THE HOLY SPIRIT AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD:
A STUDY IN THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH

By

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Introduction

As the title indicates, the objective of this essay is to study the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the Knowledge of God in juxtaposition to one another. It is also a study in the theology of Karl Barth. That is, it is hoped that through an intensive study of his handling of these two doctrines one might catch a glimpse of his theology as a whole. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit lends itself admirably to this objective in that it relates so essentially to almost every other Christian doctrine. It is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ relates to men. Therefore, it is impossible to speak of the Holy Spirit with any thoroughness without becoming involved in the doctrine of the Incarnation and the doctrine of man, and several of their corollaries: Holy Scripture, proclamation, analogy, the Church, as well as election, creation, sin, reconciliation, eschatology, and so on. Similarly, the question of the knowledge of God touches on all of these major areas of theological inquiry. These two doctrines, therefore, lend themselves especially well to a view of the systematic, coherent wholeness of Barth's thought.

Two main themes run throughout this essay. One is the inseparability of revelation and reconciliation, or of epistemology and soteriology. This is a result of Barth's Christocentrism, and his insistence that Christology must be applied to theological epistemology as well as to every other doctrine, i.e., his rejec-

tion of natural theology. Barth's doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit as Reconciler as well as Revealer is therefore a central and all pervading theme. The other is the inseparability of the Word and Spirit. One might say that this essay is essentially about nothing else than the Spirit as the power of the Word, whereby man's knowledge of God is achieved.

My concern has been to see deeply into Barth's mature thought, having previously come to the conviction that it is impossible to do theology seriously in the second half of the twentieth century without a fairly firm grasp of what this great theologian has said. His early works, such as The Epistle to the Romans, and many of his smaller works have been referred to occasionally, sometimes only in footnotes, but mainly I have used the Church Dogmatics, where, of course, his work is both more thorough and more mature. Certain of his shorter books, however, have been important, e.g., Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum, The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, Dogmatics in Outline, and A Shorter Commentary on Romans. The greatest difficulty in writing this essay has been to keep it within the proper length of an M.Th. thesis, and to restrain it from straying from the subject and becoming instead an essay on Incarnation, or certain other philosophers or theologians, or the doctrine of man, Scripture, or Church.

It is impossible to appreciate the significance of Karl Barth without taking account of his polemic against various other theological points of view. I have therefore made some effort to understand his opponents, especially in the field of epistemology. Si-

milarly, it is important to know something of the positive influence of other men upon him. Both his friends and his "enemies", if they may be so called, are often dealt with as well in the footnotes.

For the benefit of any students who may wish to read part, but not all of this essay, the following is a summary of the contents of each chapter.

Chapter One deals with the Word made flesh as the basis of the knowledge of God:
(a) Barth's epistemology as a posteriori, form and method being determined by content; theology as science.
(b) The theological "object" of knowledge as the Incarnation, i.e., the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the divinity of Christ as His revelation of the Father.
(c) Other starting-points are discussed and Barth's comments upon them are noted: Augustine and some of his contemporary followers; the roots of modernist theology in modern philosophy, beginning with Descartes and Kant and traced through Schleiermacher and Feuerbach to Bultmann; Thomas Aquinas and the Thomist tradition.
(d) Barth's concept of "religion" as it relates to the knowledge of God.

Chapter Two deals with the relation of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, noting Barth's exegetical comments on the relevant Biblical passages:
(a) The relation of the Spirit to eschatology in the Old Testament seen as the basis of the Synoptic conception of the relation of Christ and Spirit.
(b) The relation of the Spirit to Christ as seen in the Gospel stories of the virgin birth, baptism of Christ, temptation, miracles, death and resurrection of Christ; the Spirit as witness to Christ in John and Paul; the Holy Spirit as parousia of Christ.
(c) The Holy Spirit in the Trinity: Ex Patre Filioque.

Chapter Three deals with the relation of the Holy Spirit to man as the knower of God:
(a) Anthropology based on Christology; the image of God in man as it relates to the knowledge of God; the Creator Spirit and man's spirit; election, creation and redemption in Christ.
(b) Man's sin as pride and sloth; his refusal to know God; sin and the image of God; sin as falsehood; the sin against the

Holy Spirit.
(c) The Spirit the Reconciler as Revealer of Christ; Barth's attack on Augustine's synergism; simul peccator et justus; justification and sanctification: union with Christ by the Spirit; the relation of revelation and reconciliation and the prophetic work of Christ through the Spirit; the question of universalism.

Chapter Four deals with the character of theological knowledge as faith considered in relation to
(a) Theological language and the doctrine of analogy; Barth compared with Thomas Aquinas, A. Quenstedt; analogia fidei, and the opposition to analogia entis; Barth's concept of analogia relationis.
(b) Proclamation and Holy Scripture; Scripture as Word of God, as witness to revelation, as inspired by the Holy Spirit; the authority of Scripture for proclamation; the problem of the canon.
(c) Faith and Life in the Church as initiated by the call of Christ; the Spirit of the Word as the power of illumination and awakening; faith and experience; faith as acknowledgment, recognition, trust, confession; the life of faith as life in the Spirit; faith, love and hope; the Church as gathered, upbuilt, and sent by the Spirit; the Church as the community of the knowledge of God.
(d) The Hope of Perfect Knowledge; perfect union with Christ in the Spirit, and the participation in God's knowledge of Himself.

My gratitude is due to the kindness of my supervisor, the Reverend Canon Roland Walls, for his indispensable aid and advice, and especially for the many hours he spent reading and rereading the manuscripts. I must also thank the Reverend Professor T. F. Torrance for his valuable suggestions and criticisms of the original outline, and especially for the insights gained for this essay from his lectures, books and articles. I must thank also the Reverend James Torrance, who was most helpful both in seminar and in many private conversations. I extend my thanks also to the librarians of New College Library for their friendly help and co-operation, and to various friends among my fellow students whose work was sometimes complementary to mine.

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Abbreviations

C.D. -- Church Dogmatics

Instit. -- Institutes of the Christian Religion

S.T. -- Summa Theologica

CHAPTER ONE

The Word made Flesh as the Basis of the Knowledge of God

The most fundamental thing to understand about Karl Barth's theology is its Christocentrism. A mere glance at the Contents of each part volume of the Church Dogmatics makes it quite evident that Christology, or the theology of the Word, is the centre by which every other Christian doctrine is governed. Perhaps Barth is best known for his total rejection of natural theology, that is, his insistence that the Christological principle has to be applied also in epistemology. Jesus Christ Himself, as the centre of Christian faith, determines the way in which He, and in Him, God, is to be known. Jesus Christ determines theological method, and therefore is the key to the understanding of every aspect of Christian faith. In this sense, Christology, as the doctrine of Christ, rules over the rest of theology. In Volume II, part 2, Barth declares,

> Against all imaginations and errors in which we seem to be so hopelessly entangled when we try to speak of God, God will indeed maintain Himself if we will only allow the name of Jesus Christ to be maintained in our thinking as the beginning and end of all our thoughts.[1]

This is so because Jesus Christ is God's Word to us. Jesus Christ is what God communicates of Himself. We have to attend to God's Word to us if we are to know Him. The supreme grace of God is that His Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, not only to reveal Himself, but in doing so, to save us, to reconcile the world

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[1]Karl Barth, The Doctrine of God, pt. 2, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. II, pt. 2, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1957, pp. 4-5.

to Himself. Our main interest in this essay is, of course, the work of the Holy Spirit as it relates to our knowledge of God. The fact that Christ, and not the Spirit, is the centre of theology does not imply a subordination of the Person or Work of the Spirit,[2] for, as we shall see, the Spirit is the power of the Word in which it comes to us and is heard and believed by us. We begin this essay with the Word in keeping with the centrality of the Word in Barth's thought, but also because the Word is the source and content of the knowledge of God that we wish to investigate. Our main sources for this chapter are Barth's Church Dogmatics, Volumes I and II.

(a) Epistemology a posteriori

As we have already seen, Karl Barth bases his epistemology, as well as every other aspect of his theology, on Jesus Christ. He begins by assuming that there is such a reality as the "Word of God" and that this Word was "made flesh". That is, he sets out to do theology as a Christian believer; he does not call in question the existence of his object of inquiry. In his understanding, Christian theological epistemology does not only lay down guide posts for a richer and deeper knowledge of God--it does do that--but it also attempts to give an account of the knowledge of God which it already possesses when it begins its work.

Theology is not essentially different from other sciences

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[2]Karl Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God, pt. 2, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. I, pt. 2, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1956, p. 208.

in this respect. A consideration of the basis of our knowledge of human history, for example, could not proceed without first knowing something about History, and thereby knowing whence and how our knowledge was obtained, i.e., by the study of historical records and the relating together of facts in order to interpret the meaning of past events. Similarly, we could not think about the basis of our knowledge of the physical world if we did not already know something about water, air, earth, etc., enabling us to reflect upon the proper way of knowing such objects, and therefore of learning more about them. The nature of the object of knowledge determines the way in which it is known. T. F. Torrance explains, "We know something in accordance with its nature when we respect it and consciously behave in terms of it."[3] Expounding Barth in the Introduction to Theology and Church, Torrance writes:

> the methodological closeness of theology to empirical science is seen at a deeper level in the essentially scientific way in which it develops its method, for it does not bring to its task a method that it has already thought out and acquired, but elaborates a method only in its actualization of knowledge.[4]

We must always, therefore, have some knowledge of an object before we ask how we know it and how we learn more about it. Epistemology has to be done not a priori but a posteriori. It is to be expected that our knowledge of God will be obtained in quite

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[3] T. F. Torrance, "Theological Education Today," in Theology in Reconstruction, London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1965, p. 15.

[4] T. F. Torrance, introd., Karl Barth, Theology and Church, trans. L. P. Smith, London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1962, p. 42.

a different way than our knowledge of history or the physical world. But in theology, as in other sciences, our doctrine of knowledge has to be "after the fact". In the Church we believe we know God. Our first question about this knowledge has to be in the past tense: How have we come to know Him?. Karl Barth's answer is, The Word made Flesh, Jesus Christ, or, expressed more generally, God's Revelation of Himself. God has revealed Himself in His Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, as He is attested in Holy Scripture and proclaimed by the Church. If our path to knowledge is to be consistent with our object, the "subject" of theology can only be the Christian Church. As Barth points out, "the subject of a science can only be one in which the object and sphere of activity in question are present and familiar."[5]

Barth is willing to describe theology as "science", as he explains it in I, 1. Theology can be called "science" in that (1) like all other sciences, it is a human effort after a definite object of knowledge; (2) it follows a definite, self-consistent path to knowledge; (3) it is accountable for its path to itself and to everyone who is capable of following it.[6] This does not mean that it submits to conditions laid down outside itself. Indeed, the second point indicates that if it did so, it would cease to be scientific:

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[5] Karl Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, trans. G. T. Thomson, London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1949, p. 9.

[6] Karl Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God, pt. 1, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. I, pt. 1, trans. G. T. Thomson, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1936, p. 7.

> There is no possible way for theology to prove its "scientific nature" than by showing in its work at its task of knowledge--work actually done and determined by its object--what it exactly means by "scientific nature."[7]

Thus theology does not seek permission from philosophy, or any other sphere. When Barth discusses "prolegomena", he makes it very clear why theological epistemology, to be scientific, must operate a posteriori:

> Prolegomena to dogmatics are possible only as a portion of dogmatics itself. The syllable pro- in the word prolegomena is to be understood figuratively; what is in question is not the things to be said previously, but the things that must be said first.[8]

Barth expands his understanding of scientific objectivity in theology in his book on Anselm of Canterbury. In theological knowledge, as in all other knowledge, the object must be "given".

> Everything depends not only on the fact that God grants grace to think correctly about Him, but also on the fact that God comes within his system as the object of his thinking, that he 'shows' Himself to the thinker.... God must stand in encounter with him if his intelligere is not to be delusion....[9]

Knowledge of God, or "faith", does not come about without something new encountering us and happening to us from outside.[10] In the case of the ratio fidei, Anselm (and Barth) recognizes a ratio veritatis, the divine Word, Truth Itself. This is the ratio Dei to which the mind of man must be prayerfully obedient.[11] As Barth explains it in II, 1, the ratio Dei is knowable by us and

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[7] C.D., I, 1, p. 10.

[8] Ibid., p. 45.

[9] Karl Barth, Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum, trans. I. W. Robertson, London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1960, p. 39.

[10] Ibid., p. 19.

[11] Ibid., pp. 44-51.

can be trusted by us because of the Wisdom of God, which we are given to know in revelation. Anselm attempted to demonstrate in Cur Deus Homo?, says Barth, the "necessity", the wisdom of God's actions in judgment and mercy; such necessity is due to the fact that God Himself is not in the least dark and irrational, but always illuminating, intelligible and purposeful. He is not capricious, but a God of order. We have trust and confidence in Him only for this reason, that in His revelation our ratio is able to see His ratio.[12] Theological knowing, then, is a very real knowing of a Reality outside oneself. This is so, of course, only when we look (or listen) at the right place, i.e., at His revelation in Jesus Christ, and the witness to it, Holy Scripture. That is why there can be no question of beginning a quaerens intellectum without fides, simply with the rules of autonomous reason and the data of general human experience.[13] The science of faith ceases to be science if it calls in question its object, (in Anselm's understanding, the Credo of the Church). Intelligere, the goal of all theological inquiry, comes about by attention to and reflection upon the Credo. The alternative, in Anselm's view, would be "no better than bats and owls squabbling with eagles about the reality of the midday sun."[14] In all this Barth wants to stress that fides is no magical kind of knowing detached from an object. "Pistis rightly understood is gnosis; rightly understood

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[12] Karl Barth, The Doctrine of God, pt. 2, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. II, pt. 1, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1957, pp. 422-427.

[13] Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum, p. 54. [14] Ibid., p. 27.

the act of faith is also an act of knowledge." It is definitely not "a dim sensation, an a-logical feeling", because it "takes place where there is actual experience that God speaks."[15] The necessity of the presence of the object, then, is common to theology and all other sciences.

Theology does differ from all other sciences, however, because of the incomparable nature of its object, the Almighty God Himself. It may fairly be said that knowledge of God is analagous to knowledge of other persons, in that it must be knowledge in relationship. The object is a Thou who also sees and knows us. "In Christian faith we are concerned quite decisively with a meeting," Barth tells us.[16] But when we meet this particular Thou, Jesus Christ, God Himself in His revelation, our knowledge is quite different from our knowledge of other human beings, for here we are in a relationship with One who makes Himself our Lord. When we say that faith is the mode of knowledge proper to the object God, we mean that God can be known only in a relationship of trust and obedience. This means that God is never known abstractly. He is known concretely as our Lord. As an object of knowledge He does not come under our control. He remains the Lord of our knowledge of Him. The theologian is entirely dependent upon His grace. For this reason, Barth contends, the theologian must do his work in obedience, repentance and prayer.[17] He subordinates himself entire-

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[15] Dogmatics in Outline, pp. 23-25. [16] Ibid., p. 15.

[17] T. F. Torrance writes, (introd. to Theology and Church), "Because the object of theological knowledge confronts us always as Subject,..., as the Lord God.... prayer is the scientifically correct mode of inquiry," (p. 43). N.B. Barth, C.D., I, 1, pp. 19-25.

ly to the object. If the object is truly God, then the theologian cannot presume to stand above Him and judge Him. The theologian especially must do his work a posteriori. Speaking again of prolegomena to dogmatics, Barth argues:

> Her epistemological question cannot run: How is human knowledge of revelation possible? (as if it were a question of whether revelation is known! as if it were to be expected from an investigation of human knowledge that we could see into the possibility of knowing revelation!)[18]

The possibility of dogmatic prolegomena, he goes on, cannot be understood as part of a larger scientific problem-context, from the general structure of which we are to read off theology's special epistemological conditions. It cannot be a matter of analyzing the religious self-consciousness of man, as in Schleiermacher, or, prior to faith, as in Bultmann, looking for an ontologically existential possibility of the existential occurrence of faith. Such a procedure is unscientific for theology, for it adopts alien philosophical criteria as a basis on which to make its theological judgments. Barth asks:

> Is there an existential potentiality different from the actuality of revelation on the basis of which the latter can be regarded as an event? Is there possible something universally human of which this special thing can be claimed subsequently as the realization?[19]

Such an approach interprets revelation as a human possibility before finding its possibility first in God. "Such a determination of human reality only proceeds, as it is to be perceived as pro-

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[18] C.D., I, 1, p. 30. [19] Ibid., p. 40.

ceeding, from something outside all human possibilities, i.e., from God acting."[20] Certainly man's possibility of receiving revelation must be affirmed, (and we shall see that Barth develops this in relation to the doctrine of the Spirit), but it is not establishable prior to faith. It can be known only after revelation is already encountered. This is the point he makes so cogently in Church Dogmatics, I, 2,[21] where he argues that we must understand Jesus Christ as the objective reality of revelation before we think about its possibility. It is fruitless, he contends, to consider what conditions must be fulfilled in God and in ourselves to enable His revelation to encounter us, in order then to see whether it has actually occurred in accordance with these conditions. This to claim to know what God can and must do if revelation is to occur, and to know our own needs and possibilities in relation to God prior to faith

> In such circumstances it is inevitable that the most conscientious theology will prescribe for God what revelation must be and how it is to be handled if He is to count on our recognition of it as such.[22]

But, says Barth, man has to be deprived of his vaunted mid-way position between himself and God, wherefrom he tries to pass judgment on God's revelation. Rather, the man of faith

> neither imagines that he can use what he himself holds to be appropriate to God and beneficial to man as a standard with which to measure God, nor does he affirm the God-given fact on the ground that it corresponds to the conviction he has gained with the help of that same standard.[23]

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[20] C.D., I, 1, p. 41.

[21] C.D., I, 2, pp. 3-4.

[22] Ibid., p. 3.

[23] Ibid., p. 4.

Our order of knowing, Barth writes, must correspond to the order of being. Our conception of what is possible with God has to be guided solely by what He has actually willed and done and not vice-versa.[24]

It is on the basis of these insights that Barth placed quite lengthy discussions of the doctrine of the Trinity, (I, 1), and Christology, the doctrines of the Spirit, Scripture and proclamation, (I, 2), within the so-called "prolegomena" of his Dogmatics. This is because the criterion of dogmatics is revelation, God's Word, and God's Word cannot be dealt with properly except in the context of a discussion of these themes.

> The question of formal dogma cannot be raised without at this very central point entering upon material dogma, since the supposedly formal dogma is itself in reality, extremely material.[25]

Moreover, he returns to discuss the knowledge of God once again in The Doctrine of God, (II, 1), indicating that the place of theological epistemology is firmly within Christian faith.

(b) The Theological Object

We have seen, then, that for Barth, theology starts with the fact that the Word of God is actually known.[1] And because He is the Lord, He is known only as He gives Himself to be known: in a relationship of trust and obedience to His Word. This means that in His Word God makes Himself accessible to

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[24] C.D., I, 2, p. 7.
[25] C.D., I, 1, p. 47.
[1] C.D., II, 1, p. 4.

men, that He makes Himself an object that we men are able to behold.[2] Without such gracious, self-giving action, there could be no apprehension of the free, sovereign Lord. The fact that He makes Himself an object for us does not destroy the uniqueness of His particular objectivity. He has genuine objectivity like all other objects, but His objectivity is different from theirs, for He is not one in a series of like objects. Therefore, says Barth, the mode of knowledge proper to Him, i.e., faith, is "an utterly unique occurrence in the range of all knowledge."[3]

Indeed, it is not only unique, it is utterly miraculous that the Most High finds a way to show Himself to us without at the same time destroying us. "God's Word means God speaks."[4] He speaks, however, not so majestically as to deafen us, or blind us, but gently, mediately. In His Incarnation we do not look directly at God Himself as such. He is veiled in the flesh of Christ. And "flesh and blood" do not as such reveal God to us, but the "Father who is in heaven," (Mt. 16:17). "No man can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit," (I Cor. 12:3). But it is nevertheless solely by means of the objectivity of His flesh that this miracle occurs, that we do encounter God acting for us in His Incarnate life, death and resurrection. He speaks in His acts. But, as Barth points out, His acts are worldly acts, that is, they are never so very different from other events that they

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[2] C.D., II, 1, p. 10.
[3] Ibid., p. 14.
[4] C.D., I, 1, p. 158.

could not be subsumable under other categories by one who had not the eye of faith. The Church, preaching, sacraments, the Bible, Jesus Himself, can all be seen as not very extraordinary religious phenomena. "The veil is thick. We do not possess the Word of God otherwise than in the mystery of its worldliness."[5] His revelatory action in the history of Israel, preparatory to Christ, is veiled as well, and must be interpreted under the Spirit of God by the prophets: "And God spake." Comments Barth: the whole of Old Testament prophecy seems to be nothing but the proclamation of God in the form of a continual explanation of the divine work. But not until Jesus of Nazareth does the Word "appear in His eternal objectivity as the Son who dwells in the bosom of the Father."[6] The Word was made flesh and we saw His glory. In an indirect, worldly encounter with the divine Mediator, we are confronted by the reality of God as He has made Himself an object for us.

This object is entirely familiar and knowable to us.[7] He is

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[5] C.D., I, 1, p. 188. [6] C.D., II, 1, p. 19.

[7] Athanasius, in De Incarnatione Verbum Dei, (trans. T. H. Bindley, London, The Religious Tract Society, 1903) wrote that God was knowable to man through the order and design of creation, but men refused to know God because they were evil, (p. 63). Therefore, "seeing the weakness of man's nature that it was not sufficient of itself to know its Maker," God sent prophets to tell of Him, but men did not listen, (p. 64). "For when men, having rejected the contemplation of God, and keeping their eyes sunk downward in the deep were searching for God in nature and things of sense and were fashioning gods for themselves out of mortal men and daemons: then the common Saviour of all, the Word of God in His loving-kindness takes to Himself a body..., and draws towards Himself the senses of all men; in order that those who conceive God to exist in corporeal things may, from those things which the Lord does through the works of His body, perceive the truth and through Him draw inferences concerning the Father...." (pp. 69-70).

very man; He is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. He is one of us. He is not half-God and half-man, nor is He is a mixture of the two so that His manhood (or His Godhead) is compromised. He has a human mind and a human body and soul. He is a creature born of woman under the law. He is not unfallen man, but flesh. As Barth explains it, flesh is "the concrete form of human nature marked by Adam's fall."[8] Like us, He even lives under the sentence of death.

This is the supreme instance of the divine Love as we are told of it in the Bible: that He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, (Phil. 2:7). In eloquent illustration of this event, Soren Kierkegaard[9] tells the story of a king who loves a lowly maiden, but fears she will not love him in return because of the distance between them. He might simply elevate her, but this could not easily be done and still maintain her happiness. He might display his kingly majesty to impress her and so woo her, but that would not glorify her, but only him, and it is she whom he wishes in his love to glorify. He decides therefore that he must descend to her lowliness if he is really to show love for her. Kierkegaard goes on to tell of a God who wishes to make Himself known to man:

> In order that the union may be brought about the God must therefore become the equal of such a one and so he will appear in the likeness of the humblest. But the humblest is one who must serve others, and the God will therefore appear in the form of a servant. But

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[8] C.D., I, 2, p. 151.

[9] Soren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, trans. H. V. Hong, Princeton University Press, 1962, pp. 31f.

> this servant form is no mere outer garment, like the king's beggar cloak, which therefore flutters loosely about him and betrays the king.... It is his true form and figure.[10]

The Incarnation of the Son of God is just such an actual descent, a real ontic participation of God in man's creaturely being. The high and mighty God is able to do this, for His majestic freedom is such that He is not a prisoner of His transcendence. He is free to be God even as a creature. He is free to be the obedient servant as well as the commanding Lord. The genius of the doctrine of the Trinity is just this insight, that it is not alien to the nature of God to be lowly and obedient. Karl Barth has spoken of this with excellent clarity in his discussion of "The Way of the Son of God into the Far Country" in Church Dogmatics, IV, 1. The Incarnation of the Son of God reflects and reveals the inner divine Being of God Himself,[11] in which God is both Father and Son, the one who rules and the one who obeys. God's revealing and reconciling work toward His creation cannot be conceived of as apart from what God is in Himself. If in His revelation He is lowly as well as Lordly, so also in His eternal Being.[12] In His Word made flesh we are given to see deeply into the inner nature of the eternal God, for in the lowly man Jesus we see the obedience of the Son to the Father which is the eternal Love of the triune God.

But it has to be defined yet more clearly what it means for

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[10] Philosophical Fragments, p. 39.

[11] Karl Barth, The Doctrine of Reconciliation, pt. 1, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV, pt. 1, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1956, p.129.

[12] Ibid., pp. 202-209.

Jesus Christ to be "the theological object", the revelation in whom we meet and know God. We have already seen that the revelation is a mediated one. God reveals Himself in the form of something He is not, that is, a man of flesh and blood. What is it about this man that makes Him recognizable as God?

Barth feels strongly that the old "historical Jesus" school of the nineteenth century was a "blind alley". The New Testament, he points out, does not give us the materials for a biography of Jesus. Jesus is not there presented as a "great man", or as an impressive personality, a hero.[14] If He was any of these things it was not as such that He was recognized as God with us. Barth speaks of two approaches to this problem which he regards as false. The first, he says, is an Ebionite Christology, originating in the second century and very much used by modernist theology, wherein Jesus is regarded to have been such a great man who made such a great impression those around Him "that there inevitably arose the enthusiastic impression and idea, 'He is a God.'" He goes on that the other is a kind of Docetic Christology which interprets Jesus as "the personification of an idea otherwise very familiar to all, of a general truth."[15] Jesus is interpreted as the personification of the idea, perhaps, of the community of godhead and humanity, or the truth of redemption by way of death and rebirth, or of the association of holiness and loving-kindness, forgiveness and claim. That these ideas are in fact found embodied in this parti-

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[13] C.D., I, 1, p. 460.

[14] Ibid., p. 463.

[15] Ibid., p. 461.

cular man is regarded as accidental or indifferent, for in this way Jesus is regarded as a myth, a general truth taking form.[16] These two approaches, Barth points out, are essentially the same. The first regards Jesus as "a peak of history soaring into superhistory", the highest phenomenon of human life, while the other sees Him as "superhistory penetrating down into history",[17] the most perfect symbol of the divine presence. But they have in common the view that when the New Testament says Jesus is divine it is speaking loosely, and is to be loosely interpreted.[18] There is a parallel to these two approaches, Barth grants, in the Synoptic and Johannine traditions respectively. In the Synoptics we have a Christological thought which in Jesus finds God, and in John, one which finds God in Jesus.

> But the starting-point of Synoptic thought which finds God in Jesus is the fact, disclosed to certain men, of the divine emissary as such, the unambiguous fact of the man, who was in their midst, teaching and healing, dying and rising again, as a reality which, as divine, did not first require to be opened up and interpreted and asserted, but called to their lips the confession, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God! (Matt. 16:16) immediately, not as a synthetic but as an analytic statement. And the starting-point of Johannine thought which finds God in Jesus, was the fact, disclosed to certain men, of the divine mission, message and revelation, which they found in Jesus, "grace and truth," "resurrection and life," becoming events, the actual occurrence of their being fed with the "bread of life" (John 6:35) their actual being given to drink of the living water (John 4:10). "We saw--his glory."[19]

To the apostles Jesus is κυριος, Yahweh, the Lord; He is Emmanuel, God with us. Their experience of this man is not that He is a

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[16] C.D., I, 1, p. 461.

[17] Teillhard de Chardin is perhaps a representative of the first kind of Christology, Tillich and Bultmann of the second.

[18] C.D., I, 1, p. 462.

[19] Ibid., p. 463.

a very great man, so great that He deserves to be called God, or that He personifies a previously held religious idea. He relates to them as Lord, in His miracles, in His words,[20] in His power and authority amongst them, in His death and resurrection. They recognize that He is "God in kind", identical in His Person, with God's very Word. As such He reveals God.

> In distinction from the assertion of the deification of a man or the humanisation of a divine idea, the statement of the divinity of Christ is to be understood in the sense that Christ reveals His Father. But this Father is His God. Therefore to reveal Him is to reveal God. But who can reveal God but God Himself? Certainly no exalted man and certainly no exalted idea, can do that. Both are creatures. Certainly the Christ who reveals the Father is also a creature and his work a creaturely work. But if he were only a creature, then neither could he reveal God, just as surely as the creature cannot take the place of God, or act in His place. If he reveals God, he must himself be God...[21]

The theological object of knowledge, then, is Jesus Christ, as God, revealing God. This revelation is not merely a revelation however, not merely noetic, not merely a matter of information. In Christ God turns toward us and establishes intercourse with us.[22] He is God's Word of grace to us. As such He is the presence of God as light in human darkness. "The word reconciliation is another word for the same thing,"[23] Barth tells us. One might say, the content of the revelation is reconciliation. There is no knowing of this God except in a relationship of peace, for Christ, as God with us is not only the Revealer but also the Reconciler. But further discussion of this theme will have to await Chapters Two and Three.

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[20] C.D., I, 1, p. 459.
[21] Ibid., p. 465.
[22] Ibid., p. 466.
[23] Ibid., p. 468.

(c) Other Starting-points

We will see Barth's starting-point much more clearly if we look at it over against other starting-points that he opposes. In this section we shall look at other major approaches found within the Christian tradition: the Augustinians, beginning with Augustine of Hippo himself; the modernists, as their thought grew out of modern philosophy; and Thomas Aquinas and the Thomists. All of these adopt an approach very different from the strict objectivity of the Word made flesh as we find it in Barth. None of them can be examined with the thoroughness they deserve, and many very important figures are not to be discussed at all. Our main interest here is to see them in relation to Karl Barth, and note his attitude to them.

(i) Augustinians

As he relates in his Confessions, Augustine of Hippo moved from a position of scepticism to neo-Platonism, and it was in large measure a Platonic epistemology that brought him to Christianity. As a sceptic, he had asked "Can we attain certainty?". He found his answer not by reference to the overwhelming intrusiveness of any object of knowledge, but introspectively. In De Vera Religione, he wrote: "Everyone who knows that he has doubts knows with certainty that something is true, namely that he doubts."[1] And in De Trinitate: "Seeing that even if he doubts he lives; if he doubts he remembers why he doubts; if he doubts

[1] Augustine, De Vera Religione, xxxix, 73, in Augustine: Earlier Writings, ed., trans., J. H. S. Burleigh, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1953.

he understands that he doubts...."[2] Augustine does not develop into a Cartesian, but rather a Platonist. His next question was, "How is it that we can attain certainty?".[3] He realized that truths transcend the mind. They do not differ from one man to another; our minds are subject to them; they are eternal.[4] Having been a sceptic, Augustine understood that our knowledge of external things was very uncertain. Plato taught him that corporeal objects were not indeed the proper object of knowledge because of their mutability. The rational soul of man, thought Augustine in good Platonic fashion, exercises true knowledge and attains true certainty when it contemplates eternal truths in and through itself.[5] We find in his thought, therefore, a definite depreciation of sense objects in comparison to eternal objects. In the Soliloquies, he wrote: "We must entirely flee from things of sense. So long as we bear this body we must beware lest our wings are hindered by their birdlime. We need sound and perfect wings if we are to fly from this darkness to yonder light."[6] With such an attitude to the flesh it is obvious that Augustine could not understand the Word made flesh as the basis of the knowledge of God. That is why his attempt to unite Platonism and Christian faith was ultimately a failure, the flesh of Christ being the very centre of the Biblical faith.

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[2]Augustine, De Trinitate, x, 10, 14, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, ed. P. Schaff, Buffalo, the Christian Literature Co., 1887.

[3]Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol. 2, pt. 1, New York, Doubleday and Co., 1962, p. 67.

[4]Augustine, De Libero Arbitrio, II, xii, 34, in Augustine: Earlier Writings.

[5]Copleston, pp. 71-72.

[6]Augustine, Soliloquies, I, xiv, 24, in Augustine: Earlier Writings.

Augustine was thoroughly convinced, via Plato, of the reality of objective Truth beyond our minds. But in fact he found that Truth within his own mind, by introspection. For example, his proof of the existence of God in De Libero Arbitrio, begins with his own apprehension of unchangeable and eternal Truth. If there is something higher than the human mind, he argues, it must be God. Since Perfect Truth is above the human mind, God, who is Truth, exists.[7] This is not a compelling argument, logically speaking. Augustine thinks with a kind of flashing insight, an intuition, which is characteristic also of Plato, as opposed to the syllogistic kind of reasoning that we find in Aristotle and Aquinas. For Augustine there is a character of unmediated directness about the knowledge of God which sometimes amounts to mystical vision. In the Confessions, he tells us of an experience shared with his mother:

> ...we, lifting ourselves with a more ardent affection towards "the Self-same," did gradually pass through all corporeal things, and even the heaven itself, whence sun and moon and stars shine upon the earth; yea, we soared higher yet by inward musing, and discoursing and admiring Thy works, and we came to our minds and went beyond them, that we might advance as high as that region of unfailing plenty, where thou feedest Israel for ever with the food of truth.... that we may hear His word, not by fleshly tongue, nor angelic voices, nor sound of thunder, nor the obscurity of a similitude, but might hear Him--Him whom in these we love--without these, like as we two now strained ourselves, and with rapid thought now touched on that Eternal Wisdom which remaineth over all....[8]

There is certainly a very distinct awareness of the transcendence

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[7] De Libero Arbitrio, II, vii, 15f.

[8] Augustine, Confessions, IX, 10, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.

of God in Augustine and we must beware of too easily accusing him of subjectivism. Barth recognizes this, but nevertheless comments on this passage:

> However it may be with the reality and contents of this experience, it is certain that the reality of the knowledge of God is not reached by the way of the image of such a timeless and non-objective seeing and hearing.... What Augustine describes in Conf., IX, 10, is, according to his own account, the consequence of an ascendere and transcendere of all the limitations and restrictions of man's existence and situation. Whether that is a possible beginning we will not pursue further. But it is certain that the ascendere and transcendere means abandoning or at any rate, wanting to abandon, the place where God encounters man in His revelation and where He gives Himself to be heard and seen by man.... If we really soar up into these heights,... we wilfully hurry past God, who descends in His revelation into this world of ours. Instead of finding Him where He Himself has sought us--namely, in His objectivity--we seek Him where He is not to be found, since He on His side seeks us in His Word.[9]

Barth obviously suspects that the mystical experience is a purely subjective one. He goes on to make one of his clearest statements concerning theological objectivity:

> It is not the case that in the non-objective we are dealing with the real and true knowledge of God but in the objective with a deceptive appearance. Just the reverse. If we regard ourselves as bound by God's Word we shall certainly find a deceptive appearance in that ascendere and transcendere so far as what happens here--whatever else it may be--claims to be knowledge of God. For how can it make this claim except where the fulfilment of the real knowledge of God in God's Word has either not begun or has ceased again?.... Where it is being fulfilled, knowledge is bound to the objectivity of God just as it is bound to this definite object who is the God who gives Himself to be known in His Word. And it is bound to the fact that His very revelation consists in His making Himself object to us, and so is his making a flight into non-objectivity not only superfluous but impossible. Thus the

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[9] C.D., II, 1, p. 11.

> straight and proper way in this matter can never be from objectivity into non-objectivity, but only from non-objectivity back into objectivity.[10]

Inwardness amounted to a clearly thought out epistemological principle for Augustine, and this is evident in his all important doctrine of the image of God. Following Plotinus, he believed that every part of creation bore a likeness to God, and man especially, who alone is the image of God.[11] The image resides in man's intellect,[12] in the mens,[13] the inner man. Because of this inward resemblance of man to God, God Himself may be known when man looks inward into himself. Augustine desires to know the human soul because it is the medium through which he acquires a knowledge of God.[14] Augustine knows, of course, that God is not a simple unity, but three-in-one, and he believes men resemble God in this too. He finds in man many three-fold characteristics in which traces, or vestiges of the Triunity of God can be seen: for example, the self as lover, the self as loved, and the love itself;[15] mind, knowledge of self, and love of self;[16] memory, intelligence and will.[17] Because of these vestiges of the Trinity in man, this most inward truth of God is found by man when he looks into himself.[18] It is true, of course, that the image of God in man is defaced by sin, but it must necessarily remain in man,[19] for, (here he follows Plotinus) an image only has its being in relation to its exemplar. Mens, to be mind at all, must

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[10] C.D., II, 1, p. 12. [11] De Trinitate, XI, 5, 8. [12] Ibid., XIV, 4, 6.
[13] Ibid., XV, I, 1. [14] Confessions, X, xvii, 26.
[15] De Trinitate, IX, 2, 2. [16] Ibid., IX, 12, 18. [17] Ibid., X, 12, 19.
[18] Ibid., XV, 23, 44. [19] Ibid., XIV, 8, 11.

contemplate its exemplar.[20] To the mind of Augustine, man must always have some knowledge of God because of his essential ontic relatedness to Him.[21] That relatedness allows even, as we saw above, a knowledge of the Holy Trinity,--if not the clear apprehension of the Christian, then at least the dim but true awareness of a Plotinus.

It is not surprising that Barth intensely dislikes the idea of the images of the Trinity, which he discusses under the heading Vestigium Trinitatis in Church Dogmatics, I, 1.[22] In the previous section of that same volume he was at pains to establish that the doctrine of the Trinity is rooted in the Biblical doctrine of revelation. "By saying that from this root proceeds the doctrine of the Trinity, we are saying in a spirit of polemical criticism that it can proceed from nowhere else."[23] He thinks the suggestion that the Trinity is reflected in creatures assumes the possibility of a second root of the doctrine. If such trinities did actually exist, argues Barth, the question would have to be raised whether the doctrine might not have originated at least partly in human insight into these traces of the Trinity present in the created world and perhaps even quite apart from revelation. Other questions would follow: Which of the two roots is primary? Is the revelation of the Trinity merely a confirmation of what is known without it?

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[20] J. E. Sullivan, The Image of God, Dubucque, Priory Press, 1963, p. 50.

[21] Ibid., p. 50.

[22] C.D., I, 1, pp. 383-399.

[23] Ibid., p. 384.

> And then the last question could hardly be omitted, whether the vestigia in question, upon which in that case the doctrine of the Trinity would really be grounded, were really to be regarded at all as the vestigia of a Creator-God transcending the world and not rather as determinations of the cosmos now to be regarded as strictly immanent.[24]

Barth quite rightly sees in the doctrine of the vestigium trinitatis an implied denial of the infinite qualitative difference between man and God, a suggestion of continuity between Creator and creature. Indeed, the whole idea of finding God by meditative inwardness must surely, for Barth, smack of the "God-consciousness" of a Schleiermacher, the destruction of whose theology has been the passion of his life's work.

Augustine's mystical intuition as a ground for the knowledge of God has many contemporary exponents. Though Barth rarely comments upon these thinkers, it will be useful to consider what his attitude would be to their approach.

Iltyd Trethowan, in his book The Basis of Belief, argues philosophically that according to the notion of contuitio, we "in some sense contemplate God in the human soul."[25] God is so contemplated whenever we employ the standard of Truth, especially moral truth. Trethowan reviews many Christian philosophers who adopt this position, including Daniélou, Baillie, Marcel, Blondel, Lavelle, de Lubac, etc. He quotes Lavelle: "To see the absolute inside oneself and not outside oneself is the most intimate, personal and profound experience."[26] Maurice Blondel makes a similar

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[24] C.D., I, 1, p. 385.

[25] Iltyd Trethowan, The Basis of Belief, New York, Hawthorne Books Inc., 1961, p. 62.

[26] Quoted, Ibid., p. 87.

statement: "In us there is something more than ourselves, but without which we are inexplicable to ourselves."[27] Barth would see this approach as an unwarrantable confusion of the self with the transcendent God, and, as he said of Augustine, a passing by of the objective revelation God has given of Himself.

An English speaking writer who adopts a similar position is John Baillie, especially in his book The Sense of the Presence of God. Baillie refers to theological knowledge as "faith", and characterizes it as "apprehension and response". Faith in the "divine", i.e., Jesus Christ and the kerygma, is obedient committment. But Baillie in fact uses the word "faith" much more widely. He approvingly quotes Karl Heim: "Only by faith can we reach certitude of anything beyond immediate and sense experience."[28] He alleges that Russell, Hardy and Santayana "betray some residual presence in the bottom of their hearts of that primary mode of apprehension which is faith," on the basis of their apprehension of objective moral values. Baillie wants to make Christian faith continuous with man's knowledge of all non-physical reality, such as moral or aesthetic value, and thus to offer a philosophical preamble that will prepare the mind for faith in Christ. Barth's critique would be, no doubt, that creaturely beauty and proper moral order are not the objectivity of God in His revelation, and the knowledge of them bears no resemblance whatever to the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.

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[27] Quoted, in The Basis of Belief, p. 89.

[28] John Baillie, The Sense of the Presence of God, London, Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 38.

One must allow that the kind of argument Baillie offers has considerable philosophical strength to establish the existence of a "God". Certainly it is not theology's business to argue with it philosophically. But in the last analysis is this not a Kantian "God", a postulate of moral reason?, (which we will consider in the next section). These philosophers are Christian men; for them knowledge of God is completed in Christ. But their procedure in epistemology is not theological but philosophical, and therefore unscientific for theology, attending from the outset not with God Himself in His revelation, but with the human self, risking the distortion of a "God" made in man's image, a mere hypothesis. And there is no philosophical way, after all, from this philosophical "God" to the one thing needful, faith in Jesus Christ.

(ii) Modern Philosophy: (1) Descartes and Kant

Much of what Barth refers to as "modernist" theology has its roots in modern philosophy, which is characterized by subjective epistemology, not altogether unlike that of the Augustinians. The tradition grows out of an early modern sceptical distrust of objects, and takes its beginning, I think, from the French philosopher, Rene Descartes.

In his Discourse on Method, Descartes explains how he had travelled extensively and learned from the great book of the world that many different people believed many different things, and that he feared he could no longer be certain of the truth of anything. He insists that he honoured Theology and aspired as much as anyone to heaven, and therefore resolves to assume the

truth of the Catholic religion, but otherwise,

> to accept nothing as true which I did not clearly recognize to be so: that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitation and prejudice in judgments and to accept in them nothing more than that which was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly that I could have no occasion to doubt it.[29]

Descartes proceeded then to apply mathematics to philosophy, "because of the certainty of its demonstrations and the evidence of its meaning...," he was "astonished that, seeing how firm and solid was its basis, no loftier edifice had been reared thereupon."[30] Having first doubted everything, he became absolutely certain that he existed. Cogito ergo sum. In his Meditations, he argued from his clear and distinct idea of a perfect God to the existence of that God, and from the perfect God to the non-deceptiveness of his clear and distinct ideas, and therefore to the existence of the world.[31] By a series of deductions he arrived at an intricate metaphysical system of thought and extension.[32]

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[29] Rene Descartes, Discourse on Method, in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, Vol. I, Dover, Dover Publications Inc., 1955, p. 92.

[30] Ibid., p. 85.

[31] Rene Descartes, Meditations, (II), in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, Vol. I, pp. 149-157.

[32] Arguments may be brought against Descartes on his own grounds. For example, his arguments for God and the external world by "clear and distinct ideas" is circular. And E. Gilson, in God and Philosophy, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1941, p. 80) points out that he falsely assumed the innateness of his idea of God, which he actually learned from the Church, and originally from revelation to the Hebrews. The essence of the Cartesian God, says Gilson, is, however, very different from the essence of the Christian God, being merely his philosophical function: to create and preserve the mechanical world as Descartes conceived it.

William Temple offers a critique of the whole approach in Nature, Man and God, where he argues that the most disastrous "Cartesian faux-pas" was the individualism and subjectivity which he introduced into western thought. Descartes made a fundamental error at the very beginning, for everything cannot be doubted. Descartes' doubt, says Temple, was purely a variety of nursery make-believe,--"Let us pretend we do not know whether there is a sun, or that Napoleon existed, or that selfishness is bad and see if we can prove any of these things."[33] The cogito ergo sum is no valid syllogism; it is an intuition, an immediate intuition no more certain than his intuition of his friends. Temple insists that he feels as certain that other things exist as he does that he himself exists. However, the starting-point of Descaftes came to be accepted by both rationalism in Europe and empiricism in Britain, and their would-be reconciler Kant, who assumed the Cartesian hypothesis that the mind deals directly not with objects known throughout as objects, but with its own ideas which have to be related to the real world by a special mental act. The inherent error in modern thought, declares Temple, is this Cartesian starting-point:

> that in knowledge the mind begins with itself and proceeds to the apprehension of the external world by way of construction and inference.[34]

This is the beginning of the end of the domination of philosophical realism in western thought. We shall save Barth's comments upon Descartes and consider them together with those on Kant, for the

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[33] William Temple, Nature, Man and God, London, Macmillan Co. Ltd., 1960, p. 66.

[34] Ibid., p. 73.

direction of modern thinking and its significance for later theology came out clearly and forcefully in him.

Kant too begins with doubt, but produces a very different philosophy from that of Descartes. For Kant, knowledge is of phenomena only, of sensations and impressions organised by the Understanding, which imposes upon the bare impressions the a priori concepts of space, time and causality.

> We are so constituted that our intuition must always be sensuous and consist of the mode in which we are affected by objects. What enables us to think the objects of our sensuous intuition is the understanding.... Without sensibility objects would not be given to us, without understanding they would not be thought by us. Thoughts without contents are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.[35]

> Pure reason stretches its wings in vain if it tries to soar beyond the world of sense by the mere power of speculation.[36]

On the basis of these conclusions Kant thought there could be no valid cosmological argument for the existence of God. The notion of causality is central to such an argument, but causality belongs to the a priori structures of the mind imposed upon reality. It is meaningless, therefore, to speak of a First Cause beyond the empirical world. Causality is not something that can be posited of the real world, the noumenal realm of the "thing-in-itself". Causality was not something observed in objects, as a realist would have it, but something contributed to the phenomenal world by the mind. Kant thus decided he had to make room, not only for science, but also for "faith", as he understood it.

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[35] Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, in Kant Selections, ed. T. M. Greene, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, p. 57.

[36] Ibid., p. 243.

He could find no phenomenal objects corresponding to the religiously necessary notions of God, freedom and immortality. They cannot be substantiated empirically. But there is room for them in the noumenal realm. In the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant worked out God, freedom and immortality on the basis of his inner apprehension of moral obligation. On this basis he could have "faith" in these things, though they do not have phenomenal reality. His subjectivism (or idealism) is twofold. The physical reality we perceive is shaped by our minds and not perceived as it is; and non-physical reality, if it can be so called, is known by introspection and deduction. God can be known through our moral consciousness as a postulate of practical reason. God is posited by the human mind as the moral lawgiver and the guarantor of reward and punishment. In Kant the departure from theological realism is well on its way.

It is this Kantian "God" that is of most interest to us here. His ontic status is very ambiguous, for Kant wrote at one point, "God is not an external substance but only a moral condition within us."[37] Kant expressly declared that, while it has a dubious sound, it was "by no means reprehensible to say that every man makes a God for himself, and indeed according to moral concepts... must make a God for himself." It is "the God within ourselves" who must be the authentic interpreter of all revelation, says Kant, "because we do not understand anyone but

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[37]Kant, quoted by Martin Buber, in The Eclipse of God, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1957, p. 17.

the one who speaks with us through our own reason."[38] Is God an actuality in the noumenal realm? It sometimes seems that Kant believes so, but that can have little significance epistemologically. It is true that the noumenal realm is real for Kant, and essential to his theory of knowledge, but what is really known and what is really important, for it has to be dealt with, (this is the possibility of natural science) is the phenomenal. The reality of Kant's noumenal realm is quite irrelevant. Temple judges that Kant's theory of knowledge is reduceable to the idealism of a Berkeley.[39] Dietrich Bonhoeffer seems to agree with this judgment about Kant, for he contends that the Idealists took Kant's findings to the logical extreme. "To be is to be comprehended by the I.... Without I there is no being; I is creative, the sole efficient; I goes out from itself and to itself returns...." The implications come out clearly in Hegel, the next great philosopher after Kant. For him, "existence is the in-turning, returning and homecoming of the eternal I to itself."[40] Hegel's objection to Spinoza was that he failed to define substance (reality for Spinoza) as subjectivity.[41] Now if all this were accepted, if reality is subjectivity, if the world has reference to me, if the world is in being through me, then, Bonhoeffer argues, God can no longer become the object of my knowledge

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[38] Kant, quoted by Karl Barth, in From Rousseau to Ritschl, trans. B. Cozens, London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1959, p. 166.

[39] Nature, Man and God, p. 71.

[40] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Act and Being, trans. B. Noble, London, William Collins and Son Ltd., 1961, p. 26.

[41] Ibid., p. 27.

unless "God" is integrated with the "I" itself.[42] In other words, subjectivity takes over entirely in this stream of modern philosophy. Thought becomes detachable from the intrusiveness of objects. In this situation the Word made flesh, God's objectivity for us, will not be taken seriously. Subjectivity will reign in theology too, if it does not allow the potestas of its peculiar object to declare itself.

If Christian theology must be "realistic" rather than "idealistic", on what basis does it establish its realism? Does it perhaps take up the philosophical argument against Descartes and Kant, as Temple does, and show its untenability on the basis of a better philosophical understanding? Barth thinks it cannot be appropriate for theology to take up a philosophical position and rest its faith upon it. His critique of Descartes in Church Dogmatics,[43] III, 1, succeeds, I think, in showing that the proper ground of Christian theological realism is the Word of God made flesh and its power (the power of the Spirit) to confront us and grasp us in such a way that we cannot doubt the reality either of God or the external world, (flesh). "The validity of any proof of God's existence depends on its basis in the power of God's self-demonstration,"[44] Barth argues. As shown by Anselm, (very differently than by Descartes), the man who knows God by God Himself, on the basis of His revelation, and by faith in it, is aware of the necessary existence of God. There can be absolutely no ques-

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[42] Act and Being, p. 30.

[43] Karl Barth, The Doctrine of Creation, pt. 1, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. III, pt. 1, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1958, pp. 350-363.

[44] Ibid., p. 360.

tion of the non-existence of the true God. The Cartesian and Kantian "Gods" do not have this Lordly, divine character; they are entirely tied up in the mind of man; they are products of man's thought, the end of a series of arguments, mere hypotheses. But the God of the Bible is known in Himself through His Word made flesh, (a sensuous, phenomenal object, to use Kant's language). When we are confronted by this self-authenticating Word, we know not only that God is a reality, but that His creation, "the external world," is a reality as well.[45] When God's Word becomes flesh He does not become an illusion, but enters into genuine creaturely reality. On this theological basis, then, Barth opposes a theological realism to the philosophical idealism of modern thought.

(2) Schleiermacher

The I-centered approach to epistemology found its way into theology pre-eminently in the thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher. In his view, God is to be found by man in his own self-consciousness; not primarily in the intellect as such, as for Hegel, nor in his moral reason, as for Kant, but in deep and noble passion, which is the highest reality in the universe.[46] Religion is basically the self-consciousness of absolute dependence upon God. One "knows" God not by way of the objectivity of the Word made

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[45] C.D., III, 1, pp. 341f.

[46] J. L. M. Haire, "On Behalf of Chalcedon," in Essays in Christology for Karl Barth, ed. T. H. L. Parker, London, Lutterworth Press, 1956, pp. 98-99.

flesh, but by this inner consciousness of dependence. Jesus is not the one in whom we encounter God, so much as the great example of God-consciousness. God-consciousness is wholly visible in Jesus.[47] But for Schleiermacher there is no mystery of the two natures of Christ, for He has but one perfectly obedient and trusting human nature, which, as such, is divine.[48] The Incarnation can be understood in this way if God is not the transcendent wholly Other of the Bible, but an immanent principle working itself out in the world. In other words, we encounter God in Jesus only in a very loosely interpreted sense, as the highest development of our own creaturely being. In this view, Jesus is not and does not speak a direct Word of God to men. He is simply the most perfect form of God-consciousness, and His redemptive work is to assume believers into a God-consciousness like His own.[49] God is known by learning Jesus' God-consciousness, that is, the feeling of utter dependence. This is an essentially introspective way to the knowledge of God, wherein the Word is not conceived to be an objective reality that confronts us, but something found within our inner and most profound experience. in Schleiermacher's view, then, pious self-awareness is the way to the knowledge of God.[50] Christian doctrine, according to Schleiermacher, could be classified either as descriptions of human states, or as conceptions of divine attributes and modes of acting,

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[47]Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith in Outline, trans. D. M. Baillie, Edinburgh, W. F. Henderson, 1922, pp. 14f.

[48]"On Behalf of Chalcedon," p. 99.

[49]The Christian Faith in Outline, p. 39.

[50]From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 335.

or as utterances regarding the constitution of the world. The first type of statement is basic, for all must be verified or guaranteed as deducible from statements of human feeling.[51] All attributes ascribed to God, therefore, are to be taken not as denoting something special in God Himself, but only something special in the manner in which the feeling of absolute dependence is to be related to God.[52] The Word is free, changeable, relative and unauthoritative. Christians should not feel tied to any doctrines but only to the impressions which the Word makes on their hearts, for Christian doctrines are nothing but accounts of the religious affections set forth in speech.[53]

The influence of Kant is obvious in Schleiermacher. God cannot be known as a metaphysical object, but only introspectively, as a postulate, not of practical reason, but of human feeling.[54]

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[51] The Christian Faith in Outline, pp. 12-13.

[52] Ibid., p. 23.

[53] Schleiermacher, quoted by Karl Barth, in "Schleiermacher," in Theology and Church, pp. 161-162.

[54] It is surprising to find a Roman Catholic theologian who argues that Barth's theology is, at least formally, very closely alligned with that of Schleiermacher. Hans Urs von Balthasar's book Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie, (Koln, Jakob Hegner, Verlag, 1951) is discussed by G. Miegge, in "A Roman Catholic Interpretation of Karl Barth," (in Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. VII, (1954), pp. 59-72.) The book is said to be very sympathetic and appreciative of Barth's work as a whole. Most interesting to us here is his argument that Barth's polemics against Neo-Protestantism are about content, not form; and that his polemics against Roman Catholicism are most often about form and not content, (S.J.T., p. 61). This is given as evidence that Barth's theology is to be placed, from a formal point of view, on a plane with modern Protestant thought, that his philosophical style, or Denkform is that of post-Kantian philosophy, of German Idealism, (Ibid.) "What is the formal point at which Barth and Schleiermacher meet?" asks Miegge. First, Balthasar argues that for both of them, everything depends on a point of greatest intensity. If for Schleiermacher it is the feeling of absolute dependence, for Barth it is the

Certain subjective tendencies found in Augustine, which appear again clearly in Descartes and become more refined and sophisti-

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fact of man being addressed by the Word of God. In Schleiermacher there is a duality of intuition and sentiment; in Barth, of revelation and faith. Balthasar argues also that the point of greatest intensity is essentially above reason. In Kant it is the transcendental non-intuitable apperception, in Fichte the original position of the Self, in Schleiermacher, religious feeling, in Barth, faith as the primary act of God's grace in man, (pp. 65-66). Other similarities are posited that are not of direct interest to us here.

It seems a very doubtful thesis that Barth criticizes modernism on content and Roman Catholicism on form. For Barth, "form" is entirely controlled by content, (N.B. C.D., I, 1, p. 47), and critique of form and content nearly always go together. His critique of Schleiermacher and his departure from him very definitely involves a fundamental break with his I-centered approach, a rejection of the adaptation of Christian faith to a priori philosophical interpretations of human existence. Is this not essentially a "formal" disagreement, with immense implications for content? And he certainly attacks Roman Catholic theology in terms of content, e.g., the doctrine of grace, of the Church.

Also, it is misleading to speak of Barth's starting-point as one of "greatest intensity", or as "above reason". His account of conversion does not involve a domination of emotion over intellect as the word "intensity" implies, (see this essay, 4(c)), and as in Schleiermacher's starting-point. In comparing Barth's conception of the act of faith to Kant's transcendental non-intuitable apperception, Balthasar leads one to suspect that he has not understood Barth's objectivity as centered on the Incarnation. The Incarnation is not in the least "non-intuitable". Barth's resemblance to Kant resides rather in his recognition of the necessity of a sensible object for true knowledge. In Kantian terms, Barth has taken theological knowledge out of the sphere of the "postulate of practical reason" or "faith" and put it back into what Kant would call the phenomenal realm. Barth thinks of God as having entered into the phenomenal realm, and therefore into the realm of scientific objectivity. This is not to suggest that Barth operates with Kant's distinction between phenomenal and noumenal. But in Kant's terms, this is what he has done by his use of the Incarnation as the theological object of knowledge. Barth is really much closer to Aquinas, whose starting-point is man's sense perception, than to Schleiermacher, and must be regarded as a realist, not at all in the tradition of German Idealism. If Balthasar refers to the fact that the flesh of Christ can only be recognized as God Incarnate as a spiritual event, in the power of the Holy Spirit, then, the answer must be that Barth is not here following Kant or Schleiermacher, but the Bible.

cated in Kant, reach their logical and disastrous conclusion in Schleiermacher. God is seriously confused with the self, or at least with the created order of which the human consciousness is the highest development. The subject-object relationship, necessary to all true knowledge, is lost. "The tragic guilt or apostasy of his theology," writes Barth, consisted in the fact that he forced Christianity, solely for the sake of peace with culture, into a wholesale surrender of her message.[55] His theology was framed basically for apologetics. Nevertheless, Barth often speaks of Schleiermacher with great respect as a "great, bold and religious theologian."[56] His essay on him in From Rousseau to Ritschl, while it is of course very critical is also very friendly and appreciative, as are all the essays on his modern opponents in that book. He writes of Schleiermacher that the nineteenth was very much his century and that his influence continues to be very great in the twentieth, for, according to Barth, he was honoured, studied and made fruitful more in 1910 than in 1830.[57]

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[55] "Schleiermacher," in Theology and Church, p. 198.

[56] Ibid., p. 199.

[57] From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 307.
N.B. also that in Karl Barth's Table Talk, (ed. John D. Godsey, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1963), Barth is reported to have said: "I now think that a good doctrine of the Holy Spirit would have been the best criticism of Schleiermacher and of all Modernism, better than my own attack on Schleiermacher. A good critique of Bultmann and existential theology would lie along the same line. Schleiermacher must be understood as one who made a great attempt to centre theology on the Holy Spirit, but in the wrong way. Thus it was a great failure; but we should appreciate the attempt," (p. 27).

(3) Feuerbach

The obvious implications of Schleiermacher's thought are brought out lucidly, even humorously, by the philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach. He was not jesting, of course, for, as Barth explains, he sought to take Hegel and Schleiermacher completely seriously with regard to the non-objective quality of God.[58] One can imagine Karl Barth reading him with great glee, for Feuerbach draws out Schleiermacher's thought to its final atheistic conclusion with extraordinary clarity. Or if Barth did not for the first time read him with glee, he must have read him with trepidation in his early days as a liberal student. One suspects that Feuerbach had a profound influence upon him. Barth sees Feuerbach's work as

> a general attack on the methodology of Schleiermacher and of post-Schleiermacher theology. It is the question of whether and how far religion, revelation, the relation between God and man can be made understandable as a predicate of man. Theology had let itself be driven by the upsurge of a self-glorifying and self-satisfied humanism from Pietism over the Enlightenment to Romanticism. It had been forced into an apologetic corner where it had ever lessening power of defence.[59]

Feuerbach is a realist; i.e., he is thoroughly committed to the subject-object pattern of knowledge. In The Essence of Christianity, he wrote:

> for my thought I require the senses, especially sight; I found my ideas on materials which can be appropriated only through the activity of the senses. I do not generate the object from the thought but the thought from the object; and I hold that alone to be an object which has an existence beyond one's own brain.[60]

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[58] From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 355.

[59] Karl Barth, "Feuerbach," in Theology and Church, p. 227.

[60] Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, trans. M. Evans, London, John Chapman, 1854, p. vi.

He is not interested in a metaphysical Being of God, (he has learned this from Kant), but he thinks religion embodies the profoundest of man's thoughts and experiences, (Schleiermacher). He is not concerned to debunk religion: "I, on the contrary, while reducing theology to anthropology, exalt anthropology into theology."[61] He goes on, "Hence I do nothing more to religion... than to open its eyes, or rather to turn its gaze from the internal towards the external."[62] For Feuerbach, man himself is God. When man contemplates himself, he contemplates the infinite and the absolute.[63] Could this remarkable passage not have been written by Karl Barth himself in criticism of Schleiermacher?:

> If, for example, feeling is the essential organ of religion, the nature of God is nothing else than an expression of the nature of feeling. The true but latest sense of the phrase "Feeling is the organ of the divine," is, feeling is the noblest, most excellent, i.e., the divine in man. How couldst thou perceive the divine by feeling, if feeling were not itself divine in its nature? The divine assuredly is known only by means of the divine--God is known only by himself.[64]

It is no wonder Barth holds Feuerbach in such high esteem. His work exposes the impossibility of the man-centered theology of modernist theology. But of course Barth recognizes that Feuerbach was a child of his age. He shared the optimism of his day that did not take sin and death seriously,[65] and therefore did not take the Gospel seriously either. Nevertheless, Barth judges that Feuerbach was absolutely right on the whole line of his religious interpretation so far as it related to an experience of

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[61] The Essence of Christianity, p. xi.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., p. 5.
[64] Ibid., p. 9.
[65] From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 361.

men. If we can admit that to Feuerbach, says Barth, we pass the test, whether, in attempting to lay hold on God's Truth, we stand on God's grace alone.[66]

(4) Bultmann

A contemporary follower in the tradition of Kant, Schleiermacher and Feuerbach is Rudolf Bultmann. His scholarly Biblical work must be taken seriously, and I do not pretend to deal with his whole work in this essay. But it is helpful to see his rooting in the tradition of modern philosophy. At times Bultmann sounds very much like a realistic, objectivistic theologian of the Word. For example, in Jesus Christ and Mythology, he writes, "I cannot speak of God as my God by looking into myself. My personal relation with God can be made real by God only, by the acting God who meets me in His Word."[67]

But we can best get to the bottom of Bultmann's understanding of the Word and of faith and the knowledge of God by examining his program of "demythologizing." This is certainly clear in his article, "New Testament and Mythology".[68] There he tells us that the cosmology of the New Testament is essentially mythical, that the world is there conceived as a three-storied structure, with heaven above, the earth in the centre and hell beneath. The

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[66] "Feuerbach," in Theology and Church, pp. 236-237.

[67] Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1958, p. 59.

[68] Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in Kerygma and Myth, (Vol. I), ed. H.-W. Bartsch, trans. R. H. Fuller, London, S.P.C.K., 1962, pp. 1f.

earth is the scene of much supernatural activity from God and His angels on the one hand and the devil and his daemons on the other.[69] Christian preaching can no longer expect modern man to accept this world view or find it relevant. Christians must, therefore, both for the sake of their proclamation and for the sake of their own life of faith, demythologize, that is, restate the Gospel minus its mythical features.[70] In Bultmann's view, the purpose of a myth is to express man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. It is not to be interpreted as an objective picture of the world, but anthropologically, existentially. A myth expresses man's sense of dependence upon that which is beyond him. The continuing importance, therefore, of the New Testament mythology is not its imagery but the understanding of human existence which it implies.[71] Modern faith finds this understanding of existence true and meaningful, but not its mythological package, which is a combination of Jewish apocalyptic and Gnostic redemption myths.[72]

What does Bultmann believe to be the truth of the demythologized core of the New Testament? This he explains under the headings "Human Existence apart from faith," and "The Life of Faith."[73] This world is the sphere of corruption and death. Men live in "the flesh" as sinners. They are weighed down by guilt, for they are condemned by God's law. Men falsely seek

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[69] "New Testament and Mythology," p. 1.
[70] Ibid., p. 3f.
[71] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
[72] Ibid., p. 15.
[73] Ibid., pp. 17-22.

security in the flesh, but find only that they become slaves of anxiety. The life of faith on the other hand is "authentic" life, life after the Spirit, for it is life in the grace of God and the forgiveness of sins. The man of faith is free from the law, free from sin and guilt, because of God's gracious forgiveness. "Faith as openness to the future is freedom from the past," says Bultmann, because it is faith in the forgiveness of sins, freedom from ourselves as the old selves and for ourselves as the new selves.[74]

Such, very briefly, is Bultmann's existentialist unmythological interpretation of the Christian understanding of Being.[75] As he himself points out, this seems to make Christ superfluous, for even non-Christian existentialist philosophers, such as Martin Heidegger, can speak of a kind of fallenness, or alienation of man from his true nature, and of self-committment and freedom as the key to man's fulfilment. But, answers Bultmann, the question is whether the true nature of man is realizable, whether man can ever extricate himself out of inauthentic into authentic existence. The New Testament sees that man's fall is total, and that man is unable to achieve authentic existence. Moreover, it speaks "of faith and knows of an act of God through which man becomes capable of self-committment, capable of faith and love, of his authentic life."[76] Bultmann wants to speak, then, of an act of God in Christ, but in an "unmythological" way. The Cross

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[74] Jesus Christ and Mythology, p. 78.

[75] "New Testament and Mythology," p. 33. [76] Ibid., p. 33.

and Resurrection, of course, are the focal point of this act of God. The demythologizing means there can be no theology of sacrifice or atonement or of the defeat of evil powers.[77] And the resurrection cannot be regarded as an historical event. Bultmann explains, "faith in the resurrection is really the same thing as faith in the saving efficacy of the Cross."[78] This faith arises as a result of the word of preaching.

> The real Easter faith is faith in the word of preaching which brings illumination. If the event of Easter Day is in any sense an historical event additional to the event of the Cross, it is nothing else than the rise of faith in the risen Lord, since it was this faith which led to the apostolic preaching. All that historical criticism can establish is the fact that the first disciples came to believe in the resurrection.[79]

Demythologizing, then, ultimately means referring the questions of the Person and Work of Christ back into Jesus' self-understanding and that of the disciples. The New Testament and all Church theology until the modern age sought to "objectify" Christ and His work by speaking of His Person as that of the Incarnate Son of God, by understanding His death as an atoning sacrifice, by thinking of the resurrection as a real event marking the decisive victory of God over the powers of darkness. Bultmann wants to move all this out of the realm of objectivity and into the realm of "self-understanding." This is clear even in his early book Jesus and the Word. There

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[77] "New Testament and Mythology," p. 36. [78] Ibid., p. 41.
[79] Ibid., p. 42.

N.B. Karl Barth's discussion of Bultmann's demythologization of the resurrection, (C.D., III, 2, pp. 442-447): "...what if the modern world-view is not so final as all that? What if modern thought is not so uniform as our Marburg Kantians would have us believe?.... Is it our job as Christians to accept or reject world-views?" (p. 447).

he tells us that he is not interested in Jesus' personality or Messianic self-consciousness as the "historical Jesus" school was; little can be known of it at any rate. What he does want to know about Jesus is

> his interpretation of his own existence in the midst of change, uncertainty and decision; as the expression of a possibility of comprehending his life; as the effort to gain clear insight into the contingencies and necessities of his own existence.[80]

Here we can see clearly his essential accord with Schleiermacher. What he finds in Jesus is not an encounter with God Himself, but an understanding of human existence. It is a kind of inwardness. It does operate with the verbum externum, but only for the purpose of evoking a proper self-understanding. The Gospel message itself is nothing if it does not come to me in my life situation.[81] The really important thing about the kerygma is not the Christ event in the past, but the preaching of it. "The eschatological event which is Jesus Christ happens here and

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[80] Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, trans. L. P. Smith, E. Huntress, London, Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1935, p. 11.

[81] We should note that even in his early work, The Epistle to Romans, (trans. of the sixth edition, E. C. Hoskyns, London, Oxford University Press, 1933) Karl Barth is quite clear about the external objectivity of the Truth: "Truth cannot therefore depend upon my observation; that is to say it cannot be subjectivized...." (p. 287). "Truth...does not stand and fall with us, does not live and die with us; is not right when we are right and wrong when we are deceived, does not triumph in our victory and fail when we are defeated," (p. 288). T. F. Torrance, writing in the Introduction to Theology and Church, comments: "There is, insists Barth, a basic homogeneity of method from Schleiermacher to Bultmann in which theological thinking takes its rise from a basic determination in the being of man, so that the only truth it is concerned with ... is truth for man, truth which can be validated only by reference to his self-explication controlled by historical analysis of human existence," (p. 19).

now as the Word is being preached," he declares.[82] Is this a doctrine of the contemporary work of the Spirit cut apart from the once-for-all Word event? Perhaps so, for he says also, "the saving efficacy of the Cross is not derived from the fact that it is the Cross of Christ: it is the Cross of Christ because it has this saving efficacy."[83]

The most significant criticism of Bultmann made by Barth in his article: "Rudolf Bultmann: An Attempt to Understand Him," is that Bultmann has Christology swallowed up in soteriology. The once-for-all event of Christ is dissolved into the kerygma. Bultmann does not often speak of the Spirit, but Barth might have added that Bultmann in this way separates the Spirit from the Word, the power from the content of the Gospel. In the New Testament, Barth goes on, soteriology is secondary to, but not separable from, Christology. And Jesus Christ is not significant only as He is believed in and obeyed. There is a "kerygma of the Christ event," certainly, says Barth, but Bultmann speaks rather of a "Christ event in and through the kerygma."[84] We cannot speak of a pro me without a pro se. The illic et tunc cannot be merged into a hic et nunc. In Bultmann's view, the objectivity of the Person and Work of Christ is reduced in its significance to a renewing of our self-understanding. We can see, then, why Barth thinks that Bultmann has gone back to "the flesh pots of Egypt," i.e., back to Schleiermacher.[85]

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[82] Jesus Christ and Mythology, p. 81.

[83] "New Testament and Mythology," p. 41.

[84] Karl Barth, "Rudolf Bultmann: An Attempt to Understand Him," in Kerygma and Myth, (Vol. II), p. 96.

[85] Ibid., pp. 127-128.

Bultmann's roots in modern philosophy and theology come out all the more clearly when we ask how he understands the knowledge of God. In Jesus Christ and Mythology, he writes:

> Man's life is moved by the search for God because it is always moved, consciously or unconsciously, by the question of its own personal existence. The question of God and the question of myself are identical.[86]

He assures us later on that, "From the statement that to speak of God is to speak of myself it by no means follows that God is not outside the believer." He explicitly denies that he is a follower of Feuerbach.[87] But while he certainly wants to say that God exists, it is questionable whether he thinks man can have any real knowledge of God in Himself. In the sermon entitled "Concerning the Hidden and Revealed God," Bultmann says this:

> If we understand speaking 'of God' as talking about God, then this is meaningless, for in the instant in which it takes place its object, God, is gone.... For every speaking about something presupposes a point outside of the object about which we are talking. But there is no such point (and there can be none). We cannot speak of God in general sentences, general truths which are true regardless of their reference to the concrete existential situation of the speaker.[88]

Heinrich Ott comments that Bultmann is trying to banish the subject-object pattern from theology.[89] If we cannot think in terms of objective revelatory acts in history, such as an ato-

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[86] Jesus Christ and Mythology, p. 53. [87] Ibid., p. 70.

[88] Rudolf Bultmann, "Concerning the Hidden and Revealed God," quoted by T. A. O'Meara, in "Rudolf Bultmann's Theology of God," in The Irish Theological Quarterly, Jan. 1967, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1, pp. 36-60, p. 43.

[89] Heinrich Ott, "Objectification and Existentialism," in Kerygma and Myth, (Vol. II), pp. 329-333.

ning crucifixion and a real resurrection of Christ from the dead, then we cannot speak of knowing God as an objective reality by means of the Word made flesh. In terms of Christian theology, this amounts to saying in fact that God is unknowable. Knowledge of God becomes self-knowledge. This is quite inadequate, of course, to the Biblical faith, or to the life of faith, in the modern age or in any age. We can have no trust in a pro me which we do not see clearly grounded in a pro se. We cannot trust a God whom we do not know in His very Being. Nor can our life pass from inauthenticity to authenticity, from rebellion to obedience, from guilt and anxiety to peace, if we do not in fact meet the gracious God Himself in Christ, working a very specific act of redemption for us. The demythologizing process, then, and the whole subjectivizing process of modern philosophy and modernist theology, really eradicates the very centre of the Gospel, for it cuts off objective knowledge of God. Good news about our existence and our future depends on really knowing the God from whom it is a gift through His Incarnate Word.

(iii) Thomists

We have yet to consider Thomas Aquinas and the Thomists. We will deal with this tradition only very briefly here, since its epistemology will be more thoroughly discussed in the section on analogy.[90] Aquinas is not tempted to an introspective approach, but he does begin elsewhere than with the Word made

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[90]Cf. this essay, 4(a).

flesh. He begins with the world of sense. In Summa Theologica, he writes:

> our natural knowledge begins with sense. Hence our natural knowledge can go as far as it can be led by sensible things. Our mind cannot be led by sense as far as to see the Essence of God.... Because they are effects and depend on their Cause, we can be led by them so far as to know that God exists, and to know of Him what must necessarily belong to Him, as the First Cause of all things, exceeding all things caused by Him.[91]

He has explained elsewhere:

> The existence of God and other like truths about God which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; for faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature.[92]

He proceeds from there to offer his five arguments for the existence of God: Motion, Causation, Contingency, Gradation, Design. Contemporary Thomists, such as E. L. Mascall and Austin Farrer, point out that the value of Aquinas' arguments does not consist in their logical force, but in their apprehension of the finitude, the non-self-explanatory nature of finite reality. The syllogistic statement in natural theology is primarily a device for persuading our minds to apprehend finite beings in their radical finitude, and thus to apprehend the God who is their Creator.[93] Now whether we accept Kant's critique of the propriety of arguing from nature to the beyond is irrelevant to us here. This student, for one, finds the Thomists' arguments convincing. But

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[91] Thomas Aquinas, The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, First Number, London, Thos. Baker Ltd., 1911, I, 12, 12.

[92] Ibid., I, 2, 2.

[93] Farrer and Mascall, quoted by I. Trethowan, in The Basis of Belief, respectively, pp. 73-74, 76-79.

our problem here is not a philosophical, but a theological one. The question is, Do we actually come to the true God in this way? Is it in this way that theology knows in faith the Father of our Lord? Aquinas himself, of course, says that we know naturally only that God exists; we do not know His "Essence" except by grace. Barth attacks this approach as an offence against the unity of God. The God of Thomist natural theology is the rerum omnium principium et finis or creator, and this one aspect of God is said to be known without revelation. But the true God is not only the first principle or creator. He is also Reconciler and Redeemer. When we speak of God the Creator we must not forget that He is concretely also "the God who wakens the dead". There can be no special theology of the first article of the creed, contends Barth, as though it could be grounded in itself with its own special noetic presuppositions.

> How can we carry through the division--even if it is only meant to be provisional--which enables us in the first instance to investigate the knowability of God the Creator in abstracto? Are we really speaking of the one true God...?[94]

To deal with the doctrine of Creation separately, apart from Christ, is "to look away and above what God is among us and for us."[95] Action follows being in the order of being, but the knowledge of being follows the knowledge of action.[96] The Thomist arguments cannot be used in a scientific manner by theology, for they begin by opening the question of the existence of the ob-

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[94] C.D., II, 1, p. 80. [95] Ibid., p. 81. [96] Ibid., p. 82.

ject of knowledge, rather than, from the outset, dealing with the object as it intrudes itself upon the mind. Even if the existence of such a "God" were hypothesized in this manner, how could one move from there to the real object of theological inquiry, God's Word made flesh? Knowledge of God through Christ still has to come by grace and faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes a point which is a good expression also of Barth's mind on this matter: Christian faith knows that man is not capable of bestowing Truth upon himself, --not even part of the Truth.[97] Man cannot place himself into saving Truth; he cannot even set himself along the right way. Just as our justification is by grace alone, so also, the Truth of God is by grace alone. This has to be so if Jesus Christ is the one Truth.

(d) True Religion

Barth has argued strongly, then, against all attempts to build theology upon anything other than a Christological basis. One of the most common attacks upon his epistemology, particularly from the side of Thomist natural theology, is that he has ignored or twisted the meaning of Romans 1:18f:

> The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewn it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without ex-

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[97] Act and Being, p. 71.

> cuse; because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful..., and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and fourfooted beasts and creeping things.

How does Barth exegete this passage? He tells us that, in view of the conclusion at which the whole passage aims, and in view of Paul's teaching elsewhere of the hidden wisdom of God which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, which the natural man does not accept but which only the Spirit can know, (I Cor. 2:6-16), the passage cannot be used to support natural theology.[1] Paul's purpose, he points out, is to demonstrate the guilt of the Gentiles, to prove their inexcusability, not to pay them a compliment. But Barth does say this:

> Objectively the Gentiles have always had the opportunity of knowing God, his invisible being and his eternal godhead. And again, objectively speaking, they have always known him.[2]

This is very confusing if objective knowledge of God is given only by faith in Jesus Christ. But Barth goes on, "In spite of their objective knowledge of God they have not rendered him the honour and gratitude they owe him.... Rebelliously they hold that truth down--(1:18). They exchange it for a lie, (1:25)."[3]

Again, in Church Dogmatics, I, 2, Barth says of the Gentiles:

> When the grace of God is proclaimed to them in Christ they have to concede that God has not left himself without a witness (Acts 14:17). For in and with the proclamation of the grace of God in Christ there is disclosed to them the witness of God, from which they have fallen away.... They come to know afresh that this was what they already knew.[4]

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[1] Karl Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans, trans. D. H. van Daalen, London, S.C.M. Press, 1959, p. 27.

[2] Ibid., p. 28.

[3] Ibid., p. 29.

[4] C.D., I, 2, p. 305.

Thus, prior to the Gospel, they worship "ignorantly" the unknown God, (Acts 17:23), the God whom they no longer know, or idols of men, birds, beasts, or creeping things.

Calvin can help us understand Barth's position on this, for his view is, I think, essentially the same. In the Institutes, Calvin affirms that a "seed of religion" remains in all men which it is impossible to eradicate, an idea of God engraved in the hearts of all men,[5] for, as Paul says, God has made Himself evident in the world's created order. Yet Calvin seems to contradict himself when he writes further on: "the human mind is unable through its imbecility to attain any knowledge of God without the assistance of His sacred Word."[6] The apparent contradiction is explained, however, in his commentary on Romans, where he speaks of a knowledge of God by way of creation: "This knowledge of God therefore, which is only able to deprive man of the power of excusing himself, is very different from the saving knowledge mentioned by Christ, (Jn. 17:3) and in which Jeremiah teaches us to glory, (Jer. 9:24)."[7]

Barth and Calvin are both saying that the Gentiles do have a knowledge of God, but that it should perhaps be written in inverted commas. It is a lost knowledge, (Calvin says it is "extinguished," "corrupted,") and yet it is there. It is there, but it is held down. The point is this: it is not know-

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[5]John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, (Vol. I), trans. J. Allen, Philadelphia, Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936, pp. 58-62.

[6]Ibid., p. 84.

[7]John Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, trans. F. Sisbon, London, L. B. Seeley and Sons, 1834, p. 111.

ledge in the relationship of reconciliation, not saving knowledge. It is not knowledge in the Spirit. It exists darkly in the state of man's fallenness only to render him inexcusable. Barth approvingly quotes Calvin's commentary on John 3:6: "The knowledge of God which now remains to man is nothing other than the terrible source of all idolatry and superstition."[8] It is not, however, "objective" knowledge in the sense we have been using the word in this essay, which is the sense in which Barth usually uses it in his epistemological writings, i.e., it is not knowledge by way of Jesus Christ, which is really the only "knowledge" of God, strictly speaking.

Can this "knowledge" of the Gentiles be used as a basis for Christian theology, or as an apologetic prelude to Christian proclamation? Barth's answer is, of course, No, it cannot. Because it is held down, or extinguished, it is not something that the Gospel can build upon. It is itself only brought out in the open by the Gospel. Pagan gods are not dim perceptions of the true God; they are idols, lies. It is impossible to build up Christian faith on top of a lie. Barth comments:

> If there is any position from which no bridge can be built to the Gospel, to the knowledge of the living God, then this is it! Human religion, as radically distinguished from God's revelation, always originates and consists in this confusion: in the mistaken confidence in which man wants to decide for himself who and what God is, which can only produce this confusion, i.e., idolatry.[9]

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[8] Karl Barth, No! Answer to Emil Brunner, in Natural Theology, ed., trans., P. Fraenkel, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1946, p. 107.

[9] A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 29.

Barth refuses to regard the religions of the world with a patronising smile. Religion is unbelief. It is the one great concern of godless man.[10] Above all, this is so of the adherents of the Christian religion. It is an attempt at self-justification by the making of one's own god.[11] Revelation, (Jesus Christ) is the divine judgment on all human religion. "From the standpoint of revelation, religion is clearly seen to be a human attempt to anticipate what God in His revelation wills to do and does do. It is the attempted replacement

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[10]Barth's position on "religion" is as old as his early Epistle to the Romans. Commenting on Rom. 7:8-11, Barth discusses religion in relation to the Pauline theology of the law, and the "knowledge of good and evil." Several quotes from that early work make his understanding of religion plain. He writes, "Men have the opportunity of making themselves God. The knowledge of this opportunity and the consequent capacity to make use of it, is sin," (p. 246). Because of this, God's law was given. "It had to come, when men became as God, bearing the burden of the divine secret, knowing good and evil, election and damnation," (p. 250). But the law worketh wrath. True, it is the gift of God; it is "holy, just and good." Says Barth, "it points from humanity to divinity; it bears witness to the immediacy which has been lost." Therefore, "There is no human advance beyond the possibility of religion, for religion is the last step in human progress," (p. 254). It is man's highest attempt to set right his fallen relation to God. But "the law worketh wrath." "The law is the point at which sin becomes an observable fact of experience," (p. 242). Through the law, man becomes more entangled in sin than ever. We should note that Barth is here aligning "religion" and "law" very closely. The limits of religion are the limits of the law. Their ultimate effect is to entangle man ever more deeply in the sin of self-justification, in his attempt to do without God, indeed to be God. The positive meaning of the law, Barth tells us, is that "it sharpens our intelligence that we may perceive (vii. 6) the sheer impossibility of our attaining that freedom from the law, that service in newness of the spirit, at which we have gazed--outside the frontiers of religion," (p. 257). It is Jesus Christ who, as the end of the law, is the "frontier of religion," (p. 238).

[11]C.D., I, 2, pp. 299-300.

of the divine work by a human manufacture."[12] This is always the Bible's judgment on pagan religion, --e.g., Jer. 10;-16, Isa. 44:9-20, 45:16, Rom. 1:25, Gal. 4:8. Over against religion, revelation is the act by which God reconciles man to Himself by grace. God in His revelation will not allow man to try to come to terms with life, to justify and sanctify himself. Justification and sanctification by works are the chief sin of man.[13] That is why it is impossible to build Christian faith upon pagan religion. Jesus Christ is not to be thought of as filling out and improving all of man's attempts to think of God.[14] He completely replaces these attempts, because in Him alone is the world reconciled to God. And only in reconciliation is it possible to know God in a relation of trust and obedience.

Barth recognizes, however, that "Christianity" is a religion alongside other religions, that alongside the Bible are the Veda, the Avesta, the Tripitaka, the Koran, which, like the Bible, are concerned with the world's beginning and end, the origin and nature of man, moral and religious law, sin and redemption.[15] None of these systems of human thought, no human religion as such, can claim to be true over against God's revelation,[16] but,

> In His revelation God has actually entered a sphere in which His own reality and possibility are encompassed by a sea of more or less adequate, but at any rate fundamentally unmistakable, parallels and analogies in human realities and possibilities. The revelation of God

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[12] C.D., I, 2, p. 302.
[13] Ibid., p. 312.
[14] Ibid., p. 308.
[15] Ibid, p. 282.
[16] Ibid., p. 326.

> is actually the presence of God in a human universal and therefore the hiddenness of God in the world of human religion. By God's revealing of Himself the divine particular is hidden in a human universal, the divine content in a human form.[17]

In Jesus Christ, God creates true religion, justifies and sanctifies it.

> There is a true religion, just as there are justified sinners. If we abide strictly by that analogy..., we need have no hesitation in saying that the Christian religion is the true religion.[18]

It is true religion only as it is adopted by God's grace, only insofar as it is not the wilful creation of man for the sake of his own self-justification and self-sanctification, only insofar as God Himself is directly present to it by His Holy Spirit continually giving it new life, His own divine life.

The Word made flesh, then, Jesus Christ, revealing God to men of flesh, and reconciling sinful flesh to God: He is the source of true religion and true knowledge of God. He is so by grace alone.

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[17] C.D., I, 2, p. 282. [18] Ibid., p. 326.

CHAPTER TWO

Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit

The theological "object" of knowledge is the Word made flesh. Jesus Christ is the One in whom we know God in a living relationship with Him as Thou, as personal. And He is powerful amongst us to persuade our minds to recognize, acknowledge and love Him. But how can this be so, since He is departed from us? How does the theological "object continue to be with us, who are not contemporary with His flesh, in such a way that we may know Him? The answer lies, of course, in the power of God's Spirit.

Another dimension of our subject opens up when we come to speak of the Spirit, which hitherto we have only hinted at, that is, the inseparability of revelation and reconciliation, (the special theme of Chapter Three). A clear appreciation of their connection is perhaps one of the greatest contributions of Karl Barth to the history of theology.[1] In his early book The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, he tells us that "the knowledge of God is brought about when the object reaches out and grasps the subject, and through this, the latter, the man who knows, becomes a new man."[2] When a man is "grasped" by this

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[1] This theme would perhaps have become even more explicit in Barth's projected Volume V, The Doctrine of Redemption, (referred to in C.D., I, 2, p. 882), which would, presumably, have been especially oriented to the Spirit, as the Doctrine of Creation is to the Father, and the Doctrine of Reconciliation is to the Son. N.B. his association of the Persons of the Trinity in these doctrines respectively, C.D., I, 1, pp. 441f.

[2] Karl Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, trans. J. L. M. Haire, I. W. Henderson, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1938, p. 104.

object, not only his mind, but his whole life is laid hold of. True knowledge of God always and only exists together with obedience to God. Indeed, such knowledge is obedience, the obedience of faith. Such a possibility for new knowledge of God for new men exists only in a new situation. It is the eschatological situation. It can occur only in the "fullness of time", when the prophecy of the Old Testament is fulfilled. We shall see this clearly if we look briefly at Old Testament prophecy and the proclamation of its fulfillment in the New Testament. Karl Barth can be found commenting on these passages many times, usually in small print, throughout Church Dogmatics.

(a) Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy

It is important to the development of Old Testament eschatological faith that Israel's God had been at work in her history from its very beginning, and was at work by the power of His Spirit. Israel understood רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים as the blowing, or wind of God, a figure of speech[1] signifying the powerful, dynamic force of God in the world as contrasted with the weakness of mere creaturely flesh, (Is. 31:3). This blowing of God, together with God's Word, is at work in the creation of the world, (Gen. 1:2),[2] and is breathed into the dust to create Adam a living soul, (Gen. 2:7).[3] The Spirit is always the personal activity of Yahweh; He is never an immanent force in

[1] C.D., I, 1, p. 515. [2] C.D., III, 1, pp. 56, 106.
[3] Ibid., pp. 235f., 245-247.

the world in any polytheistic or pantheistic sense, but is always the transcendent power and majesty of Yahweh who is above.[4] As such, He relates freely and powerfully to certain elect men, who are "bearers" of the Spirit, and thereby instruments of God for the achievement of His objects amongst men. In this way Israel understood her unexpected successes in battle as the work of the Spirit, who was believed to be the real force behind those acts of redemption that miraculously preserved the life of this weak, enslaved people.[5] But the Spirit is utterly free and transcendent. As Barth points out, the Spirit could be withdrawn from a Samson or a Saul; it never belonged to him. It could also be given as a judgment, and therefore as a "burning blast", a power of destruction and extermination, or even as an "unclean spirit", (Is. 4:4, 40:7, Job 4:9). It was understood as the divine operation of God, characterized by God's righteous judgment.[6] This operation is utterly free, subject only to God's election. Barth comments:

> To be a receiver and bearer of the Spirit, a man in the Old Testament must be not only a member of the people of Israel, but be called Moses (Nu. 11:17, 25, 29), or Joshua, (Nu. 27:18, Deut. 34:9), or Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, (Jud. 3:10, &c) or Saul (I Sam. 10:6), or David (II Sam. 23:2), or Elijah (II K. 2:9, 15), or Micah (Mi. 3:8), or Ezekiel (Ezek. 11:5). And the bearer of the fullness of the Spirit, the man on whom the Spirit will rest, is the Messiah, (Is. 11:2, 42:1).[7]

It is the Messianic, eschatological prophecies that most

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[4] E. Schweizer, Spirit of God, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1960, p. 5.

[5] W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, (Vol. I), London, S.C.M. Press, 1961, p. 308.

[6] C.D., III, 2, pp. 357-358.

[7] Ibid., p. 357.

interest us here, and their relation to the concept of the Spirit. As Eichrodt tells us, for the prophets, eschatology is for history what fulfilment is to prophecy.[8] They knew that Yahweh's purpose for His people was far from completed in the monarchy, that God would not be satisfied until His Kingship was fully realized amongst His people. Therefore they believed He had a mysterious and wonderful plan to bring His creation to the goal He had ordained. The prophets knew the radical rebellion of Israel and had no hope for any gradual progress of the people toward obedience. The covenant made with God, requiring that Israel should be faithful and obedient to Him, and to be a light to the gentiles, would never be fulfilled without a radical change brought about by God Himself. There would have to be a new covenant (e.g. Jer. 31:31, 32:40), and men would have to be made anew, with a new heart and a new spirit (e.g. Ezek. 11:19, 32:39 etc.).[9] On the basis of their faith in the redeeming God who had brought Israel out of Egypt, and their understanding of the depth of Israel's unfaithfulness to this God, the prophets knew that a new covenant, indeed a new creation would be necessary. God would have to take decisive action. As Barth puts it, He would have to "turn them to Himself."[10] Although the prophets loudly demanded social justice and obedience to the true God in the present time, they knew that finally the

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[8] Theology of the Old Testament, p. 387.

[9] C.D., IV, 1, pp. 30-33.

[10] Ibid., p. 33.

only hope lay in the judgment and mercy of God in the last days, in the fullness of time. It would have to be the mighty blowing of God's redeeming Spirit that would turn the people around to righteousness before the Lord who brought them out of Egypt.[11] The prophets believed that the great judgment and redemption would occur through the work of a great servant of God, one to whom the Spirit would be especially given, as it was given to the charismatic leaders, and particularly to David. He is called by several names by various Old Testament writers: the Messiah, (the anointed Son of David), the Servant, the Shepherd, the Son of Man. The New Testament writers over and over again identify Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfilment of these prophecies. Their proclamation of Christ, says Barth, is simply an exposition of the former Scriptures,[12] an identification of Christ as the one foretold.

The Messiah was to be a great King, a Prince of Peace, who would be born especially for the purpose of carrying out God's redemptive work, (e.g. Is. 7:14, 11:2f, etc.). Of great interest to us here is that His work would be made possible by "a Spirit wise and discerning, a Spirit prudent and strong, a Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord," (Is. 11:2). The

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[11] Eichrodt writes, "The only way in which human activity can escape the futility and share in the genesis of the new reality is a decision taken in view of the divine advent. It is significant that from the time of Isaiah onwards, conduct that is truly in accordance with God's will is included in the category of רוח, that is, it is a manifest effect of the miraculous divine life, while all that is merely human belongs to the sphere of בשר, the transient and creaturely," (p. 388).

[12] C.D., I, 2, p. 489.

Gospel of Matthew especially identifies Jesus as this Messianic King. He first proclaims Jesus' descent from David, (Mt. 1:1), for the anointed one was expected to be the seed of David that would rule forever. Jesus is said to be born in Bethlehem, (Mt. 2:6) in accordance with the prophecy of Micah 5:2. He is born especially for the purpose of God's work, and therefore in a unique way, (Mt. 1:23, Is. 7:14). He is identified with the light that shines in darkness, (Mt. 4:16, Is. 9:1f). He is the healer, because of whom "the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the poor have the gospel preached to them," (Mt. 11:5, Is. 35:5). The great eschatological figure of the second prophet Isaiah is the Servant, who suffers for the people. In Is. 52:13-53:12, the role of the Servant is described as that of one who suffers vicariously and is afterwards triumphant. The Servant can do this work because the Spirit rests upon Him, (Is. 42:1). The gospels clearly identify Jesus as this Servant. He bears our infirmities, (Mt. 8:17, Is. 53:4). He does not protest when accused and afflicted, (Mt. 12:19, Is. 42:2), and is counted with criminals, (Mt. 27:38, Is. 53:12). John, Luke and Paul see Him especially as this Servant, whose work is one of lowliness and obedience, or as the lowly Shepherd King of Zechariah.[13] Again, in the prophet Ezekiel, we find yet another eschatological figure, the Shepherd. The Spirit is not said to rest

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[13] Lk. 3:4, Is. 40;3; Jn. 12:37-38, Is. 53:1; Jn. 12:14-15, Zech. 9:9; Jn. 19:37, Zech. 12:10; Acts 8:32-33, Is. 53:7; Rom. 10:15-16, Is. 52:7; Phil. 2:7.

upon the Shepherd yet is closely associated with His work in Ezekiel's eschatological hope. The Spirit will penetrate the people, (36:27, 37:14), so that they will have new life and peace, because they will have a new Spirit and a new heart, (11:19, 18:31, 36:26), and God will make a new covenant with them, (16:60, 34:25, 37:26). The New Testament writers identify Jesus also as the One who brings the New Covenant, (Mt. 26:28, Heb. 8:8, 10:16, Jer. 31:31-34, Ezek. 34:25), and as the Shepherd of the flock, (Jn. 10:2, 10:11, 10:14, Heb. 13:20, I Pet. 2:25). The other eschatological figure of the Old Testament is the Son of Man, (Dan. 9:7), who, though he is not associated with the Spirit, is also found fulfilled in Christ, (Mt. 24:15, Mk. 13:14).

In short, Jesus is the fulfilment of Old Testament hope; He is Emmanuel, (Is. 7:14, 8:8, 10, Mt. 1:23).[14] He is God with us in the power of the Spirit to redeem mankind. Therefore His time is the πληρωμα, the fullness of time. The time of Jesus, Barth writes, is

> the time of the centre which dominates all other times. The fact that in His life all time comes to fruition means that all time before it moved towards it and all time after it moved away from it.[15]

Thus he speaks of the "Time of Expectation" and the "Time of Recollection".[16] As "Lord of Time", as Messiah, Servant, Shepherd and Son of Man, Jesus is the Christ, the decisive eschatological event.[17] He is the arrival of the Kingdom of God in

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[14] C.D., IV, 1, p. 5. [15] C.D., III, 2, p. 461. [16] C.D., I, 2, p. 70f.
[17] C.D., I, 2, p. 114; II, 1, p. 607; III, 1, p. 180; III, 2, p. 333, IV, 1, pp. 5, 32, 160; IV, 2, p. 780.

the sphere of men, (e.g., Mt. 3:2, 9:35, 12:28, Mk. 1:15, 4:11, Lk. 8:11, 10:9, 17:21, etc.). This does not mean that the eschaton is exhausted in the appearance of Jesus. The prophets looked for a total transformation of creation, a cosmic upheaval that would be evident and effectual for all, (e.g. Is. 11:4f., Ezek. 34:17, etc.). Accordingly, the New Testament speaks of a consummation yet to come, "a new heaven and a new earth", (Mt. 24:29f., Mk. 9:1, Rev. 21:1). But this, as we shall see later, is affirmed on the basis of the eschatological event that has already occured in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.[18]

Jesus Christ is, then, the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and He is this because of the breathing of God's Spirit in Him and "upon" Him. Now we must turn our attention to this absolutely unique relation of the Spirit to Christ.

(b) Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Spirit

We have seen that it is the work of the Spirit of God in and through the Christ that brings about the "fullness of time", the eschatological situation. It is in the power of the Spirit that the Christ is able to carry out His redemptive work. Now we shall have to consider the relation of the Spirit to Christ during His Incarnate life on earth, and then after the time of Pentecost, that is, in our time, the time of the Church. Once again we shall find Karl Barth's very considerable contributions on the matter scattered throughout Church Dogmatics.

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[18] Karl Barth, The Doctrine of Reconciliation, pt. 3, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV, pt. 3, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1961-1962, p. 306.

We should begin with Jesus' conception and birth. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit that the virgin mother of Jesus conceived Him, (Mt. 1:20, Lk. 1:35). In his discussion of this theme Barth applies the sola gratia principle, that salvation comes from God alone. "Human nature," he writes, "possesses no capacity for becoming the human nature of Jesus Christ."[1] When God's reality becomes one with human reality, when the miracle occurs that God's eternal Word becomes flesh, it does not occur because of any natural capacity of men and women to make it happen; it is solely an act of divine sovereignty. Man is involved, but only as passive, not as God's fellow-worker.[2] The sexual role of the male, "the achieving, creative, sovereign man"[3] is excluded, for "what takes place in the mystery of Christmas is not world history, and not the work of human genius."[4] When the New Testament says that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, it proclaims a "pure enigma".[5] The very existence of Jesus in our midst is a mystery. It is not a human possibility, but a divine possibility: "God Himself creates a possibility, a power, a capacity, and assigns it to man, where otherwise there would be sheer impossibility."[6] Barth makes clear that there is no question here of the Spirit taking the place of the male as the Father of Jesus, as in many pagan "virgin births". The Spirit does not do what the male does. Rather, as Creator Spirit, He performs

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[1] C.D., I, 2, p. 188.
[2] Ibid., p. 192.
[3] Ibid., p. 193.
[4] Ibid., p. 194.
[5] Ibid., p. 185.
[6] Ibid., p. 199.

"the inconceivable act of creative omnipotence in which He imparts to human nature a capacity, a power for Himself, which it does not possess of itself and which it could not devise for itself."[7] He does not say, however, that the virgin birth was a necessity without which Jesus Christ could not be Son of God. The ex virgine, like all Biblical miracles, is a sign,[8] and Jesus would be Son of God even without the sign. Jesus is not Son of God because of His conception by the Spirit; rather He is conceived by the Spirit because He is the Son of God.[9] "The mystery does not rest upon the miracle," Barth explains. "The miracle rests upon the mystery,... and the mystery is attested by the miracle."[10]

Nevertheless, the mystery of the divine being of this man does depend on His special relation to the Spirit. Since God is one, and Father and Son are one, so also the Spirit and Son are one. The virgin birth of Jesus bears witness to this ontic relation. In III, 2, within his doctrine of man, Barth makes a clear distinction between the relation of the Creator Spirit to all men and His special relation to this man Jesus. The relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus is so close and special that Jesus would never have been born in the natural process of history without this very special action of God. According to Gen. 2:7, every man to whom God has given the breath of life owes his spiritual and intellectual nature, his being as

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[7] C.D., I, 2, p. 201. [8] Ibid., p. 187. [9] Ibid., p. 202.
[10] Ibid.

man, as soul of his body, to a special act of the Spirit.[11] Man in general lives as man because the Spirit is given to him. But possession of the Spirit is "not a general human state", Barth insists. To men in general the Spirit is given "by measure", (Jn. 3:34). Jesus has human spirit in this sense too; as very man He is able to die. But as the special One that He is,

> Jesus has the Holy Spirit lastingly and totally.... He not only has the Spirit, but primarily and basically He is Spirit as He is soul of His body. For this reason and in this way He lives. This is His absolutely unique relation to the Holy Spirit.[12]

And this is the eschatological power of Jesus. Barth writes of this:

> In Jesus the Evangelists and apostles discovered the new man. They discovered the man upon whom the Spirit not only descends intermittently and partially, but on whom He rests, who does not merely live from the Spirit but in the Spirit.[13]

Thus it is the powerful "wind" or "breathing" of God which is not only the power of Christ's redemptive work, but first of all, the power of His very being itself. We have to understand His whole being as πνεῦμα.[14]

For this reason the baptism of Jesus cannot be regarded as His adoption to become the Son of God. He already is the beloved Son in whom God is well pleased, (Mt. 3:17). The bap-

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[11] Karl Barth, The Doctrine of Creation, pt. 2, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. III, pt. 2, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1960, pp. 333-334.

[12] Ibid., p. 334. [13] Ibid. [14] C.D., IV, 1, p. 309.

tism is a revelation of who Jesus already is and has been, as the Bearer of the Spirit from the time of His birth.[15] As this man, the obedient One and the object of the divine good-pleasure, Jesus subjects Himself to the baptism of repentance in solidarity with sinners. At Jordan, Jesus chose the nature of His Messianic Kingship; as Barth puts it, "He entered upon the way of a great sinner repenting."[16] In the power of the Spirit He can repent and be obedient for all men, as part of His redemptive work.

We hear of the Spirit again in the story of the temptation of Christ. In the wilderness Jesus is tempted to abandon the role of the One who fasts and repents for sinners. He is tempted to be something other than the obedient Son of His Father, tempted to refuse "to give Himself unreservedly to be the one great sinner who allows that God is in the right."[17] In his doctrine of election, (II, 2), Barth interprets Christ as the one elect man of God, who, as such, has the power to overcome Satan, the power that no other man ever had.

> Face to face with temptation man in himself cannot maintain the goodness of his creation in the divine image and foreordination of the divine likeness. This is done by the elected man Jesus, (Mt. 4:1-11)....[18]

But sinful man, who cannot withstand temptation, is loved of God from all eternity and foreordained to fellowship with Him. Therefore,

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[15] C.D., III, 2, p. 479.

[16] C.D., IV, 1, p. 261.

[17] N.B. Barth's understanding of the sinlessness of Christ, C.D. I, 2, pp. 151-159.

[18] C.D., II, 2, p. 122.

> In this one man Jesus, God puts at the head and in the place of all other men the One who has the same power as Himself to reject Satan, and to maintain and not surrender the goodness of man's divine creation and destiny.[19]

This power of Jesus, the same power as that of God Himself, is the power by which He is one with the Father; it is the power of His divine being, the power of the Holy Spirit. In Christ's divinity lies the power of His obedient humanity. He is a man, and can really be tempted. But because of who He is, He, unlike all other men, must not only meet, but actually seek out temptation.[20] He must take the offensive against evil. That is why Mt. 4:1 says that the Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted. It was part of His Messianic work so to be tempted and yet to remain the man without sin. He was able to do this, as Luke suggests, because He was "full of the Spirit", (Lk. 4:1).

The synoptic gospels make little mention of the Spirit in relation to Jesus after the temptation narratives.[21] The miracle

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[19] C.D., II, 2, p. 123. [20] C.D., IV, 1, pp. 260-261.

[21] C. K. Barrett, in The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition, (New York and London, Macmillan Co., 1947) suggests that the Synoptists' scant mention of the Spirit in relation to Jesus may be a result of Jesus Himself making little use of the term. Note that Lk. 11:20 uses the word "finger", where Matthew uses "Spirit". Barrett thinks that "finger" is more likely to be authentic to Jesus' own words, for Luke is very interested in the Spirit and would not likely have omitted a reference to Him that was present in the source, (Barrett, p. 131). Barrett is of the opinion that Jesus may have used the word Spirit seldom or not at all. In this, he thinks, Jesus stood in the tradition of certain of the prophets who avoid the term because of the abuses of the nabi prophets. In Jesus' time also there were any number of "pneumatic" men in circulation, and He perhaps chose not to be thought of in this way. Or He may have avoided direct reference to the Spirit because of His "Messianic Secret". To have claimed a pre-eminent measure of the Spirit would have been to make an open confession of His Messiahship. His spiritual, or power-

stories do not usually mention the Spirit. It is quite clear in one passage, however, that the Spirit is Christ's power to perform His mighty acts: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you," (Mt. 12:28). Jesus was able to do the mighty works as part of His redemptive, eschatological work, as signs of the arrival of the Kingdom of God in the world. Barth thinks of them as "preliminary announcements" of the great victory of His death and resurrection. He does them as the Messiah, on whom the Spirit rests, and because of whom the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the Gospel is preached to the poor.[22] As the Messiah, Jesus has the power to invade the realm of death and disease, and this He does in His miracles. He does so by the power of the Spirit: the same Spirit, Barth points out, that overshadowed the virgin at the time of His conception, (Lk. 1: 35).[23] It is the Spirit, or power of His being, the power of His oneness with God.

It is in this power also, the power of the Spirit, that Je-

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ful acts are often done quietly, accompanied by a request for secrecy. This is an interesting and useful speculation of a kind that Barth never makes, insisting that we are not to search for Jesus' Messianic self-consciousness, or in any way to seek the "historical Jesus" back behind, but strictly within, the Biblical proclamation of Him, (e.g., C.D., I, 1, p. 460; I, 2, p. 351).

However, Barrett does not make a great deal of this point, and argues on exegetical grounds that the Synoptists really did regard Jesus' miracles as a work of the Spirit. This, he thinks is evident especially in the use of the word δυναμις, power, (p. 71f). The word is sometimes used of the consummation, (Mk. 9:1, 13:26) and also quite often of Jesus' mighty works, (e.g. Mk. 6: 2, 5, 9:39, Mt. 13:54, Lk. 13:10). But it is also used of the Spirit, (Lk. 4:14, 24:29, 1:17, 1:35). Luke especially thinks of δυναμις as the energy of the Spirit at work in Jesus.

[22] C.D., III, 2, p. 600.

[23] C.D., II, 1, p. 607.

sus goes to His death.[24] "Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God," (Heb. 9:14). The Spirit is the power by which the One who had conquered over the tempter now remained obedient to the Father even unto death.[25] He died under the wrath of God on our behalf, and He did so as the righteous One, in whom all are made righteous, (II Cor. 5:21). In His death man and God were reconciled, and the power of sin was broken, because of the power of His obedience. That is why Paul calls the Cross "the power of God and the wisdom of God," (I Cor. 1:24). It is the means by which God conquers over all evil power. Christ's obedience unto death is itself the power of God, the omnipotence of God over evil. Therefore, writes Barth, "Jesus Christ the Crucified is Himself the power of God." He identifies this power of the Crucified as the same power which overshadowed Mary in Lk. 1:35, that is, the power of the Holy Spirit.[26]

And finally, the Spirit is God's power to raise Jesus from the dead. I Pet. 3:18 tells us that He was "quickened by the Spirit." Again, in Rom. 1:4, we are told that He was raised "according to the Spirit of holiness." And Rom. 8:11 identifies the indwelling Spirit as the One who raised Jesus. This is not to suggest that the Spirit, apart from the Father, performed the miracle of the resurrection. In Gal. 1:1 and Rom. 6:4, the

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[24]Karl Barth, The Doctrine of Reconciliation, pt. 2, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV, pt. 2, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1958, p. 323.

[25]Ibid., p. 324.

[26]C.D., II, 1, p. 607.

Father is said to have raised Jesus. There can be no question of the Spirit working independently of the Father, or of the Son. But the Spirit is the unity of Father and Son, for Father and Son have the Spirit in common.[27] In view of this, we find Barth in several places discussing the resurrection as the work of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit. In IV, 1, for example, under the heading "The Verdict of the Father", Barth argues that the event of Easter has to be understood primarily as the raising which happens to Jesus Christ as a pure gift of grace. It is God's freely chosen exaltation of man; it is the justification of man.[28] And in this free action of the Father we see also the lowliness, the subordination of the coeternal Son. "Not simply as man, but even as Son of God," says Barth, "Jesus Christ is here simply the One who takes and receives, just as in His death on the Cross, it is not only as man, but as the Son of God that He is wholly and only the obedient Servant."[29] On the other hand, there is a sense in which the Son is raised in His own power. He says "I <u>am</u> the resurrection and the life," (Jn. 11:25). He had the power to give His life and to take it again, (Jn. 10:18). Thus Barth can say, in III, 2, "Jesus' resurrection from the dead is grounded in the fact that over against His determination κατα σαρκα as the Son of David, (the determination under which He could be and was slain) stands His determination κατα πνευμα, under which His resurrection from the dead

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[27] <u>C.D.</u>, I, 1, p. 537.
[28] <u>C.D.</u>, IV, 1, pp. 303-304.
[29] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 304.

was a divine necessity."[30] Jesus' own power to be raised from the dead is none other than the power by which He is one with the Father, the power of the Spirit. The Spirit is the Giver of life, (Gen. 2:7). In Jesus there is "life" in a pre-eminent measure. He is the source of the fullness of life, as the "perfect Recipient and Bearer of the Spirit."[31] Thus John says of Jesus that "In him was life," (1:4); "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," (5:26). Jesus says "I am the life," (11:25, 14:6). God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him, (I Jn. 4:9). To have the Son is to have life, (I Jn. 5: 12). He is the "bread of life," (Jn. 6:35). "I live and ye shall live also," (Jn. 14:19). "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly, (Jn. 10:10). Barth quotes these passages and many others,[32] to show that Christ Himself, in His own being, is the source of new life, or resurrected, eschatological life. This fact arises precisely from His oneness with the Father. He is the "life-giving Spirit," (I Cor. 15: 45). John 3:6 tells us, "That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." The life of Christ, His crucified and resurrected life, as God Himself Incarnate by the power of the Spirit in the virgin Mary is itself[33]. Because Christ is Spirit, and there-

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[30] C.D., III, 2, p. 333. [31] Ibid., p. 335. [32] Ibid.

[33] N. Q. Hamilton, in The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul, (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1957) expresses the matter well: "The Lord is 'equipped' with the Spirit in the same way as a man is 'equipped' with life. The grace or the gospel in this fact is that Christ's life of resurrection and exaltation is a communicable one. It is not confined to Christ. It is a life that can make others alive. It is a life-giving Spirit." (p. 15).

fore the very power and life of God, Barth has to say also that "He is the One for whom it was impossible that the resurrection from the dead should not take place."[34] It has to be said, then, that the resurrection of Christ, which is the justification of man and the decisive eschatological event, is the work of the Father, by the power of the Spirit; but it occurs also in the power of the Son Himself, who, in His unity with the Father, by the Spirit, is Himself the power of God.[35] Or, more simply, one can say, as Barth does, "the resurrection of Jesus Christ took place by the Holy Spirit."[36]

After the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ we have a new spiritual situation. In John 20:22 we are told that Jesus breathed on His disciples with the words, "Receive the Holy Spirit." And in Acts 2:1f we hear of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28, that God has poured out His Spirit upon all flesh. There is a new power in the world based on the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Luke is especially interested in the new work of the Spirit as the power of preaching.[37] In Acts 1:8, Jesus says, "You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me." Throughout the Book of Acts there are not only miraculous conversions through powerful preaching, and pneumatic speaking in tongues, but also miraculous mighty acts performed by the

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[34] C.D., II, 1, p. 606.

[35] Ibid., p. 606-607.

[36] C.D., IV, 1, p. 308.

[37] Spirit of God, p. 39.

apostles. The power of the Spirit that belonged to Jesus had been released to His followers. The Church, the community of His followers, is the community of the Last Days, the eschatological community. The epistles too, particularly those of Paul, are rich with a new sense of the powerful presence of the Lord through the Spirit. What then is the relation of the Spirit and Christ in the time of the Church? We find a great deal of direct teaching about this in John and Paul, who write of it very similarly.[38]

We have already seen that during the time of Christ's life on earth, as it is before us mainly in the Synoptic gospels, He is dependent upon the Spirit, for His birth, His obedience, His miracles, His death and resurrection. But after the resurrection and ascension the Spirit follows Christ, and this is the note that runs through John and Paul. According to John 16:7, Jesus had explained that the Spirit would come only after He departed. The Spirit would guide the Church into all Truth, but "He will not utter a message of His own; He will utter the message that has been given to Him and will make plain to you what is still to come. And He will bring honour to me, because it is from me that He will derive what He makes plain to you," (Jn. 16:13-15). The Spirit, according to John, is from the Father, but also from the Son. In John 15:26, the Spirit "proceeds" from the Father, but is sent by the Son and bears

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[38] G. S. Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1956, pp. 23-24.

witness to the Son. In 14:16 the Son asks the Father to send the Spirit; again in 14:20, the Father will send the Spirit "on my account". Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, (Jn. 1:33). Commenting on these passages, Barth writes, "the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 is depicted as a work supervening upon the completed Kerygma of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus."[39] This does not mean that there were no men who had received the Spirit before Good Friday and Easter. There were anticipations in the confession of Peter, (Mt. 16:16), and on the occasion of the Transfiguration, (Mk. 9:2). The diversity in the accounts of the giving of the Spirit, (Jn. 20:22, Acts 2:1f) testify that it was an event which, chronologically, was not limited to the day of Pentecost.[40] Nevertheless, it is abundantly clear that the work of the Spirit is to testify to Christ and His redemptive work. If Christ is the Truth, (Jn. 14:6), then the Spirit is the "Spirit of Truth", (Jn. 14:17). Of this, Barth writes: "the power which does not work arbitrarily or independently, but simply declares Jesus, accomplishing again and again the disclosure and revelation of His reality."[41] The Spirit is the Paraclete, or Comforter, (Jn. 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7). Comments Barth: "This term describes Him as the Mediator, Advocate and Spokesman of Jesus Christ to His own."[42] This means that Christians are not left to their own devices. Christ is

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[39] C.D., I, 1, p. 517.
[40] Ibid., p. 518.
[41] C.D., IV, 2, p. 326.
[42] Ibid., p. 326.

with them, even unto the end of the world, (Mt. 28:20).[43] The Spirit, in short, is the continuing presence of Christ after His departure.[44] The Spirit of God that was His during His life

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[43] C.D., IV, 2, p. 327.

[44] Certain comments on Barth's conception of the relation of Christ and the Spirit in Hendrikus Berkhof's book The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, (Richmond, John Knox Press, 1964) call for attention. With reference to the Church Dogmatics up to and including IV, 1, Berkhof says that Barth sees the Spirit as "merely instrumental" and "entirely subordinate" to Christ, (pp. 22-23). It is true, of course, that in I, 2, and IV, 1 especially, Barth gives great emphasis to the Spirit's work as witness to Christ, but as far as I know he does not use the words "instrumental" or "subordinate". Certainly he is also very much aware, especially in III, 2 and IV, 2 of Christ's dependence on the Spirit, as stressed particularly in the Synoptic Gospels. Barth sometimes speaks of a servitude, even a subordination (but not an ontic, essential subordination) of the Son to the Father, (e.g. IV, 1, pp. 202-209). But since the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father as well as of the Son, it would always be improper to speak of a subordination of the Spirit to the Son. Barth quite explicitly denies any subordination of the Spirit in C.D., I, 2, p. 208. He denies not only the subordination of the Being, but also of the Work of the Spirit.

Further on, Berkhof writes that "Suddenly we find a deepening and widening of his view," in IV, 2 and IV, 3, where Barth speaks of the "power of Christ's resurrection which works the miracles of light, liberation, knowledge, peace and life (even healing)," and defines the Spirit as "no other than the presence and action of Jesus Christ Himself...." (p. 29). I think there is actually no sudden change or discontinuity here. Vol. IV, 2, because it deals with sanctification, speaks more of man's life in the Spirit than IV, 1. And IV, 3 stresses the oneness of Christ and the Spirit because it deals with Christ's prophetic work, or the revealing character of reconciliation. Moreover, there is no question of Barth identifying Christ and Spirit to the exclusion of their distinction. It is clear even in IV, 3 that, while the Spirit is the form of Christ's parousia in the time of the Church, there is no simple identity of Christ and Spirit. Christ, as the Word, is especially related to the Scripture and Church. And He is also the exalted Lord at the right hand of the Father in heaven, (IV, 3, p. 504), where the Spirit is eternally the Spirit of both Father and Son. N.B. also the clear distinction Barth makes between the work of the Son and the work of the Spirit in IV, 1: "...we are reminded of the remarkable pause indicated in the New Testament between ascension and Pentecost--a new thing, another dimension of the one mystery, a further step in the way and progress of the one God in His address to man...." (p. 645).

on earth is now breathed into His followers as His continuing presence.

This becomes even clearer in the writings of Paul. There we find a relation both of identity and distinction between Christ and the Spirit. To be "in Christ" and "in the Spirit" seem to be the same thing, (Rom. 8:1, 9, Phil. 2:1). The Spirit is the Spirit "of the Lord", "of Christ", (Rom. 8:9, Gal. 4:6, Phil. 1:19). Paul even says simply at one point, "The Spirit is the Lord," (II Cor. 3:17). The Spirit is also distinct from Christ, for He brings about an inner experience of the outward objective facts about Christ. One must hear a report about Christ before faith, (Rom. 10:17), yet no man can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit, (I Cor. 12:3). Before the advent of the historical Christ, the Spirit is related to Him prophetically and proleptically, (I Pet. 1:10-12). In keeping with all this, Barth declares that the Holy Spirit is "the power in which Jesus Christ is alive amongst men."[45]

Barth's understanding of the relation of the Spirit to Christ in the time of the Church is nowhere clearer than in his discussion of the parousia in IV, 3. He contends there that the resurrection, pentecost, and consummation are to be understood as a three-fold unity, all falling properly under the heading parousia, which means "effective presence".[46] Their unity is not explicit in the New Testament, but is implied by the escha-

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[45] C.D., IV, 2, p. 323.

[46] C.D., IV, 3, p. 292f.

tological nature of the resurrection and the descent of the Spirit. Barth rejects the idea that Jesus was deluded about His immanent return, and argues that sayings which ascribe that view to Him can only be understood in terms of the resurrection.[47] Jesus believed He would be vindicated soon after His passion, and so He was when He was raised from the dead on the third day. And He expected a time lapse after the consummation, during which the disciples were to take the gospel to all nations. Pentecost and the consummation, says Barth, occur on the presupposition of Easter: they are the victories that follow on the primal victory. The resurrection is the "planting of the seed", and pentecost and the consummation follow as its growth and fruition.[48] The resurrection too, of course, has as its presupposition the obedient life and death, the judgment and reconciliation wrought out on the Cross. Easter is the revelation of the meaning of His life and death. It is His authentication, the beginning of the end of His concealment. The Messianic Secret is over and done with. The hidden Lord is unveiled, and His unveiling continues by the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church at pentecost and throughout the centuries of the Church's witness, and will culminate in His final appearing to every eye. Barth wants to say, therefore, that resurrection, pentecost and consummation are "one event" in three forms. They are all forms of the new coming of the One who came before.[49]

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[47] C.D., IV, 3, p. 295.
[48] Ibid., p. 306.
[49] Ibid., pp. 293f.

They are distinct from one another, and yet, as a unity, they are in sharp distinction to His hiddenness, His lowliness, His weakness, prior to the resurrection, for they are characterized by exaltation, glory and power.

It is the "middle form" of His coming again that interests us here: His parousia as the Holy Spirit, initiated at Pentecost. This is the important point: If Christ's coming again in power is one event, if eschatological time is one, and not divided, then, says Barth, there can be no vacuum in the midst of its occurrence.[50] Our relationship to Christ is not reduced to a mere looking back or looking forward. We are not left to ourselves. Nor can Christ be absorbed into the Christian kerygma, faith or community. It is His own prophetic office, His own self-declaration in the resurrection, in the outpouring of the Spirit, and finally in His appearing to every eye, that He makes Himself known to men as the one "True Witness" to Himself.[51] "He Himself is fully present and active," Barth declares. "He does not really need any representatives, any anointed or unanointed, sacramentally or existentially endowed vicars."[52] Jesus Christ is not replaced by Christianity. He is present in the time between the times by the Holy Spirit. This is perhaps one of the most important things Barth has to say, both to Roman Catholicism and the existentialism of Bultmann.

The Holy Spirit, then, is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the

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[50] C.D., IV, 3, p. 349.
[51] Ibid., p. 368f.
[52] Ibid., p. 350.

Spirit of the Word, of the Son,[53] "the power with which we have to do when we are concerned with the transition from Jesus Christ to other men, with a fellowship and unity between Him and them."[54] This is Barth's meaning when he speaks in I, 2, of the Spirit as the "Subjective Reality" and "Possibility" of revelation. The Spirit is the power by which God's Word, Jesus Christ, is alive amongst us as our contemporary, the power by Whom Jesus Christ gets Himself heard and believed in, creating the knowledge of God. Further discussion of this theme must now await Chapters Three and Four.

(c) The Spirit in the Trinity

Before we proceed, in the next chapter, to investigate our participation in Christ by the Spirit, we must first deal with one further aspect of the relation of Jesus Christ and the Spirit, that is, the eternal relation of the Son and the Spirit, together with the Father, in the Triune Being of God. The relation of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, combined with the relation of Jesus Christ to the Father, as seen in Christ Himself, afford us a profound, even intimate knowledge of God as He is in Himself. Karl Barth has dealt with this theme especially in Church Dogmatics, I, 1. His doctrine of the Trinity offers no startling new aspects that are not present in the Fathers or Reformers, and he constantly refers to his indebtedness to them. But unlike most theologians, Barth has

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[54] C.D., IV, 2, p. 330.

placed the doctrine of the Trinity at the head of his dogmatics, within the chapter entitled "The Revelation of God".[1]

Barth insists that the doctrine of the Trinity must have no other source than the Biblical revelation. He tells us that, although we have to approach traditional dogma with a certain prejudice in favour of its truth, with respect for its relative but not absolute authority, it must nevertheless be "proved" by Scripture.[2] He points to various Scripture passages that hint at the Trinity, e.g. Is. 61:1f., Mt. 28:19, Rom. 1:1-4, II Thess. 2:13, I Jn. 5:7, I Pet. 1:2, II Cor. 13:14, Jude 20-21, I Cor. 12:4, Eph. 4:4. These passages, of course, are far from stating the doctrine of the Trinity. He grants that the doctrine cannot itself be read anywhere in the Bible, but this is so of any dogmatic formulation. That is merely a reminder of the risk of all theology, and indeed of all Scripture exposition. Nevertheless, every dogma must be substantiated as a just interpretation of the Bible.[3]

Barth tells us that the statement "God reveals Himself as the Lord" is the root of the doctrine of the Trinity.[4] The Biblical concept of revelation implies the doctrine of the Trinity, for God in His revelation is God Himself. That is why revelation is a ground which has no higher or deeper ground above or behind it, an authority than which there is no higher authority possible. Its reality and truth do not depend upon a superior

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[1] C.D., I, 1, pp. 339f.
[2] Ibid., p. 356.
[3] Ibid., pp. 354-356, 359-360.
[4] Ibid., p. 353.

reality and truth and it stands in need of no legitimation from any such higher or deeper point of reference. God's revelation has its reality and truth ontically and noetically in itself.[5] All this is so simply because God in His revelation is God Himself.

"God reveals Himself through Himself," says Barth, for "God Himself is not only Himself but also His self-revelation."[6] According to the Bible's understanding of revelation, He is the "revealing God, and the event of revelation and its effect upon man."[7] It is for this reason that Barth puts the Trinity first. We cannot speak of revelation, or the knowledge of God, cannot do prolegomena, that is, account for theology's path to knowledge, without getting involved in the doctrine of the Trinity. This is because knowledge of God comes by way of God. "God's Word is identical with God Himself." Propositions about the Trinity are indirectly identical with propositions about revelation.[8] Barth quotes Harnack with approval: "Confession of Father, Son and Spirit is the unfolding of the belief that Jesus is the Christ."[9] In His revelation, God distinguishes Himself from Himself; He is God "a second time" in the form of something He is not.[10] He can do this because He is free, free to be God in more than one way. In Christ He is free to exist in the form of men among men. But it is not the form as such that re-

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[5] C.D., I, 1, p. 350. [6] Ibid., p. 343. [7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., p. 355. [9] Ibid., p. 361. [10] Ibid., p. 363.

veals, but God in the form. This is the point: "God assuming a form is not a medium or third thing between God and man,"[11] (Arianism) but God Himself. That is the significance of Incarnation for the doctrine of revelation. The Father, the Revealer is God. But the Revelation, Jesus Christ the Son, is also God. God does not touch us with a long stick. His very Being is amongst us and within, really within our very human nature. He is God in these two ways, as Revealer and as Revelation.

And He is God also in a third way which Barth calls "Revealedness". He is the power by which man is able to receive the revelation. Man is not predisposed to know God. In his sin he is predisposed to resist such knowledge. But at Pentecost, revelation "drops down vertically from heaven."[12] God achieves His goal, the enlightenment of man, by way of this third mode of His Being. It is the Spirit, ex Patre Filioque. He comes from the Father at Pentecost because of the reconciliation accomplished in the Son.[13] On the basis of the work of the Son, the Spirit is God's freedom to grant man the knowledge of God. And He is therefore man's freedom for such knowledge. Man's presence at God's revelation is not man's work but God's work.[14]

Now because the Spirit is ex Patre Filioque in God's operations ad extra, Barth argues that He is this also in the eternal

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[11] C.D., I, 1, p. 369.
[12] Ibid., p. 380.
[13] Ibid., p. 517.
[14] Ibid., p. 533.

Being of God. This is the fundamental principle on the basis of which true knowledge of God is possible at all: "What He is in revelation He is antecedently in Himself. And what He is antecedently in Himself He is in revelation. Right within the deepest depths of deity, as the final thing to be said of Him, God is God the Spirit as He is God the Father and God the Son."[15] Not only in His revelation, but in Himself, God is One-in-Three and Three-in-One.

Barth claims that such a thoroughgoing doctrine of the inner Triune Being of God is not in the least an offence against God's unity. On the contrary, it is absolutely the only way to preserve at the same time the unity of God along with the reality of revelation.[16] Revelation in Christ and monotheism are not to be understood as two different theoretical interests opposed to one another and then brought into an artificial agreement in the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather, anti-Trinitarianism always finds itself in the dilemma of denying either the unity or the revelation of God.

> According as it really asserts the unity of God, it must call revelation in question as the act of the real presence of the real God: the unity of God in which there are no distinct persons will make it impossible for it to take revelation seriously as the genuine presence of God in its manifest otherness, as compared with the invisible God who is Spirit. According as contrariwise... it is ready to assert revelation but without recognising the Son's and the Spirit's equality of nature with the Father in heaven, it will call the unity of God in question. It

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[15] C.D., I, 1, pp. 533-534.

[16] Ibid., p. 403f.

> will not, in fact, in its concept of revelation, be able to avoid foisting in a third thing which is not God, an hypostasis not divine... but half-divine, between man and God and making it the object of faith.[17]

One may deny the divinity of revelation, and think of Son and Spirit as exalted creatures used by God, but not God Himself, as Arius did. But this is to deny a real Incarnation, and furthermore, to raise the suspicion that the Spirit is perhaps a semi-divine authority alongside of God, a proposition incompatible with the unity of God.[18] Or one may be a modalist, (a Sabellian), and hold that the Son and Spirit are merely "phenomenal forms under which God's real single essence was concealed as something different and higher." If this were so, asks Barth, could revelation be believed in, with the thought in the background that in it we have to do not with God as He is, but only with a god as He appears to us. In this case, as in the case of Arianism, faith in revelation would be idolatry.[19] If God is really God Himself in His revelation, then He is God in three ways, in three modes of Being, Father, Son and Spirit, and yet He is one: One-in-Three and Three-in-One.[20]

Our special interest here is the Being of the eternal Spirit within the Holy Trinity. Barth tells us that the Holy Spirit does not first become Holy Spirit in the event of revelation, but the event of revelation is possible only because God is Spirit in Himself.[21] The Spirit, by whom we know God's Word, is,

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[17] C.D., I, 1, p. 404.
[18] Ibid., p. 405.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., pp. 400f.
[21] Ibid., p. 533.

like the Word, God Himself. He is the Lord. The Spirit, like the Son, is consubstantial with the Father (and the Son), but unlike the Son, the Spirit is not consubstantial with man. He is not at all part of the created order, not to be confused with the spirit of man. As true God, the Spirit is the Creator, together with the Father, (and the Son), and the Reconciler, as Spirit of the Father and the Son. Opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa.[22] No absolute boundaries can be drawn between the works of the three modes of the Divine Being, for God is One, and indivisible. They are with one another and in one another in their community of Being as well as in their works, (perichoresis).[23] The Spirit is not inferior to or subordinate to the Father and Son, but wholly and utterly He is the eternal God. He is non factus nec creatus; nor is He, like the Son, genitus, but procedens. As the Nicene Creed states it, He proceeds from the Father and the Son. We are tied to the rule, argues Barth, and the rule is fundamental, that pronouncements upon the reality of the divine modes of existence, "antecedently in themselves" cannot in content be any different from those that have to be made about their reality in revelation. But what we see and hear in revelation can really be said about God antecedently in Himself. The reality of God in His revelation is not to be bracketed with an "only", Barth tells us, as though somewhere behind His revelation there stood another reality of God, but the

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[22] C.D., I, 1, p. 540.

[23] Ibid., pp. 453-456.

reality of God which meets us in revelation is His reality in all the depths of eternity.[24] That means that if the work of the Spirit follows and depends on the work of the Son, so also the Being of the Spirit follows and depends upon the Being of the Son, as well as of the Father. Therefore Barth agrees with the statement in the Western creed, that the Spirit proceeds from Father and Son. To say that the Son is begotten by the Father and that the Spirit proceeds from Father and Son, is only to indicate a distinction, a difference between the two. The peculiarity of the procession of the Spirit as compared with the begetting of the Son may be indicated by the concept "breathing", spiratio, but, strictly speaking, merely indicated, says Barth. "For how is breathing to be distinguished from generation, if by both is to be indicated with equal unconditionality the eternal genesis of an eternal mode of God's existence?[25] Both spiratio Spiritus, and generatio Filii are but figures, attempts to express what man cannot express. "For that reason we are now embarrassed to know at what point, in order to realise what spiratio is, we can compare spiratio with generatio."[26] We cannot define Father, Son and Holy Spirit or delimit them from one another. We can only say that in revelation we are faced with Three, yet Three-in-One, who are reality antecedently in God's eternal Being.

Nevertheless, in Barth's view, if we can say ex Patre Fi-

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[24] C.D., I, 1, p. 548. [25] Ibid., p. 543. [26] Ibid., p. 544.

lioque at all, as we can on the basis of revelation, we can say that the Spirit is what the Father and the Son have in common. The Spirit belongs both to Father and Son. The *Filioque* is the expression of the knowledge of the communion between Father and Son, that is, that the Spirit is Love, which is the essence of their communion.[28] On the basis of this understanding we speak of the Father and Son "in the unity of the Holy Spirit", in the unity of the Love which God is, which ties the Father and Son together eternally.[29] The Spirit is the common factor, the communion, the "communityness" of Father and Son. The Spirit is the Love with which God loves Himself, as the Father loves the Son and as the Son loves the Father. The Spirit is the result of their common "breathing", *spiratio*. Barth thinks God's Love and God's Spirit are the same thing. The two equations, "God is Love", (I Jn. 4:8, 16) and "God is Spirit", (Jn. 4:24), says Barth, explain one another, for "to say 'love'... is to say 'Spirit'--the Spirit in whom God is wholly the Father of the Son and wholly the Son of the Father.... And to say 'Spirit'... is to say 'love'--the love which as and even before He loves us is the love in which the Father loves the Son and the Son the Father."[30]

But the Spirit is not only the unity in which God loves Himself; He is also the unity in which God knows Himself. In

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[28] *C.D.*, I, 1, p. 549.

[29] Barth recognizes his indebtedness especially to Augustine's *De Trinitate*, *C.D.*, I, 1, pp. 537, 538, 551, 560.

[30] *C.D.*, IV, 2, p. 757.

II, 1, Barth tells us that without God's eternal objectivity to Himself there could be no knowledge of God. Our knowledge is derived and secondary. God in Himself, without us, is knowable and known to Himself, for "the Father knows the Son and the Son the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit. This occurrence in God Himself is the essence and strength of our knowledge of God."[31] This means that the Being of God as Spirit, as the Love of the Father and Son, and as the unity, the common factor in God's knowledge of Himself, is the eternal ground of our knowledge of God. Because the God who is Spirit is the God who is Love, we, who are creatures, are given a share in God's self-knowledge--not as a necessity to God, but as pure grace. Therefore, says Barth,

> The Love which meets us in reconciliation and, looking backwards from that, in creation, is therefore and thereby Love, the highest law and ultimate reality, because God is Love antecedently in Himself.... Because God is Love antecedently in Himself, therefore love exists and holds good as the reality of God in the work of revelation and the work of creation.[32]

The Gospel of Love is eternally and powerfully founded upon the inner nature and Being of God as Spirit. The revelation in Christ through the Spirit grants us even this profound glimpse into the infinite depths of the Love of God. This is the knowledge of God that grasps not only our minds, but takes hold of our whole existence, to make us new men.

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[31] C.D., II, 1, p. 49.

[32] C.D., I, 1, p. 553.

CHAPTER THREE

The Holy Spirit and Man

Knowledge of God comes to us through His Word made flesh, which is made contemporary with us by the power of the Holy Spirit. On the basis of the reconciling work of Christ, the Spirit gives us new life, eschatological life, which fits us to know God in a relationship of obedience. In this chapter we must look more closely at what Barth terms "the subjective possibility of revelation", the derivative reconciling work of the Spirit which prepares man to hear the Word, and thus to know God.

The doctrines of man and of the Spirit are especially associated with one another. As Barth points out, man enters the Apostles' Creed only in the third article when it comes to speak of the Spirit:[1] "The Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." Knowledge of God is a possibility for men only in the "forgiveness of sins" which is realized in men subjectively by the power of the Spirit, for sin is the condition of man with which God has to deal if man is to know Him. Man must be restored to his proper nature, his perversion must be removed, in order for him to know God. Our first step here, then, must be a study of the true nature of man, and then of man's sin, in order then to understand the reconciling work of the Spirit.

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[1]Karl Barth, Credo, trans. J. S. McNab, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1936, p. 127.

(a) Real Man

What is to be said about man, the creature who comes to know God by way of the Word and Spirit? Just how does it lie within him to know his Creator? In Church Dogmatics, III, 2, Barth gives us a thorough treatment of "man as an object of theological knowledge."[1] The Christian must not attempt to understand man speculatively or introspectively apart from the Word of God. Nor can he be satisfied to describe merely the "phenomena" of the human, features of man that do not define his essence and which may be discovered quite legitimately by the human sciences,--biology, medicine, psychology, sociology, history, etc. Christian theological anthropology seeks to know man in his "inner reality and wholeness," and therefore in his relation to God. This has to be known on the basis of the Word of God, and therefore Biblically.

Now man viewed in the light of the Word of God is a sinner "who has covered his own creaturely being with shame."[2] How then is it possible to see beneath man's sin to reach a doctrine of his creaturely essence, of his proper human nature as such? Man has no power of vision to see through his perverted state to his true nature. The Word of God must tell him what he is, and does so in the Person of Jesus Christ. Barth tells us, "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

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[1] C.D., III, 2, pp. 19f. [2] Ibid., p. 27.

God."[3] Anthropology has to be founded upon Christology, because Jesus Christ is "real man". "Real man" is unperverted man, man without sin. Because sin does not belong to the nature of man as such, explains Barth, it is not part of the doctrine of creation, but rather of the doctrine of reconciliation.[4] If we want to see beneath man's sin to his true nature we must look at the real man Jesus.

What do we discover about man by looking at Jesus. We find first of all, according to Barth, that "to be man is to be with God."[5] Man derives from God. His being rests upon God's election and consists in hearing His Word. Man's being is therefore "summoned because chosen", it is "being claimed".[6] It is, more specifically, a "being in gratitude".[7] It is a "being in the act of response to God," and therefore has the character of a knowledge of God. Because the whole meaning of his existence lies in his responsibility before God, he must know God. Real man as such knows God, just because his being consists in hearing God's Word.

Barth continues to speak of the true nature of man when he deals with his relation to the fellowman. "We have to do with real man," he says, "when his existence takes place in this encounter, only in the form of man with his fellowman."[8] It is unfortunate, and a little confusing, that he does not discuss the relation to the fellowman under "real man", since the re-

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[3] C.D., III, 2, p. 41.
[4] Ibid., p. 34.
[5] Ibid., p. 135.
[6] Ibid., pp. 150-151.
[7] Ibid., p. 166.
[8] Ibid., p. 249.

lation to the fellowman is essential to man as such. And it is within this section on man with the fellowman, "The Basic Form of Humanity", that Barth comes to discuss the crucial concept of the imago Dei. Gen. 1:27 reads "God created man in his own image..., male and female created he them." He believes that it is in the relation of man with the fellowman, especially man with woman, that man images God. He thinks it not insignificant that v. 26 has God say "Let us create man." Not that the writer of Genesis knew about the Holy Trinity, but that he had some idea that the one God in His eternal Being is not solitary and alone, but in community.[9] In that man too is not alone, but "male and female", Adam and Eve, he is a "copy" of God. "He [God] is the original and source of every I and Thou.... And it is this relationship in the inner divine being which is repeated and reflected in God's eternal covenant with man as revealed and operative in time in the humanity of Jesus."[10] This means that the image too has to be understood Christologically. Jesus is "the man for other men." The humanity of Jesus the real man (the man for God) is the image of God.[11] The humanity of Jesus with and for the fellowman images the relationship of Father and Son in the unity of the Spirit. The similarity between God and man which is alluded to by the "image" passages is this similarity of two relationships:

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[9] C.D., III, 1, p. 186.

[10] C.D., III, 2, pp. 218-219.

[11] Ibid., p. 219.

$$\frac{\text{Man}}{\text{Fellowman}} : \frac{\text{Father}}{\text{Son}}$$

But the image of God in man has to do not only with his relationship to the fellowman, but also with his relationship to God:

> It is a question of the relationship within the being of God on the one side and between the being of God and that of man on the other. Between these two relationships as such--it is in this sense that the second is the image of the first--there is correspondence and similarity. There is an analogia relationis.[12]

This in fact is an analogy of proportionality with three terms, when the one above is included:

$$\frac{\text{Man}}{\text{Fellowman}} : \frac{\text{God}}{\text{Man}} : \frac{\text{Father}}{\text{Son}}$$

The relation of man with the fellowman (I and Thou) is analogous to the relation of Father and Son in the Trinity (as seen in the Incarnate Son Jesus), and this in turn is analogous to the relation of God and man. Man images God therefore in two ways. First, as the creaturely "thou" he responds in loving gratitude to his Creator, the eternal "Thou", even as the only-begotten Son answers his Father's Love with responsive obedient Love. Secondly, man as "thou" lives in loving relationship with his fellowman, his fellow "thou", (especially woman), who responds to him by returning his love. Hence man's being as the image of God is his "being in the act of response to God," and being "in the form of man with his fellowman." Man's essential being, then, *is* his imaging of God. To be man *is* to image God. That is why Barth

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[12] *C.D.*, III, 2, p. 220.

has to say, in III, 1 and III, 2, that the image of God remains in man despite sin.[13] "The sin of man," he tells us, "cannot be

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[13] Barth admitted this as early as 1934 in his No! Answer to Emil Brunner, (in Natural Theology, trans. P. Fraenkel, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1946). Brunner had argued, in Nature and Grace, (op. cit.), that a formal imago Dei remained in man despite sin, and that this was the point of contact for the Word of God. Man remains man, a personal subject, responsible before God. Though materially the imago is completely lost, man is a sinner through and through and there is nothing in him which is not defiled by sin, (pp. 23-24). "No one who agrees," says Brunner, "that only human subjects but not stocks and stones can receive the Word of God and the Holy Spirit can deny that there is such a thing as a point of contact for the divine grace of redemption," (p. 31). As we shall see, Barth says very similar things in C.D., III, 1 and III, 2. Brunner, in 1950, wrote an article entitled "The New Barth", (in Theologische Zeitschrift, May 1950, trans. J. C. Campbell, in Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. IV, (1951), pp. 123-135), rejoicing that his old opponent now agreed with his statements of 1934 about the imago Dei. It is not as simple as that however, (and Barth can perhaps be taken to task for not making it simpler). Even in his No! Barth admitted the so-called "formal" imago to Brunner. He wrote: "In this formal sense the original image of God in man is not destroyed. Indeed not, we may well say. Even as a sinner man is man and not a tortoise," (p. 79). Also: "If we are prepared to call the fact that man is man and not a cat the 'point of contact,' 'the objective possibility of revelation,' then all objection to these concepts is nonsensical. For this truth is incontrovertible," (p. 88). Barth does not disagree with Brunner's formal imago, and in a sense he does not even disagree with the "point of contact", but he does object to what Brunner does with it to develop a natural theology which recognizes a second source of the knowledge of God, a double revelation, (N.B. Brunner, pp. 26-27). He finds Brunner attempting to build theology upon a natural knowledge, even upon pagan religion, and asks polemically, "Is it his opinion that idolatry is but a somewhat imperfect preparatory stage of the service of the true God?" (p. 82). Barth thinks Brunner's imago is not in fact merely formal, but very material, (pp. 88-89). It is only regrettable that Barth's own position, insofar as it is in agreement with Brunner's does not come out clearly in his No!. It remains very ambiguous until C.D., Vol. III, and there he does not take pains to show how he still differs from Brunner's Nature and Grace. Consequently the agreement of his positions in 1934 and 1950 is discernable only by very arduous searching.

a creative act, an act of primary significance."[14] Man remains man even as a sinner, and so also remains God's image.

But we must take care to see exactly in what sense Barth means this, for it has great implications for the doctrine of knowledge. He offers a remarkable discussion of the image in a long footnote in III, 1.[15] His first main point, which he argues in great linguistic detail, is that the divine likeness is not a possession of man which he himself can pass on to future generations. The image is rather "the hope which accompanies and precedes the history of Israel."[16] The image is not a static fact about man, a state that belongs to him, but pertains to him dynamically as a relation. Barth stresses this especially in The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life:

> Man's being in the image of God only becomes actual fact when the Holy Ghost comes on the spot on man's behalf. This likeness to God is, therefore, not and will not be, a property of the human spirit created, but it is and remains the free work of the Creator upon His creature....[17]

(13 cont.) No doubt this is partly because of the historical situation of the German Church in 1934. Barth claims, (pp. 72, 84, 90) that Brunner's Nature and Grace gave encouragement to those in the Church who were willing to compromise with the "German Christians" who found God revealing Himself not only in Christ but also in the history of the German people, especially in the Nazi movement. The ambiguity of Barth's position concerning the doctrine of man in those years is no doubt partly due to his anxiety to add absolutely no fuel, even by way of misunderstanding, to the "German Christian" fire.

[14] C.D., III, 2, p. 33.

[15] C.D., III, 1, pp. 197-206.

[16] Ibid., p. 201.

[17] Karl Barth, The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, trans. R. B. Hoyle, Frederick Muller Ltd., London, 1938, p. 9.

He continues, further on, "Grace is ever and in all relations God's deed and act, taking place in this and that moment of time in which God wills to be gracious to us."[18]

Barth has similar things to say in III, 2 when he writes about the spirit of man. Man's very existence, he tells us, is never a potency conceded to him by God, nor a kind of fixed relation of God to him.[19] God holds man in existence and life from moment to moment by breathing His creative Spirit into him. "Man is as he has spirit," he tells us. But we cannot say that he is spirit, for "in the Bible spirit denotes what God Himself is and does for man, man himself being identified with the fact that he is soul (of his body)."[20] Spirit, then, is something that comes to man, not something essentially his own, "something that totally limits his constitution and thus totally determines it."[21] It is God's free Spirit, the Holy Spirit the Creator, in dynamic relation to man. The spirit of man (the presence of God to him) constitutes the unity, the oneness of man's being as body and soul and so determines him as a unified subject. This, says Barth, is "one of the natural points of contact for the covenant of grace. Indeed it is the basic one."[22] That man is this "inwardly united and self-enclosed subject"[23] is, (I assume Barth would make this connection) part of what it means to be in God's image. And this is something given to man dynamically "in this and that moment of time." Adam is upheld as this unified, person-

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[18] The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, p. 17.

[19] C.D., III, 2, p. 348. [20] Ibid., p. 354. [21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 371. [23] Ibid.

al subject, as one into whom God has breathed His Spirit of life, and as imago Dei, even in his sin.

But Barth seems to be saying that this situation changes with the coming of Christ into our human nature. Because Christ Himself is the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ , (II Cor. 4:4, Col. 1:15), the question of the divine likeness "is not just a matter of the divine control of man and therefore of the divine promise and pledge, but also passes into man's possession and becomes a human reality."[24] Christ is Himself the Image of God, and from this standpoint the same can be said of every man.[25] This is because the eternal Image (the Son), who is before all things, (Col. 1:15-17), assumes mankind into His own God-likeness by way of the hypostatic union. On the basis of this union of God and man in Christ man is united to God,[26] and becomes the image of God.

The created being of man in the image, (Gen. 1:26f) is not to be seen by any means as unrelated, however, to the passages that identify Christ as the image, (II Cor. 4:4, Col. 1:15). Nor does he believe Christ is only the renewed image after the destruction of the old. As He is "the first born of every creature," Barth draws the conclusion that "Adam is already Jesus and Jesus is already Adam.... In this way Paul regarded the man Jesus as the real image of God and therefore as the real man cre-

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[24] C.D., III, 1, p. 203. [25] Ibid.

[26] N.B. a discussion of this by T. F. Torrance, "The Word of God and the Nature of Man," in Reformation Old and New, ed. F. W. Camfield, London, Lutterworth Press, 1947, pp. 138-139.

ated by God."[27]

This is an extraordinarily difficult thing to understand. Does Barth mean that Jesus is the first Adam as well as the second? Is man only "real man" when he is God-man? Who is the unfallen Adam of Genesis 1 and 2, the good creature of God who becomes, but is not created, a sinner? Is he not real man as God intended him to be? What Barth has said of man in Church Dogmatics, II, 2, in the doctrine of election, offers a helpful clue to his meaning.

Barth indicates his preference for supra- over infralapsarianism, (when it is purified of its predestinationism and Calvinist notion of the decretum absolutum). He affirms the basic insight that in the Elect, God negated in advance the rule of evil.[28] He rejects the infralapsarian view of an independent realm of creation and providence over and above that of redemption.[29] That is to see man as originally apart from Christ and Christ as necessary only as an after-thought to repair the damage of the Fall. The will of God for man is thereby seen as above or apart from his eternal predestination, his eternal election in the One Elect, Jesus. This, Barth thinks, opens the way to natural theology, wherein man, quite apart from his relation to the God-man, can be related to, and have knowledge of, God. But Barth wants to say that even in his original creation man

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[27] C.D., III, 1, p. 203.

[28] C.D., II, 2, p. 142.

[29] Ibid., p. 137.

is proleptically related to Christ, the image. Adam is a τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, a type of the One to come, a figure of Christ, (Rom. 5:14). Man's essential and original nature is to found not in Adam, Barth tells us in Christ and Adam, but in Christ.[30] Adam's nature is a "provisional copy" of the true nature of man in Christ.[31] But how can this be so, we must ask, unless man was created for sin and redemption? Can it be true that man has his true created being in the Incarnation of the Son of God? Does he not have only his redeemed nature in Him? Barth is insisting that creation has to be understood from Christ. God is not taken by surprise by the Fall of man. He prepares a good creation which He foreknows will require redemption.[32] The creation is for that reason created in and for Jesus Christ, the eternal Word who is with God from all eternity, (Jn. 1:1f), who is "before all things," and "in whom all things consist," (Col. 1:17).[33] In this sense man who will have to be redeemed is created as a "provisional copy" of the One to come.

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[30] Karl Barth, Christ and Adam, trans. T. A. Smail, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1956, p. 6.

[31] Ibid., p. 10.

[32] N.B. some of Barth's statements about evil, and the relation of Creation and Redemption: "Man is quite different from God. He is at least challenged and not sovereign like God. And because of this, man stands on the frontier of that which is impossible," (II, 2, p. 163); "Man was foreordained to danger and trouble.... The danger-point of man's susceptibility to temptation and the zero-point of his fall, were thus included in the divine decree," (p. 169); "There was never a golden age. There is no point in looking back to one. The first man was immediately the first sinner," (IV, 1, p. 508); "Created being as such needs salvation," (IV, 1, p. 8).

[33] C.D., II, 2, pp. 94-99.

In this One, Jesus Christ, men have both their created and redeemed being. That is why Jesus has to be identified not only as second Adam, but as first Adam too.[34]

Because even sinful man has his being in Christ, the true Adam, he remains in God's image by God's continued grace and mercy toward him. But it is a "provisional" image. Only when he is redeemed by Christ and lives in faith by the Holy Spirit does he begin to live as "real man" in Christ. Barth tells us, "It is not in an exclusive but an inclusive sense that Paul conceives the divine likeness of man, of the one man Jesus."[35] Adam is God's image only with the woman (Gen. 1:27); so also Christ is the image only with the Body of which He is Head. Subjectively, this happens only to those in the Church, i.e., those who are "in Christ" by faith. We are "changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord," (II Cor. 3:18). Nevertheless, man generally has his being in Christ, for all men are ontologically related to Him, both in creation and in reconciliation. Therefore man generally images God:

> Man generally, the man with the fellowman, has indeed a part in the divine likeness of the man Jesus, the man for the fellowman. As man generally is modelled on the man Jesus and his being for others, and as the man Jesus is modelled on God, it has to be said of man generally that he is created in the image of God.[36]

As we saw above, however, the image has to do not only with the relation of man to the fellowman, but also with the

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[34] C.D., III, 1, p. 203. [35] Ibid., p. 204.
[36] C.D., III, 2, pp. 323-324.

relation to and knowledge of God.[37] If man generally is the image of God, then he is somehow in relation to God. As we shall discuss in the next section, man has turned away from this relation, has refused to live as a "being in the act of response to God". Nevertheless, this continues to be his true reality, though impossibly he repudiates it. In the history of the covenant with Israel we see God calling man back to Himself, indeed finally turning man around again to confront Him as Lord and Creator. In this action He refuses man's refusal. He insists that man be His image. He insists that man be what he really is. Man is thus not permitted to make himself something other than what God made him to be. Barth's statements (wherein he sounds like Brunner) about man as "capable" of entering into covenant with God, as having "natural fellowship" with God[38] have their foundation in his understanding of Christ as primal man, the original image. The true, elect being of man in Christ lies back behind the redeeming work of the Spirit as man's possibility of knowing God, as a "point of contact".[39] Yes, man is capable of knowing God, and his continuing to be man, and the image of God, is his "point of contact". But this does not imply a departure from *sola gratia* or *sola fides*, nor a natural theology and a second source of revelation beside Christ.[40] Man knows God only by His Word, and he is made

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[37] Cf. this essay, p. 95.

[38] *C.D.*, III, 1, p. 185.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 371.

[40] It does imply this for Brunner. Cf. *Nature and Grace*, pp. 26-27.

ready for it by the Holy Spirit. But men, and not sticks and stones, are recipients of this grace, because men are created (also by grace) "capable" of action and responsibility to God, and "capable" of entering into the covenant relationship.

(b) The Sin of Man

We have already said a good deal about man's sin in the previous section on real man, in order to see in what sense sinful man remains man. Now we must consider what sin is and what it does to man, especially, what it does to his knowledge of God, and how it relates to his reception of revelation. We find Barth discussing this mainly in The Doctrine of Reconciliation, Church Dogmatics, Volume Four.

The first point is that the doctrine of sin too is Christologically determined. We have to understand the sin of man in the light of Christ. Barth tells us that in the knowledge of sin we have to do with a specific variation of the knowledge of God.[1] We do not merely deduce it from the general notion of a perfect and pure God in any abstract sense, but specifically from the revelation of God in Christ.[2] The sin of man is seen properly only in the light of grace. Otherwise man can know that he is imperfect and deficient; he can even be radically pessimistic about himself;[3] but apart from Christ he cannot know his deficiency as sin, that is, he cannot know that he is not only imperfect,

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[1] C.D., IV, 1, p. 359. [2] Ibid., p. 363.

[3] When he discusses "The Knowledge of Nothingness," (The Doctrine of Creation, pt. 3, in Church Dogmatics, Vol. III, pt. 3, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1960), Barth points out the radically pessimistic view of man found in Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre, (pp. 334f).

but finally and totally guilty.[4] Man is corrupt even in his self-understanding,[5] even in his knowledge of his corruption. Knowledge of sin cannot therefore be an autonomous perception prior to the knowledge of Christ, perhaps preparatory to repentance and faith in Him, for, Barth explains:

> the God against whom the man of sin contends has judged this man, and therefore myself as this man, in the self-offering and death of Jesus Christ His own Son, putting him to death, and destroying him.[6]

The utter lostness of man without Christ as his Saviour is revealed in the Cross. The utter condemnation, and therefore the utter guilt of man, is seen there and nowhere else. At Calvary sinful man is sentenced by God's wrathful No, and is extinguished, destroyed. God can make no compromise, no "pact of non-aggression" with the man of sin.[7] And this we are given to see clearly in the Cross. God "has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin," (II Cor. 5:21), and it is in the condemnation that falls upon Him, for us, that we see and know our sin.

Barth describes sin as pride (IV, 1), sloth (IV, 2) and falsehood (IV, 3). Pride is the desire of man not to be man, the creature, but to be God, (Gen. 3:5), whereas real man, Jesus Christ, who is God Himself made flesh, wills to be man, subject to God.[8] It is the grasping of man to be the Lord, when he is

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[4] C.D., IV, 1, p. 360.
[5] C.D., IV, 2, p. 379.
[6] C.D., IV, 1, p. 390.
[7] C.D., IV, 2, p. 400.
[8] C.D., IV, 1, p. 418.

properly the servant.[9] Pride is man's setting himself up as his own judge, but real man lets himself be judged in our place.[10] And it is man's desire to be his own help, to have the knowledge of good and evil, to enter on his own fight against nothingness, whereas Jesus Christ gave Himself to the depth of the most utter helplessness.[11] But sin is not only this Promethian, heroic attempt of man to be as God; it has also its "ordinary, trivial and mediocre" side, in which, says Barth, man is merely "banal and ugly and loathsome." In this form too sin is essentially pride, unbelief.[12] It is man who in his laziness will not respond to God, who wants to be free of Him, who is content to be without God. Slothful man is the "stupid fool" who refuses to live as the creature in loving response to his Maker. Moreover, he is the man who does not want to live in loving relationship with his fellowman, who refuses to be "man with and for the fellowman."[13] Proud, slothful, sinful man is not real man. He is not his true self. He is not what he ought to be. He lives in contradiction to what he is: man in response to God and man with his fellowman. That is why Barth speaks of sin as "not a possibility but an ontological impossibility for man".[14] Man is not created with a choice between good and evil; that choice is grasped at by man, and that very act is his fall. Man is created with a determination for God and the neighbour. His freedom is not given him by

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[9] C.D., IV, 1, pp. 432f.
[10] Ibid., pp. 445f.
[11] Ibid., pp. 458f.
[12] Ibid., pp. 404-405.
[13] Ibid., pp. 432f.
[14] C.D., III, 2, p. 136.

God as the possibility of choosing between two different ways of being man; rather when he sins he contradicts his true reality and renounces his freedom.[15] That is why sin belongs not to the doctrine of man and creation but to the doctrine of reconciliation.

We have already seen that man does not cease to be man when he sins, for sin is not a creative act that can overrule God's creation and continued preservation of man as man. He continues to live with the fellowman, though not for him; he continues to live under God, though not in obedience to Him. The being of man as God's image is therefore very seriously damaged. In a sense man does not image God at all, for his back is turned in the face of his Maker and his brother. In a sense the analogia relationis ceases to apply, because that analogy consists in a relationship of self-giving love and response, which is not to be found in sinful man. Thus we find Barth writing in Church Dogmatics, I, 1 much as the reformers did about the total destruction of the image.[16] The image of God as a point of con-

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[15] C.D., III, 2, p. 197.

[16] According to John Calvin, man as created by God reflects, as in a mirror, the glory of God, and in this sense, images God. Barth, as far as I know, does not speak of it in this way, though it is not in disagreement with his concept of the similarity of God and man by way of an analogy of relation. The image, for Calvin, is not static, but dynamic. It reflects by way of active obedience. It is as man answers God's gracious Word to him by faith and love that he bears the image of God, (cf. T. F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man, London, Lutterworth Press, 1949, pp. 35f). When man no longer images God, this means that he no longer answers God's Word by obedient faith and love. God can no longer behold Himself in man, for man is no longer like Him.

tact for man's knowledge of God is "not only, with the exception of some remnants ruined, but annihilated."[17] What he says in Volume III does not really contradict this, as we shall see if we read him very carefully. What he is saying in I, 1 (and also in his No! to Brunner), is that man's capacity for God is totally, not just partly destroyed by sin, (which is a total and not partial perversion of his true nature). Man does not still answer God's Word "in part", as it were. His back is entirely turned away from God, even and especially in religion.[18]

(16 cont.) "Everything in man, the understanding and will, the soul and body, is polluted and engrossed by concupiscence; or, to put it more briefly, man is of himself nothing else but concupiscence," (Instit. II, i, viii). In his commentary on Genesis 1:26 (Commentaries, W.B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, p. 95), Calvin writes, "Although some obscure lineaments of that image are found remaining in us; yet they are so vitiated and maimed that they may truly be said to be destroyed." Again, commenting on Gen. 3:1, (p. 139): "Man, after he has been deceived by Satan... became entirely changed and so degenerate that the image of God in which he had been formed was obliterated." But he seems to contradict this in Instit. III, iii, ix, where he says that the image "was defaced and almost obliterated." Torrance points out, (p. 89f), that there is a distinction in Calvin between natural and spiritual gifts. The spiritual gifts are destroyed, but the natural gifts are merely corrupted. In Instit. II, ii, xvii, Calvin writes, "We perceive some remaining marks of the image which distinguish the human race in general from all other creatures." Man remains rational, maintains his sense of right and wrong, etc. Thus he speaks of a "remnant" or "relic" of the image, because of which it is forbidden to kill a man, (Commentary on Genesis 9:6, p. 295). Barth too insists that sinful man maintains his humanity and the use of all the faculties that God has given him, (C.D., IV, 1, p. 492). But he himself prefers not to use the terms "relic" or "remnant": "We are confronted by a contradiction in which there are no relics on either side, because it is a contradiction that does not consist merely in that of two quantities but of two qualitative determinations of the one individual being of man," (IV, 1, p. 494). Barth's doctrine of the relation of the image to sin seems to be essentially in agreement with Calvin's.

[17] C.D., I, 1, p. 273.

[18] C.D., I, 2, pp. 303f.

His turning fully toward God so that God may again see Himself in man as in a mirror, (as Calvin puts it) is not accomplished partly by man and partly by God, but only in Christ. It is not partly accomplished by something good remaining in man. True enough, man remains man and only because he is man is he able so to be turned around, converted, to God and by God. God does not so reconcile sticks and stones to Himself, for they they were not originally created to image Him as man was. This is what Barth calls "obvious" in his No! to Brunner,[19] and which he eloquently develops himself in Volume III. But what Barth is insisting upon here in I, 1 is that man has absolutely nothing in him which co-operates with God in his salvation. In this sense, the image is totally annihilated. It is annihilated so far as this function is concerned. Note that Barth says in I, 1:

> What is preserved of the image of God even in sinful man is recta natura, to which as such a rectitudo cannot be ascribed, even potentialiter. Man's capacity for God, however it may be with his humanity and personality, has really been lost. We cannot therefore see that at this point there comes into view a common basis for discussion for philosophical and theological anthropology.[20]

Man will not because he cannot, and cannot because he will not, know God except by the miracle of the work of Christ and the Spirit. His incapacity for God, the result of sin, is total. Barth's statements about man's capacity for God in Volume III are not in

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[19] No! Answer to Emil Brunner, p. 80.

[20] C.D., I, 1, p. 273.

contradiction to the statement quoted above. Once again, however, one suspects that his position could have been more obvious and more easily understood in both Volumes I and III. It is clear enough in "The New Barth" that Brunner himself has been permitted to miss the point.[21]

Sinful man, then, being turned away from God, does not know God. He refuses to know Him. In his "puerility, his senility, his mediocrity"[22] he evades the knowledge of God. He evades his responsibility as one created as a "being in response to God," and a being with the fellowman. He lives in enmity to God, who can only be known in a relationship of peace. But this deliberate not knowing of God is not utter ignorance. As we saw when we looked at Barth's discussion of religion and Romans 1:18f,[23] man, even in his ignorance, ought to know God, and in a sense does know Him, even while rejecting such knowledge. Sinful man "knows" God, in inverted commas, but this knowledge suffices only to condemn him. Barth quotes Calvin's Commentary on John 3:6: "The Knowledge of God which now remains to man is nothing other than the terrible source of all idolatry and superstition."[24] The "seed of religion", man's memory, shall we say, of his true nature in relation to the true God, expresses itself only in disobedience to the first commandment: he makes his own gods and becomes a worshipper of idols, which is essentially a proud adoration of himself. A return to the true knowledge of the true God re-

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[21] Cf. this essay, p. 96.

[22] C.D., IV, 2, p. 410.

[23] Cf. this essay, pp. 50f.

[24] No! Answer to Emil Brunner, p. 107.

quires a renewal of the mind, (Eph. 4:23, Rom. 12:2), which is a miracle of God's doing. It can occur only on the basis of the reconciling work of Christ and, therefore, by the reconciling work of the Holy Spirit.

But Christians have no cause to be proud of their knowledge of God over against the ignorance of the Gentiles. Barth makes this especially clear in his discussion of sin as falsehood in IV, 3. Sinful man's refusal to know God as he should becomes especially clear when he is confronted with Jesus Christ. If pride incurs the fall of man, (IV, 1), and sloth the misery of man, (IV, 2), falsehood brings upon him God's condemnation, (IV, 3). The falsehood of man is the untruth of man in relation to the truth of Jesus Christ, the True Witness, encountering him. It is the movement of evasion which occurs in the Christian age, the age of the Holy Spirit.[25] It is the rejection of God's grace in Jesus Christ, the refusal to know God, even by revelation. At its cleverest, the falsehood of man does not oppose, persecute, or even ignore the Truth, but pretends to embrace it. It is the specifically Christian form of sin. Barth describes it humorously, but penetratingly:

> He sets up a theoretical and practical system of truth. He forms parties in favour of truth. He celebrates days and even whole weeks of truth. He organises formal campaigns for truth. He is so active in the cause of truth that compared with him Jesus Christ the true Witness seems to be only a waif and bungler who must surely be glad that He has found a patron and advocate to support Him so skilfully and powerfully.... Surely it is a masterly way of escape...,

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[25] C.D., IV, 3, pp. 434-435.

> changing or transposing it into a translation of his own, into an improved edition, in which it looks most deceptively like itself and yet by a hardly noticeable alteration of key and accent and origin and goal it is no longer itself, but has become the truth which is mastered by him, being given a pretty but very effective muzzle so that it can give a muffled bark but can no longer bite.[26]

The "true and succulent lie" always has about it a scent of the truth, and thus appears to be earnest, respectable, devout and Christian.[27] The painful scandal that men try to evade in their falsehood, Barth writes, is the identity between the man Jesus Christ and the Truth, for in Him the Truth attacks the man of sin in his pride and sloth.[28] What the sinful man does at his most "mature and dangerous" is not to become an atheist, but to set up a substitute God before whom he bows with reverence and humility.[29]

Such falsehood is sinful man's only recourse in the face of the power of the Holy Spirit, by which God sovereignly grasps man to Himself. But when man resorts to falsehood in face of the power of the Truth, he comes under the threat of condemnation, for in refusing the Word of Truth he refuses his pardon. He denies free grace; he denies Jesus Christ as the Mediator between God and man, and therefore stands under the danger of damnation.[30] The man of falsehood thus "exists in a subjective reality alien to and contradicting his objective reality." To be damned, says Barth, is to be committed to an eternity in

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[26] C.D., IV, 3, p. 436. [27] Ibid., pp. 437-438. [28] Ibid., p. 441.
[29] Ibid., p. 450. [30] Ibid., p. 465.

which we are rejected by God and therefore lost. Such a rejection of Jesus Christ is, of course, what the New Testament refers to as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, (Mt. 12:31, Mk. 3:29, Lk. 12:10). To reject the work of the Holy Spirit in this present time is to reject God, who acts and speaks in the Son by the Holy Spirit. "Hence the famous hard saying in Mt. 12:31 about the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost which cannot be forgiven because it denies the presence of God as the source of a life of forgiveness."[31] But Barth wants to say that the falsehood of man does not have the last word against the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ has accomplished the reconciliation of the world to God, and, declares Barth, "nothing can undo or reverse this free act of the free grace of the free God."[32] Moreover, he adds:

> When talking of the falsehood of man which carries with it his condemnation, and first his existence under the threat of condemnation, we have always been careful to speak only of man's attempt to change the truth into untruth. That man wants to do this; that he tries to do it; that this sin is the culmination of his sin in its specifically Christian form.... But, when we really consider the matter, it is even more obvious that, although his attempt is resolved, planned and taken in hand, it can never succeed or reach its goal.... Yet he cannot accomplish the one thing which he really has in view. He cannot change the truth into untruth. He cannot dissolve the truth or cause it to disappear into untruth.... Nor can it expel even man himself from the world and therefore from the sphere of truth.[33]

Toward the end of our discussion of the Spirit as Reconciler we shall have to consider Barth's approach to universalism: whether

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[31] C.D., IV, 3, p. 358. [32] Ibid., p. 462.
[33] Ibid., p. 474.

finally all men will be turned by God's grace to the saving knowledge of God.

(c) The Spirit the Reconciler

The Holy Spirit is God with us, enabling us to hear His Word, and thus to know and obey Him. This means that for us who are sinners, the Spirit is our Reconciler, placing us subjectively within the reconciliation objectively accomplished in Christ, and therefore within real man's knowledge of God.

We find Karl Barth discussing this especially in Church Dogmatics, I, 2 and IV, 2. In the former volume the Spirit is considered as "The Subjective Reality" and "The Subjective Possibility of Revelation". The reality is dealt with before the possibility because to discuss the latter first would be to lay down conditions which we, a priori, considered necessary if God were to speak to us.[1] The reality of revelation cannot be called in question by theology, however, for to do so is, ipso facto, to deny it. The a posteriori principle holds in the discussion of the subjective, as of the objective:[2] We do in fact know God in Christ by the power of the Spirit. Nor can this second, "subjective" moment in our coming to knowledge be subordinated to the first, objective moment, for that, says Barth, would call in question the homoousia of the Spirit compared with the Father and the Son.[3] We are totally dependent upon the Spirit as we are

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[1] C.D., I, 2, p. 205.
[2] Cf. this essay, 1(a).
[3] C.D., I, 2, p. 208.

upon the Word. But the Spirit is the Spirit of the Word,[4] and in this sense follows it. The Spirit does not act independently of the Word; indeed His work is precisely to effect the hearing of that Word.[5] This is so both epistemologically and soteriologically, these being inseparable. The Spirit is the cutting edge of the Word, the power of the Word to penetrate our minds, and is therefore, epistemologically considered, the potestas of the object to declare itself to our minds.[6] But this very penetration of our minds is soteriological; it is a reconciling, renewing action, which creates in us obedience which is the knowledge of God.[7]

As we saw in Chapter One, God's revealing Word comes to us in a veiled, worldly form,[8] a worldliness so thorough that we are able to put Christ to death without recognizing Him. How then is he ever recognized by anyone? The fact is that some do recognize Him. The disciple Peter knows Him when he confesses, "Thou art the Christ." Not flesh and blood, but the Father revealed this to him, (Mk. 8:29-30). So also in the Gospel of John: "The Father that sent me bears witness to me," (Jn. 8:18). But the Spirit also is said to reveal Him: "When He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me,

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[4] C.D., I, 2, p. 248. [5] Cf. this essay, 2(b).
[6] C.D., I, 2, p. 244; IV, 3, pp. 528-529. [7] C.D., II, 1, p. 26.
[8] C.D., I, 2, pp. 223f.

for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you," (Jn. 16:13-15). And Paul says that no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit, (I Cor. 12:3). There is no contradiction here, for the Father sends the Spirit to bear witness to the Son, (Jn. 13:26). God, in the mode of the Spirit, reveals Christ to us. Thus Barth tells us: "Subjective revelation can consist only in the fact that objective revelation... comes to man, and is recognized by man.... The work of the Holy Spirit is that our blind eyes are opened."[9]

But why are our eyes blind? Is it because of our creatureliness as such or is it only because of sin? Presumably, even if we were without sin, if we were "real men", God would be the Lord of our knowledge of Him, and therefore would be known only as He gave Himself to be known by His Word and Spirit, (I Cor. 2:11f). The life of "real man" consists in hearing and responding to God's Word and in knowing God only in that way.[10] But because we are sinners God's Word is a reconciling Word and His Spirit a reconciling Spirit.

This reconciling work of the Spirit is a work of God alone. The opening of our eyes to see and our ears to hear is sola gratia, even as the work of God in Christ is sola gratia. In The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, Barth tells us that our sin is not seen in all its depth until it is seen as hostility to grace.

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[9] C.D., I, 2, p. 239.

[10] Cf. this essay, p. 93.

We resist not only the grace of creation, but also the grace of revelation and reconciliation. It is the power of the Spirit that is strong enough even to conquer enmity towards itself.[11] As we saw in his discussion of sin as falsehood in IV, 3: we do not want to be restored to the life of real men, and refuse to know God. We hide from Him. We do not search for God; we flee from Him. He, the Spirit, searches for us.

That is why there can be no subtle Pelagianism in our doctrine of the Holy Spirit, wherein man's free will is seen as the pivot on which our relation to God turns.[12] Barth accuses the great anti-Pelagian himself, Augustine of Hippo, of doing precisely this, thereby exalting synergism "in order to set it right away in the front line and ultimately in power," so that Augustinianism in the doctrine of grace is "directly poison and corruption to the Church."[13] Neo-Protestantism, Barth claims, uses a variety of this Augustinian doctrine, wherein man's reconciliation with God is ex utroque fit id est et voluntate hominis et misericordia Dei,[14] or, as Troeltsch expressed the same idea, "It is divine gift and man's creative action combined in one."[15] Pelagianism is thus simply transferred from the doctrine of the work of Christ to the doctrine of the work of the Spirit. This means that, although he taught justification by faith, and good

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[11] The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, p. 29.

[12] Ibid., p. 30.

[13] Ibid., pp. 34-35.

[14] Augustine, Enchir. 32, quoted, Ibid., p. 34.

[15] Troeltsch, Glaubenslehre, quoted, Ibid.

works as the gift of God, Augustine, according to Barth, sought justification in the actuality of the new obedience. Salvation comes by our actually becoming obedient, with God's help,[16] (though he recognized the need for continuing forgiveness).[17] The totus peccator diminishes, and the Christian progresses toward righteousness with the help of the Spirit. This, says Barth, is to make justification pass into sanctification.[18]

But we are faced with a very great problem indeed if simul peccator et justus (from Luther) means that there is no growth in obedience, no actualization of sanctification in the Christian's life. If this were so, then, on Barth's premisses, there could be no knowledge of God, this being inseparable from, indeed identical with, the actual obedience of faith. Faith without works is dead, (Jas. 2:20), and so also is the knowledge of God. How then does Barth understand the relation of justification and sanctification?

In IV, 2, Barth defines justification in terms of the humiliation of God, who turns toward sinful man, saying "I will be your God"; and he defines sanctification in terms of the exaltation of man as God turns man to Himself, saying "You shall be my people."[19] Note that justification is dealt with mainly in IV, 1

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[16]Augustine wrote in De Spir. et lit., 29, 50: "By Him who gives inward growth each one can work righteousness," and in Enchir. 81, 106: "So that the will itself is prepared by the Lord, by which all other rewards of God are received which lead us on to the eternal reward," etc., quoted, The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, p. 31.

[17]Ibid., p. 32.

[18]Ibid., p. 31.

[19]C.D., IV, 2, p. 499.

where Christ is spoken of as Son of God, and the Church as the Body of Christ; and sanctification is dealt with mainly in IV, 2, where Christ is spoken of as Son of Man, and the Church as the spiritual community. In Barth's mind, then, justification and the work of Christ are especially associated with the doctrine of God, and God's action on behalf of man; and sanctification and the work of the Spirit are especially associated with the doctrine of man, and man's turning toward God, in Christ. Christ is God's freedom for man, and the Spirit is man's freedom for God.[20] Of course justification occurs also through the obedient Son of Man Jesus, and sanctification occurs through Jesus the powerful Son of God. But sanctification, more than justification, has to do with man and his response to God; it has to do with man's holiness, as it follows upon the revelation of God's holiness. To say that man is made holy does not, however, deny the *simul peccator et justus:* First, because Christ, the God-man, is the one sanctified man. Sanctification, like justification, is accomplished already in Him for all men, *de iure,* as Barth puts it.[21] Christ is our sanctification, (I Cor. 1:30). This means that we, who remain *totus peccator,* are substituted for by Christ, who is sanctified for us. In Him we are already converted, turned around toward God in obedient response. He is the King and representative of all men, in whom all are sanctified.[22] Thus the total sinful-

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[20] *C.D.,* I, 2, pp. 1f., 203f.

[21] *C.D.,* IV, 2, pp. 511f.

[22] *Ibid.,* pp. 518f.

ness and total lostness of men apart from this vicarious sanctification cannot be denied. There can be no thought of becoming, even with God's help, our own sanctification, and thereby ultimately our own justification. Totus peccator just means this continuing total dependence upon Christ as the holy man. The totality of sin is not known at all except by way of Christ, as we saw in our last section.[23] And our continuing sin is known as total sin through His continuing work for us, not only as King, (Christ as King, says Barth, is the servant who became Lord),[24] but also as our High-priest, (wherein He is the Lord who became a servant).[25] Barth tells us, in II, 1:

> His high-priestly office means... that Jesus Christ sees to it that in Him and by Him we are not outside but inside. He Himself sees to it that His readiness is valid for us who are not identical with Him, and who in ourselves are not ready for God. He sees to it that what is true in Him in the height is and remains true in our depth .... As His work, the work of the Son of God, it is an almighty and therefore wholly effectual representing.... We have not merely been once represented by Him. We are so at any time because in eternity.[26]

The Christian man's righteousness before God is solely the result of this representation by Christ, then, and has nothing to do with his subjective realization of sanctification. In this, as he remains a sinner, he remains totus peccator.

But all this does not deny the growth in obedience which plays such a large part in the New Testament. The Christian does in fact, (de facto) participate in Christ's holiness sub-

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[23] Cf. this essay, p. 104.

[24] C.D., IV, 1, p. 143.

[25] Ibid.

[26] C.D., II, 1, p. 156.

jectively, for the Holy Spirit has reached him and awakened him to the power and life of obedience.[27] This is what Paul speaks of in Romans 8:15: "You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father." The Spirit adopts us to be brothers of Christ, and therefore "sons", obedient ones, with Him. Only because we are, in Him, obedient sons, can we rightly call God our Father. But to call Him Father is to know Him and to recognize Him as the One to be obeyed. As a gift of the Spirit, this is part of what it means to participate in Christ subjectively, as well as objectively, and part of what it means to be a Christian man. Barth describes the Christian man as one "disturbed" from his slumbering sin,[28] one who has lifted up his head, (Lk. 21:28), that is, who looks unto Jesus, (Heb. 12: 2). At the end of IV, 2, he deals with Christian life under the heading "The Holy Spirit and Christian Love," where he tells us that "the life-act of the Christian finds its climax and visible expression in love."[29] Barth certainly does believe, then, that there is subjective, de facto, obedience. He tells us in The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life that our obedience is never perfect,[30] is always far from being in itself pleasing to God. That is why it can never justify us, and why we remain totally lost without the continuing intercession of Christ our priest and King. And our obedience, such as it is, is hidden from us;

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[27] C.D., IV, 2, pp. 522f. [28] Ibid., pp. 524f.
[29] Ibid., p. 732.
[30] The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, p. 65.

we cannot judge it, or depend upon it, but must throw ourselves wholly upon God's mercy.[31] Such actual obedience does exist, however, and it is the reconciling work of the Spirit in us.

The work of the Spirit, then, following the reconciling work of the Son, creates in us an obedient hearing of the Word, accompanied by a life of growing obedience, which is a partial restoration of sinful man here and now, to the life and knowledge of "real men". It is the life and knowledge of those who are united with Christ by the Spirit,[32] who are "in Christ", and are therefore sons with Him by adoption. It is a real sharing in Christ's knowledge of God. And it is at this point that we come to the heart-centre of our thesis: through oneness with Christ by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit, we share in Christ's knowledge of God, which is God's knowledge of Himself. Nothing less than that can be claimed as the character of the Christian knowledge of God.

To see this clearly we must turn to Paul's passage concerning the Spirit and knowledge of God in I Cor. 2:11-16:

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31 The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, pp. 62, 69.

32 Barth's doctrine of Union with Christ by the Spirit is at one with that of John Calvin, who wrote: "The Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ efficaciously unites us to himself," (Instit. III, 1, 1). Calvin says also: "As long as there is a separation between Christ and us, all that he suffered and performed for the salvation of mankind is useless and unavailing to us.... On this account He is called our Head, (Eph. 4:15), and "the first born among many brethren," (Rom. 8:29) and we, on the other hand are said to be "grafted into him," (Rom. 11:17), and to "put him on;" (Gal. 3:27).

> What things knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the Spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God..., but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned.., for who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Paul is saying that our knowledge of God is analogous to our knowledge of persons. A person can be known only as he gives himself to be known, and this is so also of God, who is personal. A person's knowledge of himself is the primary form of the knowledge of him, and this also is true of the knowledge of God. This is the meaning of Barth's statement in II, 1, that "the primary objectivity of God to Himself is His eternal Being as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."[33] This is the insight expressed also by his dictum that "God is known by God and by God alone."[34] Now according to I Cor. 2:11f., it is the Spirit who gets us into that inner personal knowledge, by uniting us to Christ by the gift of faith. And Christ is the God-man, the eternal Son, who knows the Father: "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him," (Mt. 11:27). This is the startling truth of our participation in the divine self-knowledge, as it is graciously given to us in God's self-revelation in Christ:

> The only-begotten Son of God and therefore God Himself who is knowable to Himself from eternity to eternity,

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[33] C.D., II, 1, p. 49.

[34] Ibid., p. 179.

> has come in our flesh, has taken our flesh and does not exist as God's Son from eternity to eternity except in our flesh. Our flesh is therefore present when He knows God as the Son of the Father, when God knows Himself. In our flesh God knows Himself. Therefore in Him it is a fact that our flesh knows God Himself.[35]

This is fully realized in the ascended Jesus Christ, who is the sanctified man for all men, who "sits at the right hand of the Father." But those who are united to Him by the Spirit are given an imperfect share in His sanctified, obedient life, and therefore also in His knowledge. This, then, is the relation of the Holy Spirit to man and its significance for the knowledge of God: He gives us a share in "the mind of Christ".

That sharing in the obedience of the mind of Christ recalls one of our main themes: the inseparability of revelation and reconciliation. We find Barth discussing their relation explicitly in the third part of the Doctrine of Reconciliation. He tells us that there is no question of any further development of our material knowledge of the event of reconciliation. What God has done as the Reconciler in Jesus Christ, (as described in terms of justification and sanctification in IV, 1 and IV, 2) is exhausted and nothing material is to be added in IV, 3. In other words, the first two aspects of Christ's reconciling work, His Highpriestly and Kingly work, are not added to by His prophetic work. His prophetic work is to make known His completed reconciliation. Thus the third part of the doctrine of reconciliation "expresses,

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[35] C.D., II, 1, p. 151.

discloses, mediates and reveals itself." He adds:

> Revelation takes place in and with reconciliation. Indeed the latter is also revelation. As God acts in it, He also speaks. Reconciliation is not a dark or dumb event, but a perspicuous and vocal. It is not closed in upon itself but moves out and communicates itself.[36]

If reconciliation is itself also revelation, the reverse cannot be said:

> Reconciliation is indeed revelation. But revelation in itself and as such, if we can conceive of such a thing, could not be reconciliation. It takes place as reconciliation takes place; as it has in it its origin, content and subject; as reconciliation is revealed and reveals itself in it.[37]

Because the doctrine of the prophetic work of Christ has to do with the nature of reconciliation as revelation, it is closely associated with the doctrine of the Spirit, which looms very large in this part volume. It is in the work of the Holy Spirit that the event of reconciliation is concretely active and perceptible in its character as revelation. Barth thinks the Spirit must not be understood as a kind of Deus ex machina in His revealing work. Such a doubtful theory of knowledge is avoided, he thinks, if the work of the Spirit is not separated from "the power of reconciliation itself, i.e., of its character as revelation."[38] Jesus Christ Himself, the Reconciler, in His prophetic office, as the "True Witness" reveals Himself to men in the Spirit's power. As the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit is the Reconciler, for Christ and the Spirit are one in the unity of God.

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[36] C.D., IV, 3, p. 8. [37] Ibid., pp. 8-9.
[38] Ibid., p. 11.

But if reconciliation is powerful, by God's Spirit, to reveal itself, can sinful man finally resist it by the evasion of his falsehood? This is the question we find Barth struggling with under the heading "The Condemnation of Man". As we have already seen, man cannot undo the reconciliation God has accomplished in Christ. And the Spirit is powerful enough to break through man's sin to overcome even man's enmity against God's reconciling grace. Men of themselves are hostile to grace and reject it, but the Spirit penetrates their alienation and frees men to accept it. Does the Spirit stop at the sin of falsehood? Does the Spirit not free men even from this last and subtlest form of rebellion? If we are delivered from our sin, are we not delivered even from the sin against the Holy Spirit by which we reject our very deliverance? We find Barth approaching very closely to apokatastasis here in IV, 3:

> As the reconciliation of the world to God, the justification and sanctification of man, is the reality and indeed the living and present reality in Jesus Christ the true Witness of its truth, a limit is set both to the falsehood of man and also to his decay and destruction, to the disintegration of his existence under the dominion of the pseudo-reality of that image. War is declared on them and they are checked.[39]

But Barth insists that we cannot count upon it that "the sword will not fall," that our falsehood will not win its proper reward, God's utter condemnation and damnation. If we are not condemned, he writes, it can only be a matter of the unexpected work of grace.

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[39] C.D., IV, 3, p. 476.

> To the man who persistently tries to change the truth into untruth, God does not owe eternal patience.... We should be denying or disarming that evil attempt and our own participation in it if, in relation to ourselves or others or all men, we were to permit ourselves to postulate a withdrawal of that threat and in this sense to expect or maintain an apokatastasis or universal reconciliation as the goal and end of all things.... Even though theological consistency might seem to lead our thoughts and utterances most clearly in this direction, we must not arrogate to ourselves that which can be given only as a free gift.[40]

Though we cannot count on it as though we had a claim to it, we are not forbidden, Barth thinks, openness to the possibility of apokatastasis. Indeed, he writes, we are commanded to hope and pray for it,

> i.e. to hope and pray cautiously and yet distinctly that, in spite of everything which may seem quite conclusively to proclaim the opposite, His compassion should not fail, and that in accordance with his mercy which is "new every morning," He "will not cast off for ever," (Lam. 3:22f., 31).[41]

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[40] C.D., IV, 3, p. 477.

[41] Ibid., p. 478.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Knowledge of Faith

In this final chapter we shall have to investigate the nature of theological knowledge, the source of which we have already seen to be God's revealing Word, in the power of His Holy Spirit. Karl Barth calls it Glaubenserkenntnis,[1] perhaps best translated "faith-knowledge" or "knowledge of faith." Essentially our inquiry continues to be concerned with the relation of the Spirit to the Word, as it reaches its goal, the enlightenment of man. First we have to ask about the work of the Spirit in relation to our human words about God, the words of Scripture and proclamation, and the language of both faith and theology, i.e., the doctrine of analogy. Then we shall have to look briefly at the work of the Spirit as it relates to Holy Scripture, proclamation, faith and the Church, limiting our discussion in each case to the bearing it has upon our knowledge of God as faith.

(a) Theological Language: Analogia Fidei

Every theologian who concerns himself with epistemology must deal with the problems involved in human language about God, and Karl Barth is no exception. It is clear enough, of course, that Barth will not allow the question to be raised for theology from outside Christian faith. Not Philosophy, but Theology, asks the question of theological language and does so in a way appropriate

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[1] Karl Barth, Dogmatik im Grundriss, EVZ-Verlag, Zurich, 1947, pp. 19, 25f. N.B. p. 26: "Glauben heisst Erkennen."

to itself.[1] His approach is therefore essentially dogmatic rather than apologetic. It can be apologetic with integrity only when it has first been scientifically dogmatic.[2] Barth sets himself the question, "Does there exist a simple parity of content and meaning when we apply the same words to the creature on the one hand and to God's revelation and God on the other?"[3] It is immediately clear that he is not inquiring about any general concept of "God", which he might be able to discuss apologetically

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[1]Barth does not deal directly with the attack on the meaningfulness of metaphysical and theological language made by logical positivists and linguistic analysts, whose work is so influential in the English speaking world. This is, no doubt partly because he writes not in Britain or America but in continental Europe. His not having taken up the debate with them must be seen, however, as founded mainly on his attitude to apologetics generally, the question of the meaningfulness of theological language having been perhaps the central focus of Christian apologetics for many years now. For Barth, willingness to discuss the meaningfulness of the language of faith as an open question would be a denial of revelation. To take such an approach would be to pretend to negotiate with the unbeliever on the basis of common presuppositions, agreement upon which could presumably lead to, or prepare for, faith. Barth insists, however, that unbelief is not to be taken as seriously as faith. "What unbelief expects of faith is purely the one thing, that it should be an event. It is not in our power to cause the event," (C.D., I, 1, pp. 32-33.)

[2]Barth is quoted in Karl Barth's Table Talk: "Dogmatics will always have an apologetic side. In a certain sense all dogmatics is apologetics, namely, in the sense of setting limits. But God's revelation defends itself," (p. 44). He writes also in C.D., I, 1: "There is no dispute about the fact that dogmatics too, together with the Christian Church generally, has to speak all along the line as faith opposing unbelief, and to that extent all along the line her language must be apologetic, polemical," (p. 31). Again, "Apologetics and polemics can only be an event, they cannot be a programme," (p. 33). He delights in quoting Luther's colourful language: "we must take care not so to deface the gospel... that it is quite lost, to defend it so well that it collapseth. Let us not be anxious, the gospel needeth not our help," (p. 33).

[3]C.D., II, 1, p. 224.

with the non-Christian, but quite strictly of the Biblical God. He asks the question therefore on the presupposition of actual knowledge of God and actual language about Him, in keeping with what he has argued elsewhere,--that theological epistemology properly operates with a backward look at our actual knowledge and does not begin by taking up a position outside of knowledge to consider its possibility.[4]

The starting-point for the doctrine of analogy is, therefore, a Biblical one: the hiddenness of the Holy God. It is because the Christian knows the God of the Bible as the hidden, holy One that he has to deny a parity of meaning when human words are predicated of God. The hiddenness of God is a statement of faith for Barth. It has nothing to do with any philosophical unknowability of God, whether Platonic or Kantian.[5] "We must not," he writes, "base the hiddenness of God on the inapprehensibility of the infinite, the absolute, that which exists in and for itself, etc."[6] It is only when the God of the Bible is known in the response of faith that His transcendent hiddenness is truly known. Similarly, however, Barth cannot speak of disparity, for if our words mean something quite different when applied to God, then, in fact, God remains unknown to us, and

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[4]Barth's "after the fact" approach to theological knowledge and language as based on revelation has a parallel in the attitude of some who do natural theology. E.g., E. L. Mascall, Existence and Analogy, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966, pp. 94-95.

[5]C.D., II, 1, p. 183.

[6]Ibid., p. 188.

no fellowship can exist between Creator and creature. The man of faith knows that his speaking must be appropriate to God's "unveiling in veiling". Revelation pushes him to deny disparity as well as parity. "Pressed by the true revelation of God we are pushed on to the word 'analogy'." Analogy means "similarity, partial correspondence and agreement," in distinction to both likeness and unlikeness. The term, says Barth, is correct and "unavoidable".[7]

But Barth uses this "unavoidable" word reluctantly because of its association with natural theology. Just what is it that troubles him about its use in natural theology, and how does he distinguish his use of the concept from that of natural theologians? It will be best to glance first, very briefly, at the doctrine of analogy in the classical natural theology of Thomas Aquinas. Much has been written about the Thomist doctrine, and many Thomist scholars disagree in their interpretation of him,[8] so that my remarks here can only be of the briefest and most elementary kind.

Aquinas too, of course, is well aware of the hiddenness of God to the mind of man, and therefore also of the problems of language about God. But he does not understand God's hiddenness on the basis of revelation. In the Summa Theologica, (I, 12), he bases the unknowability of God on the idea of God's infinity.

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[7] C.D., II, 1, p. 225.

[8] B. Mondin, The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology, the Hague, Nijhoff, 1963, pp. 7-61.

Because God is infinite and everything is cognoscible according to its actuality, God is infinitely cognoscible. But the created, finite intellect cannot know God infinitely,[9] "for if the mode of anything's existence exceeds the mode of the knower, it must result that the knowledge of the object is above the nature of the knower."[10] God, therefore, cannot be comprehended by man. This leads Aquinas to his *via negativa*, whereby we know not what God is, but what He is not. None of the definite forms signified by the words we predicate of God actually exists in God, strictly speaking. For example, it cannot be said that goodness as such, intelligence as such, nor power as such, exist as definite forms in the divine Being.[11] Aquinas does not rest in total disparity, however, for he passes from the negative way to the affirmative way, that is, to the doctrine of analogy, by way of the distinction between the *perfectio significata* and the *modus significandi*:

> As regards what is signified by these names, they properly belong to God, and more properly than they belong to creatures, and are applied primarily (*per prius*) to Him. But as regards their mode of signification, they do not properly and strictly apply to God; for their mode of signification applies to creatures.[12]

Words that apply properly to creatures can be applied to God because God is the Creator of creatures. Thus God has to be known by us through "sensible things".

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[9] *S.T.*, I, 12, 7.

[10] *Ibid.*, I, 12, 4.

[11] Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. Shook, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1957, p. 109.

[12] *S.T.*, I, 13, 3.

> Because they are His effects and depend on their Cause, we can be led from them so far as to know that God exists and to know of Him what must necessarily belong to Him as the First Cause of all things, exceeding all things caused by Him.[13]

Since our intellect knows God from creatures,

> it knows Him as far as creatures are capable of giving a true and adequate representation of Him.... God presupposes in Himself the possession of all the perfections belonging to all creatures.[14]

If God is said to be _good_ or _wise_, these words "signify the Divine Substance, but in an imperfect manner," for "whatever good we attribute to creatures pre-exists in God, and in a more excellent and higher way."[15] Even by way of sensible things, then, our words are transferrable to God only analogically. But they are transferrable.[16] On this basic presupposition Aquinas proceeds to work out a large part of his doctrine of God within his "preambles"[17] of natural theology. Because of the created similarity between the creature and God he can deduce God's attributes (e.g. goodness, immutability, eternity, unity, love, justice, mercy) analogically from the creature, (_S.T._ I).

The similarity which permits this procedure is what Karl Barth refers to as _analogia entis_, analogy of being. In the foreward to _Church Dogmatics_, I, 1, Barth declares, "I regard the _analogia entis_ as the invention of Antichrist."[18] He refuses to admit a similarity between God and man which would permit God's

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[13] _S.T._, I, 12, 12.
[14] _Ibid._, I, 13, 2.
[15] _Ibid._
[16] _The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas_, p. 104.
[17] _S.T._, I, 2, 2.
[18] _C.D._, I, 1, p. x.

attributes to be delineated apart from His self-revelation. When Barth comes to speak of the Reality of God in II, 1, he insists that he cannot write the doctrine of God independently of God's revelation on the basis of a general, natural notion of God.[19] "We cannot discern the being of God in any other way than by looking where God Himself gives us Himself to see, and therefore by looking at His works." This is most obvious when one considers that the doctrine of the Trinity is absolutely integral to the Christian doctrine of God. It is this Triune God of whom he wishes to speak when he comes to deal, for example, with the Life of God,[20] the Love of God,[21] the Freedom of God.[22] Aquinas could not possibly speak of this specifically Triune God in his natural theology (the Trinity is for him part of revealed theology), and therefore, in Barth's view, he should not have attempted, in a preamble, to speak of God in Himself. To speak of God Himself without being governed throughout by revelation, is inevitably to distort the true God and set up in His place an idol of one's own making. Barth seems to see <u>analogia entis</u> as the basic error behind this false method. He accuses Aquinas, (and the Lutheran Quenstedt) of including God and the creature under one general concept of being.[23] Now Aquinas explicitly rejects this very thing, most notably in <u>Summa Theologica</u>, I, 3, 5. Not only is God not in any genus, but "being" cannot <u>be</u> a

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[19] <u>C.D.</u>, II, 1, p. 259.
[20] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 263.
[21] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 275.
[22] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 317.
[23] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 237.

genus, for it cannot be distinguished by any differentia not included in it.[24] Barth is not unaware that Aquinas has said this, for he quotes it at least three times in II, 1.[25] Nevertheless, he would argue that Aquinas sees the common "existence" or "being" of God and man as the basis of man's knowledge and fellowship with God. Barth wants to insist over against this that not any common being, but only God's utterly free grace is in fact the basis of this knowledge and fellowship.[26]

At this point we touch again on the very heart centre of Barth's thought, for the inner dynamic of his whole theology revolves around the Reformation principle of sola gratia. If the grace of God builds upon something in man himself, or some natural relation between God and man prior to grace and faith, then sola gratia is compromised. It is in accordance with this insight that Barth includes within his Doctrine of God, (Church Dogmatics, Volume II) both his major epistemological work and his doctrine of election. God's gracious election of man in Jesus Christ, as it is known in His reconciling life, death and resurrection, is the starting-point for Christian theology. "The name of Jesus Christ ... is the beginning and end of all our thoughts."[27] "When theology allows itself on any pretext to be jostled away from that name, God is inevitably crowded out by an hypostatized image of man. Theology must begin with Jesus Christ and not general principles."[28] A proper doctrine of God must demonstrate its

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[24] S.T., I, 3, 5.
[25] C.D., II, 1, pp. 187, 310, 444.
[26] Ibid., pp. 237-243.
[27] C.D., II, 2, p. 5.
[28] Ibid., p. 4.

Christian character from the beginning by avoiding all abstractions, i.e., notions of God the content of which are not totally determined by Jesus Christ. According to this basic principle, Barth works out his doctrine of God beginning with the Christologically determined statement, "God is the One who loves in freedom." Under the heading of God's Love he develops the Being of God as Grace and Holiness, Mercy and Righteousness, Patience and Wisdom, and under the heading of God's Freedom he discusses His Unity and Omnipresence, Constancy and Omnipotence, Eternity and Glory.[29] This particular juxtaposition of concepts, he points out, is offered by way of suggestion, and he does not claim for it any necessity or finality.[30] But he does insist that they must be developed entirely in connection with revelation. This is not by any means to imply that theology can speak only of God in His outward acts and not of God Himself in His own Being. On the contrary, he has at every point been at great pains to show the rooting of God's outward acts in the inner Triune Being of God.

The implications of this approach for analogy can be seen very clearly, for example, in his discussion of God's Power. If we say that God's Power is omnipotence, we do not merely extend our creaturely notion of power to the infinite degree and ascribe it to God. We do not know, prior to revelation, what God's "Power" means. Barth writes, "It is not a matter of already knowing

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[29] C.D., II, 1, chapter VI. [30] Ibid., pp. 352-353, 441-442.

by ourselves what omnipotence is and then learning from God's self-revelation that He is this and acknowledging the One defined in this way as our Father."[31] Rather, we see God's Power in His mighty acts for the People of Israel, and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. From this we know God as the Almighty Creator and Redeemer who can do what He wills as Lord of this world according to His free Love. Moreover, argues Barth, our statements about God's Power are not merely about His Power *ad extra*, for His omnipotence is not merely His omnicausality.[32] God is powerful in Himself from all eternity, quite independently of His creation, for the God of the Bible is never in any way dependent on creation for any aspect of His Being. "God is the omnipotent God as He is the Trinitarian God; in His life as this God, in His power to be the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; in the power by which He is the One by and in the Other, all being equal in origin, necessity and glory."[33] The analogy between God's Power and creaturely power, then, can be made only in faith, only within a knowledge of God's revelation. The possibility of knowing this God in Himself analogously from the creation is manifestly impossible. A proper understanding of analogy must be rigorously determined within this Christological doctrine of God. The meaning of our words for God must be filled with this very specific Christologically determined content.

The application of the *sola gratia* and *sola fides* to analogy

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[31] *C.D.*, II, 1, pp. 524-525.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 527f.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 529.

is worked out most explicitly by Barth in his polemic against the seventeenth century Lutheran theologian A. Quenstedt,[34] (always including Thomas Aquinas also in his criticism). Quenstedt, like Aquinas, rejects as inappropriate for language about God the analogy of inequality: the kind of similarity which exists between the different species of one genus; he rejects also the analogy of proportionality, the similarity which exists in the agreement when some determinations of two objects agree, but at the same time others disagree.[35] Barth concurs in the rejection of these. We must rather, he says, use an analogy of attribution: a similarity of two objects which consists in the fact that what is common to them exists first and properly in the one, and then, because a second is dependent upon it, in the second.[36] But Quenstedt wants to say this is an analogia attributionis intrinsecae, a similarity proper both to the analogans and the analogatum. The similarity which the creature bears to God is, though secondary and dependent, an inward quality or characteristic of the creature's being. Now Barth believes this means that the creature is qualified for revelation, indeed that he has a relationship with the Creator apart from Christ, that the creature is a participant in God's Truth without Him. He reasons that, if the similarity between creature and Creator is given and constant, a state of affairs belonging to the creature as such, then the absolute necessity of revelation is denied, or at least, sola fides.

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[34] C.D., II, 1, pp. 237-243.

[35] A discussion of analogy of proportionality follows, p. 146.

[36] Ibid., p. 238.

But this is quite contrary to the Biblical teaching of the total lostness of man without Christ. Quenstedt, complains Barth, holds to sola fides in his doctrine of justification, but fails to see its implications for epistemology, as though knowledge of God could be something other than faith-knowledge, knowledge in the relationship of peace. And Quenstedt makes this error, (as Aquinas does) by misunderstanding the nature of God's hiddenness. He rejects parity because it denies the distinction between absolute and relative being, both of which are true being. God is absolutely what we are relatively according to this view, so that being and not grace is the ground of the knowledge of God and the criterion of truth. The being in which both God and man participate is the similarity between them, and the basis of their knowledge and fellowship. This is what Barth objects to when he so strenuously anathematizes analogia entis. This is what he means when with apparent rashness he accuses Aquinas of including God and man together in the same genus of being.[36] Over against this, Barth wants to insist that the readiness of man for God's revelation is itself a gift of God, a creation of God, a miracle that comes in and with the objective revelation. Sola gratia, he believes, is endangered seriously if man's being is itself said to be capable of fellowship with God. Holy Scripture, he argues, expressly describes our participation in the Person and Work of Christ as a Work of the Holy Spirit.[37] The Spirit, and not any

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[36] C.D., II, 1, p. 237.

[37] Ibid., p. 157.

innate capacity of man, is to be given the praise for man's hearing and reception of the Word of God. The Spirit creates the point of contact. This holds also for our language. Earthly concepts do not have in themselves the capacity to speak of God, not even analogically. Our words cannot be transferred from man to the Creator.

> The pictures in which we view God, the thoughts in which we think Him, are in themselves unfitted to this object and thus inappropriate to express and affirm the knowledge of Him. For God--the living God who encounters us in Jesus Christ is not such a one as can be appropriated by us in our own capacity. He is the One who will appropriate us, and in so doing permit and command and therefore adapt us to appropriate Him as well.[38]

To argue otherwise is to posit a togetherness of God and man which is forbidden by the transcendent holiness of God, the holiness which is destructive of the unholy, as we know it in revelation. Our words can have valid reference to God only in Jesus Christ, since it is only in and through Him that we can know and be related to God at all. The analogy, or similarity, between God and man which permits our language to refer truly to God is the analogia fidei, analogy of faith. Faith in Jesus Christ, the creation of the Holy Spirit in us, is our similarity to God. The creature is "converted"[39] into an analogue of God, by faith, that is, by the Spirit. The analogy of attribution is therefore not intrinsic, as Quenstedt would have it, but, according to Barth, extrinsic. The similarity between God and man can only be one controlled and

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[38] C.D., II, 1, p. 188. [39] Ibid., p. 239.

bestowed by God in His revealing and saving work, and is not to be understood as a constant co-existence of the Creator and creature in a like being. We are adopted into our similarity with God,[40] and so also is our language adopted. "This happens only as the grace of the revelation of God comes to us and therefore to the means of our thinking and language, adopting us and them, pardoning, saving, protecting and making good."[41] Our words for God are properly, analogically predicated of Him

> so far as they are formed and expressed in faith in God's revelation, in obedience to the direction given to man in it.... The limit of our knowledge of God is this: that

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[40]The belief that our human words in themselves are quite unfitting to describe God at all is suggested very early by Hilary of Poitiers in his De Trinitate, I, 19, (in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. IX, Oxford, James Parker and Co., 1899, p. 45), where he writes, "There can be no comparison between God and earthly things...." Hilary at first seems to say that it is nevertheless a proper procedure to apply ordinary human words to God, since "the weakness of our understanding forces us to seek for illustrations from a lower sphere to explain our meaning about loftier things. The course of daily life shews how our experience in ordinary matters enables us to form conclusions on unfamiliar subjects. We must therefore regard any comparison as helpful to man rather than as descriptive of God, since it suggests, rather than exhausts the sense we seek." All of this, of course, could have been written by Thomas Aquinas. But Hilary goes on: "I proceed with my task intending to use the terms supplied by God...." Here he makes plain in a very few words that he understands the procedure to be permissible only as it is informed by revelation, and not autonomously in what Aquinas called a "preamble" to the theology of revelation or in what Barth calls "natural theology". Commenting on Hilary, T. F. Torrance, in an unpublished paper, makes this distinction clear: "We can only know and talk about God in human terms because He has used human terms to reveal Himself to us in His Word, and so interpreted Himself to us. In receiving the Word, our human language and reason are stretched beyond their accustomed limits." All this is in line with Barth's meaning when he says our words are "adopted" and "made good" by God if they are to be used of God. This means their content must be strictly filled with meaning given them by revelation. We have to "use the terms supplied by God."

[41]C.D., II, 1, p. 223.

> when we know God we must not and will not leave the grace of His revelation.[42]

A doctrine of *analogia entis*, Barth thinks, is secretly an attempt to dispense with faith, or at least *sola fides*, to give aid to the Holy Spirit to do what we do not quite trust Him to do on His own. But with *analogia fidei*,

> The Holy Spirit can be given the last word instead of the absolute, all enquiries being answered by the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, that through Him our faith is true faith and our knowledge true knowledge of God.[43]

Barth's doctrine of analogy of faith seems to this student to be a very important contribution to the question of theological predication. His attempt to carry it out in a rigorously Reformed way is to be appreciated. But it is faulty, I think, in its connection with the doctrine of man, and therefore faulty in its total rejection of all *analogia entis*. One comes to this conclusion on the basis of Barth's own theological statements about man in *Church Dogmatics*, Volume III. His statements about man there are, I think, inconsistent with those assumed and implied in II, 1, where he makes the most extravagantly negative statements about man.[44] "We do not resemble God," he says. "The fact that we are created in the likeness of God means that God has determined us to bear witness to His existence in our existence. But it does not mean that we possess and discover an attribute within ourselves on the basis of which we are on a level

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[42] *C.D.*, II, 1, p. 235.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 249.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

with God." But here he has only disposed of a straw man, for no exponent of *analogia entis* puts man on a level with God. Again, he writes, "Of ourselves we do not resemble God. We are not master of Him."[45] But it is most misleading to suggest that a resemblance between God and man implies our mastery of Him, even in terms of knowledge.[46] Further on, in his polemic against Quenstedt and Aquinas, he contends that no similarity exists between Creator and creature except that given by revealing and saving grace.[47]

But Barth is much sounder in Volume III. There, as we have already seen,[48] he finds the image of God in man generally, even from creation, because of his relation to the one image, Jesus Christ. Man's being in God's image, and therefore his resemblance to God, as *analogia relationis*, is his by virtue of his election and creation in and for Christ. Every man created by God is *created* in God's image,--"man generally, man with the fellowman."[49] His teaching is clear that man is an analogue of God not only by faith, but in virtue of his creation. He can say this because creation too is grace and is to be understood Christocentrically. From his creation, man is a "type of the one to come," (Rom. 5:14). In Volume III Barth appears to have recognized in the grace of creation a presupposition of revealing and saving grace, which, of course, is not as such a departure from *sola gratia*. However,

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[45] *C.D.*, II, 1, p. 190.

[46] R. F. Aldwinkle, "Karl Barth and Religious Language," in *Canadian Journal of Theology*, Vol. XI, (1965), pp. 164-173.

[47] *C.D.*, II, 1, p. 239.

[48] Cf. this essay, 3(a)

[49] *C.D.*, III, 2, pp. 323-324.

he seems to withdraw all this on those very pages of Volume III in his continued rejection of *analogia entis*. The "God-likeness" of man, says Barth, does not consist in anything that man is or does.[50] The analogy of relation is not, like the analogy of being, an existing quality or intrinsic capacity, possibility or structure of man's being.[51] It is an analogy of two relationships, but not of two beings, he insists. He expressly denies, then, that his *analogia relationis* is reduceable to an *analogia entis*: "We repeat there can be no question of an analogy of being, but of relationship. God is in relationship and so too is the man created by Him. This is the divine likeness."[52] It is difficult, however, to see any reality in the distinction. If both God and man possess this personal being, so that both man and God can rightly be addressed as Thou, and therefore live in relationship, surely a similarity of being does exist. Of course, a similarity of being is not a continuity of being. It goes without saying that God possesses His character as Thou prior to, and in a different way from the way in which man does. In this sense, we must accept the dictum of Aquinas, agreed to be correct by Barth, that God and the creature are not to be included together under one genus of being. The juxtaposition of God and the creature as two extremes, the absolute and relative, in one continuous Being cannot be considered. But that is not necessarily implied by *analogia entis*. Nor need it be a static thing, but a dynamic,

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[50] *C.D.*, III, 1, p. 184. [51] *Ibid.*, p. 195.
[52] *C.D.*, III, 2, p. 324.

relational reality, as Calvin understood the imago Dei.

One suspects that an analogy of being is implied in Barth's own position not only in the doctrine of man, but also in his understanding of the priority of God. This is evident, for example, when he speaks of our use of the word "Father" for God. He recognizes that the word "father" in ordinary human language primarily signifies the natural human originator of our existence. "In calling God our Father, Scripture adopts an analogy, only to break through it at once."[53] Barth goes on, "We must not estimate by natural human fatherhood what is meant by God being our Father. But from the Fatherhood of God natural human fatherhood acquires any meaning and value inherent in it."[54] In other words, our human word "father" is adopted and used in God's revelation to refer to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so filled with new content which is fitting to Him. And through this revelation of God's Fatherhood we come to know the truth of all human fatherhood. But to say this is to recognize a real similarity of being between divine Fatherhood and proper human fatherhood. To speak of Fatherhood, or Love, or Power, or whatever, as having their being in God prior to their being in man, is to imply, quite unmistakeably, a real similarity between the being of the Creator and the being of the creature. To deny this similarity in actual being, (known of course only in faith) is to adopt the position of disparity which Barth rejected so clearly

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[53] C.D., I, 1, p. 447.

[54] Ibid.

in II, 1, and to render theological language meaningless. One can have sympathy, then, with Quenstedt's analogy of "intrinsic" attribution over against Barth's "extrinsic".

John McIntyre throws a great deal of light on this whole matter in his article entitled "Analogy", in Scottish Journal of Theology, (Vol. XII, 1959). Barth, he thinks, has unnecessarily limited himself in the discussion of analogy by his acceptance of Quenstedt's terminology. Quenstedt, says McIntyre, though he rejects analogy of inequality, (the kind of similarity that exists between different species of one genus) has in fact made use of it, and Barth has quite rightly "shot a sitting bird".[55] He is mistaken, however, to concur in Quenstedt's reference to it as an analogy of intrinsic attribution. McIntyre thinks it most unfortunate that both of them have ignored analogy of proportionality. Proportionality does not, as Barth supposes, involve a calculable, mathematical proportion; it is not to be represented A/B = C/D, but rather A:B : : C:D.[56] In fact, Barth uses proportionality of this latter kind constantly when he speaks of analogy of grace, which is an analogy of relations.[57]

The kind of proportionality that Barth does in fact use, however, is not adequate in itself, (as I have argued above). The formula A:B : : C:D will not do, McIntyre points out, without some indication of how A is related to C, and/or B to D. Because

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[55] John McIntyre, "Analogy", in Scottish Journal of Theology, (Vol. XII, 1959), pp. 1-20, (pp. 14-15).

[56] Ibid., p. 13.

[57] Ibid., p. 16.

the analogy of proportionality is an analogy of relations, it requires to be supplemented by some form of analogy which relates the terms,[58] --perhaps an analogy of intrinsic attribution. The dynamic, relational feature which Barth wants to insist upon in his understanding of the image of God could be adequately protected, I think, by a combination of intrinsic attribution with proportionality, in a very carefully defined analogia entis. Although Barth's unqualified rejection of analogia entis is not well founded, his strict adherence to the principle of sola fides and his insistence that theological language is valid only in faith, and therefore in the Spirit, is his great and lasting contribution to the doctrine of analogy.

(b) Proclamation and Holy Scripture

Our study of analogy has taught us that our human words can speak truly of God only as they are informed by God's revelation, and that this is the presupposition of all our theological knowledge and language. However, the knowledge of God does not reach us primarily through dogmatic theology. Barth tells us that the significance of dogmatics is quite secondary, that it exists not as an end in itself, but strictly for the service of proclamation.[1] God is not known as part of a philosophical theory or system, as an intellectual abstraction. He is known as He is proclaimed to men as the One who has acted in history for their salvation. He is known by way of the announcement of His deeds,

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[58] "Analogy", p. 14.

[1] C.D., I, 1, p. 94.

and therefore in the decision[2] to believe and live in accordance with them. This knowledge which responds to proclamation and Scripture is "faith-knowledge". The announcement concerns God's Word made flesh: Jesus Christ is God's action in history. As such, He is the basis of the knowledge of God, the "theological object" of knowledge. As "flesh" however, He is very contingent, belonging to a particular time and place, and can only be known by way of recollection[3] and report. This section deals with the nature of the report, both proclamation and Scripture. We have to look at them in this essay only as crucial aspects of Barth's epistemology and doctrine of the Spirit. He deals with them, of course, as part of The Doctrine of the Word of God, (Church Dogmatics, I, 1 and I, 2). But if his dogmatics had been arranged differently,[4] they might have been discussed as belonging to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, since they have to do with the mode of Christ's presence after His resurrection and ascension.

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[2] C.D., I, 1, p. 55.

[3] Barth criticizes Augustine's use of the concept "recollection" as memoria, which is very close to the Platonic notion of anamnesis. He insists that it cannot mean "the actualisation of a revealedness of God, originally immanent in the existence of every man," (C.D., I, 1, pp. 111-112). Recollection therefore becomes a subjective, rather than objective thing. Barth continues: "God, according to Augustine, is what we all seek, a vita beata.... Recollection on these lines clearly means... man's turning inward, his heartsearching and his homecoming from the dissipation of the outer world to himself, to find God actually there,"(Ibid.)

[4] The Table Talk records Barth saying: "A good theology can be based on any of the three articles of the Creed. You could base it on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit" (p. 27).

In Church Dogmatics, I, 1, Barth speaks of the three forms of the Word of God: the Word preached, the written Word, and the revealed Word. The last of these is the "past" revelation itself, Jesus Christ. The function of the other two forms of the Word is to attest, to witness to, the revealed Word.[5] He has not placed proclamation before Scripture for no reason. Here he follows Luther in insisting that the Gospel is primarily proclamation. For Luther, the Gospel was not a book but a message to be spoken by the viva vox. Preaching is more important than writing in the Church: "The Church is a mouth-house, no pen-house."[6] The Scripture itself, Barth tells us, is the deposit of proclamation made in the past by the mouth of men; it is proclamation in writing.[7] Proclamation, then, which is both preaching and Sacrament,[8] has a certain conceptual priority over Scripture. But Scripture is, in order, superior to proclamation, as the canon or rule which is authoritative for it, even as Scripture stands, in a sense, under the revelation to which it witnesses. Nevertheless, there is no distinction of degree

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[5] C.D., I, 1, p. 125.

[6] Luther, quoted by W. J. Kooiman, Luther and the Bible, trans. J. Schmidt, Philadelphia, Muilenberg Press, 1961, p. 202.

[7] C.D., I, 1, p. 114.

[8] Unfortunately we do not have any thorough treatment of the sacraments by Barth. According to the outline of his intentions in C.D. I, 2, p. 882, this was to appear in IV, 3. It does not occur there however; he presumably moved it to a later volume which was never completed. It is clear enough, however, in The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism, (trans. E. A. Payne), London, S.C.M. Press, 1948, and in C.D., I, 1, (e.g. p. 89) that he understands the Lord's Supper and Baptism as verba visibilia, visible proclamation.

or value between these three forms.

> For so far as proclamation really rests upon recollection of the revelation attested in the Bible and is therefore the obedient repetition of the Biblical witness, it is no less the Word of God than the Bible. And so far as the Bible really attests revelation, it is no less the Word of God than revelation itself.[9]

This is in itself an astounding statement. The words of proclamation spoken by men, and the words of the Bible, written by men, are actually the Word of God; they are God speaking. They are human language in and through which God Himself speaks.[10] Just how can man's word become God 's Word? As Barth asks it, "How is it to come about that proclamation proclaims not only truth but truth as reality, that is, as God's work...?" The answer lies, of course, in God Himself, in

> the Holy Spirit, who will establish as His own work in the preacher's mouth and the hearer's ear, the work of the faith proclaimed in words of human thought and expression.... This reference to the personal power of God's very Word amid and in spite of the darkness of the human words that serve it, is, of course, the Alpha and Omega, the ultima ratio, without which... the concept of the Church's proclamation could not be completed at all.[11]

In the section entitled "The Word of God as Preached", however, Barth strangely makes little mention of the Spirit, and speaks rather of the "Word of God" as "the object which must be given to proclamation in order that it may be real proclamation."[12] Again in "The Written Word of God", the doctrine of the Spirit is not made use of. Barth later felt it necessary to meet the criticism that he had no place in his theology for the Spirit by

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[9] C.D., I, 1, p. 136.
[10] Ibid., p. 57.
[11] Ibid., p. 66.
[12] Ibid., p. 101.

writing his shorter book, The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life.[13] In I, 2, however, the Spirit has a much larger place in relation to proclamation and Scripture. Speaking of proclamation, Barth tells us that human words can only become operative to speak of God, and indeed, be the means by which God speaks, by the power of the Holy Spirit.[14] The Spirit performs the miracle by which man's word becomes God's Word, something quite impossible from the human side, for (as we saw in our discussion of analogy) men cannot even speak about God, let alone speak God's Word Himself, without the Spirit. Speaking of Holy Scripture, he tells us that the power of the Bible is the "power of the object" to which it bears witness, i.e., the power of God. The Spirit sets Christ before us, and powerfully so, for the power of the Word is the Spirit of the Word. The Spirit, says Barth, is "the power and matter of Holy Scripture".[15] Epistemologically considered then, proclamation and Scripture are the means used by the Spirit to bring the theological object of knowledge before our minds, and the Spirit is the power of these means by which the object intrudes itself upon us, enabling us to know God.

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[13] Translator's preface to The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, p. 5. Barth explains in The Table Talk, when asked why he made so little use of the doctrine of the Spirit in this part of I, 1: "You must remember the theological situation in 1932. At that time I wanted to place a strong emphasis on the objective side of revelation: Jesus Christ. If I had made much of the Holy Spirit, I am afraid it would have led to subjectivism, which is what I wanted to overcome. Today I would speak more of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps I was too cautious." (p. 27).

[14] C.D., I, 2, p. 751.

[15] Ibid., pp. 538, 579.

Theological objectivity remains a possibility after Christ's departure, then, by way of the objective presence of God's Word in proclamation and Scripture. Barth understands the relation of God's Word to man's word in these two forms as analogous to the relation of the divine and human in Christ. For example, he writes in I, 1, "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 human events."[16] When man's word becomes God's Word, it remains a fully human word, even as the eternal Word is made flesh, very man. So also, in the Lord's Supper, which, with Baptism, is also proclamation, "bread remains bread, wine remains wine."[17] There is no transubstantiation, either of human words or of sacramental elements. Nevertheless, proclamation becomes, in its earthly character, "a fresh event, the event of God speaking Himself in the sphere of human events... Real proclamation as this new event, in which the event of human language about God is not set aside, but rather exalted, is the Word of God."[18] The miracle of God's Word in preaching and sacrament, when understood in this way, is no less "realistic" than the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.[19]

In I, 2, we find Barth applying the Christological insights of Chalcedon to the doctrine of Scripture. Christology rules here too. There can be no direct identity between the human word

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[16] C.D., I, 1, p. 105.
[17] Ibid., p. 106.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., pp. 106-107.

of Scripture and the Word of God, no transmutation of the one into the other, and no admixture of the two, even as in the Person of Christ, the divine and human are not confused, but not divided, two natures in one Person. The human element does not cease to be human, and as such and in itself is not divine; nor does God's Word, the divine element, cease to be God's Word.[20]

> As the Word of God in the sign of this prophetic-apostolic word of man, Holy Scripture is like the unity of God and man in Jesus Christ. It is neither divine only nor human only. Nor is it a mixture of the two nor a tertium quid between them. But in its own way and degree it is very God and very man.[21]

"In its own way and degree," says Barth. It is a "witness" to revelation, but not revelation itself. The distinction is a limitation, he tells us. It is simply revelation "as it comes to us, mediating and therefore accommodating itself to us who are not ourselves prophets and apostles, and therefore not the immediate and direct recipients of the one revelation."[22] When he speaks of "Scripture as the Word of God," he also wants to say that "what we hear is more than witness.... What we hear is revelation, and therefore, the very Word of God."[23] Thus there is identity between Scripture and the Word of God, but indirect identity.

We can see this clearly in Barth's understanding of the relation of the Spirit to proclamation and Scripture, i.e., *theopneustia*, or inspiration. He emphasizes over and over again in

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[20] *C.D.*, I, 2, pp. 499-500.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 501.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 463.
[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 473, 499.

I, 1 that the inspiration of Scripture is not a static thing belonging to Scripture itself. The Word of God is not something men can possess simply by possessing a Bible. God is majestically free, over and above both proclamation and Scripture. He must grant His "Word" if proclamation is to be true proclamation.[24] God's Word does not pass into our control so that we of our own power can speak it or cause it to be heard.[25] And the Bible is God's Word so far as God lets it be so, only so far as God freely wills to speak through it. It only <u>is</u> God's Word as it becomes so by God's gracious action.[26] In I, 2, he points out, with Paul, that "the letter killeth" but "the Spirit giveth life," (II Cor. 3:6). "This is said in favour of the Spirit but not against Scripture, or only against a Scripture received and read without the Spirit."[27] Without the work of the Spirit the Scripture speaks no Word of God. That is why there can be no such thing as "verbal inspiredness."[28] Such a static view of the Bible subtly becomes a kind of natural knowledge of God, that is, knowledge which man can have without God's free grace, in this case by way of a Bible that has passed into man's control. However, as we saw in chapter one, God is always actively the Lord of our knowledge of Him. Our knowledge of God, or our relation to Him never becomes our once and for all possession outside of the living Spirit-given relationship. It is always faith-know-

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[24] <u>C.D.</u>, I, 1, p. 101.
[25] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 104.
[26] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 124.
[27] <u>C.D.</u>, I, 2, p. 514.
[28] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 518.

ledge, and therefore not something we grasp after and hold as our own, but always an event. Not a datum, but a dandum.[29] It is never a quality or predicate of ours given once and for all, but something "being given" again and again in the ever new work of the Holy Spirit.

It should be pointed out that the relation of the Spirit to the Scriptural Word is quite different from (though analogous to) the relation of the Spirit to the Word made flesh, Christ Himself. The Spirit's relation to the Scriptural Word is derivative from His relation to Christ. Barth says little of this distinction, but hints at it when he writes:

> According to His humanity Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit to be born of the virgin Mary for us. Again, according to His humanity, Jesus is redemptively present by the Holy Spirit in the Lord's Supper [proclamation]. And by the Holy Spirit the witnesses of His humanity became and are also the witnesses of His eternal Godhead, His revela- was apprehended by them and through them [Scripture] it is apprehended by us.[30]

This derivative relation of the Spirit to Scripture is, it seems to this student, very crucial for a proper understanding of the Bible as inspired witness to revelation, and as distinguishable from it. As we have just seen, the relation of the Spirit to the Bible is a "being given", a dandum, not a datum, whereas the relation of the Spirit to Christ is not "given" at all. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; He gives the Spirit to His disciples, (Jn. 20:22). The Spirit and Christ, though distinguish-

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[29] The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life, p. 16.

[30] C.D., I, 2, p. 537.

able, are one in the unity of the Triune God. "The Lord is the Spirit," says Paul, (II Cor. 3:17). As the One conceived by the Holy Spirit, Christ is the Word of God, ontically, in Himself as such. In the Incarnation there is an ontic, essential, hypostatic union between the divine and human natures of Christ. Jesus Christ is homoousios with the Father as well as with humanity. But this cannot be said of Scripture; the Bible is not, in itself, one substance with the Father. Do we not have to say, (I do not think Barth states this explicitly) that the Bible, in itself, is human only? It is written by sinful men, and needs to receive the atonement wrought out in Christ. It has to be given the powerful, reconciling Spirit in order that it may become, like Christ, divine as well as human. The two-natures analogy applies only in this dynamic sense. One only wishes that Barth had spelled out this distinction clearly in his doctrine of inspiration, for it is crucial, I think, to a proper understanding of the humanity and fallibility of the Bible.

Barth speaks very radically of the humanity of the Bible. He rules out the dictation theory of inspiration, insisting that the inspiration of the writers involved no abolition of their freedom or self-determination, but rather consisted in a special attitude of obedience inspired by the Spirit.[32] The writers are

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[32] C.D., I, 2, p. 505.

conditioned by their own "psychological, biographical and historical possibilities."[32] Barth also wants to say that the Bible is fallible:

> The vulnerability of the Bible, i.e., its capacity for error, also extends to its religious and theological content.... There are obvious overlappings and contradictions--e.g., between the Law and the prophets, between John and the Synoptists, between Paul and James.... In view of the actual constitution of the Old and New Testaments this is something which we cannot possibly deny if we are not to take away their humanity, if we are not to be guilty of Docetism.[33]

Barth argues for the fallibility of the Bible, then, on the basis of its humanity. Klaas Runia, in his book Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture, argues that this does not follow. If there is really a parallel between the divine and human in Christ, and the divine and human in Scripture, then the humanity of the Bible does not imply its fallibility any more than the humanity of Christ implies His sinfulness.[34] Runia believes that if the Bible is fallible, that is, if it is sometimes erroneous even in "religion and theology", as Barth suggests, then one must hold a dualistic conception of inspiration, that is, "one must distinguish between the divine and human aspects of the Bible and try to find out which parts belong to the one aspect and which to the other. Some parts give us divine revelation, others contain merely human opinions."[35] Barth does not want to say this, for his whole theological method rebels against the idea of man

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[32] C.D., I, 2, p. 505. [33] Ibid., pp. 509-510.

[34] Klaas Runia, Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture, Grand Rapids, W. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1962, p. 74.

[35] Ibid., p. 118.

standing above God's Word and judging it. He denies such a dualism: "We are completely absolved from differentiating in the Bible between the divine and human as such.... and then cautiously choosing the former and scornfully rejecting the latter."[36] Runia describes Barth's approach as a "vertical dualism", in which God's Word comes in and through a human word that serves it, rather than beside it and separate from it. But Barth does not successfully escape the problem in that way. As Runia argues later, if a statement, for example, of Paul, is fallible and erroneous, it cannot be authoritative. There cannot be a distinction between Deus dixit and Paulus dixit,[37] Runia argues. He accuses Barth of an inclination to "reinterpret" unpalatable texts; this, he contends, is nothing but a "camouflaged form of dualistic criticism."[38] Now Runia finds the basis of Barth's error in his fundamental concept of Scripture as witness, distinguishing it from revelation itself.[39] It is in keeping with this distinction that he rejects "inspiredness" as an "inherent quality" of the Bible,[40] and heavily qualifies the statement that the Bible is the Word of God. It is in accordance with these views that Barth finds himself saying that the Bible is fallible, even theologically. Runia denies these distinctions. For him, the Bible simply is revelation and is inspired, and infallibly Word of God. He believes that the Bible cannot be authoritative

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[36] C.D., I, 2, p. 531.
[37] C.D., I, 1, p. 127.
[38] Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture, pp. 180-181.
[39] Ibid., pp. 21f.
[40] Ibid., p. 124.

if it is fallible; and he thinks that the parallel with the Incarnation is entirely destroyed if fallibility is admitted.[41]

Our first question to Runia's critique is whether he has adequately taken account of the dialectical nature of Barth's conception of Scripture as witness and Word of God. We must remember Barth's statement that the distinction between witness and revelation does not imply a distinction of degree or value.[42] Note also that "witness is more than witness.... it is the very Word of God."[43] But the main thing lacking in Runia's position is a clear distinction between the relation of the Spirit to Christ and the relation of the Spirit to Scripture. Christ does not have to be given the Spirit to be Word of God. He is this in Himself. Nor does He require atonement; He is Himself the atonement. The reconciling work of the Spirit is not directed to Christ; it flows from Him. But the Scripture, which in itself is only a human word, must be given the Spirit again and again if it is to have the power of the Word of God. And, as the word of sinners, it must receive the reconciling work of the Spirit if God is to speak in it and through it. Barth himself only hints at this distinction, and, as far as I know, fails to work it out in terms of reconciliation. He does say, "That the

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[41] Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture, pp. 77, 180-181. In these latter pages Runia offers a very intelligent and clearly defined doctrine of infallibility, taking into account the humanity of Scripture. But he has not taken seriously enough the distinction between Incarnation and Inscripturation, or related Scripture to atonement.

[42] C.D., I, 1, p. 136.

[43] C.D., I, 2, p. 473.

Word has become Scripture is not one and the same thing as its becoming flesh."[44] One only wishes that he had spelled out this difference between Incarnation and Inscripturation explicitly and used it as the basis of his "fallibility" doctrine. We have to say that the humanity of the Bible is fallible because it is sinful humanity, requiring the gift of the reconciling Spirit, but that the humanity of Christ is not sinful, because He is the reconciling Spirit. This means that every word and verse of the Bible has to come under the judgment and atonement of Christ. Christ, as the centre and Lord of Scripture, has to be the "hermeneutical principle", so to speak, according to which the Bible is read and interpreted. It should be pointed out also that Barth not only fails to base his "fallibility" doctrine soundly, he also fails to apply it. Runia tells us that Barth nowhere rejects or criticizes any part of Scripture. Barth's "criticism", he writes, consists mainly in "re-interpretation".[45] Surely he should either have done something with fallibility or openly espoused infallibility, which seems, in practice, to be his actual attitude to Scripture. The nearest thing this student can find to a real grappling with this problem in Barth is his discussion of the openness of the canon, and his reference to Luther's views. Barth writes:

> The well known criterion of Luther was to test whether "it sets forth Christ or not." "What teacheth not Christ is not apostolic, even though Peter or Paul teacheth it. A-

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[44] C.D., I, 2, p. 500.

[45] Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture, p. 105.

> gain, what teacheth Christ is apostolic, though Judas, Annas, Pilate and Herod doth it." And with varying insight into what can be called Christ, this is the criterion which in all ages the Church has in its own way applied to the canon.[46]

Barth might well have applied this criterion positively in order to give real meaning to his "fallibility" doctrine.

We have yet to consider this question of the authority of the canon. One might suspect that Barth's insistence on the dynamic destroys all continuity of inspiration, and thereby the authority of the canon as such. Is there nothing at all to be said for "inspiredness" or "revealedness", for a datum beside the dandum? Certainly Barth realizes that it is these particular books of the Old and New Testaments through which God speaks as nowhere else, for these are the prophetic and apostolic witness, written in temporal and spatial proximity to the revelation itself. The a posteriori principle is applicable here. Commenting on II Tim. 3:14-17, Barth points out that the believer who reads the Bible must remember "the fact that the Scriptures have already played a definite, decisive role..., that they have already given the proof of what they claim to be, that they have already shown their power, the specific power of instruction in the faith which saves him."[47] Barth's denial of static "inspiredness" is closely associated with his understanding of the Bible's unique authority. The authority and freedom of the Bible are inseparable, even as the Word and Spirit are inseparable.[48] That is

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[46] C.D., I, 2, p. 478.

[47] Ibid., p. 504.

[48] Ibid., p. 666.

why he rejects the Catholic notion of a "deposit" of Scripture entrusted to the institutional Church, as if "the Word of God had been conveyed and handed over" to the Church, which is then "left alone with her deceased husband's legacy."[49] The Bible is not something over which the Church has gained control. As "the wind bloweth where it listeth," (Jn. 3:8), so the Bible as the instrument of the free Spirit, is the free Bible.[50] As free, the Bible is authoritative. It stands over against the Church as a free authority confronting it. Nor can it be co-ordinated with the Church's tradition, (or councils, or fathers, or philosophy, reason or history) in such a way that together they constitute one whole body, or deposit, of revelation.[51] Revelation simply cannot be possessed in that way. We may not therefore speak of "Scripture and tradition", any more than we may speak of "faith and works" or "nature and grace" or "revelation and reason".[52] To do so, says Barth, is to relativize the majesty of God in His fellowship with man. It means that the Church looks elsewhere than to God and His Word for its knowledge and salvation, if the authority of tradition is placed beside that of Scripture. Neo-Protestantism and Roman Catholicism are guilty of the same error, Barth thinks, in that both fail to place themselves under, rather than over, Scripture. Here, of course, he is following the sola Scriptura principle of the Reformation. But it is profoundly in keeping with his whole understanding of the Lordship

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[49] C.D., I, 2, p. 688.
[50] Ibid., p. 687.
[51] Ibid., pp. 546, 558.
[52] Ibid., p. 557.

of God over our knowledge of Him.

God's Lordship over our knowledge of Him is also the essence of his approach to the problem of the canon. It is, once again, the Reformation approach. There can be no question of the Church giving divine authority to sacred writings. The Church only recognizes and confirms their authority.[53] The Church's "belief" in the Bible, its "recognizing and knowing" it as Word of God, is theopneustia,[54] even as is the writing of the Bible. "Belief that the Bible is the Word of God presupposes, therefore, that the overmastering has already taken place, that the Bible has already proved itself to be the Word of God, so that we can and must recognize it to be such."[55] When the Church sets the canon, therefore, it does not create a divine authority, thereby proving its equality with, or superiority to, Scripture as an authority. Rather, the Church, in setting the canon, sets itself under an authority, the authority of the Word of God, recognizing it alone as authoritative for its knowledge and life.[56] In doing so,

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[53] C.D., I, 2, pp. 474f. [54] Ibid., p. 506. [55] Ibid.

[56] Concerning the authority of the canon, John Calvin wrote: "There has very generally prevailed a most pernicious error that the Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church.... But the apostle testifies that the Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. If the doctrine of the prophets and apostles be the foundation of the Church, it must have been certain, antecedently, to the existence of the Church.... Wherefore when the Church receives it and seals it with her suffrage, she does not authenticate a thing otherwise dubious or controvertible; but, knowing it to be a truth of her God, performs a duty of piety by treating it with veneration." (Instit. I, vii, 1 and ii). Calvin's doctrine of the testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum, or illumination, is included by Barth under the category of theopneustia. I shall discuss this in the next section.

however, the Church is not infallible. When it sets the canon of Scripture it does so as the majores, and as the πρεσβύτεροι.[57] It makes a human judgment, and therefore

> The Church cannot speak of its canon as though in its decision it had made the decision of the Holy Ghost Himself and therefore decided in its own power for all ages and as against all individuals in the Church. The Church can only regard and proclaim its decision as a direction--an indication seriously meant and therefore seriously to be taken.... In respect of the canon, it will always be open to further instruction. Towards individuals within it it will show patience in respect of their practical relationship to the canon.[58]

Thus he goes on to deplore Protestant orthodoxy's attempt to absolutize the canon, making a divine law out of the Church's decision of faith.[59] Barth holds that it would be quite proper for the Church, if it thought the measure necessary, either to extend or limit the canon, either to recognize other ancient books as Word of God and witness to revelation, or no longer to recognize certain of the present constituents of the canon. He does not, however, make any concrete suggestions along these lines.[60] Barth's failure ever to criticize the Bible, either individual texts or the constitution of the canon, is no doubt determined by his strong desire to reverse the subjectivity of liberalism. Quite rightly he insists on the "basic principle of the subordination of our ideas, thoughts and convictions to the testimony of the Scripture itself."[61] When the Word of God

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[57] C.D., I, 2, p. 479. [58] Ibid., p. 480. [59] Ibid.

[60] According to the indices of Biblical references in the Church Dogmatics, every canonical book is referred to except Esther.

[61] C.D., I, 2, p. 721.

really comes into its own, the world of thought loses its absoluteness, "surrendering itself and following the Word as a tamed beast of prey must follow its master."[62]

As we have seen above, however, there is a note of subjectivity in Barth's doctrine of Scripture, particularly concerning the canon. His great interest is the power and freedom of God's Word actually to reach the mind of man and to create the knowledge of faith. That the Word of God actually takes hold of men, that it grasps them in their whole existence, even in the realm of thought, is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is only the human instrument--indispensable though it is--to this end.

His close association of Scripture and proclamation illustrates this. In Barth's view there can be no separation of any of the three forms of the Word of God: the preached, the written, the revealed. The "revealed" Word never meets us in abstraction from proclamation and Scripture. And proclamation is always dependent upon the Bible as the witness to that "revealed" Word. He startles us, though, when he insists as well that "Scripture, to become the Word of God for us, must needs be proclaimed in the Church."[63] He overstates this. It would be contrary to his whole theological emphasis to suppose that he thinks proclamation, rather than the Spirit, makes the Bible God's Word. He would not, I think, want to deny that the Bible can speak

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[62] C.D., I, 2, p. 721.

[63] C.D., I, 1, p. 136.

God's Word to the individual who reads it in private. When he says this, (if we may venture a sympathetic interpretation), he wants to emphasize that the Bible, as it lies on the shelf, as it were, is not itself God's Word. The Gospel is proclamation before it is Scripture, and is most properly announced by the living voice. It must be spoken to real, particular, living men and women, and this because it is not an abstract body of ideas, or even of information, but a proclamation, a call to decision and faith.

(c) Faith and Life in the Church

We saw at the end of Chapter Two that the Holy Spirit is the form of Christ's parousia in the time of the Church, that is, the eschatological time between the resurrection and the consummation. And in Chapter Three we saw that the reconciling work of the Spirit creates our union with Christ by giving us a share in His obedient life and knowledge. Now we have to look more closely at this faith and life of Christians, paying special attention to its character as knowledge of God. All this has to be discussed in connection with the Church, since, as we shall see, Christian life is always life in the Body of Christ. Karl Barth offers an immense amount of material on these themes, especially in the three parts of Volume IV, and in I, 1 of the Church Dogmatics.

As we noted at the end of our last section, proclamation and Scripture have the nature of a call to faith. It will be useful to begin this section by reference to Barth's discussion

of the call of Christ in IV, 3, under the heading "The Vocation of Man." There he tells us,

> the vocation of man consists decisively in the fact that the living Jesus Christ encounters definite men at definite times in their lives as their Contemporary, makes Himself known to them as the One He is, i.e., as the One He is for the world, for all men, and therefore for them too, and addresses and claims them as partners in His covenant and sinners justified and sanctified in Him. He does this in the witness of the prophets and apostles, but in this witness it is He, Jesus Christ, who does it....[1]

Because it comes to definite men at definite times, not all men as such are called; on the contrary, all men as such are uncalled. But this event has its basis in the election of all men in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world.[2] It is a spiritual process and can only be perceived and understood spiritually. As "spiritual" it is a work of the Holy Spirit. The so-called "process of vocation" is described by Luther: "The Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith."[3] Thus Barth writes:

> As the Spirit of the Father and the Son He is the power of the Gospel itself to call and enlighten and sanctify and preserve man in the true faith. That is to say, He is the power of the One who, as the Son sent by and glorifying the Father, is not only the theme and content but also the origin, and in His person, the Author, of the Gospel.... His <u>parousia</u>, His presence and action is the meaning, goal and substance of this work of the Spirit.[4]

Barth points out that the New Testament never speaks, as Luther does, of the Holy Spirit calling men. This does not mean that

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[1] <u>C.D.</u>, IV, 3, p. 502.
[2] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 483.
[3] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 501.
[4] <u>Ibid.</u>

Luther's statement is not true and valid, for the presence and action of the Holy Spirit are the presence of Jesus Christ in the time between Easter and His final revelation. However, the Spirit is not spoken of in such a way that Jesus Christ is obscured or concealed as the Subject who acts in and through the Spirit to call men to Himself. Jesus Christ is the One who calls in all the concreteness of His humanity.[5] He Himself, the living Jesus Christ, calls. Barth wants to say this in a quite radical way. He refuses to admit a vocatio mediata through the word of prophets and apostles. Vocation in the New Testament, he argues, is always "immediate vocation, i.e., the direct and personal work of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit."[6] The prophets and apostles have an indispensable task of mediation, but it is simply that of witness; it is not their power nor their work that men are called. "Even in Holy Scripture as such there is no inherent force," says Barth. "It is wholly and immediately His power and work if, attested by them, He now issues His call to others as once He did to them.... They are called immediately by Him, by God, by Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit."[7] There can be no office-bearer in the Church who can represent the one Lord who is the living Word of God and issue a vicarious call. He has to be understood "immediately, directly and exclusively" as the One who calls.[8] He Himself can call even now because He is not a figure of the remote past but the living

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[5] C.D., IV, 3, p. 503.
[6] Ibid., p. 515.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

Christ. And He does not live only at the right hand of the Father. In His parousia in the form of the Holy Spirit, He is the Contemporary of man in every age.[9] That is why Barth speaks earlier in this same volume of Christ as the Prophet and True Witness. He is this in our time in the power of the Holy Spirit, who is the "renewing power of the breath of His mouth which as such is the breath of the sovereign God and victorious truth."[10]

Barth describes the vocation of man first as illumination. The light of Christ shines on all men, but in the event of vocation it actually illuminates a man. His blind eyes are healed and made to see. Illumination is his advancement to knowledge, wherein he hears, receives, understands, grasps and appropriates that which is said to him in revelation.[11] This illumination[12] is not the flaring up of a light which was secretly burning low in him already, but a wholly new creation,[13] which comes entirely from without, from Christ speaking. Illumination

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[9] C.D., IV, 3, p. 504.

[10] Ibid., p. 421.

[11] C.D., IV, 3, p. 509.

[12] Barth's "illumination" runs parallel to Calvin's doctrine of the testimonium internum spiritus sancti. Calvin understood it as the work of God in us convincing us of the authority of Scripture, (Instit. I, vii, iv). K. Runia points out (in Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture, p. 15), that Barth makes the internal work of the Spirit, or Illumination, part of theopneustia, or inspiration. "The biblical concept of theopneustia points us therefore to the present," says Barth, (C.D., I, 2, p. 506). "Scripture is recognised as the Word of God by the fact that it is the Word of God. This is what we are told by the doctrine of the witness of the Holy Spirit," (C.D., I, 2, p. 537).

[13] C.D., IV, 3, pp. 508-509.

is not restricted to the noetic, which a man can experience neutrally. Rather, the event of illumination is an event of revelation and knowledge in which a man's whole being is "seized and refashioned so that it becomes his new being."[14] Of this Barth writes:

> In making Himself known, God acts on the whole man. Hence the knowledge of God given to man through his illumination is no mere apprehension and understanding of God's being and action, nor as such a kind of intuitive contemplation. It is the claiming not only of his thinking but also of his willing and work, of the whole man for God.[15]

That this experience cannot be a neutral and exclusively intellectual one is emphasized by Barth earlier in the same volume when he asks, What is truth?. The truth is not an idea, principle or system, nor a structure of correct insights, nor a doctrine. It may be reflected in doctrine, but

> no doctrine has the power of summoning him out of his falsehood to a knowledge and confession of the truth, to obedience and service. The truth alone has the power to do these things.... Jesus Christ in the promise of the Spirit as His revelation in the sphere of our time and history is the truth.[16]

Beside the concept of illumination Barth places the concept of <u>awakening</u> as descriptive of the event of vocation. Awakening contrasts two states of man, the false and the true, sleep and wakening. When one is called by Jesus Christ one's existence is no longer marked by closed, but by open eyes and ears.[17] He speaks of this at length also in IV, 2, under the heading "The Awakening to Conversion", noting such Scriptural passages as

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[14] <u>C.D.</u>, IV, 3, p. 519.
[15] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 510.
[16] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 376.
[17] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 513.

I Thess. 5:6: "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober," and Eph. 5:14: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." Christians cannot be defined simply as those who are awake while others sleep. They constantly stand in need of re-awakening and depend on the fact that they are continually re-awakened.[18] And this awakening is a rising from the sleep of death, the sleep from which there is no awakening except as a miracle of God. Barth quotes Eph. 2:1: "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." There can be no natural, human impulses or emotional movements or deep-burrowing reflections, Barth writes, that assist in this awakening to conversion. It cannot be initiated by ourselves or by any experience of our own, but can be compared only to the miracle of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. While this awakening is wholly divine, however, it is wholly human as well. As the sanctification of a real man it takes place to and in a man and involves his whole heart and soul and mind.[19] But it is the sovereign act of God, "a matter of His omnipotent mercy, of His Holy Spirit."[20] As such it involves compulsion, but a compulsion that creates liberty. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," (II Cor. 3:17). Barth stresses this also in his discussion of vocation in IV, 3. When Jesus Christ makes Himself known as Lord He exercises a power to which no other power

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[18] C.D., IV, 2, p. 555.
[19] Ibid., pp. 556-557.
[20] Ibid., p. 578.

in heaven or earth is comparable. But it is *potestas*, not *potentia*.

> ...it is not a blind, brute power working causally and mechanically. He does not force or suppress or disable in His exercise of it. He is not the rampaging numinous which strikes man unconditionally, so that he can only be petrified and silent before it, yielding without really wanting to do so. He does not humiliate or insult man. He does not make him a mere speculator, let alone a puppet.... The power in which Jesus Christ sets a man in attachment to himself is the liberating power of His Word which is opposed to all compulsion and eliminates and discards it. It is the power of the free grace of God revealed in Him. When He who is resurrected from the dead exercises His power on man, this man may breathe and live and rise and stand with him.[21]

The awakening to conversion has to be a *mortificatio* and *vivificatio*, a miracle of death and resurrection, for sinful man in his falsehood is against God and will not hear God's Word or know God, except as he is compelled by God's grace.[22] But the quickening Spirit has its force in the fact that God is first *for* man, that God precedes man and says Yes to him, and thus "silences the No of man and lays a Yes in his heart and on his lips. He loves man even though he is an enemy (Rom. 5:10) and thus makes him the friend who loves him in return."[23]

Those who are awakened by the call of Christ participate *de facto* in the sanctification of man. Jesus Christ alone is "The Holy One", the sanctified man for all men, and all men are holy in Him. But those who hear the call of Christ, the saints, are those who actually, subjectively participate in His sanctifica-

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[21] *C.D.*, IV, 3, pp. 528-529.
[22] *C.D.*, IV, 2, pp. 578-579.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 580.

tion,[24] who are "disturbed sinners", who "lift up their heads", (Lk. 21:28), and "look to Jesus", (Heb. 12:2).[25] They have the call to discipleship, and, in the freedom and power of the Spirit, they obey the call to follow Christ. Knowledge of God, the knowledge of the saints, exists within this soteriological context.

The more strictly epistemological aspect of faith is discussed by Barth with great polemical and intellectual strength in I, 1, especially the four sections under the heading "The Knowability of the Word of God". The opponents whom he addresses here are primarily liberal and existentialist protestants. Barth makes very little mention of the Spirit here, though his major theme is the sovereign power and self-authenticating authority of the Word of God, which power and authority can, of course, only be understood in terms of the Spirit.

Barth indicates first that the inquiry into the knowability of the Word of God does not call into question whether or not God's Word is known. Those who know the Word are "faced with its trueness," "can no longer withdraw into themselves in order from there to affirm, question, or deny it." "As knowers, they are got at by the Word of God. They can no longer exist without it but with it."[26] Nor is he asking here, How do men know the Word of God?, the answer to which would be proclamation, but rather, How can men know the Word of God?, an inquiry into the possibility of

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[24] C.D., IV, 2, p. 517.
[25] Ibid., pp. 527f.
[26] C.D., I, 1, p. 214.

such knowledge. Nor is he asking about man in general, but rather about man in the Church, i.e., "how it is possible that men can become called and chosen, and therefore real Christians, hearers and proclaimers of the Word of God through their knowledge."[27] Thus Barth very carefully guards against what he calls a premature introduction into the investigation of a philosophical and epistemological determination of the problem.[28] In other words, the question is raised and asked by theology, in keeping with its peculiar object.

In the section entitled "The Word of God and Man", Barth wishes to make man comprehensible as knower of the Word of God. But that this is an anthropological problem he will admit only with reservations. He repudiates the sense in which modernist protestantism understood man's capacity for knowledge of God. His main foe here is Schleiermacher, who saw the coming to faith, or meeting with God as a religious experience "historically and psychologically fixable," to be regarded as a realization of a religious potentiality in man, understood merely anthropologically in terms of what was then the newly discovered category of "religion" in general.[29] Over against this, Barth believes that

> what we are dealing with is a possibility of knowledge, the nature of which is to be made understandable, certainly as a possibility in man, but in this case, which differs from all others, only by starting from the object of knowledge, i.e., the reality of knowledge, and so absolutely not from the subject of knowledge and so absolutely not from man.[30]

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[27] C.D., I, 1, p. 216.
[28] Ibid., p. 217.
[29] Ibid., pp. 219-220.
[30] Ibid., p. 221.

That man can know God is an inconceivable novum, he argues, in direct contrast to all his ability and capacity, and is to be regarded as a "pure fact," like the Word of God itself. Men can have this knowledge only if the ability is given to them by the Word of God itself. And here Barth mentions the Spirit, without Whom the Word cannot be heard.[31]

He tells us that fundamentally he has no objection to describing the hearing of the Word as an "experience", or even as a "religious experience", except that the term is burdened with the view that man generally has the capacity for this experience, and that this capacity has the significance of a norm.[32] Indeed, his next section is called "The Word of God and Experience". Where there is knowledge of the Word, there is experience of it. Here he defines knowledge as

> that confirmation of human acquaintance with an object whereby its trueness becomes a determining factor in the existence of the man who knows. It is precisely this factor determining the existence of the man who knows that we call experience. Man exists not abstractly but concretely, i.e., in experiences, in determination of his existence by objects, by something external distinct from himself.[33]

The experience in question is one of human self-determination, subordinate to determination by God. That is, it does not involve anything that man can give himself or say to himself, yet it is a really human hearing and decision, human obedience or disobedience.[34] Since it is human, the question arises as to

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[31] C.D., I, 1, p. 222.
[32] Ibid., p. 220.
[33] Ibid., p. 226.
[34] Ibid., pp. 227-229.

the anthropological spot at which hearing of the Word of God becomes possible. Barth tells us that we need not single out perhaps will, conscience, or feeling as the peculiar aspect of man to which God's Word relates. Entire theological systems, he points out, have unfortunately been reared upon a preference for one or the other. Nor can there be any fundamental distrust or suspicion of any anthropological centres, such as the intellect, which has all too often been under attack as the peak of human pride. Feeling, conscience and will are also open to such perversion. Man is not more sinful in the act of thought than in any other aspect of his existence. The attack upon the intellect can only be an arbitrary prejudice, a retreat in the face of agnosticism. If the Word of God is God speaking, that is language, and a spiritual event, it must necessarily involve a claim upon the intellect. There can be absolutely no sacrificium intellectus, which Barth describes as "but a last desperate attempt to make the knowledge of God a work of man, to have a human possibility correspond to what is the sole work of God."[35] Nor should theology take any special interest in any recondite anthropological centres, unconscious, subconscious or occult possibilities in the soul of man. Such possibilities need not be denied, nor should any special value be ascribed to them. "Information on the accessibility of this human existence to the Word of God we shall not dream of receiving or expecting," says Barth, "even from the

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[35] C.D., I, 1, p. 283.

deepest psychology of the depths."[36] Man's existence by the Word of God is not to be regarded expecially as the determination of will, or feeling or intellect, but of the whole self-determining man.[37]

In what, then, does experience of the Word of God consist? The most useful concept, Barth thinks, is acknowledgment. He develops the concept in relation to his earlier discussion in the same volume of the nature of the Word of God. First, the Word of God is spiritual. It is language, a rational event, communication from mind to mind; it is the Word of Truth directed to man's ratio. Experience of the Word of God, or acknowledgment therefore, involves knowledge.[38] And the Word of God is personal. Acknowledgment involves a relationship between man as a person, and God as Person.[39] The Word of God is purposive in its relatedness or pointedness as an address, as a Word of the Lord. For this reason, acknowledgment implies man's approval of it, his acceptance of it as good.[40] God's Word is contingent and contemporaneous. To acknowledge the Word, therefore, is to experience His presence.[41] The Word of God has power to rule. Here Barth makes one of his rare references, (in I, 1) to the Spirit:

> The Holy Spirit (at least according to the western notion of the Trinity of God) is inseparable from the Word and His power, therefore not a power separate from that of the Word, but the power that lives in the Word and through the Word.[42]

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[36] C.D., I, 1, p. 233. [37] Ibid. [38] Ibid., pp. 151, 234.
[39] Ibid., pp. 155, 234. [40] Ibid., pp. 158, 234.
[41] Ibid., pp. 164, 235. [42] Ibid., p. 171.

Acknowledgment of the Word therefore means to give way before its superiority.[43] As powerful, the Word bends man. Moreover, the Word of God, as an act of the free, personal God, is a decision.[44] So also, acknowledgment means decision. The Word of God is mysterious in its worldliness, that is, in its veiledness, its appearance of being an ordinary part of human history. Acknowledgment is, then, a "halt before an enigma." It means respect for, and acknowledgment of its mystery.

> Faith therefore invariably means the recognition of our limits and the recognition of the mystery of the Word of God, the recognition that our hearing is bound to God Himself..., who one way or the other does not give Himself into our hands, but keeps us in His hand.[45]

The Word is mysterious also in its onesidedness, in that we are met by it now in its veiling, now in its unveiling. It does not admit of us arriving at a whole, a synthesis, a system. God's ways remain higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts, (Is. 55:8). Acknowledgment, then, means letting oneself continually be led, continually taking the step, continually being in movement from the experience or thought grasped at one time to the opposite experience or thought. Hearing the Word is always a simultaneous hearing of God's No and God's Yes. "The Word in its veiling--its form--is God's demand upon man," he explains, and "the Word of God in its unveiling--its content is God's turning to man."[46] Faith always exists in the movement which is never brought to a rest, and this because of the mys-

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[43] C.D., I, 1, p. 235.
[44] Ibid., pp. 178, 236.
[45] Ibid., pp. 236, 201.
[46] Ibid., p. 204.

tery of God's Word.[47] Finally, the Word of God is spiritual, and this time Barth means the word with explicit reference to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, he says, is the final word to be said of the matter. So far as it belongs to the Word to be apprehended by man it is spiritual.

> The Lord of the language is also the Lord of our listening to it, the Lord who gives the Word is also the Lord who gives faith. The Lord of our listening, the Lord who gives faith, the Lord through whose act the openness and readiness of man for the Word is true and real--is not another God but the one God in this way--and that is the Holy Spirit.[48]

This means that we cannot produce conditions on the fulfilment of which hearing the Word is assured. There can be no methodology by which we can convert revelation into revelation apprehended.[49] When God's Word is acknowledged, the believer "yields to authority." His appropriation of the Word is "The Word's own action," and therefore a gift of the Holy Spirit. The attitude of acknowledgment, then, is a really human attitude and act of man's self-determination. But it is such a human self-determination that it is to be ascribed not to the man himself but to his determination by the Word of God.[50]

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[47] C.D., I, 1, pp. 198f., 236-237. [48] Ibid., p. 208.

[49] Barth rejects Paul Tillich's attempt to produce "a new and better method" of proclamation. Tillich had said that we must renounce direct exposition of religious contents as they are given in Bible and tradition. Man must be led to a "thoroughgoing experience of the limiting situation"; we have to take away his "secret reservations" which prevent his "unconditioned resolve at the limits of his human existence." This is "child's play", says Barth, for we cannot take away man's reservations in face of the Word. The "contents of Bible and tradition" witness to our inability to achieve any such thing for ourselves, (C.D., I, 1, pp. 209-210).

[50] Ibid., pp. 237-238.

Experience of the Word of God, then, is a genuine, humanly possible experience, but it is never a possibility "possessed" by a man as another organ or capacity belong to him.[51] Nor is it especially proper to "men of sensibility".[52] The man of religious inclinations, and especially he, does not possess any possibility for hearing God's Word. The possibility remains God's possibility.[53] Nor is it "given over" to men. We might say any such thing of the religious man

> if we were dealing not with the criterion of dogmatics, but with the principle of a philosophy or view of the world, not with the proclamation of the Church, but with the message of a union of illuminati or peerers into the deeps, not with the Church at all, but with a community of emotional sensationalists whose game was emotion.[54]

Because man's possibility of hearing God's Word does not lie in his own depths, there can be no question of his being an "opposite pole" to God; he will not, as Barth puts it, "expect fresh experience in the form of self-experience."[55] He will not try to hold to it or build upon it, for it has not become a possibility imparted to him and now inherent in him; he cannot "hoard it up".[56] When we know the Word of God we are turned away from ourselves towards Christ. "To stand in the faith means to be called to new faith."[57] It means "fresh clinging to the promise, fresh vision"; it means expectation.[58]

We find Barth dealing with these same themes again in his section on faith in IV, 1. There he speaks again of acknowledg-

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[51] C.D., I, 1, p. 239.
[52] Ibid., p. 240.
[53] Ibid., p. 244.
[54] Ibid., pp. 246-247.
[55] Ibid., p. 251.
[56] Ibid., pp. 255-256.
[57] Ibid., p. 257.
[58] Ibid., pp. 257-258.

ment, which he calls "a cognitive event, the simple taking cognisance of the preceding being and work of Jesus Christ."[59] It does not have reference to any doctrine, theory, or theology, nor to any creed, dogma, or dogmatics, or to the histories or theologies of the Bible. Barth feels it most important to say this in face of what he calls "all false orthodoxy". Christian faith is hopelessly obscured when understood as the acceptance of certain statements.[60] He goes on to speak of faith also as recognition. Recognition does not precede acknowledgment, though it is already included in it. "All true knowledge of God is born of obedience," as Calvin said. But it is not blind obedience without knowledge, nor a mere emotion or act of will.[61] The Christian cannot obey Christ until he has begun to see and understand Him. Therefore, says Barth, every Christian, in however primitive and rudimentary a way, must be a theologian. Once again, it is not an abstract or merely theoretical knowing, but at once a practical knowing.[62] Thus he speaks here also of faith as confession. Real faith cannot be hidden. A Christian who does not confess his faith deceives himself, for, says Barth, if he does not confess Christ, he is not a Christian.[63] In Dogmatics in Outline, we find Barth discussing faith not only as Knowledge and Confession, but also as Trust,[64] trust in God's faithfulness and forgiveness.

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[59] C.D., IV, 1, p. 758.
[60] Ibid., p. 761.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., p. 765.
[63] Ibid., p. 776.
[64] Dogmatics in Outline, pp. 15f.
[65] C.D., IV, 1, p. 758.

It is already abundantly clear that, for Barth, knowledge of God is faith-knowledge, and that Christian faith is inseparable from Christian life. He thinks of Christian life primarily in terms of Paul's three key words in I Cor. 13:13, faith, hope and love. Speaking of the "Act of Faith" in IV, 1, he tells us that faith is the act of Christian life, the basic Christian act which embraces and controls all individual acts and activities.[65] Earlier in the same volume he wrote of "Justification by Faith Alone." When he asks, What is faith?, he answers, Faith is wholly and utterly humility.[66] Faith is the obedient work of man which only recognizes that all of man's work is unavailing for justification: an empty vessel, a vacuum.[67] It is this humble trust in God's grace, this faith which means also knowledge and confession, which fundamentally constitutes the Christian life. We find him speaking of faith again in IV, 2, in relation to Christian love. If faith is pure and total reception, then love is the pure and total self-giving of the Christian man which is inseparable from faith. If faith is the basic and fundamental feature of Christian life, love is its "climax and visible expression."[68] Again, in IV, 3, he speaks of faith in relation to hope, the third essential feature of Christian life. Hope rests on faith. Because the Christian has faith in God, he can hope in Him; and hope nourishes and sustains faith. The whole of Christian life: faith, love and hope, is the work of the Holy Spirit, as Barth indicates

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[65] C.D., IV, 1, p. 758.
[66] Ibid., pp. 617-618.
[67] Ibid., p. 631.
[68] C.D., IV, 2, p. 732.

by the titles of the final section of each of the three parts of the Doctrine of Reconciliation: "The Holy Spirit and Christian Faith," (IV, 1), "The Holy Spirit and Christian Love," (IV, 2), "The Holy Spirit and Christian Hope," (IV, 3).

Life in the Spirit is eschatological life, for we have already an installment, (ἀρραβῶν , II Cor. 1:22, 5:5, Eph. 1:14) of what is to be our future possession, or the first-fruits, or a gift from the income (ἀπαρχή , Rom. 8:23), on the capital of our future inheritance.[69] Even Christians who have the first-fruits of the Spirit can only groan with the rest of creation for the redemption of our body, and the Spirit makes intercessions for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, (Rom. 8:26). Nevertheless, the middle form of eschatological time (as we spoke of it in Chapter Two) is a time of new life for Christians:

> As the Holy Spirit, i.e., Jesus Christ in the power of His resurrection, addresses and gives to them His promise of the eternal kingdom and their eternal life, here and now in the world which is not yet redeemed and perfected, they awake from their sleep and dreams to the knowledge, confession and freedom in which they may be Christians and exist as such.[70]

Being a Christian, in faith, love and hope, means "becoming like children," (Mt. 18:3), being "born again," (Jn. 3:3). Coming to know God in Christ means "Repent and believe the Gospel," (Mk. 1:15), putting off the old man and putting on the new man, (Col. 3:9).[71]

But we cannot go on speaking of Christian faith and life

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[69] C.D., IV, 1, p. 330.
[70] C.D., IV, 3, p. 352.
[71] C.D., I, 2, p. 261.

without reference to the Church. Barth makes it absolutely clear that Christian life is always life in the fellowship of believers. He does not deal with the Church at any length until Volume IV, but from the very first page of I, 1, he is clear that theology and the knowledge of God essentially belong to the Church. It is in the Church that the Holy Scripture is heard and believed; it is in the Church and by the Church that Jesus Christ is proclaimed to the world. And the Church is the creation of the Holy Spirit. In the three parts of The Doctrine of Reconciliation, we find Barth speaking of "The Holy Spirit and the Gathering of the Christian Community," (IV, 1), "The Holy Spirit and the Upbuilding of the Christian Community," (IV, 2), and "The Holy Spirit and the Sending of the Christian Community, (IV, 3). The doctrine of the Church, as part of dogmatic theology, can only be done in faith, i.e., the Church can only be known and understood in faith. It is quite proper that the creed says Credo ecclesiam. It can only be believed in. While it is a visible sociological entity, "it cannot agree to be seen and understood for what it is in this external picture as such."[72] The Church is essentially visible, even as the Incarnate Christ was visible, but what it is, is invisible except to faith. And what is the Church? As a work of the Spirit it is the sphere of the "subjective realisation of the atonement".[73] It is the gathering together of those men who stand in a faith relationship to

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[72] C.D., IV, 1, p. 655.

[73] Ibid., p. 643.

Jesus Christ and who are justified and sanctified by faith. The Christian man, as a member of the Church, is the new creation of the Spirit, the work of the Spirit which follows on the work of Christ:

> The fact that there is the Christian community and Christian faith and therefore this man is, of course--we are reminded of the remarkable pause indicated in the New Testament between the ascension and Pentecost--a new thing, another dimension of the one mystery, a further step in the way and progress of the one God in His address to man....[74]

The Spirit, as doctor veritatis, from the time of His coming at Pentecost, is the awakening power of God creating the new man.[75]

Barth also wants to say that the community is the "earthly historical form of the existence of Jesus Christ," and as such the Body of Christ. He lives above at the right hand of the Father, but not only above human history in this way. He lives in a "special element of this history created and controlled by Him," i.e., the Christian community.[76] He is the Head of the Body. That the Church is His Body is not merely a metaphorical truth. Christ's physical body was the seat of His earthly historical life, the medium of His experience and suffering, His instrument of activity.[77] In His existence in the world after the ascension by the power of the Spirit, His presence is not merely "spiritual" but but bodily. Those who are "in Christ," that is justified by faith and new men in the power of His Spirit, are necessarily in the Body. The Church is the "Body in Christ," (Rom. 12:5).

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[74] C.D., IV, 1, p. 645. [75] Ibid. [76] Ibid., p. 661.
[77] Ibid., p. 663.

Because He is their Representative and Substitute and Advocate, and therefore their Head, because He is the vine of which they are the branches, He includes them in Himself as members of His Body.[78] Union with Christ by the Spirit means, then, life within the Body of Christ. The fellowship (κοινωνία) of the Body, the partaking of the one bread, (I Cor. 10:17), their communion with one another, their common action in remembrace of Him, their common proclamation of the death of the Lord, "publishes and documents" their union with Christ.[79] The being of men in Jesus Christ is never a solitary being, but always in the unity of the community with its diversity of the gifts of the Spirit.[80] Although Barth speaks of the Church as the "earthly-historical form of Christ's existence," he thinks it unwise to speak of the Church or unio cum Christo as an extension of the Incarnation. He explains in IV, 3: "We are concerned with the fact that He, as the one Word of God takes up His abode in the called, that His life becomes their life as He gives Himself to them. This is the mystery and miracle of His union with them."[81] The limitation of the identification of Christ and Church is made plain in IV, 2. While we have to say, Jesus Christ is the Community, we cannot reverse the statement and say, The Community is Jesus Christ. The Church is not the eternal Son of God, the Incarnate Word and Reconciler of God. He does not live because the Church lives, but the Church lives because He lives. The Church is a

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[78] C.D., IV, 1, p. 664.
[79] Ibid., p. 665.
[80] Ibid., p. 667.
[81] C.D., IV, 3, p. 543.

predicate of Christ, but He is not a predicate of the Church. He cannot be thought of as enclosed in the Church or exhausted by it. Moreover, the Church does not send or pour out the Spirit.[82] Neither Christian men, nor the Bible, nor the Church as such "possesses" the Spirit or is related essentially to the Spirit as Christ Himself is. But the Spirit founds, or gathers the Church, upbuilds it, and sends it on its mission to the world.

Obviously this cannot become an essay on the doctrine of the Church. Our interest here is that the Church, as the creation of the Spirit and as the bodily form of Christ's continuing presence, is the community of those who, together, have union with Christ, and thereby share in Christ's knowledge of God. It can fairly be said that the Church is the community of the knowledge of God. Barth writes in I, 1:

> Knowledge of the Word of God... is the presupposition of the Church. We may and must also reverse the statement and say that the Church is the presupposition of knowledge of the Word of God.[83]

The Church is made up of those who know God; there would be no Church if there were no knowledge of God. But similarly, there would be no knowledge of God without the Church. The encounter with Christ which creates faith-knowledge of God will always be in the form of an encounter with the Christian community, with its ministry or proclamation.[84] And Barth often speaks of know-

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[82] C.D., IV, 2, p. 655.

[83] C.D., I, 1, p. 214.

[84] C.D., IV, 1, p. 759.

ledge as the distinction between Christians and other men; God has already reconciled the whole world to Himself, but Christians are distinguished from other men in that they know about this reconciliation.[85] That is why the Christian must exercise his faith by confession and witness,--not only to the world, but also to his brothers in the Church.

> ...humanity means fellowship. This is equally true, indeed it is genuinely true, only of the humanity of the Christian. Since faith is his "free human act, he cannot perform it without his neighbours, without communication with them. He cannot try to keep it concealed from them.... To exist privately is to be a robber.[86]

The believer who knows God in the Spirit can only be a "confessing Christian in the confessing community."[87]

(d) The Hope of Perfect Knowledge

We have already referred briefly to Christian hope as a work of the Holy Spirit. Now we must think of it particularly in relation to our knowledge of God, and the nature of knowledge as faith. In the time of the community, during the middle-form of Christ's parousia, that is, in the power of the Spirit, we live in hope of Christ's final coming again, when He shall appear to every eye. The basis of this hope is, of course, the resurrection of Jesus Christ; the reconciliation of the world is already accomplished in Him. Since hope rests on faith in the resurrection, and faith is a gift of the Spirit, so also is hope a work of the Spirit, (Rom. 15:3, Gal. 5:5). Barth tells

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[85] C.D., IV, 2, p. 511.
[86] C.D., IV, 1, p. 778.
[87] Ibid., p. 779.

us that hope is not the result of an intellectual, theological, moral or religious effort or a mere elevation of one's emotional life.[1] We are "born again unto a living hope," (I Pet. 1:3). Our being born again involves a de facto participation in the sanctification and exaltation of all men accomplished de iure in Christ.[2] Our union with Christ by the Spirit is the ground of our hope. Life in hope is not life in a spiritual vacuum, not a mere waiting. It is a time of life, a time of real participation, through the Spirit, in Christ's new life. The reality of new life is not diminished by the fact that we await His epiphany; it is veiled, but it does not lack significance, power, truth and force.[3] Nevertheless, it is an imperfect participation, and we do not know precisely in what our future, perfected life will consist. We are children of God now, but we do not yet know what we shall be, (I Jn. 3:2). Our life is hid with Christ in God, (Col. 3:3). What we have, then, is a partial participation in Christ's new life. A tension exists between what we already are de iure in Him and what we are de facto, and this tension cannot be relaxed until the end.[4] In Barth's words, the Christian is limited by the fact

> that Jesus Christ has not yet taken the last step in His prophetic work, that His consummating, i.e., universal, exclusive and ultimate revelation has not yet taken place .... For this adequate knowledge and therefore for the true and full form of his witness, the Christian waits. And it is his hope that he may do so, and not do so in

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[1] C.D., IV, 3, p. 939.
[2] C.D., IV, 2, pp. 620-621.
[3] C.D., II, 2, p. 608.
[4] C.D., IV, 3, p. 319.

> vain or in the void, but with a measure of participation already in the One in whom he hopes and in what He expects from Him.... In hope, that which the Christian cannot reach is already near for all its farness. In hope, that which is unknowable is not alien but already known.[5]

Knowledge of God, as an aspect of Christian life in the Spirit, is also limited by the incompleteness of Christ's parousia. Until then, Christian knowledge of God is real and true knowledge, but it is knowledge "in part", "through a glass darkly", (I Cor. 13:12). It is faith, not sight, (II Cor. 5:7). We have an installment, (II Cor. 1:22), or the first-fruits, (Rom. 8:23), but our participation in Christ is "provisional". That is why faith and hope are essentially bound up together.[6] "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen," (Heb. 11:1). Barth writes of this with reference to Calvin:

> Where there is a living faith in the Word of God..., it cannot be otherwise than that that faith should have hope as its inseparable companion, or rather, that it should beget and create it. If we have no hope, we can be sure we have no faith.[7]

The fact that faith never exists without hope is the distinction between faith and sight. When Christ appears we shall see Him as He is, (I Jn. 3:2), and we will no longer need to know Him only by faith and hope, "through a glass darkly", but "face to face".

But what is the nature of the limitation of our present, provisional knowledge of faith? We have already seen, in our discussion of analogy, that our words for God can claim only

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[5] C.D., IV, 3, p. 923.

[6] C.D., IV, 1, p. 330.

[7] Ibid., p. 332.

partial similarity and agreement with His reality. He is the hidden, holy God, who is known only in His veiling in unveiling and unveiling in veiling. Thus in our present time we see as in a mirror. Barth explains,

> We see in an element and medium foreign to the object itself; in the form of human perceptions and concepts; in an earthly history visible in earthly terms; in a consideration of the external aspect of the works of God, the life of the people Israel and even the life of the man Jesus. It also has the particular meaning that we see in a way which corresponds to the nature of a mirror: the interchanging of right and left; God in His disclosure in which He conceals Himself and His concealment in which He discloses Himself. Thus even at best our life is an indirect seeing, a seeing in <u>contrario</u>, and to this extent, an improper seeing.[8]

Barth speaks similarly also in II, 1, under the heading "God before Man". God gives Himself to be known by man in an objectivity different from His own, in a creaturely objectivity. Thus the knowledge we have of God now is comparable to the being, thinking and speaking of a child. There is no question of denying the truth of our present knowledge, but it is indirect, distinguishable from the knowledge of sight, "face to face". We do not yet know God as He knows us. We know Him through His signs.[9]

But in the final appearing of Christ, not only shall prophecies fail and tongues cease, but knowledge shall vanish away, (I Cor. 13:8). "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away," (I Cor. 13:10). Com-

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[8] <u>C.D.</u>, IV, 2, p. 839.

[9] <u>C.D.</u>, II, 1, pp. 52-53.

menting on this, Barth refers to the "distinctions and divisions and contradictions and antitheses" which burden every Christian prophecy or theology. Their partial character cannot exist, in its poverty, when the perfect is come. Therefore,

> Theological research and instruction will then be outmoded. Demythologisation will no longer be required. There will be no further scope for investigation of a correct hermeneutics and debates concerning Law and Gospel, etc. No more volumes of Church Dogmatics will be written; there will be no further need for the furor theologicus.[10]

When the perfect comes we shall know God not indirectly, but directly, "face to face". We shall know Him even as He knows us.[11] In I, 1, in a discussion of analogy, Barth goes as far as to say, "without dissimilarity",[12] and again in IV, 2, "directly, unparadoxically, undialectically".[13] This recalls a remarkable passage that we have already quoted from Barth, but which bears quotation again:

> ...the only begotten Son of God and therefore God Himself, who is knowable to Himself from eternity to eternity, has come in our flesh, has taken our flesh, has become the bearer of our flesh, and does not exist as God's Son from eternity to eternity except in our flesh. Our flesh is therefore present when He knows God as the Son of the Father, when God knows Himself. In our flesh God knows Himself. Therefore in Him it is a fact that our flesh knows God Himself.[14]

Because the man Jesus is the eternal Son of God, knowledge of God is present in Him originally and properly. But through Him we are promised our own divine sonship and therefore our fellow-

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[10] C.D., IV, 2, p. 837.
[11] Ibid., pp. 839-840.
[12] C.D., I, 1, p. 279.
[13] C.D., IV, 2, p. 839.
[14] C.D., II, 1, p. 151.

ship of His knowledge of God.[15]

This knowledge comes to perfection at the final appearing of Jesus Christ. And "when He shall appear we shall be like Him," (I Jn. 3:2). Perfect revelation means perfect reconciliation, and vice-versa. Our perfect knowledge means our perfect sanctification, a part in Christ's Sonship, which is ours by adoption.[16] All this is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, creating our oneness with Jesus Christ, giving us a share in His mind and Spirit, and therefore in God's eternal knowledge of Himself.

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[15] C.D., II, 1, p. 252.

[16] C.D., IV, 2, p. 328.

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