abides in the world.'

(Florovsky, p. 47)

This summary of Athanasius could well be applied to

5. Art.cit., p. 47.

Barth for in the latter's doctrine of creation the being of God does not tend to annihilate or absorb creation but affirms it in grace. Indeed the generality of the last phrase in the quotation is rendered concrete in the embodiment of God's grace in Jesus Christ, the Word of God. At the base of Athanasius' argument is the distinction of the Father and the Logos, who are from eternity, and the creation, which has a beginning and is derived. God's being has an absolute priority over his action and will. This ontological distinction has been inherited by the Christian tradition and developed in both East and West. In the West this has been in terms of the priority of the doctrine of God and the tendency to allow Christology and the doctrine of creation to grow apart. In the East the distinction of 'essence' and 'energy' underwent systematic development.

Barth's doctrine of God expresses, as we have seen, a pervasive actualism for the being of God cannot be divorced from his act.

'We are dealing with the being of God: but with regard to the being of God, the word "event" or "act" is final, and cannot be surpassed or compromised. To its very depths God's Godhead consists in the fact that it is an event - not any event, not events in general, but the event of His action, in which we have a share in God's revelation.'

(CD II/1, p. 263)

We must bear in mind this mutual realisation of act and being in Barth's account for it offers a contrast, as we shall see, with that of Athanasius. This has important implications for Athanasius made a consistent distinction in his doctrine of God between his essential (or ontological)

attributes and those of his deeds or acts.

'God is what He is: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is an ultimate reality, declared and manifested in the Scriptures. But Creation is a deed of the divine will, and this will is common to and identical in all Three Persons of the One God. Thus God's Fatherhood must necessarily precede His creatorship. The Son's existence flows eternally from the very essence of the Father, or, rather belongs to this "essence", The world's existence, on the contrary, is, as it were, "external" to this divine essence and is grounded only in the Divine will. There is an element of contingency in the exercise and disclosure of the creative will, as much as His will reflects God's own essence and character. On the other hand, there is, as it were, an absolute necessity in the Trinitarian being of God.'

(Florovsky, p. 49)

Does Barth's radical actualism elide this distinction, which is not nominal but real (i.e. ontological) in the thought of Athanasius? If Barth does actualise God's being as utterly as he appears to do then what are the implications of this? Does Barth's apparent attempt to overcome the distinctive theological types offered by Origen and Athanasius (in a creative fusion that goes beyond both) run into problems when examined in the theological context we are setting out? In other words what are the dangers and what are the attractions implicit in Barth's theological scheme of creation and God in relation to the central doctrine of Christology?

Athanasius' thought drove towards an adequate and final distinction of 'generation' and 'creation'; in Florovsky's judgement his trinitarian vision and the concept of creation belonged closely and organically together. In the opinion of L. Bouyer, Athanasius, (in his Discourses against the Arians) 'forces us to contemplate the Divine life

in God Himself, before it is communicated to us'. The priority of God is apparent in both Athanasius and Barth, but does Barth's equally apparent adoption of an Origenist and actualist stance lose in the final count the radical and indispensable distinction of Creator and creation, as a consequence of his understanding of the unity of being and act in God? Does the ontological distinctness of Creator and creation fall victim to a quasi-metaphysical formula? The place of time in Barth's doctrine of creation will provide a testing way of finding an answer to these questions.

Athanasius' distinction of 'generation' and 'creation' was taken up by Cyril of Alexandria and through him found its way into the Exposition of the Orthodox Faith by John of Damascus who argued on the basis of this real and indeed temporal discontinuity in the instantiation of being.

'For we hold that it is from Him, that is from the Father's nature, that the Son is generated. And unless we grant that the Son co-existed from the beginning with the Father, by Whom He was begotten, we introduce change into the Father's subsistence, because, not being the Father, He subsequently became the Father. For the creation, even though it originated later, is nevertheless not derived from the essence of God, but is brought into existence out of nothing by His will and power, and change does not touch God's nature.'

(De fide orth. I 8, PG 94, 812-813)

According to Florovsky, Athanasius' deepest conviction was that the distinction of being and acting in God (that is between 'essence' and 'energy') is a 'genuine and ontological distinction', and that 'Not only do we distinguish between "Being" and "Will"; but it is not the same thing, even for God, "to be" and "to act".'⁶ If it was found that Barth had

6. Art.cit., p. 57. Here we must ask how far in fact Florovsky is correct in his assessment of Athanasius and whether he does not overemphasise and harden the distinction of being and act. The distinction of energeia and ousia in God in Athanasius' thought is relevant here.

in fact rejected this distinction would not the consequences in fact match those errors against which Athanasius originally formed his position? That is, if the distinction of being and act in God was overcome would this not endanger the discrete but nevertheless related ontologies of God and creation?⁷

We now set out to examine Barth's doctrine of creation from the particular standpoint of time and eternity, an issue which lies at the heart of this controversy. Following this we shall make some concluding comparative comments before entering theological anthropology in our next chapter.

As we saw in the opening paragraphs of this chapter Barth asserts that creation is known by faith and is not derived from natural knowledge or metaphysical postulates. The creatureliness of the world is known only by acknowledgement of the revealed Word of God and, moreover, creation and redemption are mutually related aspects of the covenantal decree of God. In this sense both the subjective apprehension and objective act of creation are related in their Christological and trinitarian basis. In a structure of formal similarity to that developed in the doctrines of election and the incarnation the pattern of eternal antecedence and temporal consequence is established with the most uncompromising rigour in the doctrine of creation. Contrary to any causal notions thrown up by the human mind

7. The mutually realised doctrine of act and being has been considered at length in our earlier chapters, especially II and III. As has been seen this ontology is the most fundamental unifying factor in the Church Dogmatics.

Barth argues that:

'The God who created heaven and earth is God "the Father", i.e., the Father of Jesus Christ, who as such in eternal generation posits Himself in the Son by the Holy Spirit, and is not therefore in any sense posited from without or elsewhere. It is as this eternal Father, determined in the act of His free expression and therefore not from without but from within, determining Himself in His Son by the Holy Spirit and Himself positing everything else, that He is also the Creator. And it is again as this Eternal Father, and not in any other way, that He reveals Himself as the Creator, i.e. in Jesus Christ His Son by the Holy Ghost, in exact correspondence to the way in which He has inwardly resolved and decided to be the Creator. As He cannot be the Creator except as the Father, He is not known at all unless He is known in this revelation of Himself.'

(CD III/1, pp. 11-12)

Barth does not assert creation as the pre-condition or preliminary of Christology and reconciliation, for our knowledge of the former is bound up with the latter. The only real analogy is disclosed in the Fatherhood of God in Jesus Christ which gives us the basis of an analogia fidei. Barth repudiates any notion of a timeless relationship 'analogous to the internal cosmic relationships of cause and effect'.⁸ By contrast he posits the unique relation of God and creation which is itself instantiated, maintained and indeed revealed by God himself. This is perhaps the fullest and most explicit use of analogia fidei in the Church Dogmatics.

'In contrast to everything that we know of origination and causation, creation denotes the divine action which has a real analogy, a genuine point of comparison, only in the inner begetting of the Son by the Father, and therefore only in the inner life of God Himself, and not at all in the life of the creature. The historical secret of the creation is that outwith His own reality God willed and brought into being a correspondence to that which, as the constitutive

8. CD III/1, p. 13.

act of His deity, forms the secret of His own existence and being. This is the incomparable perfect to which the creed looks back as the beginning of heaven and earth. Thus creation does also denote a relationship between God and the world, i.e., the relationship of absolute superiority and lordship on the one hand and of absolute dependence on the other. Creation does not signify, however, only a mythological or speculative intensification of the concept of this relationship, but its presupposition and decisive meaning. That is, creation speaks primarily of a basis which is beyond this relationship and makes it possible; of a unique, free creation of heaven and earth by the will and act of God.'

(CD III/1, pp. 13-14)

Once more in this pattern of antecedence and consequence - interpreted by the credo ut intelligam - is at the core of Barth's thought and he combines the theological currents that we have traced in this thesis in an extended dogmatic exposition of Genesis I and II. The problem of time is implicit in this account of creation in which the theology of the Trinity, Christ, eternity and indeed time are forged into an integrated doctrine. In the light of the critical issues isolated in the first part of this chapter we may explore the temporal structure of Barth's doctrine given that it is expressed through the dynamic revelatory movement of analogia fidei. Jesus Christ is the Word of God and as such has a noetic and an ontic role in our knowledge of creation and in its original happening. In Barth's words, 'Jesus Christ is the Word by which knowledge of creation is mediated to us because He is the Word by which God has fulfilled creation and continually maintains and rules it.'⁹ The further assertion that 'Jesus Christ

9. Op.cit., p. 28.

is the key to the secret of creation' is grounded within the temporal structure developed in the doctrine of election which as we have seen is the basis of Christology.

Creation is the first in a series of works of God and in containing in itself the beginning of time it lies outside the range of historical observation. Given the importance of analogia fidei and the access this affords to the true meaning of creation, this agnosticism is far from disastrous and it is further relieved by Barth's interpretation of the creation narratives as 'saga' (which is 'essentially aetiological, i.e., a poetic vision of the becoming that underlies being').¹⁰ Creation as the first of God's works in time is itself the 'external beginning' of 'all things distinct from God', whereas the 'inner beginning'¹¹ lies in the eternal and determinate will of God. Creation is not accidental or arbitrary in Barth's vision but the external temporal sign of that which is original (in a very full sense) in God's eternal will and being in Trinity. Now, as throughout the Church Dogmatics, our point of departure in understanding is not immanent nor simply transcendent but in the being of God in act, in his trinitarian existence of ineinander and auseinander and in the Godmanhood of Jesus Christ in and from eternity.

Creation has no 'external presupposition' for it 'follows immediately the eternal will of God'.¹² God is

10. Op.cit., p. 304.

11. Op.cit., p. 43.

12. Ibid.

'the First' but not a First Cause, for his act of creation and continued sustenance of creation is the concrete expression of his love and freedom and, moreover, his continued faithfulness. Creation is in no way the isolated act of God but has in view the 'institution, preservation and consummation of the covenant of grace'.¹³ In conformity with the structure of Barth's theological priority we examine first the eternal starting-point of the overall temporal structure.

'As the Father, God is in Himself the origin which has no other (not even an eternal and divine) origin, the source of the other eternal modes of existence of the divine essence; and as Creator, in virtue of His originative activity ad extra, He is the absolute sovereign Lord of all that exists and is distinct from Himself. As the Father, God procreates Himself from eternity in His Son; and with His Son He is also from eternity the origin of Himself in the Holy Spirit; and as the Creator He posits the reality to all the things that are distinct.'

(CD III/1, p. 49)

The indivisibility of God's acts in that the opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa provides a key to the eternal and thus the temporal unity of the dogmatic structure of the Church Dogmatics. Not only are the works of the one God united in their basis but the outward act and continuance of creation is the apposite reflection of God's inner reciprocity and relatedness. There is a 'worthiness' in the fact that the 'eternal fellowship between Father and Son... thus finds a correspondence in the very different but not dissimilar fellowship between God and His creature'.¹⁴ Barth

13. Op.cit., p. 44.

14. Op.cit., p. 50.

is, however, more specific as he penetrates the logic of this theological interconnection. In a quite direct sense the creation exists for the sake of the Son of God. We must at this point examine at length the words of Barth because they offer a clue to understanding the whole inner balance of the Church Dogmatics. Great weight is given to the eternal because in effect the temporal exists on behalf of and for the sake of the eternal. Barth reverses the priority of immanence in his theological structure at this juncture in a way entirely consistent with what has gone before in the Church Dogmatics. This is not without problems and difficulties (as for example those raised by G. Wingren¹⁵) for Barth here carries his Christocentrism to its ultimate point. In this passage we perceive the exact relation of eternal creative and redemptive reciprocity in God to its temporal actualisation.

'...the expression Son or Word of God also indicates the One who in the divine decree and will humbled Himself already from eternity and therefore before the creation of all things; who manifested and exercised His deity when he willed to become the Son of Man, flesh, in order that in His person He should bear and bear away the curse of sin for all men; and who, because of His obedience even to the cross, was to be exalted by God and thus to become, again in His person, the bearer of the divine image for all men. The connexion between Him and creation is obviously even closer and more significant. In respect of His Son who was to become man and the Bearer of human sin, God loved man and man's whole world from all eternity, even before it was created, and in and in spite of its absolute lowliness and non-godliness, indeed its anti-godliness. He created it because He loved it in His Son who because of its transgressions stood before Him eternally as the Rejected and Crucified. And again, in respect of His Son who was to become man and the Bearer of the divine image, God

15. Cf. once more Wingren's Creation and Law.

attributed to man and his entire world from all eternity, even before He created it, enough glory, as a likeness of future glory, to cover and indeed obliterate its misery, because He thought of it in His own Son who, for its justification, stood eternally before Him as the Elected and Resurrected. If by the Son or Word of God we understand concretely Jesus, the Christ, and therefore very God and very man, we can see how far it was not only appropriate and worthy but necessary that God should be the Creator. If this was God's eternal counsel actualised in the manger of Bethlehem, the cross of Calvary and the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, it was not merely possible but essential for God to be the Creator. The fact that God has regard to His Son - the Son of Man, the Word made flesh - is the true and genuine basis of creation. To be sure there was no other than that of His own free love. But a genuine necessity is constituted by the fact that from all eternity He willed so to love the world, and did so love it, that He gave His only begotten Son (Jn. 3,16).'

(CD III/1, pp. 50-51)

The priority of Christology in its fullest sense is complete. Jesus Christ, the Word of God, pre-exists with God as Reconciler and the dynamic initiative is in this sphere prior to creation and thus to time. The corresponding exegesis of the New Testament (inspired by the insights of Colossians I in conjunction with the key text of John I) is intended to substantiate the Christological priority of the passage above. The fullness of 'primal history' (that category of pre-temporal 'history' first encountered in the doctrine of election) is apparent.

The act of reconciliation worked out in Jesus Christ in virtue of which man and world are reconciled to God is presented in its completeness as the basis upon which creation takes place.

'To sum up, the New Testament passages in question say that the creative wisdom and power of God were in the beginning specifically the wisdom and power of Jesus Christ. For in the first place He was the eternal

Son and the Word of God, the whole of divine being revealed and active in creation being His own eternal being. Second, His existence as the Son of God the Father was in some sense the inner divine analogy and justification of creation. Finally and supremely, He was already in the eternal decree of God the Mediator; the Bearer of our human nature; the Humiliated and Exalted as the Bearer of our flesh; a creature and precisely as such loved by God; and in this way the motivating basis of creation. If God willed to give His eternal Son this form and function, and if the Son of God willed to obey His Father in this form and function, this meant that God had to begin to act as Creator, for there could be no restraining His will. Hence, as these passages of the New Testament declare, it is not only God the Father, but in particular the Son Jesus Christ, who is propria vi et efficacia et potentia the Creator of all things.'

(CD III/1, pp. 55-56)

Likewise the Holy Spirit 'makes the existence of the creature as such possible, permitting it to exist, maintaining it in its existence, and forming the point of reference of its existence. For it is He who in that counsel anticipates and guarantees its reconciliation with God and redemption by Him in the union of the Father and the Son.'¹⁶ In this way Barth develops a thoroughly integrated trinitarian doctrine of creation on the basis of it being the opus indivisum totius trinitatis. The prefiguring of creation takes place in the eternal reconciliation of God and man (i.e. 'flesh') in Jesus Christ. This positing of the eternal reconciliation imposes a certain constraint of creation upon God. God's freedom is freely to bind himself to creation. In this creation the reconciliation wrought in eternity is fulfilled in time by itself fulfilling time in Jesus Christ, that is in his actual life, death and resurrection. Jesus Christ is utterly central in Barth's account of the eternal and temporal acts of God in reconciliation and creation. In this supreme and concrete

16. CD III/1, p. 56.

expression of analogia fidei found in the pattern of eternal priority and divine self-realisation in the trinitarian reciprocity of God's being which is actualised in time ad extra, we find the core of Barth's doctrine of creation.

The undoubted weight of eternal priority and indeed the degree of fulfilment within the history of the Godhead in eternity (putatively developed on the basis of New Testament insights as well as in accordance with the dogmatic structure that has been analysed at length in this thesis) is placed behind the act of creation. In creation the eternal instantiates time; indeed, 'the aim of creation is history'. Once this is said the nature and role of time becomes highly important. The general theological scheme gives way to the specific problems of contingent particularity in the encounter of time and eternity in history. All the difficulties concerning the reality of time itself now come to a head in the light of this potentially overwhelming doctrine of creation, from eternity.

In this context 'history' is:

'the history of the covenant of grace instituted by God between Himself and man; the sequence of events in which God concludes and executes this covenant with man, carrying it to its goal, and thus validating in the sphere of the creature that which from all eternity He has determined in Himself; the sequence of events for the sake of which God has in patience with the creature and with its creation gives it time - time which acquires content through these events and which is finally to be "fulfilled" and made ripe for its end by their conclusion. This is from the theological standpoint the history.'

(CD III/1, p. 59)

This is quite categorically a form of 'salvation history' although not a 'red thread' submerged in a secular

history of religion but the history which 'encloses' all other history, for the covenant of grace is the theme of history. In a real sense history is a derivation of theological presuppositions and of the great presupposition, God's movement in grace from eternity in Jesus Christ. We find here the confirmation of what Barth stated in Volume I/1 of the Church Dogmatics: that history is the predicate of revelation, not revelation the predicate of history. In other words history occurs as the concrete actualisation of the inner self-determination of God. History and its context, creation are the events and the arena of God's fulfilment of his eternal purpose in Jesus Christ. It does not exist for its own ends but so as to display the divine teleology of temporal fulfilment of that which is determined from eternity. The meaning of this 'fulfilment', the transformation that takes place in revelation is nowhere more clearly seen than in relation to the problem of time and history. In the final chapters of this thesis it is the exact nature of this fulfilment and the theological anthropology dictated by Barth's doctrine of time that is to preoccupy us. At this stage, however, the most significant passage that is to concern us will allow us to answer some of the questions raised at the outset of this chapter. The comments Barth makes on time and creation will be related to what we know of his total scheme and thus be made comparable to other accounts of creation and the problems that arise therefrom.

In Barth's vision creation and providence are not separate because the latter is the continuing realisation of the former, a true creatio continua. In relation to

creation and history Barth once more makes a concrete application of the so-called Boethian concept of eternity which is both radical and dynamic in its significance for the Church Dogmatics. Eternity is 'supreme and absolute time, i.e. the immediate unity of present, past and future; of now, once and then; of the centre, beginning and end; of movement, origin and goal' which is the 'essence of God Himself'.¹⁷ This temporal transcendence of eternity gives God and his acts their place in relation to time and to history as their origin and 'fulfilment'. By virtue of eternity 'creation is not a timeless truth, even though time begins with it, and extends to all times, and God is the Creator at every point in time'.¹⁸ The supra-temporality of eternity as the intrinsic characteristic of God's active and creative being, expressing ad extra the inner convenantal decision and reconciling purpose of God, is the theological possibility of creation. It is in these terms that we must understand the perennial theological problem (particularly remarkable in the line of thought from Origen, through Maximus the Confessor to Aquinas) of how the world may be understood to co-exist with God.

In the light of this doctrine of eternity, as the transcendent (yet immanently striving in grace) supra-temporal creativity of God's being-in-act, Barth claims that,

'According to Scripture there are no timeless truths, but all truths according to Scripture are specific acts of God in which He unveils Himself; acts which

17. Op.cit., p. 60.

18. Ibid. The deep parallelism in Barth's thought effected by the ontology of God's acts is apparent in the passage quoted below.

as such have an eternal character embracing all times, but also a concretely temporal character. As Jesus Christ Himself is eternal as God and stands as Lord above all times, but is also concretely temporal and in this way the real Lord of the world and His community, so it is with creation. Those who regard God's creation as an eternal but timeless relation of the creature and its existence can certainly boast of a very deep and pious conviction, but they cannot believe it in the Christian and biblical sense. For this timeless relation has nothing whatever to do with God's decree of grace in which God from all eternity has condescended to His creature in His Son in order to exalt it to His Son; nor with the acts in which God has accomplished this decree according to the revelation of Himself. It does not exclude the possibility that God may not yet or no longer be gracious to man and the world. In this timeless relation there is not yet or no longer to be seen anything of His will to condescend to His creature in order to exalt it to Himself. We could only in some sense persuade ourselves on our own responsibility that this relation exists, and then give it a positive meaning, again on our responsibility. That we can understand our creaturely existence as such as the gift of divine grace depends - if "grace" is not just to be a pious word - on the fact that its creation and preservation is a concrete act of God and therefore a historical reality fulfilling time. Then and only then does our creaturely existence as such already stand in connexion with the organising centre of all God's acts, with the reality of Jesus Christ; then and only then can we understand our existence and nature as God's grace; then and only then can we believe in our existence and nature as we believe in Jesus Christ, as we believe in the triune God.'

(CD III/1, p. 61)

Creation and reconciliation, divine condescension and exaltation and covenant and atonement all stand under the banner of grace. Creaturely existence and the Christian community find their true basis in the 'concrete act of God' when they are acknowledged as the gift of grace. What Barth terms 'the organising centre of God's acts, ... the reality of Jesus Christ' is quite crucial to the overall ontology of the Church Dogmatics. The concept of eternity employed in the Church Dogmatics is of absolutely central importance because the duality of the foregoing statements (which are fundamental

to the whole structure of Barth's theology) is grounded upon the reality of God's own temporality. Only by and through this doctrine is the complete architectonic made ontologically plausible. This duality in unity is made possible by God's power to instantiate time by virtue of his potent eternity and it underlies the following fundamental analogy for, 'as Jesus Christ is eternal as God and stands as Lord above all times, but is also concretely temporal and in this way the real Lord of the world and His community, so it is with creation'.¹⁹ The eternity of God that we initially explicated in Chapter IV underlies both Christology as we saw earlier and indeed creation as we now become aware. In this way it becomes clear that the relation of time and eternity in the theology of the Church Dogmatics is quite basic to its overall conception and construction. It would not be untrue to say that this axis is the structurally unifying factor par excellence in both its crucial nodal points and its extended implications, throughout the Church Dogmatics. In fact as unifying theme its pervasiveness is far more complete than others chosen by students of Barth (such as 'the triumph of grace') for it comprises as we have seen all aspects of reality both 'sacred' and 'secular' as well as scientific. In the perspective of the Church Dogmatics all is subject to the temporal structure that it comprises and thus in the problem of time a key of universal significance is forthcoming to Barth's theological endeavour and its historical antecedents.

19. Ibid.

Barth emphasises without flinching that the accounts of creation in Genesis I and II are 'historical' in a special sense. This special historicity is the 'pre-historical' nature of creation indicated by the fact that 'God is the only actively operative Subject of these events, and that they include the beginning of time in which they also took place'.²⁰ As it is 'God's work and Word' that is involved in creation and reconciliation and in the totality of the covenant there is no opposition of timelessness and time. At this point Barth initiates a polemic against an Augustinian Neoplatonic metaphysics. The 'timelessness' against which Barth reacts is the radical cancellation of time by the elimination of flux, change and division in the name of the absolute unity and utter simplicity of the divine nature. For Barth, however, as we have seen, God's existence is 'historical' and on this basis God affirms himself in creation and does not set up an alien force and reality which constitutes the antithesis of his own being.

'Even the basis of creation in God's eternal decree is not a non-historical pre-truth, for this eternal pre-truth obviously has a historical character in the bosom of eternity. Not even the pure eternal being of God as such is non-historical pre-truth, for being triune it is not non-historical but historical even in its eternity.'

(CD III/1, p. 66)

The purpose of creation is history and history is to consist in the accomplishment of a series of histories of the revelation, representation and communication of God's grace to man for 'creation as history fashions the world as a sphere for man who is to be a participant in this grace'.²¹

20. Op.cit., p. 64.

21. Op.cit., p. 67.

What of course underlies the pre-history of the accounts of creation in the coming into being of the world as the theatre of God's acts is the dynamic and creative theory of eternity, which Barth has exploited throughout the Church Dogmatics and which we studied in some detail in Chapter IV. It is this qualitative discontinuity yet affirmation and fulfilment of time by eternity which as we saw was an 'alien presupposition' in the eyes of Cullmann and indeed posed linguistic problems. This understanding of the relation of eternity and time despite these apparent difficulties is absolutely fundamental and intrinsic to the Church Dogmatics. Here, as in the doctrines of God and the Trinity as well as Christology, this concept of eternity is the organic expression of Barth's most basic theological impulses. As we have observed previously this concept is no extraneous item upon the theological agenda but an irreducible and essential element in the thought of Barth.

If eternity has its own 'history' and creation is the transition into the history of God's will and purposes in the covenant then what is it that distinguishes time from eternity? There is no straight antithesis of time and eternity such as we found in Augustine but two contrasting thrusts in Barth's thought. First, 'time, in contradistinction to eternity, is the form of existence of the creature'. Second, 'eternity is not merely the negation of time'. The first of these facets forms the subject-matter of 'Man in his Time' and our next chapter. The second concerns the actual interaction of eternity and time. Given

that eternity is not merely the negation of time and in addition is 'not in any way timeless' then:

'On the contrary, as the source of time it is supreme and absolute time, i.e., the immediate unity of present, past and future; of now, once and then; of the centre, beginning and end; of movement, origin and goal. In this way it is the essence of God Himself; in this way God is Himself eternity. Thus God Himself is temporal, precisely in so far as He is eternal, and His eternity is the prototype of time, and as the Eternal He is simultaneously before time, above time, and after time. But time as such, i.e., our time, relative time, itself created, is the form of existence of the creature; it is in contradiction to eternity, the one-way sequence and therefore the succession and division of past, present and future; of once, now and then; of the beginning, middle and end; of origin, movement and goal.'

(CD III/1, pp. 67-8)

In this passage the assertion of the primary distinction of eternity as the essence of God himself and time as the form of existence of the creature is the context in which we encounter conceptual temporal contrasts within the theological structures. In the theological terms with which we are familiar, eternity is interpreted firstly as the 'source of time' which is understandable if God is indeed to be the Creator. God's eternity is therefore 'supreme and absolute time' and 'the prototype of time'. This is reminiscent of exemplarism and the Augustinian²² cast of thought that has been apparent in earlier consideration of Barth's doctrine of eternity. Furthermore, as eternity is supratemporal so it has the 'immediate unity' of present, past and future once more reflecting the Boethian notion of divine eternity. In Barth's account of creation he is without doubt using certain

22. Cf. comment upon this in Chapter VI above.

of the basic concepts of the theological tradition. Cullmann can argue that there are 'alien presuppositions' (i.e. to a truly Biblical theology) insofar as the terms of common theological currency appear. The question the theological inquirer must put is the following. Does Barth's theological and ontological end justify the conceptual and terminological means he employs? In other words does Barth's work transcend the strictures of a nominalistic approach? This raises questions parallel to those in J. Barr's resolution of semantics without remainder into syntactics, for here without doubt Barth is above all concerned with the semantic references involved in the creative encounter of eternity and time. Barth is constantly seeking to crystallise in words theological interconnections that are of ontological import or they are nothing.

In the passage that has been quoted the strictly conceptual and temporal means of distinguishing time and eternity is based upon the contrast presented by the Boethian conception of the totum simul over against mundane human time. If eternity is an 'immediate unity' of present, past and future in an undivided duration which excludes division and therefore the possibility of succession, then time, as the form of human existence, lacks precisely this unity for it consists of division and succession. Whereas eternity is simultaneity (this is a stronger word for the connotation of 'immediate unity') time is the irreversible order of a 'one-way sequence' composed of the succession and division

of past, present and future. This contrast is the distinction of eternity and time once the theological architectonic has been penetrated and discussion is at the level of linguistic and logical argument. In short, can we remain satisfied with conclusions that are purely logical or terminological in the face of putative realities which are potentially trans-logical, without sinking into irrationality? This is avoided only if in fact it is the case that in theological investigation a creative encounter is made which demands intellectual and conceptual adjustment as ontology determines epistemology. It is necessary, however, to notice when there is an apparent transgression or overstepping of the logical in the interests of theological fidelity. The contrast of time and eternity is just such an occasion.

The positive impulse of eternity - understood as the creative supremacy of God - underlies time and is its very possibility. This generalisation is represented in the doctrines of creation and covenant through which the living purpose of God is realised from eternity in temporal actualisation. At the centre of this bona fide theological movement is it not nevertheless true to say that the opposition of simultaneous duration (that is duration without division) in eternity and succession and division (without duration, by implication) in time exists in what is virtually its classical form of a distinction of timelessness and time? This would be the case if Barth's concept of eternity lacked temporal characteristics to the extent of emptying its claim

to be 'absolute time'. Despite Barth's Herculean labours does not there remain a certain logical problem and conceptual difficulty in asserting that eternity is the prototype of time when it lacks exactly those aspects of transience and succession which are inevitably associated with time? It is sufficient to note here that in fact in the final analysis Barth's juxtaposition of time and eternity in creation is not unrelated to those categories present in the traditional assessments of this problem. This is of course inevitable unless the whole Christian tradition were mistaken. Cullmann demands the impossible if the inescapable is not to be avoided by illicit means. In 'The Redeemer in God's Eternity'²³ Hans Küng argues that the pre-existence of Jesus Christ is a question for the theologian which demands temporal transcendence as part of its answer for 'the truly divine supra-temporality of eternity must remain preserved'.²⁴ It is this task to which Barth applies himself at great length and which Cullmann ignores in the name of an exclusively biblicist approach.

In the pre-history of the divine and trinitarian eternity its temporal structure is that of the 'immediate unity' of the past, present and future which constitutes the origin of human history and time in, and subsequent to, the act of creation. The arguments that follow for a

23. CD III/1, p. 275.

24. Justification, pp. 272-288.

temporal creation, that is one in which time is 'actualised', are intended to affirm the reality of eternity and of time. Barth's arguments have an ambiguous tone because although eternity must be utterly distinct from time as the essence of God's existence, it nevertheless is the source of time in creation for, 'It is undoubtedly true that God in His eternity is the beginning of time'.²⁵ A spate of double negations indicates the near-paradoxical tension in this attempt to overcome the threat of timelessness which postulates an eternity which is 'not merely the negation of time, but an inner readiness to create time'.²⁶ This undeniable ambiguity is ineradicable unless either the linear time approach of Cullmann or the elimination of Platonism advocated by Jenson is adopted, for Barth is trying to maintain that the God who is the transcendent One is in fact the Creator. He is to be both transcendent and immanent if he is to be the God of Christian revelation. The relation of eternity to time in the mystery of creation is shrouded by its very nature but is subordinate to the greater mystery of revelation in Jesus Christ, who embodies the relation of eternity and time in hypostatic condescension. The generality of ontological categories becomes contingent and particular in the God-man Jesus Christ. In Barth's own words the temporal ambiguity of the transcendent yet Creator God is expressed as follows:

'That it is not in time is something that can be said only of God's eternal being as such, i.e., God in His pure, divine form of existence. Even in this

25. Op.cit., p. 68.

26. Ibid.

sense God is not non-historical and therefore non-temporal. He is not non-historical because as the Triune He is in His inner life the basic type and ground of all history. And He is not non-temporal because His eternity is not merely the negation of time, but an inner readiness to create time, because it is supreme and absolute time, and therefore the source of our time, relative time. But it is true that in this sense, in His pure, divine form of existence, God is not in time but before, above and after all time, so that time is really in Him. According to His word and work, God was not satisfied merely with His pure, divine form of existence. His inner glory overflowed outwards. He speaks His Word and acts in His work with and for "another" than Himself. This "other" is His creature.'

(CD III/1, p. 68)

The distinctive feature of time is that the creature of time lives in a 'one-way sequence, in that succession and separation, on the way from the once through the now to the then'.²⁷ As time is therefore characteristically irreversible and eternity not bound by this time order, God, as the Eternal, can only enter into relation with the creature in graceful condescension. God's grace towards creation is essential to its actualisation. Indeed according to Barth, God could have remained in his triune and unsearchable essence but he chose otherwise,

'But according to His Word and work which we have been summoned to attest He has willed and decided otherwise. He has had compassion on His creature and accepted it. But if this cannot be gainsaid, we cannot and must not deny or even question the further fact that in giving the creature its existence and form of existence, He Himself stooped down to it, appropriated to Himself and His Word and work the form of the existence of the creature, and therefore as the Creator and Lord of time addressed and dealt with it in time: in time from the very basis and beginning; in the time which itself commenced because as the Creator He gave to the creature its basis and beginning. If this were not the case He would not

27. Ibid.

have had compassion on the creature or accepted it. He could not have begun to take it to Himself. If His utterance and operation had been merely eternal, this would inevitably have meant that it would not have been a creative utterance and operation, the beginning of intercourse other than Himself.'

(CD III/1, p. 69)

If God be God then in creating something other than Himself he cannot act otherwise than in grace. Creation and grace demand each other in a theology of mutual entailment. Creation actualises grace and grace is realised in creation. Covenant and creation are not set over against each other but are different aspects of the one reality. Barth in effect enlarges and qualifies the basic structure of Augustine's doctrine of creation which uses, as we have seen, the Boethian notion of the relation of eternity and time²⁸ but retains a Neo-Platonic tendency to detemporalise creation. The real substance of Barth's criticisms is directed against his failure to build up the reciprocity of God and creation in terms of temporal source and divine grace. Barth's great advance upon Augustine is in his interpretation of the divine simultaneity in the dynamic, intensional and creative sense apparent below.

'Prior to the creature there is only God's pure being at rest and at movement in itself; and prior to time there is only His eternity.'

(CD III/1, p. 70)

Thus far Barth and Augustine are in agreement but, and this is Barth's advance in theological integration which reflects the total impulse of his doctrine of God:

'His eternity is itself revealed in the act of creation as His readiness for time, as pre-temporal,

28. Cf. Confessions, Bk.XI, Ch.16, and comment upon this in Chapter IV above.

supra-temporal (or co-temporal) and post-temporal, and therefore as the source of time, of superior and absolute time.'

(CD III/1, p. 70)

The Boethian notion of divine simultaneity has been made the inner skeleton of a potent doctrine of creation and developed in the context of a theology of covenant and creation. The unity of God's opus ad extra internum and his opus ad extra externum is secured on the basis of the history of creation being 'at one and the same time both the originating divine activity and the originated creaturely occurrence'.²⁹ The distinction of activity and occurrence corresponds to the distinction of eternity (in God) and time (the form of time) lies fully within the theological circle. We have noted in this thesis the existence (explicitly avowed by Barth) of the theological circle and how this tends to be expanded by the 'natural theology' of time apparent in Barth's treatment of philosophies of time which dwell upon the transience and fleeting nature of the 'now' of human temporal experience. The cramped nature of arguments based entirely upon the structure of revelation emerges at this point in Barth's thought on creation. Here he advances a 'theologic' which is highly ambiguous and which ultimately remains unsatisfying because of its circularity. Eternity and time have a conceptual interdependence which is seen clearly in the following.

'As creaturely being, emerging by God's creation, is both something that has been and something that is coming into being, the same is true of its time. Beginning as present, it is as such both past and future. It would not be real, i.e., our relative

29. CD III/1, p. 71.

time, with its succession and separation of now, once and then, if, beginning as present, it did not at once have its past and future. In contradiction from eternity time is just this division into present, past and future; this flux of that which is from the past, through the present, and into the future. It would not be really created, it would not be really time in contrast to eternity, if it were not immediately this flux.'

(CD III/1, p. 71)

On this somewhat repetitious basis Barth corrects Augustine's Procul dubio non est mundus factus in tempore, sed cum tempore by the substitution of mundus factus cum tempore, ergo in tempore. Creation would not and could not be creation if it were not temporal. Time commenced, so Barth argues, with God's 'Let there be' as it had been 'from the very first the form in which creatures began to exist'. Whereas the logic of Barth's position is similar to that of Augustine, insofar as both use the fundamental structure of the divine simultaneity as the basis of their doctrines of creation, Barth differs in his systematic mutual relation of creation and covenant and his emphasis upon the sheer creativity of eternity, God's 'absolute time', as the source of time. The eternal will of God realised from eternity in Christ is actualised in the incarnation. The unity of the opus ad extra in eternity and time on the basis of the grace of God in creation and covenant exhibits a degree of theological integration and genuine synthesis unique to Barth.

In the preceding pages we have examined Barth's primary arguments for a temporal creation by the eternal God. We have found them to a degree disappointing, lacking some of the compulsive power of his doctrine of God and Christology.

In passing we would suggest that although knowledge of God and Christ is rightly derived from revelation, the further systematic attempt to derive true knowledge of creation from revelation rather than from creation itself is misconceived. This is not to defend natural knowledge of God but natural knowledge of the natural order. Barth, as we have become aware, advances the latter and this will become even more obvious when in the next chapter we examine 'Man in his Time'. It is not only that we can know true humanity only in the humanity of Jesus Christ, likewise it is only in the time of Jesus Christ that we can know real time. To condense this into an aphorism: true knowledge of the natural order is revealed knowledge.

Barth continues to elaborate his theologically inspired account of time in Volume III/1 and this will form the starting point of our next chapter, for in the ensuing paragraphs he gives the first glimpses of his Christologically conditioned theological anthropology of time. In the final stages of this chapter we shall retrace our steps in some comparative comments, so as to set Barth's thought on creation over against other highly influential accounts in the Christian tradition.

In the first pages of this chapter we saw how two contrasting impulses were apparent in patristic theology. Origen's unifying and synthesising movement tended towards what we shall term a monism in that the ontological distinction of God and creation became blurred. Athanasius in his thorough-going ontological yet dynamic distinction of uncreated and created being tended (according to Florovsky)

to match this legitimate dichotomy with a distinction between God's being and acts. We have contended that Barth strove seemingly to combine both emphases in his doctrine of creation. Barth undoubtedly promotes a systematic actualism the like of which has not been seen since the days of classical Greek patristic theology. Within the unified covenantal scheme of a single decree from eternity (which is again reminiscent of Origen) Barth asserts the real distinction of created and uncreated being as found in Athanasius. Barth's creative synthesis is of course in no way bound to its antecedents but offers interesting parallels and can be evaluated in the light of these previous theological trends.

As we noted above, Barth's doctrine of creation is ambiguous with regard to time. This is apparent in his arguments which justify the unlikeness of time and eternity yet establish the derivation of time from its source, eternity. This fundamental linguistic ambiguity allows the resolution of contrasting impulses to take place. Eternity is ambiguous in that it shares both the 'transcendent' quality of duration without division and yet the prototypical temporal attributes of 'pre-history' and the capacity to be the source and fulfilment of time. In the inner realisation of God's act in Jesus Christ from eternity - manifested in the one covenant and its consequent 'actualisation' in time - there is a unified and integrated theological movement reminiscent of Origen. Eternal and temporal categories of reality are united in a doctrine of divine

actualism through the one covenant of creation and reconciliation, willed and executed by and through Jesus Christ, in and from eternity which is founded upon the ultimate doctrine of God's being-in-act and his act-in-being. The mutuality of covenant and creation is evident in the 'inner' and the 'outer' aspects of the one movement in grace. In Barth's overall doctrine of revelation, he achieves by means of the integrated doctrines of God and Christology, a fundamental and most remarkable unity of creation and reconciliation which has distinct affinities with certain Origenistic patterns which have been largely lost in the static categories of the Augustinian West and its ultimate adherence to inflexible and alien doctrines of substance.

The unified impulse which renders concrete in revelation the doctrine of God's being-in-act has to embrace and give full weight to a rightly-understood ontological distinction between God and man, and between God and creation, if the pitfalls of Origen's ontological monism are to be avoided. These issues, it will be remembered, in the elision of the distinction between the eternal Word and creation, which was allowed eternal status in the theological vision of Origen. Thus in following an Athanasian distinction of uncreated and created being Barth sought to preserve the integrity of God in Trinity and creation in the context of the unified and integrated doctrine of God and revelation. Athanasius exploited the distinction of 'generation' and 'creation' which defended the integrity of the eternal divine Word and the dependence of the originated

created cosmos. This distinction was based (according to Florovsky) upon a right understanding of the relation of God's being (and thus the eternal integrity of the Word) and his acts (therefore guarding the created order) which was submerged in Origen's actualist aberrations. Without such a distinction in God the contingency of creation was sacrificed within an all-embracing doctrine of being. Without radical contingency, conceived as the dependence in grace of created upon dynamic uncreated being, the spectre of an eternal creation co-existent with God would become a reality. The danger of the Athanasian position is that whereas the apparent tendency to disunite God, as apparent in Aquinas' dichotomy between the One God and the Triune God may become marked, it nevertheless permitted secondary theories to enter in the attempt to account for creation. An unmoved static God could be creator only if given the means as in, for example, the doctrine of exemplarism. In fact the hint of such a theory lingers on in the terminology of the Church Dogmatics if not in its substance. The doctrine of primordial causes conceived as existing in an exemplarist manner in the eternal pre-ordination of God was developed in its most distinctive way by John Scotus Eriugena.³⁰ Barth's assertion that eternity is the 'prototype' of time contains something of this although he relates this by analogy more closely to the prototypical man Jesus Christ and discounts any form of systematic and unconditioned exemplarism.

30. Cf. De divisione naturae, 2, 27.

Jesus Christ is God's act and decision from eternity. The world is created in and through Jesus Christ and reconciled to God in him in the one covenant. This covenant is the bridge which relates the reality of God and that of world and man in Jesus Christ, as we have seen. In Jesus Christ time is fulfilled³¹ for he is the source of time in his eternity. In theological terms there is no antithesis (although there is an ontological discontinuity) between eternity and time for created time has creative eternity as its source. The distinction and relation of eternity and time are conditioned theologically by both Christology and creation. Thus the theological structure and ontology are effected in the dynamic use of the unio hypostatica and uncreated and created being. The problem with Barth's doctrine is, however, to be found in the conceptual and logical shortcomings of the temporal notions he employs. Previously we noted that these temporal concepts could not bear the theological weight set upon them and now we shall be able as we have much wider perspective of the Church Dogmatics before us, to substantiate this charge of an inner inadequacy. In exposing this Cullmann's intuitive complaint is rendered concrete but not in the way he envisaged. We cannot postulate a mere linear eternity as the 'biblical' notion for this eliminates temporal transcendence. There is an alien remnant in the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics and it is related to an argument the invalidity of which has perilous consequences

31. Cf. CD II/1, p. 437ff.

for the ontological security of the whole theological structure. Both these weaknesses we are about to explore represent logical and conceptual shortcomings, where the power of the theological dynamic breaks the restriction of formulations in Barth's attempted synthesis of the contrasting Origenistic and Athanasian impulses.

At the centre of the theological architectonic lies the distinction of time and eternity, which in Barth's thought in the Church Dogmatics is a re-presentation of the antithesis of the pure undivided being of eternity and the temporal flux and division to be found in Athanasius and likewise Augustine. This antithesis lies in its logical form at the base of Barth's distinction of eternity and time. It consists as we have noted in this chapter and earlier in the juxtaposition of duration without division and division without presence. On this antithesis Barth builds the theological imperative derived from his total dogmatic structure. In the light of this, eternity is the 'source' and 'fulfilment' of time. If the notion of duration without division is accepted then the theological use made of this can follow. What Barth in fact does is to construct a relation of necessity between the two. Eternity is uncreated but in creating (setting an 'other' against the original One) it 'must' (because it has already in fact done so from the standpoint of man) posit an irreversible time order with division and succession over against the divine simultaneity of supra-temporal eternity. Barth's argument is couched in the necessity of theological reality

over against possibility. We must bear in mind that although there is undoubtedly a theological motive in asserting that eternity creates time, the actual logic of the inner conceptual relation of eternity and time is an antithesis based upon the bisection of our normal complex concept of time. To speak of duration without division and division without duration is to raise a linguistic paradox to theological heights. The resolution of the two factors is a synthesis indeed but logically trivial. The ambiguity of Barth's temporal language is caused by this curious and inadequate resuscitation of the traditional antithesis of eternity and time as inherited from Platonic thought. Thesis: simultaneity and duration of eternity posits division and successive time order of time (effectively an antithesis) and revelation of 'God's time' restores time by 'fulfilling' it, causing a resolution back to 'perfect presence' (final synthesis). There is in this conceptual assertion, division and re-assertion of synthesis a logical structure which retains the dialectic of eternity and time. This is not characteristic of Barth's overall theological effort, which is magnificent, but because the logic of the traditional dialectic has unfortunately affected the conceptual structure in the temporal language of the Church Dogmatics. In other words the ontological profundity is threatened by the logical weakness of certain basic concepts.

The consequences of this conceptual structure we have briefly explored are not inconsiderable and lead in the context of Barth's Christology to the threat of an ultimate loss of the Athanasian balance between uncreated and created

being in the interests of an overall unified and apocastatic^{ta} structure not unlike that of Origen. Again this is potentially an even more damaging assertion because it affects not merely the conceptual weaknesses of language but the very status of Barth's theological theory of time and his doctrine of creation.

The primary ontological statement (although not primary in Barth's argument) is that God and the world exist in mutual reality and probity. This is a contingent statement of fact which refers to two different modes of being which are related in what is in turn a contingent relation insofar as the world could not have existed if God had so chosen. Given the actual contingency of this fact of creation it cannot be used as the basis of a necessary statement. The Creator-created relation becomes a necessary statement (i.e., one that could not be otherwise) when it is used as the basis of the 'theological circle'. The theological circle exists within Christology and the given 'simple reality' of revelation; but in turn the conceptual dialectic of eternity and time (as duration without division over against division without duration) lies within this theological circle. Now if God and creation are related contingently they must not be underlaid by a necessary fact or statement or this contingency is immediately lost. Thus if we begin, as Barth does, with Christology in the form of the unified covenant of creation and reconciliation and state quite categorically that this 'reality' is the eternally willed basis of the 'possibility' of revelation and use this in explanation as a theological circle, then

creation ceases to be contingent. God and creation are facts understood within the theological circle on the ground of the covenant which is the primary item of all theological knowledge.

The apparent contingency is ambiguous because, for example in the case of time, the characterisation of both eternity and time is in terms of the theological circle, not the unique and disparate attributes of each reality. The strictures of the dialectic unfortunately inherited from the philosophical and theological tradition of the West and ultimately from Platonic thought have been imposed upon the immense power of Barth's Christian theology.

We have isolated two major difficulties in Barth's thought on creation. First there is an inner logical dialectic of eternity and time which is too fragile (yet all too powerful in its effects) to carry the theological weight it should bear. Second, a theologically necessary statement, the covenant from eternity as the basis of the theological circle is ontologically and epistemologically prior to the 'contingency' of the relation of Creator and created order. The combination of both factors is potentially even more hazardous for the place of creation as the realm of our own existence in Barth's Church Dogmatics. If the contingent statement, 'God created' is subsequent to the logic of the covenant which is known only on the basis of its reality (i.e. The reality of God in revelation is, therefore it is known) then all created reality is truly known only on the basis of revealed realities of the covenant. This leads to the conclusion we have already stated that true knowledge of

the natural order is revealed knowledge.³² But as revealed knowledge (as for example the mutual derivation of eternity and time) is only given from within the theological circle which gains and loses its apparent 'necessity' as it is applied to different spheres of reality then we have to ask the following questions. Is there any place for contingent reality within the ontological structure of the Church Dogmatics? As we have observed true knowledge of man and of time is in effect revealed. Given the infrangible connection between epistemology and ontology, does Barth allow - once the logical order of priority in his arguments is demonstrated - for contingent empirical reality as it is experienced daily? We in no way assert that Barth is some sort of idealist but in terms of his ontological structure in the Church Dogmatics is contingent reality any more than a surd factor once total priority is given to the reality of the covenant wrought and consummated in Jesus Christ.

Is it not the case that the contingency of the world has been on the one hand lost to the supreme reality of the covenant actualised in Jesus Christ, and on the other reduced to a surd status? This is because the only place for man and creation in the theology of the Church Dogmatics is secondary, that is in solidarity with Jesus Christ. This solidarity is by assertion and is a derived ontological basis. Man and creation are only comprised in the necessary reality of the

32. By this epigrammatic statement we do not assert the identity of revealed and natural knowledge, but the fulfilment (with regard to eternity and time) of the knowledge of natural (fallen) time by 'real' time, that is eternity. The relation of the two is highly complex as can be seen in this study.

theological circle, which is revealed and made concrete in Jesus Christ, by 'solidarity' in him. Consequently in relation to this fundamental ontology our (that is my) existence is contingent only insofar as it is comprised in the being of Jesus Christ. The distinction of necessary and contingent existence may be crude and reflect alien doctrines of static ontology but it does allow for the mutual if distinct realities of created and uncreated being. It seems that Barth's doctrine of creation endangers this and is perhaps the least satisfactory aspect of the Church Dogmatics that we have yet encountered.

It is not without trepidation that we have ventured some fairly trenchant criticism of Barth's overall theological position as we find it expressed in his theological assessment of creation. We are despite this grateful to Barth for the immense thoroughness of his work and, moreover, for his account of time which is possibly the most extensive ever attempted. In the next chapter the temporal consummation of this account will be stated and analysed, allowing us to complete our exposition and examination of this important theme and structuring element in the Church Dogmatics.

CHAPTER IX
MAN IN HIS TIME:
TRUE TIME

In Chapter VIII we began with the assertion that it is only in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ that we can come to a knowledge of our creaturely existence. It was this fundamental Christological priority that was obeyed in putting Christology before creation in this thesis. This priority which is both epistemological and ontological is exploited with great power by Barth. Given the intrinsic bond of ontology and epistemology in the Church Dogmatics and the eternal priority of God's will as rendered concrete in Jesus Christ can creation be given an adequate basis? As became clear in our last chapter the ontological distinction of God and cosmos was threatened by the all-determinative unity of the eternal act of God in Jesus Christ.¹ The generalised opposing viewpoints of Athanasius and Origen were related to Barth in whose thought can be seen an attempt to resolve these contrasting impulses. Underlying the temporal aspects of this attempted synthesis is Barth's use of certain concepts which, it has been argued, tend to weaken rather than strengthen the creative theological and ontological derivation of time from eternity. In the final paragraphs it was argued that the logical order of Barth's assertions placed contingency in the created order after the necessity of the 'theological circle', the net result being the danger of eliminating the ontological distinction

1. Cf. Ch.VIII.

of uncreated and created being. The question which finally emerged concerns our own status, that is the status of man in the cosmos, as a product of the overall theological ontology. The preliminary conclusion reached was that man (i.e. ourselves, not Jesus Christ as the man above all men) existed in Barth's theological scheme only in solidarity in Jesus Christ, insofar as he is our representative. In the chapters that are to follow it is precisely the strength and importance, or lack of it, of the distinction of creation and Christology in temporal terms which will be central in our thoughts on Man in his Time.

It would be easy at this juncture to find our thought diverted into many channels in the mighty exposition of Barth's Church Dogmatics and so we will move with extreme care to avoid the dangers of irrelevance and yet on the other hand the elision of vital elements in the theological structure of his doctrine of time. The actual context of theological anthropology is in the mutual reality of creation and covenant which is developed in the latter stages of CD III/1. In Barth's argument:

'The inner basis of the covenant is simply the free love of God, or more precisely the eternal covenant which God has decreed in Himself as the covenant of the Father with His Son as the Lord and Bearer of human nature, and to that extent the Representative of all creation. Creation is the external - and only the external - basis of the covenant.'
(CD III/1, p. 97)

The core of Barth's position is in the eternal covenant and the creation is, as the external basis of the covenant, bound up Christologically with the Father. The relation of the internal and external bases comprises three

fundamental elements as we can observe in the following quotation and these are: the primary will of God; the analogical parallel of creation and the relation of God and man in the covenant of grace; and the positing of creation as the sphere of the outworking of divine grace. Only in this concatenation of factors is it possible to understand the absolutely crucial role of theological anthropology in this exposition of the problem of time. In commenting on Genesis I/1 Barth explicates this understanding of God, Christ, covenant and creation.

'It is the divine will and accomplishment in relation to man - and nothing else - which really stands at the beginning of all things. It was in this way and no other - that heaven and earth originated.... This and nothing else, took place at the beginning, for anything else that might have taken place had already passed in virtue of the fact that this had taken place. The present and future of this beginning of all things, even of the beginning of time, and therefore of all genuine present and future, was this divine volition and accomplishment. Thus the work of this beginning was not an accidental thing, either self-formed or formed by a strange idea and force, but a cosmos, the cosmos, the divinely ordered world in which heaven and earth - a picture of the relationship between God and man in the covenant of grace - confronted one another in mutual separation and interconnexion as an upper sphere and a lower: the one essentially invisible to man, the other essentially visible; the one transcending him in unknown heights, the other his own and entrusted to him. This is the creation chosen, willed, and posited by God; the creation which for this reason, is "good", indeed "very good", in His sight. It is so because, in virtue of its nature, it is radically incapable of serving any other purpose, but placed from the very first at the disposal of His grace.'

(CD III/1, p. 99)

In the remaining passages of CD III/1 Barth provides an immensely positive and affirmative account of creation, which in the light of its integral nature (creation is not alien to the purposes of God as in Marcion and Schopenhauer)

with the covenantal purpose, is 'the actualisation and justification of the creature' and, therefore, 'creation as benefit'.² Because of this integration of God's reconciling and creating purpose in creation, and furthermore because at its core there is the encounter of God and man and thus revelation, it is not possible, according to Barth, to subsume creation into a world-view.³ It is not our intention to affirm or contest but to clarify this assertion for it is the consistent consequence of the theology that we have explored and therefore can only be judged in this wider total setting. Barth defends this distinctiveness of all true theology, which, because it has 'to recognise and confess creation as benefit because it is the work of God in Jesus Christ' is on a different plane to 'philosophy' which is intrinsically incapable of such a confession.⁴ It might well be argued that such a systematic distinction divorces Christian theology from the world by positing distinct realities corresponding to distinct epistemologies. In other words this tends dangerously close to a total isolation. The fact that the referents of both theology and philosophy

2. CD III/1, pp. 340-1.

3. In this chapter a parallelism is exploited between 'ontology' and 'world-view'. The former is primarily theological in the Church Dogmatics whereas the latter tends to expression in what has been generically termed 'philosophy'. This broad categorial distinction is the product of the serious attention which has been accorded to the discrete and revealed ontological foundation of the Church Dogmatics over against the distinct sphere of non-theological reality. The relation of the two has concerned us in the study of the interaction of eternity and time which bridges this dichotomy.

4. Cf. CD III/1, pp. 343-4. Again 'philosophy' is a short-hand for 'human understanding of non-theological reality as a whole' in other words a metaphysics.

coincide in the worldly direction although they diverge absolutely with regard to the activity of God in Jesus Christ means that real agreement and disagreement must take place.

It is this distinctiveness of Christian theology, which in its purported antagonism to and incompatibility with extra-theological modes of explanation, forms the basis of Barth's theological anthropology in Volume III/2 of the Church Dogmatics. The overwhelming purpose of creation consists in its being God's arena for his self-disclosure, for in creation 'the Creator Himself has become creature'.⁵

'The secret, the meaning and goal of creation is that it reveals, or that there is revealed in it, the covenant and communion between God and man, and therefore the fulfilment of being as a whole, which is so serious and far-reaching that the Word by which God created all things, even God Himself, becomes as one of His creatures, being there Himself like everything else, like all created reality distinct from Himself, and thus making His own its twofold determination, its greatness and wretchedness, its infinite dignity and infinite frailty, its hope and its despair, its rejoicing and its sorrow. This is what has taken place in Jesus Christ as the meaning and end of creation. His humiliation and exaltation as the Son of God are the self-revelation of God the Creator.'
(CD III/1, p. 377)

This is the unique basis of Christian theology and within this functional scheme we are to find the temporal aspects of theological anthropology. Once more right at the centre of theological anthropology there exists this unparalleled degree of theological integration whereby Jesus Christ becomes all in all and it is in the light of his actual humanity lived out in relation to God we must

5. Op.cit., p. 377.

understand the problem of time. In this thesis the basic theological impulse of Barth's thought has been followed in such a way as to reveal the inner logic of the Church Dogmatics. There is in this approach the danger of over-emphasising the theological realities at the expense of human or cosmic realities thus distorting Barth's arguments. This is a point about which special care must be exercised because although it is certainly true that Barth has no desire to undervalue the basis of the realities that we experience daily and that he reacts specifically against the powerful idealist trend in German thought, it nevertheless remains true that his ontology is not without problems. The ambiguity evident in the Church Dogmatics with regard to man is systematic in CD III/2 for we can only know true human nature by knowing the perfect human nature of Jesus Christ.⁶ Likewise there now comes the comprehensive exposition of the analogy between 'flesh' or human nature and time. Both are presented in their full reality in the incarnation for with Jesus Christ the fulfilment of the fallen order is achieved.

In CD III/2 a new emphasis is immediately apparent for the latent implications of the general categories of the doctrine of creation presented in CD III/1, as an exposition of Genesis Iff. are made Christologically specific.

'Because man, living under heaven and on earth, is the creature whose relation to God is revealed to us in the Word of God, he is the central object of the theological doctrine of creation. As the man Jesus is Himself the revealing Word of God, He is the source of our knowledge of the nature of man as created by God.'

(CD III/2, p. 3)

6. Cf. CD III/2, p. 43.

Given the centrality of Christological anthropology in the doctrine of creation then what has to happen to a doctrine of the totality of the cosmos? Barth overcomes the incipient danger apparent in III/1 by the assertion that it is man 'living under heaven and earth', that is man in his full ontological Sitz im Leben of space and time and so on. In CD III/1 the 'analogy between God and man, is simply the existence of the I and the Thou in confrontation' for 'this is the first constitutive for God, and then for man created by God'.⁷ Critics of Barth (Ninian Smart⁸ in this instance) have claimed that there is a sterile personalism present in Barth's thought at this juncture which precludes serious consideration of extra-human factors (e.g. space and time as objective realities) which are nevertheless intrinsic to the human condition. In this chapter it is possible to understand the issue in terms of the question as to whether created reality is sufficiently distinguished from Christology (that is as 're-created' reality in traditional theological thought).⁹ This most fundamental of questions may be formulated as follows. If the primary reality is 'in Christ' as the fulfilment of fallen creation, and if this

7. CD III/1, p. 185.

8. Smart argues in 'Karl Barth' in the Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, New York/London, 1967, edited by P. Edwards, that,

'The Bible (according to Barth) presents no cosmology, but it does contain an anthropology; and thus God's relation to the natural world can only be understood by analogy with his saving revelation to human beings.'

9. That is indistinct in Barth inasmuch as both are founded upon the doctrine of God's acts in his being, that is upon what he has termed the actus purus et singularis. We refer to discussion in Chapter VIII above.

reality is only known to faith but at the same time gives us true knowledge of the original creation which is 'lost' to us, then are the original created categories given adequate weight? Does an incarnation in which both human and divine categories are posited in the dynamic movement of enhypostasia and anhypostasia, and which is used as we have seen as the basis of the reconciliation of other categories (i.e., eternity and time), allow in the notion of 'fulfilment' sufficient and distinct ontological ground for the relation of creation and Christology?¹⁰ Again to approach this from yet another direction, can we dispense (as Barth appears to do) with an ontological account of the relation of God and cosmos which is not subsumed into the central doctrine of Christology, the hypostatic union? Once more we are grappling with a fundamental problem in the theology of Barth which we cannot ignore, even if we cannot answer it adequately in our concern with the problem of time. Before proceeding to a detailed exposition and analysis of Man in his Time it is necessary to clarify further Barth's position at the outset of III/2, for without this his account may be misrepresented. This is in answer to the deceptively simple question as to what it is exactly that is spoken of as the 'time' which awaits us in the later section of this volume.¹¹

10. There is indeed tremendous ontological grounding of the relation of creation and Christology (in re-creation) but doubts arise as to the distinction of the two realities.

11. I.e., Section 47, Man in his Time.

It is necessary that we establish with the utmost precision the exact order of Barth's argument, for its implications are very important if we are to isolate the status of the theory of time implicit in Man in his Time. By 'status' we mean the ontological basis of time and its place in the overall structure of related realities comprised in the architectonic of the Church Dogmatics and in turn its relation to other accounts of time. Without this extensive introductory survey we should merely reiterate in summary Barth's exposition (as indeed does F.W. Camfield most ably)¹² without subjecting it to relevant analysis. Such relevant analysis must begin from the theological standpoint with some understanding of the ontological complexities which undoubtedly underlie the crucial passage Man in his Time. From this it becomes obvious that Barth's account of time is highly original and quite distinct from what may be termed the traditional approaches.

Barth argues that Creator and creation exist in relation and that in consequence the creature cannot be understood as such apart from the Creator. Although 'in practise the doctrine of creation means anthropology' it is essential to realise that man 'is only a creature and not the creature'.¹³ The creature of God is 'the totality, the whole cosmos of the reality posited by Him and distinct from Him, in the plenitude of which man is only a component

12. Cf. 'Man in his Time', S.J.T. 1950, pp. 127-48.

13. CD III/1, p. 3.

part'.¹⁴ In a passage of critical realism Barth secures at the outset the mutuality of man and cosmos and it is important that we record at some length his words, for much that follows might seem to conflict with the assertion of the reality of both man and cosmos. It is the relative nature of this reality which becomes apparent in the subsequent Christological critique and ultimate fulfilment to be found in the perfection of Jesus Christ in the revelation of God's Word.

'We are concerned with man as set in the cosmos and therefore not with man as alone before God or alone addressed by Him; not with a cosmos concentrated in man, and perhaps having no independent reality, but being only the phenomenal world as radical Idealism maintains, of the mind of man. We have to do with the man who in the cosmos is confronted by another reality, and who is the more conscious and sure of his own humanity and therefore his own reality by the encounter of man with man and of God and man.'

(CD III/2, p. 4)

Despite this affirmation the task of theology is not to outline a cosmology or elaborate a world-view because:

'The Word of God is concerned with God and man. It certainly gives us an ontology of man, and we shall be concerned with this in the doctrine of the creature, i.e., with the ontology of man living under heaven and on earth. But the Word of God does not contain any ontology of heaven and earth themselves.'

(CD III/2, p. 6)

The distinction Barth asserts here has only an apparent plausibility for it implies either a radical distinction of man and cosmos (which he denies) or the derived status of the cosmos (which he is to embrace) in relation to the primary God-man axis. Let us note the stages in Barth's argument, the logic of which becomes extended and even

14. Op.cit., pp. 3-4.

dangerously attenuated. First, man in relation to God is the primary object of the doctrine of creation and the cosmos is the context of this relationship. Second, as this knowledge is derived from a knowledge of creaturehood which is again only made known in the Word of God because our human nature is 'lost' to us. It follows, thirdly, that it is in Jesus Christ that both man and God are made known perfectly as the Creator enters creation as creature. It is therefore in the reality and humanity of Jesus Christ that we may alone see true humanity and along with this become aware of true time and so on. The strength and the weakness of this approach is that the God-cosmos relation is understood completely in relation to Christology, conceived as a wide-ranging theological anthropology of the man Jesus Christ. This can now be shown in Barth's exposition, which in consequence might tend towards an all-embracing cosmological and Christological personalism against which much of the positive work of T.F. Torrance appears to be a reaction. Torrance has extended arguments into the cosmological area with great vigour and has attempted to re-establish ontological thinking in theology in particular with regard to space and time.

It is man who is 'the point in the cosmos where, in spite of its very different nature, its relationship to God is illuminated'¹⁵ and in this brief statement we have the

15. CD III/2, p. 18. The point Barth makes is parallel to that of Athanasius in the Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione. My critique of Barth is directed at the consequences involved in the problematic relation of the prototypical humanity and temporality of Jesus Christ to our own humanity and temporality.

key to Barth's theological anthropology. The task of theological anthropology within dogmatics is highly specific but has extra-dogmatic consequences in that, as we shall see, we learn about the true nature of humanity and indeed of time.

'It is the task of dogmatics generally to present the revelation of the truth of the relationship between God and man in the light of the biblical witness to its history as a whole. Anthropology confines its enquiry to the human creatureliness presupposed in this relationship and made known by it, i.e., by its revelation and biblical attestation. It asks what kind of being it is which stands in this relationship with God. Its attention is wholly concentrated on the relationship. Thus it does not try to look beyond it or behind it. It knows that its insights would at once be lost, and the ground cut from beneath it, if it were to turn its attention elsewhere, abstracting from this relationship. Solely in the latter as illuminated by the Word of God is light shed on the creatureliness of man. Thus theological anthropology cleaves to the Word of God and its biblical attestation. But in the revealed relationship between God and man genuine light is thrown, not only on God, but on man, and on the essence of the creature to whom God has turned in this relationship.'

(CD III/2, p. 20)

In this relationship, 'the disclosed relationship of God with man there is disclosed also His relationship with universe'. It is, as we have already asserted, in Jesus Christ that this relationship is perfectly realised by the Word of God and therefore perfectly known. For it is:

'As the man Jesus is Himself the revealing Word of God, He is the source of our knowledge of the nature of man as created by God.'

(CD III/2, p. 20)

Barth proceeds to elaborate this in his characteristically dynamic fashion but it is in this insight that 'the nature of the man Jesus alone is the key to the problem of human nature'¹⁶ which gives the guiding impulse to

16. CD III/2, p. 43; See Note 15 above also.

Barth's reflections. Once more our investigation of the problem of time in the Church Dogmatics is to be illuminated by the analogy of humanity and time. In a direct parallel with the following passage the theory of time finds its stated basis in Christology the source of true knowledge, through revelation, of creation itself. The founding of anthropology on Christology (and temporality on Christology likewise) is in direct conformity with all that we have found in Barth's thought in the Church Dogmatics. The specific is prior to the general.

'in so doing, we leave the traditional way, which was to try to establish generally what human nature is, and on this basis to interpret the human nature of Jesus Christ in particular. Our whole approach to the relation between human sin and human nature has led us irresistibly in the opposite direction. Human sin excludes us from understanding human nature except by a new disclosure through the perception of divine grace addressed to man and revealing and affirming true humanity in the midst of human sin, i.e., a disclosure which is genuinely new, involving faith in the divine relation. But if we ask where we may find an authentic revelation in this respect, we are not lead to man in general but to man in particular, and in the supreme particularity to the one man Jesus. Thus contrary to the usual procedure, we must first enquire concerning this one man, and then on this basis concerning man in general.'

(CD III/2, p. 44)

We do not intend, having given this long but quite essential introduction, to explore Barth's theological anthropology of 'Man for God', etc., but to move directly to 'Man in his Time' and to explore this in relation to the total development of Barth's doctrine in the Church Dogmatics. The basis of theological anthropology in Christology is once more a highly developed version, following early Reformed thought, of the classical patristic doctrine of enhypostasis

and enhypostasis:

'The fact that He is a person, that He is the soul of a body, that He has time and so on, does not make Him real man. It merely indicates His possibilities as a man. He becomes and is real man, and is there as such as God is there in Him, as the Saviour of each and every man. This man is there in and by the sovereign being of God by which He is born and by which He is sustained and preserved and upheld. Not the juxtaposed realities - a divine and then a human, or even less a human and then a divine - constitute the essence of man, this man, but the one, divine reality, in which as such the human is posited, contained and included.'

(CD III/2, pp. 69-70)

Upon this foundation the doctrine of man and man in time is built for 'the ontological determination of humanity is grounded in the fact that one man among all others is the man Jesus' and that 'He is the creaturely being in whose existence we have to do immediately and directly with being of God also'.¹⁷ We are not as we have said to criticise this notion but examine the resultant doctrine of time in its relation to the total structure of the Church Dogmatics. Barth continues in CD III/2 to develop a relational notion of humanity in correspondence with the concept of human nature we have found in earlier parts of the Church Dogmatics, that is, 'human life is a being in responsibility before God'.¹⁸ He works this out in terms of a dynamic anthropology of 'soul and body' as the animate and inanimate aspects of human nature which form a 'man (who) exists because he has spirit...that...means that he is

17. Op.cit., p. 132.

18. Op.cit., p. 176.

grounded, constituted and maintained by God as the soul of his body'.¹⁹ This is developed in relation to Jesus Christ and in terms of man-man relationality and is ours by solidarity, for it was on our behalf that his life²⁰ was lived out.

Barth's whole doctrine of humanity²¹ is presupposed by time as the form of creaturely existence and in the highly important section 47 we are to find the consummation of Barth's doctrine of time. Barth begins his account by stressing the actual dependence of theological anthropology upon time. That is of man's existence as 'the soul of his body as established by God, namely by the Spirit of God' which in being a 'series of acts of his own movement, enterprise and activity',²² presupposes a sequence of events in succession, a concept of time as opposed to eternity and simultaneity. At the outset Barth establishes the basic elements which have been present in the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics. These are of course the theologies of God and man as Creator and creature, with all that this implies, which now come together in a mutual explication.

'Even the eternal God does not live without time. He is supremely temporal. For His eternity is authentic temporality, and therefore the source of all time.'

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19. Op.cit., p. 344. This specific theological anthropology developed in contrast to Nietzsche is summarised on pages 416-8 of CD III/2.
20. Cf. CD III/2, p. 439, '... we must take our bearings first and decisively from the man Jesus in His time. This will enable us to press forward to propositions in which the general Christian understanding of man will find expression in the light of the problem of time.'
21. The basis of the solidarity of Jesus' humanity with our own is stated on pages 211-2 of CD III/2.
22. CD III/2, p. 437.

But in His eternity, in the uncreated self-subsistent time which is one of the perfections of His divine nature, present, past, and future, yesterday, today and to-morrow, are not successive, but simultaneous. It is in this way, in this eternity of His, that God lives to the extent that He lives His own life.'
(CD III/2, pp. 437-8)

This is of course the standard definition of divine eternity that Barth has used throughout the Church Dogmatics which is 'authentic time' as opposed to the 'inauthentic time' of man.

'But man, who is not God, who is a creature and not the Creator, cannot live like this (that is like God). If He is to live at all, he needs an inauthentic temporality distinct from eternity. He needs the time created by God, in which past, present and future follow one another in succession, in which he can move from his past through his present to his future, in which these three elements, corresponding to his life-act as a whole and in detail, form a sequence. We speak of "created time", but it would be more accurate to say "co-created". For time is not a something, a creature with other creatures, but a form of all the reality distinct from God, posited with it, and therefore a real form of its being and nature.'

(CD III/2, p. 438)

The distinction of time and eternity is not arbitrary but reflects in temporal terms the theological discontinuity and relation implied by the mutual realities of Creator and created. To live his life God has to be eternal and to live man has to be in time. God's Lordship is temporally transcendent and unbound by time as is its 'source'. Man's responsibility and frailty is bound up with his dependence upon God and his response to him in covenant and history, the essence of which is succession.

'Man lives as he has time and is in his time. It is his time to the extent that it is not God's eternity, not the simultaneity of present, past and future, but their succession. And it is his time to the extent that it is given him in a fixed span when he is created the soul of his body to live before God.'

It is for the sake of this life willed by God, and as its form, that he has time. He has it, therefore, as his lifetime; and as the time for each of his individual life-acts and for their connected sequence, his total lifetime. He has no more and no less time than this, and no different time. He is in this time, and in this time alone. The constitution of man's being as the soul of his body presupposes his temporality.'

(CD III/2, p. 438)

Barth recognises that this dual approach raises the problem of time in both theological and non-theological contexts. The universality of the temporal pre-condition is recognised, but Barth's generalised account of theological anthropology is to be based not upon observation of things as they seem to be to us but as they are concretely displayed in Jesus Christ. The fundamental contrast of eternity and time - which we have stated following Barth - is universal in that all human existence would be impossible without time, but that beyond this, the real nature of time is only to be seen and understood when its contrast with eternity is grasped as the relation of Creator and dependent creature, in covenant and history. It would have been plausible to argue that as time is the universal conditio sine qua non of theological anthropology and human existence in general, it would have been possible if not desirable to examine time as such, but, in conformity with his overall theological conceptions Barth has not done this. The same arguments that apply to human nature here are applicable to time for the ambiguity that afflicts the latter is present in this account of time. This ambiguity is in the presentation of general categories as the concrete particularities of Jesus Christ which are then in turn used in the explanation of the basis and nature of general human existence. The fundamental

distinction which Barth lays out at the beginning of Section 47, that of eternity and time as simultaneity and succession is now to be used in the exposition of the primary theological datum, Jesus, Lord of Time, in whom the truth is both concealed and revealed.

In his exposition of 'Jesus, Lord of Time' Barth sets his own account of the man Jesus in his time against the minimising view of Bultmann in particular and places it in the context of the New Testament. Our attention will be concentrated upon Barth's positive structure for it is this that reveals most directly the inner continuity of the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics. From the outset the dynamic mutuality of the God-man in hypostatic unity underlies the temporal 'fulfilment' spoken of in the New Testament.

'Like all other men, the man Jesus is in His time, His lifetime, the time he needs like all other men to be able to live a human life. But in this time of His He lives as the One He is in virtue of His unity with God. That is, He not only lives with God, but for Him; not only as His Elect and Called in responsibility before Him, but as His representative to men. And He not only lives with men, but for them; not only as a man like themselves in encounter with them, but as their Representative before God. He lives in His time as the Judge by whose word and work the right of God is vindicated in the sight of men, and therefore that of men is vindicated before God and among themselves; by whom the Kingdom of God is thus established among men and His covenant with them fulfilled. It is in this two-fold representation and vindication of right that the man Jesus lives in His time. And it is this content of His life which makes the barrier of His time on every side a gateway. As in His unity with God He lives the life of the supreme Representative and Judge, His life does not belong exclusively to Himself. It is a life lived for God, and therefore for men, And as He lives this life in His time, it ceases to be exclusively His time. His time becomes for God, and therefore for all men.'

(CD III/2, p. 439)

Barth's arguments are highly distinctive standing in contrast to those of Bultmann and Cullmann in particular.²³ This distinctiveness consists precisely in the primal duality in unity of Jesus Christ in his life and resurrection. The life of Jesus Christ is the living-out of God-in-manhood on behalf of men and represents God's solidarity with the human temporal condition and man's grateful response. Barth presents this in the following paragraph and upon the basis it offers in conjunction with the previous quotation he is able to explicate the implications of this temporality.

'The answer given by the life of Jesus to the questions of God and man makes His time the time which always was when men lived, which always is when they live, and which always will be when they will live. It makes this life at once the centre and the beginning and the end of all the time of all the lifetimes of all men. It is the time of man in its whole extent. **Wherever men live** and have time the decision taken in the life of Jesus holds good; the content of His life affects and embraces them all because it is the answer to the question which God addresses to all men and which they address to God. The two-fold answer which He gives, to God on the one hand and to men on the other, makes Him the Contemporary of all men, whether they have lived, live or will live. The way in which He is their Contemporary varies according to whether they live with Him, lived before Him or will live after Him. Yet He is the Contemporary of them all because He lives for God and for them all. The man Jesus has therefore His time, but has more than just His own time. He lives in His time, and while it does not cease to be His time, and the times of other men do not cease to be their times, His time acquires in relation to their times the character of God's time, of eternity, in which present, past and future are simultaneous. Thus Jesus not only lives in His own time, but as He lives in His own time, and as there are many other times both before and after Him, He is the Lord of time.'

(CD III/1, p. 440)

This is indeed as Barth remarks the insight to be established and expounded for in it the particularity of the

23. These are cited along with W.G. Kummel, M. Barth and F. Buri, cf. CD III/2, p. 439.

life of Jesus Christ in time and its universal significance coincide. The life and time of Jesus Christ in conformity with his divinity and humanity in hypostatic unity has the characteristics of both time and eternity. It is both particular and relative to the one man, yet at the same time universal, in that it impinges upon the past, present and future lives of all men. In other words it reflects the characteristic distinction we have noted throughout the Church Dogmatics. It is temporal and subject to the division implicit in the distinction of before and after, and yet eternal insofar as it applies without exclusive differentiation to past, present and future. The duality in unity of the God-man Jesus Christ is exploited dynamically, for his time becomes eternity for man. Once more Barth's argument is explication, for the life of Jesus Christ ('lived for God, and therefore for men') is a fact, not an inference or speculation; and as a theological fact of revelation it exists within the circle of such realities that are inter-explanatory. Thus the deductions in the two extended quotations above are to be understood in the light of their context. Barth's assertions linked by the locutions 'therefore' could be misleading unless they are seen as theological explanation because only on the basis of the theological impulse of the revealed realities of the Church Dogmatics do they gain any real force.

The reality of Jesus Christ was supremely manifested in the events of the forty days of 'easter history and Easter time',²⁴ which reveal the contingency and the utter finality

24. Op.cit., p. 442.

of his life and time. Barth juxtaposes the temporal and the eternal aspects of the reality of Jesus Christ in terms of 'form' and 'content' and establishes the basis of his dogmatic and biblical exposition in the first section of Man in his Time from the perspective of the resurrection.

'The event of Easter is as it were their prism through which the apostles and their communities saw the man Jesus in every respect of His relation to them - as the One who "was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4,8). But this prism itself is not just a timeless idea, a kind of a priori, hovering as it were above the relations between Jesus and His followers, above their memory of His life and death, above His presence in their midst or their expectation of His second coming and the final consummation. No, it happened "once upon a time" that He was among them as the Resurrected.'

(CD III/2, p. 442)

By his systematic appropriation of this vantage point, Barth places himself in accord with modern critical understanding of the New Testament, which recognises the fact that the writers themselves were imbued with the Easter faith on the basis of which they sought to witness to and penetrate the mystery of revelation. The parallel exposition that follows constitutes the foundation of the phenomenological (Given Time) and schematic (Allotted Time) accounts of time that conclude CD III/2. Brief analyses of these important passages will follow in two short chapters to follow this present chapter. At this juncture Barth is attempting to show that his doctrine of time is in fact that underlying the New Testament witness and that it is congruent with those passages most notably concerned with time as such. As we shall see Barth's efforts here have been frequently misinterpreted and underestimated for in fact they comprehend more of the relevant factors than do either Cullmann or

Bultmann, who minimise temporal transcendence and the actual historicity of the resurrection, respectively.

Hans Küng points to the indispensability of accounting for the pre-existence of the revealed Christ.²⁵ In contradistinction to Cullmann, Barth seeks on the specific ground of the resurrection to assert the full temporality (and this all-embracing contemporaneity) of the Incarnate Logos and to show that this is underlying the New Testament and enlivening the Church. In answer to Küng we have seen that the incarnation is 'powerfully prepared from eternity in God's unalterable decree' in the theology of the Church Dogmatics. Beyond this Barth is striving to include past, present and future in his theological anthropology and as we shall see his efforts are consistent with what we have so far discovered in his thought, yet they are at this point self-consciously biblical in their inspiration.

The core of the passage Jesus Lord of Time is a schematic analysis of the temporal being of Jesus as reflected in the New Testament. Barth stresses precisely those aspects of his transcendent temporality²⁶ and actual mundane temporality (as in his resurrection and subsequent real appearances) seen as affirmations of faith merely, by Bultmann. The three basic tenses of past, present and future are subject to separate development and exposition, but are unified in Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of time for he himself participates in and imparts God's time, that is

25. Justification, p. 272.

26. Cf. op.cit., p. 275. Küng shows that Cullmann attacks the notion of the pre-existence of Jesus.

eternity. In virtue of his humanity and his divinity as the eternal One in time, past, present and future do not fall apart, but are one in the continuity and contemporaneity of Jesus Christ as the Lord of time and by direct derivation in the community, which lives through faith in him by the power of the Holy Spirit. In this co-location of human and divine temporality we encounter once more the Boethian notion of divine simultaneity as Barth effectively realises the unio hypostatica through the temporal transcendence of eternity in its encounter with time, and in doing so he represents, as we shall see, those concepts we have found consistently characteristic of the Church Dogmatics.

Barth establishes his understanding of Jesus in time from the standpoint of the 'forty days' of resurrection time. In this latter period the hidden mystery of the being of Jesus Christ has been exposed for 'during these forty days the presence of God in the presence of the man Jesus was no longer a paradox....He had been veiled, but He was now wholly and unequivocally and irrecoverably manifest'.²⁷ Over against Bultmann this concrete revelation and its attendant temporality depends upon the resurrection as real event. (This dependence is the 'later Barth's' saving feature in the eyes of conservative Calvinist critics who see this as his repentance and turning from the dialectical and a-historical. Such an assessment is misplaced as we have seen for Barth has been striving to come to terms with the multiplex factors of the divine and the historical over the pages of

27. CD III/2, p. 449.

the Church Dogmatics). For Barth the resurrection is indeed fundamental because 'God Himself, the object and ground of their faith, was present as the man Jesus was present in this way. That this really took place (and it could as we have noted only take place on the basis of the resurrection) is the specific content of the apostolic recollection of those days'.²⁸ Only on the basis of the resurrection is Jesus declared and known to be Lord, exalted from the dead.

'He was thus the concrete demonstration of the gracious God, who in the death of this man did not will that His own right, and that of man, should go by default, but willed to vindicate them, as He did in great triumph. He was then the concrete demonstration of the God who not only has authority over man's life and death, but also wills to deliver him from death. Moreover - and this is what interests us especially in this connection - He was the concrete demonstration of the God who has not only a different time from that of man, but whose will and resolve it is to give man a share in this time of His, in His eternity. The concrete demonstration of this God, His appearance, is the meaning of the appearance and appearances of this man Jesus, alive again after His death, in the forty days.'

(CD III/2, pp. 450-451)

In this act God's time overcomes discontinuity. The hiddenness of God in Jesus Christ is in His time-bound existence as a man made subject to death. This bondage is broken and God's temporal continuity made manifest in the resurrection.²⁹ In this the contrast of time and eternity as division, and as continuity and simultaneity, respectively, is apparent, though not in so many words in Barth's actual

28. Ibid.

29. Cf. Chapter V, 'Predestination and Resurrection' above which contains a preliminary account of Barth's understanding of the central event of the resurrection.

argument. This may, however, be legitimately deduced from the contrast implicit in the following passage when it is understood in the context of what we know to be Barth's doctrines of time and eternity.

'This man, the incarnate Word of God, had not only to be present but to be apprehensible as the triumphant justification of God and man, as the revelation of the divine sovereignty over life and death which delivers man, and finally as the One who exists in the higher, eternal time of God. This, the Revealer of hidden glory as God's eternal Word incarnate, is what Jesus was in His real and therefore physical resurrection from the dead, in His appearances as the One who was really and therefore physically resurrected.'

(CD III/2, p. 451)

The whole integrity of Barth's Christology is made (quite rightly as we are aware from I Cor. 15) to rest upon the historicity of the resurrection and turns on the axis of the resultant forty days of the fullness of time which is built into the very heart of the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics. Having repudiated Bultmann's account of the resurrection Barth expounds the New Testament allusions to time in a way different from Cullman yet congruent with the overall understanding of the relation of time and eternity in the Church Dogmatics.

A crucial passage for the interpretation of Jesus, Lord of Time occurs on pages 455-456 of Volume III/2. In it Barth combines many themes which are developed later as well as reiterating insights that have been apparent throughout our study.

'The Easter time is simply the time of the revelation of the mystery of the preceding time of the life and death of the man Jesus. The two times are inseparably linked. They are together the time of the man Jesus to the extent that His person existing in His words and

works, His mystery first and then its revelation, constitute its content. But this means that this whole time is the time of the appearance and presence of God. At the heart of all other times, both before and after, it is the time in which God Himself was this man, and therefore had time, a life-time. It is the Creator of all reality distinct from Himself who, taking flesh of our flesh, also took time, at the heart of what we think we know as time. It is the Lord of time who became temporal and had time: His own time at the heart of all the times of the being created by Him; and this time in the same way as He had it in Himself before all created being, and as He does not cease to have it above all created being, and as He will have it with all created being when the time of this being is over. Here, in this creature, in this man, who had His own time of life and death, and beyond this His time of revelation, God, the Creator and Lord, had already had time before His time, eternal time. It is the time which He took to Himself, thus granting it as a gift to the men of all time. It is the time which He willed to have for us in order to inaugurate and establish His covenant. It is the time which is the time of all times because what God does in it is the goal of all creation and therefore of all created time. Since God in His Word had time for us, and at the heart of all other times there was this particular time, the eternal time of God, all other times are now controlled by this time, i.e., dominated, limited and determined by their proximity to it. This means positively that they are not shown to be mere illusions. The many philosophical theories of time which deny its reality and regard it as a mere form or abstraction or figment of the imagination can only be finally abandoned when we consider that God Himself took time and thus treated it as something real. But it also means critically that there is no such thing as absolute time, no immutable law of time. Not even its irreversibility can be adduced as an inviolable principle in relation to the time which was once real at the heart of time as that of the life and death and revelation of the man Jesus. There is no time in itself, rivalling God and imposing conditions on Him. There is no god called Chronos. And it is better to avoid conceptions of time which might suggest that there is. On the other hand, we need not be surprised if the nature and laws of all other times, and all we think we know as time, are seen to be illuminated and relativised by this time. Relativised does not mean discarded. Time is real, and will always be so. Even its end - and it will one day come to an end as it once began - will not mean that it is thrown away. Yet even now its meaning does not lie in itself. But as all creation has its goal in what God purposes and will do and does within it for man, for us, so time as its historical form has its meaning in

the particular time which God once took for the execution of this purpose, for establishing His covenant with man. This is the hidden meaning of all time, even of all other time. And time itself has no property, no laws, to preclude the control of all other times by this time, or to prevent this time of Deus praesens impressing upon them - in varying degrees and in different ways - the stamp of its own nature and law. The fact that all other times have been placed in proximity to this time means that even in them there may be discerned traces of this eternal time, of the true and proper time in which they necessarily have a share because, even though at a different level, they too are real times.'
(CD III/2, pp. 455-456)

In the exposition of the following pages of Jesus, Lord of Time Barth develops the duality of Godhood and manhood in Jesus Christ in terms of the distinction of time and eternity in a passage which represents the farthest reaches made by the theological impulse that we have traced from its inception in eternity, in the being of God in act. The fundamental Christological insight that informs the Church Dogmatics governs in turn the account of time, for, 'without ceasing to be God, He has made Himself a worldly, human, temporal God in relation to this work of His'.³⁰ Barth applies his theological and exegetical elaboration of the πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου and the notion of divine καιρός as he finds them in Old and New Testaments³¹ to the unique event of Jesus Christ, who in himself and in his life is the realisation of the fullness of time. Time as pictured by the writers of Gal. 4, Eph.1, and Mk.1, is an 'empty vessel, not yet filled', which waits 'to be filled up at a particular time'.³² The fulfilment of time is the determinant of time,

30. CD III/2, p. 457.

31. Op.cit., pp. 456-7.

32. Op.cit., p. 461.

as:

'This event (i.e. the mission of the Son) does not merely make this particular time fulfilled time. This fulfilled time is before or after all other time. Hence it makes all time, *χρόνος* — as such, in the sequence and succession of which this fulfilment was achieved, fulfilled time. The raison d'être of all time, both past and future, is that there should be this fulfilment at this particular time. Time may seem to move out of the void, but it is actually moving from this event. The fulfilment of time has now "come", epitomising all the coming and going of time. Henceforth all time can be regarded only as time fulfilled in this particular time.'
(CD III/2, p. 459)

So as to preserve the balance of divinity and humanity Barth takes steps to ensure that revelation is not de-historicised (and thus endangered by docetism) for there is 'no fulfilment of time without the time of fulfilment'.³³

Yet at the same time these events are:

'eternal time; the time which God has assumed for us, and thus granted to us, the men of all times; the time of His covenant; or, as the Bible sees it the great Sabbath; the year of salvation; fulfilled time.'

(CD III/2, p. 462)

Our interpretation of the Church Dogmatics turns on the relative success of the balance of eternity and time which Barth seeks to achieve, as it is found in the following passage. The ontological equilibrium of time and eternity rests upon the validity of the acts of Jesus in time and their transformation by eternity. In Christological terms of humanity and divinity — (which must be understood from the standpoint of the theological ontology which predominates in the Church Dogmatics) Barth preserves the balance through systematic exploitation of the Athanasian (and Patristic) concept of God's self-positing as man in the unio hypostatica.

33. Op.cit., p. 462.

It is in the actual conceptual out-working of the particular categories ostensibly shared by divine and human existence that problems develop. In this passage Barth states his goal and it is in relation to this that we must judge his achievement in the application of this insight to the three dimensions of time.

'...the time of Jesus is also a time like all other times; that it occurred once and once for all; that it had beginning, duration and end; that it was contemporary for some, future for others, and for others again, e.g., for us past. Only a docetic attitude to Jesus can deny that His being in time also means what being in time means for us all. Our recognition of His true humanity depends on our acceptance of this proposition. Even the recognition of His true deity, implying as it does the identity between His time and God's, does not rule out this simple meaning of His being in time. On the contrary, it includes it.'

(CD III/2, p. 463)

As God embraces manhood in Jesus Christ so in His eternity he undertakes time. How does Barth work this out specifically? This question concerns us for the remainder of this chapter where the threefold contrast of past, present and future in the life of Jesus Christ is made with the nature of these distinctions in our own lives and temporality. With these questions in mind we may now proceed to outline the initial Christological parallelism of time and Jesus' time to be found in the latter stages of Jesus, Lord of Time. This will prepare the ground for consideration of the 'Zeitlichkeit' elaborated in final passages, Given, Allotted, Beginning and Ending Time.

Barth explicates the time of Jesus Christ on the basis of the presupposition of his divinity and humanity. This he does by means of the related but contrasting notions of time and eternity which are used repeatedly throughout

the Church Dogmatics and which we have traced at length in this study. Thus Barth singles out the separatedness and non-contemporaneity of past, present and future as the predominant and characteristic feature of 'our' time. (As we shall see in the next chapter the nature of the transition from one state to the next, that is, present to future, for example, and the 'Now' of God's time comes to the fore as the predominant phenomenological feature of time). According to Barth 'all other times are confined to the three dimensions. They begin, they endure, and they come to an end. According to the standpoint of the observer, they are future, contemporary or past'.³⁴ This stress on the strict non-contemporaneity of future, present and past is in direct contrast to the nature of the time of Jesus, which is not bound by 'these limitations of all other times'.³⁵ Thus in conformity with the antithesis of time and eternity as developed earlier (that is succession and division over against duration and continuity) Barth asserts that the distinctive feature of the time of Jesus is 'the removal of the limitations of its yesterday, to-day and to-morrow of its once, now and then'.³⁶

The dialectic of time and eternity consists in the double affirmations that Barth makes in the following passage which we quote at length as a representative statement of what Barth is to develop in the ensuing pages of Jesus, Lord of Time.

34. Op.cit., p. 463.

35. Ibid.

36. Op.cit., p. 464.

'1. The life of Jesus begins, and therefore it was once future. But the man Jesus already was even before He was. Hence the time before His time, the time when this was still future, because it hastened forward to His future, was also His time the time of His being.

2. The life of Jesus has duration, and therefore it was once present. But for all its singularity this present reaches back to His past when His time was still future, and forward to His future when His time will be past. The man Jesus is as He was and will be. Even the time of His present, just because it is the time of His present, is also the time before and after his time, and is thus His time, the time of His being.

3. The life of Jesus comes to an end, and therefore there was a moment when His time became past. But its end is such that it is always present and still future. The man Jesus was as He is and will be. Even the time after His time, the time in which His time is already past, because it is the time of His past, the time which derives from Him, is the time of His renewed presence, the time of His new coming, and therefore again His time.'

(CD III/2, p. 464)

In consequence of this and in congruity with the doctrine of hypostatic unity and the general doctrine of eternity:

'This means, however, that from the standpoint of the three dimensions of every conception of time, His time is not only the time of a man, but the time of God, eternal time. Thus as the title of this subsection suggests, He not only is in time and has time like other men, but He is also Lord of time.'

(CD III/2, p. 464)

In other words the concrete particularity of Jesus' life and death manifesting his actual solidarity with the human condition is not limited but has validity at all times because his time is also God's time. Thus

'For as such, according to its manifestation in Easter-time, it is also the time of God; eternal time; the time of the covenant; the great Sabbath; the year of salvation; fulfilled time. What is for all other times, the times of all other living creatures, an absolute barrier, is for Him in His time a gateway.'

(CD III/2, p. 464)

The ground for the claim that Jesus is Lord of Time is as we have seen previously the resurrection. In this event the apostles and Church of the New Testament saw the real meaning of Jesus' previous existence in time and made this point axiomatic in their thought. The declaration and exaltation of Jesus Christ from the dead is the revelation of the unlimited nature of Jesus' temporal being,³⁷ of his actual life and death. Barth conceives the core of this revelation of special temporality as revealing the central unity of the total Christian revelation. This reality is most clearly expressed in the statement of what we termed 'temporal transcendence' (this does not imply a denial, but, in conformity with Barth's thought, a supreme affirmation of time) made in Rev. I,8. Jesus Christ is the self-declared 'Alpha and Omega, ...which is, and was, and which is to come, the Almighty'.³⁸ This 'life embraces a present, past and future. Here is no timeless being, but a strictly temporal one, though of course it differs from all other temporal being as that which is divinely temporal'.³⁹ Through the supreme 'I am' of Jesus' being, the simple succession of the three temporal dimensions of present, past and future is precluded. The being of Jesus in the light of the 'I am' of

37. That is to say that Jesus' being in time is without the fragmented and fallen characteristics of the division of before and after. In the 'forty days the presence of God in the presence of the man Jesus was no longer a paradox....the total, final, irrevocable and eternal manifestation of God Himself'. Op.cit., p. 449. God's temporal being enters time unequivocally in Jesus Christ in the forty days: thus Jesus has unlimited temporal being.

38. CD III/2, p. 465.

39. Ibid.

Revelation I,8 means, according to Barth, the following.

'I am all this simultaneously. I, the same, am; I was as the same; and I will come again as the same. My time is always simultaneously present, past and future. That is why I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last. Since my present includes the past and the future it is both the first and the last of all other times. All times have their source and end in my time. Of course, all these other times are real times, for at the heart of them I have time. But other times are previous or subsequent to mine. They are overshadowed, dominated and divided into periods by my time. It is my present that makes them past or future, for my present includes them both. I was, and I am to come, as surely as I am and I live.'

(CD III/2, p. 465)

Some hostile critics have argued that this notion of divine temporality is similar to a doctrine of idealism (that is to say the concept of the transcendental unity of apperception, originating in Kant and developed by Fichte) which is the projection of human self-consciousness writ large on the plane of the infinite. This criticism presented by C. Van Til⁴⁰ can only be made upon the basis of a doctrine of God which is both 'self-contained' and utterly inaccessible, and relies in turn upon the abyssmal nature of God existing over against his revealedness. Clearly Barth's theology in the Church Dogmatics is a systematic repudiation of the crypto-Deism of this position, as it is both dynamic and actively trinitarian in its analysis of the relational reciprocity of the divine nature. In addition it is arguable that the ontology of Kant expressed in the notion of the intrinsic temporality of the transcendental unity of apperception which has then been taken up by

40. This charge is made along with many other manifest distortions and wilful misunderstandings in Christianity and Barthianism, Philadelphia, 1965.

Heidegger is in fact a product of the Christian tradition itself not a hostile progeny of the Enlightenment.

Shereover argues the first part of this thesis in Heidegger, Kant and Time⁴¹ and illuminates the relation of Kant and Heidegger will thus provide a starting point to our later reflections, when we turn in our next chapter to Barth's ontology of time considered as a phenomenological account with objective consequences.

In fact the most convincing aspect of Barth's argument at this juncture is the powerful correlation he establishes between his systematic theory of time as we have seen in its development and the New Testament. If the so-called orthodox critic were to come to grips with this feature of Barth's exposition then much less would be heard of 'alien philosophical presuppositions' lurking in the darker recesses of the architectonic of the Church Dogmatics. Contrary to the demythologising approach of Bultmann et al., Barth asserts specifically the pre- and post-existence of Jesus Christ as indispensable features of the fundamental insight of the New Testament, that Jesus Christ is the same 'yesterday, today, forever'. As we will see later in the chapter to follow Barth seeks to combine this assertion of temporal transcendence (understood as the 'embrace' of time by God's time) with a phenomenological account of time as temporality, or Zeitlichkeit. The major defenders of

41. Charles M. Shereover's thorough but unexciting book (Indiana, 1971) covers the difficult ground between Kant and Heidegger's response.

Bultmann (e.g. Malet)⁴² claim that he truly reflects the understanding of existence of the New Testament through the medium of Heidegger's categories. We shall see that in the first instance Barth certainly manages to give a coherent account of the time of Jesus Christ from the standpoint of the New Testament as it comprehends past, present and future. Barth argues directly contrary to the position that the pre- and post-existence of Jesus Christ is mythology (that is the projection of a primitive, falsely objectified self-understanding) on the grounds that Jesus Christ is 'absolutely present temporally', allowing him to become the Contemporary of the post-resurrection community. By Jesus' presence at a particular time Barth does not allow him to cancel his past and future in a dissolution of his time. Barth binds prophetic pre-existence and eschatology to the One who is the 'I am' of the Book of Revelation. This unity (reinforced by means of the scriptural exposition of the fundamental insight implicit in Barth's doctrine of eternity and time) can be illustrated by the following passage which indicates the direction in which Barth's (unfinished) eschatology would probably have moved.

'the presence of Jesus in His community is full of import for the future. His presence impels and presses to His future, general and definitive revelation, of which there has been a particular and provisional form in the Easter history. Hence even the presence of Jesus in the Spirit, for all its fullness, can only be a pledge or first instalment of

42. A. Malet launches a reductio ad absurdum against Barth which fails to grasp the latter's attempt to overcome the dualism of the Kant, Heidegger and Bultmann tradition. Cf. The Thought of Rudolf Bultmann, Shannon, 1969, especially Chapter 18 for this scurrilous misinterpretation.

what awaits the community as well as the whole universe, His return in glory. But it must never be forgotten that He who comes again in glory, this future Jesus, is identical with the One proclaimed by the history of yesterday and really present to His own to-day.'

(CD III/2, p. 468)

Barth is attempting to avoid a reduction of past, present and future to a single eternal and timeless presence and yet at the same time to escape the reductionist and linear 'one-dimensional' temporal thinking of Cullmann. Thus the presence of Jesus Christ is born of his past resurrection but is at the same moment pregnant with the future implicit in his coming parousia. As we have seen this understanding is that of Rev. I,8 which asserts that 'I am (he that) is' for, so Barth argues,

'The present in which there is a real recollection of the man and the particular and preliminary revelation accomplished in Him, and real expectation of this man and God's final and general revelation with Him - this present "between the times" is His own time, the time of the man Jesus.'

(CD III/2, p. 468)

Each dimension of time is explored in a trans-historical yet, so Barth would argue, fully temporal perspective provided in the being of Jesus, which is now infused and charged with God's time and fully revealed after the resurrection in the 'forty-days'. Present,⁴³ past,⁴⁴ and future⁴⁵ are each related by the supra-temporal continuity of the being of Jesus. This recognition of Jesus as Lord of Time, made possible by the resurrection and recounted in such passages as the account of the incident on the Emmaus

43. CD III/2, pp. 466-74.

44. Op.cit., pp. 474-85.

45. Op.cit., pp. 485-511.

road⁴⁶ (Luke, 24f.) is of:

'The hidden power of the first time, the fact that it is not past but present, is now disclosed. Jesus was not found among the dead, but among the living; the living One and the Lifegiver. He was the self-same Jesus who had previously gone about with his disciples; thronged by the multitudes and the devout of Galilee and Jerusalem; seen, but not really perceived; heard but not really understood;' (CD III/2, p. 471)

The present of Jesus is a presence which reveals the fullness of time in the fulfilment of the covenant and the concrete making-known of the supreme 'I am' of divine being. His past is the fullness of the 'time which was',⁴⁷ recollected by the New Testament. This past is recapitulated by the Holy Spirit which brings the events of salvation into the present from the other side of 'the great dividing line... secretly but very really drawn which masks off the new age from the old'.⁴⁸ As noted previously Barth asserts the theological concreteness of the pre- and post-existence of Jesus Christ as the basis of the existence of the life of the Church over against the thrust of the demythologisers. In this Barth follows out once more the unifying vision of the Fathers (H. Küng stresses this) in identifying the 'past' of Jesus' time with the 'yesterday' of the New Testament which is the prophetic time and history of the people of Israel. Moreover beyond this, the unity of time extends into the fundamental purposes of God as they are realised in Jesus Christ. This is the consistent outcome of the overall

46. Luke 24.

47. CD III/2, p. 474.

48. Ibid.

scheme we have been studying in Barth's thought. In the fulfilment of the covenant the eternal purpose of God is achieved and insofar as this is consummated in Jesus Christ (who is the one 'I am' of the Book of Revelation) a comprehensive transhistorical (yet not ahistorical) unity is achieved through the notion of God's time.

'Hence for the apostolic community the yesterday of Jesus extends beyond the prior yesterday of the Old Testament to the primal history and primal time which are beyond the reach of "historical" investigation, not only in practice, but in principle; to the history and time when being, history and time began as such. Is this just speculation? But surely if creation and covenant are so integral to one another even in the Old Testament that neither can be considered apart from the other; if in the Old Testament the covenant is always eschatological and prophetic in character, and is never realised; if finally - and this is the point on which everything else depends - Jesus is the One who was to come as the fulfilled reality of the covenant, is it speculation to say that even the time of creation was His time? To the extent that it was the time when the Creator began to execute His will. It too was His time; the time when He was the primary, proper object of this divine will, foreseen and foreordained in the creation of all things.'

(CD III/2, p. 477)

The unity of trans-historical and historical is achieved in the God-man Jesus Christ, who is the historically concrete yet universal point of consummation of the divine purpose. Within the all-embracing domain of the Rev. 1,8 the concept of divine eternity allows for the Christological synthesis and conditioning of the total theological scheme.

'As the man Jesus had been in His appearance on the way, in the prefiguration and expectation of the divine covenant with Israel, and in the divine foresight and foreordination in creation, so He had been in the counsel of God before creation and therefore before all time. If the lesson of Easter is true, if the man Jesus was really the manifestation of God, how can we possibly think of an eternity of God which does not also and primarily include His time, His future, His present, but also His past? How can

it be denied that in God's free plan and resolve He was before the beginning of time and all things, and therefore that He was really, and therefore that He was really, supremely and fully, that He divinely was?'

(CD III/2, p. 477)

Barth specifically and unmistakably refers to the application of the concept of eternity as the unity of time which 'legitimizes' past, present and future. The Word of God spoken of in John I is not a timeless existence but refers to an eternity which,

'includes not only the present and future, but also the past. God's eternity does not invalidate past present and future, and therefore time; it legitimizes them. In it they have their origin and true character. In it yesterday, to-day and to-morrow are one, and in their unity genuine and real. The man Jesus is this genuine and real yesterday of God's eternity, which is anterior to all other yesterdays, including the yesterday of creation.'

(CD III/2, p. 484)

Analogously Barth relates the future to the transcendent temporal unity posited in 'God's time' for 'There is no difference of degree between the being of Jesus in the three dimensions, whether in substantiality, importance or urgency, in dignity or value'⁴⁹ for the New Testament looks forward 'not merely to a better future, but to a future which sets a term to the whole time process, and in its perfection includes and surpasses absolutely all the contents of time.'⁵⁰ This future is conceived eschatologically as a 'wholly new order' which is 'wholly and utterly His time, the time of Jesus, the time of His being'.⁵¹ This future kingdom is not

49. Op.cit., p. 485.

50. Op.cit., p. 486.

51. Ibid.

a detached or arbitrary happening but is the concrete hope of the community which arose after the resurrection. Barth argues that,

'What will take place at His return is just that the arch of His time which began with the revelation of His first coming, and then vaulted over the interim time of the community, of the Gospel and the Spirit, of faith and love, the time given for the conversion of the world will then be completed.'

(CD III/2, p. 486)

In the perspective of the future and the general outline Barth offers, indicating the direction in which he would elaborate the doctrine of the Last Things, we can see that the 'arch of God's time' is not merely one more item in the vocabulary of what Cullmann has called Barth's 'figurative speech' about time in the context of dogmatic theology. It is one more aspect of the consistent and systematic development of a unified - and theologically unifying - doctrine of time which explicitly structures the Church Dogmatics. Thus in consequence of this unity of temporal being Barth asserts quite explicitly the intrinsic bond of resurrection and parousia in a vital and notable theological integration and dynamic synthesis.

'As the One He has shown Himself to be He must again appear in confirmation of the fulfilment of time, in a glory which is no longer particular and transitory, but universal and permanent, embracing the whole of creation both in heaven and earth. The unity of His glory and our glorification already achieved in His resurrection has again become the future, His future, for us. For us, therefore, the resurrection and the parousia are two separate events. But for Him they are a single event. The resurrection is the anticipation of His parousia as His parousia is the completion and fulfilment of the resurrection.'

(CD III/2, p. 490)

In brief Barth argues, 'The future to which we look forward from the present of the man Jesus is, like this

present itself, and the past which lies behind it, His time, the time of the man Jesus,⁵² and this whole consciousness and understanding of time is summed up in the phrase of Rev. I,8. Such is the structure of Barth's exposition of Jesus, Lord of Time, which we have considered at great length because it furnishes not only the consummation of Barth's Christology in its temporal aspect, but also in achieving this it provides the basis of his understanding of human being-in-time, the phenomenological theological ontology of the latter sub-sections of Man in his Time in Volume III/2 of the Church Dogmatics. The passage that has been examined is rigorous and demanding because in it Barth combines three major threads in his thought. The absolute primacy of the Chalcedonian impulse of the two natures as the dynamic foundation of the Church Dogmatics is united with doctrine of eternity inherited from Augustine and Boethius which is concentrated upon the eternal 'Now' of the divine present embracing without division past, present and future. This synthesis is developed with the third major factor, a sustained biblical exposition an extended systematic theological exegesis of Rev. I,8.

The success of this passage rests with the acceptability of the notion of divine eternity implicit in Barth's arguments. The conceptual relation and qualified opposition of time and eternity constitutes the vertebral logic of this sub-section and if it is granted as the basis of what ensues, then Barth's account is remarkable for its power and

52. Op.cit., p. 493.

thoroughness. Given our hesitance and doubts as regards this concept, our feelings remain those of admiration as we proceed to our next chapter. In this the more philosophical and directly temporal issues of the remainder of the section Man in his Time will be examined on the basis of the theological foundations laid in Jesus, Lord of Time.

CHAPTER X
 MAN IN HIS TIME:
 GIVEN TIME

In Barth's extended study of time in Volume III/2 of the Church Dogmatics he first considers the being in time of Jesus Christ and then that of man in general. This is consistent with his overall doctrine of analogia fidei and his presentation of Jesus Christ as prototypical humanity. In our last chapter this former, and in Barth's eyes, primary reality was examined as it provides the fundamental ontological framework which underlies general human experience and understanding of time. Many objections to this may be raised, both to the method of analogia fidei as a whole and to the putative accessibility of the humanity of Jesus Christ as a guide to the understanding of human nature as we know it from day to day.¹ It is not our intention to examine these issues but to state and analyse Barth's theory of time, having provisionally accepted his indispensable premises for the purposes of argument. As a background to this part of our study we shall assume an acquaintance with the thought of Kant, Heidegger and Bultmann on temporal ontology. The term 'ontology' has a specific meaning for students of the latter tradition of interpretation which is different to that employed so far in this thesis. J. Macquarrie² clarifies this

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1. The issues raised by this feature in T.F. Torrance's article, 'Natural Theology in the Thought of Karl Barth', Religious Studies 6, p. 133, "the basic question as to the relation between the 'new man' in Christ to 'man' as such, the 'good creation' of God".
 2. J. Macquarrie, An Existentialist Theology, London, 1955.

distinction by pointing to the contrast between the 'ontic' and the 'ontological'. The following argument is of importance for our study of the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics because as will become apparent Barth postulates an arguably untenable distinction between the two categories of insight.

'A statement may be ontological (ontologisch), that is to say, it will tell us about the being of something and its range of possibilities. Or a statement may be ontical (ontisch), that is to say, it will tell us about some entity in its actual relations with other entities. But every ontical statement carries ontological implications, for to say that A is, in fact, B implies that A has the possibility of being B. This is a statement about the being of A, namely that its being is such that A can be B.'

(An Existentialist Theology, p. 30)

The difficulty exists not only in the implication of the ontological by the ontic but in whether the reverse also applies. As we shall see Barth provides what may justifiably be called an 'ontology' of time but retains a curious hesitance over the 'ontical'. The scepticism over the latter in the face of extensive ontological evidence that is characteristic of Barth is resolved by a complex theological and dogmatic solution. This obscure assertion will become clear later in our study as Barth's contrast of human and God's time is explored in this chapter.

Having established to his satisfaction the being of Jesus in time Barth now turns with devastating negation to the time of man and mounts an assault worthy of the most hardened sceptic. Barth's scepticism is reminiscent of that in Cicero's Contra Academicos and in his response Barth also reflects Augustine, who in his own Contra Academicos asserted the certainty of knowledge by faith over against

the uncertainty of human knowledge. The patterns of sceptical argument that Barth advances has affinities with those used by F.H. Bradley and J.M.C. MacTaggart³ in arguing against the reality of time and the nature of the time order. We now are able to state Barth's argument in the light of the more specifically ontological and phenomenological problems of recent Continental thought. We are therefore to concentrate upon the exact structure of human time argued for in his scepticism and the reality that relieves this loss of time. The precise relation between these factors of 'lost time' and 'given time' raises difficult problems and once more forces us to assess how Barth relates contingent reality to that brought to us in revelation. Does Barth fall into an ontological self-sufficiency so pervasive as to confine true reality to the theological circle and thus be in danger of an overall docetism despite his systematic and methodological attempts to escape this manifest hazard?

Man's time has to be understood in contrast with that of the man Jesus Christ. For man the past is a 'great flood of forgotten reality'⁴ and of the future Barth says 'we do not and cannot conceive its contents'.⁵ Memory and anticipation are the only imperfect means available to man whereby he may have access to past and future. These Barth dismisses as nothing more than vain and vague ways of extending man's grasp upon his experience and thus his time.

3. Cf. the allusion made to this on page 154 above.

4. CD III/2, p. 512.

5. Op.cit., p. 513.

Worse still, man's present is in doubt and under threat.

'For what is our present but a step from darkness to darkness, from the "no longer" to the "not yet", and therefore a continual deprivation of what we were and had in favour of a continual grasping of what we will (perhaps) be and have? Our past and future do at least have real if limited content, but the fullness of our present is obviously only the remarkable act of existence itself in which we have already been deprived of our past, but have not yet been able to grasp the future, everything being wholly behind us and everything (or nothing) wholly before us. What are we now? And what do we have?'
(CD III/2, p. 514)

This scepticism which echoes that of St. Augustine, both in the Confessions as regards the analysis of future and past and the Contra Academicos in his response to Cicero, forces us to consider this 'present'.

'But what is Now? What is the present? It is the time between the times. And this, strictly speaking and as we experience it, is no time at all, no duration, no series of moments, but only the boundary between past and future, a boundary which is never stationary, but always shifts further ahead. It is the moment we can never prevail upon to stay, for it is always gone or not yet come.'
(CD III/2, p. 514)

This radical but time-honoured doctrine means that time becomes a 'riddle' yet this is an 'ultimate truth' of human existence. Out of this puzzle presented by time arise the concepts of infinity which surround the regression into past and future. Infinite too are 'the succession of moments, or rather constant shiftings of the boundary, between the darkness there and the darkness here'.⁶ Again we may detect in this a Kantian flavour for it is out of the antinomies, including those of the time-order, that the illusory knowledge of metaphysics arises. Curiously enough Kant's

6. Op.cit., p. 515.

words, 'I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith'⁷ are to find their theological fulfilment in Barth's account which specifically repudiates metaphysics but nevertheless seeks to speak of God as bounding and conditioning time.

In his exposition Barth finds in the poetry of Hölderlin the consummate appreciation of our being in its time which 'is in its infinity an infinitely tragic destiny' and a 'life-long insecurity'.⁸ Barth asserts the irreducible succession of moments which constitutes the 'flight' of man's time and over against this he presents the Christological contrast, the 'I am...which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty'.⁹ The fact that this contrast bears a close formal similarity to the opposition of the empirical determinations of inner appearances and the transcendental unity of apperception in the Critique of Pure Reason¹⁰ is of interest. Whereas Kant in the Transcendental Deduction sought to demonstrate the synthetic a priori status of this unity Barth ascribes this possibility to God.¹¹ In this passage Kant ascribes necessity (that is 'transcendental' necessity) to the unity of apperception as the condition of experience. It might well be possible to argue that Barth's distinction of fallen time and God's time runs into difficulties from the Kantian standpoint because it attempts to

7. Critique of Pure Reason, Preface to second edition, p.29.

8. CD III/2, p. 515.

9. Op.cit., p. 516.

10. Cf. Critique of Pure Reason, A353, A355, A402, B220.

11. Op.cit., A107.

synthesise the extremes of idealism (the 'I am' of trans-temporal unity in God) and empiricism (the flux of unbound moments of time). What we must note at this juncture is that the influence of Kant's arguments have been of immense importance and prefigure not only the work of Barth but that of Heidegger and the phenomenological-ontology tradition. The contrasting conclusions of these traditions will help show us the exact structure and status of Barth's theory of time.

The complexity and ambiguity of Barth's position becomes apparent when he unfolds his exposition of sinful man in time who has 'lost' his time and who is alienated from his Creator and therefore from himself'.¹² This ambiguity which we have encountered before concerns the relation of created to revealed reality and the role of revelation as a guide to natural theology. Barth's intentions are ambitious for he is to 'break through and invert the concept of time'.¹³ The following pages of Barth's Church Dogmatics which expound this theological departure are crucial to our understanding and analysis of this work. We therefore proceed with caution and care as we assess this attempt to outflank and overcome once more with a theological answer the perennial problems of human existence and philosophical ratiocination.

Man has not been left in this dilemma of contradiction and alienation from himself and from God. In the being of Jesus Christ a protest is made against the 'perverted and disturbed reality'¹⁴ of man. The existence of the man Jesus

12. CD III/2, p. 517.

13. Op.cit., p. 553.

14. Op.cit., p. 517.

is a demonstration to us that God did not will man's existence to be like this. God has 'come to our rescue, and therefore to the defence of our true creaturely nature against the unnatural condition into which it had fallen'.¹⁵ Man is lost because the truth of his time is 'lost'. More accurately man's time has been 'mis-laid' because Barth argues that he lives in a false reality in which his experience of time is perverted. Jesus' being in time recalls men to the truth as 'It allows us no rest in this falsehood, because it is itself the truth which confronts it, the truth of human nature as God created it.'¹⁶ This point is of absolutely fundamental importance: revealed reality of time in the being of Jesus is created reality which recalls us to the truth of our own being. Jesus Christ is both a 'unique determination' of human being (he is the Son of God with all that implies) but this 'includes a being in time which is true and genuine in contrast to the plunge into falsehood'.¹⁷

Barth's assertion concerning the meaning and significance of the being of the man Jesus in time is clear. What proves ambiguous is what exactly it is that has fallen: is time itself fallen or merely man's being in time? In other words is our fleeting fallen time merely our subjective and perverted experience which does not move beyond these bounds? If this is so does this matter? Given Barth's limitations

15. Op.cit., p. 518.

16. Ibid.

17. Op.cit., p. 519.

upon the nature of time and our knowledge of it could we have ever known true time without having been God in the first place? The problem that confronts us arises out of the explicit subjectivity of Barth's epistemology at this point. He desires to assert the objectivity and veridical nature of time on the basis of revelation, yet at the same time as we shall see, he confines our possibility of knowing the objective truth about time to the realm of being as phenomenology. Consequently we may ask if the being in time of Jesus Christ is to remind us of what we should know or what we could possibly know? Barth has confined his argument to our experience of time and has so far remained agnostic as to the possibility of ascertaining the objective state of affairs. This agnosticism does not last for long as will soon be apparent.

Barth maintains the characteristic tension of continuity over against division through the contrast of the 'I am' of Jesus' being the flight characteristic of man's being. Given this fundamental dichotomy overcome in Jesus Christ, what consequences flow from the restriction of this to the realm of 'being'? Barth's undoubted actualism in his doctrine of being drives him away from substantialist thinking with regard to God, man or cosmos and so 'lost time' and 'God's time' understood in terms of 'being' occupy a category with close affinities to the Dasein of Heidegger.¹⁸

18. There is a parallel between Heidegger and Barth's analyses of time which is explored in this chapter. This stems in the main from their reactions to Kant but the ultimate goal of each is of course quite distinct.

The categories of existence bear similarities in that in both cases they concern human being in the world and in relation, understood basically in terms of intentionality. Of course the differences are enormous as regards the interpretation of human existence and the conclusions reached, but both Barth and Heidegger share a Kantian heritage at this juncture. The difficulty is that whereas Heidegger may argue that the traditional arguments of scepticism and dogmatism about the external world do not concern him as the analytic of Dasein transcends this (it is 'transcendental' in a sense related to that of Kant) of dispute, the theologian, on the contrary, has no such freedom. We must now see if Barth does in fact remain inside the bounds of an ultimate subjectivity and if so how he can argue beyond this about the external world and time order. Besides this we must probe the implications of Barth's conclusions for theological ontology, understood in its general sense of the study of what in reality exists. To revert for a moment to the other use of this term it will be remembered that Macquarrie argued that Heidegger's distinction of the ontological and the ontic was based on a necessary relation of the former to the latter. In the context of theology the reverse applies at this point. Can we speak of the ontological in theology without reference to the ontic? Is it not the case that Barth is in danger of doing this in the following key passage which we quote at length. We shall then contrast this with his argument for objectivity.

'We do not know what time means for animals or plants, or for the rest of the universe. We live in constant relationship to the rest of the universe. Therefore

since we ourselves are in time, we may conclude or suspect that time is the form of existence of everything created. At any rate, the mode of existence of the earthly cosmos as observed and conceived by us shows countless analogies to our own to support view. Even the apparently timeless truths of mathematics may be observed and conceived by us only in the form of temporal acts of consciousness, analyses and syntheses, demonstrations and definitions. Moreover the biblical accounts of creation, especially the first, seem clearly to imply that time was created simultaneously with universe as the form existence. Like man, the whole universe in time is in time as created by God and therefore real. But to the universe there also belongs heaven as the upper cosmos - the inconceivable and inaccessible side of created reality. And we would be making a bold step to say that this has time as the form of its existence. Indeed, we do not know what it means for beings in the earthly cosmos to be in time. We have no means of observing or conceiving their temporality. But we can and must see and apprehend that we ourselves are in time and only in time; that - whatever its significance - we are only in the movement from the past to the present and no mere "presupposition" of human reality, as though the positioning of it, or the reality as such, were really timeless. Man is, only as he is in time. Even in eternal life he will still be in his time. For he will then be the one who, when there is no time but only God's eternity, and he is finally hidden in God, will have been in his time. Just as he is the soul of his body, so he exists in his time. We might almost say that he is himself his time in the sequence of his life-acts. He is himself his time fulfilling itself in the sequence of his life-acts. So close is the relation between the real being of man and the real time in which he is.'

(CD III/2, p. 521.)

This argument (or series of arguments) is vital to gaining an accurate insight into the Church Dogmatics. There is a strict delimitation of the extent of human knowledge of time which is confined to our own awareness of personal temporality, for 'We can and must see and apprehend that we ourselves are in time and only in time....Man is only as he is in time'.¹⁹ We can have no certain knowledge that time is the form of the rest of the universe or the objects that

19. Op.cit., p. 521.

that lie in it. Our conclusions about the external world are surmise, or inference by analogy from ourselves. Time as something unconnected to human or divine existence in the Heideggerian sense of an apprehension of the phenomenology of being-in-time, is secondary. Once more the theologian does not (and cannot on Barth's view as it is expressed here) indulge in speculation either cosmological or philosophical. He must argue on the basis of the inner dialectic of eternity and time, as it is manifested in the contrast of Jesus' duration and consistent 'I am', with the fleeting, fragmented, 'fallen time' of human temporality.

We have seen that Barth's limiting argument precludes direct knowledge of time in the universe. His positive argument directed against this agnosticism is based in turn upon a rigorous scepticism. Barth is radical in the extreme: 'Illusion always results when we seek light on human nature from any other source than the man Jesus Christ'.²⁰ It is only possible to know our temporality as it is bound up in our humanity itself. It is only possible to know truly our own humanity as it is in Jesus Christ. There are, therefore, two waves of scepticism to be overcome before we can become aware of the truth. This is not a parody of Barth's argument but its very kernel. It is only in the positive assertion of revelation itself, Jesus Christ, that we may know humanity and thus time. We approach the core of Barth's argument and the touchstone of the problem of time in the Church Dogmatics.

'The anthropological truth with which we are here concerned may be combined with its christological basis in a first proposition which must occupy us in

20. Op.cit., p. 520.

this sub-section. It is that the existence of the man Jesus in time is our guarantee that time as the form of human existence is in any case willed and created by God, is given by God to man, and is therefore real.'

(CD III/2, p. 520)

This argument is not new for we have encountered such an assertion previously. What is remarkable is that it is combined with the specific sceptical agnosticism of Barth's overall position. He continues in the next paragraph to assert the primacy of Jesus' existence in time as not merely the paradigm of real time for us, but also we shall see, as the basis of our experience of such real time over against our own fleeting temporal existence.

'It is real. We are, therefore, in time. Time is not, therefore, the abyss of our non-being, however perverted and corrupt we may be in it. We have time. Threatened though we may be, we are not in time in such a way that it continually slips away into infinity and is therefore lost forever. Time is. It is the form of man's existence, the form of our existence. To be man is to live in time. Humanity is in time. This is involved in the fact that the being of man is his life, and that his life is reception and action, rule and service. If this life of his is real, so too is his time as the stage on which he lives out his being.'

(CD III/2, p. 521)

Although, according to Barth, we cannot assert the intrinsic temporality of the world of material objects it is possible on the other hand to believe in the reality of the 'stage' of human activity only because of the guarantee of the man Jesus in time. Barth proceeds to reinforce his argument. As we have seen the core of his position is that 'Humanity is temporality'. But what, we may justifiably ask, of time itself? Following the line set by the distinction of the ontological and the ontic we may ask whether we can speak of 'temporality' without establishing 'time'. At this

point Barth once again resorts to scepticism as aid in fending off possible speculation about time as such and he rapidly rehearses some of the standard arguments and metaphors in the analysis of time. Does time move? Do we move? Such questions all assume, so Barth thinks, a distinction between ourselves and time which is absurd. In fact given the background to this assertion it might equally well be argued that the only distinct and fully discrete realities in the whole scheme Barth elaborates are those of man and God, for external objects are either surmise or inferences or established with certainty only in the humanity of Jesus Christ. Barth argues:

'This much at least is certain - that it is as difficult to separate time as the form of our existence from ourselves as it is to separate ourselves from time. All such abstractions are as absurd as the separation of body and soul.'

(CD III/2, p. 552)

Barth's position is anti-metaphysical and anti-speculative²¹ and this is consistent with what he has said earlier in the Church Dogmatics. Given his overall aim, which is to articulate the logic of divine revelation and to establish this exposition on the basis of its reality, then his efforts with regard to time are again consistent. Unfortunately for Barth this inner consistency strikes difficulties when he argues about time. We have noted in the earlier parts of this study that time was a category shared by both divine and human existence, but which beyond this called into question

21. Barth thinks out with rigour the implications of his own theological stance which is structured by its own ontological presuppositions as we have seen in this study. This involves a rejection of extraneous abstractions.

wider issues because of its very nature. To be precise, temporal assertions made within theology have implications beyond the immediate area of theological explanation. This is what Barth is facing as a dilemma. Either he is to maintain the unity and integrity of a pure theology of the Word of God made flesh, which cannot but be explained upon its own terms, or he has to accept that theological explanation of the problem of time has to relate to other understandings of time. The first alternative can only be sustained by the divine-human account of time as purely 'temporality', that is an account generated out of contrasting phenomenologies which in turn imply particular ontologies. If this is maintained then the following critical argument may be pressed. Given the exclusive source of knowledge about human nature (the man Jesus Christ) and if this 'flesh' is understood as man's God-relatedness alone, then it is sustainable to argue that in Jesus alone there is this perfect representation of humanity. Once Barth speaks of time as perfectly represented in him then we may consistently ask if all 'real' attributes of human existence and by inference those of the objective world are so present in him.

The problem which underlies this is that which we have noted before in relation to the doctrine of creation. What is the ontological status of creation in the ontology of the Church Dogmatics in the face of the overwhelming reality of the Word of God Jesus Christ? The ambiguity we encounter is in respect of the created order. Jesus Christ may be seen as on the one hand the source of the true reality of time, but on the other hand he appears as the sign of the true

reality, causing us to recognise the truth about the time in which we have our being. The difference is great because if the former is true then all true realities must be derivable from Jesus Christ, but if the latter is true then he comes merely as the corrector of misconception. Is the world fallen or merely our perception of it as manifested in our experience of 'fallen time'?

This construction of Barth's dilemma is not contrived. His exclusion of consideration of 'time' per se is not derived from the nature of revelation itself (which would be consistent with his fundamental theological method) but is based upon an agnosticism emanating from his use of traditional sceptical arguments which are in turn drawn from speculation about cosmic, not theological realities. Barth uses the 'intimate relation' between man and time to exclude consideration of time itself, except insofar as it is temporality, that is 'being in time'. These two basic arguments are of great importance.

'Humanity is temporality. Temporality, as far as our observation and understanding go, is humanity. The first of these two statements is clear. However we may interpret it, human life is that movement from the past through the present into the future. Human life means to have been, to be, and to be about to be. Human life means to be temporal. The second statement is not so clear. But at any rate we do not know what we are really saying when we ascribe to "temporality" a different content from "humanity". We cannot espouse with confidence even the more modest statement that the concept of temporality might have other contents.'

(CD III/2, p. 522)

Barth is operating a formidable reverse form of 'Ockham's razor' eliminating those aspects of time which are to him theologically unnecessary or embarrassing. It

has been established for better or worse that Barth's account of time is based upon the opposition of human and divine 'temporality'; this latter being understood in the sense of 'being in time', a phenomenological ontology. Ontological questions which move beyond this circumscribed area are precluded for reasons we have rehearsed. All that is to follow in our exposition presupposes this foundation which we consider to be of crucial importance in our exposition and analysis of the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics.

Barth continues with a justification of the approach we have outlined based upon the intrinsically temporal nature of man's relation to God and to other men.

'What God and my fellow-men are to me, they are in the history of their being and action, and therefore in the time they have for me. And what I am to God and to my fellow-man, I am in the history of my being and acting, and therefore in my time, to the extent that in some way I am in my time for them.'
(CD III/2, p. 522)

Barth again denies that we can know time is intrinsic to the being of plants and animals because there is no analogy between man's relationship to God and that relation that exists between man and the natural order. We know with certainty that our relationship with God is 'temporal' for 'What we must know is that it is essential to us, that it belongs to our nature, to live in time, as is conclusively proved when we recall our relationship to God and to our fellow-man'.²² This 'certainty' is opposed to the 'inference and conjecture' which is the only basis upon which we may ascribe time to the 'being of plants and animals and the rest of the universe'. Immediately Barth specifies

22. CD III/2, p. 522.

the relation of God to his 'creatures' (i.e. man) in a combination of actualist and personalist categories. This basis has been encountered previously in our study. The combination of God's temporality and his relation to us provides an indispensable key to understanding the Church Dogmatics. Let us analyse this briefly.

God's relationship to his creatures (again we must specify that this means men) is not a 'permanent, universal relation' like that existing between finite and infinite, matter and spirit and so on but is a 'necessary action in its concrete particularity'.²³ for,

'The God of Holy Scripture does not hover motionless above the flux of human history, above the times with their kaleidoscopic variety, above the passage of each individual from yesterday through to-day and into to-morrow. God accompanies them in person.'
(CD III/2, p. 523)

Suffice it to say that Barth's assertion of the actual and the personal and his denial of what we might term the objective and ontological (that is the 'ontic) factors is an approach open to the reductio ad absurdum of R.W. Hepburn.²⁴ If, however, Barth were to have asserted the first aspects of the divine-human relation but have remained uncommitted upon the second, then his account would have been far easier

23. Op.cit., p. 523.

24. Christianity and Paradox, London, 1968, Cf. Chapter V, 'Meaning and Mediator'. The argument of this thesis is that the particularity of Jesus Christ (which is used as the focus of all theological assertions as abstractions cashed out into statements concerning this man in this situation) is precisely underlaid by an ontology and unified doctrine of time. Thus D.M. MacKinnon's illuminating analogy based upon Bertrand Russell's injunction (that 'Whenever possible, let us substitute logical constructions out of the observable for inferred, unobserved entities') is only a partial characterisation of the structure and method of Barth's thought.

to sustain. What Barth's work inaugurates is an acute need to return to consideration of cosmological and objective ontological questions as is evidenced in the work of T.F. Torrance. Barth has shown inadvertently the acute difficulties which result from a theological method which bases itself upon the expanded, but ultimately limited and isolated categories of the personal and the actual with respect to both God and man. The net result is the need to derive all other categories from these basic elements or, alternatively, to explain other categories through these by a 'cashing out' procedure. Thus it is with time that a huge structure underlying the whole of the Church Dogmatics is built upon several limited concepts of time and eternity which have to perform a formidable series of tasks in binding together God and man. The concrete, massive and apparently solid structure has its potential weaknesses but these only become clear when we probe the basis upon which this is built. Barth's achievement is breath-taking but its fundamental ambiguity is systematic and therefore extremely difficult to detect. Once located, however, the ambiguity of reality in creation and in Christ and the construction of an architectonic of time exclusively upon the basis we have outlined must cause us to look upon Barth's Church Dogmatics from a new angle, which reveals both its strengths, and unfortunately, its undoubted weaknesses.

We may now begin to examine Barth's development of the consequences of his primary positive arguments concerning the 'inextricable unity of man and time'. In confirmation of our exploration of this Barth reasserts the integral nature

of his anthropology of man as spirit and of man as temporal. From these primal facts the other theological factors emanate. We cannot think of human nature without thinking of time. Beyond this we cannot escape time as it manifests itself as our own temporality. Above all Barth argues we cannot reverse the time-process. The inescapability of time suggests that 'time as the form of existence is no less ordained by a higher power than existence itself'.²⁵ Now, in the context of his fundamental method Barth advances an argument working towards a new natural theology. This is a natural theology fulfilling the theological ontology of the Church Dogmatics from within. Barth offers an account which is a combination of factors derived from what he conceives of as human experience of time and the evidence of revelation which confirms this. In fact there is a confirmation (by the removal of illusion and misconception) of nature by grace. Again the ambiguity of this account is whether the time of Jesus Christ confirms or re-creates, whether it merely removes an illusion or actually restores time itself.

Barth proceeds to elaborate a theological exposition which clearly adheres to what we have called the 'confirmation' view.

'The presence and gift of God cannot, therefore, be ignored in this matter if we are to think of human nature. For it is in virtue of the presence and gift of God that temporality belongs to human nature. All man's unbelief, error and superstition cannot alter this original relationship of God to him or its far-reaching implications. Unbelief, error and superstition certainly involve a misuse of time given by

25. CD III/2, p. 525.

the presence and gift of God. By means of them man may very well compromise himself. His being in time may acquire the character of dissipation and corruption. But it cannot be destroyed. For God Himself, His presence and gift, cannot be abrogated or destroyed. Time as the form of human existence is always in itself and as such the silent but persistent song of praise to God.'

(CD III/2, p. 525)

Time is not merely on the one hand the form of human existence created and willed by God for man (however he may pervert this). In Barth's words 'Time, then is willed and created by God as the form at any rate of human existence', but on the other hand time is also,

'In all its hiddenness it is the rustling of the Holy Spirit by which, however deaf to it we may be, we are surrounded in virtue of the fact that we are in the movement of time and are obliged to make this movement in and with our own life, so long as we have it. And in the modest garment of time, this mere form of our existence, given in such sovereign freedom, we are actually confronted by the presence and gift of God's grace. If we are to speak of pre-venient grace it is difficult to see in what better form it may be better perceived and grasped than in the simple fact that time is given to us men.'

(CD III/2, p. 526)

Thus Barth understands time as not solely the arena of the historical outworking of the covenant but as also the bearer of the reality of the Holy Spirit dynamically present to man. This view of the Holy Spirit (which is a combination of the doctrines of Athanasius and Basil in a positive development by Barth) brings us towards the consummation of his analysis. As a purely dogmatic account Barth's summary is quite unexcelled. It is only when we consider this in the context of wider issues that we become aware of potential difficulties. The theological doctrine of time is built upon the foundations we have outlined and in particular the relation of time and eternity. Within the

limitations of his scheme Barth provides a degree of integration and comprehensiveness unrivalled in the history of Christian theology. It is only when we begin to examine the relation of this theological time to other 'times', as for instance in the world-order outside immediate the theological rationale, that doubts may arise. We quote Barth's summary at length for it demonstrates both strength and weakness of the Church Dogmatics.

'Time, then, is willed and created by God as the form at any rate of human existence. A few words of explanation are needed here. Time is not eternity. Eternity itself is not timeless. It is the simultaneity and co-inherence of past, present and future. Thus eternity is the dimension of God's own life, the life in which he is self-positing and self-sufficient as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is this in contrast to time as the dimension of our life - the dimension in which past, present and future follow in succession. Eternity is not created. Eternity is God Himself. For as God is self-existent, He is also His own dimension. But time is willed and created by God as a reality distinct from Himself. It is willed and created as the universe is willed and created, and in the universe man. It is willed and created to be our dimension, corresponding to His. This must obviously mean that God willed and created time as the dimension of the life He ordained for us when we were willed and created, and therefore as the dimension of a life in communion with Himself as the eternal and living God, and also in relationship with our fellow men, to whom He has given that same dimension for the same life in communion with Himself. Time was in fact willed and created in order that there might take place His dealings in the covenant with man, which finds its counterpart in the relationship between man and his fellows. It is for this reason and in this sense that time is the form of our existence. As our existence is not an end in itself, neither is time as its form. It is our time and we have it only to the extent that we belong to God, i.e., to the God who turned to us even in His eternity. It is ours and we have it only to the extent that as our time it rests in His hands, from which beginning to end are of course at work for us. It is this sense and to this extent that time is given to us, and this mighty ordinance of time, which we can only accept as such, is as we receive and possess it a hymn of praise to God, a proclamation of His mighty acts, the hidden rustling of the Holy Spirit, the garment and form of

the grace in which God wills to meet us. Everything depends upon the fact that God willed and created time for this purpose.'

(CD III/2, p. 527)

Thus Barth concludes the analysis of the basis of man's temporality which gives rise in experience to his understanding of time. In this passage we see most of the elements that have been examined in the course of this thesis which all contribute to Barth's understanding of time. Time is both the theatre of the man's acts and those of God. It is thus the realm and medium of both 'nature' and 'grace'. In short, time as the 'form of our existence' and the 'garment and form of grace' is a manifestation of the theological unity informing the structure of the Church Dogmatics. The category of divine-human temporality is a shared, though inwardly distinct reality which is intrinsic to both God and man. This doctrine of time has implications developed far beyond those in Barth's understanding of space, and it has a role of very great importance, study of which leads us to the very heart of the Church Dogmatics.

Having established to his satisfaction both the nature of time as it is in the being of Jesus Christ (in Jesus, Lord of Time, the subject of our last Chapter) and the time of man as he experiences it in his being in time (in Given Time which we have just been examining) Barth now presents a combination of the two in describing man as the subject of revelation. The basic theological impulse underlying this is concisely presented in the following short passage which illustrates the ambivalence of time as manifestation of human fallenness and bearer of grace.

'Its secret is the will and act of God - the Creator who will not be thwarted or confused by human sin, but remains faithful to Himself and therefore to us in defiance of sin and its consequences. The dangers to which the reality of our time is exposed may bewilder and terrify us, as indeed they must. But they do not invalidate the truth of His presence and gift.'

(CD III/2, p. 527)

Once more Barth uses the threefold pattern which he considers expresses the fundamental form of time as present, past and future. Thus he begins again with the present. Man's present is a 'crossing of the frontier between the past and future'. Is this present real or a dream perhaps? I recollect the 'Now' of the past and I anticipate the 'Now' of the future. My life in time is structured with reference to the present as its base-point.

'In other words from the standpoint of the present I always see and understand my being in time as the totality of the previous and subsequent times now distinguished by me and meeting in my Now; and I always see and understand my past and my future, and therefore the totality of my being in time, as a present like my actual present. But is this present real? And if not what about my whole being in time?'

(CD III/2, p. 528)

Outdoing the sceptics who find refuge in the 'I am' of the present Barth denies them even this unsure foothold, for 'the present is without duration or extension'. Left on our own Barth argues that we have no basis for our present in time. 'But we are not left to our own resources in this matter if we have reason to believe that the will and act of God are the secret of our time, of our being in it, and therefore of our being in the present moment, in each present Now'.²⁶ It is not our intention to evaluate the particular

26. Dp.cit., p. 528.

philosophical merit of Barth's preliminary arguments for they are not designed to be conclusive but cumulative and, moreover, they are subordinate to an overall theological purpose within the Church Dogmatics. Barth alludes to Schleiermacher's contention that 'we are eternally in every moment', this detemporalises man's being and attributes to man an eternal being that can only be postulated of God. If only, Barth exclaims, Schleiermacher had spoken of the eternity of God and not of man.²⁷ Barth's primary purpose is to show how time is underpinned by God's eternity and this of course means that the core of time, man's ungraspable present, has to undergo transformation. Thus Barth argues that the present, 'the basic form of our time as a whole', is as we have seen 'without duration or extension, disappearing as soon as it comes'. Over against this deficient present, this fleeting 'now' Barth argues:

'Primarily, however, it is not we who are now but God who is now: God who created us and is process of rescuing and preserving us; God who is not dismayed at our sin, and does not cease to be for us, nor reverse our determination to be for Him and in mutual fellowship; God in all the defiance of our unfaithfulness by His own faithfulness. He is now primarily; and we secondarily.'

(CD III/2, p. 529)

God 'is now properly' but we are 'improperly in relation to Him' because 'He is in His self-existence and self-repose; we "pass hence, and wander from one year to another".'²⁸ The dynamic of God's eternity is in his being

27. Op.cit., p. 628-9.

28. Op.cit., p. 529.

as Creator and as the One who actively loves man. Thus we do not find God in static or passive relation to man's time (as we have seen it is not in Barth's view a relation of finite and infinite, matter and spirit and so on) but a lively relationship.

'He is now as Creator. But this means that there is first a divine stepping from the past to the future. This is His present. We speak of His eternity, in which the past is not "no longer" nor the future "not yet", in which therefore the Now has duration and extension. It is in His eternity that God is now. But we do not speak of God's abstract eternity, but of the eternity of His free love, in which He takes and will take time for our sakes, in which He wills to be for us and also wills that we should be for Him and therefore in mutual fellowship. That God is now means that all this is now the meaning of a divine stepping from the past to the future, of a divine Word spoken now, of a divine action performed now.'

(CD III/2, p. 529)

Barth proceeds to affirm the distinction of relation and relationship in his immediate denial of both 'abstract eternity' as well as 'abstract time'. His account insofar as it is abstracted is basically phenomenological and developed in conjunction with purely theological postulates.

'And now we continue that there is also - in relationship from the very first to what God is and does - our human stepping from the past to the future. This is our present in our time, in which the past is no more and the future not yet and therefore the Now is that middle point between the two with neither duration nor extension.'

(CD III/2, p. 529)

Once more at this juncture the objection might well be put to Barth that by asserting this two-sided doctrine of the fleeting present (under-pinned by the Now and the theological doctrine of God implied in this relationship) but denying on the other hand 'abstract' temporal speech he is falling once more into a sophisticated subjectivity. In

this we do not imply that God and men are mere 'objects' but that relational language is inadequate if 'time' is to be understood not merely as the relational schemata of God and man's acts, but as one of the fundamental characteristics of the cosmos and the history of world activity.

The account we have outlined culminates in a complex series of arguments which we are bound to expound at length and comment upon. This complexity does not reflect any great virtue in Barth's thought at this point because there is at work a double dialectic. He has to assert the Now of God's eternity as the basis of our time yet deny its actual detectability as an experiential datum. This interpretation may sound both aggressive and radical but when we examine Barth's thought with care we see this to be the truth out of which emerges a new and exciting doctrine of divine and human temporality to be seen in the following passage.

'That we are in the present means that we are in the present of the gracious, judging, commanding will and action in which He has turned wholly to us, but claims us wholly for Himself, for fellowship with Him, and therefore for human fellowship. It is in doing this that He gives us time, and first of all the present, and what the present is in our time, that moment between the times which is without duration or extension. It is our past on the basis of His, in His and for His. That is why it takes the form it does. That is why it is a stepping from the past to the future. That is why it means a leaving of the past which is "no longer" and a grasping of the future which is "not yet". And finally that is why it is in itself only that frontier and our crossing of that frontier and therefore apparently nothing intrinsically its own. That God is present to us is what fills our present: from the past, for He is not "no longer", into the future, for He is not "not yet"; and therefore also in the centre, because His movement from the past into the future has the duration and extension which escape our own Now. That I

am now - with all the inescapable problems which this involves - means that as I am continually there in movement from my past to my future, I am referred wholly to Him and cast back upon Him, upon His being in time addressed to me. Without Him, without the fact that He is for me, I should have no time and therefore, since I can be only in time, I should not be at all. The very fact that I am now far from giving that boastful certainty of my real being, would then show me only that I am in process of sinking into nothingness. But I really am now because God is, and is first, and is not only for Himself but for me. Because God loves me without cause or merit, I am now. And I can add with confidence, and with a precision of which the prophets of "I am" have not the slightest inkling, that because God loves me I really am now, and really have time as I have it. I do not sink into a void, although I still have that great "no longer" behind me and the great "not yet" in front of me, and although I have only the unstable moment, the ice-floe of the present, beneath my feet. If I have God (or rather, if God has me), I need no more. I have space and therefore time. Time is given me, and with all the certainty and solidity that I could desire because it is given me directly by Him, because, as I am in time in this way, I have to do with Him, and therefore with eternity as the fount and sum and source of all time. His presence as such is the gift of my time. He Himself pledges both its reality and its goodness. I am His creature. All I need to be this is time. Only if I want to be as God can I desire more, and suffer and sigh and complain because I only have time, and my now has the remarkable form of this transition. Only if I had to be a creature without God should I have to regard this transition as my destruction. But I am a creature under God and with Him. I have time. I have my now in the form in which I need it. I am where I may live neither threatened by illusion nor enmeshed in falsehood, i.e., in real time, in the present of God. Tersteegen is right after all: "Content, is he, who hath Thee, Whose spirit to Thee cleaveth, Every yearning leaveth."²⁹

(CD III/2, pp. 530-531.)

In Barth's doctrine of time there is the temporal correlate of the veiled and unveiledness of revelation encountered in the early volumes of the Church Dogmatics.²⁹

29. The assertions in this paragraph are justified by the foregoing analysis in this thesis which has demonstrated the integral nature of Barth's understanding of time in his theological thought.

Thus the assertion of revelation is made in and through the worldly particularity of the Word of God in Jesus Christ, but as in the other forms of the Word of God, we cannot point to God ourselves as only he can cause us to witness to him in the acknowledgement that is the knowledge of faith. Likewise with regard to the passage we have just quoted, time is undertaken by eternity, in asserting this we do not postulate an observable state of affairs. On cursory examination this might not seem to be the case as the careless reader might imagine that the 'Now' of God's eternity actually altered our perception of our own time or time itself (however this is conceived). In fact what we are witnessing is a transformation in Barth's thought, for the very opacity and unsatisfactory nature of this crucial passage seen from the standpoint of the dialectic of scepticism and theological ontology gives way to a new understanding of time. Granted the provisos that we have laid out earlier in this chapter (which trace Barth's apparent tendency towards a separation of the 'phenomenological' from the 'ontological', i.e., the 'ontic') we find a new aspect to Barth's doctrine of time. This is profoundly dynamic, offering both (in terms of Heideggerian categories) an 'existential' horizon of enhanced dimensions, as well as a sharp impulse towards the grasping of actual 'existentiell' possibilities. The 'is' of God's time constitutes a great 'ought' of commitment.

God provides 'His movement from the past into the future' which has 'the duration and extension which escape

our Now'.³⁰ God's 'present' is not static as we might have expected from that facet of Barth's doctrine of eternity which stresses the abrogation of the 'before and after' in the distinction of 'past, present and future'. On the contrary God's present is precisely the movement from past to future which is given us in time and which prevents our lives from sinking into nothingness. Although 'I have only the unstable moment, the ice-flow of the present, beneath my feet' and the past and the future lie irretrievably after and before me God nevertheless gives my time 'certainty and solidity'.³¹ This is not because God effects some material or metaphysical or even phenomenological change in my time but because he 'pledges both its reality and its goodness'.³² In reality God's time is a promise to us that our time is not merely the devouring Chronos of mythology or the passage we make to constant annihilation. God's 'presence as such is the gift of my time'³³ and in the light of this I do not have to regard this transition (in the now of the movement from past to future) as my destruction. Thus God's temporality, that is eternity, does not annihilate time or eternalise it into timelessness but allows us to live assured that our own time is the time that God has willed for us because he is fully temporal in the three tenses. In this passage Barth is striving to eliminate the

30. CD III/2, p. 530.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

dualism of the western tradition by the assertion of a divine temporality that is the affirmation of our time understood within the framework of a truly Christian faith and theology.

It is because of this that Barth can say 'I have my now in the form in which I need it. I am where I may live neither threatened by illusion nor enmeshed in falsehood, i.e., in real time, in the present of God'.³⁴ God's time assures us that 'God loves me as I really am now, and really have time as I have it'.³⁵ Contrary to those expectations engendered in us by the Platonic tendency in most theological speculation about time, influenced by the notion of the eternal 'Now' or present, Barth is now arguing for a fully temporal and dynamic doctrine of God's eternity. This is the temporal culmination of the whole Church Dogmatics, for as we have seen there are a variety of strands of thought on eternity and time which are now united in the creative healing of human time. Again we quote at length to secure Barth's insights without distortion.

'We next ask concerning the significance of the fact that man is always now. We have seen that all human being, action and experience is either now or else unreal. Even as past and future it can be understood as a totality only in relation to the present, as a past or present now. We are always in this transition. Our own reality depends upon the reality of this transition. And this transition, and therefore the Now in which we are, is real as and because the present of the eternal God as the Creator of time is the secret of our present. What is this transition, then, but the offer, the summons, the invitation, to be with God now, to be present with Him, to make this transition with Him, recognising that He always precedes us, not without us, but for us and on our

34. Op.cit., p. 531.

35. Op.cit., p. 530.

behalf? He always does this now. This is what gives our present its distinctive weight, but also its distinctive lightness; its distinctive seriousness, but also its distinctive radiance. God is primarily and continually present. He is always the same, yet always new, always with a particular offer and summons, always with a particular invitation. In this way, in this particularity, God's present is the secret of our own. It is not merely like the dominant undertone of a painting, or the sustained basic note at the beginning of the St. Matthew Passion. It always has its own particular sound, character and lustre. It is the present of the living God, not of an exalted but static picture of God. And this means that our present is not like the millions of identical oscillations of the clock with which we measure it. It would be like this if we had to live it without God, if our present were lost time, if it were not real but non-existent. The fact that the living God is present makes our present not only real but weighty and therefore important. It encloses the mystery of what God has for us now, of what He has to say to us, to allow, to command us, to give us. It encloses the opportunity which He wills to be realised in and through us now. It encloses, therefore, the mystery of the grateful response we now owe to Him and in consequence to our fellow-men.'

(CD III/2, p. 531)

In consequence of this special present Barth further argues that 'Only now can we see how significant it is that my Now, in its particular relation to the past and future, is an opportunity which comes only once and then, perceived or grasped or not, passes never to return'.³⁶ As we shall see in our third and final chapter on 'Man in his Time' Barth's analysis offers the opportunity of being towards life and choice as against the negative inevitability of the Heideggerian analytic. In the passage we have just quoted Barth has discovered the 'present of the living God' and by so doing supplants the dualistic understanding of the relation of eternity and time by the fundamentally Christian

36. Op.cit., p. 531.

mystery of the divine presence demanding response in trust and faith.

God's being in time is not static for, as we have seen it is a 'movement', divine transition in temporality from past to future. Beyond this, however, God's presence has 'particular moments, *καιροι*, in His being, speech and action in relation to us; moments which continually come and go'.³⁷ In consequence God's time demands decision as the response of man for 'Now we must step out and act as the men we really are'.³⁸ God's 'Now' is by its very structure an imperative and an opportunity not an invitation to mystical or pietistic escape into passivity.

This passage presents to us a major nodal point in Barth's thought on time, not because the concomitant doctrine of God is absent earlier in the Church Dogmatics but because here we find a departure from accepted categories of analysis. There is a radical appropriation of a theological ontology which attempts, through the phenomenological structure of time to comprehend the relation of man and God as a relationship of intersubjectivity, conditioned and indeed constituted according to the fundamental postulates of the New Testament temporal structures. Whatever reservations we may have about the problem of the relation of the time of the cosmos and God, it can be truly said that this account is the most thoroughly emancipated account of time in theological thought yet to have emerged, struggling to shake

37. Op.cit., p. 532.

38. Ibid.

off the remaining alien philosophical shackles of Platonic dualism and idealist reductionism. The limitations of this analysis made by Barth are manifest as we have seen, but despite this many strands are woven into his understanding of time and eternity providing a truly outstanding synthesis and integrated theory of time.

In these pages of Given Time there is presented a new understanding of divine temporality. Out of the negative and sceptical arguments of the initial paragraphs there emerged a doctrine of time as affirmative encounter and opportunity in a living present of divine transition and transformation of time.

There is a strong parallel between the transition that Barth effects and that to which Heidegger alludes between the thought of Hegel in the Phenomenology of Mind and his own analysis of time in Being and Time.³⁹ According to Heidegger, Hegel argued that,

"Time, as the negative unity of Being-outside-of-itself, is likewise something simply abstract, ideal. It is that Being which, in that it is is not, and which, in that it is not, is: it is intuited becoming. This means that those differences which, to be sure, are simply momentary, transmuting themselves immediately, are defined as external, yet as external to themselves." For this interpretation, time reveals itself as "intuited becoming". According to Hegel this signifies a transition from Being to nothing or from nothing to Being. Becoming is both arising and passing away. Either Being "makes the transition", or not-Being does so. What does this mean with regard to time? The Being of time is the "now". Every "now", however, either "now"-is-no-longer, or now is not-yet; so it can be taken also as not-Being. Time is "intuited" becoming - that is to say, it is to say, it is the transition which does not get thought but simply tenders itself in the sequence of

39. This is made clear on pages 482-86 of Being and Time, Blackwell, Oxford, 1967.

"nows". If the essence of time is defined as "intuited becoming", then it becomes manifest that time is primarily understood in terms of the "now", and indeed in the very manner in which one comes across such a "now" in pure intuition.'

(Being and Time, pp. 482-3)

The resultant synthesis in Hegel between the eroded past and future and the eternalised 'now' of the present suggests a very strong affinity with the thought of Barth as we have analysed it above in this chapter. Again Heidegger analyses Hegel and reveals even more clearly the close affinities with Barth's attempt to synthesise a temporal thesis and antithesis, an attempt overcome by a radically new approach as in Being and Time.

'That Hegel interprets time in terms of this primary orientation by the "now" which has been levelled off, is evidenced by the following sentences: "The 'now' is monstrously privileged: it 'is' nothing but the individual 'now'; but in giving itself airs, this thing which is so exclusive has already been dissolved, diffused, and pulverised, even while I am expressing it." "In Nature, moreover, where time is now, no 'stable' (bestehend) difference between these dimensions" (past and future) "ever comes about". "Thus in a positive sense one can say of time that only the Present is; the 'before' and 'after' are not; but the concrete Present is the result of the past and pregnant with the future. Thus the true Present is eternity."'

(Being and Time, p. 483)

There is a close parallel here with the structure of Barth's argument. What is even more crucial is that a further factor emerges. Not only do we have the dialectic of becoming (the demise of past and future under attack and the assertion of the eternal present in the Church Dogmatics, which is subjected to an even more ruthless attrition by Barth, as he demonstrates in turn the insubstantiality of this conception) but also a transformation of the understanding of time, a veritable renewal of fundamentals. Is

it not the case that in the passage of the Church Dogmatics we have just analysed, Given Time, we find an ontology presupposed in the very possibility of temporal existence? Thus Heidegger argues for a basis similar in categorial structure to that of Barth, although of course with disparate development and conclusions.

'Our existential analytic of Dasein, on the contrary (i.e. to that of Hegel), starts with the "concretion" of factually thrown existence itself in order to unveil temporality as that which primordially makes such existence possible. "Spirit" does not first fall into time, but it exists as the primordial temporalising of temporality. Temporality temporalises world-time, within the horizon of which "history" can "appear" as historizing within-time. "Spirit" does not fall into time; but factual existence "falls" as falling from primordial, authentic temporality. (Macquarrie here notes the difference between Hegel's verb "fallen" and Heidegger's "verfallen") This "falling" ('Fallen'), however, has itself its existential possibility in a mode of its temporalizing - a mode which belongs to temporality.'

(Being and Time, p. 406)

There remains, despite the new basis of the relation of man's time and God's time in the Church Dogmatics, the problem of world time and the time of the cosmos in its spatio-temporal continuum. Neither the Heideggerian nor Barthian re-comprehension of time moves beyond the ontological to the ontic (in this very extensive sense of time as a cosmic reality bound up with the fabric and possibilities of modern post-Einsteinian science). The great positive quality of this step forward (found in the parallel we have drawn between Heidegger and Barth) lies in the possibility of a new and positive understanding of God's existence as temporal, that is God's eternity as fundamentally creative and affirmative rather than negative or timeless. It remains true that the core of this transformation is valuable

and positive, but as long as cosmic time and reality apart from man remain assumptions (Heidegger), or the product of theological inference and conjecture (Barth), acute problems remain for the Christian doctrines of creation and eschatology as well as contemporary providence. Again the hint of Being and Time⁴⁰ at such an understanding of God's temporal being, which is developed by O. Pöggeler⁴¹ and used by Schubert M. Ogden⁴² in an article of exemplary brilliance, is a further indication of an extensive, even if implicit response on Barth's part, to the atheistic ontology of Heidegger. Once more Barth reacts to both an ally and an opponent without explicit or ostentatious reference, but, as with Augustine, the scale of the encounter in the later sections of the Church Dogmatics with which we are now engaged is both pervasive and profound.

In a final exultant set of statements Barth fuses these factors around his daring but much contested union of Gospel and Law in which we see the identity of creation and reconciliation. With the following comments we turn to a brief consideration of the past and future as they are expounded in Given Time. This will conclude our analysis of the inner structure of time as it is presented in this subsection and lead to the final expository chapter in which we will examine Barth's account of the bounds of time as the horizon of man's being.

'This, then, is how the present is filled. It is real. And from this we are entitled to conclude that

40. Op.cit., p. 499, note xiii, (English translation).

41. Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers, Pfullingen, 1963.

42. 'The Temporality of God', in The Reality of God, London, 1967.

all our time is real, that we are really in time, that we really have time. God's presence and gift creates, delivers and sustains this reality, this means judgement and grace. This is the mystery of the whole Gospel and the whole Law. But this means that though we are sinners who have forfeited our time, and indeed ourselves, we are not lost, but as we were created, so we are sustained and delivered.'

(CD III/2, p. 532)

A number of constructions might be put upon this final paragraph on the present in Given Time. In this chapter it has been understood as creating the basis of a fundamental innovation which stands in the Church Dogmatics overlaid by the residue of original materials and the accumulated preconceptions of Barth's interpreters, awaiting exploration and development.

We shall now embark upon some concluding exposition and comments concerning the 'past' and the 'future'. My present perishes in passing into the past. Memory or oblivion may be used against this loss but neither offers a real remedy. Barth maintains that we attempt to re-create the past in memory or consign it to oblivion seeking the future exclusively. 'But we are not dependent on ourselves if we accept the fact that the will and act of God are the meaning and ground of our being in time'.⁴³ Indeed our past is given substance because 'God also has been'.

'For there is a Then, a genuine past, in God's eternity, as surely as it is the eternity of the living God. Of course no lines are drawn there. The past is not left behind, nor does it fade. The God who was, is now, and ever shall be. It is in the coinherence of past, present, and future that His eternity is original, authentic and creative time.'

(CD III/2, p. 536)

43. CD III/2, p. 535.

This argument raises once more the issue of eternal simultaneity over which we shall not linger at this stage. Barth's primary postulate that informs the whole of this sub-section is that 'If our whole time is the gift of God, then God also pledges to maintain its reality as a whole'.⁴⁴ So the argument follows a pattern established previously with regard to the present which is summed up in the assertion that 'The truth is that we may really have our time as given by God; our whole time, even in its character as past and passing time'.⁴⁵ God's love is constant as 'He loved us in our time then, and because He has not ceased to do so, we are real even in that time'.⁴⁶ God's judgment stands over the past and although he (that is God) never forgets, mercifully the imperfect memory of man draws a partial veil over the recollections of past consciousness.

Finally Barth turns to the future and once more casts doubt on our guarantees of future continuity of identity⁴⁷ for 'That step forward may be a step into the void, into the abyss'.⁴⁸ Once more we are presented with a choice which this time is flight or confrontation; we may be optimists or pessimists in face of the future and so on. Barth's systematic reply is parallel to that offered for the past.

'On the contrary, we can count on the fact that the will and act of God are the meaning and ground not only of our being in time generally, but also of our

44. Op.cit., p. 537.

45. Op.cit., pp. 537-8.

46. Op.cit., p. 538.

47. Op.cit., p. 541.

48. Op.cit., p. 542.

being in the future. True, the future stands at every moment under the question whether it will be our future, our time at all. But in the first instance it is not we who will be in the next moment, to-morrow, or a year hence. It is God, our Creator, Deliverer and Sustainer, who will still be for us and faithful to us.'

(CD III/2, p. 545)

Barth invites us to 'see the eternity of God, not abstractly, but as His eternity for our future'.⁴⁹ Thus in Barth's account all three tense dimensions of man's time are not alienated from each other and do not resolve into an eternal present or alternatively annihilation. On the contrary 'As created by God, human reality has been embraced by God and His covenant from all eternity'.⁵⁰

In terms of intensionality our existence in time is an affirmed even if not assured future allowing us to live 'unreflectively' for 'if this provokes concern, it is not our concern but God's. In contrast to Heidegger our concern⁵¹ is cast upon God and thus we may live today with 'little interest....in the things of tomorrow'.⁵² 'The only thing we can do with our anxiety for the future is to cast it resolutely upon God' as we can be secure in the knowledge 'That He constantly gives us life, and the time needed for it'.⁵³ Our terror of the future must therefore be transmuted into a fear of God because of the temporal

49. Op.cit., p. 545.

50. Op.cit., p. 546.

51. Translation of 'Sorge', Macquarrie renders this 'care' in Being and Time.

52. CD III/2, p. 547.

53. Op.cit., p. 548.

consequences of the truth that 'from all eternity (he) has been our Covenant-Partner and Friend'.⁵⁴ Human existence is restored through the rediscovery of the real-temporality of God's time which is trans-temporal from the standpoint of our fragmented and anxiety-fraught existence in time. In summary Barth argues:

'This then is how man is in the time given him by God; this is how he is before God in his present and moving from his past and into his future. The time which we have been considering in these three tenses is the time created by God. We have not been speaking of God's eternity, but of our time as God created it and gave it to us; yet not of what it must become and be on the presupposition of our alienation from God, but of the time as God gave it to man in creation, and constantly renews it in allowing him to live; of the time which as the form of his existence belongs no less to his natural reality than the fact that man is the soul of his body. Always against the background of God's eternity, we have tried step by step to isolate human time - the time created and given by God - from its distorted and obscured manifestation, and to study and present it in and for itself. We began with an analysis of time in the distorted and sinister form we know only too well; and we found that Hölderlin has the last word on that subject. We then proceeded to analyse time in the reality in which it may be seen as the time given us by God.'

(CD III/2, p. 551)

In the sub-section Given Time, Barth has offered an integration of the doctrines of Christology, creation and reconciliation within the area of time, thus effecting a transformation of philosophical and existential analyses of time. In Jesus as 'Lord of Time', God is eternal 'for us' and 'In Him God utters His gracious and saving contradiction of man without God and therefore of a concept of time without God, checking self-perverting and ignorant man and

54. Op.cit., p. 549.

arresting the development of all false and cheerless conceptions of time'.⁵⁵ In nuce, it is 'In Him we see ourselves as God willed and created us'⁵⁶ thereby demonstrating God's own constancy towards man in that he re-asserts 'the nature in which God has not ceased to see us, and which has not therefore ceased to be our true nature in spite of all the disruption and error caused by sin'.⁵⁷ The emptiness of time that we all too readily experience has been challenged and overcome by God himself in Jesus Christ and as 'Jesus is risen and is the Lord of time.... therefore we can say positively of man that in the true nature in which God sees him he is not destroyed, but he has real time and may live in it.'⁵⁸

Whatever we may say about the implications of the latter statement as soteriology it is possible to assert that it is only in virtue of Jesus' death and resurrection, his victory over contradiction that he is Lord of Time. This Lordship is the presupposition of Given Time and as Barth says, 'Christology gives rise to a definite anthropology in respect of the concept of time'.⁵⁹ In this way he binds the universality of God's time to the concrete particularity of Jesus Christ, whose time is in itself the overcoming of man's alienation from the truth of his own time, thus showing us that we have 'real time and may live

55. Op.cit., p. 552.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Op.cit., p. 553.

59. Op.cit., p. 552.

in it'. We cannot do better than quote Barth's summary at the end of Given Time. This reveals his purpose which we have attempted both to state in some detail, but also to penetrate beneath the obvious into the dialogue Barth conducts with other thinkers, so giving his monumental work both historical interest and contemporary significance.

'This conclusion, developed in our second analysis, rests on the promise given us in Jesus (i.e., the revelation of the truth about man's being in time), on His resurrection and Lordship over time. For on this depends the fact that we can relate man's time to God's eternity, and that God's eternity can and must be seen and understood as His eternity for us, God Himself as the Creator and Giver of our time, and therefore our being in time as a reality. All this depends on the reality of the divine being, intervention and work for us as it takes place in Jesus. All speculation - even that which is based on a perfect idea of God, let alone any other - will inevitably end in a vicious circle. But in theology we are not free to ignore the reality of this divine being, intervention and work, or to start our thinking at any other point. And if we make this our starting point, we shall find it possible and necessary, compelling and illuminating, to break through and invert the concept of time along the lines attempted. Yet we shall not forget that this starting point is not a formula to be adopted and appropriated at will, but an actual encounter with the reality to which theological presentation can only point.'

(CD III/2, p. 553)

This passage we have studied at length is of inestimable importance for the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics and, whilst not free from complex issues common to the whole architectonic, it reveals a radical and gripping re-interpretation of the problem of eternity and time constituted and conditioned by fundamental postulates of Christian theology. As such it is the culmination and fulfilment of those profound and pervasive theological and ontological impulses that we have traced from their inception

throughout the Church Dogmatics. In this full perspective we are able to see the mighty response Barth has made to the overall theological situation in which he found himself.

CHAPTER XI
 MAN IN HIS TIME:
 BOUNDED TIME

In the previous two chapters Christology and the anthropology of man in time has been examined in the order dictated by Barth's basic theological postulates. In this third and final chapter on the theology of time itself, and the corresponding understanding of human temporality, the consequences of the two earlier chapters will be discussed as they are developed in the final sections of Allotted Time, Beginning Time and Ending Time.¹ These are particularly concerned with 'time as it were from the outside, as the totality of that movement, as the succession of those moments of transition in which we continually come and go, continually leaving ourselves behind us and having ourselves before us'.²

The basis of this exposition is that man's time is allotted (befristete) and therefore bounded in duration. Man, however, protests against this and would wish his time, his life, to be 'an unfathomable, inexhaustible reality'.³ The problem that faces the theologian is how can man achieve legitimate fulfilment within the God-given bounds of his temporal finitude. This demand for fulfilment is not a mere striving after the infinite but an authentic reflection of man's createdness. 'Human life is ignorant of its own

1. Cf. CD III/2, pp. 553-640.

2. Op.cit., p. 554.

3. Op.cit., p. 555.

true nature when it accepts the fall as its original and authentic destiny, and therefore when it is not troubled by the demand for duration and finds no problem in the allotment of its time'.⁴

The theological reason for man's protest against the bounds placed on his existence is that human life is created by God and for him and in relationship to other men. As humanity and divinity are the 'original and authentic determination' of man then human life 'demands no less than perfection'.⁵ Barth distinguishes between 'an abstract craving for life' and the legitimate craving for 'duration'.⁶ Indeed man's desire does not stem from the experienced insufficiency of the human condition but the Word of God which reveals our two-fold determination. The reality of man's condition is not known to him outside knowledge of the Word of God but nevertheless a godless existence is intolerable to him. He demands perfection and 'What but an unlimited, permanent duration can be adequate for the fulfilment of this duration?'.⁷ Only within the theological circle is both the source of human dissatisfaction in its actual falsehood known and thus its removal and overcoming made possible. Once more Barth does not argue from incidental facts about the nature of human existence but from the Word of God as it has been conceived and expounded throughout the Church Dogmatics. To understand the limitations and the temporal freedom of man he

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Op.cit., p. 556.

7. Ibid.

does not therefore begin with an analysis of the human condition as does Heidegger but begins once more with the contrast of divine and human time which, as we have seen, underlies the whole theological architectonic.

Human life needs time as its dimension. This transcendental dimension of time has been asserted earlier and is now presupposed in Barth's exposition of God's time in its limitlessness over against man's limited time. The 'allotment' of man's time is not to be conceived from the standpoint of mortality but from the fundamental theological contrast between eternity and time. Thus we penetrate through the concentric rings of Barth's thought into the sphere of the truly ultimate which is the indication not merely of theological realities but of the ground of human existence to be found in faith alone.

'God also lives in His time. But His time is eternity, which has no fixed span, no margins, no other measure but Himself. Eternity is not time without beginning or end. Time is the mode of existence of the creature. To identify eternity with time without beginning or end would be to attribute to it an idealised form of creaturely existence. This would be wrong; for to say eternity is to say God. And God does not live in an idealised form of creaturely existence. God Himself is not only the ground and content but also the form of His existence. To the extent that He is His own form of existence He is eternal, and He is in eternity as in His time. When we say this, we say only that He is in Himself. Hence in His eternity He is indeed Creator of time, but as its Creator He is the One who was, and as such is and will be; who is and as such was and will be; who will be, and as such was and is. In His eternity He is beginning and middle and end. He is not, therefore, apart from all these. If He were, we should have another false definition of eternity. Eternity is not timelessness. It is beginning, middle and end in fullness, for it is all three simultaneously. It is always the first and second as it is also the third. Thus God is His own dimension. And this dimension underlies, conditions and includes that of His creature, so that that of His

creature is always His own, and where His creature is, He is also. But His dimension has no fixed span, no margins, no measure but Himself.'

(CD III/2, p. 558)

Man's life is in time and the fundamental feature of this is a contrasting set of limits. The following paragraph in relation to the above is of quite crucial importance in the Church Dogmatics, for through the central linguistic and conceptual contrast of duration and simultaneity Barth distinguishes time and eternity once more in a way that follows in essence the Boethian tradition, yet runs into philosophical difficulties when pressed.

'Man on the other hand lives in the time created and given him by God. If he were God and not man, the allotment of his time would not be a problem, for his time would not be allotted. For he would be eternal. But that is a dream, and a bad one at that. Since man is man and not God, and he is not therefore eternal, the dimension which he is left, and over which he has no control (as God has over His, because He is His own dimension), is created time, which in distinction from the eternity of the Creator has a beginning, middle and end which are not simultaneous but separate, distinct and successive, so that it has margins and a measure in its beginning and end, and is thus allotted time, the time between its beginning and end.'

(CD III/2, pp. 558-559)

It is, according to Barth, the entirely proper corollary of God's temporal aseity that human life should be bounded. The dimension of eternity is the expression of God's being in its life which is not only 'unfathomable and inexhaustible, but self-grounded and self-creative, welling up from within itself'.⁸ In contrast the time of man is the perfect expression of his creatureliness for 'The proper dimension for the life of the creature which is not

8. Op.cit., p. 559.

self-grounded or self-creative, welling up from within itself, but has its basis in the life of God, is the time in which beginning and end are distinct, and therefore constitute its boundaries'.⁹ Because man stands by virtue of his creation in relation with God he cannot be satisfied by an attitude to existence which has abandoned the demand 'that he should endure and burst the limits of temporality'.¹⁰ The true reason for this human discontent is the revealed truth of our createdness which gives man a 'promise, gift and task'.

Given that man desires unlimited or even infinite time rather than allotted time, then would infinite time ('enduring time without beginning or end') answer this human craving for duration and fulfilment? As Barth notes we have met this notion previously and it is 'the expression of the infinite embarrassment into which man without God is plunged by the question of the reality of his being in the present, past and future'.¹¹ To treat time as an endless process for the infinite development of human life would only be an adequate answer to this craving if the time available were indeed infinite and in fact guaranteed that it corresponded to God. This desire for 'long life' is expressed in the thought of Israel. In fact this desire for a longevity is frustrated firstly by the actual limitation of any man's time and, secondly, by the merely assumed congruence of everlasting life with the divine life. At this point Barth reverts to

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Op.cit., p. 560.

his transcendental exposition of time by asserting, in correspondence with what we have traced in our previous two chapters on time, that: 'Time is only the conditio sine qua non, only the indispensable opportunity, both for life itself, and for the realisation of its legitimate craving for duration and fulfilment'.¹² Crudely put, Barth is arguing for a reappraisal of time in qualitative rather than quantitative terms. Infinite time would mean only infinite opportunities for fulfilment not the opportunity for infinite fulfilment. In the light of revelation Barth can assert that 'No infinity of space or everlasting time can achieve or even guarantee this negation, this removal of restrictions, this realisation, which consists in the perfection of the relationship to God and fellow man to which it aspires'.¹³ Such an infinity of opportunity would be absolute unrest and 'life as an endless process'.

It is within the bounds of allotted time that final satisfaction must be sought but not in the series of opportunities with the persistent unsatisfied demand for duration and perfection. We must abandon abstraction and realise that God has given our time to us under the form of limitation. Having accepted that we have 'a limited life in an allotted span of time' we should therefore concern ourselves not with the limitations of our lives but the God who limits it. Our extreme frailty as 'vapour, sigh or flourishing and fading grass' is the truth of our condition over against

12. Op.cit., p. 561.

13. Ibid.

God, our 'beyond'.¹⁴ God is behind and before us and therefore our duration and perfection leads to him, not into a void. 'If we ask concerning the beyond...there is only One either behind or before us, either before our beginning or after our end. He, God, is this beyond'.¹⁵ With this assertion of the ultimacy of God as our 'beyond' we once more enter the theological circle of statements that are mutually justifying. In the ensuing pages of Allotted Time there is advanced an argument which raises a basic issue concerning fundamental ontology. Whereas the tension of time and eternity is bound up with the distinction of succession and duration (which is in turn related to distinct philosophical problems) the arguments that Barth develops on limitation and the unlimited cause us once more to consider the relation of theology qua theology and theology qua ontology. This pushes our reflections even further for in the final count we must discover what exactly is the role of time and eternity in the Church Dogmatics. On the one hand the use of the distinction of time and eternity forces us to consider the role of philosophical concepts in dogmatic theology, despite the overt but sophisticated biblicism of the Church Dogmatics. On the other hand the role of the temporal structure and interconnections in Barth's work when compared with other major theologians (in particular St. Thomas Aquinas), causes us to appreciate the difficulties into which a theology without metaphysical presuppositions may fall when it has

14. Op.cit., p. 564.

15. Ibid.

to offer an account of the traditional categories¹⁶ involved in an analysis of human and cosmic reality. There are thus two major problems which arise directly out of this study of the doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics: the first involving a comparison of Barth's theory of time and eternity with analogous arguments in philosophy; the second an overall assessment of the actual role assumed by time.

In the light of these comments we may now probe Barth's argument in Allotted Time which is both theological as well as being 'metaphysical'. Once more it is the fusion of both elements which causes us to question the very foundations of the Church Dogmatics as a presentation of divine revelation as it is made known in Jesus Christ. In our comments upon this series of arguments we shall adumbrate on a small scale a criticism potentially applicable to the whole theory of time in the Church Dogmatics. In doing this we begin to explore the second line of comparison alluded to above, in which we attempt to assess the role of time as a whole.

'And we shall see Him indeed as the One in relation to whom our life has its limit and our time is allotted.

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16. In this chapter a broad comparison is drawn between a theology in which 'substance' (this of course is not a simple notion) and one in which a purely theological ontology is employed. In relation to this it is necessary to account for the basis and interrelation of the other categories to this fundamental and generalised category. Whilst making no assumptions about the exact historical provenance of these notions (to be found initially in Aristotle's Categories and the Metaphysics) we are concerned at all points to isolate what might be termed the 'nuclear realisation of being' to which Professor D.M. MacKinnon refers in his recent contribution to the Cambridge symposium on Christology (see Bibliography). It is the very ambivalence of the theology of Karl Barth with regard to this question which has been at the centre of our thoughts.

We shall see Him as the One who has created and wills to have us within this limit and allotted span. The final longing for an unlimited life in unallotted time necessarily falls away once we realise that the limit and set span of our existence is the condition which must be fulfilled in order that He, the eternal God, may be our Counterpart and our Neighbour as described, and that we may be His counterparts and His neighbours. Limit in the creaturely dimension means a clear-cut outline and contour. Man would not be this man, here and now, the concrete subject of this history, if his life did not have this outline and contour, if it did not have these limits and boundaries. A being in unending time would be centrifugal. It would not be that of a concrete subject to whom God can be an equally concrete Counterpart and Neighbour, with whom He can enjoy communication and intercourse.'

(CD III/2, p. 565)

The first four sentences of this quotation are derived from revelation insofar as they are what God is known to have willed and to will now. God has created and willed that our time be allotted, that is limited. Our longing for unlimited time gives way when we realise that this limit is the condition of his relationship with us. The dimension of creaturely limitation is clearly determined (i.e., by the needs of this relationship). After this series of related assertions Barth then proceeds to argue metaphysically from the nature of being in unending time. By this he supplements an argument from revelation with the assertion that 'A being in unending time would be centrifugal'. The limitation of temporal being is a condition of God being able to enter into relation with a subject. Barth has made a metaphysical assertion which is used to prove a conclusion about divine relationships, a conclusion which, in fact has already been used to prove the metaphysical assertion. The theological circle has been completed. Correspondingly God's being cannot be indefinitely enduring time, because if

it were, it would again be centrifugal and relationally incapable. In fact the only justification for this is that God and subject must be 'concrete' to relate to each other. The hidden implication is that endless being is incapable of relation. This is argued petitio principii with regard to man but on a linguistic basis with regard to God.

'...it would be quite nonsensical to say that God was, is and will be, that He is beginning, middle and end, because in Him there could then be no beginning or end. God, however, is eternal. That is to say, He is simultaneously and in fullness beginning, middle and end. In this respect He is utterly different from us. But in this respect, for all the difference, He is a concrete Subject, which can encounter us and be our Neighbour on all sides.'

(CD III/2, p. 565)

Barth's justification of God's non-infinity of time is derived from the general concept of eternity which Barth takes to belong to the category of truths revealed in the Word of God's very nature. Again, however, he resorts to a quasi-metaphysical justification of God's temporal concreteness. It would be 'nonsensical' to assert the infinity of God because he would have no beginning or end. If he had no beginning or end he could not be simultaneously beginning, middle and end. Thus he would fail both to be the eternal and the concrete God. This argument is justified on the basis of revelation but appears to consist of just the kind of derivation of ontology from language which has undergone severe criticism in recent philosophy.¹⁷ Given provisional acceptance of the fundamental postulate that eternity is so composed of beginning, middle and end, and so on, then we can accept Barth's argument. What is more remarkable is

17. Cf. Chapter IV p. 154 above.

that the centrifugal nature of human infinite time is dependent upon this argument. One might contrast Barth's argument with that of Aquinas, whose angels in 'aeviternity' had a beginning but no end, yet who nevertheless enjoy a relationship with God.¹⁸ In other words our objection to Barth's argument is this. Is it absolutely essential that man or any 'subject' in relation to God be so bounded in time for a relationship to be possible? In matter of purely theological fact it is the case that man, a limited being in time, enters into relationship with God on the latter's initiative. What is questionable is how this is necessarily so except insofar as it contingently is so. The necessity is apparently in the limitation of time being a condition of relation taking place or even being possible. The theological justification is obvious, given Barth's theological method of derived and related truths, but the proof of the metaphysical assertion that endless being is 'centrifugal' is far less compelling. By arguing from the temporal nature of the divine-human encounter to the ontology (i.e. the 'concreteness') of the participants, Barth is using human temporality as the ground of ontology at this point. We add this last proviso because elsewhere it might be thought with justification that Barth does the reverse. The function of temporality (spelt out in the relation of time and eternity) is therefore of greater potential significance in the Church Dogmatics than might have been thought. In this provisional allusion we consider the possibility that in fact the role of time may be of much greater importance than would at first

18. Cf. S.T. 1a, 50-64, 106-14.

appear, given the power of the theological ontology itself.

We might well find ourselves diverted along interesting byways at this juncture but we will confine ourselves to the assertion that in this sketch, based upon Barth's primary arguments in Allotted Time, we may detect a function attributable to time which runs far beyond the immediate needs of biblical exposition of the relation of God and man or the schematic representations of history in for example the work of Cullmann. In conformity with his over-riding theological impulse Barth interprets the encounter of concrete subjects as the expression of divine affirmation, that is the fulfilment of the 'set span' which can therefore be seen as 'benefit'. Thus the temporal characteristics of the God-man relationship form part and parcel of the total integrated theological scheme of divine grace and human response made in gratitude.

The proper task of man is to seek for 'duration and perfection' understood in the full sense of ultimate fulfilment. This finds its goal in the work of God. 'It is in Him, in His eternal counsel and work, that God and man, and man and man, are brought into the intimate fellowship which we necessarily but disturbingly see to be the goal of our life'.¹⁹ We therefore seek the fulfilment of a God-given and indeed divinely prescribed determination in the form of our limited time. Limited time constitutes both the condition and the possibility of the divine-human encounter and relationship. Without limited time there could be no concrete subjects. With limited time comes the positive

19. Op.cit., p. 566.

bounding of our time by God and the intended relation of concrete subjects. The weakness of this position is the absence of cogent proof that unending time and concrete encounter exclude each other's possibility, except inasmuch as this is derived from theological presuppositions, which are presented as part and parcel of Barth's overall dogmatic structure in the Church Dogmatics. The central notion of limitation is a highly adaptable and apposite theological tool which Barth is able to develop. We have not questioned the theological use of this conception of 'limited time', but its apparent justification by somewhat inadequate argumentation. This serves to reveal to us one minor aspect of what may well prove to be a much more extensive interpretation of the function and structure of Karl Barth's doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics.

In Barth's final 'decisive proof' he places the foregoing argument into the context of a theology of grace. God's free grace in Jesus Christ is highly specific and is perfectly realised through the temporal structure that has been developed.

'This is the free grace of God, which is not just a benevolent attitude towards man, but the turning to him of God in person; of the God who, in inverse ratio to his deserts, enters into solidarity with him, thus interposing Himself, making the life of man His concern, the salvation of man His need, the peace of man the cause for which He fights and wins, so that all human affairs, be they great or trivial, individual or collective, are first and last His concern, ordered and solved by Him. That He Himself receives us to Himself is God's free grace. And this God who is gracious to us in freedom is the very One who limits our life and bounds our time.'

(CD III/2, pp. 567-8)

This is the specific grace of God as realised in Christ. This is not, however, God's only activity. His

role is providential in the general sense of preserving our being from dissolution. What we must note is that the foundation of this account is temporal because God's maintenance of being consists in the limiting of time, and that loss of being is the 'inevitable fate' of 'disintegration'. This observation is most important because it reveals to us the ontological role of time and temporal concepts. However well the theory of time fits into the theological structures of creation, providence and indeed grace, it is nevertheless also functioning as a conceptual explanation along the lines of a metaphysical system. There is in fact a subtle 'cashing-out' operation in progress whereby the theory of time is playing both a material and a formal role in the structuring of divine and human being and their relation. Let us note the second related and immediately subsequent passage.

'He does not only do this (act in grace and solidarity). He bears and sustains our life even with the span allotted to it. In willing to have it so, He disposes and fashions that it may always be life, so long as He permits. He protects and preserves it from the disintegration from which it cannot protect itself and which would be its inevitable fate if it were to run its course without Him. He governs it in accordance with the determination which he has given it - and against the intentions with which we would like to govern it. He leads it towards His revelation; the revelation of His glory which consists in the fact that we may live under Him and with Him. Yet in doing all this He also limits it. And thus He is certainly present to us, so long as we have our time and are privileged to be grateful recipients of His gifts and responsible executors of His commission in this time of ours as knowing and active subjects.'

(CD III/2, p. 568)

In consequence of this:

'There is no part of our time which is not as such also in His. It is, so to speak, embedded in His

eternity...at the very points where we emerge from non-existence and return to non-existence, we are confronted in a particular way by the gracious God.'
(CD III/2, p. 568)

According to Barth, God 'bears and sustains our life even with the span allotted to it', moreover, in this limitation he 'protects and preserves it from disintegration.' Now what exactly is the import of this? Is it not the following: the structure of our time (as it is 'allotted') is the basis of its being insofar as it preserves it from non-being (that is 'disintegration'). In the simplest terms does not this doctrine of time function in a manner analogous to, for example, the doctrine of being as underlying the notions of 'cause' employed by St. Thomas? If this is the case then Barth is effecting a transposition of time and eternity into a new ontology. There is nothing intrinsically objectionable in this but the actual status of 'being' and its prime focus must be isolated. Even though in purely theological terms Barth's efforts are very successful we must pursue the weaknesses of his arguments. The foregoing analysis has allowed us to probe into the ultimate theological rationale of the Church Dogmatics as it attempts to overcome the constrictive parameters of contemporary thought. This will lead us eventually to a judgment upon the degree of success enjoyed by Barth's attempted emancipation of western theology from the epistemological and ontological bondage of the post-Kantian era.

In the passages we have quoted above there is expressed an essential unity of what we shall term 'nature' and 'grace' in that the created time of man's being is preserved from falling into non-being (in the sense of a 'disintegration')

that Barth advances) by the movement of grace.²⁰ The limitation of our time is the prerequisite of relation and reconciliation. God posits our limitation in time as an affirmation of our being insofar as this is bounded by God's past and his futurity (his 'end' and his 'beginning'). How God is related to us in the present remains a problem expressed in the apparent hesitance of Barth himself. God's past and future stand at the border of our being but only 'near' to our present.

'Either the gracious God (and He alone) is for us, or nothingness is the abyss from which we have emerged and to which we shall return. But if we are confronted, not by nothingness, but exclusively, unequivocally, fundamentally and definitively by the gracious God, we are obviously near this God at these two points in a way which cannot be said of our being in the time between, though He is certainly near us there as well. What characterises the nature of man at these frontiers of his being is that, as the God who is wholly and utterly for us, God is wholly and utterly outside us, namely beyond all our other possibilities. This is generally true as He is near us. But it is clear and essential only at the point where we can cling to no one and nothing but Him who as outside us is for us; neither to the world nor to chaos, to angel nor devil, nor even our own selves.'

(CD III/2, p. 569)

There is an embarrassment in Barth's thought at this point for in asserting the proximity of God in 'confrontation' (in his 'nearness'), we are presented with an unanalysed and perhaps even an unanalysable relation. Given that Barth has previously argued for the dynamic role of the divine 'present' in the 'I am' of Rev. I,8²¹ in Jesus, Lord of Time

20. This movement of grace is to be conceived in terms of God's 'act' which is the basis of Barth's theological ontology.

21. See Chapters IX and X above.

and in its application in Given Time, there still remains apparent this uncharacteristic vagueness of the 'nearness' of God at this juncture in Allotted Time. Let us contrast this with Aquinas' overtly metaphysical argument in the Summa contra Gentiles²² where he considers the statement 'That God preserves Things in Being'. God is the first cause of all things. Arguing by analogy from movement and cause, and given that the being of a thing is participated being, and again that only God's being is self-sufficient, Aquinas asserts the causal dependence of all natural things on the power of God. The Aristotelian background of Aquinas' arguments, and indeed their implicit Neoplatonic presuppositions notwithstanding, the doctrine of 'final causes' does allow of a coherent (even if misconceived) understanding of the relation of created and uncreated being. Of course as we have seen more truly biblical accounts have been offered by, for example, Athanasius, and figurative description advanced in the 'contrapuntal relation' of T.F. Torrance. Our problem with Barth is that whilst dealing with 'being' he does refer to a relation of 'concrete subjects'? This means in temporal terms human and divine 'temporality' as once more we have become aware in our previous two chapters. Barth is attempting to create a doctrine of being expressed through a theory of time without lapsing into an autonomous metaphysics of being. In Aquinas

22. Summa contra Gentiles, Bk.III, Ch.65.

the relation of God and cosmos is specified and reducible to Aristotelian concepts of causality. In Athanasius this relation may be specific but analysable.²³ In Barth this relation does not exist except insofar as there is a second order relation constructed by derivation from the structure of the relation of time and eternity.²⁴ The ambiguity in Barth's thought is once more revealed: is he in fact moving beyond an account of the structure of time and eternity (as they are expressed through the ontology of God and man's being understood upon what is, in the final analysis a phenomenological basis) to a general ontology with 'ontic' implications generated from temporal concepts? Such a question in turn leads to ask a further one which has underlaid this thesis throughout. Does Barth's dogmatic structure represent a systematic construction²⁵ based upon a number of primary axioms rather than a reflective penetration of theological and non-theological reality? Sympathetic interpretation is along the latter path but we must ask in the light of the emergent role of time whether Barth's ontology is a construction of being and reality derived from 'temporality' but presented as objective reality.

The adequacy of the theological exposition of the Church

23. This raises a number of issues concerning the place of Jesus Christ as the focal point of our knowledge of the God-man (and by 'inference' the God-creation) relation. This referred to by R.W. Hepburn in Christianity and Paradox, Chapter 5.
24. This 'derivation' is by no means simple and calls into question the complex interface of conceptual and ontological factors in the Church Dogmatics.
25. This expresses the tension that becomes apparent in Barth's thought in CD III/2 between the ontological impulse traced from CD I and CD II and the negative natural theology to be found in his sceptical arguments based upon the ungraspability of time in human experience.

Dogmatics is not in question at this point but merely the place of non-theological being in a scheme dominated and determined by divine realities. In other words is Barth's derivation of the general (e.g. vis à vis anthropology) from the particular in Jesus Christ not failing to provide a soundly based account of the natural order except by extension from theological (that is primarily Christological) postulates. The issues we have been examining in this exposition of Allotted Time are related to this central potential criticism, for the account of being we have studied is born out of Christology by means of an ontology that has distinct affinities with the tradition of Husserl and Heidegger. These factors have been instrumental in producing the subtle but potentially ambiguous theory of time in the Church Dogmatics.

There is lacking in the thought of Barth that explicit concern referred to by Tillich²⁶ in the Systematic Theology to account for 'the ground of all causal dependence and all accidental changes....the power of being itself' which was characteristic of Aquinas. Tillich is of course arguably no great example in this direction as his own account of the traditional categories (time, space, causality and substance) is also undertaken 'in the light of human finitude'²⁷ and under the influence of the phenomenological-ontological tradition. Both Heidegger and Barth argue on the basis of an assumption of veridical reality and maintain that neither the

26. Systematic Theology, Nisbet, 1968, Vol. II, p. 80.

27. D.E. Roberts, 'Tillich's Doctrine of Man' in The Theology of Paul Tillich, New York, 1952, p. 121.

theologian nor the philosopher (i.e. the Heideggerian explorer of the phenomenological and transcendental) need be concerned with its proof. In fact with regard to Barth as we have become aware, the existence of God in the assertion of his Word is the fundamental truth; certainty in other areas is built upon this. The extension of this systematic architectonic of theological certainty reaches its outer limit with the temporal construction of an ontology of being. If we ask a simple question about the place of the traditional categories in the Church Dogmatics we note the presence of space and time but neither causality or substance. With an ontology of temporal being the role of causality and substance has been assumed by time and eternity and exploited within the realm of a reality ultimately derived from human and revealed divine subjectivity. This latter is all we can know for time as it is in itself is beyond our knowledge.²⁸ God is eternity; man is temporality. It is around this axis that Barth has built his ontology, but, as has now become clear to us, this structure is fraught with potential problems.

Over against the theology of the nineteenth century Barth has striven to pre-empt the strictures and limitations of Kantian criticism by beginning his theology from the objective fact of Jesus Christ, man and God. This he attempted by a conscious rejection of philosophy as a legitimate way of knowing God or explicating revelation. Philosophy is, we would argue, a bona fide way of approaching

28. Cf. CD III/2, p. 521, 'We do not know what time means...'

human reality, and insofar as theology (necessarily if its Object is to be known to us) has entered our reality in its pursuit of truth, then it can ignore the basic insights of philosophy into ordinary reality only at its peril. Grace has consumed nature only to offer it back to us in the form of a theological regurgitation. The product of this reconstruction cannot by its very origin offer all the characteristics that we know nature to possess when analysed in philosophical terms, and so it has to create them by derivation. Neither substance nor causality feature as such but as their role is indispensable they are obliquely inferred through the internal and pervasive structure of the doctrine of time and eternity.

In the first half of this chapter there has been made what might well be regarded as an outright attack upon Barth's account of time in the Church Dogmatics. This would indeed be a misreading of our intentions, for what we have tried to show is firstly the use to which Barth puts this theory and secondly, the highly involved inter-relation of his arguments when they are explicated. Our critique of the core of his doctrine of time and eternity, the antithesis and yet resolution of duration and simultaneity over against division and succession, will come in the next and final chapter of this thesis in which we will recapitulate the theory of time in summary form. We shall now be free to do this having stated the whole theological scheme of temporality which characterises the Church Dogmatics. It has been our first concern to provide such a representative and full account of the doctrine of time for only having done this

may we offer a fair assessment of the fullest and most comprehensive theological account of time in the history of western theology.

Barth renders his analysis of Allotted Time even more concrete and particular for in the final paragraphs he restates the Christological core upon which his anthropology is built. His starting-point has been Jesus Christ and so according to Barth it is this datum which is to determine our understanding of man and indeed time. In reality this analysis is not quite accurate for we have noted the composite arguments that are used in Man in his Time which are combined in the production of a dogmatics with both theological and extraneous factors.

There is a coherence and structure to Barth's thought in the Church Dogmatics which is highly original and the product of a response to the most basic dynamic loci of his theological vision. Thus in the penultimate and the final sections of Man in His Time Barth applies the central elements of his Christology and anthropology of time to the human experience and understanding of the beginning and the end of time. It is therefore in the light of primary doctrines of the 'fulfilment' and the 'allotment' of time, with all that these entail, that we now turn in examining Barth's account of the extremities of man's temporality.

Beginning from the assumption that 'non-being' (das Nichtsein) threatens our being 'before' and 'after' Barth can now turn to the attempts of the 'older theology' to account for the origins of human existence in terms of the genesis of the soul. In conformity with his theological

anthropology Barth avoids entering into discussion of the controversies of pre-existence or creationism, because however psychological or physiological factors may be resolved, there is a more fundamental categorial level of human existence which must first be considered. It is from this that the theological solution will emerge to pre-empt the abstruse complexities of the traditional arguments. So once more Barth resolves problems through the theological ontology we have seen him develop.

'Before the being of the individual as of the race there was somewhere a non-being. And this non-being from which the individual and the race come is the non-being to which we also move. In the language of traditional theology (which we now find obscure and unacceptable), there was a time when my soul did not exist. In terms of a more biblical view of man, there was a time when I myself as the soul of my body, I myself as the unity and totality of my psychosomatic existence, did not yet exist, but I began to be. That this is the case is the occasion of a serious theological concern to which it is possible to give a serious theological answer.'

(CD III/2, p. 574)

In this way we are aware that Barth places his own 'more biblical view of man' at the centre of his exposition. Before proceeding to state what this is we must note that there is a potential ambiguity in his assertion. Moreover the quality of Barth's anthropology is highly distinctive and directly reflects the arguments of the previous sections of Man in His Time whose relation to recent thought in philosophy and phenomenology cannot be ignored. As regards the ambiguity we must ask if this 'biblical view of man' is something general or the highly specific anthropology based upon the concrete particularity of Jesus Christ. Barth expands this 'biblical view',

'...that even from my origin I am threatened by annihilation, being marked as a being which can only advance towards non-existence. Before a certain point I had no past; the time before this point was not my time; I had no dimension to live in.'

(CD III/2, p. 574)

So once more the basic insight emerges of the past and future of both individual and race as subject to both 'shadow and deficiency'. Although we indeed come from non-being we do not come from nothing because 'the eternal God was before we were' and he was 'in the unattainable life-space before ours'.²⁹

'We can never regard Him as belonging to the past like everything before us, as something lost which cannot be recaptured because only our non-being was before us. He has preceded us in time, in all the times of our non-being. Indeed, He has proceeded the non-being of all creation, the beginning of all time in its dimension of life. Where do we come from? From the being, speaking and action of the eternal God who has preceded us. This is the particular answer to this particular question. Before we were, this gracious God was our gracious God: the God who even when we were not was not without us but in all that He was Himself for us; therefore God for us; wisdom and omnipotence for us; holy and righteous, merciful and patient for us; eternal and ineffably glorious for us; for us the origin and fullness of all perfection. His inner life as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, His will and purpose in relation to heaven, earth and ourselves, His already accomplished and uninterrupted work in execution of it) this was the content of the time before our time, the meaning of the pre-history before our history. Hence there is nothing mysterious or terrifying about the time before we were. It does not really entail any deficiency or shadow. Our yearning to expand our being backwards into the past is pointless. Whatever our end may be, our beginning does not lay us under any threat or curse. Regarded in the light of its beginning, our life in our allotted time is tolerable because at this point it does not hang lost and helpless over an abyss but is reliably held and supported, secured and guaranteed. Indeed it stands under a promise....For the eternal and gracious God, who is the boundary of our beginning, will surely guarantee the whole of our life, the span which we are given, and its final end.'

(CD III/2, p. 577)

29. Op.cit., p. 577.

Here we see in summary the cohesive structure of Barth's theological thought for in this passage he combines all the major elements in the Church Dogmatics as they affect and are affected by the problem of time. God's eternal being in inter-Trinitarian act sustains all time as its 'content' and its 'promise'. The 'reality' of this 'content of the time before our time' belies the deficiency or shadow of the time we know and fear. This answer has undoubtedly certain difficulties in its development and formulation but these stem not so much from deficiencies in its statement as from the assertion of a purely theological account of the problem of time. Thus it is the whole status of such a theory in ontological terms which has concerned us. The truth of this theory is conceivable primarily as its coherence within what we have called the 'theological circle' (using Tillich's phrase for our own purposes) and its correspondence to, or assumed penetration into, the theological structures made known in the Word of God. The question of the correlation of theological truth with the world known in mundane empirical experience has always been crucial in this study of Barth. His assumption of natural theology into the sphere of revelation has consistently made such natural knowledge problematic. As we have become aware with regard to time and human nature these are both truly made known in Jesus Christ, the Word of God, who is both the sole and supreme datum of revelation and the source of true knowledge of humanity in its categorial complexity.

It is by moving along the frontier between theology as it is grounded in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and

philosophy as it strives to analyse the transcendental in both the traditional form as metaphysics and in the contemporary insights of analysis and 'descriptive metaphysics', that we risk mutual incomprehensibility. It is here alone that the questioner can hope to relate the contrasting and indeed competing and conflicting fields of putative truth-schemata. In the words of S. Körner³⁰ it is in attempting to explore the possible commensurability of such conflicting schemata, that the intellectual isolation of Christian theology (and most particularly dogmatics) may be broken down. As we have become aware in our examination of this sub-section of the Church Dogmatics, Man in His Time, there are a number of tensions in Barth's account which stem from the fact that time is a fundamental unifying category which is shared by both the theological and the cosmic, scientific and human spheres of existence analysed by corresponding thought and disciplines. If this unity and diversity is infringed by an account of one area (i.e., theology) which denies (under the guise of natural theology) the validity of other paths of reality and of ratiocination, then an inevitable tension will emerge when this special discipline uses a category of universal validity. The intrinsic unity of the time-continuum will demand a resolution in terms of a single system or related systems when it is faced with an intellectual and ontological imperialism stemming from one area of analysis.

30. 'Abstraction in Science and Morals', Eddington Memorial Lecture, Cambridge, 1971. My reference is to the gist of his lecture as delivered extempore. Körner's non-reductive pluralism has contributed much to the technique adopted in this thesis.

This series of points leads us to the brink of many problems that are basically concerned with the validity of Barth's presuppositions over against others which might well conflict with, or be of potentially equal worth to his own. Besides this, the question of time in this much wider context raises issues which impinge upon our study in initial outline only. The theological self-consistency of the Church Dogmatics works against such considerations in principle. All we can hope to achieve in this thesis on Barth's thought is to show that such isolation is reflected in the inner difficulties of the Church Dogmatics and its doctrine of time. This is apart from any objections raised to the method (N. Smart)³¹ or overall logic of Barth's arguments (W.W. Bartley III)³² from the standpoint of an outsider.

We raise these issues at this point for we have just seen how in asserting the time of God in his eternity (as the past and the futurity of man in promise, over against his non-being as nothingness) we are aware that Barth has combined insights of diverse inspiration into the temporal aspect of his 'biblical view of man'. Again we have noted that his arguments are in fact not entirely rid of elements which might well be regarded as 'alien' or 'philosophical'. It might well be concluded that such impurities were inevitable if theology is to be saved from systematic irrelevance

31. Cf. Smart's article on Barth in the Encyclopaedia of Philosophy cited earlier in this study.

32. The Retreat to Commitment, London, 1964 (New York, 1962).

and disrelatedness to ourselves when it is bound up with the 'concrete particularities' of revelation that overwhelm the experience of man in the name of 'reality' and 'truth'.

In the final passages of Beginning Time Barth states the biblical evidence for his account. Israel knew its 'Whence?' was God who was the 'living rock' and whose election and covenant were the prius upon which they depended. In the New Testament the Saviour is the fulfilment of the covenant and 'His person is the grace of God in which ancient Israel sought and found its refuge from generation to generation'.³³ History, that of Israel and humanity, culminates in Jesus Christ. So Barth re-iterates in textual reference and exegesis the pattern of the covenant and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, whose post-resurrection presence through the Holy Spirit invigorates the Church.

Having applied the insights of Allotted Time to the beginning of man's time, Barth now turns to the end of man's time, to the problem of death and finitude. Once more he argues on the basis of the primary concepts of temporality and limitation. Our being in time relies upon the transitory present and demands a future. One day this will end, for we shall have been, we will in fact be, but we shall be no longer. Our time is finite and therefore it is always overshadowed by this end. This is all Barth's particular application to the end of man's time of the doctrine of fleeting temporality and the limitation of time analysed in Chapters IX and X **above**. The reality of this

33. CD III/2, p. 581.

end, death, is not evaded by the Bible but faced as an 'incomprehensible, inexplicable and unassailable reality',³⁴ that confronts man. In essence death is the withdrawal of freedom for action and relation.

'What the living person had and was is now gone; death has brought it to extinction. Gone is his character as a living person, his being as the soul of his body. For the fact that he is dead means that the spirit, the power of the living breath of God which constituted him an existent subject, has been withdrawn. He exists only as one who has been, who is therefore deprived of the Spirit, who has disintegrated, and who is thus incapable of enjoying the good things of life, well-being, fortune, security, prosperity and honour.'

(CD III/2, p. 589)

Our concern is with time and the question that Barth isolates as of supreme importance likewise impinges directly upon the temporality and finitude of human existence. Barth asks how far we are to understand the finitude of our allotted time - and death as the determination of human life - as a determination of the divinely created, and therefore good nature of man. In other words is there not a conflict between the goodness of God and the evil presented by the reality of death and the termination of human existence? What place can this have in a doctrine of man as creature of God? Barth argues that our entry into being is positive insofar as we come from God. This is established by Barth in terms of the ontological link of past, present and future made by God's time as the time beyond our apparent fragmented and fleeting time. Correspondingly Barth argues that death can be negative only if it means 'passing not only into non-being but into the negation of being'.³⁵

34. Op.cit., p. 588.

35. Op.cit., p. 595.

This distinction is of course of fundamental importance to Barth's exposition and expresses the difference between the extinction of being, and a return to a non-being which is by virtue of the supra-temporality of God, a return to God.

We have according to Barth a real past in the non-being prior to being, insofar as this is God's past, and, likewise in the future a non-being with God, post mortem. In between we have the opportunity of life in positive relation to God and to man, which we spurn. Why is this repudiation made by man? There is no clear answer given to this for there exists the 'fact of the abysmal and irreparable guilt which we have incurred from the beginning of our existence'.³⁶ Curiously enough, 'guilt' looms with awful vigour but 'sin' is scarcely mentioned. The reader wonders how it is possible that Barth can escape the conclusion that man's actual 'fallen' state is entirely arbitrary and inexplicable. This passage must be quoted because it illustrates the difficulties of Barth's position in attempting to account for death as the termination of man's time.

'...between our emergence from God and our final confrontation with Him, there stands the fact of the abysmal and irreparable guilt which we have incurred from the beginning of our existence, are still incurring and will increasingly continue to do so until the end: guilt in relation to God and also to our divinely appointed fellows; guilt of many kinds, great and trivial, gross and refined, blatant and complicated, but always guilt. Guilt means retrogression. And retrogression consists in a failure to use our God-given freedom; in a failure to be truly human in our relationships with Him and our fellows; in an inconceivable renunciation of our freedom; in our incredible, inexplicable and

36. Op.cit., p. 596.

impossible choice of the imprisonment of a being in renunciation on both sides; in our incomprehensible lapse into a state of ungodliness and inhumanity. That we are guilty in this boundless and quite inexcusable way is what will confront us at the end of our time and stare us in the face when we die. It is in this irreparable state of transgression that we shall be translated from being to non-being and brought face to face with our Creator. With all our life up to this point, with our life as it is now concluded and a thing of the past, we shall meet Him and be wholly dependent upon Him. That we shall be no more will mean concretely that our past will be only one of total guilt and retrogression - one long failure. Can we doubt that for this reason death must inevitably seem to be negative and have only the character of an unqualified evil? What else can its onset mean but the approach and execution of God's judgment upon us? What can this judgment mean but our rejection? And what can its execution mean but the ending and expulsion of our unworthy and degenerate life from before the eyes of the Creator from whom it has already alienated itself by its guilt? What can it mean but its total destruction, dissolution and abolition in confirmation of what it has made of itself? What fate can measure up to life's deserts, and what can its goal be, but absolute negation? Was it not a thing of nought? What has it to expect from its end but the divine subscription to its nothingness? As we approach our end, we approach God. And since we are guilty in relation to Him as our Creator, this excludes any other prospect. Not to be any more is to be powerless to alter the fact. To die is to be caught in the toils of this unalterable fact. It is to be at the point to which we fall. And because even now we are powerless to alter it - and the less so the longer we live - our life is already overshadowed by its end. Hence Holy Scripture is right in describing the realm of death not only as an underworld but as an onslaught to which man's life in time is already exposed.'

(CD III/2, p. 596)

There seems in fact to be in Barth's thought a confusion of 'transgression' and 'retrogression' for without the former (which is absent) then the state of man as guilty and under God's condemnation is apparently arbitrary. In this passage the guilt is inexplicable, but hardly 'inexcusable', for, as Barth shows, there is no alternative way open to man. We appear to choose the inevitable and

the inescapable. If, however, we grant that man is under the condemnation of God then 'Death as it actually encounters us men, is the sign of God's judgement'.³⁷ The choice of not entering this state of guilt is entirely hypothetical but the situation we actually occupy is characterised by a finitude we are to think of as 'unalterable'. Death is a 'sign' of God's judgement because in fact Jesus Christ has suffered death on our behalf. Our lives bear all the marks of impending judgement (i.e., in death) but this does not represent the original intention of God in creation. Behind the grim face of this sign of divine condemnation, which is to be feared with a fully legitimate fear, there is the lost order of creation. Christ's death is a unique, and uniquely efficacious death as our Representative. Our death is not the death of negation (i.e. utter annihilation) for this death has been borne by Jesus Christ. On the contrary it is the death in which we are to fear God for it is he who is our 'beyond'. The power of death is the power to 'convince the creature that strives against God, sinful man, of his nothingness before God'.³⁸ Thus Barth uses a feature in the existence of man's being towards death as an element within his theological scheme of encounter. So in death, annihilation is converted in virtue of Jesus Christ into the finding of the 'radical comfort' of a gracious God who is encountered in the midst of death. Our death is absolutely real but God is not likewise transitory.

37. Ibid.

38. Op.cit., p. 608.

We cannot indulge in speculations about immortality, but only hope in the ultimacy of God as the frontier of death itself.

All this of course hangs upon acceptance of Barth's doctrines of vicarious humanity and the link of 'solidarity' between Christ's humanity, and therefore his life and death, and our own lives and death. This is not our concern except insofar as we must point out that this relation is the necessary condition of the applicability of the following, thus demonstrating the temporal conclusion of this soteriological victory over the annihilation of death.

'In Him (Jesus Christ) God Himself has really turned to us, and acted for us, and indeed become our own. In Him the promise of eternal life - not just an extension of this life in a continuation of time, but a life in communion with the eternal life of God Himself - is really given. In Him the fulness of this life is already poured out upon us. This One, in whom all this is introduced in a concrete, tangible and unmistakable form, is the new factor in the New Testament revelation and perception of God in His relation to death.'

(CD III/2, p. 614)

We have not lingered over the detail of Barth's exposition at this point because it has been the consistent outworking of the theory of time that we have seen developed in the sub-section Man in His Time. This major part of Volume III/2 of the Church Dogmatics has consisted in the development of a theological anthropology constituted and conditioned by the person of Jesus Christ as the focal point of Barth's thinking. We shall now briefly review this structure as it has been reflected and subjected to analysis in the last three chapters. Having achieved this we shall then proceed in Chapter XII to recapitulate in a single

systematic statement the whole doctrine of time in the Church Dogmatics. Having presented this summary we shall examine the most fundamental characteristics of the contrast of time and eternity, the distinction of duration and division which constitutes the nub of Barth's theological theory of time.

In these last three chapters we have followed out the impulse of Barth's thought and found it to be centred in certain fundamental notions. First, in conformity with his Christological preoccupation Barth established the supremacy of Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of time; the One whose time is the union, in dynamic action, of the eternity of God and the time of man. Second, we examined Barth's account of the time given to man in Jesus Christ which overwhelms the flawed and fragmented fleeting time of man. Third, the time of man is limited; yet within these limitations God has made himself known in Jesus Christ and the boundaries of man's being do not present him in reality with the nothingness which he fears, but the being of God as man's beyond. These three systematic stages in Barth's thought have been set against questions that arise from the general nature of Barth's doctrine of time and its ontological status. We have seen that despite the great struggle to establish a theological architectonic of time this has not been an unqualified success. Barth's theology of time has great strength but correspondingly great weaknesses which are apparent only after forceful grappling with this extraordinary work.

In the light of the 'fact that God has wiped out men's sin and guilt, and therefore abolished their death, by taking the place of all others in this man, so that He has become their Deliverer from death in this One'³⁹ how is the finitude of our being to be understood? Jesus Christ suffered the 'second death' of which our own deaths are only a 'sign' for this second death is the judgement of God upon sin. The death we are to undergo is therefore not this divine judgement but a sign not merely of its having been suffered and triumphed over in Jesus Christ. Christ took up finitude in the incarnation and therein overcame death, so likewise we are not to spurn life in time and its limitations. It is therefore the consequences of the incarnation and the atonement which justify the finitude of human existence on analogy with the outlook that brought forth the cry 'O felix culpa'. The arena of the demonstration of God's righteousness demands limitations. The necessity of the actual pattern of the redemptive events is such that time and its limitation of human life are essential to the application of those benefits. 'We have to be finite, to be able to die, for the ἐφ' ἧπαξ of the redemption accomplished in Christ to take effect for us.'⁴⁰ The fact of revelation constitutes its necessity. Without finitude we could not be the recipients of divine grace, God could not reveal his glory unless we were threatened by a death which was abrogated, that is 'relativised' by the death of Jesus Christ. Man dies,

39. Op.cit., p. 626.

40. Op.cit., p. 631.

for his death is a 'step from existence into non-existence'.⁴¹
The Christian hope is not continued existence but his
'beyond', that is God. He will share in eternal life and
with this assertion Barth enters the realm of the strictly
inconceivable⁴² for man ceases to be in the hope he has of
God alone. Man is to live in this hope in God for,

'...the definitive prospect in which he rejoices is
for him an authorisation and command to serve God
in his allotted span with all the preliminary joy
without which his joy is his end and new beginning
with Him would be purely imaginary. He affirms
Jesus Christ as his beyond. And it is for this
reason that he understands his life here and now as
one which is affirmed by his beyond.'

(CD III/2, p. 640)

41. Op.cit., p. 632.

42. Op.cit., pp. 632-3.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

This study began with a brief description of the historical background against which Barth reacted. Within the general limitations created by the complex theological tradition of Kant, Hegel, Trendelenburg and Kierkegaard, Barth had to find a new or renewed basis for theological method. This Barth undertook by exploiting the impulse of fides quaerens intellectum and beginning from within fundamental theological postulates he elaborated a hermeneutic of the Word of God. His starting-point is systematically exploited in the demonstration of the threefold Word of God which relies upon the 'essence' of the Church, Jesus Christ, in a 'fundamental transcendence of all human possibilities'.¹ Grace is not static or infused but happens in 'the present instant in which Jesus Christ Himself speaks and is heard, when the light divine is created in our hearts'.² The continuity of identity of God's Word through time is not provided by immanent structures or human effort of any kind but by God's own immanence made on the basis of his transcendence. God in his positive relation to the Church is not an essential 'timeless ground' but 'in the midstream of becoming, being moved only by itself, in the mid-ocean of the unsettled, changeable, and self-changing, the fixed event, the fulness of time'.³ Thus at the outset of the

1. CD I/1, p. 44.

2. Op.cit., p. 45.

3. Op.cit., p. 133.

Church Dogmatics on the basis of the discrete and distinctive happening of the Word of God an ontology and temporality are posited in mutual reality. The questions of ontology and of time appear simultaneously and are answered together. Where is the source of the knowledge of God? The answer is of course in God's Word which becomes a reality for man on the basis of God's own self-objectification in the positing of the hermeneutical circle. How is the 'pure event' of revelation, 'the fulness of time' to be both of God and yet be in time? This can be achieved by the continuity of God's temporal transcendence which is grounded 'only within the Trinity'.⁴ The danger of an occasionalism is overcome by the very life of God in act and in the Trinity. The continuity of the revealing events is secured on the basis of its 'contingent contemporaneousness', the correlate of the equation of God's Word and God's act.

This identity is absolutely fundamental to the Church Dogmatics, for insofar as 'God's Word is God's act' demands its 'contingent contemporaneousness'⁵ we are faced with the duality (not the dualism) of God's act in his being and his act in time in revelation. These are one, 'a contingent illis et tunc from the standpoint of the God who speaks, and also with a contingent hic et nunc from the standpoint of man who hears'.⁶ Barth's definition of an 'act' runs in the following way: an act is (over and above a word) 'a

4. Op.cit., p. 134.

5. Op.cit., p. 169.

6. Ibid.

relative alteration in the environment...an active participation in history...' but the 'Word of God is the identity of word and act and here Barth's words must be noted with exactitude,

'But for the Word of God these distinctions do not hold. For it is precisely as a mere word that it is an act. Nay, as a mere word it is the divine Person, the Person of the Lord of history, whose self-utterance as such is an alteration and an absolute alteration of the world, whose passio in history is as such an actio.'

(CD I/1, p. 164)

Such an act is 'insusceptible of general determination'; in other words we cannot reproduce an act of God ourselves. This argument is in its actualism parallel to that of Bultmann in his article 'What Does it Mean to Speak of God?' where he argues that 'Love is there only when I love or am loved; it has no existence alongside me or behind me'.⁷ As with human love, so with God's omnipotence, which cannot be a 'universal truth', conceived outside the actuality of the total determination of our existence by God. So with Barth there can be no 'abstractions' only the 'claim' of God (Bultmann) or knowledge in 'acknowledgement' (Barth). The divine reality instantiates itself in revelation and man responds or rebels against the Word of God. Barth's 'absolute alteration' and Bultmann's 'determination of our existence' both drive inexorably to the same conclusion: that God can only be known in the 'obedience of faith' (Bultmann) and 'faith seeking understanding' (Barth). Bultmann accepts without question the radical antithesis

7. Faith and Understanding, London, 1969, p. 54.

and dualism of the static 'unified complex of this world'⁸ inherited from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment over against the 'Wholly Other'. T.F. Torrance has rightly criticised the Deistic rigidity of this outmoded and obsolescent world-view which Barth's thought does not reflect. Bultmann's God is 'occasional' in his manifestation which takes place in kerygmatic events, and here Hamer's criticism would apply. Barth in contrast to Bultmann is providing an explication of that basis upon which God acts in his self-revelation although both begin with an analogous sense of obligation: 'We must speak or we must keep silent'.⁹ It is God who makes himself known and man who responds in obedience.

The parallel drawn above between Barth and Bultmann is important; because whereas both begin with God himself (as the veridical basis of man's knowledge of him as he is manifest in his acts) there is subsequently an immediate and striking contrast. Bultmann cannot escape the charge of occasionalism but Barth does, as has been seen at length in this thesis. By relying upon the temporal aspects of his doctrine of God to maintain the divine continuity by and through his 'contingent contemporaneity' Barth is venturing out upon the precarious path of relating divine and human existence in terms of their mutual but contrasting temporalities. Bultmann makes no such endeavour for the incognito of the divine is complete. Barth posits the

8. Op.cit., p. 58.

9. Op.cit., p. 61.

'veiledness and unveiledness' of revelation; in other words, the systematic ambiguity of the events of revelation. The former is satisfied with an explication of Christian existence which is generated by the kerygma confronting man who responds in the 'free act' of obedience. The latter sets out to unfold the inner structure of the Christian event of the knowledge of God and within this actualised and dynamic starting-point is to be found the only bona fide source of the knowledge of God. There is from the outset a duality of 'times', the resolution of which must now be recapitulated in summary on the basis of the foregoing study of the Church Dogmatics.

The central notion of 'contingent contemporaneousness' in the doctrine of the Word of God directs attention to its basis in God's being. The 'times' of Jesus Christ, of prophecy and so on¹⁰ are unified on the basis of their 'togetherness with Christ'.¹¹ It must be borne in mind that the temporal unity that this implies is grounded in the 'free act of God'; this act is the contingent revelation of God, the expression of his 'freedom, ontic and noetic independence'.¹² It is within these limits that the time which is to be truly 'God's time' must be understood.¹³ The ground of this time is in God's being which forms the primary pole of the great axis of antecedence and consequence that informs the Church Dogmatics. It is in the doctrine

10. CD I/1, p. 161.

11. Op.cit., p. 167.

12. Op.cit., p. 352.

13. CD II/1, p. 5.

of eternity (that is 'God's time') that the 'possibility' corresponding to the 'reality' of the 'contingently contemporaneous' event-acts of revelation is to be found in the extraordinarily powerful theological ontology of the first two volumes of this work.

God's being in act and in eternity is the foundation of Barth's theological ontology and the temporal structure of this being is (because of the mutual reality and identity of God's being and his time) a formal structure of the Church Dogmatics itself. The axis of eternity and time has indeed a truly vertebral role in the thought of Barth. Moreover his theory of time is an original and highly developed synthesis of several dogmatic impulses, forerunners of which may be detected in the history of Christian theology. The irreducible ontological datum of the Church Dogmatics is God's being in act,

'...with regard to the being of God, the word "event" or "act" is final, and cannot be surpassed or compromised. To its very depths God's Godhead consists in the fact that it is an event - not any event, nor events in general, but the event of His action, in which we have a share in God's revelation.'

(CD II/1, p. 263)

This doctrine has been presented in full above and so now it is necessary merely to isolate the temporal aspects. In these is to be found the theological key to the assertion of 'contingent contemporaneity' in the doctrine of the Word of God. God's being is an actus purus et singularis yet its unity does not mean that it is located in, or bound to past, present or future. It is all of these and Barth argues for a catholicity of temporal being-in-act which is to

inform the doctrine of eternity in every area of its application.

'It is not, therefore, an event which has merely happened and is now a past fact of history. God's revelation is, of course, this as well. But it is also an event happening in the present, here and now. Again, it is not this in such a way that it exhausts itself in the momentary movement from the past to the present, that is, in our to-day. But it is also an event that took place once for all, and an accomplished fact. And it is also future - the event that lies completely and wholly in front of us, which has not yet happened, but which simply comes upon us. Again this happens without detriment to its historical completeness and its full contemporaneity.'

(CD II/1, p. 262)

The concept of temporal transcendence that this passage introduces is the dimension of time in which past, present and future are included without mutual exclusion. The dualism of contingent and necessary truths is surmounted by Barth through the basing of this concept of 'time' upon the act of God. This not only makes acts of God as recorded in Scripture concrete and particular, but also allows an unparalleled integration of God's being and his attributes. God is in his attributes, his active perfections. Both 'time' and 'act' are supremely realised in God and correspondingly form the basis of Barth's attack upon the abstract opposition of the categories of finite and infinite and the irrecoverability of the events of history in historicist thinking. This central doctrine that is founded upon the unity of act-time in God's being is the ontological and unifying nodal-point of the Church Dogmatics as regards time and also underlies and informs the unfolding theological architectonic. In drawing together these elements it must be remembered that Barth's

primary concern is the theological integrity and fidelity of his efforts - this conclusion is merely an attempt to crystallise the logic of his temporal arguments. So it is seen that the 'contingent contemporaneity' of the Word of God is made possible (in Barth's technical sense of theological explanation) by the integration of the doctrines of time and God's being in act.

In a corresponding way God's omniscience knows no temporal limitations for his 'absolute priority and superiority...to every possible existence to his own' is a temporal transcendence which gives God knowledge that 'is not actually tied to the distinction between past present and future being'.¹⁴ The actual distinction of eternity and time is expressed in purely temporal (as opposed to theological and expository) terms by the contrast of 'true duration' and time. The 'duration without separation between beginning, succession and end' which characterises eternity and the division characteristic of time in the separation of past present and future into before and after is central in the exposition that follows. The tension of the nunc stans and the division of time is understood within a thoroughly theological context in the ensuing volumes of the Church Dogmatics as each doctrine is related to the others upon the basis of this fundamental temporality-ontology.

The doctrines of eternity, election, Christology, creation and providence all reveal this doctrine, as has been argued in the above study. The fulfilment of time by

14. Op.cit., pp. 558-9.

eternity is in the resurrection, when the brokenness and division of human time is overcome by the demonstration in God's power over death of the undividedness of eternity and the future of God's time. The impulse of God from eternity in Jesus Christ in his act of election therefore finds its concrete fulfilment in the resurrection. The axis of eternity and time corresponds to the overall structure of divine and dynamic prototype and human or earthly flawed reality. On the level of generality as regards time there is the contrast of eternity, made actively concrete in the decree of election, and time brought to its fulfilment in the resurrection. Does Barth's understanding of time as fulfilled by eternity do justice to the meaning of the resurrection as an 'act' and 'event' or does it in fact damage this notion? Is 'real time' not in danger of abrogating what is understood by time, that is its division and fluere?

There is in Barth's thought a complex integration of this notion of the interaction and creative unity of eternity and time; both in the incarnation and resurrection and in the assumption of grace in Christology. The abstract opposition of eternity and time, finite and infinite is comprehended within a Christology which is in turn a dynamic expression of the doctrine of God's being in act. The attendant problems lie in the ambivalence and ambiguity of Barth's notions of 'act' and 'time'. As both 'act' and 'time' receive increasing emphasis and as greater and greater weight is placed upon them so further and further do these notions appear to become removed from both popular and

even more sophisticated philosophical concepts of time. The argument that both these realities exist in a special and distinct sense (once the divine and prototypical origin is seen) runs into difficulties when these conceptions begin to conflict radically with more generally accepted notions. The ontological weight of the Church Dogmatics tends towards a resolution of this tension of eternity and time on the side of 'real time'. On reflection it must be asked that whether in denying the dividedness of time in eternity and expressing the recreation and restoration of time through the resurrection Barth is not dramatically weakening the actual framework of human experience and historicity. As was noted earlier this undoubted ambivalence in the thought of Barth has led to the contrasting resolutions in subsequent theology.

Barth has provided the greatest theological synthesis of the problem of time in western theology into which he draws positive elements of Augustine, Boethius, Athanasius, Calvin, Luther and so on, in an integrated and dynamic Christologically-conditioned vision which is grounded upon an ontology of time and being in the reality of God's eternity. The fulfilment and application of this structure is in the doctrine of man's being in time. It is now possible to consider briefly the final section of Man in his Time having pointed to the inevitable dialectic of eternity and time which persists (even if only upon a linguistic level) throughout the Church Dogmatics. It is not possible to offer any short or easy final judgement upon the theological achievement of Barth as regards the problem of time for the

material of this thesis has demonstrated (if it has done nothing else) the comprehensive integration of his thought in the Church Dogmatics.

Given the ontological ground of the Church Dogmatics in the doctrine of God's being in eternity and its fulfilment in the incarnation and the resurrection then the understanding of man in his time that Barth offers is the consistent outcome of the interaction of eternity and time as it has been developed within in the incarnation and Christology. Underlying his theological anthropology a number of problems attend Barth's understanding of the relation of creation and Christology as both are grounded in the being of God in act. Throughout the Church Dogmatics the inner juxtaposition of the axis of eternity and time informs the divine-human relation, whether it is the man Jesus Christ in relation to God or through him humanity itself. This manifests itself in an external complexity and yet inner simplicity with regard to ontology. The ontology-temporality of the Church Dogmatics could certainly be regarded as an articulation of what T.F. Torrance has regarded as the 'inner logic' of Barth's theology. In the foregoing thesis an attempt has been made through a statement of the primary postulates of the Church Dogmatics to allow the inner temporal structural articulation of the architectonic to stand revealed. There is an essential tension between the ontological impulse from eternity and the resurrection in time at the foundation of Barth's work. Both refer to God's 'act', 'time', and 'movement' and yet within this relation of factors, of 'events', there remains a pervasive ambivalence

which can be most clearly seen in the consideration of 'Man in his Time'. When does an 'act', 'time' or 'movement' cease to be such? Does Barth in his assertion of the temporality of God escape ambiguity or even worse a slide into timelessness?

The inner paradox of time and 'God's time' is most explicit in the passage 'Man in his Time'. Here Barth argues that 'the eternal God does not live without time' for 'He is supremely temporal'.¹⁵ God's eternity is 'authentic temporality' and the 'source of all time' and as such it is 'the uncreated self-subsistent time' in which 'present past and future, yesterday, today and to-morrow are not successive, but simultaneous'.¹⁶ The paradox is not in the contrast of eternity ('God's time') and time, but in God's time itself. Man's time is 'inauthentic', that is a time in which 'past, present and future follow one another in succession' answering man's 'need' for created time as the 'form of all reality distinct from God'.¹⁷ A paradox arises in that despite the need of man for successive time, his true 'temporality' ('real time') is simultaneous time. Thus the time of Jesus Christ 'acquires in relation to their times the character of God's time, of eternity, in which past present and future are simultaneous'.¹⁸ In short is it not the case that the

15. CD III/2, pp. 437-8.

16. Op.cit., p. 438.

17. Ibid.

18. Op.cit., p. 440.

closer man's time comes to eternity (that is God's or 'real' time) the farther the concept of 'time' employed moves from any notion of time that can be acceptable as time? With the increasing emphasis upon the alleged reality of God's time so there is an ever greater departure from the structure of time. The stridency of the assertions of 'past, present and future' in simultaneity without the division of before and after is undermined by the very subtraction that has taken place. The reality of God's time insofar as it is made upon the basis of the New Testament statements about the 'I am' of Jesus' temporal being is a laudable insight. The further interpretation of this in terms of the dialectical contrast of a simultaneous past, present and future in the nunc stans with the division of fragmented fleeting human time is introducing a tension which tends on a linguistic level towards a nominally 'timeful', but in reality 'timeless', concept of so-called 'real time'. This is a serious charge which may be tempered by the complexities and subtleties of Barth's exegesis. This point must therefore be enlarged if it is to be sustained.

In reply to the above argument Barth's defender might immediately respond that 'The many philosophical theories of time which deny its reality and regard it as a mere form or abstraction or figment of the imagination can only be finally abandoned when we consider that God Himself took time and thus treated it as something real'.¹⁹ Here we see

19. Op.cit., pp. 455-6.

the paradox of Barth's position because he asserts a 'time' which has consciously lost those very features which allow us to call it time, that is its determinate transience.

'Real time' is not even necessarily bound by irreversibility,²⁰ for God's time does not merely 'illuminate' and 'relativise' time but enlarges and projects the movement and teleology of the temporal process, the flux of past, present and future whilst eliminating the inevitable and intrinsic loss of time in its division and transience. Barth's theological 'real time' might be thought of as a selective extraction and expansion of one intrinsic aspect of concept of time at the expense of another equally intrinsic aspect. If the result is 'time' then the reader must recall its provenance and limitations for it is in danger of being a hypostatisation of one arm of a linguistic distinction. As such it may display considerable intellectual ingenuity, but is nevertheless highly questionable in its source. The relativisation of all time by the 'fulfilment of time' is based upon this abrogation of the division of time in 'God's time'. There is an inner dialectical tension in the temporal structure of the Church Dogmatics, which if the reader is not to capitulate his own rationality in the face of the apparent rationality of revelation, indicates to him that despite Barth's emphasis upon 'real time' over against human transience there is an apparent tendency towards a timelessness implicit in the notion of God's eternal simultaneity.

20. Op.cit., p. 456.

Barth is aware of the danger of an overall ontological and temporal docetism when he argues that,

'Only a docetic attitude to Jesus can deny that His being in time also means what being in time means for us all. Our recognition of His true humanity depends on our acceptance of this proposition. Even the recognition of His true deity, implying as it does the identity of His time and God's, does not rule out this simple meaning of His being in time. On the contrary, it includes it.'
(CD III/2, p. 463)

Can Barth be understood to maintain this duality?

What does 'being in time mean for us all'? In the preceding sentences Barth has made it quite clear that he means by this 'time' the 'once-for-allness' of the life and death of Jesus Christ. It has happened and therefore it is in the past. This means that the division of 'before' and 'after' applies. It is contingent because these events could have happened otherwise; they had a beginning and an end. This being in time that we recognise as such is 'included' in God's time. The weight of Barth's ontology, which is structured and mediated through the architectonic of God's time, appears to bear down upon and overwhelm the contingent in an 'inclusion' which tends to amplify the continuity and simultaneity of the past, present and future whilst eliding their real distinction in the division of before and after. Can there be in the inner logic of the Church Dogmatics a renewed dialectic which resists all Barth's attempts at a resolution? Does Barth's resolution not appear to effect in theological terms a synthesis of categories within Christology and theological ontology analogous to that of Hegel? Given the ontological chain that Barth has forged can it be that his theological integration overwhelms the

extra-theological conception of time in the final inclusion? Barth's own words cannot fail to convince as he puts them in the mouth of the Christ of Revelation I,8.

'All times have their source and end in my time. Of course, all these other times are real times, for at the heart of them I have time. But other times are subsequent to mine. They are overshadowed, dominated and divided into periods by my time. It is my present that makes them past or future, for my present includes them both. I was, and I am to come, as surely as I am and I live.'

(CD III/2, p. 465)

Barth's overall theological inversion of ontological priority is here at work for not only is the contemporaneity of man's times with that of Christ postulated in its 'inclusion' by his time but also their 'division' by his time (which is of course God's). Here there is at best a certain ambiguity (how can the divisionless simultaneity of eternity divide time?) and at worst an outright contradiction. What appears to happen is a subtle process of conceptual sleight-of-hand in which premisses are entering, withdrawing from and re-entering Barth's argument as they are required to maintain the apparent duality of the mutually related realities of created and uncreated temporal being. An ontological monism in the Church Dogmatics would seem quite inevitable if the doctrine of time and eternity does ultimately resolve itself on the side of 'real time' (eternity) as opposed to divided time. Barth's thought is rightly ambiguous on this issue for he is quite naturally concerned to maintain the reality of both. If, however, the foundation of his dogmatics in an exclusively theological source (the Word of God) is granted then how can its 'time' be more than a theological construction, albeit a valid and

veridical reflection of that reality posited as the basis of fides quaerens intellectum? Can there be two realities in the Church Dogmatics if Barth is true to his initial postulates? Is it possible for either man or time to exist within theology anything other than the status of derived entities, or alternatively, as suggested earlier, as a surd element in the Church Dogmatics? The ambivalence in Barth's thought stems from this double thrust; he must speak of God and of man, of eternity and of time. Given the basis of his thought how can he speak of man or of time other than as theological constructions drawn out of the 'real' and 'simple reality' of the Word of God in its full manifestations?

The reality of the Word of God in its multiplex manifestation is the basis of all theological reality but can also be seen as the renewing basis of all reality in the Church Dogmatics. The 'humanity' of Jesus Christ and his 'time' is part of that act of God from eternity the contingency of which is secured in virtue of its being God's act. The conceptual openness of Barth's theological system appears to be an openness to reality as a reality given within and explicated on the basis of the 'theological circle'. This 'circle' is both logical in that it comprises the structure of revelation and ontological in that this structure has its foundation in God's act from eternity, realised in the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Can and does Barth move outside the limitations that have been located in this study? The non-theological reality required to realise the theology of the

Word of God in time, and in history, cannot but be derived from Barth's theological postulates if he is to be (as indeed he is) faithful to his initial stance. This is but merely an interpretation of Barth's immensely rich and well developed arguments. As has been recounted at length in the course of the foregoing study of Barth's work there is a deep and utterly pervasive theological conditioning of all aspects of the Church Dogmatics. In fact the reader's perspectives must undergo a series of alterations if he is to grasp the thoroughness of the theological and Christological constitution of the work of Barth. Even in Romans this was evident and here in assessing the achievement of the Church Dogmatics with regard to time there is a parallel fidelity to theological principle which is complete. Only in the context of a full appreciation of this response made in faith on Barth's part can justice be done to his thought.

If, however, the reader were to ignore the qualification made above some interesting conclusions might be drawn. There is undoubtedly an extremely powerful ontology in the Church Dogmatics in which the axis of time and eternity plays a most important part. Given the fact that eternity is the being of God and that the being of God is being in act then could it not be plausibly maintained that temporality (that is as 'God's time') is ontology? Time and eternity in infrangible interconnection and this axis is the ontological structure of the Church Dogmatics, based of course upon the Word of God. If indeed this were the case and the distinction of eternity and time was a theolo-

gically derived construction then would it not be plausible to argue (given in turn that man's 'time' is 'inauthentic' and 'unreal') that although there might well be an ontological distinction of God and man, God and cosmos, there was in fact no real temporal distinction. Alternatively it would be even more radical to argue that there was, given the mutuality of temporality and ontology, no ontological distinction either. Unfortunately such speculations are perhaps encouraged by Barth's refusal to deal with natural and cosmic time except insofar as it is inferred from human time. Besides this Barth's extensive use of the parallels between 'flesh' and 'time' as the paradigms (and ontological base in Jesus Christ) of the knowledge of real humanity and real time also tend to reinforce these difficulties.

It could hardly be denied that whatever interpretation, hostile or sympathetic is put upon Barth's work the role of eternity and time is quite crucial in the Church Dogmatics. This Conclusion is not intended to impel the reader into any rapid or ill-considered judgement of Barth's achievement but merely to provide certain thoughts which might be used in reflection upon the foregoing materials in this thesis. Once the inner logic of time and eternity is shown in relief in the Church Dogmatics then it can be seen to have both an extremely important intrinsic role but that it also acts as a touchstone with regard to the ontological status of each part of the whole system.

Christian theology must do justice to the mutual yet distinct realities of man and God. Does it appear that

Barth has done this or has he in fact derived the latter from the former? There is no simple answer to this question but it could be argued on the basis of Barth's own presuppositions that the reader is on occasion led to the brink of timelessness, in a 'time' which is fundamentally 'simultaneity', yet which is expounded dialectically through the doubtful distinction of 'past, present and future' from 'before and after'. The 'time' postulated as 'God's time' is a most singular conceptual construct and however much it may be defensible upon theological grounds it would seem to trade upon a linguistic ambiguity (involving a dialectic of concepts in a 'real time') which is allied to a further series of ambiguities in the relation of ontology and temporality which has been explored in the course of the foregoing exposition and analysis.

We must therefore ask if in fact there is an identity of ontology and temporality underlying the Church Dogmatics. If this were found to be so, thus making all theological reality dependent upon the actus purus et singularis of divine being as interpreted through the doctrine of 'real time' (eternal simultaneity), then could not the whole massive architectonic be thought of as teetering on the brink of the abyss of timelessness, once the dialectic of 'real time' had been exposed? This is a hard-thinking and admittedly reductive interpretation of the Church Dogmatics. The essential many-sidedness of Barth's work (seen in less hostile terms as systematic ambiguity) would allow the proponent of Barth to argue from the historicity of the resurrection and the incarnation to a different view

of his achievement. The immense skill and energy of Barth has resulted in a complexity in the involution of theological argument and ontology which is quite capable of resisting simplistic reduction once responsible attempts are made to grapple with its intense theological seriousness.

Finally so as to expand this brief critique of Barth's theological theory of time it is necessary to examine the basis of the terms used to denote the temporality of God's being. These are primarily 'act', 'movement' and 'time' itself with all its corollates. Each of these terms is posited in Barth's characterisation of the divine being and is there supremely exemplified. In being thus elevated each loses in accordance with the degree of amplification and exaltation those features which distinguish it from the notion of supra-temporality, the simultaneity of divine eternity. Such a process is noted at length in this thesis with regard to 'act' and 'time'. A further example is found in the most inspiring and theologically surprising section of 'Man in his Time', where Barth introduces the notion of 'movement' into the time of God. It will be remembered that Kierkegaard took particular exception to Hegel's use of the concept of movement within a system which purported to attain total and comprehensive rationality. It is vital that Barth does not fall into the same pitfall in his doctrine of God and if this is a real *κίνησης* then he escapes the logical and categorial reduction characteristic of Hegel. Barth argues as follows in the context of his radical scepticism with regard to human 'inauthentic' time. Man has neither past nor future and

even his present is lost. Thus primarily 'it is not we who are now but God who is now' and there is a 'divine stepping from the past to the future'.²¹ This is a divine action performed now' that is 'His movement from the past into the future' that 'has the duration and extension which escapes our own Now'.²² It is plausible to grant that God's 'now' is the basis of our human present for in Barth's eyes 'we have seen that all human being, action and experience is either now or unreal'. This is plausible in the theological context but what is questionable is the ascription to God of 'movement'. Is there not perhaps an implicit contradiction in asserting the actus, purus et singularis of God's being and the multiplicity of movements as in Barth's later argument? 'At any rate we have to reckon with each moment because God Himself has particular moments, *καιρός*, in His being speech and action in relation to us; moments which continually come and go'.²³ Barth is here asserting the 'movement' in God's being which demands the discrete particularity of 'moments'; yet this is specifically excluded by strict simultaneity although it is allowed by his equivocation over time as 'duration' without 'division'. Once more Barth is forced into an ambiguity which can only be detected when the whole of his ontological conception of the axis of eternity and time is subjected to analysis.

21. CD III/2, p. 529.

22. Op.cit., p. 530.

23. Op.cit., p. 532.

Barth repudiates the intrusion of 'philosophy' into theology. By this he means the elaboration of 'Weltanschauungen' and generalised theories or explanations of the nature of reality. This thesis has been an attempt to combine the methods of dogmatic and philosophical theology in a study of a major contemporary work of theology. We have sought to escape Barth's condemnation by using the methods of simple logical analysis so as to expose the tensions and ambiguities within the structure of ontological and theological assertion and construction made in the Church Dogmatics. By this an attempt has been made to do justice to his work both as an achievement in purely theological terms as well as a system of thought as open as any other to the common tests of rationality. As regards purely theological criteria then Barth's work is a magnificent creative synthesis. As regards the latter philosophical standpoint then greater difficulties emerge. The former cannot be divorced from the latter without an attack being launched upon rationality, and to take this step would be grave indeed. A simple set of contradictions, antitheses or antinomies could well be anticipated in any dogmatic theology which set out to relate man and God or to explicate and expound the dogma of the Trinity but what we appear to have in the Church Dogmatics is something far more subtle. Barth is generating on the basis of the doctrine of the Word of God, and expressing through an immense architectonic a total theological explanation in which features of all reality must appear. Unfortunately the semantic and linguistic tools used to achieve this are misused and thus

broken and distorted as regards time. This is because there is a single ultimate ontological source of reality in the Church Dogmatics and in accounting for aspects of non-theological reality which inevitably impinge upon man's experience and thought Barth would have to draw some features of these other aspects out of his ontological monism. It is only possible to do this partially because of the intrinsic incompatibility of these features. To achieve this a selective borrowing and conceptual pruning takes place. We have recounted what seems to happen after that above. The alien features are elided and the compatible ones amplified, this process disguising the loss as greater emphasis takes place. Whenever Barth seeks to temporalise God by utilising the method of analogia fidei this becomes a species of ontological and semantic parasitism. Certain concepts have to draw semantic vitality from what they deny. This issues in a systematic ambiguity which despite its apparent theological virtues is in the final count not free from a dubiety when tested by logical criteria.

In this thesis a path has been driven through the Church Dogmatics by means of a study located in the immediate historical and theological context in which Barth found himself. The immense and compelling scheme lies behind us. There is more to explore undoubtedly but we have laid out the vertebral ontology of this work, expressed as it is through the doctrine of time. The truth of T.F. Torrance's judgment is evident. Barth has indeed thought through into each other 'the being of God in his acts and the acts of God in his being, in a thoroughgoing

integration of the ontic and the dynamic, and then in the light of the inner organic connections that come to view, and the fundamental grammar of God's revelation as Lord, (interpreted) the whole of Christian theology by setting it once more squarely upon its proper foundations'.²⁴ This has not proved an unalloyed blessing for in interpreting the 'dynamic' in terms of 'time' and positing the identity of being and act (as Torrance demonstrates) so the danger of acute categorial reduction appears when the whole of Christian theology is founded upon this. There is an implosion of time into the 'act' of the 'being-in-act' which can only be resisted (given absolute fidelity to this ontological foundation) by the ambiguous re-assertion of 'time' in an 'eternity' ('God's time') developed by breeding from emasculated temporal assertions. These are used to create 'real time' which ostensibly 'heals' man's 'inauthentic' and 'unreal time'.

Barth exploits the axis of time and eternity as the ontological medium for the reality of his whole theological structure in a manner analogous to that of 'substance' in traditional theological assertion. As such this axis is not value-free and it cannot be used in an all-embracing theological system with a single ontological source, without the destruction and distortion of indispensable features of that medium. By using what amounts to a metaphysical doctrine of being expressed in the axis of eternity and time which the structural link in the Church Dogmatics

24. 'Newton, Einstein and Scientific Theology', Religious Studies, 6, p. 248.

Barth has introduced strains and ambiguities, which whilst all-pervasive, are difficult to detect. The systematic nature of this ambiguity may only be seen when we examine and state the totality of his ontological achievement. It is this that has been attempted in this thesis where we have analysed the interconnection and Christological reciprocity of the major doctrines, drawing forth through careful attention to logical, as well as ontological and theological considerations the form and nature of Barth's fundamental temporal ontology.

Hopefully we have seen something of the limits of both theological and philosophical thinking in this thesis. Great credit is due to Barth for the multi-dimensional character of his thought which demands an equivalent response on the part of the student. Unfortunately this categorial catholicity does not extend far enough and there is in Barth's work the greatest and doubtless the last movement in the western tradition of attempts to surmount the antitheses of man and God, eternity and time, and so on in living synthesis. Barth's attempt is both theological and Christological but it is at root ontological. This is only the beginning of his problems not the end of them; for ontology is temporality in the Church Dogmatics, but real being in act is only nominally, and with the greatest ingenuity, to be regarded as 'temporal' in anything other than a very Pickwickian sense. The inner dialectic is held off by Herculean efforts, but careful analysis shows that the categorial reduction is intrinsic and ineradicable in the doctrine of eternity and time employed and exploited

with such systematic zeal in the Church Dogmatics.

The foregoing critical analysis is presented in the context of a full study of the work of Karl Barth as a very great theologian. The fidelity of Barth to the object of his study, the living Word of God, is so great that only when we grant him in full his theological stance and credentials can we begin to grasp and to appreciate the total and uncompromising authenticity of his theological endeavour. This does not, however, prevent us from retaining our critical faculties following Barth into the labyrinthine depths of the Church Dogmatics, and from keeping our grip upon the slender thread of rationality granted to us. In this way it has seemed to this writer possible to examine the work of Karl Barth as regards the problem of time from the stance of both theology and philosophy without relapsing into comparison and repetition on the one hand, or, on the other, into mere linguistic word play and futile nominalism.

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