

**God the Eternal Contemporary:**  
**Trinity, Eternity, and Time in Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics***

By

Adrian E.V. Langdon  
Faculty of Religious Studies  
McGill University, Montreal

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the relation of eternity and time in the theology of Karl Barth (1886-1968), specifically the *Church Dogmatics*. In contrast to traditional views, Karl Barth defines eternity with reference to the central Christian doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation. Eternity is understood, then, not merely in its difference from time but as the life, order, and movement of the Father, Son, and Spirit. This dynamic view of eternity ensures a creative and positive relation to created temporality.

To demonstrate this positive relation in Barth this thesis focuses on volumes III and IV of the *Church Dogmatics*. While briefly examining the doctrine of the Trinity in *CD I/1* and the perfection of eternity in *II/1*, the bulk of the thesis examines how the discussion of temporality unfolds in later volumes. What develops is a trinitarian reinterpretation of time: the Father creates and preserves time as the theatre of covenantal relations; the incarnate Son recapitulates time by retrieving the original purpose of created time, which is lost to fallen humanity, and by redirecting all time on the way to the eschaton; while the Holy Spirit creates the time of the community as the correspondence to the fulfilling of time by the Son. Implicit in Barth's view is a narrative view of time. Not only is time created for covenantal relations but also the overall narrative of God's creating, reconciling, and redeeming work controls the varied discussions of time.

To explicate this, the first chapter examines traditional interpretations of eternity, briefly outlines Barth's doctrines of the Trinity and eternity in *CD I* and *II*, and surveys the secondary literature. The second chapter outlines the argument of the dissertation by discussing time and analogy, and then by suggesting Barth's position as an *analogia*

*trinitaria temporis*. The next three chapters examine the times of the Father, Son, and Spirit respectively. The conclusion summarizes the dissertation by suggesting how Barth's view improves on the traditional discussion. It also highlights lacunae and criticisms of Barth in suggesting what a contemporary theology of eternity and time might include.

## Résumé

La présente thèse examine la relation entre l'éternité et le temps telle que développée dans la théologie de Karl Barth (1886-1968), en particulier dans sa *Dogmatique*. S'éloignant des interprétations traditionnelles, Karl Barth définit l'éternité en référence aux doctrines chrétiennes essentielles de la Trinité et de l'Incarnation. L'éternité est ainsi définie non pas seulement par sa différence au temps, mais en tant que vie, ordre et mouvement du Père, du Fils et du Saint-Esprit. Cette approche dynamique de l'éternité entraîne une relation créative et positive avec la temporalité créée.

Afin de démontrer que cette relation positive se retrouve dans les œuvres de Barth, la présente thèse se concentre sur les volumes III et IV de la *Dogmatique*. En examinant brièvement la doctrine de la Trinité trouvée en *Dogmatique* I/1 et de la perfection de l'éternité en II/1, la thèse se penche particulièrement sur la manière dont Barth discute de la temporalité dans les volumes subséquents. Ce qui s'y développe est une réinterprétation trinitarienne du temps : le Père crée et préserve le temps comme le théâtre des relations de l'Alliance; le Fils incarné récapitule en restaurant la fonction originelle du temps créé, que l'humanité déchue a égarée, et en redirigeant tout temps comme se dirigeant vers l'eschaton; l'Esprit Saint crée le temps de la communauté en tant que

réalité correspondant à la réalisation du temps par le Fils. Les vues de Barth contiennent implicitement une vision narrative du temps. Non seulement le temps est créé en vue des relations de l'Alliance, le récit global de la création, réconciliation et rédemption de Dieu dirige les différentes discussions portant sur le temps.

Afin de développer ces points, le chapitre premier examine les interprétations traditionnelles de l'éternité, décrit sommairement les doctrines de la Trinité et de l'éternité soutenues par Barth dans la *Dogmatique* I et II, et résume la littérature sur le sujet. Le deuxième chapitre fait l'ébauche de l'argument de la dissertation en analysant le temps et l'analogie, et ensuite en suggérant que la position de Barth est une *analogia trinitaria temporis*. Les trois prochains chapitres examinent respectivement les temps du Père, du Fils et de l'Esprit Saint. La conclusion résume le contenu de la dissertation en suggérant la manière dont la position de Barth améliore les discussions traditionnelles de ces sujets. Elle souligne de plus des lacunes et des critiques s'appliquant à Barth en proposant les éléments de ce qu'une théologie contemporaine de l'éternité et du temps pourrait inclure.

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## Chapter One

### Interpreting the Tradition and Barth on Eternity and Time

In his *Summa Theologica* Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, argues that time is the measurement of created and human life in its movement, while eternity is the measurement of God's being: "for eternity is the measure of a permanent being, while time is the measure of movement" (Part I, Q. 10.4, answer).<sup>1</sup> Yet the measurement of divine life does not include movement. For Aquinas, and the theologians who preceded him, eternity is generally defined in its negative relation to time. While time is mutable eternity is immutable, while time is flowing eternity is static. To a large extent, then, Christian theologians did not allow the biblical view of the living God or the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation to inform their definitions of eternity, since these imply the activity and movement of God in time and history. This is not to say Christian theologians viewed God as absent from time and space, or that they denied the reality of the Trinity and incarnation, but that these positive doctrines did not supersede the negative relation found in the Greek tradition.<sup>2</sup> This is the fundamental difference between Barth's view and that of the tradition; he allowed the doctrine of the Trinity to direct his view of eternity.

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<sup>1</sup> Although Aristotle only refers to the measurement of time; in his *Physics* he concludes that time is "movement in so far as it admits of enumeration" (IV, 11; 219b).

<sup>2</sup> Any acquaintance with Augustine or Aquinas, for example, will reveal their faithfulness to the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation and God's activity in time. But they do not redefine eternity with the use of these beliefs. In *Summa Contra Gentiles* Aquinas, for example, states his procedure of remotion and then defines eternity. In Chapter 14 of Book 1 he states: "As a principle of procedure in knowing God by way of remotion, therefore, let us adopt the proposition which, from what we have said, is now manifest, namely, that God is absolutely unmoved." Following this in Chapter 15, eternity is defined: "But God, as has been proved, is absolutely without motion, and is consequently not measured by time. There is, therefore, no before and after in Him." Aquinas' point is that temporality and motion implies change, but God is not subject to change, therefore he is without time and motion.



Otherwise, his view is quite similar to the traditional one. For example, Barth holds to the ontological distinction between eternity and time. Eternity is not time and time is not eternity. Or, there is an asymmetrical relation between eternity and time. Eternity is the prototype and time the type, time derives its existence from eternity. For Barth, however, eternity must be described with temporal and historical predicates. Not because eternity is controlled, trapped or limited by time, but because in the Christian revelation the triune God moves and is active in time.<sup>3</sup>

Divine temporality may be expressed in two basic ways. First, God's inner triune life is described as the perichoretic relation between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And antecedent to the creation of the world, this God elected Jesus Christ to be the savior of humankind. God's eternal life, then, can be described using temporal categories such as movement, decision, event, act and life – even before the creation of time. Second, the eternal living God works and acts within created time and space. This occurs in the creation and preservation of the world and then in the covenantal relation between God and humanity – focused for Barth on the incarnation of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In this second way, the eternal God must be described again using temporal categories and terms. Barth, then, can justify talk of divine temporality based on the triune being and activity of God.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> William Placher correctly interprets Barth's view as a middle way between atemporality and everlastingness – that eternity is time infinitely extended. See *Narratives of a Vulnerable God: Christ, Theology, and Scripture* (Louisville: WJK Press, 1994), 36-40.

<sup>4</sup> David Ford briefly notes the importance of time and space for Barth's doctrine of God as well, *Barth and God's Story: Biblical Narrative and the Theological Method of Karl Barth in the Church Dogmatics* (Frankfurt am Main, Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 1985), 141. The insight that the Trinity is central for Barth's definition of eternity is made clear by George Hunsinger in "Mysterium Trinitatis: Karl Barth's Conception of Eternity", in *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000): 186-209. See as well Brian Leftow, "Response to 'Mysterium Trinitatis,'" in *For the Sake of the World: Karl Barth and the Future of Ecclesial Theology*. Ed. George Hunsinger (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004): 191-201.

To highlight Barth's similarity to and difference from the tradition a brief historical overview of the relation between eternity and time will be given before moving into Barth's own thought.<sup>5</sup> This includes the Greek philosophers Parmenides, Plato and Plotinus, and the Christian theologians Augustine and Boethius. The use of the Trinity in Joachim of Fiore will also be examined, with the purpose of not only differentiating him from Barth but to illustrate the use of the Trinity in the relation of God and time. In the rest of this chapter there will be an examination of Barth's own view with a focus on the Trinity. This includes not only examining the doctrine of the Trinity in *CD I/1* and the perfection of eternity in *II/1*, but also a brief look at the second *Romans* commentary and the *Göttingen Dogmatics*. This will be followed by a critical overview of secondary literature on this issue in Barth. Chapter Two will outline the argument for the rest of the dissertation.

### 1.1. Barth and the Traditional Discussion

There is an irony in Barth's relation to the traditional discussion. First, Barth is in debt to the sources of western thought, both philosophical and theological. From the Greek sources he inherits the ontological distinction between eternity and time, their asymmetrical relation, and the notion of simultaneity. From his theological predecessors (including patristic, medieval, reformation, and post-reformation sources) there is a long list of theological categories he employs, even if he does so in novel ways.<sup>6</sup> Yet, second,

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<sup>5</sup> For historical overviews see Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum: theories in antiquity and the early middle ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); W. Kneale, "Time and Eternity in Theology", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 61 (1961): 87-108; and Garrett J. DeWeese, *God and the Nature of Time* (Aldershot, Hampshire and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishers, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> His trinitarianism includes the divine hypostases, genetic and perichoretic relations, the divine missions, the *filioque* clause, and, following this, the Augustinian definition of the Spirit as the bond of love between

when Barth sees fit he does not hesitate to critique the tradition. The eternity-time relation is a primary example. When discussing the attribute of eternity *CD II/1* he famously states that the “theological concept of eternity must be set free from the Babylonian captivity of an abstract opposite to the concept of time” (611). It will be argued that Barth is able to redefine eternity in a positive relation to time because his definition of eternity is founded on the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation. Thus, Barth critiques the traditional definition of eternity by employing concepts found within the very sources he is critiquing. Barth’s positive use of the tradition will also become evident when examining the perfection of eternity in *CD II/1*.

A full exposition of this twofold relation of Barth to the tradition, even with reference to eternity, lies beyond the scope of this chapter. In this section the concentration will be on the difference between Barth and the traditional discussion, only to illustrate Barth’s trinitarian redefinition of eternity. It will be argued that the tradition, specifically Christian thinkers, did not fully exploit the doctrine of Trinity, which presupposes the living God of scriptures, in their definitions of eternity. This occurred in spite of the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity, along with Christology and pneumatology, were fully embraced and expounded by the likes of Augustine, Boethius and Aquinas. In fact, they were some of the most important exponents and shapers of these central doctrines. Again, this will only be illustrated here.

There seems, then, to be a fundamental tension in Christian definitions of eternity that closely follow Greek thought. The biblical view has God working in time and

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Father and Son. His discovery and use of the *anhypostatic-enhypostatic* Christology is also in debt to the traditional discussion, while his magisterial doctrine of reconciliation takes Chalcedonian ontology as its basic outline. These trinitarian and christological concepts, along with Barth’s ingenious definition of election, form the bedrock of the *Church Dogmatics*.

history, while in the Greek tradition this is not the case. Alasdair Heron summarizes well the difference that the biblical view makes: “Time and history were rather looked upon as the arena of a directed movement, leading from a beginning to an ending; and it was in relation to that movement that Jahweh was proclaimed as he who was, is and will be the Lord of Ages. His eternity was that of the *everlasting* who endures ‘forever,’ not merely that of an a-temporal or super-temporal deity.”<sup>7</sup> The living God of the scriptures is present and active in time and history, and so a Christian definition of eternity wishing to take account of the biblical view ought to note the particular way in which this history between God and his people occurs – especially in reference to Jesus Christ. Thus, there is the need for a positive relation between eternity and time that follows the Christian revelation.<sup>8</sup>

In this historical sketch the different ways in which eternity is defined and the implications of this for the relation to time will be noted. The predominate definition has been a static one. Eternity is either conceived of as timeless, a static Now, or as the simultaneity of past, present and future – yet without movement. This follows the *via negativa* of the Greek tradition.

### **1.1.1 *Parmenides, Plato, and Plotinus***

Behind the important discussion of Plato lies the influence of Parmenides of Elea. In his poem *On Nature* he describes Being as without time and contrasts it with that which is in

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<sup>7</sup> Alasdair I. C. Heron, “The Time of God” in *Gottes Zukunft - Zukunft der Welt: Festschrift für Jürgen Moltmann zum 60. Geburtstag*. Edited by Hermann Deuser, Gerhard Marcel Martin, Konrad Stock and Michael Welker (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1986), 233.

<sup>8</sup> This is not to deny the basic hermeneutical pairing of created and divine characteristics in describing God’s attributes - as in time and eternity, or space and omnipresence. A hermeneutical circle seems unavoidable here. Yet the definition of God’s attributes ought not to be abstracted from the narrative of scripture.

time. As the poem reads: “Being is ungenerated and imperishable, entire, unique, unmoved and perfect; it never was nor will be, since it is now all together, one, indivisible” (Fragment 8, 3-5).<sup>9</sup> This description of Being as without past and future, an ‘all together’ now, will be taken up by later philosophers, eventually becoming a part of Boethius’ definition. The non-temporal Being, moreover, is contrasted with becoming: “it is changeless . . . without beginning or cessation, since becoming and perishing has strayed far away” (Fragment 8, 26-27). Again: “time is not nor will be another thing alongside Being, since this was bound fast and fate to be entire and changeless” (8, 36-38). Beginning with Parmenides, then, Being is without past and future. It is unmoving and negatively distinguished from all that moves and changes; that is, from time.

The most influential ancient discussion of eternity and time, however, is found in Plato’s *Timaeus*. Here Plato describes the creation of time by the demi-urge as “a moving image of eternity” (37 d) while “eternity itself rests in unity” (ibid.).<sup>10</sup> Similar to Parmenides, while time is moving and flows as past, present, and future, eternity is immovable and only ‘is’. This is expressed in the following passage:

For there were no days and nights and months and years before the heaven was created, but when he constructed the heaven he created them also. They are all parts of time, and the past and future are created species of time, which we unconsciously but wrongly transfer to eternal being; for we say that it ‘was’, or ‘is’, or ‘will be’, but the truth is that ‘is’ alone is properly attributed to it, and that ‘was’ and ‘will be’ are only to be spoken of becoming in time, for they are motions, but that which is immovably the same for ever cannot become older or younger by time; nor can it be said that it came into being in the past, or has come into being now, or will come into being in the future; nor is it subject at all to any of those states which affect moving and sensible things and of which generation is the cause. There are the forms of time, which imitates eternity and revolves according to a law of number (ibid.).

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<sup>9</sup> A. H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides: A Critical text with introduction, translation, the ancient testimonia and a commentary* (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> “Timaeus”, translated by Benjamin Jowett in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*. Edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961): 1151-1211.

Note that there is, first, an asymmetrical relation between eternity and time: time is the moving image of eternity, the imitation. Second, immovable eternity is negatively defined in its relation to time. There is no past and future in eternity, eternity only 'is'. While Barth shares with Platonic thought the asymmetrical relation between eternity and time, it will be demonstrated that his view differs in that eternity contains its own movement between the divine persons.

Following Plato, Plotinus is the next most influential Greek thinker on the eternity-time relation. Arguably the last great Hellenistic philosopher, he brings together Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic influences into his speculative system.<sup>11</sup> The three divine hypostases – One, Mind and Soul – make up a hierarchy in which the absolutely transcendent One emanates into the Mind and the Mind into the Soul.<sup>12</sup> The One is beyond predication, existence and being; while the Mind, the source of the Ideals or Primals, contemplates the One; and the Soul, the animating principle of the universe, contemplates the Mind. Through mystical experience and philosophical reflection human beings, who participate in the Soul, can rise to become united with the One, leaving behind the material world.

Within this schema, in *Ennead* 3.7, eternity and time are discussed in relation to the Mind and Soul (the One is beyond any such predication). For Plotinus, the cosmos,

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<sup>11</sup> As Paul Henry puts it: "The One, on this assumption, would be the God of Plato, the Good of the *Republic* identified with the absolute One of the *Parmenides*. The thought which thinks itself and in which Being and Intellect coincide would be the first principle of Aristotle. Lastly, the soul of the world would conjure up certain features of the Absolute of the Stoics, the vital principle immanent in the world", "The Place of Plotinus in the History of Thought" (lv); in Plotinus, *Enneads*. Translated by Stephen MacKenna, abridged with an introduction and notes by John Dillion (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

<sup>12</sup> While emanation is the common term employed to describe the relation between the three hypostases, Dillion points out that emanation may be better thought of in terms of 'illumination' or 'irradiation' and that hierarchy is sometimes replaced by Plotinus with the analogy of the One as the center of a circle, a less hierarchical picture; he suggests, thus, opening up other interpretations of Plotinus. See "Plotinus: An Introduction", especially xc-xcii, in *Enneads*.

and time with it, emerges or emanates with the Soul from the Mind (3.7.11).<sup>13</sup> Eternity is the life of the Mind and time the life of the Soul. The time of the Soul, which is moving, durational, and has the succession of past and future, is an image of the Mind's immobile eternity. The immanent Soul is ever successive, durational and ordering, keeping the universe together. The Eternity of the Mind, however, being the exemplar of time, is far removed from the time and movement of the Soul. Anticipating Boethius, eternity is defined as "a life limitless in the full sense of being all the life there is and a life which, knowing nothing of past or future to shatter its completeness, possesses itself intact for ever" (3.7.5). It is "a Life changelessly motionless and ever holding the Universal content in actual presence . . . knowing nothing of change, for ever in a Now, since nothing of it has passed away or will come into being, but what it is now, that it is ever" (3.7.3). It is the "Life – instantaneously entire, complete, at no point broken into period or part" (ibid.).

Like Parmenides and Plato, there is an asymmetrical relation between eternity and time and they are defined as immobile and mobile respectively. Eternity is timeless, without the succession of past, present, and future. Plotinus continues Parmenides' view by stating that eternity is a full and complete life, it possesses all of its life together at once; or as Boethius will put it, simultaneously. Barth will pick this up as well, though in reference to trinitarian life. The difference between Plotinus and the following two Christian thinkers is the issue of God's knowledge. In the passage above, Plotinus states that the Mind knows "nothing of past or future." Given the Christian belief in God's

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<sup>13</sup> Plotinus explains the origin of time in this way: "Time lay, though not yet as Time, in the Authentic Existent [Mind] with the Cosmos itself; the Cosmos also emerged in the Authentic and motionless within it. But there was an active principle there, one set on governing itself and realizing itself [= the All Soul], and it chose to aim at something more than its present – it stirred from its rest, and the cosmos stirred with it" (3.7.11).

providence over history, however, knowledge of the future and the past are definite concerns for Augustine and Boethius. Both will thus expand the discussion of eternity to include the problem of divine foreknowledge and future contingents.

### 1.1.2 *Augustine and Boethius*

Augustine's discussions of God and time show evidence of a struggle with various philosophical and theological sources.<sup>14</sup> As just mentioned, Augustine takes up the thought of Plato and Plotinus but adds the discussion of God's knowledge. What follows will not be an exhaustive treatment of Augustine's position concerning eternity and time but will focus on the famous discussion in Book Eleven of the *Confessions*.

The difficulties with understanding time are expressed in the ubiquitously quoted passage: "What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know, if I want to explain it to someone who does ask me, I do not know" (XI.14).<sup>15</sup> Yet despite his hesitation, Augustine does attempt a description of the human experience of time.<sup>16</sup> In the first place, he seems to presuppose a flowing, dynamic view of natural time. He rhetorically asks: "Who will see that all past time is driven back by the future, that all the future is consequent on the past, and all past and future are created and take their course from that which is ever present?" (XI.11). Later he admits that it is only the present which has

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<sup>14</sup> These include not only the biblical tradition but also the Platonic tradition and Aristotle; see Simo Knuuttila, "Time and Creation in Augustine" in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*. Eds. Eleonore Strump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 103-115. A fuller discussion would have to include *The City of God* and the various commentaries on Genesis, not to mention the different influences and questions being answered by Augustine.

<sup>15</sup> *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Translated, with an introduction and notes, by John K. Ryan (New York: Doubleday, 1960).

<sup>16</sup> Knuuttila's judgement seems appropriate here: "Contrary to what has often been maintained, Augustine does not offer any philosophical or theological definition of time in Book XI of the *Confessions*. He tries to explain how we are aware of time and how its existence could be explained from the psychological point of view", "Time and Creation in Augustine", 113.



reality (XI.20), and he eventually describes time as the present and subjective experience of past, present and future. He argues that this experience is an extension of the mind (*distentio animi*) (XI.26). Augustine explains:

It is now plain and clear that neither past nor future are existent, and that it is not properly stated that there are three times, past, present, and future. But perhaps it might properly be said that there are three times, the present of things past, the present of things present, and the present of things future. These three are in the soul, but elsewhere I do not see them: the present of things past is in memory; the present of things present is in intuition; the present of things future is in expectation (XI.20).

Thus, unlike Aristotle, Augustine focuses his attention on time as the subjective experience of past, present and future, whereas Aristotle focuses on time as the measurement of objective movement.<sup>17</sup> This leads Augustine to wonder if time can exist without motion and matter (XI.21, 23-24). These reflections on past, present and future, moreover, lead to a discussion of God's eternity.

Like his Greek predecessors, Augustine defines God's eternity with reference to the structure of time. While he assumes that the experience of past, present and future is an extension of the human mind – only real as memory and expectation – God has a different relation to time. All times, past, present and future, are one before God.

Surely, if there is a mind possessed of such great knowledge and foreknowledge, so that to it are known all things past and future, just as I know one well-known psalm, then supremely marvelous is that mind and wondrous and fearsome. From it whatever there is of ages past and of ages to come is no more hidden than there are hidden from me as I sing that psalm what and how much preceded from its beginning and what and how much remains to the end (XI.31).

The eternal God does not experience time and history as a continuum of past, present and future – rather, God is above time and sees all times at once. Augustine explains the divine experience of time before creation in the following way:

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<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, IV, C, especially Chapter 11. For a discussion of Aristotle's view see Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, especially Chapters 1, 4, 6 and 7.

You precede all past times in the sublimity of an ever present eternity, and you surpass all future times, because they are to come, and when they come, they shall be past, 'but you are the Selfsame, and your years shall not fail' [Ps. 101:28]. Your years neither come nor go, but our years come and go, so that all of them may come. Your years stand still at once, because they are steadfast. . . . Your years are one day, and your one day is not each day, but today, because with you today does not give way to tomorrow, nor does it succeed yesterday. With you, today is eternity (XI.13).

Unlike time, then, God's eternity for Augustine does not include succession and movement, it is like the experience of today but never ceases and gives way to the past or future; it is "an ever present eternity," is "steadfast," and God's "years neither come nor go", but "stand still at once," "are one day," "today". Eternity, then, does not contain any movement in comparison to time. The eternity of God is above time; he sees all of what humans call the past, present and future together.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, God being above and beyond time, in a static 'now', is based on the doctrine of immutability.

But far be it that you, creator of the universe, creator of souls and bodies, far be it that in such wisdom you should know future and past. Far, far more wonderfully, far more deeply do you know them! . . . Not so does it befall you who are unchangeably eternal, that is, truly eternal, the creator of minds. Therefore, just as in the beginning you have known heaven and earth without change in your knowledge, so too "in the beginning you have known heaven and earth" without difference in your activity (XI.31).

God's knowledge of all times, then, is without change and activity. God knows all pasts, presents and futures because he is the eternal and immutable God.

Augustine's discussion is important for two reasons. First, unlike the Greek tradition, he argues that God has knowledge of the past, present and future. In Plotinus there is little concern for divine providence and ordering over history. The relation

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<sup>18</sup> The problem of foreknowledge and future contingents in Augustine will not be expanded on here. William Hasker argues that Augustine puts forth three positions concerning this problem: compatibilism, timeless knowledge and a soft determinism; see Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge*. Cornell Studies in Philosophy of Religion (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 2-6. William L. Craig argues, however, that Augustine's position is more consistently compatibilism, see Chapter Two of his *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 7 (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1997).

between the divine hypostases and humanity is one of emanation and mental accent. As a Christian theologian, Augustine, however, is profoundly concerned with God's control over history and must think of God's relation to the past and future, as well as the present.<sup>19</sup> Thus time is not merely the imitation or reflection of eternity, the eternal God knows all pasts, presents and futures. While Barth holds to God's foreknowledge, he does not allow his definition of eternity to be fundamentally controlled by the problem of foreknowledge and future contingents, which played a central role in the tradition. Rather, eternity (and the rest of the attributes for that matter) is a predicate of the triune God. Eternity is not a philosophical problem as much as it is theological description.

Second, like the Greek tradition, Augustine seems to define eternity as static, without movement. While the eternal God *knows* the past, present and future, Augustine does not state that eternity is *active* within time and history. Since he bases his definition of eternity on immutability and simplicity it is difficult for him to conceive of eternity as containing its own movement.<sup>20</sup> This becomes even more complex when examining other places in Augustine's corpus. In *The Trinity*, for example, he espouses the missions of the Son and the Spirit in time and history; including the birth, life, death, and resurrection of

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<sup>19</sup> Note that it is not being claimed that the problem of foreknowledge and future contingents was not a concern for Greek philosophy, only that the problem was more pressing for Christian theologians who needed to argue that God is providential over and active in history. The problem of foreknowledge maintains a central role in discussing eternity even in contemporary analytical philosophy of religion. See, for instance, Linda Zagzebski, "Omniscience, Time, and Freedom" and Brian Leftow, "Eternity and Immutability" in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Religion*. Ed. William E. Mann (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> See for example Knuuttila on timeless creation and atemporality, "Time and creation in Augustine", 106-07 and 112. As he states: "Augustine's answer to the arguments against the temporal beginning of the world is based on a sharp distinction between time and timelessness. Time depends on movement, and since God is unmoving, there is no time before creation" (ibid., 106). Admittedly, Augustine's definition of eternity is being abstracted from the fuller purpose of Book XI and the rest of the *Confessions*. Torrance Kirby ties the conscious unity of past, present and future in the extension of the mind to the conscious unity of reciting a Psalm in praise, which reflects the unity of history, which ultimately reflects the unity of the eternal triune God. The point is that the fractured experience and dissimilarity within time and history finds its rest in eternity. See W.J. Torrance Kirby, "Praise as the Soul's overcoming of Time in the *Confessions* of Augustine", *Pro Ecclesia* VI, No. 3 (1997): 333-350.

the Son.<sup>21</sup> Yet this does not lead Augustine to redefine eternity with reference to movement; eternity is contrasted to that which is in time.<sup>22</sup>

Is there not a contradiction for Christian theology, however, between static eternity and activity in time? After examining briefly the christocentrism of the NT, Heron suggests that static theories of eternity must be questioned from a Christian perspective:

[It] makes it impossible any longer to think of eternity in purely static terms. He who is eternal must be seen as personal, as active, and as capable of entering into time and of taking temporality into himself. Not only the *structure* but also the *movement* of time must have its ground in him, though both movement and structure must certainly be seen in his possession rather than as possessing him.<sup>23</sup>

This need for movement cannot be traced within Augustine's thought nor the rest of the tradition; it is only being suggested here that a static view of eternity makes the activity of God in time difficult to conceptualize.<sup>24</sup> Barth, by contrast, does not view eternity as static. Rather, as will be examined, God is present and active in all moments of time. This is possible because God has a particular divine temporality.

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<sup>21</sup> *The Trinity*. Introduction, translation and notes by Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 1991), Book IV. For example: "And just as being born means for the Son his being from the Father, so his being sent means his being known to be from him. And just as for the Holy Spirit his being the gift of God means his proceeding from the Father, so his being sent means his being known to proceed from him", IV.29.

<sup>22</sup> See *ibid.*, IV, prologue, and the following: "In their own proper substance by which they are, the three are one, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, without any temporal movement, without any intervals of time or space, one and same over all creation, one and the same all together from eternity to eternity, like eternity itself which is never without verity and charity" (*ibid.*, IV.30). What is more, the various acts of the Trinity in time and history are the result of creaturely apprehension for "they cannot be manifested inseparably by creatures which are so unlike them" (*ibid.*).

<sup>23</sup> 'The Time of God', 237.

<sup>24</sup> Again Heron's general conclusions suggest this: "It is no accident that a purely undifferentiated idea of eternity as 'timelessness', dominated by the model of a mathematical point and by the concept of 'simplicity', has frequently joined forces with that unitarian notion of God which never seems very far from the surface of much Western Christian thought and belief. The alliance has taken many forms; but the result has always been that the doctrines of the incarnation and Trinity have come to appear at best problematic, at worst absurd. Whether the emphasis has been placed on unity rather than differentiation, on timelessness rather than on the eternal divine temporality . . . the consequence has been the same: God has been 'magnified' by squeezing him into a frame of reference altogether too cramped. By contrast, a trinitarian understanding opens the way to a richer conception both of divine eternity and of eternity as the source and ground of our temporality" (*ibid.*, 237-38).

The Christian philosopher Boethius provided what is considered the classical definition of eternity. In book five of the *Consolation*, the problem of divine foreknowledge and future contingents is front and center. The problem is outlined in two stages. First, he asks, “does foreknowledge of the future cause the necessity of events, or necessity cause the foreknowledge?” (5.III).<sup>25</sup> Boethius argues with Lady Wisdom that foreknowledge does indeed create necessity. Second, this creates the situation in which there is no human freedom. One way out of this predicament is to argue for the contingency of divine foreknowledge – which is unthinkable.<sup>26</sup> Another way out, according to Boethius, is by reflecting on knowledge: for every object is known not because of *its* ability to be known but according to the ability of the *knower* (5.IV). In other words, the problem of divine knowledge of the future can only be resolved if reason can rise to understand the way in which divine knowledge occurs (5.V).

It is within the framework of this problem of divine knowledge that Boethius gives his classical definition of eternity. He responds to the problem of eternity, time and knowledge in the following way. The passage is worth quoting at length:

Eternity, then, is the complete, simultaneous and perfect possession of everlasting life; this will be clear from a comparison with creatures that exist in time. Whatever lives in time exists in the present and progresses from the past to the future, and there is nothing set in time which can embrace simultaneously the whole extent of its life: it is in the position of not yet possessing tomorrow when it has already lost yesterday. In this life of today you do not live more fully than in that fleeting and transitory moment. Whatever, therefore, suffers the condition of being in time, even though it never had any beginning, never has any ending and its life extends into the infinity of time, as Aristotle thought was the case of the world, it is still not such that it may properly be considered eternal.

Its life may be infinitely long, but it does not embrace and comprehend its whole extent simultaneously. It still lacks the future, while already having lost the past. So that that which embraces and possesses simultaneously the whole fullness of everlasting life, which lacks nothing of the future and has lost nothing of the past, that is what may

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<sup>25</sup> Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Translated with an introduction by V.E. Watts (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1969).

<sup>26</sup> For if God “thinks that they will inevitably happen while the possibility of their non-occurrence exists, He is deceived, and this is something wicked both to say and to think” (5.III).

properly be said to be eternal. Of necessity it will always be present to itself, controlling itself, and have present the infinity of fleeting time (5.VI).

God's eternity, then, is like an 'eternal present' which does not lose itself to the past or the future. Unlike human life, it is the full possession of life simultaneously. The timelessness of this position is not clear until it is applied to God's knowledge of time.

Boethius explains:

His knowledge, too, transcends all temporal change and abides in the immediacy of His presence. It embraces all the infinite recesses of past and future and views them in the immediacy of its knowing as though they are happening in the present. . . . For it is far removed from matters below and looks forth at all things as though from a lofty peak above them (ibid.).

While Boethius suggests that God has an intimate knowledge of all times, his eternity is above and beyond time. All of time is present at once to God as if he looks at it from a peak. Eternity cannot be involved in time because this would imply change and corruption.

The definition of eternity as the complete and simultaneous possession of everlasting life (*interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*), like Plato, Plotinus and Augustine, begins with a reflection on creaturely existence in time. Like Augustine, his discussion is controlled by the problem of divine knowledge and future contingents. This leads Boethius to a definition of eternity that is atemporal; eternity as above and beyond time.<sup>27</sup> While God has an intimate knowledge of all times his eternity is not defined as active within time. Despite Boethius' use of 'life' to describe eternity, he does

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<sup>27</sup> There is some debate as to whether or not Boethius holds to eternity as timelessness or as duration. Stump and Kretzmann in their classic paper on eternity argue that Boethius puts forth both ideas. Because God has the fullness of life he must as well have some sort of duration, but this is coupled with the idea that this duration is timeless. They attempt to overcome the apparent contradiction between the ideas of duration and timelessness by arguing for the coherency of the idea of Eternity-Time simultaneity, in which God's eternity is present to time while remaining timeless. See Elenore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity", *The Journal of Philosophy* 78:8 (1981): 429-458. Their ideas have come under scrutiny by a number of scholars, however.

not connect this with God's triunity or work within time. Brian Leftow's description of Boethius' definition of eternity is telling:

Boethius simply took this definition over from pagan Neoplatonist philosophers. He did nothing to integrate it with his Christian theology. It occurs, in fact, only in his *Consolation of Philosophy*, a work whose Christian ties are so minimal that some have doubted that Boethius wrote it. But there too, there was nothing especially Christian about it. It was simply a bit of useful philosophy.<sup>28</sup>

There are at least three important factors to note in this brief historical overview. First, there is an asymmetrical relation between eternity and time. God, Being, the Forms or the Mind, are in a superior relation to time and its movement. This superiority relies on notions of immobility and immutability. Since God cannot be conditioned by time, then his eternity is generally defined in a negative relation to the temporal order. While Barth assumes the asymmetrical relation between God and creation, his definition of eternity relies on the triunity of God, which does not exclude divine movement. Second, common to Plotinus and Boethius, is the idea that eternity is the complete possession of life. God's eternity does not lack anything of his life. Boethius extends this to mean a complete knowledge of all life that has and will occur in time. Barth takes up this idea of the fullness of divine life, though he argues that it has not been adequately exploited (*CD*, II/1, 611). Third, common to Augustine and Boethius, is the necessity of defining eternity with reference to the problem of divine foreknowledge and future contingents. The eternal life of God is a life that sees, all at once, the future and free actions of finite human beings. In this way, God is related to each human moment by his complete omniscience.

Thus, there is both similarity and difference between Barth and major discussions of eternity and time in the western tradition. This brief overview, which did not even

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<sup>28</sup> Brian Leftow, "Response to '*Mysterium Trinitatis*,'" 194.

include Thomas Aquinas, highlights that Barth is indebted to these thinkers, though Barth's distinctiveness needs to be examined further. This will demonstrate not only Barth's contribution to the tradition but also point out the basis for the argument of this dissertation. Before this, however, one more thinker deserves to be mentioned, since he also took up the doctrine of the Trinity as the focal point in relating God and time.

### **1.1.3 Joachim and Barth**

While the relation between eternity and time is traditionally discussed with little reference to the Trinity, a notable exception is the medieval mystic and exegete Joachim of Fiore. Like Barth, the doctrine of the Trinity is central for Joachim's construction of the God and time relation. At first glance, however, it would appear that Joachim and Barth are miles apart.

Bernard McGinn has suggested that there are three essential themes that distinguish Joachim's thought.<sup>29</sup> The first is the Calabrian's "symbolic mode of presentation", which is evidenced in his diverse *figurae*.<sup>30</sup> Joachim's mode of theological discourse was a combination of exegesis and symbolic representations. Joachim articulated his often difficult and obscure interpretations with symbolism, using an array of numerical, zoological and botanical representations. The second theme is Joachim's distinctive mode of exegesis. Joachim is squarely within the allegorical tradition when he articulates a mode of interpretation that he termed *spiritualis intellectus* (spiritual understanding). This type of exegesis he thought was a gift of the Holy Spirit that enabled him to move beyond the letter of the text into a more profound spiritual understanding of

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<sup>29</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Thought* (Macmillan Publishing Co., NY: 1985.), see especially 99-203.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.



scripture. Characteristic of his interpretation were symbolic concordances or typologies between the Old and New Testaments. These first two themes would have been quite foreign to Barth's approach to theology. Barth's presentation of theology is discursive rather than symbolic and his exegesis is far from Joachim's allegorical method. Yet with Joachim's third essential theme, his theology of history, there is some commonality with Barth.

Both have a central place for the Trinity when discussing the relation of God and history.<sup>31</sup> Joachim is known for a complex interpretation and division of history with the use of the double pattern of twos and threes. There are two Testaments and two great peoples elected by God. Yet this use of two is complemented by the three overlapping *status* or eras. The first status, after the Father, is the *ordo conjugatum*. The second status, after the Son, is the *ordo clericorum*, while the third status, after the Spirit, is the *ordo monachorum*. These orders of marriage, priesthood and the contemplative life are even given exact historical beginnings by Joachim.

While the end of history is completed in the third status of the Spirit, wherein the *virī spirituales* will lead the way in contemplation and "spiritual understanding", this does not mean that marriage and the priesthood will be done away. The first two orders of life lead to the monastic, though the church and even the papacy are not dissolved in the final status of the Spirit. For Joachim, these patterns of twos and threes are based on God's triune nature. According to Reeves, he "founded his interpretation of history upon a belief that it reflected the nature of the Godhead, sometimes in the twofold relationship

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<sup>31</sup> For discussions of Joachim's view of history see Majorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Latter Middle Ages: A Study of Joachimism* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1969), 16-27; Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot*, 161-203; and E. Randolph Daniel, "The Double Procession of the Spirit in Joachim of Fiore's Understanding of History", *Speculum* 55:3 (Jul 1980): 469-83.

of Father and Son, sometimes in the threefold relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>32</sup>

As will be noted in the next section, Barth’s discussion of time takes on a trinitarian shape corresponding to the Father, Son and Spirit as well. And like Joachim, these times can be described as perichoretic in nature. Nevertheless, because of Barth’s focus on the incarnation and outpouring of the Spirit as the locus of God’s historical revelation, he does not identify the trinitarian times with specific historical events and institutions. Neither does Barth’s thought contain any apocalyptic predictions, while Joachim made and was sought out for predictions in his immediate historical context.

Yet this brief comparison does bring attention to the possibilities available for Christian theology when it takes up the triunity of God in the construction of the eternity-time axiom. The triune God as revealed in the Christian scriptures is clearly active within the temporal order; he is not apart from time in an atemporal existence. Both Barth and Joachim would agree that beginning with the triune God is not only faithful to the scriptures but also the central place from which to view the eternal God is his relation to time and history.

Aside from the work of Joachim, the majority of the tradition does not define God’s eternity and its relation to time with reference to the Trinity. Rather, it more often defines eternity with reference to immobility and immutability or couches the discussion in reference to the problem of divine foreknowledge and future contingents, as in

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<sup>32</sup> Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 20. See as well Daniel’s study on the importance of the immanent Trinity for the work of God in history (“The Double Procession of the Spirit”). He argues that not only do the three orders correspond to the divine persons, but also that the double procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son is expressed in the twofold people of God (Jews and Gentiles) and the Old and New Testaments. Thus, the eternal processions within the divine life are expressed in the historical revelation.

Augustine and Boethius. The answer to the God and time question is more often given through philosophical reflection and not by turning to the revelation of God in the scriptures or the confessions of the creeds.

## **1.2. Trinity, Eternity, and Time in Barth**

In the following subsections, the importance of the Trinity for Barth's view of the eternity-time relation will be outlined in broad terms. First, however, there will be a brief discussion of eternity and time in *Romans II* and its rejection by Barth – evidenced as early as the *Göttingen Dogmatics*. Second, there will be an overview of the doctrine of the Trinity in I/1 and then, third, suggestions as to its importance for the eternity-time relation. Fourth, there will be an analysis of the perfection of eternity in II/1. This background will then enable a systematic review of the necessary secondary literature.

### **1.2.1 *Eternity and Time in Romans II and the Göttingen Dogmatics***

Although work prior to the *CD* will not be the focus of this dissertation, a brief review of the difference between the *Romans* commentary and the *CD* ought to be noted. Various commentators have correctly asserted that the relation of eternity and time in *Romans II* is predominately negative. In distancing himself from his liberal teachers, Barth needed to draw the sharpest possible line between God and history, eternity and time. The protest of *Romans* is that eternity is not time, the Spirit of God is not history, and knowledge of God is not religious experience. Barth seeks to point out this Krisis in human knowledge of God. While the relation of eternity and time is found throughout the commentary, it is not the major theme of the work. In fact, the attributes of God do not receive sustained

attention; it is after all a commentary.<sup>33</sup> Eternity and time are briefly examined in *Romans* only to mark out the different way in which this relation is worked out in Barth's dogmatics, especially as it begins in the *Göttingen Dogmatics*.

The clearest description of the relation is found in Barth's reflections on the work of love expounded in Chapter Thirteen. Here he reflects on the possibility of works of love toward one's neighbor, suggesting that the relation of eternity and time grounds the when and where of "the incomprehensible work of love" (*Romans*, 497).<sup>34</sup> He defines the relation in the following manner: "Between the past and the future – between the times – there is a 'Moment' that is no moment in time. This 'Moment' is the eternal Moment – the Now – when the past and the future stand still, when the former ceases its going and the latter its coming" (ibid.). Eternity, then, is a constant timeless Moment, likened to the present but does not pass away. It is not time, but accompanies and transcends time as the "Now that lies invisibly in the midst, incommensurable with it and unable to approach it" (ibid., 499). In the face of this hidden eternal Moment, every "moment in time bears within it the unborn secret of revelation, and every moment can be thus qualified" (ibid., 497). As Barth put it earlier in the commentary, there is a line of intersection between eternity and time (ibid., 47). Eternity can either judge and critique each human present or empower it for loving action. In *Romans*, then, the relation of eternity and time is not necessarily negative, since eternity grounds "the opportunity for the occurrence of love" (ibid., 498). This intersection of eternity and time, nevertheless, does not present the

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<sup>33</sup> On the significance of *Romans* as a commentary, with directions on the importance of this genre for Barth and his relation to modern exegesis, see John Webster, "Karl Barth" in *Reading Romans through the Centuries: From the Early Church to Karl Barth*. Eds. Jeffrey Greenman and Timothy Larsen (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005): 205-223.

<sup>34</sup> Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*. Translated from the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition by Edwyn Hoskyns (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1968). Hereafter *Romans*.

creation, preservation, and fulfilling of time that Barth develops in the *CD*. In fact, eternity is here viewed as a static Now, similar to what is found in the traditional discussion.

As one might expect, the diastasis of eternity and time in the commentary is most prominent. For example, in contrasting the relation of the flesh and the Holy Spirit Barth suggests the following dualism: “In time, it has already been decided that we are all *in the flesh*: in eternity, it has already been decided that we are all *in the Spirit*. We are rejected *in the flesh*, but elected *in the Spirit*. In the world of time and of men and of things we are condemned, but in the kingdom of God we are justified. Here we are in death, there we are in life” (ibid., 284). The relation of flesh and Spirit does not reflect an equilibrium but an “infinite preeminence which the one has over the other, whereby time is swallowed up in eternity” (ibid., 285).<sup>35</sup> There is also a focus on the future eschaton that is negatively related to the present. Time is not seen as moving toward or being fulfilled in the eschaton, rather the “*futurum aeternum* towers above our life, casting over it everywhere the shadow of doubt and shock, of uncertainty and impossibility. What in God we are, and know, and will, rises like an overhanging precipice over our past and present and future” (ibid., 200).<sup>36</sup>

Yet there are also passages on the positive relation of eternity and time. Again the eternal future, which we groan for (ibid., 312), gives us promise (ibid., 377) and the hope of resurrection (ibid., 223). Moreover, the work of the eternal Spirit in creating faith is

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<sup>35</sup> See as well 91, 328-29, 360, 414, 417 and 482-84; on the equating of death with eternity and life with time see 120, 121, 238, 250 and 327.

<sup>36</sup> See as well 191, 202 and 515.

God's eternal Yes (ibid., 152), so that in this temporal life one may come to know God.<sup>37</sup> And while "the knowledge of God is eternal and unobservable: it occurs altogether beyond time", God is still able to call humans to love and know him: "Since love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things (I Cor. xiii. 7), human past, present, and future, is, as such, already the eternal Future. Love is the existential recognition of God; for it is God's recognition of men" (ibid., 325).<sup>38</sup> So while the relation between eternity and time in *Romans* follows the diastasis between God and humanity, which the whole work supports, there is still the possibility of temporally knowing God in faith and love. To reiterate, however, this is not the trinitarian view developed throughout the *Dogmatics*, but the static and hidden Now which either judges each human moment or creates faith and love.

But what significance does the *Romans* commentary have for Barth's further development on this issue? Bruce McCormack argues that in *Romans* II the eternity-time relation assumes a subordinate role to the veiling-unveiling dialectic; and that while the latter remains and develops with reference to the incarnation and Trinity (which is evident in the Göttingen lectures), the former is eventually replaced. McCormack argues that there is a more positive relation, and even nascent trinitarianism, between God and humanity found in the veiling-unveiling dialectic - which is the basis of human knowledge of God.<sup>39</sup> God is not known through a natural theology but indirectly reveals

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<sup>37</sup> "The creature sighs *until now*, and in so doing makes reference to the truth which is revealed in Christ, interpreting our temporal life to those who have ears to hear both as *this present time* and as the opportunity of eternity. Have we now heard the groaning of the creature, which, if we interpret it aright, tells us all we need to hear? If Christ be in us, we hear what He proclaims" (ibid., 310-11).

<sup>38</sup> See as well 331-32, 382 and 457.

<sup>39</sup> This reasoning follows McCormack's larger proposal that there is more continuity between *Romans* II and *CD* than once assumed, *Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 244-45.

himself in the mediation of Jesus Christ.<sup>40</sup> Revelation, in the narrowest sense, occurs in the resurrection, and the cross as the gracious event of God abandonment is only known because of the light of the resurrection.<sup>41</sup> McCormack summarizes this in the following:

In the dialectic of veiling and unveiling which occurs in the cross and resurrection, Barth sees the actualization of a relationship of correspondence between the hidden God and the death of this man in God-abandonment. God is revealed as the God who shows His faithfulness to the human race in the negation of every last temporal possibility up to and including death itself. . . . That the event of the cross can become *the* parable of the Kingdom means that in and through it is revealed the fact that the Kingdom of God is realized only through the negation of all human, historical, temporal possibilities. The Kingdom of God lies on the other side of the 'line of death' which separates eschatology from history, time from eternity.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, while the concentration here is on the negation of human possibilities in the death of Jesus, the cross, in light of the resurrection, reveals God's faithfulness to humanity.

Yet Barth's eschatology here does not reveal any positive telos in the time of the community as the movement toward the eschaton, which he will develop later.

Nevertheless, following this objective revelation of God *in* history, there is still the subjective realization of this by the human subject in the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>43</sup> In *Romans* II, then, there is a nascent form of the epistemology found in the trinitarianism of *CD* II/1.<sup>44</sup> What is missing in *Romans*, however, is "sufficient attention to its ground in God himself."<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, Barth did describe eternity in predominately negative terms. Critics of Barth were quick to point this out and suggest its negative repercussions for the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 246-251.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 251 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 255-256.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 256-259.

<sup>44</sup> "There are three distinguishable moments in the revelation process: revelation in itself, so to speak (the resurrection); revelation making itself 'objective' in a medium (the veiling and unveiling of revelation in the event of the cross); and the revelation creating a subject capable of receiving it (the actualization of the new humanity in time by the power of the Holy Spirit). Expressed in Trinitarian form: God reveals Himself in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is not yet a Trinity of being, but it is headed in that direction" (ibid, 262).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 261.

relation of God and history. The importance of this negative view, however, is not to be misunderstood. For as McCormack argues,

It is clear from the foregoing analysis of Barth's epistemology that God can do things which eternity (treated as an abstract principle) cannot. God can raise Jesus from the dead bodily; He can create the knowledge of God and faith in the sinner living in time. Unlike eternity, which can only limit or bound time, God can realize new possibilities in time. In a very real sense, the inadequacy of the time-eternity dialectic for witnessing to *all* that Barth wanted to say rendered it outdated from the very moment it was first articulated.<sup>46</sup>

It is arguable, therefore, that the view of eternity and time in *Romans* is not traceable into the *CD* because it was not significant for Barth in the first place. The negative relation of eternity and time in *Romans* functioned primarily to critique any notion that knowledge of God could be had by way of abstraction from history. It is basically a rejection of natural theology, especially in the Protestant liberal form of Barth's teachers. Yet knowledge of God and his work in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ is an actual possibility.

According to McCormack, the final rejection of the eternity-time dialectic of *Romans* was secured when Barth discovered anhypostatic-enhypostatic Christology in his Göttingen lectures. This ancient Christology preserved the distinction of God and humanity, even while bringing them into connection when the second person of the Trinity took on human nature. A focus on Jesus Christ, as both fully God and fully human in one person, meant that "the time-eternity dialectic could now gradually be dispensed with with no loss of the critical distance between God and humankind which that dialectic had once secured."<sup>47</sup> Now that the eternity-time relation of *Romans* had ceased

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 328. McCormack also notes that this Christology also served to preserve the veiling-unveiling dialectic. The divinity of the Son is veiled in his humanity until the revelation of the resurrection and the imparting of faith by the Spirit: "Because of His unintuitability, God can only be known in Jesus where He condescends to grant faith to the would-be human knower; where He unveils Himself in and through the veil of human flesh" (ibid., 327).



to serve its original function, Barth would eventually develop a more positive relation in the Göttingen lectures. Barth, for the first time, begins to reflect on his theology in the more systematic form of dogmatics.

While the shift to dogmatics may have surprised many, even those associated with *Zwischen den Zeiten*, Barth hesitantly took up the task of dogmatic lectures.<sup>48</sup> In 1924 and 1925 the importance of Trinity and Christology for Barth's theology begins to emerge – not even three years after the revision of *Romans* in 1921. For the present concerns, there is a definite shift in the discussion of eternity. With the Protestant scholastic collections of Heppe and Schmid in hand, Barth provides a sustained discussion of the attributes of God.<sup>49</sup> In a critical discussion of the *via triplex*, he suggests that his method is a “way of revelation” (*GD*, 398-401). Like the *CD* he divides the attributes into two basic categories and pairs them off. The positive or communicable attributes of God's personality are life and power, wisdom and will, love and blessedness (*ibid.*, 401-426); While the negative or incommunicable attributes of God's aseity are uniqueness and simplicity, eternity and omnipresence, and immutability and glory (*ibid.*, 426-439).

While there are further developments found in the *CD* (especially in taking up the medieval discussion and developing pre-, supra-, and posttemporality), Barth does begin to relate eternity and time in a more positive manner. First, he states, negatively, that God is not limited by time and space as humans are, nor can eternity and omnipresence be

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<sup>48</sup> *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion, Vol 1*. Ed. Hannelotte Reiffen. Trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991). Hereafter *GD*.

<sup>49</sup> It might be noted that the order of things in these lectures resembles that of the *CD*: Trinity and incarnation are a part of the prolegomena, epistemology immediately proceeds the nature and attributes of God, and election is treated within the doctrine of God.

understood as infinite time or space.<sup>50</sup> Yet reflection must not end with the negation,<sup>51</sup> rather “God’s freedom has to be God’s lordship over time and space. It is lordship backwards only if he created time and space, and forwards only if he rules them, only if he is present every moment in them as the Lord. God is the author and Lord of time. He is the fabricator of all times” (*GD*, 435). To support this positive relation, following 17<sup>th</sup> century reformed scholastic Franciscus Burmann, Barth defines eternity as “coexistence” (*ibid.*, 436). Moreover, “Eternity is the quality of God in virtue of which he contains in himself the meaning of time. Eternity is simultaneous duration. We recall the biblical saying: ‘My times are in thy hand’ (Ps. 31:15)” (*ibid.*). So here Barth can be seen struggling to move beyond the predominately negative description of eternity in *Romans*. He explicitly combines a negative and positive relation: negatively, eternity is to be distinguished from time; positively, the eternal God is Lord of time, in his eternity he created and sustains time. His eternity coexists and contains the meaning of time.

Thus, interpretations that suggest Barth replicates the eternal Now of Romans in the *CD* appear incorrect. As McCormack suggests, the diastasis of eternity and time may have been surpassed as soon as Barth used it, and it was certainly replaced in the Göttingen lectures. Now Barth is free to reconstruct the eternity-time relation with specific emphasis on the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation. This is the subject of the next sections.

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<sup>50</sup> “We do not begin to conceive of God’s eternity and omnipresence by infinitely extending time and space but by negating them. . . . God is he for whom the limit of time and space has no necessary meaning, not even as a necessary correlate, as one can hardly deny in the case of the concept of infinity” (*GD*, 434).

<sup>51</sup> In a shot at reviews of *Romans*, Barth states: “If I were the theologian of negation that I am rumoured to be, I could hold a perfect orgy here” (*ibid.*, 435).

### 1.2.2 *Trinity in I/1: Revelation, Genetic Relations, and Perichoresis*

Fundamental to both the structure and content of the *Church Dogmatics* is Barth's doctrine of the Trinity. Indicative of this is the fact that Barth places the doctrine in the first volume of the *CD*, where one might expect a prolegomenon. As Barth put it: "In giving this doctrine a place of prominence our concern cannot be merely that it have this place externally but rather that its content be decisive and controlling for the whole of dogmatics" (303). Or, as John Webster states, "In one very important sense, the whole of the *Church Dogmatics* is a doctrine of the Trinity, both in its architectural conception and its specific content."<sup>52</sup>

Since his doctrine of the Trinity is found in the prolegomena, Barth couches the discussion in terms of self-revelation: the "basis or root of the doctrine of Trinity, if it has one and is thus legitimate dogma . . . lies in revelation," but it is "also an interpretation of the God who reveals himself in revelation" (*CD I/1*, 311). This beginning with revelation gives Christian theology the ability to speak of God's difference. For, according to Barth, within this self-revelation of God there are implied three questions: Who is God in his revelation? What is he doing? And what does it effect? (*I/1*, 295-97). For Barth, these three questions show the identity of the self-revealing God to be revealer, revelation and revealedness; or, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Within this revelation of God, however, there is both "unimpaired unity" of revealer, the revelation and revealedness, and "unimpaired differentiation . . . within himself" as "this threefold mode of being" (*I/1*, 299).

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<sup>52</sup> John Webster, *Barth. Outstanding Christian Thinkers* (London and New York: Continuum, 2000), 72. On Barth's trinitarianism see as well William Stacy Johnson, *The Mystery of God: Karl Barth and the Postmodern Foundations of Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997) and Paul Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Trinity: In dialogue with Karl Barth and contemporary theology* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2002).

For Barth, the material basis of revelation in scripture begins with a focus on self-unveiling, or the incarnation of the Son (I/1, 315-320). According to the biblical witness, this means that God “takes form, and this taking form is His self-unveiling” (I/1, 316). This taking form means “a being of God in a mode of being that is different though not subordinate to His first and hidden mode of being as God” (I/1, 316). This is expressed in the gospel story as Easter, for the resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrates that he is a second mode of the divine being. Behind this occurrence, however, is also the God who cannot be unveiled. This mode of God is the Father, the creator who is by essence “inscrutability, hiddenness” (I/1, 320). For behind “the *Deus revelatus* . . . is the *Deus absconditus*” (I/1, 321). In this second mode of being, “God the Father is God who always, even in taking form in the Son, does not take form, God as the free ground and the free power of his being God in the Son” (I/1, 324). The fatherhood of God is expressed in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, Good Friday. According to Barth, the cross points to the veiled Father, who is the source of revelation (I/1, 331). Yet the revelation of God in these two modes is still incomplete without the imparting of revelation to humans (I/1, 324-332). The revelation of God is not an abstract mythology, but is directed to “a specific man occupying a very specific place, a specific historical place” (I/1, 325). Barth explains this imparting in the following way:

By this concept we mean that in the Bible revelation is a matter of impartation, of God’s being revealed, by which the existence of specific men in specific situations has been singled out in the sense that their experiences and concepts, even though they cannot grasp God in his unveiling and God in his veiling and God in the dialectic of unveiling and veiling, can at least follow Him and respond to Him (I/1, 330).

This is described as “an effective encounter between God and man” (I/1, 331), but it is at the same time “an act of God himself” (I/1, 330). This third mode of God’s being, who

brings about the impartation, is the Holy Spirit (I/1, 332). The material basis in the New Testament is the outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles after the ascension of Jesus.

These three economic moments of the biblical revelation correspond to the three immanent modes of the divine being. Barth explains: “The concept of the revealed unity in the revealed God, then, does not exclude but rather includes a distinction (*distinctio* or *discretio*) or order (*dispositio* or *oeconomia*) in the essence of God. This distinction or order is the distinction or order of the three ‘persons’, or, as we prefer to say, the three ‘modes (or ways) of being in God’” (I/1, 355).<sup>53</sup> God in the three modes of being (*seinsweisen*) “is God three times in different ways,” and “this difference is irremovable” (I/1, 360). So within the immanent divine life there is a true difference and distinction of the divine persons or modes of being, a *repetitio aeternitatis in aeternitate* (I/1, 366). There is no hidden fourth substance behind this differentiation and order within God.

In faithfulness to the classical discussion, the basis of this distinction within the immanent Trinity is found in the doctrine of “distinctive genetic relations”, wherein the modes of being “stand in dissimilar relations of origin to one another” (I/1, 363): *paternitas, filiatio* and *processio*.<sup>54</sup> First, Barth points out the relations of “begetting and being begotten”, and a “bringing forth which originates in concert in both begetter and begotten” (ibid). Second, corresponding to these relations of origin, Barth attributes the works of God *ad extra* to particular persons. The Father is the basis of “authorship,” “source”, and “grounding” as the revealer; while the Son is the basis of “the event of

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<sup>53</sup> On the caution quotes around person, see Barth’s discussion of person and his preference for mode of being (*Seinsweisen*), I/1, 355-360. T. Torrance also notes in the 1975 edition of *CD* I/1 (with the apparent permission of Barth) that *Seinsweisen* may also be translated as “way of being” so as to avoid the modalist connotations suggested by “mode of being” (viii). Thus the terms may be used synonymously.

<sup>54</sup> “The relations in God in virtue of which He is three in one essence are thus His fatherhood (*paternitas*) in virtue of which God the Father is the Father of the Son, His sonship (*filiatio*) in virtue of which God the Son is the Son of the Father, and His spirit-hood (*processio, spiratio passiva*) in virtue of which God the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son” (I/1, 365).

making manifest” as the revelation; and the Spirit the basis of “goal” or “purpose” as revealedness (ibid). A page later, in the fine print, these relations and distinctions within the Godhead are connected to God’s work as creator, reconciler and redeemer: “We might say further that the fact that God is the Creator is the presupposition of the fact that he can be the Reconciler and the fact that the Creator is the Reconciler is the ground of the fact that he can be the Redeemer” (I/1, 364). Thus the relations and order within the Godhead, which are the foundation of God’s distinct modes of being, allow one not only to view God as revealer, revelation and revealedness, but also to describe God as creator, reconciler and redeemer. The full shape of God’s works *ad extra* corresponds to the order of his being *in se*.

Another important doctrine taken up in Barth’s discussion of the immanent Trinity is the perichoresis of the divine modes of being. With the use of perichoresis, Barth avoids the idea of a mathematical unity of one and instead affirms that the unity of the one God is found in the perichoresis of the three divine persons. While the doctrine of genetic relations is the foundation of the difference in the divine life, the perichoresis of the persons is the foundation of divine unity. Barth explains this in the following way:

The triunity of God obviously implies, then, the unity of Father, Son and Spirit among themselves. God’s essence is indeed one, and even the different relations of origin do not entail separations. They rather imply – for where there is difference there is also fellowship – a definite participation of each mode of being in the other modes of being, and indeed, since the modes of being are in fact identical with the relations of origin, a complete participation of each mode of being in the other modes of being (I/1, 370).

The life of the immanent Trinity, therefore, is not exhausted by the subsisting relations of the divine persons but also includes a participation of each person in the other.<sup>55</sup> Barth

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<sup>55</sup> Following a discussion of perichoresis or circumincesso, Barth concludes that these terms imply “both a confirmation of the distinction in the modes of being, for none would be what it is (not even the Father) without its co-existence with the others, and also a relativisation of this distinction, for no one exists as a

also argues that such a doctrine has its material basis in scripture. For in the testimony of scripture what “is always stated implicitly or explicitly . . . is not, of course, the identity of the one mode of being with the others but the co-presence of the others in the one” (ibid.). So besides the relations between the persons in the immanent Trinity, as the basis of differentiation, there is also a coinherence of the divine persons, the basis of God’s unity.

With the doctrines of genetic relations and perichoresis Barth holds together the difference and unity of God’s life. Yet these two doctrines must not only be employed when discussing the immanent Trinity but also when reflecting on the work of God in the economy.<sup>56</sup> Thus, when constructing the relation between eternity and time in the *CD* Barth’s trinitarian theology ought to be evident. This will be illustrated in the next section.

### **1.2.3 *Trinity and Time***

Barth never wrote a separate work on eternity and time, so it is difficult to judge whether he consciously applied the following points. What is certain, however, is that Barth attempted to take up the problems of the theological tradition with a constant reference to the Church’s dogmatic center. Perhaps it is best to suggest that the discussion of eternity and time followed Barth’s dogmatic concerns. The relation of eternity and time is not a philosophical problem but a theological one.

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special individual, but all three “in-exist” or exist only in concert as modes of being of the one God and Lord who posits Himself from eternity to eternity” (I/1, 370).

<sup>56</sup> This is especially the case if one desires to hold together the being and act of God, which Barth certainly intends.

The importance of the doctrine of the Trinity for the eternity-time relation will be demonstrated by making three points. First, not unlike Boethius, it is out of the livingness of God's triune being, as expressed in difference and unity, that time is created and preserved. For Barth, that God's being is eternal does not mean that it excludes movement; rather eternity is the measurement of God's being that includes the perichoretic and electing life of the Father, Son and Spirit. This eternal triune life Barth describes as divinely temporal and as such is the prototype and source of created time.<sup>57</sup> Second, because there is a threefold order within the immanent life of God there corresponds a threefold pattern within the economy of God's works *ad extra*. There are times, then, appropriated to the eternal Father, Son and Spirit (created, fulfilled and ecclesial times). Third, since there is a perichoresis of the divine persons, there corresponds a perichoresis of the trinitarian times. Reflecting the coinhering of the triune persons is a coinhering or simultaneity of created, fulfilled and ecclesial time.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> As we will look at below, Eberhard Jüngel defends the use of temporal and historical predicates for describing God's eternal life. See Brian Lethow as well, "Response to '*Mysterium Trinitatis*'", 196-198. Admittedly, the bounds of language are being stretched to describe eternity with the language of movement and time. Yet if God is the *living* God, then this may be justified.

<sup>58</sup> The positive relation between God and creation in Barth may also be made with reference to spatial categories. Barth holds, in similarity to some of the church fathers, to the position that it is equally correct to say that creation is in God as it is to say that God is present in creation. In the discussion of God's omnipresence, Barth develops the concept of God's spatiality (*CD* II/1, 466-474). So in Barth's view it is incorrect to think of God as distant from creation, since God is the prototype of all space and the universe is present to him in this containment. When God creates the universe it is *in* the divine space and time, "so that time is really in him" (*III*/1, 68).

The apologist Theophilus of Antioch (C.E. late second century), for example, argues that the Roman gods of his pagan friend and interlocutor Autolycus are limited in their spatial existence, they can neither see all nor be everywhere. One of the attributes of the Christian God, however, is "not only to be everywhere present, but also to see all things and to hear all, and by no means to be confined in a place; for if He were, then the place containing Him would be greater than He; for that which contains is greater than that which is contained. *For God is not contained, but is Himself the place of all*", Theophilus of Antioch, *Theophilus to Autolycus*, Bk II, chap. III, italics added. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol 2 (Eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Peabody, MASS: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994); see as well Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Bk II: chaps. I.1; II.3; V.4; XXV.2 and 4 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol 1; and Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, Bk I, chap. 6; Bk II, chaps. 6 and 20, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd Series, Vol. 9.



### 1.2.3.1 *Trinity as the Source of Time*

According to Barth, God's self-unveiling gives humanity the permission and ability to truly speak of God's perfections. This also implies that when discussing God's perfections one is truly describing who God is within himself, even apart from his relation to the created order. Thus, the divine perfections must have a source from within the immanent divine life. This is no less the case with God's eternity. The fullness of the immanent divine life, which *is* eternity, has its own time; which in turn is the prototype and source of created time.

In *CD* II/1 when discussing the final perfection of God's glory, Barth seeks to illustrate the divine beauty with reference to God's triune nature. Within this context, he suggests that within the immanent triune life there is divine 'space' and divine 'time':

There are here three in God who stand in definite irreversible and non-interchangeable relationships to one another and are definitely a plurality of divine modes of being in these relationships. Here God in Himself is really distinguished from Himself: God, and God again and differently, and the same a third time. Here there is no mere point, nor is the circle or the triangle the final form. Here there is divine space and divine time, and with them extension, and in this extension, succession and order . . . Here the three modes of being are always together – so intimate and powerful are the relationships between them. We can never have one without the others. Here one is both by the others and in the others, in a *perichoresis* which nothing can restrict or arrest, so that one mode is neither active nor knowable externally without the others (II/1, 660).

This passage suggests that within the difference and unity of Father, Son and Spirit there is divine 'space' and 'time'. The robust relations between the three modes of being

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This is not unlike Aquinas' claim that God's being sustains all being in the universe. In the *Summa Theologica*, for example, he writes: "Now God causes this effect in things [the being of things] not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being. Therefore as long as a thing has being, God must be present to it, according to its mode of being . . . Being is innermost in each thing . . . Hence it must be that God is in all things, and most intimately" (Part I, q. 8.1, answer).

The word 'containment' is used rather than pantheism, which would also view the world in God, since the relation between God and the world for the fathers and Barth is asymmetrical. In some forms of pantheism the relation between God and the world is reciprocal, mutually conditioning. Barth, in contrast, has a stronger sense of God's aseity and does not argue that the relation between God and the world is mutually conditioning or that the world somehow completes God's being.

contains ‘extension, succession and order.’ This is God’s spatiality and time, or, God’s omnipresence and eternity. Divine time, the ‘succession’ between the persons, is God’s eternity. It is from this divine time that created time flows.

In his discussion of the attribute of eternity earlier in *CD II/1*, Barth makes it clear that eternity is a designation for the triune God. He states that a “correct understanding of the positive side of the concept of eternity, free from all false conclusions, is gained only when we are clear that *we are speaking about the eternity of the triune God*” (II/1, 615, italics added).<sup>59</sup>

If in this triune being and essence of God there is nothing of what we call time, this does not justify us in saying that time is simply excluded in God, or that His essence is simply a negation of time. On the contrary, the fact that God has and is himself time, and the extent to which this is so, is necessarily made clear to us in his essence as the triune God. This is his time, the absolutely real time, the form of the divine being in its triunity, the beginning and ending which do not mean the limitation of Him who begins and ends, a juxtaposition which does not mean any exclusion, a movement which does not signify the passing away of anything, a succession which in itself is also beginning and end (ibid.).

Important conclusions may be drawn from this passage. In the first place, there is a clear ontological distinction between created time and God’s eternity or divine time. Second, however, Barth makes it clear that God’s eternity is not static nor in opposition to time. God’s triune being contains its own succession and movement. Third, God’s eternity not only has its own temporality, but is also the source of created time. Barth hints at this by mentioning that God’s eternity contains ‘beginning’ and ‘ending.’<sup>60</sup>

The idea of God’s triune nature being the source of created time is made explicit within the discussion of creation. In *CD III/1*, Barth takes up the relation of eternity and created time. He argues that God

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<sup>59</sup> For discussions which take account of the connection between Trinity and eternity see Hunsinger’s “*Mysterium Trinitatis*: Karl Barth’s Conception of Eternity”, and the perceptive response to another version of this essay by Brian Leftow, “Response to *Mysterium Trinitatis*: Barth’s Conception of Eternity.”

<sup>60</sup> On the use of the simultaneity of past, present and future in Barth see the discussion below of Padgett’s interpretation of Barth.

is not non-historical because as the Triune He is in His inner life the basic type and ground of all history. And He is not non-temporal because His eternity is not merely the negation of time, but an inner readiness to create time, because it is supreme and absolute time, and therefore, the source of our time, relative time. But it is true that in this sense, in His pure, divine form of existence, God is not in time, but before, above and after all time, so that time is really in Him. According to his Word and work, God was not satisfied merely with His pure, divine form of existence. His inner glory overflowed outwards (III/1, 68).<sup>61</sup>

Here Barth makes it explicit that time is created out of the dynamic divine life. In fact, God is ‘in his inner life the basic type and ground of all history,’ his eternity is ‘an inner readiness to create time.’ Far from being abstracted from time, God’s eternity is the dynamic source, in difference and unity, from which time is created.

#### 1.2.3.2 *The Trinitarian Pattern of Times*

Not only does beginning with the Trinity prove useful in pointing out that God is the source of time, but it also helps discern a trinitarian pattern in Barth’s construction of the eternity-time axis. That is, throughout the *Church Dogmatics* created, fulfilled and ecclesial time may be appropriated to the Father, Son and Spirit.

Corresponding to the unity and differentiation of the divine persons *in se* is the unity and differentiation of God’s works *ad extra*. Yet the description of one act or attribute to one person of the Trinity or another is not exact, according to Barth. It is an appropriation based on the relations and differentiations of the Father, Son and Spirit. He seems to give two reasons for this. First, there is a unity of God’s work *ad extra*. The divine persons do not work separately; even if scripture or dogmatic interpretation assign a particular work to one of the persons the other two are not absent. Second, despite the fact that God reveals himself to humanity, there is still an element of incomprehensibility

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<sup>61</sup> See as well IV/1 (202-03 and 205), where the triune life is described as having its own ‘history.’

and mystery in human knowledge of God (I/1, 371-72). For these reasons, there “is an analogy . . . between the terms Father, Son and Spirit along with the other formulations of this triad in revelation on the one side, and on the other side the three divine modes of being which consist in the different relations of origin and in which we have come to know the truly incomprehensible eternal distinctions in God” (I/1, 372). Given this, Barth defends the doctrine of appropriations wherein “this act or this attribute must now be given prominence in relation to this or that mode of being in order that this can be described as such” (I/1, 375). In application to the eternity-time relation, the following appropriations can be made.

First, since the Father is the basis of authorship, source and grounding within the Godhead, then the creating and preserving of time can be appropriated to him. The creation and preservation of time follows Barth’s delineation of the two ways in which God acts as creator. In the first initial act of creation, there is a *direct* and *immediate* act of God to bring about something totally new, akin to works in the covenant of grace. Following this, there is the *indirect* and *mediated* act of God preserving the world that has been brought into existence (III/3, 63-64). Given this twofold action of God in the doctrine of creation, there is both the initial act of creating time (III/1, 68 ff.) and the preservation of time (III/3, 84 ff). Within preserved time are both the ‘fallen time’ of sinful humanity (III/1, 72 ff) and the ‘allotted time’ of each individual life (III/2, 553 ff). Fallen time is the time wherein humanity rejects fellowship with God, and therefore rejects the original purpose of created time, a time meant for covenantal fellowship. The flow of time as past, present and future, meant for fellowship with God and humanity, becomes a sinful flight plagued with anxiety and fear. It must be noted, however, that

created time remains permanent for human existence, despite humanity's sin. Fallen time merely distorts the purpose and meaning of created time; human temporality still remains a good gift of God as he preserves the creature. Following this, allotted time is the time of each individual life, from birth to death, wherein humans are given an opportunity to respond in faith to God's gracious call. The fatherly works of creating and preserving time are characterized by God's goodness and patience. The times of creation, then, are shaped by a theology of the first article, God the creator.<sup>62</sup>

Second, the Son being the basis of "manifestation" and "revelation" takes up human temporality in the incarnation. In so doing, the incarnate Son retrieves created time and heals fallen time (III/2, 437 ff). As will be reviewed shortly, some have argued, however, that in *CD III* Barth gives the impression that this healing of time, which is manifested in the resurrection, implies the full revelation of eternity in time and thus leaves less room for ecclesial time. This premature closure of ecclesial time, which will be discussed below, is complicated when Barth develops more fully the threefold *parousia* of Jesus Christ in volume IV. He develops an ascension time between the 'first *parousia*' of the resurrection and final *parousia* of Christ in the eschaton. Thus, the rest of humanity awaits the final *parousia* with the return of Jesus Christ, living in the 'middle time.' Humanity may participate in this fulfilling of time, moreover, in the time of the community or ecclesial time. This ecclesial time is the work of the Spirit.

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<sup>62</sup> It should be noted that Barth was reluctant to dialogue with science on the nature of time. On his reluctance to dialogue with science see the brief comments in the preface to *CD III/1*, ix-x. This will be mentioned in the conclusion when Barth is briefly compared with Thomas Torrance on this matter. On time in modern theology, Wolfgang Vondey points out that the discussion of time generally lags behind the discussion in modern physics, and Barth indeed is a part of this. Modern relativity theory calls into question the absolute and universal time of Newton. See Vondey, "The Holy Spirit and time in contemporary Catholic and Protestant theology", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58:4(2005): 393-409, especially 394-96.

Third, the Holy Spirit, being the basis of “end” or “purpose” within the triune life, creates the time of the church, which corresponds to the fulfilled time of the Son.

Ecclesial time is the time in which the eternal Spirit awakens believers to faith in Jesus Christ (IV pars. 62, 67 and 72). The Spirit is the bond of contemporaneity between the fulfilled time of Jesus Christ and the ecclesial time of the community.

The trinitarian pattern of God’s supratemporality found in volumes III and IV is thus faithful to Barth’s early trinitarian theology in I/1. While there is development in Barth’s construction of the eternity-time axis in the *CD*, there is also a high degree of continuity and faithfulness to his trinitarian modes of thought. This preliminary sketch will be supplemented in the next chapter when this trinitarian pattern is brought into discussion with a discussion of time and the use of analogy.

#### 1.2.3.3 *The Perichoresis of Trinitarian Times*

It must be reiterated, however, that these movements of the Father, Son and Spirit in creating, preserving and recreating temporality are not abstracted from one another. Barth makes use of the doctrine of perichoresis to highlight the unity of the divine ways of being: there is “a complete participation of each mode of being in the other modes of being” (I/1, 370).<sup>63</sup> Yet this is not only true for the doctrine of the immanent Trinity, but must also be reflected in the divine works *ad extra*. As stated above, “the fact that God is the Creator is the presupposition of the fact that he can be the Reconciler and the fact that the Creator is the Reconciler is the ground of the fact that he can be the Redeemer” (I/1,

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<sup>63</sup> Or: “Here the three modes of being are always together – so intimate and powerful are the relationships between them. We can never have one without the others. Here one is both by the others and in the others, in a *perichoresis* which nothing can restrict or arrest, so that one mode is neither active nor knowable externally without the others” (II/1, 660).

364). Hence, it will be argued that the creating and preserving of time by the Father is the foundation of the fulfilled time of the Son, and fulfilled time is the foundation for the ecclesial time of the Spirit. There is a perichoresis of the trinitarian times.<sup>64</sup>

While the perichoresis of the triune times will become obvious throughout the dissertation, it would be helpful to illustrate it briefly here. One of the fundamental and original moves made by Barth in the *CD* is his doctrine of election found in *CD* II/2. The original and irrevocable divine decision from all eternity is the election of Jesus Christ, and him as the representative of his people and of all humanity. According to Barth, the original and primal decision of God is the name of Jesus Christ. Thus, in the primal history of God's pretemporal eternity there is the decision to become incarnate in time and to pour out the Spirit upon all flesh.

This doctrine of election is evident when Barth articulates the initial creation of time in *CD* III/1. He argues that one cannot think of time, which is "the form of existence of the creature" (III/1, 67), apart from either God's eternity (III/1, 68-71) or two other counterparts: fallen time and fulfilled time (III/1, 71-75). The first counterpart, the fallen time of humanity, is "the time of man in isolation from God" (III/1, 72). It is the time in which the flux of created time becomes a flight. Yet the second counterpart to created time is the time of grace. With "the commencement of this time, our lost time as such is both condemned to perish but also transformed and renewed. This time is constituted by God's own presence in Jesus Christ in the world created by him" (III/1, 73). What is more, healed and fulfilled time, the time of grace, is in fact the "true prototype of all time", even the original time of creation (III/1, 76). Reflecting his doctrine of election,

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<sup>64</sup> This is one of the main themes of Welker's article, "God's Eternity, God's Temporality, and Trinitarian Theology", *Theology Today* 55:3 (Oct 1998): 317-328.

Barth explains: “the first and genuine time which is the prototype of time is not the time of creation but that of the reconciliation for which the world and man were created in the will and the operation of God” (ibid.). Accordingly, created and fulfilled times are interconnected or perichoretic. As Barth notes, “there is occasion to separate and distinguish creation and covenant and therefore their times, even though we recognize and acknowledge their indissoluble connection and mutual relationship” (ibid.). Barth’s doctrine of election complements his doctrine of creation, thereby leading to the interdependence of the time of the Father and the Son.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity is fundamental for understanding Barth’s view of the eternity time-relation. First, it provides the basis of a dynamic view of eternity, which is the prototype and source of all time. Second, the work and presence of God in creation takes on a trinitarian pattern. While third, the trinitarian times of Father, Son and Spirit are to be viewed as perichoretic. George Hunsinger states the historical significance of Barth’s view in the following:

Barth makes perhaps the first sustained attempt in history to reformulate eternity’s mystery in fully trinitarian terms. The mystery of eternity becomes in effect a subtopic in the mystery of the Trinity. Eternity holds no perplexities that cannot be stated in trinitarian terms, and the Trinity has no formal aspects irrelevant to the question of eternity, so that the form of the Trinity and the form of eternity coincide. Barth unfolds the mystery of God’s eternal time within a fully trinitarian framework.<sup>66</sup>

Hunsinger’s comments are on the mark. Barth develops a complex and nuanced trinitarian theology of eternity and time. Barth’s discussion of eternity in *CD II/1* must also be examined, again highlighting the central role of the Trinity in his definition of eternity and its relation to time.

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<sup>65</sup> Conspicuously absent from the discussion of the times of creation, however, is mention of the Spirit. An important question in Barth studies is the person and role of the Spirit. Could it be that Barth limits the role of the Spirit as “Lord and Giver of Life” in his doctrine of creation, and that this is rooted in his delineation of the Spirit as being “pure Receiver” (I/1, 364)?

<sup>66</sup> George Hunsinger, “*Mysterium Trinitatis: Karl Barth’s Conception of Eternity*,” 189.



### 1.2.4 *The Perfection of Eternity in CD II/1*

In order to set the parameters for this study and to indicate the importance of dogmatic loci for the eternity-time relation, the programmatic discussion of God's eternity in II/1 must be reviewed. Barth has two goals in this discussion of eternity. First, he wants to distinguish his definition of eternity from the traditional atemporal one, even while incorporating what he sees as its best insights. This includes the definition of eternity as pure duration, or the simultaneity of beginning, middle and end. Second, he gives a brief exposition of eternity as pre-, supra-, and posttemporality. With these two basic discussions Barth's theoretical outline for the definition of eternity and its relation to time become evident. It will be contended, moreover, that these formal concepts are only given life and impetus by the doctrine of the Trinity, and closely following Christology and pneumatology. It will also be noted how the concept of supratemporality, in particular, will shape the rest of this dissertation.<sup>67</sup>

It should be noted at the outset that Barth takes up a different methodological basis in defining eternity. He does not want to discuss this perfection as an abstract philosophical notion. Rather,

like every divine perfection it is the living God himself. . . . This radically distinguishes the Christian knowledge of eternity from all religious and philosophical reflection on time and what might exist before and after time. . . . We have simply to think of God Himself, recognizing and adoring and loving the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is only in this way that we know eternity (II/1, 638-39).

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<sup>67</sup> In the literature review below Hunsinger's excellent reading of this section will be noted. He suggests that the dialectical relation of the trinitarian concepts of *ousia*, *hypostases* and *perichoresis*, found in CD I/1, are analogous to the dialectical relation of pure duration, 'beginning, middle, end', and simultaneity, found here in II/1. Hunsinger's reading will not be directly followed here, though his argument seems commensurate with the present summary, especially on the centrality of the Trinity.

For Barth, then, eternity cannot be defined apart from knowledge of the living triune God. “For, rightly understood, the statement that God is eternal tells us what God is, not what He is not” (II/1, 613).

#### 1.2.4.1 *Eternity and the Critique of Atemporality*

In the first half of the discussion Barth affirms, critiques, and incorporates elements of the traditional discussion. The affirmation rests on the conviction that it is necessary to distinguish eternity from created time. In this way, he affirms insights of Augustine and Aquinas. But distinguishing time and eternity is not enough; they must be brought into positive relation. To make this connection, Barth takes up Boethius’ definition of eternity, but decisively moves beyond the sixth-century philosopher. The positive relation of eternity and time, moreover, is not based merely on philosophical reflection but arises from the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation.

Barth begins in what may seem to be a traditional mode. He makes a sharp distinction between eternity and time by defining eternity as pure duration. Eternity as “pure duration” means that “beginning, succession and end are not three but one, not separate as a first, second and a third occasion, but one simultaneous occasion as beginning, middle and end.” This leads Barth to suggest that “Eternity is not, therefore, time” (II/1, 608). He distinguishes eternity from time by stating that duration is absent from created time: “Time is distinguished from eternity by the fact that in it beginning, middle and end are distinct and even opposed as past, present and future. Eternity is just the duration which is lacking to time, as can be seen clearly at the middle point of time, in the temporal present and in its relationship to the past and the future” (ibid.). The point

Barth is making is that whereas for humanity the past and future are separated from the present, thereby making the experience of time one of loss and anxiety, the same cannot be said for eternity. With eternity, there is no loss of the past and fear of the future. Eternity as pure duration overcomes the fleetingness of time. The sharp distinction of eternity and time resembles the traditional discussion. In fact, Barth positively quotes Augustine, Anselm and Polanus to this effect. This distinction, moreover, is supported by the doctrines of divine constancy and unity, also perfections of the divine freedom.<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, as soon as Barth makes the necessary distinction between eternity and time, he notes that pure duration is not merely what is missing with beginning, succession, and end, but that “the duration of God Himself is *the* beginning, succession and end” (II/1, 610). This has the positive meaning that God’s eternity possesses, “decides and conditions all beginning, succession and end. It controls them” (ibid.). So not only is eternity distinguished from time, but it is the basis of all past, present, and future, or beginning, succession, and end.<sup>69</sup> In fact, “God is both the prototype and foreordination of all being, and therefore also the prototype and foreordination of time. God has time because and as He has eternity” (II/1, 611).<sup>70</sup> Barth moves from the

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<sup>68</sup> Defining eternity in connection with constancy, or in traditional terms immutability, is reminiscent of the traditional approach. And as Barth states: “the reason why He is free to be constant is that time has no power over Him. As the One who endures He has all power over time” (II/1, 609).

<sup>69</sup> Barth uses past, present and future interchangeably with beginning, succession and end; both describe the unidirectional flow of time. Yet, as will be shown in the next chapter, these descriptions are based on different understandings of time.

<sup>70</sup> This mirrors the idea that God’s omnipresence is the prototype of created space (II/1, 613). Again, “If God in Himself is the living God, this prototype, too, is in Himself identical with His eternity. The fact that He is the enduring God, duration itself, does not prevent God from being origin, movement and goal in and for Himself. What distinguishes eternity from time is the fact that there is in Him no opposition or competition or conflict, but peace between present, past and future, between ‘not yet,’ ‘now’ and ‘no more,’ between rest and movement, potentiality and actuality, whither and whence, here and there, this and that. In Him all these things are *simul*, held together by the omnipotence of His knowing and willing, a totality without gap or rift, free from the threat of death under which time, our time, stands” (II/1, 612).

negative distinction to a positive relation; eternity is the pure duration that controls the movement of time.

To support this positive relation, Barth takes up Boethius' famous definition of eternity from *The Consolation of Philosophy*: "*aeternitas est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*" (V.6). He suggests that this definition goes beyond Augustine and Anselm who were "too occupied with the confrontation between eternity and time" (II/1, 610). While this was the most important definition of eternity in the middle ages, according to Barth it was not properly exploited, neither by Boethius himself nor Aquinas after him.<sup>71</sup> For Barth, Boethius' focus on the divine Now, which was a *nunc stare* (standing or still now), was defined in opposition to the *fluere* (flow) of time. But such an opposition cannot exist for Barth: "the concept of the divine *nunc* must not exclude the times prior to and after the 'now,' the past and the future, nor may it exclude the *fluere*. On the contrary, it must include it no less than the *stare*" (II/1, 611). Barth defends his view of eternity not by reference to the negation of time, but because of the knowledge of God's unending possession of life.<sup>72</sup> That is, with knowledge of God's triune life.

Support for the total, simultaneous and perfect divine life is found for Barth in the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation. First, eternity is not atemporality because God's eternal immanent being has its own order, succession and movement – its own time. This lengthy passage explains Barth's position:

We are speaking about the God who is eternally Father, who without origin or begetting is Himself the origin and begetter . . . We are speaking about God who is also eternally the Son, who is begotten of the Father and yet of the same essence with Him . . . We are

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<sup>71</sup> Barth has in mind here Boethius' *The Trinity*, Bk. 4 and Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 10, art I.

<sup>72</sup> He even suggests that the traditional approach was close to the idea that if there is no time there is no eternity, since its definition of eternity depended on the negative distinction of eternity and time.

speaking about the God who is also eternally the Spirit . . . who as the Spirit of the Father and the Son is also undividedly beginning, succession and end, all at once in His own essence. It is this 'all,' this God who is the eternal God, really the eternal God. For this 'all' is pure duration, free from all the fleetingness and the separations of what we call time, the *nunc aeternitatis* which cannot come into being or pass away, which is conditioned by no distinctions, which is not disturbed and interrupted but established and confirmed in its unity by its trinity, by the inner movement of the begetting of the Father, the being begotten of the Son and the procession of the Spirit from both. Yet in it there is order and succession. The unity is in movement. There is a before and an after. . . . If in this triune being and essence of God there is nothing of what we call time, this does not justify us in saying that time is simply excluded in God, or that His essence is simply a negation of time. On the contrary, the fact that God has and is Himself time, and the extent to which this is so, is necessarily made clear to us in His essence as the triune God (II/1, 615).

Second, Barth notes that God has time for humanity in the fulfilled time of Jesus Christ:

“The fact that the Word became flesh undoubtedly means that, without ceasing to be eternity, in its very power as eternity, eternity became time. Yes, it became time” (II/1, 616). For these reasons, Barth rejects eternity as “pure timelessness” (II/1, 617). God is temporal both in the sense that his own being contains order and movement *in se*, even antecedent to the world, and in his action *ad extra*, exemplified in the incarnation. Barth can conclude, then, that God is both timeless and temporal. God is timeless in the sense that his eternity is not created time, but temporal in his own triune being and in his creating, reconciling and redeeming activity within the temporal order.<sup>73</sup>

As noted in the discussion below on Barth and traditional views, there is an ironic double relationship between Barth and his classical predecessors. First, it is obvious that Barth is indebted to the western tradition. From the Greek philosophers he inherited both the strong ontological distinction between eternity and time and the idea of simultaneity. And from patristic, medieval and post-reformation sources he learned to describe God's

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<sup>73</sup> “He is timeless in that the defects of our time, its fleetingness and its separations, are alien to Him and disappear, and in Him all beginning, continuation and ending form a unique Now, steadfast yet moving, moving yet steadfast. He is temporal in that our time with its defects is not so alien to Him that He cannot take it to Himself in His grace, mercy and patience, Himself rectifying and healing it and lifting it up to the time of eternal life. This power exercised in Jesus Christ consists in His triune being” (II/1, 617-18).

triune being. This should be obvious from the discussion above. Yet, second, Barth uses the trinitarian description of God's being, as well as the incarnation, to redefine the perfection of eternity. In this way, Barth rejects notions of atemporality popular in classical sources. As Barth sees it, his predecessors did not fully exploit the livingness of God that was inherent within traditional theology itself. It is not as if Barth merely dismisses the tradition, constructing his view in opposition to others. Rather, in an important sense, he is being a faithful student of the history of Christian theology. It could be argued, that he is faithful to its most important insights and critical of its wrong turns.

#### 1.2.4.2 *Pre-, Supra-, and Posttemporality*

With his threefold concept Barth describes God's eternity before, during and after created time. Pretemporality includes the being of God antecedent to the creation of the world; supratemporality includes God's creation and accompaniment of time; and posttemporality is God's eternity after the end of time. In this way God's eternity, Barth argues, encloses time on every side. "Eternity is in time, and time is in God's eternity" (II/1, 620). He also argues that this threefold division is essential for a proper understanding of the gospel. If God is not seen as active in relation to time, then the gospel is reduced to myth or it cannot be articulated in a credible way (ibid).

Pretemporality refers to the being of God antecedent to creation and the beginning of time. God exists as Father, Son and Spirit in the fullness of his free and loving perfections. In pretemporal eternity God elects the Son to become incarnate for the

fellowship of God with the world.<sup>74</sup> Thus, in the freedom of God's pretemporal existence Barth evinces the christocentrism that will be characteristic of his theology (II/1, 622). In pretemporality there is also the anticipation of creation itself, all times therein, the church as the fellowship of believers, and the eschatological end. In his pretemporality God is ready for time, anticipating his work and activity in creating and acting within creation (II/1, 621-622).

With the concept of supratemporality, Barth immediately admits that the preposition 'supra' is inadequate. He also suggests the terms 'co-temporality' and 'in-temporality' to explain what he means by this second form of eternity. All three of these prepositions will prove important for understanding his view. 'Supra' emphasizes the ontological distinction between God's eternity and created time. 'Co' emphasizes that God's eternity is temporal in a distinctively divine way and that eternity accompanies time. Whereas 'in' points to the fact that the eternal God works in time, especially for Barth in the incarnation. All three descriptions, then, must be kept in view if God's eternity is not only thought of in distinction from, but also in relation to, created time.

Supratemporality is defined as the accompaniment of time by eternity. Time's "whole extension from beginning to end, each single part of it, every epoch, every lifetime, every new and closing year, every passing hour: they are all in eternity like a child in the arms of its mother" (II/1, 623). However, one is not to think of supratemporality, according to Barth, as a general law in which God is abstractly present in every now. While it is true that every created now is present to God, Barth does not

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<sup>74</sup> "For this pre-time is the pure time of the Father and the Son in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And in this pure divine time there took place the appointment of the eternal Son for the temporal world, there occurred the readiness of the Son to do the will of the eternal Father, and there ruled the eternal peace of the eternal Spirit – the very thing later revealed at the heart of created time in Jesus Christ" (II/1, 622).

want to construe this in terms of an abstract and immediate experience.<sup>75</sup> Rather, it must be kept in view that one is taking account of the “supratemporality of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” and thus “we are not to speak secretly of a timeless God or a godless time, again taking refuge in a desperate hypostatising of the ‘now’ of our time which cannot be hypostatized” (II/1, 625). When thinking of supratemporality, then, not only is God’s creation and preservation of time in general taken into account, but also God’s work in Israel, Jesus Christ and the Church. It is with the later that the meaning of time in general is found (ibid.).

Barth then gives a discussion of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of time, which is clearly the centerpiece of supratemporality. While this will be examined further in Chapter Four, a number of comments are pertinent. First, Jesus Christ is the center of time, and all time past and future receive their meaning from his time.<sup>76</sup> Second, this turning from the past to the future, from the old aeon to the new aeon, from sin to salvation, is accomplished in his death and resurrection. With the cross, Jesus Christ put to death the sin and disobedience of the old man and the sinful past. “He bore in His person the sin of Israel, thus bringing it under the divine forgiveness. He paid the debt of the human race” (II/1, 626). With the resurrection, moreover, Jesus Christ “brought to

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<sup>75</sup> “And any conception of the relation of time and eternity is in error which tries to find eternity only in an immediate perpendicular connection with each moment of time, and does not see that the basis of time is also in the divine ‘before’ and ‘after’. . . . A doctrine of God which consists and results in the hypostatising of our ‘now’ between the times, what we think we know as our present, or perhaps of our temporal consciousness, or in speculation on the connection of all times with God, is more the doctrine of an idol than the doctrine of God” (II/1, 624). That is, supratemporality must be seen as coming from pretemporality (with the election of Jesus Christ) and moving toward the eschatological redemption of all things. If supratemporality is abstracted from pre- and posttemporality there is a danger of idolizing the human experience of ‘now’ as that which is eternal.

<sup>76</sup> “Because, in this occurrence, eternity assumes the form of a temporal present, all time, without ceasing to be time, is no more empty time, or without eternity. It has become new. This means that in and with this present, eternity creates in time real past and real future, distinguishes between them, and is itself the bridge and way from the one to the other. Jesus Christ is this way. For it is Jesus Christ who in his person decides what has happened and is therefore past, and what will be and is therefore future, Himself distinguishing between the two” (II/1, 626).



light and life in Himself the new man of the second sphere”, and “led men upwards and forwards to the freedom in which man will no longer be a sinner or the slave of any fate. He made him the heir of eternal life. In Himself He brought the kingdom of God near for all who believe in Him” (II/1, 626-27). In Jesus Christ there is a turning from the past of sin toward the future of salvation.<sup>77</sup>

Third, turning to anthropology, human creatures participate simultaneously in the two times. As Luther stated, believers are *simul iustus et peccator* (II/1, 627). Though the two spheres do not have the same reality; for “in Him the equilibrium between them has been upset and ended. He is the way from the one to the other and the way is irreversible” (II/1, 628). Fourth, believers may look to the past and future differently. They do not need to look to the past with tears and complaints or yearning to live pasts again. Rather, they are to look to the work of Jesus Christ in the past. The future, moreover, is not to be anticipated with fear. “But the future is not this empty time. It is the coming new age with all its benefits for which we are set free in Jesus Christ. As men set free in this positive way we can look and move to the future – this is the meaning of the evangelical admonition not to worry” (ibid.). To live under God’s supratemporality is to live in this real turning, to live “in the real time healed by God, the time whose meaning is immediate to God” (II/1, 629). So the accompaniment of time by God’s supratemporality is not a general abstract concept. Rather, it is defined with reference to the salvific activity of God in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>77</sup> “In the sense of the Old and New Testament witness, Jesus Christ is taken seriously only when we see that as He comes between the two spheres He makes the one really past and the other no less really future, constituting time itself the way from this past to this future” (II/1, 627).

Though Barth keeps this christocentrism throughout the *Dogmatics*, there is a definite expansion in what may be called supratemporality in volumes III and IV. As mentioned above, this includes the creation and preservation of time, fulfilled time and ecclesial time – appropriated to Father, Son and Spirit. This complex nexus of trinitarian times may be seen under the rubric of God’s supratemporality.

The third form of God’s eternity is posttemporality. Posttemporality refers to the eternity of God after the completion of history and time in the eschaton. It includes the judgment and redemption of all time that comes before it (II/1, 630). As such, from this side of the eschaton, all time moves toward this end (II/1, 629). This will occur with the final revelation and unveiling of the kingdom of God. “God’s revelation stands before us as the goal and end of revelation. After time, in post-temporal eternity, we shall not believe in it. We shall see it. It will be without the concealment which surrounds it in time and as long as time continues” (II/1, 630).

For Barth, then, eternity refers to the life of God antecedent to, accompanying, and completing time and history.<sup>78</sup> The center of Barth’s understanding is Jesus Christ,

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<sup>78</sup> Following his exposition of the three forms of God’s temporality, Barth insists that the forms must not be abstracted from one another, giving emphasis to one form at the expense of the others (II/1, 631). At the end of the section he bases this on the fact that God is the living God, and beginning, middle and end are distinct but not separable (II/1, 639-40). This is even analogous to the perichoresis of the divine persons. There is “a mutual indwelling and interworking of the three forms of eternity. *God* lives eternally. It is for this reason that there are no separations or distances or privations. It is for this reason that that which is distinct must be seen in its genuine relationship. In the future course of dogmatics we shall often have occasion to think of both the distinction and the unity of God’s eternity” (II/1, 640).

Barth sees unbalance in different theological movements from the Reformation to his own theology. For their part, the Reformers were preoccupied with God’s pretemporality, to such an extent that supratemporality and posttemporality were treated as appendixes (II/1, 631-32). More dangerous, however, was theology in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that tended to focus solely on God’s supratemporality. Neglecting pre- and posttemporality meant a preoccupation with man in his time. This was expressed in Schleiermacher’s “eternity in a single moment”. But more dangerously “it became little more than an exclamation mark which had no positive content, so that it could be placed not only behind the word ‘God’ but behind any word at all denoting supreme value, even in the very last analysis, as we have seen under National Socialism, behind the word ‘Germany’” (II/1, 633). Thus a focus on eternity in time, neglecting the other two forms, meant that God’s presence and activity became a cipher for whatever would take it

whose life, death and resurrection is the work of the triune God bringing salvation to humanity. Consequently, believers may now look to the past and toward the future with hope and expectation. It is being suggested, however, that the concept of supratemporality be extended to include further discussions of eternity and time in the *CD*. This will allow the full breadth of Barth's position to be unveiled, while being faithful to his conceptual framework.

### 1.3. Reading Barth on Eternity and Time

As just observed, for Barth the doctrine of the Trinity is the basis for his discussion of eternity and time. The following survey will examine interpretations of Barth under three basic categories. The first set of interpretations suggest that, in one way or another, despite Barth's best intentions he ultimately reintroduces an atemporal or negative view of eternity. A second set of interpretations focus on problems surrounding the fulfilled time of the Son. The third group of interpretations highlights the eternity-time axis in relation to Barth's trinitarian theology. In different ways, these latter interpreters argue for the positive relation of eternity and time in Barth.

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over. Lastly, posttemporality was rediscovered at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This arises from not only the exegetical recovery of eschatology, but, closer to Barth, the ministry of the Blumhardts and their companions. This rediscovery of eschatology and hope, however, went astray when the coming Kingdom was tied to secular socialism and not to the return of Jesus Christ. In this connection, Barth states that the theological error of the elder Blumhardt was abstracting pneumatology from Christology (II/1, 633-34). These insights in the end led to a focus on supratemporality similar to pietism and liberal neo-Protestantism. Thus, there are always dangers lurking when one form of eternity is neglected at the expense of the others.

Barth admits as well that a sole focus on posttemporality is dangerous. It is in this context that Barth gives a rare piece of theological autobiography. He states his close association with and objections to theological liberalism, the Blumhardts, and socialism (II/1, 634-638). He admits that in the reaction against these influences he and his companions focused on posttemporality as "a pure and absolute futurity of God and Jesus Christ" (II/1, 634). Barth has in mind his own work in the *Romans* II. Though he recognizes the error in neglecting pre- and supratemporality he insists that the overemphasis was necessary at the time. Nevertheless, Barth seeks to strike a balance between the three forms.

### 1.3.1 *The Charge of Atemporality*

The first group of interpreters includes Robert Jenson, Jürgen Moltmann, Richard Roberts, Colin Gunton and Alan Padgett. They take Barth's view to be reintroducing the traditional atemporal view of eternity or constructing a view with such tendencies. Barth, in these views, somehow betrays his best dogmatic intentions in being guided by residual philosophical categories or concepts that carry with them an atemporal construction.

The work of Robert Jenson provides one of the most substantial attempts in contemporary theology to reconstruct eternity and time in a positive relation. This attempt is noteworthy for the present discussion because his initial impetus arose from an engagement with Barth – though subsequently he moved beyond Barth.<sup>79</sup> Highlighting the differences between the two will explain Jenson's concerns with Barth, but also highlight how Barth's view may be preferred to that of Jenson's.

Jenson's 1969 work *God after God: The God of the Past and the God of the Future, Seen in the Work of Karl Barth* was the first major work to take up the discussion of eternity and time in the Barth. Jenson correctly sees in Barth an attempt to overcome an abstract atemporal view of God. He points out that Barth reconstructs his doctrine of God by turning to the Gospel for a redefinition of God's being. He appropriately notes the importance of both Christology and the Trinity for Barth's construction. Jenson states, for example: "Jesus' existence is the one great event to which all others, from the creation of the world to the blessedness of the saints, are subsidiary. The story is the story of Jesus

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<sup>79</sup> As Jenson notes on 'moving beyond': "But the point in the use of any thinker is not whether one can buy his whole system or not, but what good the labor of understanding him and arguing with him does in one's own enterprise of thinking through the matter at hand", *God after God: The God of the Past and the God of the Future, Seen in the Work of Karl Barth* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969), 67. Hereafter *GaG*.

Christ, and *we and all creatures* occur solely in that we have roles to play in that story.”<sup>80</sup>

Or again, reflecting on Barth’s trinitarianism in relation to eternity, he summarizes: “God comes to be understood not as a transcendent thing but as a transcendent happening, and his transcendence therefore understood not as his timelessness but as his radical temporality.”<sup>81</sup>

In the end, however, Jenson finds Barth’s view unsatisfactory, claiming that despite his best intentions Barth did not escape the atemporal tradition. For Jenson, the problem lies in Barth’s distinction between God’s being in himself and his temporal activity. He summarizes the charge in the following way:

He wants to say that God is in fact what happens with Christ, that we are in fact actors in his story, that God’s Trinity is in fact his being Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer. But he also wants to proclaim the freedom and transcendence of God over against what he is for and with us. He thinks that to do this he must postulate a reality of God in himself distinct from God-for-us.<sup>82</sup>

What Barth provides, Jenson argues, is nothing more than the Platonic view of time as the image of eternity. He rhetorically concludes: “But if the whole of God’s temporal story is to be analogous to something else, what can this something else be – if not a timeless deepest reality of God? The notion of analogy of the whole of time to something else is itself the grin of the timeless cat.”<sup>83</sup> Jenson must conclude that Barth has not made good on his intentions to rescue eternity from its Babylonian captivity of an abstract atemporality.<sup>84</sup> Yet, it is not altogether clear why Jenson is suspicious of the distinction

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 69. On the importance of Christology seen, 68-72.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>82</sup> *GaG*, 153. On Barth’s use of analogy and its similarity and differences from the western tradition, see 75-78 and 83-86. Jenson’s basic insight is that Barth substitutes Jesus Christ and the Trinity for Being in the similarity-dissimilarity structure of analogy.

<sup>83</sup> *GaG*, 154.

<sup>84</sup> It should be noted that Jenson tempers his judgment of Barth in later works. In *The Triune Identity*, for example, Jenson states that Barth makes progress in western trinitarianism because, first, he rigorously uses the gospel to define God’s being, and, second, because the Trinity is defined in terms of act and repetition. See *The Triune Identity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1982), 136-138. Hereafter *TI*. In *Systematic*

between God *in se* and *ad extra*, which he argues must lead to Platonic timelessness. Jenson's negative judgment of Barth can be explained by noting the following four differences between their two views.

First, methodologically, Jenson's definition of eternity arises from reflecting on the problem of time itself. He suggests that religions offer different versions of eternity that are in fact answers to the problem of time.<sup>85</sup> That is, versions of eternity bring unity and coherence to the fragmented human experience of time in which the past is lost, the future is feared, and the present is ever slipping away. Barth, as well, defines eternity with reference to time. He suggests that, "Eternity is just the duration which is lacking to time" (II/1, 608). The difference, however, is that for Barth reflection on time does not serve the methodological role that it does in Jenson. The problem of time remains programmatic in Jenson's definition of eternity even when he takes up the discussion of the Trinity. Barth does not give the problem of time the same function. Rather, the Trinity lies behind Barth's definition of eternity, even when he defines it as the *simul* of past, present and future. Moreover, as to be examined below, time is only problematic when its proper use for fellowship with God is refused ('fallen time'). In this way, created time

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*Theology*, Vol. 1, when defining eternity as infinite temporality, he appropriates Barth's definition of eternity as pure duration. Dialoguing as well with Gregory of Nyssa, Jenson describes eternity in the following manner: "God is not infinite because he extends indefinitely but because no temporal activity can keep up with the activity that he is," *Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, The Triune God* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 216. Hereafter *ST*. For a similar discussion of temporal infinity see as well *TI*, 162 ff – which continues Jenson's reflections on 'unsurpassable futurity' in *GaG*, 118-121. This differs from Barth's view by giving priority to the future. Jenson is moving beyond Barth here, though the negative judgment of timelessness is not repeated. Elsewhere Jenson simply summarizes Barth's view of eternity without critique, see "Karl Barth" in David Ford, ed., *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century, Vol. 1* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989): 23-49, esp. 40-41.

<sup>85</sup> See, for example, *GaG*, 62-63, 96; *TI*, 1-5, 21-25, 57-61, 140 ff, and 164 ff; and *ST*, Vol. 1, 55-57 and 67.

becomes fallen, but still remains the good creation of God as a universal form of human existence.<sup>86</sup>

A second feature of Jenson's view is the appropriation of Father, Son and Spirit to past, present and future. As he states:

The Father is the 'whence' of God's life; the Spirit is the 'whither' of God's life; and we may even say that the Son is that life's special present. If, then, when and whither do not fall apart in God's life, so that his duration is without loss, it is because origin and goal, whence and whither, are indomitably reconciled in the action and suffering of the Son.<sup>87</sup>

The criticisms associated with Jenson's temporalizing of God will not be taken up, since the difference from Barth's view is the main concern.<sup>88</sup> Barth refuses to identify any one of the divine persons with the three modes of time. While he defines time as the succession of past, present and future, he does not reduce the divine persons to these three modes. Nevertheless, Barth does eventually appropriate time to the three divine

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<sup>86</sup> Commenting on Jenson's view, Farrow questions the conflation of the problem of time with the problem of sin: "we have seen that it is necessary somehow to overcome temporality, and bodily limitations too, which is not the same thing as God redeeming man. It is temporality itself, 'the one unavoidable metaphysical fact', that has here become the focus of redemption. That is what I meant when I said that the whole scheme is not the rout of the timelessness axiom it is meant to be. Can Augustine's error in viewing time as a byproduct of thought be corrected by transferring his analysis of the human thinker to the divine thinker?", Douglas Farrow, "Robert Jenson's Systematic Theology: Three Responses", *IJST* 1:1 (March 1999), 93. It must be admitted, however, that Barth is not clear on the relation of created and fallen time until the discussions in *CD* III, which we will take up. In *CD* II/1 there is an ambiguity which leaves open the possibility that the flow of time is inherently sinful or at least needs to be healed by eternity. As will be shown, in Barth's later reflections created time only becomes fallen when it is used not for fellowship but for sin; in this way the unidirectional flow of time becomes a flight from God. Hunsinger gives an alternative interpretation by making a distinction between the imperfection and transitoriness of time and sin; in a Thomistic fashion fulfilled time "perfects and exceeds" human temporality, "*Myterium Trinitatis*", 205.

<sup>87</sup> *ST*, Vol. 1, 218-219. For Jenson's explication of this see 218-221. See as well *GaG*, 157 ff. and *TI*, 24-25, 168 ff.

<sup>88</sup> That Jenson comes close to conflating eternity and time is seen in the following: "God is what happened with Jesus of Nazareth in Israel, grasped as the event whose contents articulate the structure of our time. If we ask of our origin, the gospel proposes the will which occurred as this self-giving. If we ask after our destiny, the gospel promises full participation in his act of mutuality before the Father. Here are the only possible past and future which by their concrete content could never be evaded or surpassed. If and only if these promises are true, we may live temporally, called just as we are, as the past has made us, to be ready for each other and the newness each of us brings the other, called the future. *That* we may so live is the occurrence of God" (*GaG*, 132-33).

persons; the creation of time to the Father, fulfilled time to the Son, and ecclesial time to the Spirit.

A third feature of Jenson's view is that God's work in time constitutes his being.<sup>89</sup> Jenson is not satisfied to say that the eternal God acts in time, but moves beyond to suggest his being is somehow completed by his actions within time and history. Given this, Jenson must give priority to the future. One also wonders here, if Jenson makes God's being dependent on creation. As will become evident, Barth's view is less radical than Jenson's. While for Barth God clearly works in time, he never suggests that God's being somehow needs this work to constitute his being. Barth's view does include anticipation and futurity, but this does not in any way constitute God's being. God creates and works within time because he freely chose to do so.

Fourth, Jenson rejects reflection on God's being antecedent to creation, what Barth terms pretemporality. Though Jenson theoretically affirms God's pretemporality, there is no positive role for it. In answer to the question of whether God could have been the God he is without other persons, Jenson answers: "The dialectics of deity, as I have described them, equally compel us to say that he could, that God is independently personal, *and that we cannot know how*. As it in fact is, his personhood is not posited apart from us, and we cannot cognitively transcend this fact."<sup>90</sup> So while God, hypothetically, could have been personal apart from his relation to creatures and creation,

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<sup>89</sup> "Since the Lord's self-identity is constituted in dramatic coherence, it is established not from the beginning but from the end, not at birth but at death, not in *persistence* but in *anticipation*. The biblical God is not eternally himself in that he persistently instantiates a beginning in which he already is all he ever will be; he is eternally himself in that he unrestrictedly anticipates an end in which he will be all he ever could be" (*ST*, Vol.1., 66).

<sup>90</sup> *TI*, 179. Italics added. See as well *ST*, Vol. 1, 141.



this is not the case.<sup>91</sup> This is closely related to his reinterpretation of the immanent-economic Trinity. Instead of allowing for an immanent Trinity prior to creation and the works of the economy, Jenson argues that the identity of the economic with the immanent Trinity is an eschatological reality: “the ‘immanent’ Trinity is simply the eschatological reality of the ‘economic’.”<sup>92</sup> Along with this, Jenson refuses to acknowledge the preexistence of the eternal Son, reserving his preexistence for a narrative pattern in Israel.<sup>93</sup> Again, Barth’s view is different in affirming positive roles for God’s pretemporality and the *logos asarkos* (albeit a limited one).

Jenson’s negative interpretation, then, is centered on a criticism of Barth’s use of the immanent Trinity. This is insufficient for Jenson because it suggests an eternal reality of God apart from his action within and with creation and creatures. Jenson prefers a view of eternity that is only thought of in relation to God’s activity within creation. Barth, with Jenson, argues for the temporal activity of God in creation and bases this on the gospel and its revelation. Yet in contrast to Jenson, Barth has a positive place for the immanent Trinity apart from his temporal activity of the world. As already demonstrated, moreover, this immanent divine life is not a static being, but has its own order and ‘time’. Thus, Jenson’s negative assessment of Barth, even while he sympathizes with Barth, stems from programmatic differences.

Like Jenson, Moltmann is one who has both learned much from Barth and made the God-time relation a focus of his theological project. Whereas Jenson eventually

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<sup>91</sup> Fred Sanders interprets Jenson’s view of the immanent Trinity as “the Counterfactual Hypothetical,” see *The Image of the Immanent Trinity: Rahner’s Rule and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 107-112.

<sup>92</sup> *TI*, 140; For the explication of this see 138 ff.

<sup>93</sup> See *ST*, Vol. 1, 138 ff; *TI*, 140; and *GaG*, 69 ff. For a brief analysis of this and a critique of Jenson see Simon Gathercole, “Pre-existence, and the Freedom of the Son in Creation and Redemption: An Exposition in Dialogue with Robert Jenson”, *IJST* 7:1 (January 2005): 38-51.

tempered his critique of Barth and admitted learning from him, Moltmann's reading of Barth on eternity does not move beyond his initial critique. In fact, Moltmann's engagement with Barth on this issue is rather brief – though Barth has been a constant dialogue partner in Moltmann's corpus. Moltmann takes the 'eternal Now' of the second *Romans* commentary as paradigmatic and critiques it based on his own concern to develop an eschatological view of history. His interpretation does not acknowledge any positive development in the *CD*, suggesting that Barth remained trapped in the Platonic tradition.

In his 1965 work *Theology of Hope* Moltmann interprets Barth's 'transcendental eschatology' as espousing an 'eternal Now,' which is present and judges each moment of time. Eternity is less concerned with the beginning or end of time but critically judges each present. Moltmann sees a similarity to the historian Leopold von Ranke and Kierkegaard. More directly, however, is the influence of Wilhelm Herrmann. As a teacher of both Barth and Bultmann, Herrmann bequeathed to his students the importance of subjectivity in the act of revelation. Yet the question remained, "Does the 'self' of the self-revelation refer essentially to God or to man?"<sup>94</sup> While Moltmann thinks Herrmann clearly refers to human subjectivity in the act of revelation, as does Bultmann following him, Barth interprets subjectivity primarily in reference to God – which is eventually interpreted with reference to the Trinity and the lordship of God in *CD* I/1.<sup>95</sup> According to Moltmann, however, this does not exorcise the eternal Now from Barth's theology. He rhetorically asks: "Does the doctrine of the Trinity mean the eternal trinitarian reflection

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<sup>94</sup> Jürgen Moltmann. Trans. Margaret Kohl. *Theology of Hope* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 52.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-55.

of God upon himself? Does ‘self-revelation’ mean the pure present of the eternal, without history or future?’<sup>96</sup>

Even after Barth admits problems associated with *Romans* (II/1, 635), Moltmann still insists that the self-revelation of God is the eternal Now that makes a future eschatological coming of God problematic. The God of Parmenides remains. He suggests what this might mean for Jesus’ resurrection and eschatology. If the self-revelation of God is God’s eternal presence in time,

then the event of the resurrection of Christ would in itself already be the eschatological fulfillment, and would not point beyond itself to something still outstanding that is to be hoped for and awaited. To understand the revelation in Christ as self-revelation of God, is to take the question as to the future and the goal indicated by revelation, and answer it with a reflection on the origin of revelation, on God himself. With this reflection, however, it becomes almost impossible to see the revelation of the risen Lord as the ground for still speaking of an outstanding future of Jesus Christ.<sup>97</sup>

That is, the self-revelation of God in the resurrection inevitably means a lack of promise and futurity in thinking of the eschatological future. While one may agree that there are problems with fulfilled time in Barth, it will be argued that this is not the result of an eternal Now, without past and future, haunting Barth’s view in the *CD*. Rather, it concerns Barth’s view of the cross and his use of the veiling-unveiling dialectic in interpreting this.

A similar interpretation of Barth is given thirty years later in *The Coming of God*.<sup>98</sup> Again summarizing Barth and Bultmann on eschatology, he states their view as “the transcendent breaking-in of eternity that plunges all human history into its final crisis. It is not history that puts an end to eschatology; it is eschatology that puts an end to

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>98</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, Trans. Margaret Kohl. *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

history.”<sup>99</sup> Again, the focus is on the second edition of *Romans* and its view of eternity as the eternal Now.<sup>100</sup> Moltmann again suggests that Barth’s view makes further divine activity in history problematic.<sup>101</sup> Ultimately, then, even Barth’s attempted correction in 1948 (III/2) Moltmann views as insufficient.<sup>102</sup> According to Moltmann, Barth’s view of eternity is merely a reaffirmation of the Platonic tradition. His later work merely added to the problem by suggesting that eternity is before, with and after every moment. This does not begin the necessary eschatological reading of history.

In response to Moltmann, the following may be proposed. First, as already pointed out, the eternal or static Now of *Romans* was a view that Barth essentially left behind. Even in the *Göttingen Dogmatics*, Barth is beginning to construct a positive view based on the living God of scriptures. It is unwarranted, then, to dismiss Barth’s discussion throughout the *Dogmatics* and to suggest he has not broken from the Platonic tradition – especially if the *CD* has not been more fully taken into account. It might be added, second, however, that there is indeed some concern with the way Barth constructs fulfilled time. Moltmann notes that the resurrection as the self-revelation of God implies a fulfillment of eternity in time that takes leave of a future fulfillment. In the next section,

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>100</sup> Again, “If eschatology has to do with the presence of eternity in the moment, and therefore with this limitation and abolition of time, then the problem of ‘the delay of the parousia’ collapses of its own accord” (ibid., 15).

<sup>101</sup> “If eschaton means eternity and not End-time, then eschatology has no longer anything to do with the future either. Its tension is not the tension between present and future, the ‘now already’ and the ‘not yet’; it is the tension between eternity and time in past, present and future. When Jesus proclaims that the kingdom of God is ‘at hand’, he is not looking into the future in the temporal sense; he is looking into the heaven of the present. The kingdom does not ‘come’ out of the future into the present. It comes from heaven to earth, as the Lord’s Prayer tells us” (ibid.).

<sup>102</sup> “So that eternity then surrounds time from all sides, and is contemporaneous with all times, not just to the present? No eschatological tension as yet enters time just because God’s ‘post-temporality’ is added to his ‘supra-temporality’; nor does this lend any precedence to the future over against present and past. Even in his own self-criticism of 1948, Barth did not rediscover that access to the eschatological hope which he had encountered early on in the two Blumhardts. His time-eternity dialectic remained stuck fast in the Platonic thinking about origins pursued by his brother, Heinrich Barth” (ibid, 18).

the problem of fulfilled time is more closely related to his view of atonement, and perhaps even his use of the veiling-unveiling dialectic. Yet, third, Barth does take into account God's futurity; not only in discussing fulfilled time in *CD* III and IV but even in the discussion of II/1. This includes Barth's exposition of the incarnation of the Son and outpouring of the Holy Spirit in time and history. Within this, he does have an eschatological view of history as moving toward its end in the final eschaton. This will become evident throughout the dissertation. Moltmann simply does not take into account Barth's trinitarian formulations, especially the discussions in volume's III and IV.<sup>103</sup>

A third atemporal interpretation is that of Richard Roberts. In his often insightful essay "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Time: Its Nature and Implications,"<sup>104</sup> Roberts attempts to unravel something of the "inner logic" of Barth's theology by focusing on the eternity-time relation. While the work has a number of positive contributions, it will be suggested that the essay's conclusions are unwarranted.

First, however, Roberts is insightful on a number of fronts. He is sensitive to Barth's development in light of the philosophical background of Kant, Hegel and

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<sup>103</sup> It cannot go unmentioned that Moltmann's own theology takes up the critical task of rethinking the God and time relation. He attempts to think of God in the context of modern atheism, suffering and the search for human liberation. The answers that he provides are birthed through reflection on the doctrine of the Trinity and the kingdom of God. In particular, the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ lead him to think of God in historical terms. As O'Donnell summarizes, the "Christian account of God has its origins in an historical event, more precisely in the event of the cross. In this slice of history God encounters man in his suffering and death, even in his God-forsakenness. Moltmann contends that when this history is adequately interpreted – and that means theologically interpreted – it is seen to be nothing less than the history of God himself. And in this historical event God shows himself to be the trinitarian God, i.e., this history is itself the event involving Father, Son, and Holy Spirit", John J. O'Donnell, *Trinity and Temporality: The Christian Doctrine of God in the Light of Process Theology and the Theology of Hope* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 112. For a further summary of Moltmann see *ibid.*, 108-158. Besides the earlier works which O'Donnell examines, Moltmann takes up the discussion of time in the following: *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. Trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 140 ff; *The Coming of God*, 279 ff; and *Science and Wisdom*. Trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 85 ff and 98 ff.

<sup>104</sup> Richard H. Roberts, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Time: Its Nature and Implications" in *Karl Barth: Studies in his Theological Method*. Ed. Stephen W. Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979): 88-146.

Kierkegaard.<sup>105</sup> He also notes the importance of the Trinity for Barth's definition of eternity in *CD* II/1: "Barth develops his exposition of 'pure duration' upon an explicitly Trinitarian basis of prototypical interaction and reciprocity without division. The relationship between the Trinitarian and the temporal doctrines is enhanced by similar terminology used by Barth in both contexts, thereby implying a continuity of argument."<sup>106</sup> Yet Roberts does not exploit this insight and turns elsewhere for interpretive tools.<sup>107</sup> This leads to a number of problems in Roberts' interpretation.

The first problem, like Moltmann, is the suggestion that the eternal and timeless Now of *Romans* continues into the *CD*. He concludes that in the "ensuing sections Barth's doctrines of God, Christ, and creation have been analysed from the standpoint of their dependence upon a set of temporal conceptions bound up with the doctrine of the divine act in the eternal 'Now'."<sup>108</sup> The persistence of the eternal Now into the *CD* is presumed throughout Roberts' essay.<sup>109</sup> The place of the timeless Now in *Romans* cannot be denied, but as already suggested the eternity-time dialectic of *Romans* was dropped nearly as soon as it was employed. Moreover, in Roberts' analysis of the period between *Romans* and the *CD* there is no mention of the Göttingen lectures which evinced a turning toward the Trinity and incarnation for the basis of dogmatics, and the first

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<sup>105</sup> With Kant, Barth affirmed the autonomy of theology with its own subject (ibid., 91-92), and from both Kant and Hegel inherited the conceptual problem of relating the infinite and finite, which Roberts claims Barth translates into the theological categories of relating eternity and time (ibid., 92-96). But Barth is closer to Kierkegaard, according to Roberts. Kierkegaard "asserted an existential paradox of encounter over against the Hegelian possibility of abstract synthesis", which "shifts the focus of difference from an abstract contrast of being to an encounter of finite consciousness with an infinite Wholly Other God" (ibid., 96). This, Roberts suggests, found expression in *Romans* II.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 115-16. As will be shown below, the similar terminology and pattern of thinking between the doctrines of the Trinity and eternity is expounded by Hunsinger.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 115-16. In fact, earlier Roberts states that the "relative worth of Barth's doctrine of the Trinity developed in the latter parts of volume I/1 of the *Church Dogmatics* is not of prime importance here" (ibid., 106). We are arguing the exact opposite.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>109</sup> See as well 88, 98, 99, 103, 104, 105, 108, 109 and 140.

sustained reflection on the divine perfections in Barth's thought. As discussed above, in the *GD* Barth makes an effort to move beyond the negative relation of eternity and time and begins to relate them positively.

While Roberts does well to note Barth's actualistic doctrine of God, a second problem arises with the failure to notice the relation of anticipation and actualization in Barth's view of the eternity.<sup>110</sup> As will be examined shortly in reviewing the interpretation of Padgett, for Barth God's eternity includes both an *anticipation* of his acts and their *actualization* in time and space. The eternal decisions of God in pretemporal eternity do not contradict their supratemporal realization. In contrast, when discussing the doctrine of election Roberts states that there is "an invidious contrast between on the one hand the eternal basis of election in the 'perfect presence' of God in the pre-, supra-, and post-temporality of 'primal history' . . . and on the other the realization of revelation in time in the life and death of Jesus Christ."<sup>111</sup> There is only a tension and contradiction, however, if there is no movement from decision and anticipation to realization and actualization. Yet this is not the case for Barth; God's being-in-act is a dynamic being. Rather than leading to the obliteration of time by eternity, God's being-in-act forms a conceptual basis on which Barth can speak of the trinitarian interaction of eternity and time, including the movement from anticipation to actualization.

The third issue, and perhaps most problematic, is that Roberts assumes Barth's rejection of natural theology is a rejection of the natural order. This categorical error is constantly repeated in his essay and leads to his dismissive conclusions. Roberts argues

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<sup>110</sup> Roberts does note the turn to God's being-in-act and its importance in the *CD*: 103, 105-08, 110-112, 121, 132 and 134.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 118. See 119 as well.

that Barth alienates the natural order when he excludes non-theological views in his constructions.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, an “ontology and epistemology of the world are produced in direct correlation with those of faith and its object, Jesus Christ. Nature as such becomes wholly problematic in the face of this revelation.”<sup>113</sup> Barth’s theological method, focusing on Jesus Christ as the Word of God, does not exclude the importance of non-theological views or the reality of the created cosmos. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, Barth does indeed have a theology of created time. Yet because of Roberts’ reasoning, he makes the following conclusion:

Like some cancerous *Doppelgänger*, theological reality appears to inflate itself, drawing life from the reality it condemns, perfecting in exquisite form what could be seen as the most profound and systematically consistent theological alienation [sic] of the natural order ever achieved. The theological evidence for this interpretation, that is the exclusive and irresistible progress of revealed reality enshrined in the dogmas of God, the Trinity, and God’s act in eternity, is clear and indubitable.<sup>114</sup>

By contrast, this dissertation will demonstrate that Barth’s doctrines of God, Trinity and incarnation do not alienate the created order but sustain a profound theology of eternity and time, which includes the grounding and fulfillment of human temporality.

In a study comparing Hartshorne and Barth, Colin Gunton provides a more nuanced interpretation of Barth. He notes well the place of time and movement within Barth’s doctrine of God. Commenting on the use of ‘event’ to describe God’s being, he states:

One way of conceiving this is with the aid of the metaphor of movement. The incarnation is the movement of God into relation with the world he has created. Because this movement *is* God, there is no unmoved God behind or underlying it; rather it entails that God’s being consists in a movement ‘outwards’ to what is not God. But because this movement is triune, and so not necessitated, it is a movement with a double aspect. God *is* movement towards the other, and this movement is expressed conceptually by the

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<sup>112</sup> “Barth is effectually calling into question not merely anthropocentric sources of revealed knowledge of God but natural knowledge of the natural world” (ibid., 123).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 124. For similar reasoning see, 110, 114, 120, 126, 130, 132, 136, 141, 142, 144 and 145.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 124-25.



eternal relation of the Son to the Father in the Spirit. In its turn, this inner movement provides the ontological grounding for the outward movement we see to have happened in the life of Jesus.<sup>115</sup>

Thus God's being *in se* and his work *ad extra* is interpreted with kinetic terms. As already argued, the eternal being of God has its own divine temporality. Gunton defends the metaphor of movement against critics who would suggest Barth compromises the ontological distinction between God and creation or inserts arbitrariness in God's activity. This cannot be the case because Barth always maintains the aseity of God and views God's becoming and movement as "triune and eternal."<sup>116</sup>

Yet Gunton's interpretation does express concern. Gunton is cognizant of Barth's attempt to overcome classical theism and its reliance on substantialist metaphysics, but he argues that Barth may not in fact escape this. This is seen in the ambiguity surrounding his discussion of eternity, which Gunton describes as 'eminent temporality'. He suggests that Barth's use of pure duration and simultaneity seem contrary and that his use of Boethius' definition is not clear. He concludes: "The truth appears to be that at times Barth defines eternity in light of (temporal) revelation while at other times he opposes it to time."<sup>117</sup> The result is that despite his insistence on the historical character of revelation, "Barth has failed to maintain the full temporal reality of the revelation event"; in fact, there is a persistent tendency "to contaminate the temporality of revelation with a conception of revelation as a timeless theophany."<sup>118</sup>

Granted, one must agree with Gunton that Barth is not always clear in his exposition and this could easily lead to ambiguity. Yet the difference between God's

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<sup>115</sup> Colin Gunton, *Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth*. 2nd Edition. (London: SCM Press, 2001), 167.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 169, see 168 ff.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 181.

temporality and its ‘opposition’ to time is not one of a negative correlation but rather of an ontological distinction. The distinction between eternity and time can be seen in two ways. First, as pointed out, God’s immanent triune being has its own succession and order; eternal life, even antecedent to the creation of the world, is temporal in a particular way. This is one form of God’s temporality. A second form used by Barth is that the eternal God acts within time and history; God is not timeless in the sense of being ‘above and beyond’ time. Rather, God creates, preserves and acts within creation – especially for Barth in the incarnation and the outpouring of the Spirit. Thus, the distinction between eternity and time in Barth is not recourse to timelessness, as Gunton suggests may be the case.<sup>119</sup> Gunton’s interpretation is tempered, however, as he notes “that these criticisms are not of the whole of Barth’s theology, but are made possible by the ambiguity in his understanding of time.”<sup>120</sup>

One of Gunton’s suggestions may be followed up, however. He notes in passing that “one is even tempted to wonder whether the very word *revelation* is not one of the chief culprits, in that it carries too heavy a load of inherited connotations to be able to bear the radical changes of meaning that Barth wishes to impose upon it.”<sup>121</sup> In Chapter Four it will be argued that the veiling-unveiling schema used by Barth in his doctrine of revelation contributes to the problem of finality during the time of the forty days. This is not central to Gunton’s critique as he proposes instead, following Jenson, that a subtle Platonism underlies Barth’s theology.

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<sup>119</sup> He makes five suggestions in his case; see *ibid.*, 181-185.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 185. Gunton then interprets Barth’s doctrine of God in *CD* II/1 as evidence of Barth’s possible relating God and creation. See *ibid.*, 186 ff.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

A fifth interpretation, focusing on Barth's discussion of eternity in *CD II/1*, is found in Alan Padgett's *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time*.<sup>122</sup> Padgett examines Barth's use of traditional language when constructing his notion of God's eternity; in particular, Boethius' definition of eternity as the total, simultaneous and perfect possession of unending life (*interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*).<sup>123</sup>

Padgett suggests that Barth's position is incoherent. He argues the following: "Barth refuses to define eternity as the antithesis of time, but instead argues that eternity is *the fullness of time without the defects of succession*. What is missing from eternity as God's time is the past – present – future distinction, which I have called process."<sup>124</sup> So while Padgett notes Barth's intent to positively relate eternity and time, he suggests that Barth's definition of eternity excludes the reality of time as the process or succession of past, present and future.<sup>125</sup> He explains:

Given the process view of time, it is simply contradictory to assert that all of the past, present and future can be one simultaneous Now to God. Those events that existed in the past, or will exist in the future, are not real and cannot be in 'eternity' any more than they exist (tenselessly) here on earth. It is incoherent, therefore, to assert that the time of Jesus Christ can be simultaneous with all other times.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Alan Padgett, *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* (London: Macmillan, 1992). Others working in the field of analytic philosophy of religion simply dismiss Barth outright. William Craig, for example, accepts the judgment of Grace Jantzen that Barth's discussion is nothing more than "edifying nonsense", William Lane Craig, *God, Time and Eternity: The Coherence of Theism II: Eternity* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), x. Such a view ignores the importance of reading Barth as a dogmatic and dialectical theologian, and is idiosyncratic of Craig's own work as not only an analytic philosopher but also a scholar of historical sources.

<sup>123</sup> 'Philosophiae Consolationis' V.VI.10, in *Boethius: The Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*. Trans. H. F. Steward and E.K. Rand. (London and Cambridge, Mass: William Heinmann Ltd and Harvard University Press, 1913). The translation "total, simultaneous and perfect possession of unending life" is the present author's, though it is close to Steward's ("perfect possession altogether of an endless life"). This is preferred to the translation of Watts (*The Consolation of Philosophy*. Trans. with an introduction by V.E. Watts. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1969), who interprets *interminabilis* as 'everlasting'. Everlasting would be better reserved for "*sempiternitas*".

<sup>124</sup> Padgett, *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time*, 143.

<sup>125</sup> As with other analytical philosophers of religion defending a positive relation of eternity and time, Padgett spends much effort defending the successive or process view of time (time flows as past, present and future). This defence is meant to counter the supposition that some atemporal views of eternity are defended by rejecting a process view of time – which is often the case.

<sup>126</sup> Padgett, *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time*, 144.

Padgett suggests, then, that Barth's reference to the simultaneity of past, present and future implies the unreality of created time. That is, if for eternity past, present and future are simultaneous then this would exclude the *succession* of past, present and future; which in Padgett's view is essential. This critique, however, does not take into account how Barth interprets the concept of *simul*.

Padgett's interpretation assumes that Barth arrives at the notion of simultaneity in the same way in which Boethius did. For Boethius, eternity is defined with the use of the *via negativa*. Whereas time is limited and fleeting, losing the past and ignorant of the future, eternity is all encompassing, it views all of time at once. For Boethius, God sees all of time – past, present and future – “as from a peak” (*Consolations*, 5.IV). This procedure would leave one with the impression that human time with its succession of past, present and future is a non-reality for eternity. Padgett assumes this to be the same procedure as Barth, defining eternity in its negative distinction from time.

Barth, however, uses the *simul* of God's eternity in both a negative and a positive manner. First, negatively, he uses the concept of simultaneity to *distinguish* eternity from time. Barth states that “Eternity is the simultaneity of beginning, middle and end, and to that extent it is pure duration. Eternity is God in the sense in which in Himself and in all things God is simultaneous, i.e., beginning and middle as well as end, without separation, distance or contradiction” (II.1, 608). This functions negatively in relation to time since “Eternity is just the duration which is lacking to time, as can be seen clearly at the middle point of time, in the temporal present and in its relationship to the past and the future” (ibid.). The simultaneity or unity of eternity indicates the divine duration that is lacking in time.

More important, however, is Barth's positive use of *simul*. As he argues, to understand "duration without separation between beginning, succession and end is true only against a background of the decisive and positive characteristic that as true duration, the duration of God Himself is *the* beginning, succession and end" (II/1, 610). In fact, God's eternity "decides and conditions all beginning, succession and end. It controls them. It is itself that which begins in all beginnings, continues in all successions and ends in all endings" (ibid.). The simultaneity of past, present and future is actually a reference to God's will and determination for creation. As Barth explains: "God is both the prototype and foreordination of all being, and therefore also the prototype and foreordination of time, God has time because and as He has eternity" (II/1, 611).<sup>127</sup> Barth, therefore, uses the notion of simultaneity, in distinction from Boethius, to argue that *in* God's eternal being all temporal modes of existence are anticipated before they are actualized in creating, sustaining and redeeming creation.<sup>128</sup>

For God, according to Barth, past, present and future are not in contradiction since what God anticipates, he will actualize, and what he actualizes he has anticipated in his eternity.<sup>129</sup> Or, as Barth explains:

What distinguishes eternity from time is the fact that there is in Him no opposition or competition or conflict, but peace between origin, movement and goal, between present, past and future, between "not yet," "now" and "no more," between rest and movement, potentiality and actuality . . . In him all these things are *simul*, held together by the

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<sup>127</sup> This strong language of determination must take into account the space and time for human existence as well. Barth takes this up in his doctrine of providence, which is discussed in Chapter Three above.

<sup>128</sup> In discussing God's Sabbath rest in Gen 1, Barth makes the following comments concerning God's eternal anticipation and his acts in time: "Speaking of God's rest on the seventh day the biblical witness actually tells us that what God was in Himself, and had done from eternity, He had now in some sense repeated in time, in the form of an historical event, in His relationship to His creation, the world and man; and that the completion of all creation consisted in the historical event of this repetition" (III/1, 216).

<sup>129</sup> The language of anticipation is Bruce McCormack's. See "Grace and being: the role of God's gracious election in Karl Barth's theological ontology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*. Ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 100; and "Barth, Karl" in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*. Ed. Adrian Hastings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 65f.

omnipotence of his knowing and willing, a totality without gap or rift, free from the threat of death under which time, our time, stands (II/1, 612).

This does not mean that created time – with all of its beginnings, middles and ends – occurs all at once. It does mean, however, that all beginnings, middles and ends are controlled by God’s eternity.

George Hunsinger explains Barth’s view of simultaneity when reflecting on the life of Jesus Christ as eternal life. He explains the relation of past, present and future (temporal forms) in eternity to the “one life action” of Jesus Christ. He argues that in “eternity the totality of this action is present in an everliving, dynamic, and differentiated unity. Whether by way of *anticipation*, *recapitulation*, or *synchronicity*, each temporal form in eternity contains the other two, yet the individuality of each is not destroyed but retained. Each form participates in the others and is active and revealed in them.”<sup>130</sup> Thus, in God’s eternity all futures are *anticipated*, all presents are *synchronic*, and all pasts will be *recapitulated*. But all the anticipations, synchronisms and recapitulations in God’s eternity are the act of God himself and thus cannot be divided from his will and knowledge. While there is truly a distinction or succession of the past, present and future in created time, these are held together in God’s eternity, whether anticipated, synchronic or recapitulated.<sup>131</sup> For Barth, the triune God is truly Lord of time.

Padgett’s criticism of Barth, therefore, appears unwarranted. His criticism would be correct if Barth was following the same procedure as that of Boethius.<sup>132</sup> For Barth, God as the triune being, with his own space and time, creates space and time as the form

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<sup>130</sup> George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 241, italics added.

<sup>131</sup> For a brief description of God’s recapitulation of all times in the eschaton see *CD* III/3, 89-90.

<sup>132</sup> As Leftow notes, Boethius’ definition of eternity appeals to Barth because of “the definition’s talk of God’s life” though Barth fills the definition with trinitarian content, “Response to ‘*Mysterium Trinitatis*’”, 196.

of the creature, out of his omnipresence and eternity.<sup>133</sup> Padgett's own approach is in fact similar to Barth's in a number of ways. Like Barth, Padgett sees God as actively engaged in created time, while being ontologically distinct. Padgett also supports a form of the containment argument, not unlike Barth. As he explains: "it is far more appropriate to say that we are in God's time, than that God is in our time. Since God is the ground of time, this is another reason to speak of us being in God's time, rather than God being in our time. The latter expression, though philosophically acceptable, is theologically backwards."<sup>134</sup> Unlike Barth, however, Padgett goes on to say that God's time, eternity, cannot be measured, for there is no 'intrinsic metric' for the time of God.<sup>135</sup> And though the world is contained in God, "God is spaceless, that is, he does not have any spatial location or extension."<sup>136</sup> He concludes that God "can enter into our space or Measured Time at will, but is not contained within it of necessity."<sup>137</sup> Barth, as well, argues for the position that created space and time are 'in' God, but he 'measures' God's eternity and omnipresence as the concrete and robust 'succession' and 'extension' that is the perichoretic life of the divine persons (II/1, 660). Barth would argue, given the revelation of God's triune life, that God may be described spatially and temporally.

The assessment of these interpretations is based on the view that close attention must be paid to Barth's trinitarian theology when interpreting his view. The assessment can be summarized with the following points. First, Barth's theology of eternity and time

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<sup>133</sup> Padgett's critique would in fact be more appropriate for Boethius than Barth. While Barth agrees with Boethius that God's eternity is the fullness of unending life, Barth is referring to the fullness of the triune life, while Boethius is making a reference to all of created life. It seems that because Boethius is relying on the *via negativa* he ends up confusing the full life of God with the full life of creation; or in the least, he does not make the distinction clear enough.

<sup>134</sup> *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time*, 126.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

developed significantly in the *CD* from the view of *Romans*. It is unwarranted to assume the negative view of *Romans* continues into Barth's dogmatic work. Second, and closely related, reading Barth on this issue must take into consideration, as much as possible, the full scope of the *CD*. As Barth was continuously developing his thought throughout his career the full breadth of his work must be kept in view. While this study is not exhaustive, it will be argued that examination of *CD* III and IV allows one to see the full trinitarian shape of Barth's view on this topic. Of course, an examination of Barth's full corpus lies beyond the confines of this project; the basic arguments will only be demonstrated in relation to the concept of supratemporality. Most of the interpreters above focused their attention on *Romans* and *CD* II/1. A third issue, as just mentioned, is Barth's tendency to reinterpret traditional categories in a unique manner. A sensitive reading of Barth must be contextually aware of Barth's particular use of theological and philosophical categories. Padgett's criticism of *simul*, just noted, was more appropriate for Boethius than Barth. A fourth concern, which most interpreters mention or allude to, is the question of whether or not Barth pays sufficient attention to the temporality of the human creature. It will be demonstrated throughout that while Barth is theocentric and christocentric (the two are compatible) this does not necessitate the rejection of the human creature nor their temporal existence. While Barth minimally includes non-theological sources, for example, this does not mean he neglects human or cosmic time. Rather he desires to read time theologically.



### 1.3.2 *The Problem of Fulfilled Time*

A second group of interpretations is centered on Barth's christocentrism. Rather than claim that he imports atemporality, these criticisms suggest that the explication of Christology and time somehow inhibits a proper view of human time in general or the time of the church. The most persuasive of these interpretations note that the forty days of resurrection time are the fulfillment of eternity in time. This tendency of Barth is inadequate because it leaves the impression that the time of the church, the ascension, and future *parousia* receive unbalanced or inadequate attention. Representatives of this category include Albert Brandenburg, David Ford and Douglas Farrow.

Albert Brandenburg's essay on time and history in the *CD* surveys well Barth's various discussions.<sup>138</sup> This includes the times of expectation and remembrance in I/2; eternity and time in II/1; election in II/2; the times of creation in III/1; human temporality in III/2; and the problem of faith and history found in IV.<sup>139</sup> Brandenburg highlights in his short discussion Barth's christocentric interpretation of time. He concludes, for example, that fulfilled time for Barth is the "pure unveiling presence with the resurrection and the 40 days."<sup>140</sup> He also notes the importance of the time of community in IV, which corresponds to the second form of the *parousia*, too often overlooked in secondary literature.<sup>141</sup> Yet he argues that Barth neglects time and history apart from that of Jesus Christ. As he states: "The unmistakable idealist development of Barth is so strong that he can find no access to this historically grounded reality, the 'flesh has been assumed.'" <sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Albert Brandenburg, "Der Zeit – und Geschichtsbegriff bei Karl Barth", *Theologie und Glaube* 45 (1955): 357-78.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 358-75.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 362.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 375.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 358. Translation the present author's.

While he is sympathetic to Barth's use of Chalcedonian Christology, he argues that Barth does not give sufficient attention to time and history apart from the history of Christ. For example, Barth's division of fulfilled and fallen time rejects the time of creation apart from Jesus' history, whether understood as history in general or the reality of creation. So whereas Bultmann "de-historises" the acts of God in history, Barth simply neglects time and history apart from the biblical picture of reality.<sup>143</sup>

Granted, Barth's doctrine of creation is understood in light of the covenant and his view of human time is read christologically, but he does not neglect time and history in general. First, to be discussed in Chapter Three, he does include the reality of objective cosmic time in his exegesis of Genesis 1. This of course was not taken up in relation to natural science, since Barth did not think himself adequately skilled to do so, though he thought future theologians might (III/1, x). Second, in his explication of human temporality Barth states that time is a part of the universal form of existence (*Existenzform*) of the creature. Brandenburg's focus on fulfilled and fallen time does not give sufficient weight to time as a permanent and universal concept in Barth's anthropology – just as the concepts of the *imago dei* and the unity of soul and body are. Barth, then, did not neglect the reality of time apart from Jesus-history. Third, it must also be pointed out that the driving force of Barth's discussions is his trinitarian theology. While Brandenburg mentions time in creation, fulfilled time and even the time of the community briefly, he does not note how these are held together with the doctrine of the Trinity. So while Barth is definitely christocentric this is not at the expense of theocentrism. Brandenburg's criticism, in the end, remains general, though he does point to neglected sections in the *Dogmatics*.

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 376-78.

David Ford in *Barth and God's Story*, using literary analysis and a focus on narrative, asks whether or not the forty days of Jesus' post-resurrection history bears the weight Barth gives them. Barth's emphasis, he argues, leads to a distortion in which "the content of the Gospel accounts of the resurrection appearances does not bear out Barth's claim that they represent a unique fulfillment and completeness, a manifestation of eternity in time. They have much more the character of 'sending' into the future, and there is at least as much promise as fulfillment."<sup>144</sup> That is, while Barth speaks of resurrection time in terms of final fulfillment, the gospel narratives do not. The problem behind this, Ford argues, lies in Barth's conflation of resurrection and *parousia*.

His absolutising of the Forty Days goes well beyond the perception of their literary function. It is related to his modification of the traditional paradigm, for in that paradigm the resurrection and Parousia were not at all one event for Jesus, and there was little temptation to transfer "the sense of an ending" to the resurrection. The resurrection and the appearances are immensely important in the story even when they are recognized as in one sense interim events. Barth's virtual 'closure' at this point overburdens them . . . and violates the 'realistic' element as one link in a chain of events.<sup>145</sup>

The NT narrative, according to Ford, presents the resurrection appearances and final *parousia* as links in a 'chain of events.' Thus Barth's emphasis on the forty days as the fulfillment of eternity in time does not respect the difference and unity of the full history of Jesus Christ.

Ford's critique is important for at least three reasons. First, that the fulfilled time of Jesus Christ must take into account the successive nature of Jesus-history is correct. This must include not only the life and ministry of Jesus, the cross and resurrection, but also the ascension, heavenly session and final return; all of this while providing the basis for the outpouring of the Spirit and the time of the church. Any distortions in this

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<sup>144</sup> David Ford, *Barth and God's Story: Biblical Narrative and the Theological Method of Karl Barth in the Church Dogmatics* (Frankfurt am Main, Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 1985), 145.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 145-146.

succession must be critiqued. Second, however, Ford needs to take account of the further development of Barth's thought. Though Barth tends to focus on the forty days, the problem of fulfilled time becomes more complex when it is asked how Barth develops his position in *CD IV*. Ford's analysis focuses upon I/2 and III/2. In *CD IV* Barth makes the interval between the first and final *parousia* more explicit. The time of the church there becomes the second form in Christ's threefold presence. This will be taken up in Chapters Four and Five. It will be suggested that the apparent conflation of resurrection and *parousia* does not prevent Barth from developing Jesus-history further. Yet it may be asked, third, if the problem with fulfilled time is simply a matter of poor narrative arrangement or is there something else within Barth's theology that causes this problem? Here the interpretation of Douglas Farrow is the most thorough.

Farrow's questioning of the finality given to the forty days is with the purpose to pursue a fuller doctrine of the ascension and heavenly session. While Ford points out that Barth put too strong an emphasis on the forty days, Farrow seeks to discern the underlying reasons for this problem.<sup>146</sup> The basis of his critique is the finality given to the cross for the history and activity of reconciliation. That is, the work of salvation is completed at Golgotha to such an extent that the resurrection and ascension are merely the noetic realization of this, first to the apostles and then to the church. This is problematic because it cuts off the continuing soteriological work of Jesus Christ in the time of the church and the eschaton. While the crucified Jesus rose, ascended, and will

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<sup>146</sup> His appreciation and critique of Barth is found in the following places: *Ascension and Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 229 ff; "Karl Barth on the Ascension: An Appreciation and Critique", *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2:2 (July 2000): 127-150; and "Ascension and Atonement" in *The Theology of Reconciliation*. Edited by Colin Gunton (London: T&T Clark, 2003): 67-91.

return, the implications of this for humanity and cosmos are truncated, being reduced to a noetic participation.

It must first be pointed out that Farrow appreciates Barth's project on a number of levels. First, he states that Barth's *CD IV* is "one of *the* major works of ascension theology."<sup>147</sup> He summarizes by noting that for Barth "the doctrine of the ascension is no longer a device for the undoing of Jesus' humanity, but for its establishment; no longer a reason for speaking of a race of gods [as in Hegel], but of a race of men loved by God."<sup>148</sup> More germane for the present discussion, he affirms Barth's attempt at grounding the time of the church, the time between the times, in the contemporaneity of Jesus Christ.<sup>149</sup> This contemporaneity of Jesus Christ, moreover, is disclosed in the resurrection and ascension.<sup>150</sup> Farrow also describes the implications of the ascension for Barth's anthropology: "More abstractly, the ascension is that which introduces motion and direction towards God as the proper basis and qualification of human being. It does so in the face of the fall and dissipation of human being – the sloth and inertia, the resistance to God, the flight from God – that characterize humanity as we know it."<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> "Karl Barth on the Ascension", 127.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 131. This is complemented by his agreement with Barth on a number of other issues. He notes with approval Barth's view of the assumption of fallen humanity, his "relentless anti-Pelagianism" ("Ascension and Atonement", 77-78), the rejection of a priori assumptions and natural theology, and the relativity of appropriations in dogmatic presentation ("Karl Barth on the Ascension", 139, 143 and 141).

<sup>149</sup> *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 232-241; Cf. "Karl Barth on the Ascension", 136-38.

<sup>150</sup> "That contemporaneity is what the resurrection and ascension disclose, and in disclosing render effective. They make it clear to us that Jesus himself is seated at the right hand of God; that he alone has secure and concrete reality; that his present is in fact more real than ours. For the time being this presence is a mysterious one, for the ascension is not the parousia. But through the resurrection and the ascension God has laid claim to Jesus-history as his very own act and declared it to be his one definitive Word; with Barth that is always the crux of the matter" ("Karl Barth on the Ascension", 136-37). Or again, "Resurrection and ascension time is the time which is given Jesus by the Father who vindicates him, and as such which also belongs to him as the Lord. It is the time of one who is glorious and triumphant even in his humiliation and loss; who knows himself, and by the church is known, also in that way. And it is already an anticipation, albeit a particular and provisional anticipation, of the universal disclosure of his glory that is to take place at the parousia" (ibid., 138).

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 132.

Yet Barth's view, Farrow argues, is not without its problems. The problem centers on Barth's view of reconciliation. It implies

that Jesus-history is entirely complete at Calvary, for the nadir of the divine descent necessarily coincides with the pinnacle of human ascent. All that remains, says Barth, is that we should see and hear and share in what has already been done. Jesus-history from the standpoint of the Emmaus Road is pure revelation, pure unveiling, pure contemporaneity. Nothing is added except our histories.<sup>152</sup>

As interpreted by Farrow, Barth's view of the cross brings a certain closure to the work of reconciliation that is not born out by the NT narrative. This focus of Barth has numerous effects. There is the conflation of resurrection and ascension, which Farrow argues even the idea of threefold *parousia* does not solve.<sup>153</sup> The difference between church and world, moreover, is basically a noetic distinction, since all humanity is in reality contemporaneous with Christ. That is, the resurrection, ascension, intercession and *parousia* have little effect in the reconciling of God and humanity, they merely function in the apprehension by believers of a work already completed on Calvary. What is more, he argues that the appropriation of the *triplex munus* to the Chalcedonian pattern leads to a neglect of the priestly office.<sup>154</sup>

Farrow gives two reasons for this problem in Barth. First, in regard to the discussion of *CD IV* especially, the two natures of Jesus Christ are correlated with the two states of humiliation and exaltation, so that the descent of God and the ascent of

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 245. See 245-248 as well. Or, the descending God and the ascending man is "a history, then, that is already full and complete on the cross", which implies that nothing "more is required by this history for its perfection, and nothing is added to it in the resurrection and ascension and *parousia* of Jesus but our inclusion or participation in it" ("Karl Barth on the Ascension", 139). Thus Barth's interpretation of the cross is contrary to these further events as "objective happenings, autonomous new acts of God" (ibid., 140, cf. 142).

<sup>153</sup> "The notion of a threefold *parousia*, which to some extent continues the conflation of resurrection, ascension and *parousia* we have already rejected, imports into the resurrection events a kind of finality, and into the ascension an act of closure, that belong only to the *parousia* proper" (*Ascension and Ecclesia*, 248).

<sup>154</sup> "Karl Barth on the Ascension", 143.

humanity correspond on the cross.<sup>155</sup> Thus the Chalcedonian pattern is imposed on the biblical narrative, affecting an unnecessary closure. Second, Farrow suggests there is an underlying negative correlativity between God and creation. The appropriation of deity to descending and humanity to ascending means that divinity and humanity are “logically correlative” or “polar opposites.”<sup>156</sup> Farrow attempts to trace the problem of correlativity into different levels of the *CD*,<sup>157</sup> claiming that there is “a contrariety which requires an atoning act from the very outset.”<sup>158</sup> These issues come to a head with Barth’s view of the cross as a divine self-humiliation and a self-alienation.

‘The secret of the cross is simply the secret of the incarnation in all its fullness’ [*CD* IV/2, 293], says Barth. And with this statement it is obvious enough that God’s ‘non-contradictory’ relation to the world, just at the point where God truly is related to the world, is something that can only be achieved by the death of God. It is obvious too that resurrection cannot be allowed to be anything more than a revelation of the secret, or ascension anything more than the establishment of its eternal vitality. For if the humanity

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<sup>155</sup> But Farrow asks concerning this: “Can we afford, even occasionally and as a purely formal device, to use one element in the story of Jesus to speak primarily of divinity and another primarily of humanity? Does that not endanger the story itself, not to mention a sound theology of the incarnation?” (ibid., 243, cf. 243-250). See as well “Karl Barth on the Ascension”, 134-135; and “Ascension and Atonement”, 78-82. Similarly, G.C. Berkouwer noted the problems created for time and the successive nature of the NT narrative by reconfiguring the two states of humiliation and exaltation. See *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Trans. Harry Boer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 314-319. He states for example: “When this transition [from humiliation to exaltation] is obscured all that we can still speak of on the score of Christ’s exaltation is the ‘unveiling’ of the *previously existing* divine glory. Thinking consistently in this line would require that we see already in the time of His humility the presence of His unlimited power and life. This would mean losing from sight, however, the full emphasis which the New Testament places on the *temporal* aspect involved in the progression from humiliation to exaltation. It is precisely this emphasis which Barth’s intertwining of Christ’s natures with His states is not able fully to honour” (ibid., 315).

<sup>156</sup> “Karl Barth on the Ascension”, 141. Dale Dawson sees something similar when he notes in Barth an antithesis between God and humanity, Jesus Christ and humanity, and even within the Godhead – between Father and Son. See Dale Dawson, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 158 ff and 218-19. He does not however see this as problematic. Of course, the hamartological antithesis between God and humanity is necessary for any conception of atonement. Yet to say that there is a basic ontological antitheses between God and creation could lead to dualism or an antithesis within God that leads to the necessity of creation for the completion of God’s being. Barth would not affirm either of these things explicitly.

<sup>157</sup> This includes election, the close connection of creatureliness and sin, sin as Nothingness, the naturalness of death, and the rejection of inherited sin from Adam, ibid., 143-146.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 146.

of God *means* God's self-alienation, a new life beyond the cross is – apart from its revelatory power – meaningless.<sup>159</sup>

The reconciliation between God and humanity, therefore, must first occur within God before humans can participate in it, and this is what the death of Jesus accomplishes.<sup>160</sup>

Now the way out of this problem for Farrow is by rejecting the identification of states with natures and seeing the descent and ascent as movements of *the God-man* and not of his divine and human natures separately.<sup>161</sup> This, he argues, would resist the fulfillment of eternity during the forty days, and also open up a fuller appreciation for the ascension and final *parousia* as new events in Jesus-history, and thereby space for the ecclesial time of the Spirit.<sup>162</sup> The fruit of Farrow's examination, however, comes when he suggests how one may move beyond Barth. Rather than the resurrection and ascension being merely the unveiling of the cross, they are

a fresh beginning for Jesus. Seen thus, as the beginning of the liberty of the sons and daughters of God, and hence of the whole of creation, for genuinely new events – for the *parousia* and for what lies *beyond* the *parousia* – the resurrection and ascension stand as a testimony both to possibilities which are yet to be realized and to possibilities which long ago were lost. They witness to the fact that reconciliation *cum* revelation does not exhaust the truth of the incarnation; that the incarnate one is the basis of a story that has now to be told and a story that cannot yet be told. In the same way, they witness to the fact that creation as the sphere of God's self-giving does not have Nothingness and the fall and God's self-alienation as its corollary; that all of this need have been for creation to be and for God to be a man.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 147. It might also be asked here if this problem of correlativity is behind Barth's view of the cross as the second or eternal death, which seems at times to imply a decision and event between the Father and the Son quite apart from his humanity.

<sup>160</sup> Farrow also suggests, though he does not fully develop the idea, that Barth's actualism only compounds the problem, *ibid.*, 147-148.

<sup>161</sup> *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 249-250; "Karl Barth on the Ascension", 141; and "Ascension and Atonement", 79.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. On the negative effects of this for ecclesiology see 250 ff. Similarly, Thomas Freyer notes that the work of the Holy Spirit is reduced to the subjective and noetic realization of the work completed by Jesus Christ (see *Zeit – Continuität und Unterbrechung: Studien zu Karl Barth, Wolfhart Pannenberg und Karl Rahner*. Bonner Dogmatische Studien 13 [Echter, 1993]: 176-179). Though he views the problem as symptomatic of Barth taking over idealist notions of time (*ibid.*, 147 ff and 180-181) and not symptomatic of Barth's doctrine of reconciliation and the cross.

<sup>163</sup> "Karl Barth on the Ascension", 149. Farrow continues to supplement Barth in "Ascension and Atonement" by reflecting on the Levitical priesthood and its correlates in John, Hebrews, the Apocalypse,



Farrow's critique, then, stems from a call for a fuller view of salvation. Salvation is not just the reconciliation between God and humanity on the cross and the noetic participation of believers after the fact, while it includes such participation, but must include the ongoing work of Jesus Christ in the heavenly session, *parousia*, and beyond. Thus Farrow's critique is substantiated on a call for a different, perhaps broader, soteriology. While a fuller engagement with Barth's soteriology lies beyond this present project,<sup>164</sup> the implications of his view for fulfilled time will be noted.

In response to Farrow the following points can be made. First, there is a basic agreement. Much like Ford, it will be pointed out in Chapters Four and Five that there is indeed a tendency in Barth to finalize the forty days as fulfilled time and thereby reduce the ascension and *parousia* to noetic realization of the reconciliation completed on the cross.<sup>165</sup> This will be complemented by suggesting a larger role for the veiling-unveiling dialectic that Barth uses in connection to this. Yet, second, it must also be pointed out that Barth does make room for an ascension time with a corresponding pneumatology and ecclesiology. Of course, this may not be as full as deemed necessary, but the being and activity of the church are not altogether neglected. It is not as if there is no history after the cross, then, but that its quality and character tends to be reduced to noetic participation. This history after the forty days that accounts for the novelty of ascension, church and *parousia* will be pointed out.

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and Paul (69-77), and with the use of Irenaeus, Zizioulas, and Milligan. These further suggestions and supplements will not be taken up here, since the concern is with the reading of Barth.

<sup>164</sup> See David Lauber, *Barth on the Descent into Hell: God, Atonement and the Christian Life* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>165</sup> Farrow's point does not seem to be that Jesus-history actually ends or that the cross is insufficient for salvation but that this further Jesus-history could be given more soteriological substance by Barth (*contra* Dale Dawson, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth*, 132 and 185-188).

Third, while the individual points at which Barth may exhibit negative correlativity between God and creation will not be taken up, it will be argued that Barth's theology of eternity and time does not succumb to this tendency. In III/1 and III/2, for example, Barth makes a distinction between created and fallen time (though admittedly this is not clear in II/1) and so time's fallenness is not inherent in its being created. Fallen time, rather, is a result of human sin filling the created time humans are given. On this account, Barth does not fall into the situation of a negative correlativity. Fourth, Farrow, though only hinting at the issue, suggests Barth's actualistic doctrine of God contributes to the problem of fulfilled time.<sup>166</sup> It will be argued, however, that Barth's version of God's being as act or event serves the positive relation of eternity and time. In connection with God's eternity, God's action in history includes differentiation and unity between past, present and future acts. That the eternal God acts in time does not imply the dissolution of human time but its true grounding. Even the *simul* concept does not imply the necessity of completeness.

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<sup>166</sup> See, for example, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 291-292, where Farrow argues the *simul* doctrine is a view of eternity had by the negative judgement of time, which ends up, by way of fulfilled time, choking creaturely time ("It is plainly time for God, in other words, but we are justified in asking how far it is time for man; for it is time in which the creature's possibilities are already 'exploited and exhausted'," *ibid.*, 291). Here Farrow refers to a brief discussion of the eschatological preservation of time (III/3, 84 ff) which seems to suggest the dissolution of human time in the eschaton. It may be agreed that Barth's discussion here of eschatology and time is problematic – though his is not an uncommon view, even in contemporary theology (see brief comments of John Polkinghorne, *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004]: 156-57). Yet it will be argued that the upholding and integrity of created time by eternity is fundamental to Barth's view. First, eternity is not merely the duration which is lacking in time, which Barth does say, but also the readiness to create time and the sustaining presence with every moment of time. Second, moreover, fulfilled time is not the dissolution of created human time but rather a response to fallen time. Time as the *Existenzform* of the creature is permanent and universal. Even fulfilled time does not dissolve it. Rather, third, the sinful time of the creature becomes fulfilled (though only in anticipation) in the time of the community. The creature participates in fellowship with God, through Christ and by the Spirit. The creature, then, is simultaneously in created, fallen and fulfilled time. He remains a creature in creaturely time but is now in covenant relation with God through Jesus Christ by the Spirit.

Nevertheless, the criticisms of Ford and Farrow do point to Barth's emphasis on the forty days as the fulfillment of eternity in time. While Ford basically points out the problem, Farrow's account, based on the call for a fuller soteriology, notes that the basic problem is associated with the completion of salvation on the cross.

Following up the work of Farrow, Andrew Burgess provides an exposition of the ascension in Barth.<sup>167</sup> Overall, he provides a positive reading of Barth's view, emphasizing the agency of the ascended Lord in revealing the work completed on the cross. This agency, which is through the Holy Spirit, focuses on Holy Scripture, which becomes the primary means of this revelation.<sup>168</sup> His exposition also focuses on the presence and absence of Jesus Christ in the ascension, and not the heavenly session per se. The material basis of the work is *CD* I/2, with occasional use of IV.<sup>169</sup>

Burgess' work takes up a number of issues to be covered in this dissertation. These include Barth's christological reading of time and the division of the threefold *parousia*,<sup>170</sup> and following this, the agency of the Spirit within the second form of the *parousia*, the time of the community.<sup>171</sup> He is also correct to note the *telos* of the time of the community moving toward the eschaton in Barth's view. This present work differs from Burgess', however, in that these issues are taken up in light of the doctrines of the Trinity, eternity, and Barth's fuller exposition of created, fallen and ecclesial times; that is, in light of God's trinitarian supratemporality. Of course, Burgess is correct to read the time of the community in light of the threefold *parousia*, particularly the ascension, and the work of the Spirit. However, by discussing fulfilled time without reference to the time

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<sup>167</sup> Andrew Burgess, *The Ascension in Karl Barth* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 61 ff.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-43.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 43 ff and 68 ff.

of creation, this leads to ambiguous statements suggesting fulfilled time is the abolishing of time itself.<sup>172</sup>

Burgess, moreover, does not sufficiently take note of Farrow's concerns. As mentioned, Farrow's charge against Barth is that the work of salvation is so complete on the cross that all that remains is the unveiling of this to humanity – penultimately in the church and ultimately to the rest of humanity in the eschaton. Burgess' account does not see the full force of this critique. In fact, Burgess' own exposition confirms the suspicions of Farrow:

The present age can only exist as a space that Jesus creates within His own time – eschatological time – for the continued being of the old time of the world, and for the being of the church as His body within that old time. On this basis *Jesus is not described as needing to achieve anything new as regards salvation, but rather as exercising His authority to reveal Himself as the Lord* and thereby to bring about the redemption of those who belong to Him.<sup>173</sup>

While Burgess correctly notes Farrow's criticism of the two states, it is incorrect to suggest that Farrow's view of the Eucharist determines his critique.<sup>174</sup> Rather, it lies in the soteriological weight given to the cross at the expense of further Jesus-history. It might also be added that Farrow's critique focuses on *CD IV* while Burgess' work mainly addresses *I/2*.

Dale Dawson has recently drawn attention to the importance of the resurrection in Barth and thus sheds light on some of the issues and passages to be examined in this dissertation. He insightfully points out that for Barth the resurrection “has to do with the movement of Jesus Christ in the fullness of his reconciling work from the christological

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<sup>172</sup> Burgess misses the importance of created time, equating at a number of points created and fallen time. Read this way, fulfilled time is the destruction of time; see *ibid.*, 36, 40, 76, and 151.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 149. Italics added. Or, a few pages earlier where it is stated that the humiliation and exaltation reach “their peak at the cross” (*ibid.*, 146).

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 153 ff.

sphere to the sphere of other human beings.”<sup>175</sup> That is, the resurrection begins the realization and apprehension of Christ’s completed work on the cross in believers.<sup>176</sup> For Barth, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not merely the vindication of his life and death, but also the point of God’s turning to human beings for their inclusion and participation in the work accomplished.

Dawson’s work is commensurate with this dissertation by highlighting two basic themes. First, there is the role of the resurrection in the fulfilled time of the Son. His exposition includes commentary on the contemporaneity of Jesus Christ found in *CD* III/2 and the expansion of this with the threefold *parousia* in *CD* IV.<sup>177</sup> Second, Dawson gives an important exposition of the Spirit as the effective power of the resurrected Lord in relation to the participation of believers. He notes well Barth’s insistence that reconciliation includes the participation of believers and the importance of the Holy Spirit in this process.<sup>178</sup> The present exposition differs, however, since it is for the purpose of interpreting the role of the Son and Spirit in God’s trinitarian supratemporality. Thus, fulfilled and ecclesial time will be interpreted in light of the Trinity and the question of the eternity-time relation.

It must be noted, however, that Dawson’s work as well fails to account for the critiques of Ford and Farrow. Since he does not significantly engage Ford, a few comments concerning his reading of Farrow can be made. To repeat, the basic thrust of

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<sup>175</sup> Dawson, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth*, 3.

<sup>176</sup> Dawson helpfully summarizes the function of the resurrection in Barth’s corpus with four themes. First, the resurrection is the decisive and primordial self-revelation of God. Second, the resurrection reflects the “ineradicable particularity” of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. Third, it is “the free and unilateral movement of the crucified Lord Jesus Christ to other human beings.” And fourth, the resurrection is “the establishment and revelation of the relationship of the reality of Jesus Christ to the reality of other human beings” (*ibid.*, 3-4). Italics removed from original.

<sup>177</sup> This includes *ibid.*, Chapter 4 and sections from Chapters 5 and 7.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 6.

Farrow's critique is that the completed work on the cross reduces the soteriological importance of the resurrection and ascension. Dawson, however, reads Farrow (as well as Berkouwer and Torrance) to be saying that Barth closes off Jesus-history after the resurrection and thereby reduces the sufficiency of the cross for reconciliation.<sup>179</sup> Dawson is then free to expound the work of the risen Christ and Holy Spirit in the church. However, the charge of closure does not say that Barth has no exposition of the work of Christ and the Spirit post-Golgotha, but rather that his construction could say more besides the predominately noetic participation of human beings. That is, while the cross is essential and sufficient for salvation the story does not end there! This is the basis of the call for a fuller account of the heavenly session.

Nevertheless, the work of Burgess and Dawson do point out the agency of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in the time of the community. The present work complements theirs by seeing fulfilled time and the time of the community in light of the larger trinitarian framework of God's creating, reconciling and redeeming the human creature in their time. Both of these works also suggest that fulfilled and ecclesial time, under the control of Son and Spirit, are moving toward the eschaton. Thus they note the continuing sequence of the time of Jesus and the Spirit after the cross and the forty days. This dissertation differs by following the criticisms that the language of finality and fulfillment given to the forty days is unwarranted and would better suit the final fulfillment of time in the eschaton.

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 17-18, 132, and 185-188.

### 1.3.3 Trinitarian Readings

Other interpreters have found Barth's trinitarianism more central to the eternity-time relation. It is not as if the above interpretations miss Barth's trinitarianism. Jenson and Gunton receive much direction from Barth and most interpretations from the second group seem to assume it. But the central role of the Trinity in Barth's definition of eternity must be more explicitly acknowledged. In this regard, Eberhard Jüngel, Wolfhart Pannenberg and George Hunsinger are examples of this third form of interpretation. In the next chapter, it will be suggested how this dissertation complements these views.

In his important paraphrase of Barth's doctrine of God, Eberhard Jüngel highlights divine temporality and historicity in Barth's view.<sup>180</sup> Since for Barth the doctrine of the Trinity is central, God's being contains its own movement and order. Jüngel's work gives a commentary on fundamental sections of the *CD*. Though this project will focus on other sections, Jüngel's analysis provides insight into the relation of Trinity and time.

Jüngel begins in the prolegomena with the revelation of God (*CD* I/1). God's self-revelation is that of revealer, revelation and revealedness, which is grounded in the triune self-differentiated being of God. Christian revelation is not based on an *a priori* concept of revelation but on God's revelation in the gospel.<sup>181</sup> Moreover, the doctrine of revelation corresponds to the self-relatedness of God's own being. The being of God is a "being which is differentiated in itself and so related in its differentiations, so that the relation constitutes the distinction."<sup>182</sup> Moreover, the inner unity of God's being is

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<sup>180</sup> *God's Being is in Becoming: The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology of Karl Barth. A Paraphrase.* Trans. John Webster (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 ff.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

expressed in the doctrine of perichoresis, while the outer unity in his works is expressed with the concept of appropriation.<sup>183</sup> After a chapter on Barth's epistemology in II/1,<sup>184</sup> and a discussion of God's being-in-act, Jüngel seeks to show the concrete being of God in Barth's discussions of election and the cross.<sup>185</sup> While these fine discussions are important, it is Jüngel's conclusions that need to be highlighted for the present interpretation.

In contrast to Platonic metaphysics, which excludes event and movement from the divine essence, Barth's doctrine of God includes event, relatedness and self-movement.<sup>186</sup> This can be explained with the concept of double relationality in Barth's doctrine of God:

This means that God can enter into relation (*ad extra*) with another being (and in this very relation his being can exist ontically, *without* thereby being ontologically dependent on this other being), because God's being (*ad intra*) is a being *related to itself*. The doctrine of the Trinity is an attempt to think through the self-relatedness of God's being.<sup>187</sup>

This implies, moreover, that it is appropriate to apply historical predicates to the divine being; not only in his revelation but also in his inner triune being. This historicity, however, must not be understood in a generic sense, that God *is* history, but rather as a descriptive of God's revelation and triune being. For God is historical in a more fundamental way. The 'Yes' of eternal election reflects this in Jüngel's view: "This *Yes* of God to himself constitutes his being as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. And at the same time, from the beginning, it constitutes the historicity of God's

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 44 ff. As he states: "In this concreteness of God's being is the ground of the fact that God can reveal himself and that in revelation there is an exact correspondence between the involution and convolution of the three modes of being in the *work* of God and 'in the involution and convolution of the three modes of being in the essence of God' [*CD* I/1, 374]" (ibid., 51).

<sup>184</sup> This is Chapter 2, "God's Being-As-Object", ibid., 55 ff.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., respectively 75-82, 83-98, and 98-104.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 108 ff. For a succinct summary of Jüngel's argument see 120-21.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 114.



being, in which all history has its ground.”<sup>188</sup> In fact, “the being of God takes place as the history of the divine life in the Spirit. And in the history which is constituted through this correspondence God makes space within himself for time. This making-space-for-time within God is a continuing event. The space of time conceived as a continuing event we call eternity.”<sup>189</sup>

Jüngel’s insight, then, is that for Barth God’s eternity – which is the triune life – calls for historical and temporal description. Not only because God reveals himself in time, but also because the divine life has its own independent historicity as Father, Son and Spirit. God’s eternity is the prototype of history and time. That is, divine temporality in Barth can be spoken of in two ways. First, God is ‘temporal’ in his eternal life *in se*. Second, God is temporal in the sense that he works in time and history *ad extra*. While Jüngel examines this in relation to election and the cross, the following chapters will examine it in the creation and preservation of time by the Father, the fulfillment of time by the Son, and in the ecclesial time of the Spirit.

Wolfhart Pannenberg has given the eternity-time relation a central place in his theological corpus. This is evidenced not only in his systematic work but also in his work in prolegomena and metaphysics.<sup>190</sup> Like Jenson and Moltmann, Pannenberg is highly appreciative of Barth’s work but ends up critiquing Barth in light of his own constructive proposal. This reading of Pannenberg’s interpretation of Barth will rely on his later work *Systematic Theology*.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 111

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> On this see Christiaan Mostert, *God and the Future: Wolfhart Pannenberg’s Eschatological Doctrine of God* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2002), 89 ff.

<sup>191</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vols. 1-3. Translated by Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids and Edinburgh: Eerdmans T & T Clark, 1991–1998).

Pannenberg, like Barth, seeks to redefine the eternity of God in light of the revelation of the triune God and to appropriate critically the traditional discussion. In *ST* vol.1 Pannenberg seeks to relate positively the eternal God to the created order, and credits Barth with connecting God's eternity with his triunity. Understanding the relation of eternity and time

is possible only if the reality of God is not understood as undifferentiated identity but as intrinsically differentiated unity. But this demands the doctrine of the Trinity. Barth finely stressed this and spoke of an "order and succession" in the trinitarian life of God which includes a "before" and "after". The last point can be made only with reference to the manifestation of the Trinity in the economy of salvation.<sup>192</sup>

Besides recognizing the importance of the Trinity for Barth's view of eternity, Pannenberg also notes the importance of the incarnation for Barth – what Pannenberg describes as the 'in-temporality' of eternity. He summarizes Barth's view of eternity by describing it as the "source, epitome, and basis of time."<sup>193</sup> Pannenberg's analysis, however, does not note in Barth the relation of eternity to the creation of time nor the time of the church; which will make up important parts of this dissertation.

However, in seeking to read together NT eschatology along with Plotinus and Boethius, Pannenberg relates eternity to time with an emphasis on futurity: "Eternity as the complete totality of life is thus seen from the standpoint of time *only* in terms of a fullness that is sought in the future."<sup>194</sup> Here a basic difference between Barth and Pannenberg can be discerned. While Pannenberg sees the relation between eternity and time more or less exclusively in terms of futurity, Barth views the relation with reference to God's pretemporality, supratemporality and posttemporality. Thus eternity is related to the past, present and future in terms of recapitulation, synchronicity and anticipation, and

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<sup>192</sup> Pannenberg, *ST* 1, 405.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 408, emphasis added, cf. 405 ff. On the focus of futurity see *ST* 2 as well, 84 ff, where the Holy Spirit is viewed as a 'force field' of the future.

not exclusively as the power of the future.<sup>195</sup> Eventually, then, Pannenberg critiques Barth's position in *ST* vol. 3.

In volume 3 Pannenberg repeats the basic contours of his view of eternity while relating it to the final *parousia*.<sup>196</sup> Here he criticizes Barth for not relating eternity positively to the final eschaton, stating that Barth "still did not do full justice to the distinctive priority given to the eschatological future in primitive Christian eschatology."<sup>197</sup> This charge seems unwarranted for two reasons. First, unlike Pannenberg, Barth never was able to complete his dogmatics with a full-fledged eschatology, thus one cannot finally adjudicate on what Barth was never able to complete. Second, there are places where Barth relates the eternal God to final things. This will be discussed below in Chapter Four. After this perhaps one may judge whether or not Barth does justice to the eschatological futurity of God. Nevertheless, Pannenberg does note the importance of the Trinity and incarnation for Barth, pointing to their positive use for the eternity-time relation.

George Hunsinger in his article "*Mysterium Trinitatis: Karl Barth's Conception of Eternity*" also highlights the doctrine of the Trinity as the key to interpreting Barth's view of eternity and time.<sup>198</sup> He argues that Barth's motive on this issue is "to think through the conception of eternity in thoroughly trinitarian terms. Eternity for Barth is not the container in which God lives. It is a predicate of God's triune being."<sup>199</sup> He demonstrates

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<sup>195</sup> It may be argued that Barth's balance of pre-, supra-, and posttemporality could provide a correction to Pannenberg's over emphasis on divine futurity.

<sup>196</sup> See especially 595 ff.

<sup>197</sup> *ST* 3, 595.

<sup>198</sup> George Hunsinger, "*Mysterium Trinitatis: Karl Barth's Conception of Eternity*" in *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000): 186-209.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 188-89. On the significance of Barth in relation to the traditional and modern views of eternity, Hunsinger correctly concludes: "By granting primacy to the divine freedom at the heart of God's trinitarian life, Barth can side with the traditional view on eternity's radical otherness and perfect transcendence while

this, first, by outlining key features of Barth's view of the Trinity and, second, by suggesting how this relates to the discussion of eternity.

First, Hunsinger notes the trinitarian background as found in *CD I/1*. He highlights the three main features of Barth's discussion. "God is self-identical in being (*ousia*), self-differentiated in the modes of being (*hypostases*), and self-unified in eternal life (*perichoresis*)."<sup>200</sup> Describing God's triune life as *ousia*, *hypostases* and *perichoresis* cannot be fully understood but only adequately described. This description, Hunsinger suggests, takes up a dialectical strategy in which neither concept is allowed to isolate the other, but all must be held in tension – though Hunsinger suggests Barth gives a logical priority to the self-identify (*ousia*) of God.<sup>201</sup> Hunsinger then proposes that this dialectical strategy of holding different conceptions in tension in order to preserve the mystery of God is found elsewhere. He points to God's eternal life<sup>202</sup> and God's perfections as including multiplicity and simplicity.<sup>203</sup>

Hunsinger, second, moves into a discussion of eternity found in *CD II/1*. He suggests that the same "theological grammar that governs Barth's doctrine of the Trinity

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also incorporating themes of dynamism, teleology, and immanence that characterize the more modern view" (ibid., 189).

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 190. Hunsinger gives this brilliant summary: "Three main concepts therefore need to be taken into account and coordinated: God's being (*ousia*), God's modes of being (*hypostases*), and God's becoming (*perichoresis*). God's being correlates with God's Lordship. As the Lord, God is one acting subject – indivisible, sovereign, and singular – the God who is supremely free. God's modes of being correlate with God's internal concrete relatedness. As Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God is an eternal communion of love. The three divine 'persons,' each of whom is fully God, coexist simultaneously in mutual self-giving. Finally, God's becoming correlates with God's vitality. As the living God, God's being is in the process of becoming. This life process occurs independently of any relationship that God may have with the world. The triune God does not need the world for the sake of self-actualization, for this God is always already totally actual in the hypostases and perfections of his eternal life" (ibid., 196).

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., "God's life in and for himself, his one *ousia* in three hypostases in the process of perichoresis, is a perfect work (*opus perfectum*) that occurs in perpetual operation (*in operatione perpetuus*) (I/1, p. 427). In the dynamism of his one eternal life, God, who is his own basis, his own goal, and his own way from the one to the other, continually becomes who he is" (ibid., 193).

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 192-196.

is being applied with suitable modifications to his concept of eternity.”<sup>204</sup> This does not mean that Father, Son and Spirit are identified with past, present and future – as is the case with Jenson –<sup>205</sup> but that Barth’s dialectical strategy of relating eternity as ‘pure duration’, ‘beginning, middle and end’, and ‘simultaneity’ corresponds to that of relating *ousia*, *hypostases* and *perichoresis*.<sup>206</sup> Eternity is thereby understood as “the mutual coinherence of three concrete temporal forms, distinct but not separate, that exemplify an undivided duration, identical with the *ousia* of God.”<sup>207</sup>

These distinctions are then used by Barth to distinguish and relate eternity and time. As pure duration, eternity does not share the dissolution and separation between past, present and future. Whereas time means a loss for human experience, the same cannot be said of eternity. This is expressed with the idea that beginning, middle and end are simultaneous in eternity. Yet eternity does contain distinctions between beginning, middle and end, and thus creates and coexists with all beginnings, middles and ends of creaturely time. Although eternity is ontologically distinct from time, eternity is understood by Barth as God’s own time, since it has its own immanent order and succession and is contemporary with time.<sup>208</sup> Hunsinger then notes the importance of the incarnation in *CD* II/1 as both the entry of eternity into time and the elevation of time into eternity. As fully God, Jesus Christ participates in God’s eternity and, as fully human, takes up and heals time. Hunsinger finishes his essay with a brief review of eternity’s

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>205</sup> Eberhard Jüngel also hints at this identification. See “Theses on the Eternality of Eternal Life”, 166-67 (translated by Christopher Holmes in “Eberhard Jüngel and Wolf Krötke: Recent Contributions toward a Trinitarian Doctrine of God’s Attributes”, *Toronto Journal of Theology* 22:2 [2006]: 159-180).

<sup>206</sup> Hunsinger, “*Mysterium Trinitatis*”, 197-98.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 197-202.

preceding, accompanying and fulfilling of time with as pre-, supra-, and posttemporality.<sup>209</sup>

The value of Hunsinger's essay is at least threefold. First, he illustrates that the best way to understand Barth's position is by a close reading of the *CD* itself.<sup>210</sup> While Barth takes up traditional notions such as simultaneity, one must be attentive to the way in which Barth employs and develops these terms, lest one assume he is reintroducing ideas that imply timelessness. Second, Hunsinger notes Barth's trinitarian pattern of thinking. Without reducing the Father, Son and Spirit to the temporal modes of past, present and future, Barth's dialectical relating of *ousia*, *hypostases* and *perichoresis* is applied to the definition of eternity and its distinction from and relation to time. Third, Hunsinger's discussion correctly assumes that Barth's view is founded on the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation. These are taken to be fundamental as well in Barth's discussions throughout the *CD*. While Hunsinger's analysis is focused on the discussion of eternity in *CD* II/1, the focus of this dissertation will be on God's supratemporality as found in volumes III and IV. As such, it seeks to complement Hunsinger's insights, as well as those of Jüngel and Pannenberg, by extending the discussion further into Barth's *magnum opus*.

It might be noted here, that the centrality of the Trinity distinguishes this dissertation from other similar works. Take, for example, Thomas Freyer's *Zeit* –

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 203-205 and 206-209, respectively.

<sup>210</sup> It might be noted that Dawson takes a similar approach. As he states: "Barth's own hermeneutical principle of immersing oneself in the thought of an author, straining to see what she sees, and perhaps to express even more adequately the object in view, offers a promising approach. That is, to read Barth with a view to his persisting single material intention, in the harmonies and dissonances of its thematic movements and diachronic developments, in the tension and cohesion of its mutually illuminating parts, and throughout his many efforts to go back again to the beginning and 'start again', and to submit it all to the critique of theology's enduring object, constitutes, I suggest, an approach which Barth himself would approve" (*Resurrection in Karl Barth*, 27 n. 88).

*Continuität und Unterbrechung: Studien zu Karl Barth, Wolfhart Pannenberg und Karl Rahner*.<sup>211</sup> Freyer brings the theologies of time in Barth, Pannenberg and Rahner into critical dialogue with phenomenological views, particularly the work of Emmanuel Levinas. Thus his overall purpose differs from the present work. Freyer begins by examining the eternity-time relation previous to the *CD*. This includes not only the two editions of *Romans* and *Christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf*, but also earlier essays previous to his conversion from theological liberalism.<sup>212</sup> His exposition in the *CD* includes fulfilled, expecting and remembering time in I/2; eternity in II/1; the creation of time and its relation to the time of the covenant in III/1; fulfilled time in III/2 as ‘the divine present’; and the threefold *parousia* and its unity in IV.<sup>213</sup> Freyer’s interpretation, however, does not see the importance of the Trinity to the extent we are arguing. He does not note the overall trinitarian shape of Barth’s view.<sup>214</sup> Nor, more specifically, does he view the Trinity as important for the discussion of eternity espoused in II/1, as Hunsinger points out. Rather it is described as the ‘eternal now.’<sup>215</sup> In fact, he states Barth’s view is insufficiently trinitarian and instead focuses on God as the absolute subject, something similar to Moltmann’s criticism.<sup>216</sup> Nevertheless, Freyer does note the central place of the incarnation for Barth.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Thomas Freyer, *Zeit – Continuität und Unterbrechung: Studien zu Karl Barth, Wolfhart Pannenberg und Karl Rahner*. Bonner Dogmatische Studien 13 (Würzburg: Echter: 1993).

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 94 ff.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 126 ff, 142 ff, 155 ff, 160 ff, and 169 ff.

<sup>214</sup> See, for example, his outline, *ibid.*, 73-75, and conclusions, 488 ff.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 142 ff.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 148 ff.

<sup>217</sup> Another example would be that of John Colwell. While Hunsinger argues that one must begin with the Trinity in order to understand Barth’s view of eternity, Colwell’s study focuses on Barth’s actualism instead (see *Actuality and Provisionality: Eternity and Election in the Theology of Karl Barth* [Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1989], 37 ff). Granted, Barth’s trinitarianism and actualism are not mutually incompatible, which Colwell realizes, but it seems best to view his actualism as a function of his doctrine of the Trinity. As Jüngel notes: “In the self-relatedness of God’s being the relational structuring of this being *occurs*. As the mutual self-giving of the three modes of God’s being, God’s being is event” (*God’s*

In this chapter, it has been argued that Barth's view of eternity is based on the doctrine of the Trinity. This means that his is a dynamic view that includes the life and movement of the triune persons both *in se* and *ad extra*. This is God's own divine temporality. The following interpretation focuses more specifically on God's supratemporality, the activity and movement of God in creating and preserving time (Father), recapitulating time (Son), and creating ecclesial time (Holy Spirit). This is the temporal work of God *ad extra*. In contrast to interpretations that suggest Barth's view is closer to the traditional atemporal definition, the alternative reading offered here demonstrates a complex nexus of trinitarian times in Barth. The next chapter outlines the present interpretation of Barth's view in the context of a discussion of time and his rejection and use of analogy.

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*Being is in Becoming*, 41). Moreover, it is being argued here that the trinitarian shape of eternity's relation to time is seen in the creating, preserving, reconciling and redeeming of time. While Colwell's study covers some of the same material as this dissertation (Jesus Christ and time, humanity's time, and even the time of the community), his focus is on actuality and election. The present trinitarian interpretation has the advantage of including the time of creation as appropriated to the Father, and thus incorporating the full breadth of Barth's view.



## Chapter Two

### Time, Analogy, and Barth's *analogia trinitaria temporis*

As already suggested, Barth's understanding of eternity and time fundamentally depends on his doctrine of the Trinity, especially its christocentric focus. Pannenberg notes this, while Jüngel points to the necessity of using temporal predicates when describing God's eternal life. Even Jenson sees the importance of the Trinity and incarnation for Barth, though his own view of eternity differs substantially from Barth's. Hunsinger gives the most attention to the connection between Trinity and eternity. His detailed analysis focuses on the perfection of eternity and its relation to time in II/1, demonstrating how the grammar and central concepts of Barth's doctrine of the Trinity are analogously applied to the discussion of eternity.

Following these trinitarian readings, this dissertation focuses on the question of how Barth develops the eternity-time relation in volumes III and IV of the *Dogmatics*. This is the first contribution of this dissertation. Whereas other studies have tended to focus on the earlier volumes of the *CD*, the following three chapters will provide a sustained discussion of sections that have tended to be neglected. There has been much discussion of eternity in II/1 and significant attention given to "Jesus, Lord of Time" (§ 47.1) but less given to other sections, especially those that relate to the Father and the Spirit. But, second, and more importantly, it will be argued that focusing on the doctrine of the Trinity reveals the conceptual coherence of Barth's view. As described in the first chapter, the movement and life of the triune persons *is* God's eternity. Since God's immanent life is the differentiation and perichoretic relation of Father, Son, and Spirit –

containing its own movement, order and succession – then eternity is its own particular time.<sup>1</sup> This is not only true *in se*, when only the life of God is described, but also *ad extra*, in God's relation to created temporality. In fact, Barth's view of the relation between eternity and time can be described as analogous, a trinitarian *analogia temporis*. What this means is that not only is God's dynamic eternity the source of time, but also that a trinitarian pattern of the eternity-time relationship emerges in the *CD*. The creation of time is appropriated to the Father, the fulfillment of time to the Son, and the communion of time to the Spirit. These trinitarian dimensions of temporality correspond or are analogous to the eternal triune life.

Having already noted Barth's dynamic understanding of eternity, clarity still needs to be given to the discussion of time itself, after which, a brief review of Barth's understanding and use of analogy will be given. These discussions will help discern the complex contribution that a trinitarian construction of the eternity-time relation makes, Barth's *analogia trinitaria temporis*.

## 2.1. What, then, is Time?

Time is generally discussed quantitatively as a formal feature of created and human existence. It is either described as the flow of past, present and future, or as the measurement of movement. Less discussed, however, is the qualitative character of time; that is, how time is filled – the content of time. The relation between form and content,

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<sup>1</sup> The claim that eternity is its own time does not mean that Barth collapses eternity into time. As will be argued, there is a proper analogical relation between a dynamic eternity and the movement and succession of created time. The point is that God's triune life contains movement and order and thus, as Jüngel argued, it may be predicated using temporal categories, but it is not created time. There is even a sense in which eternity for Barth is timeless; that it is not controlled, contained, or limited by created time, though it is not timeless in the sense that eternity does not interact with and enter time. The point that must be kept in mind is that the relation between eternity and time is always asymmetrical; eternity creates, upholds and acts in created time, though it is not limited by created time.

quantity and quality, needs to be analyzed in order to understand Barth's contribution. To delineate the quantitative dimensions, the experiences and observations of time will be divided into subjective and objective forms, and then two basic definitions of time arising from these experiences will be noted. To suggest the qualitative dimension – how time is filled with content – Paul Ricoeur's concept of narrative time will be employed. This will demonstrate that the manifold nature of time may still be coherently understood, not merely as a formal feature of human and created existence but as something that has a narrative structure.

Experiences and observations of time may be roughly divided into endogenous (subjective) and exogenous (objective) approaches. The most basic form of endogenous time is the human experience of being awake and sleeping, resulting from natural light and darkness. These experiences are accompanied by various biological processes and a basic consciousness of time's process and duration.<sup>2</sup> Exogenous times are concerned with the rhythms and processes of the natural world, as well as cultural and social times.<sup>3</sup> Discussions of time in modern science add to this with the deep time of evolution and cosmology, and the technical discussions found in physics and relativity theory. The discovery of the space-time continuum, for example, has expanded understandings of the exogenous time of the natural world.<sup>4</sup>

Philosophical reflection on subjective and objective times has produced two main definitions of time in the western tradition. The first and most common is the rational-linear view; time is the movement from the past, through the present, and into the future.

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<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang Achtner, Stefan Kunz, and Thomas Walter, *Dimensions of Time: The Structures of the Time of Humans, of the World, and of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 2002), 8 f, and 12 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 9 f, and 110 ff.

<sup>4</sup> On time in modern science see Paul Davies, *About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution* (London: Orion, 1995; New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005).

Concerning the human experience of time, Augustine's famous version of linear time as memory of the past, perception of the present, and anticipation of the future has held sway (*Confessions*, BK 11.XXI.20). Yet the linear passage of time is also found in objective times as well. Stemming from the experience of monotheism, first in Egypt and then in Israelite experience, history itself is viewed as a constant forward movement.<sup>5</sup> The linearity and unidirectionality of time are also assumed in scientific understandings of time. Barth assumes this basic division of time into past, present and future in most of his discussions. He assumes that the linear flow of time is the way in which God created the universe with time.

A second definition of time was put forward by Aristotle: time is the measurement of movement in regard to before and after (*Physics* IV, 11).<sup>6</sup> With this view a particular time has a beginning, duration and end. Originally, the basic units in this measurement were periods of the day, days, months, and years. With the invention of the clock in the middle ages however, social and economic time were measured and quantified by standards apart from the natural processes. The clock was originally invented to aid secluded cloister life and then applied to social and economic life.<sup>7</sup> This measurement approach was also significant for the discovery of relativity; times are measured differently (in reference to the speed of light) depending on one's perspective in relation to an object in motion.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Achtner, *et. al.*, *Dimensions of Time*, 27 ff.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of Aristotle's view, especially in relation to other ancient views, see Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum: theories in antiquity and the early middle ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> Achtner, *et. al.*, *Dimensions of Time*, 84 ff.

<sup>8</sup> On time in the theory of relativity see Davies, *About Time*, 44 ff.

Thus, time may be approached as a subjective experience or a feature of the external world in general, whether defined as the flow of past, present, and future, or as a measured duration. Even so, these basic delineations do not necessarily lead to an integrated understanding of temporality.<sup>9</sup> In fact, one may be left with a scattered excess of measured times that have no coherence, quality, or character.

Paul Ricoeur, however, makes a strong case for integrating various approaches under the concept of narrative time. Rather than viewing time merely as the unidirectional and neutral succession of instants, he argues that temporality and narrativity be reciprocally understood.<sup>10</sup> Ricoeur specifically focuses on the role of plot in narrative, which suggests two major features of narrative time.<sup>11</sup> The first, a chronological feature, is the episodic dimension. The narrative is made up of episodes. The second, a nonchronological dimension, is configuration, in which “the plot construes

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Ricoeur perceptively argues that Aristotle’s cosmological and Augustine’s psychological approaches remain in fundamental tension. Aristotle relies on movement and the notion of instants to measure the succession of before and after, while Augustine does not account for cosmic movement in his description of time as extension of the mind, especially in the present experience of perception, anticipation, and memory. See Ricoeur “The Time of the Soul and the Time of the World: The Dispute between Augustine and Aristotle” in *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3. Trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988): 12-22.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Ricoeur, “Narrative Time,” *Critical Inquiry* 7:1 (Autumn 1980): 169-190. In this article Ricoeur uses and expands Heidegger’s phenomenology of time, while his argument is directed against the dechronologizing of narrative in certain strains of literary criticism and historiography. He agrees with Heidegger’s analysis of time; first, that events occur ‘in’ time (ibid., 172-180) and second, that humans experience time as historicity. This refers to the projection of the unity of past, present and future of each individual life from birth to death. Yet individuals move toward death and need retrospection, a turn to the past, in order to deal with their limited durations (ibid., 180 ff.). On the need to turn to the past, even while looking to the future Ricoeur states: “Of course the shift from future to past is understandable to the extent that any project implies memory and that no authentic anticipation of what we may ‘have to be’ is possible without borrowing from the resources of what we already ‘have been’ ” (ibid., 181). Third, following from historicity is Heidegger’s concept of repetition. This refers to the necessary retrieval of the past in order to move toward the future, and the movement toward death (ibid., 182). Ricoeur criticizes Heidegger however, since the German philosopher focuses his view on individual temporal experience to the neglect of the communal and collective. Thus Ricoeur argues that narrative preserves public time and a being-with others that Heidegger neglects (ibid., 188 ff.).

<sup>11</sup> As Ricoeur explains: “By plot I mean the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in a story. . . . A story is *made out of* events to the extent that plot *makes* events into a story. The plot, therefore, places us at the crossing point of temporality and narrativity: to be historical, an event must be more than a singular occurrence, a unique happening. It receives its definition from its contribution to the development of the plot” (ibid., 171).

significant wholes out of scattered events.”<sup>12</sup> The plot structures a number of episodes into a narrative. Other features of narrative time include development and directedness; the end of the story pulls the narrative along.<sup>13</sup> The plot superimposes a sense of ending, so that time does not merely move from the past to the future, but toward a particular end that is contained even in the beginning.<sup>14</sup> Like objective approaches, moreover, narrative time is public. It is “a time common to the actors, as time woven in common by their interaction.”<sup>15</sup> There is also the element of what Ricoeur calls intervention. Even though actors move with a certain amount of freedom, their time has been created and they do not control the consequences of their action. The actor is bound up in a world order.

Narrative time, then, includes both the measurement of objective time, as episodes have a specific measurable duration, and the subjective experience of linear time, as actors within the narrative experience the flow of time. Yet temporality takes on a particular quality as times are ‘for’ this or that activity, which are included and directed by the overall narrative. As Ecclesiastes puts it, there is a season for everything: time to be born and die, plant and uproot, mourn and dance, etc. (3:1-8). *Time is not only quantified as the measurement of duration or existence in the flow of past, present and future, but takes on qualitative differences depending on the activity and relations taking place within it.* The overall narrative directs the times within it, giving various times particular qualities as they are directed to an end.<sup>16</sup> What is important in Ricoeur’s

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 178. Ricoeur sees a similarity between configuration and other categories: Aristotle’s “theme” in *Poetics*, the “point” of biblical parables, Kant’s “thought” in *Critique of Judgment*, and “colligatory” terms in historiography, *ibid.*, 179.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 179-80.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>16</sup> There is generally little discussion of the qualitative dimension of temporality in theological contexts. This is especially true of analytical philosophy of religion where the discussion has been dominated by the question of eternity as timelessness and the nature of time. Basically, the arguments have been either in

analysis for the present discussion is the insistence on thinking about time within a larger overall narrative or framework, which in Barth has a trinitarian and christological focus.

As Ingolf Dalferth has pointed out, Barth readily incorporates non-theological perspectives on human experience or the natural world into his dogmatic project. In fact, Barth seeks to subsume these external perspectives with reference to the internal content of the Christian faith. This results in two basic components in Barth's theology:

[A] constructive or dogmatic component which generates the basic theological categories, and an interpretative component which applies those categories to elucidate our experience of natural reality in the light of faith. The first component is the backbone of his dogmatics and unfolds the universal perspective of Faith in terms of a complete reconstruction of reality on christological foundations. The second component reproduces the reality normally external to theology within theology by interpreting it in light of the perspective of Faith.<sup>17</sup>

The first component moreover is focused on the eschatological reality of the resurrected Christ, which "has ontological and criteriological priority over the experiential reality which we all share."<sup>18</sup> There is then no understanding of humanity, the world, or cosmos that lies outside the dogmatic enterprise, including temporality.<sup>19</sup> Thus there is no secular time as such; all time is understood with reference to the content of the Christian faith.

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favour or against an eternal God working in time with little concern for the actual content of Christian belief for the discussion. Moltmann and Polkinghorne however come close to the qualitative dimension when speaking of time in an eschatological context. See Moltmann, *Science and Wisdom*, 109 f, and John Polkinghorne, *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 156 f.

<sup>17</sup> Ingolf Dalferth, *Theology and Philosophy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988; repr. Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 122-23.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>19</sup> Barth "unfolds in a painstaking and detailed way a theological perspective of universal inclusiveness which incorporates and reconstructs the shared and public reality of our world within theology; and he achieves this by interpreting it theologically within the frame of reference provided by the christological exposition of the eschatological reality described" (ibid., 120-21). In fact, "Taken by itself [our world] is nothing but an abstraction of the only concrete reality there is: God's self-realization in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, the foundation of all this in the eternal will of God and its consequences in and for our world. It does not follow from this that what we experience as real is not real or only seems to be so. Rather it is a preliminary, penultimate, abstract reality which as such is in permanent danger of relapsing into non-existence. In short, our world of common experience is an *enhyposstatic* reality which exists only in so far as it is incorporated into the concrete reality of God's saving self-realization in Christ. Taken by itself natural reality is an *anhyposstatic* abstraction, unable to exist on its own and systematically at one

For Barth, moreover, the discussion of time must begin with the eschatological being of Jesus Christ. Specifically,

theology refers not to a reality past but a present reality – present neither in the sense of a historical past remembered by us nor in the sense of a permanent presence of timeless eternity. Rather it is the personal presence of the risen Christ, the revelation of God’s love towards us; Christ freely makes himself present to us through the Spirit by interrupting the continuities of our life and calling us into community with the living God.<sup>20</sup>

This is the theological core of Barth’s discussion of eternity and time. The eternal God meets temporal humanity in Jesus Christ; the risen and ascended Lord becomes present to believers through the awakening power of the Holy Spirit. But this christological focus does not exclude the work of the Father and Spirit in relation to time, rather it presumes it. There is, then, a distinct trinitarian content that fills the forms of time, the narrative qualification of time.

In addition to the trinitarian and christological filling of time, there are four basic forms of time that Barth includes. The first form is the rational-linear, time as the flow of past, present, and future. This follows closely Augustine’s discussion and is the most common definition in western thought. A second form used by Barth is allotted time. This refers to the lifetime of each individual and focuses on one’s movement from birth to death, a concern of modern phenomenology. This follows the definition of time as the measurement of movement, that is, the duration of time. The third form Barth includes is the objective time of the cosmos. This occurs in the rhythms and cycles of natural

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remove from the texture of concrete reality” (ibid., 120). “This amounts to nothing less than to a sustained hermeneutical process of redefining virtually every dogmatic concept in christological terms ... in sometimes quite complicated and twisted ways – derived from the central eschatological reality of the risen Christ” (ibid., 123-24).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 114. Douglas Harink also notes how all histories are taken into the time of the gospel. He contrasts Barth’s view in his Romans commentary (along with the work of Giorgio Agamben) with views that fit gospel time into secular history or salvation history. These later views attempt to “inscribe the gospel into other supposedly ‘larger’ histories or narratives [and] end up losing that which Christ came to save by taking all things into the time of the gospel, which is to say, by gracing all things with eternal life” (“The Time of the Gospel and the History of the World”, a paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, November 2007, 30).



processes, though Barth understands this in relation to human existence. Finally, Barth speaks about general world history or the general world occurrence. It should be clear that Barth makes a limited choice in these forms. He focuses more on the discussion of human experience, only briefly mentioning exogenous or objective time, explaining it as the objective context for human temporality, never taking up the discussion of time in modern science. Moreover, Barth assumes that these forms are the common understandings of time; this is how God created the world with time. He rarely takes up the history of these concepts but merely assumes they are the common experience. Thus, it can be safely said that Barth makes no new contribution to the formal discussion of time; he assumes popular definitions.

Distinguishing these forms of time is only the beginning. Since time is ‘for’ or ‘of’ this or that particular activity, these forms are empty of content and quality. Barth’s contribution comes in interpreting these forms with reference to the content of the Christian faith, the internal dogmatic component of his view. What occurs in the *CD* is that time is ‘filled’ with reference to the being and activity of the triune God, especially in reference to the eschatological reality of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the quantitative or formal nature of time does not change for the creature – it is still the flow of past, present, and future, or allotted time. What changes, however, is the quality of time according to the divine and human activity within it. For example, a Christian believer still lives in the flow of time and in the movement towards death, but she knows that her time is relativized in the presence of Jesus Christ by his Holy Spirit. Her own death is not a final end and she finds herself in the time of the community, which has a particular *telos* on its way to the final eschaton. Thus, while she finds herself in the ebb and flow of history and

time, like anyone else (fallen time), her experience of time is lived within the time of the community; her temporal existence is actually filled with hope, even in the face of death and the end of her time. It is the movement of the triune God toward humanity that conditions, fills, and qualifies the experiences of time.

To suggest further that the relation between eternity and time is analogous, a short digression into the controversy surrounding analogy is necessary.

## **2.2. Barth's Rejection and Use of Analogy**

There is no proper Christian theology without analogy. One may not speak of God or think properly of the God-world relation without recourse to analogy, especially if the twin dangers of pantheism and deism are to be avoided.<sup>21</sup> Thomas Aquinas, for example, established the necessity of analogy when speaking of God.<sup>22</sup> Both univocal and equivocal forms of predication are inappropriate; the former views language in reference to God and creation as identical, as if humans speak of God in the same way as created reality, while the latter sees human language as inadequate when speaking of a transcendence and mysterious God. Analogy, then, is the middle way between the

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<sup>21</sup> Analogy has a long and complex history in western philosophy and theology. Though its beginnings lie in ancient philosophy, from a theological perspective, the most significant work was done by medieval scholastics. This included Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, and Thomas Aquinas. Analogy in ancient thought was found in science, mathematics, grammar, logic, and finally, theology. This includes Plato and Aristotle, though its original use in speaking of God seems to be found in Proclus. See Battista Mondin, S.X., *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholics Theology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 1-6. For an exhaustive treatment of the history of analogy see Hampus Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World: An Investigation of its Background and Interpretation of its Use by Thomas of Aquino* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1953).

<sup>22</sup> See *Summa Contra Gentiles* Book 1, chapters 28-36 and *Summa Theologica* Part 1 Chapter 12, "How God is known by us," and Chapter 13, "The Names of God." It should be noted that the line of interpretation that suggests Aquinas uses analogy as a linguistic category is being followed here (and that he does not have a developed analogy of being). See for example Ralph McInerney, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992). This does not mean no analogy of being can be developed in reference to and dialogue with Aquinas, but that it seems he reserves analogy for the problem of naming God.

univocal and the equivocal; it allows a true description of God (the point of univocity), while maintaining the ontological distinction and uniqueness of God (the concern of equivocity). Yet analogy is not only used in reference to naming God, but has also been employed to describe the God-world relation and as a method of access to knowledge of God.

While most would agree that analogous language is appropriate when describing God, which even Barth admits (*CD* II/1, 222 ff), the use of analogy beyond predication is more controversial. The controversy, which continues from the last century, surrounds the issue of the *analogia entis*. Erich Przywara (1889-1973) introduced the concept into modern German theological discourse as a summary of Catholic theology. He argued that the *analogia entis* could be a middle way between the domestication of God in Protestant liberalism and the excessively transcendent God found in the Barth-Gogarten-Thurneysen school of the 1920's.<sup>23</sup> For Przywara *analogia entis* was a dynamic theory that attempted to synthesize the history of western thought. As James Zeitz notes, with this concept Przywara “develops into a symbol and banner for Catholic theology in general – in the debate with Barth. It becomes synonymous with his broader vision of integrating cultural movements, religious intuition and metaphysics.”<sup>24</sup> Przywara “studies a vast amount of

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy in Theological Discourse: An Investigation in Ecumenical Perspective*. Tesi Gregoriana, Serie Teologia 4 (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1995), 126-129. The term *analogia entis* is not found in Thomas Aquinas, as is often assumed, but is a product of commentary by Cajetan and Suarez, which was then found in Jesuit texts from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Przywara's construction of the *analogia entis* follows from this line, as he learned it from study at a Jesuit college in Holland and subsequently passed it into German theological discourse, while combining it with ideas from the fourth Lateran council (ibid., 155-158).

<sup>24</sup> James Zeitz, *Spirituality and Analogia Entis according to Erich Przywara*, S.J. (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 117. This work looks at the complex development of Przywara's thought as it relates to and culminates in the concept of *analogia entis*. See esp. 117-165.

authors and other cultural phenomenon concerning religion and man's quest for God in order to attain an 'immanent synthesis' of Christianity in general."<sup>25</sup>

Barth's response to the doctrine of *analogia entis* is at least twofold: first, a negative polemic against the doctrine, and, second, a constructive alternative. The negative reaction is summarized in the infamous claim that the Catholic doctrine of the *analogia entis* is the invention of the antichrist (*CD* I/1, xiii). Barth understood the doctrine "as proposing *being* as a common ground between God and man, that is, God and man as sharing in the same being, which then is common to both. The ground of analogy in this case is creation and human nature and not God's revelation."<sup>26</sup> While Barth, following the lead of Przywara, may have been incorrect to assume the *analogia entis* as the sum of Catholic theology, he does seem to have legitimate concerns. Given his understanding of the doctrine, Barth suggests that it presupposes a higher concept beyond God and humanity, so that God is defined by a general concept of being. Following this, such a procedure would imply a second source of knowledge of God apart from that attained by faith in the revelation of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the *analogia entis* implies that knowledge of God is direct and immediate, whereas for Barth it is indirect and mediated by scripture and preaching. Finally, the *analogia entis* suggests that knowledge of God is a movement of humans to God, as opposed to the gracious

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 119. For a positive retrieval of Przywara's position with a perceptive eye on modern and postmodern aesthetics, especially on the rupture between beauty and the sublime, see the two part article by John Betz "Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being", *Modern Theology* 21:3 (July) 2005: 367- 411, and *Modern Theology* 22:1 (January) 2006: 1- 50.

<sup>26</sup> Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy*, 49.

movement of God to humanity.<sup>27</sup> So it seems, given the definition Barth assumed, he had legitimate concerns.<sup>28</sup>

Barth's constructive and positive response to Przywara was the *analogia fidei*. Rather than constructing a theology by beginning with a preconceived notion of being, wherein an understanding of God and humanity are straight-jacketed, Barth seeks to begin theology with the revelation of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This knowledge arises from faith, a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. The faith of the believer is analogous to the God's knowledge of himself and to the activity and revelation of God in Jesus Christ (*CD* I/1, 227ff and *CD* II/1, §§ 25-26). The *analogia fidei*, then, is basically an epistemological category that distinguishes Barth's approach from Przywara's.<sup>29</sup> Yet Barth's use of *analogia fidei* is not the only case of analogy in Barth.

Further to the epistemological and linguistic analogy of faith, there are other uses of analogy that describe the ontological order of things as such – what Christoph

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

<sup>28</sup> It must be stressed here that we are concerned with Barth's understanding of the doctrine. It may be the case that Barth did not fully understand the *analogia entis*. It seems Betz corrects Barth's caricature that God and humanity are fitted into a preconceived notion of being and notes the christological content of Przywara's position. Yet he does not highlight Przywara's notion of revelation in creation ("Beyond the Sublime", 404, note 17), a concern of Barth, and misconstrues Barth's view of revelation as trinitarian self-*interpretation* and theopanthistic (see "Beyond the Sublime", 5-6), whereas for Barth revelation is a trinitarian self-*disclosure* that includes the integral participation of the creature; admittedly a clearer appreciation by Barth for the role of humanity is given with an explication of the *imago dei* in *CD* III/2. Thus a more fruitful conversation with Barth might be had with his discussion of the *analogia relationis* found there; Moreover, Betz's claim that Barth denies "any openness whatsoever of the creature to God, and thus any natural desire (*desiderium naturale*) for God" is incorrect. For a response to this see the article by Kenneth Oakes, "The Question of Nature and Grace in Karl Barth: Humanity as Creature and as Covenant-Partner", *Modern Theology* 23:4 (October 2007): 595- 616. Thus while Betz chides Barth for his misreading of Przywara, his own reading of Barth is problematic. Betz's aim in employing the *analogia entis* however is laudable: "Indeed, as long as theology has not abandoned philosophy and ontology, as long as it has not retreated entirely into cultural-linguistic models of Christianity and forsaken the question of being, there is arguably no doctrine that is better able to maintain theology's philosophical front against its critics, and to offer a counter aesthetic that is at once more beautiful and more sublime—which, in our own day, retains a certain regard for beauty even in the absence of the good and the true, and is thus perhaps the most compelling testimony to its truth" ("Part Two", 20).

<sup>29</sup> Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy*, 31 ff. and 51 ff.

Schwöbel terms “a multidimensional network of analogies.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, following the epistemological are ontological uses.<sup>31</sup> This ontological use of analogy is most evident in Barth’s varied employment of the *analogia relationis*. Found especially in the doctrine of creation, the intra-divine relation between the Father and the Son finds analogies in the relation of God and the world (I/1, 397; III/1, 14 and 50), the relation between Jesus Christ and God, and Jesus Christ and the rest of humanity (III/2, 55ff and 203 ff).<sup>32</sup> This analogy of relation is also reflected in the relation between a man and a woman, parent and child, and neighbors (III/4, 116 ff).<sup>33</sup> Thus while Barth remains faithful to the epistemological foundations of the *analogia fidei*, he is not opposed to using analogy in

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<sup>30</sup> Christoph Schwöbel, in the foreword to Peter S. Oh, *Karl Barth’s Trinitarian Theology: A Study in Karl Barth’s Analogical use of the Trinitarian Relation* (T & T Clark: London and New York, 2007), xi.

<sup>31</sup> Palakeel notes the distinction between analogies used in predication (the epistemological and linguistic) and those that describe the ontological order of things (*analogia relationis* and *analogia operationis*), though he does not exploit this distinction (*The Use of Analogy*, 47). Both Palakeel and Peter Oh, while following Barth to different degrees, attempt to develop an *analogia entis* that is within the *analogia fidei*. See Peter S. Oh, *Karl Barth’s Trinitarian Theology*.

<sup>32</sup> See the summary statement in III/2, 323-324.

<sup>33</sup> For an exposition of the analogy of relation see Gary Deddo, *Karl Barth’s Theology of Relations: Trinitarian, Christological, and Human: Towards an Ethic of the Family*. Issues in Systematic Theology Vol. 4 (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 94 ff. See as well Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy*, 24 ff. On the analogy between the being of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ’s relation to culture see Paul L. Metzger, *The Word of Christ and the World of Culture: Sacred and Secular through the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). Or, more recently, Peter Oh has argued that the perichoresis of the divine persons is reflected in ecclesial existence, *Karl Barth’s Trinitarian Theology*, esp. 81 ff. Although his main thesis that there was a methodical shift from the dialectical to the *analogia fidei* has been replaced by the work of McCormack, von Balthasar does point out the diversity of analogies in Barth as well. See Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*. Translated by Edward Oakes, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 161-167.

describing the relation of God and creation<sup>34</sup> – though he does not subsume these analogies under the rubric of the *analogia entis*.<sup>35</sup>

Following this, it will be argued that within Barth's ontology there also functions an *analogia temporis* along with such concepts as the *analogia relationis*.<sup>36</sup> As Falk Wagner states, analogy generally refers to a "correspondence or similarity between two or more entities that are neither completely the same nor completely different."<sup>37</sup> The basic concept refers to a similar-dissimilar relationship. In the case of God and creation, or God and humanity, the dissimilarity must include the creator/creation distinction in which the aseity of God is preserved, while the similarity may include various features of God's life or the life of creation. In the case of the analogy of faith, the knowledge of God by faith arising in the believer is analogous or corresponds to the acts of God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the analogy of relation, the general relation between the God and the world is analogous to the intra-trinitarian relation of the Father and the Son. In the first case, knowledge of God by faith corresponds to God's act; in the second, the intra-divine relation corresponds to the relation between God and creation.

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<sup>34</sup> In Barth, then, analogy is a more flexible concept than once assumed. Palakeel notes that this is based on his doctrine of God: "Barth has a dynamic concept of analogy, which he bases not on God's being as an abstract concept, but on God's being defined by him as pure act. Hence, according to him, the similarity between God and man (namely, analogy) cannot be based on a general concept of being, but on God's revelation in Christ, which is God's readiness for man, appropriated in the human readiness of faith. Hence, the correspondence and agreement between God and man, whether in the knowledge of God or in speech about God, takes place through an analogy of relation, analogy of faith or analogy of revelation" (*The Use of Analogy*, 59).

<sup>35</sup> If Barth is incorrect in his understanding of the *analogia entis* and he allows for the use of analogy in his 'ontology', then would it not be the case that there is an incipient *analogia entis* in his theology? For an argument along these lines see Peter Oh, *Karl Barth's Trinitarian Theology*, 40 ff.

<sup>36</sup> On Barth's actualistic and covenantal ontology see Bruce McCormack, "Grace and being: the role of God's gracious election in Karl Barth's theological ontology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*; and "The Ontological Presuppositions of Barth's Doctrine of the Atonement" in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological and Practical Perspectives*. Eds. Charles Hill and Frank James III (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 346-366.

<sup>37</sup> Falk Wagner, "Analogy", *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. 1, 48.

Barth's various discussions of eternity and time clearly evince the dissimilar-similar relation. The difference between eternity and time is found in the asymmetrical relation between eternity and time; eternity creates time, it is the prototype of the type; eternity is the primary analogate and time the analogue. There is also the basic ontological distinction (not distance) between eternity and time, as there is between God and creation. On the similarity between eternity and time, both contain movement, order, and succession. For Barth, this is expressed in the differentiated and perichoretic life of the eternal triune persons, and the movement and succession of time evident in the common understandings of time. But more than this, eternity leaves its stamp in Barth's trinitarian reinterpretation of time. The Father creates time, the Son rescues and fulfills it, while the Spirit is the bond between the contemporaneity of the Son and the time of believers (ecclesial time). Thus the analogy between eternity and time not only includes the similar-dissimilar distinction but also a positive and creative relation.

### **2.3. Barth's *analogia trinitaria temporis***

The forms of time Barth incorporates and the activity of the triune God in time have been mentioned. Important to note is that within his overall trinitarian narrative the quality of time varies for the human subject depending on their relation to God in Jesus Christ. While the forms of time do not change for the human subject, the activity and reality of the living God in time qualifies the experience of time, giving it a new character. Following this, the analogical nature of the eternity-time relation can now be explained.

It must be noted that Barth does not explicitly describe his view as an *analogia temporis*, though his language is highly suggestive of this. Thus the analogical



interpretation is being suggested (though of course it may be argued analogical reasoning and relations are inevitable in a proper Christian theology). Following this, the trinitarian appropriations that will be made in the dissertation are not always stated as such by Barth. For example, while he is explicit in describing the times of the Son and the Spirit he does not state that the creating and preserving of time are the work of the Father, though this appropriation is faithful to what Barth says elsewhere about trinitarian appropriation. Moreover, when it is suggested that the eternal relations within the Godhead correspond to temporal activity within history, this again is a suggestion that Barth does not explicitly state but which seems to be a faithful extrapolation of his view.

There are two basic ways in which the analogy between eternity and time are evident in the *CD*, which correspond to different understandings of time. First, Barth uses a formal definition of time – usually the flow of past, present, and future – suggesting that eternity is the simultaneity of these three modes. Whereas for created time past, present, and future are separated and even opposed, they are united in eternity. Based on a dynamic view of eternity, since the Father, Son, and Spirit are in an eternal relation of differentiation and perichoresis, *simul* was interpreted in the first chapter to mean that all futures are anticipated, all presents synchronic, and all pasts recapitulated by God's eternity. Or to reverse the relation, the pasts, presents, and futures of created temporality are anticipated and remembered in God's eternity. The division of time into past, present, and future is no threat to God's eternity, as it is to human existence. There is a basic analogy between eternity and time as all times are contained or anticipated in the simultaneity of God's eternity; eternity creates and preserves the pasts, presents, and futures of time. Although Barth does not explicitly use analogy to describe this relation, it

is evident in the language he employs in describing the eternity-time relation.<sup>38</sup> Yet couching the analogy between eternity and time in these terms is merely formal. It does not suggest how the activity of God and humanity *fills* time, it only suggests that eternity creates and preserves the flow of time – which in itself is important.

To unpack the richness of Barth's scattered discussions – the activity and presence of God in time and the trinitarian content – fuller explication is needed. This is the second way in which the analogous relation between eternity and time is found in the *Church Dogmatics*: the eternal triune being of God finds an analogous pattern in created, fulfilled and ecclesial time. The content and qualification of the forms of time begin with the Father creating and preserving time itself. Yet, while time is meant for covenantal fellowship between God and the creature, humanity refuses this and lives in fallen time. (Again, the form of time does not change; humanity still lives in the flow of time and in allotted time. Rather than an existence of proper fellowship, it is an existence of sin; time's "flow becomes a flight.") The Father's creating and preserving time will be discussed in the next chapter. The Son enters time, however, and restores the fellowship between God and humanity. His time fulfills the original intention of created time, rescues fallen time, and provides the direction to all humans in their allotted times. According to Barth, the risen and ascended Lord now exists in the flow of time, while his life ruptures allotted time (his duration does not end with death, but begins anew with the resurrection; he is the contemporary of all time). Jesus Christ and time will be the subject of Chapter Four. But humanity still lives in its sinful time and must be awakened to the contemporaneity and presence of the risen mediator. This awaking of the believer to the presence of the Son is the work of the Spirit in ecclesial time. The Spirit is the agency of

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<sup>38</sup> See for example *CD* II/1, 615 and III/1, 68.

the risen and ascended Lord in the duration between the Son's first *parousia* (resurrection) and the final *parousia* (the eschaton). The activity of the Spirit fills this 'middle time' by awakening, building up, and sending the community and individual believers. The Spirit and ecclesial time will be the subject of the fifth chapter. Therefore the Christian believer still lives in the flow of time and their allotted time (time as its basic *Existenzform*), but now lives with hope instead of despair, since they live in ecclesial time on its way to the eschaton. Time has a new *character* and *quality* for the believer given the activity of the Son and Spirit toward the creature, even in face of death and time's fleetingness.

Again, Barth does not use the term analogy to describe this fuller relation between eternity and time; it is an appropriation of the present interpretation. Nevertheless it should be evident that it correctly interprets Barth. In fact, both the Son's and the Spirit's entering time correspond to the eternal relations within the Godhead. As Bruce McCormack states, "the condition of the possibility of the incarnation in time is to be found in the eternal generation of the Son. The condition of the possibility of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in time is to be found in the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. To the movement (the lived history) of the Son in time, there corresponds a movement in eternity. And so also with the Spirit."<sup>39</sup> It may also be added that the Father's eternal role as origin within the Godhead finds its analogy in creating and preserving time. The following three chapters will explicate how this second analogy between eternity and time is evident in *Church Dogmatics*.

As examined in the first chapter, Barth's understanding of God's eternity includes pretemporal, supratemporal, and posttemporal modes. This dissertation focuses on the

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<sup>39</sup> McCormack, "The Ontological Presuppositions of Barth's Doctrine of the Atonement," 358-359.

complex relation between eternity and time found in supratemporality, since it is so often left unexplored. Even so, the fuller vision of Barth must be kept in mind. Pretemporality includes not only the life and movement of the triune God but also the free election of the Son to become incarnate, which compels God to create the world. It is the foundation of God's temporality. Following this, supratemporality includes the works of creating, preserving, and reconciling, all of which point to the completion of God's work in the eschaton. Posttemporality is the completion of time by eternity, the final redemption of all history and time. It is the goal and end of the both pretemporality and supratemporality. In other words, Barth views the decision and activity of God in all three modes as one unified work and event, even as all modes have their own particularity.<sup>40</sup> In what follows, pretemporality will be presupposed and noted when pertinent, while posttemporality and the problems associated with Barth's view of it will be examined in Chapter Four and the Conclusion of the dissertation. Thus while the focus of this work will be on supratemporality, the other modes of God's eternity and their relation to time will be kept in view as well.

Since the parameters of this study focus on supratemporality in III and IV, its limitations should be noted. It is not a full genetic-historical study of Barth's development. Work before volumes III and IV has already been dealt with in Chapter One. The study focuses on Barth's systematic development in these later volumes of the

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<sup>40</sup> As Hunsinger summarizes in relation to the consummation: "But in the consummation it will not be another work than it was as the finished work of Jesus Christ for our sakes on the cross, nor will it be another work than it is in our reception of it here and now by the Spirit, nor again will it be another work than it already has been from before the foundation of the world in God's pretemporal decision of election. The final consummation toward which this work is moving; the cross on which it was accomplished; the sending of the Spirit through which it is contemporized, revealed, and imparted here and now; the primordial decision of election by which it is grounded in eternity – all these are not to be set alongside one another, Barth proposes, as though they were separate events that are only externally or narratively connected. They are rather to be seen as distinctive and irreplaceable variations of one and the same event", "The Mediator of Communion," in *Disruptive Grace*, 173.

*CD*. Thus we will not examine discussions of time in I/2 (45 ff), and will even be bypassing discussions in III/4 (372 f, 569 ff, and 580 ff) and IV/3, “Jesus is Victor”. The focus on supratemporality also means a minimal examination of pretemporality or posttemporality. Barth had much to say on God’s pretemporality, which will be evident throughout, though he was never able to complete his eschatology. As mentioned, gleanings on posttemporality will be discussed in connection with Christology, as the sparse evidence warrants. Nevertheless this selection does allow a sustained argument that Barth’s view of the eternity-time relation is fundamentally controlled by the doctrine of the Trinity.

## Chapter Three

### The Theatre of the Divine Glory: The Father and Time

Traditional and contemporary discussions of the eternity-time relation generally occur in abstraction from particular doctrinal loci. With the predominate approach, beginning with Plato and continuing into contemporary analytic philosophy, time is defined first and then features of this definition are abstracted in order to define eternity. This *via negativa* has often lent itself to atemporal definitions of eternity. Even in contemporary defenses of divine temporality the discussion often revolves around definitions of time that are compatible with divine activity in time and not the fecundity of Christian doctrine per se.<sup>1</sup> The advantage of Barth's view over these approaches is the constant use of central Christian beliefs in approaching the issue.

Barth assumes common definitions of time in his construction as well. But rather than using these definitions to define eternity, whether atemporal or not, he assumes them under the doctrine of creation, the work of the Father. Within his trinitarian and covenantal ontology, common definitions of time, assumed to be the shared experience of creaturely existence, are incorporated. Such an approach has the methodological advantage of not defining eternity merely in its relation to time, but in terms of God's triune being and activity. What is more, Barth's view includes the particular and complementing times of the incarnate Son and the Holy Spirit, a material advantage.

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<sup>1</sup> Even in those who defend divine temporality (whether sempiternity, interventionism, or omnitemporality) there is only reference to the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation tangentially, these doctrines are not central to the discussion. For example, in the Four Views book *God and Time*, ed. Gregory Ganssle (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), three of the four contributors (Alan Padgett, William Lane Craig, and Nicholas Wolterstorff) defend some form of divine temporality, contra timelessness (Paul Helm), without central use of these doctrinal loci.

Time is not merely defined formally and quantitatively, but includes the narrative content of the work of the triune God and his relation to humanity, which qualifies all conceptualizations of time. The important thing for Barth is not whether particular definitions of time lend themselves to either divine timelessness or temporality (as noted, a particular form of divine temporality is assumed), but rather how it is that the being and activity of the triune God reconstitutes and redefines what one thinks time is for. The purpose of time is God's gracious movement toward the creature, first conceived in the pretemporal election of the Son, then unfolding in the work of creation and reconciliation, and finally in the completion of time in the eschatological redemption of all things. Therefore, time cannot be defined apart from the being and work of God -- there is no secular or common experience of time in the abstract. For Barth, God's time is primary; it reconstitutes all other definitions and descriptions of time.

Nevertheless, while it may be argued that Barth's theological reading of time is a preferred procedure, more attention to the nature of time in general would have prevented him from suggesting that temporal existence ends in the eschaton. For example, Barth's brief discussion of the objective time of the cosmos correctly points out that it is the context wherein human temporality is embedded. But further reflection on the relation between objective and subjective time in general would help discern the need for a more robust view of eschatological temporality. This will be hinted at in this chapter and explained in the next.

In this chapter the creating and preserving of time are appropriated to the Father. This is not an explicit appropriation by Barth, but one that is faithful to his theology nonetheless. As noted above, within the immanent divine life the Father is the basis of

authorship, source, and grounding (I/1, 363). In his fatherhood (*paternitas*) he eternally generates the Son and, with the Son, gives the Spirit. Analogous and corresponding to this eternal role is the Father's economic work in creation and providence, including the paternal work of creating and preserving of human and cosmic time. Eternity and time are analogously related.

The heuristic distinction and inseparable relation between the form and content of time must be reiterated here. Temporality is a basic *Existenzform* of the creature, as is the *imago dei* and the body-soul relation. The basic function of time is to allow humans to live a life, for there is no activity and relation with God and humanity apart from temporality, human existence must be lived in time.<sup>2</sup> In this way, time is a gift (III/2, 520-522). Thus Barth can state, "Humanity is temporality . . . However we may interpret it, human life is that movement from the past through the present into the future. Human life means to have been, to be, and to be about to be. Human life means to be temporal" (III/2, 522). Barth usually defines time as the succession of past, present, and future, or as allotted time, one's lifetime. This is fundamental to the form of existence of the creature. Yet for Barth the Father creates and preserves the creature in their time for the primary purpose of covenantal partnership. This is the purpose and content of time, what time 'is for.' Thus Barth makes the following distinctions. God originally creates humanity in their time to have fellowship with the creature, this is *created time*. The creature rejects this, however, and the purpose of time is lost, the creature's time becomes *fallen time*. The form of time remains, because it is constitutive of the creature *qua* creature, though

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<sup>2</sup> As Barth states: "What God and my fellow-man are to me, they are to me in the history of their being and action, and therefore in the time they have for me. And what I am to God and to my fellow-man, I am in the history of my being and acting, and therefore in my time, to the extent that in some way I am in my time for them" (III/2, 522).



the true purpose and meaning of time is abated. But because of God's fatherly goodness there is still the possibility that the creature may be reconciled to God and the true purpose of time realized. Thus time is *preserved* so that the creature is given further time to respond to the reconciling activity of God. And this reconciling depends on the work of the Son and Spirit in time, *fulfilled* or *gracious time*. This is the time 'of' God's reconciling and redeeming activity and presence. Thus while the temporal *Existenzform* of the creature remains, the quality or experience of time depends on one's relation to God in this time.<sup>3</sup> While the creature lives in fallen time, they may participate in gracious time simultaneously. Barth insists that time as the form of existence of the creature is never lost, even in humanity's sinfulness. Humanity's "being in time may acquire the character of dissipation and corruption. But it cannot be destroyed. For God Himself, His presence and gift cannot be abrogated or destroyed. Time as the form of human existence is always in itself and as such a silent put persistent song of praise to God" (III/2, 526).

To explicate these distinctions and to demonstrate that the Father creates and preserves the creature in their time this chapter will first outline some of the basic features of Barth's doctrine of creation, especially the relation of creation and covenant. Then the bulk of the chapter will expound created, fallen, and gracious time as found in volumes III/1- III/3 of the *Church Dogmatics*. It will become evident that although Barth does note the reality of objective time his focus is clearly on human temporality, especially as the Father creates and preserves human time for covenantal purposes.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> There is in reality merely no formal temporality; it is created, fallen, or gracious time, or a combination thereof.

<sup>4</sup> Barth's anthropocentrism is questioned by Thomas Torrance, *Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian*, 132. See as well Gunton, who suggests that Barth does not appreciate creation in and of itself but more as an instrument, *The Triune Creator*, 165.

### 3.1. Barth's Christian Doctrine of Creation and Providence

Barth thoroughly seeks to Christianize his doctrine of creation.<sup>5</sup> This Christianizing creation and providence is summed up in the axiom that the covenant is the internal basis of creation, and creation is the external basis of the covenant (§ 41.2-3). God created the universe with its own history and time in order that he may enact the covenantal history with humankind within it. For Barth, echoing Calvin, creation, history, and time are the *theatrum gloriae Dei*.<sup>6</sup> Yet this axiom is based upon a number of other presuppositions arising from the Trinity and election. Briefly summarizing these presuppositions will enable a clearer understanding of Barth's discussion of eternity and time in the doctrine of creation. They reveal that he is not working with views of creation or time part from dogmatic loci. These presuppositions can be summarized in two basic clusters. The first concerns how the life of the immanent Trinity is reflected in the work of creation; the second concerns basic distinctions of God's external works in creation and providence.

The themes of the first cluster include the appropriation of creation to the Father, the analogies of relation between the triune life and God's relation to creation, the perichoresis of persons *in se* and work *ad extra*, and the critical doctrine of election.

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<sup>5</sup> On the relation of covenant and creation in Barth as his attempt to Christianize these, see Kathryn Tanner, "Creation and Providence" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 111-126.

<sup>6</sup> In III/3 Barth suggests a number of metaphors to describe the sustaining of the creature and creation by God, such as servant, instrument, material, and mirror (46 ff). His favorite metaphor, however, is creation as a theatre. Creation as the *theatrum gloriae Dei* meets the requirement of understanding creation as the external basis of the covenant. The metaphor of theatre suggests that creation provides the time and space for divine and creaturely activity, making possible the communion between God and humanity (III/3, 47). "But in the Christian concept of the creation of all things the question is concretely one of man and his whole universe as the theatre of the history of the covenant of grace; of the totality of earthly and heavenly things as they are to be comprehended in Christ (Eph 1.10)" (III/1, 44). And the "work of God, which is not an *opus ad intra* like the inner acts of the trinitarian God but most definitely an *opus ad extra*, needs outside (*extra Deum*) a theatre of which it can be enacted and unfolded. The created cosmos including man, or man within the created cosmos, is this theatre of the great acts of God in grace and salvation. With a view to this it is God's servant, instrument and material. But the theatre obviously cannot be the subject of the work enacted on it. It can only make it externally possible" (III/3, 48, revised). Or, to use a slightly different metaphor, creation is the house of the Father (III/3, 48-49).

These ideas secure the conviction that the work of creation is first an intra-divine decision before it is actualized.

As already noted, within the immanent Trinity the Father is the basis of origin, source, and authorship, since he generates the Son and, with the Son, spirates the Spirit. Thus creation is appropriated to the Father.<sup>7</sup> The possibility and actuality of God creating is based on the inner divine life: “It arises out of a self-grounded and self-reposing possibility in God. It is – and all this is to be regarded as an intradivine relation or movement, as *repetito aeternitatis in aeternitate*” (I/1, 393-94).<sup>8</sup> The doctrines of creation and providence, then, are not a reflection on general world occurrence as such, whether a scientific cosmology or a philosophy of history, but the recognition that God’s providential care is based on his fatherly love expressed in the revelation of Jesus Christ (III/3, 20).<sup>9</sup>

Barth also forms analogies between the eternal relations of Father, Son, and Spirit and God’s relation to the created order. The most predominant analogy of relation is between the relation of Father and Son and the relation of God and the created order. This follows from the appropriation of creation to the Father. As Barth states:

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<sup>7</sup> “As the Father, God procreates Himself from eternity in His Son, and with His Son He is also from eternity the origin of Himself in the Holy Spirit; and as the Creator He posits the reality to all the things that are distinct from Himself” (III/1, 49). The same is true for the work of providence. It is the work of the divine Trinity and appropriated to the Father specifically: “the God who sits in government is ‘the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’” (III/3, 28). Or, “One who is for us as the Son is over us as the Father. As God has elected to be for us in His Son, He has elected Himself our Father and us His children. We are not in strange hands, nor are we strangers, when He is over us as our Creator and we are under Him as His children. ... This fatherly hand is the divine power which rules the world” (III/3, 29).

<sup>8</sup> Antecedent to the revelation of God the Father in Jesus Christ is the Father as the first mode of being in the immanent Trinity: “God’s trinitarian name of Father, God’s eternal fatherhood, denotes the mode of being of God in which He is the Author of His other modes of being” (I/1, 393). See as well I/1, 392 and 395.

<sup>9</sup> For Barth’s polemic against a philosophy of history being the subject of providence see III/3, 21-24. It often goes unnoticed, however, that Barth does leave room open for something of a partial Christian ‘worldview,’ if it is not static but constantly open to being reformed by the work of the Holy Spirit. See III/3, 55-57.

There is an affinity between the relation of the Father to the Son on the one hand and the relation of the Creator to the creature on the other. In both cases, though in a sense which differs *in toto coelo*, we are concerned with origination. In respect of this affinity it is not merely permitted but commanded that we ascribe creation as a *proprium* to the Father and that we regard God the Father *peculiariter* and specifically as the Creator (I/1, 397).<sup>10</sup>

The eternal basis of God's fatherly care, moreover, is rooted in "what has taken place from all eternity, and then in time, between God the Father and the Son" (III/1, 49). Thus the eternal relation and love between Father and Son is the source of God's fatherly creating and preserving. A second analogy occurs between the eternal role of the Holy Spirit as the "communion and self-impartation" between the Father and the Son, and the Spirit as the principle of the creaturely existence and preservation (III/1, 56).<sup>11</sup> The Spirit ensures the difference and unity between the Father and the Son; just as the relation of the Father and the Son is the principle of 'otherness' in the divine life, so the Spirit is the principle of 'connecting' or 'communion' in this otherness. Following this, Barth argues, "it is in God the Holy Spirit that the creature as such pre-exists. That is to say, it is God the Holy Spirit who makes the existence of the creature as such possible, permitting it to exist, maintaining it in its existence, and forming the point of reference of its existence" (III/1, 56).<sup>12</sup>

Following the analogies is the doctrine of perichoresis in relation to the divine life *in se* and work *ad extra*. While creation is generally appropriated to the Father it is also the work of the Son and the Spirit (I/1, 394). For it "is only an appropriation to the degree that it does not also express the truth of perichoresis, of the intercommunity of Father,

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<sup>10</sup> This *analogia relationis* is repeated in III/1 as well, 14 and 50. For a discussion of the *analogia relationis* in III/2 with particular reference to Barth's ethics and its implications for an ethics of the family, see Gary Deddo, *Karl Barth's Theology of Relations*, 94 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Within the triune life the Holy Spirit is the "reality of their separateness, mutuality and convolution, of their distinctness and interconnection"; even in the eternal election of the Son, the Spirit ensures that the "commission of the Father and the obedience of the Son" coincide (III/1, 56).

<sup>12</sup> See 46.2 "The Spirit as Basis of Soul and Body", III/2, 344-366, esp. 355 ff.

Son and Spirit in their essence and work” (I/1, 396).<sup>13</sup> So while the difference in the divine life leads to the naming of the Father as Creator, the unity of the divine life suggests that the Son and Spirit are present in the work of creation as well.<sup>14</sup>

The last feature of pretemporal life to note is divine election. Given Barth’s view of election in *CD* II/2, he can state that God creates because of the election of the Son.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the eternal decree and will before creation compels God to create. As Barth reasons, “If God willed to give His eternal Son this form and function, and if the Son of God willed to obey His Father in this form and function, this meant that God had to begin

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<sup>13</sup> As Barth explains: “In regard to the work of the Father, Son and Spirit *ad extra* we earlier applied the stipulation that they all work in the order and sense appropriate to them. This means that the unity of their work is to be understood as the communion of the three modes of being along the lines of the doctrine of ‘perichoresis’” (I/1, 296).

<sup>14</sup> See I/1, 394 and 397, as well as III/1, 48-49. Despite these stated trinitarian themes, it remains unclear how the Son and Spirit are *agents* in the action of creation. When relating the Son and creation, for example, Barth speaks of the being and decision of God antecedent to the creation of the world and does not suggest how the Son or Word, as the second divine person, is an agent in act of creation itself. As Colin Gunton suggests, Barth does not so much have a view of the agency of the Son in creating, as he does lay “a stress on the analogy between the Son’s and the world’s distinction from the Father” (*The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study*. Edinburgh Studies in Constructive Theology [Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998], 158). For Gunton’s own view of creation “through” the Son and “in” the Spirit see *Christ and Creation*. The Didsbury Lectures, 1990 (Carlisle and Grand Rapids: Paternoster and Eerdmans, 1992), 75 ff. To put the question simply: does the eternal Son do anything at the initial act of creation? Or, as Thomas F. Torrance asks concerning Barth’s approach: “But why did he not offer an account of creation from a fully overarching trinitarian perspective, as was surely demanded by his doctrine of God? What then becomes of Barth’s claim that the doctrine of the Trinity must be allowed to govern all our understanding of God’s interaction with us in creation and redemption? . . . Moreover, even if we grant to Barth that the incarnation has the effect of giving a central place to the problem of man in dogmatics, why did he limit his account of the created order so severely to *man* in the cosmos, without very much to say about the cosmos itself except in respect of his magnificent discussions of time and providence?” (*Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian*, 132). This is not to say that Barth’s doctrine of creation is not Christologically grounded, but that his conception of the agency of the Son, and the Spirit for that matter, seem undeveloped.

It is noteworthy that Barth refuses to take up a discussion of the Spirit in relation to creation in his exegesis of Genesis 1:3 (the Spirit or wind swept over the waters). For comment on this see Andrew Gabriel, “A Trinitarian Doctrine of Creation?: Considering Barth as a Guide” in *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry* 6 (2003-2006): 36-48, esp. 44 ff. For examples of trinitarian agency in the doctrine of creation, with special reference to the Spirit, see Wolfhart Pannenberg, “The Doctrine of the Spirit and the Task of a Theology of Nature” in *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith*. Edited by Ted Peters (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993: 123-137; and Colin Gunton, “The Spirit Moved Over the face of the Waters: The Holy Spirit and the Created Order”, *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, vol. 4, no. 2 (July 2002): 190-204.

<sup>15</sup> “In respect of His Son who was to become man and the Bearer of human sin, God loved man and man’s whole world from all eternity, even before it was created, and in spite of its absolute lowliness and non-godliness, indeed its anti-godliness. He created it because He loved it in His Son who because of its transgressions stood before Him eternally as the Rejected and Crucified” (III/1, 50-51).

the act as Creator, for there could be no restraining His will” (III/1, 56).<sup>16</sup> Thus the decision to create arises from the primal election of the Son to take up human nature to reconcile God and humanity.<sup>17</sup> The pretemporal basis for both creating and preserving

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<sup>16</sup> See III/1, 18 as well.

<sup>17</sup> There has been recent controversy surrounding Barth’s doctrine of pretemporal election. Bruce McCormack has called for a critical correction on the relation between Trinity and election. For Barth, God’s election does not begin with an unknown, the election of some to salvation and the election of others to damnation. McCormack correctly argues that for Barth, “He is a God whose very being – already in eternity – is determined, defined, by what he reveals himself to be in Jesus Christ; viz. a God of love and mercy towards the whole human race” (Bruce McCormack, “Grace and being: the role of God’s gracious election in Karl Barth’s theological ontology” in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 97-98). This election in eternity contains the death and God-abandonment of Jesus Christ by way of anticipation (ibid., 98). And this event in the life of God, where he elects to take up even the spiritual death of God-abandonment, does not mean a change in the being of God, because “from eternity, [it] is determined as a being-for this event” (ibid.). God, antecedent to creation, elects to take up death and judgment in Jesus Christ. McCormack takes it one step further, however, when he attempts a critical correction of Barth by giving the doctrine of election logical priority over the doctrine of the Trinity. He reasons: “The denial of the existence of the *Logos asarkos* in any other sense than the concrete one of a being of the logos as *incarnandus*, the affirmation that Jesus Christ is the second ‘person’ of the Trinity and the concomitant rejection of the free-floating talk of the ‘eternal Son’ as a mythological abstraction – these commitments require that we see the triunity of God logically as a function of the divine election” (ibid., 103). And so, the “decision for the covenant of grace is the ground of God’s triunity and, therefore, of the eternal generation of the Son and of the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from Father and Son” (ibid.). McCormack’s reasoning rests on at least two assumptions. First, there is little positive place for the *logos asarkos* (ibid., 96). That is, the only a place for the *logos asarkos* is found in the concept of *incarnandus*. And second, the divine modes of being are constituted by divine decision of election.

In response to this, Paul Molnar first argues that Barth does indeed have a positive, albeit limited, place for the *logos asarkos* in affirming God’s freedom. “He believed this abstraction was necessary because God acting for us must be seen against the background of God in himself who could have existed in isolation from us but freely chose not to. He rejected the logos asarkos in his doctrine of creation if it implied a ‘formless Christ’ or ‘a Christ-principle’ rather than Jesus who was with God as the Word before the world existed; he rejected it in connection with reconciliation if it meant a retreat to an idea of God behind the God revealed in Christ; but he still insisted it had a proper role to play in the doctrine of the Trinity and Christology, describing it as ‘indispensable for dogmatic enquiry and presentation’” (*Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: In dialogue with Karl Barth and contemporary theology* [London and New York: T & T Clark, 2002], 71. Molnar is quoting from III/1, 54; he refers as well to CD IV/1, 52; I/2, 168 ff; and III/2, 65 f., 147 f.). If the doctrine of logos *asarkos* is used to protect God’s freedom and not used to undermine the view that the eternal Son is to be incarnated (*incarnandus*), then it has a positive dogmatic role to play.

Second, Molnar calls into question the view that election constitutes the triunity of God. He argues: “For Barth, God exists eternally as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and would so exist even if their had been no creation, reconciliation or redemption. Thus, the order between election and triunity cannot be logically reversed without in fact making creation, reconciliation and redemption necessary to God. . . . The covenant of grace is a covenant of grace because it expresses the free overflow of God’s eternal love that takes place in pre-temporal eternity as the Father begets the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. None of this is subject to a principle of love, and God’s being is not the result of his will. Rather, his will to elect expresses the fact that . . . God is Lord of his inner life as well as of his actions *ad extra*. But none of this is required by his essence, and his essence most certainly is not contingent upon his works *ad extra*” (ibid., 63). Van Driel draws the same conclusion: “Trinity precedes election, and both make election possible, as

time is found therefore in the relation between the Father and Son, especially in the eternal election of the Son.

A second cluster of themes are concerned with God's external work in creation and preservation. These include the relation between creation and covenant, the distinction between creating and preserving, the present hiddenness of the Father's work, and finally, the co-operation between creation and covenant.

Conceptually following supralapsarian election is Barth's thesis that the covenant is the internal basis of creation and creation is the external basis of the covenant.<sup>18</sup> For Barth, the history of the covenant takes priority over the history of creation. In fact, covenant history is the presupposition and content of creation history and its time. That is, it is the true content of history and time in general.<sup>19</sup> The covenantal purpose of

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well as gives it its peculiar character, namely by taking up the elect in the community of God" ("Karl Barth on the Eternal Existence of Jesus Christ", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60/1: 52).

According to Molnar and van Driel, not only does McCormack's suggestion misinterpret Barth but the logical outcome would also imply the necessity of creation and reconciliation for the being of God. Van Driel rhetorically asks how this Hegelian tendency could be avoided by McCormack ("Karl Barth on the Eternal Existence of Jesus Christ", 54). To these rebuttals it may be added that here in the doctrine of creation, Barth consistently gives the immanent divine life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit logical priority over the doctrine of election (in III/1 see 43, 45, 46, 48 and 97). It is not the intention here to make the case by taking into account the discussion as found in the doctrine of God. For this see Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 61 ff, as well as van Driel, "Karl Barth on the Eternal Existence of Jesus Christ", 51 ff. For McCormack's response to these criticisms and his suggestion that there may be some ambiguity in Barth, see "Seek God Where He May be Found: A Response to Edwin Chr. Van Driel" in *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008): 261-277.

<sup>18</sup> For discussions of election and covenant see Bruce McCormack, "Grace and being" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 99-110; Arthur Cochrane, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Covenant" in *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition*. Ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992): 108-116; and W. A. Whitehouse, "Election and Covenant" in *Theology Beyond Christendom: Essays on the Centenary of the Birth of Karl Barth*. Ed. John Thompson (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986): 63-86. Barth's insistence on thinking of covenant and creation together follows from his prioritizing the doctrine of election in his doctrine of God. The prominence of the doctrine of election in III/1 is a result of Barth's exposition of it in the doctrine of God. On the development and importance of this see McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 453 ff.

<sup>19</sup> As Barth explains: "God wills and God creates the creature for the sake of His Son or Word and therefore in harmony with Himself; and for His own supreme glory and therefore in the Holy Spirit. He wills and creates it for the sake of that which in His grace He wills to do to it and with it by His Son or Word in the Holy Spirit. The execution of this activity is history. What is meant is the history of the covenant of grace instituted by God between Himself and man; the sequence of the events in which God concludes and

creation is repeated in the doctrine of providence as well. On the relation of God's eternal decree and providence, Barth argues that providence "belongs to the execution of this decree. It is eternal, divine providence to the extent that it is grounded in this decree" (III/3, 5). Conversely, covenant history, which is the goal and presupposition of providence, needs providence as an external basis (III/3, 7).

Another important distinction is the one between creation and providence. This is based on the two forms of divine activity in the doctrine of creation: the initial act of creation and God's preserving, accompanying, and ruling what has been created.<sup>20</sup> Providence ensures that creaturely being has a "permanence and continuity" (III/3, 68 and 71). Or in relation to temporality, "The act of creation takes place in a specific first time; the time of providence is the whole of the rest of time right up to its end" (III/3, 8).<sup>21</sup> The distinction between these two activities is based on the direct and indirect activity of God. "In creation God acts directly, i.e., without the intervention of other things, for other things could enter in only as the product of His creative activity and not as the co-efficient of it" (III/3, 64), which is likened to God's direct creative activity in

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executes this covenant with man, carrying it to its goal, and thus validating in the sphere of the creature that which from all eternity He has determined in Himself; the sequence of the events for the sake of which God has patience with the creature and with its creation gives it time – time which acquires content through these events and which is finally to be "fulfilled" and made ripe for its end by their conclusion. This history is from the theological standpoint *the history*" (III/1, 59).

<sup>20</sup> "As distinct from creation, providence is God's knowledge, will and action in His relation to the creature already made by Him and not to be made again. Providence guarantees and confirms the work of creation. And no creature could be if it did not please God to continually confirm and guarantee and thus to maintain it" (III/3, 6). Or, as Katherine Tanner describes the relation: "In contradistinction to creation, then, which is God's once and for all bringing of the world into existence, providence concerns God's upholding of the world against threats of chaos and destruction so that it continues over time; it concerns God's interactions with creatures who also act and the fact that, in this history with the world, God does not merely hold chaos and destruction at bay, but directs the world for a loving purpose. In providence, the world comes under God's use and is shown to be the sort of world that can be so used – a world with a history" ("Creation and Providence" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 122). See as well Webster, *Karl Barth*, 94 ff.

<sup>21</sup> For Barth's rejection of a continuous creation see III/3, 68.



the covenant of grace.<sup>22</sup> The providential work of God, in distinction from creation and covenant, is indirect, concerned with preserving the creature and creation in its total environmental nexus.<sup>23</sup>

Yet this work of the Father in creation and providence is, according to Barth, hidden from humanity in general. While God's fatherly providence is revealed in the actualization of God's eternal election in the covenant with humanity, this is still hidden from general world history. This is reflected in the providential theme that the particular history of the covenant is a thin line in general world history, even while it is the "starting-point or goal" that fulfills all of history (III/3, 36). Conversely, knowledge of this particular history leads to faith in God's general preserving and sustaining.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, while God's providence is known now through the covenant of grace, it will be fully revealed in the new creation (III/3, 38-39). Thus the hiddenness of God's providential work will end with the universal unveiling of the reconciliation between God and humanity in Jesus Christ. Even before this future unveiling, creation history, upheld in God's providence, co-ordinates or co-operates (albeit asymmetrically) with the unfolding of covenantal history; there is "a positive, material and inner connection between the two series" (III/3, 40). That is, for the creature there is a real freedom and activity; "in its continued existence the creature may serve the will of God in His

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<sup>22</sup> From the calling of Abraham, to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to the calling of individuals by the Holy Spirit, these activities have "the very same immediacy as the act of creation itself" (III/3, 64).

<sup>23</sup> As Barth reasons: "all that the creature needs is the preservation of the context of its being and its own preservation within that context, a context which was created by God in order that the individual might have its permanence and stability and continuity with the whole, and the whole within the individual, according to the will and ordination of God" (III/3, 64). Barth describes the relations in the environmental nexus with broad terms: "the human body by the soul which directs it; the human soul by the body which serves it; the race as a whole and all the species of beasts and plants by natural propagation; the individual by his human and cosmic environment; and every creaturely thing by its environment and according to the particular order of that environment. God himself sustains the creature, but He sustains it in the context in which He has created it and ordains that it should be so" (III/3, 63). See pp. 63-66 for the fuller discussion. Here Barth admits he is following Aquinas, see small print section, 66-67.

covenant, grace and salvation, it does this in the individuality and particularity given it with its creation by God, in the freedom and activity corresponding to its particular nature” (III/3, 43). Thus the variety, particularity, and individuality of the created order are preserved in the history of the covenant.

But what have these distinctions to do with Barth’s trinitarian reading of time? Concerning the role of the Father, it may first be noted that the creating and preserving of time is appropriated to the Father, while the distinction between creating and preserving time is based on the two modes of creative activity. The analogies of relation between the divine modes of being and God’s creative activity demonstrate that Barth was thinking of the God-world relation via analogical categories. To suggest, then, that there is an analogy between eternity and time in the *CD* is commensurate with Barth’s thought. Moreover, Barth’s supralapsarian Christology and doctrine of election not only compels God to create and informs the axiom that creation is the external basis of the covenant, and vice versa, but is also reflected in Barth’s view that the fulfilled time of Jesus Christ is not merely a response to fallen time, but in fact the prototype and goal of created time itself. Just as the incarnation is not primarily a response to human sin but of God’s will for fellowship with humanity, so gracious time is not merely a response to fallen time,

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<sup>24</sup> “And the special occurrence in Israel, in Jesus Christ and in His community is not merely embedded in this general occurrence, but so inextricably woven into it that what takes place particularly in the one all bears the character of the other, and can and must be understood from the standpoint of this general occurrence, as a part of the history of the creature. Abraham, and his descendants, and the prophets and apostles, and even Christians as men called and awakened to the consciousness, thankfulness, obligation and mission of covenant-partnership with God, are all men in the cosmos and participants in its history. For this reason their faith must be faith in providence, faith in the God who even as their Creator, as the Lord of this general occurrence, is the same as the One whom they may know by His summoning Word, or conversely faith in the fact that the God who has called them by His Word is also their Creator and the Lord of this general history” (III/3, 37-38).

but the goal of created time itself.<sup>25</sup> The last point, that the history of the covenant is the secret of history in general, will become more obvious throughout these last three chapters as it becomes clear that the gracious time of the Son and Spirit are the eschatological goal of time and history itself. Lastly, the theme of asymmetrical co-operation is important for understanding the relation between divine and creaturely freedom, which Barth takes up in the discussion of preserving time. With these distinctions in mind, created, preserved, fallen, and gracious time may be taken up.

### 3.2. The Creating and Preserving of Time

The first locus of this exposition is the creation and preservation of time for covenantal encounter.<sup>26</sup> Time is a basic form of existence (*Existenzform*) of the creature, along with the *imago dei* and soul-body relation, which serves as the basis for the covenantal relations with God and fellow humanity.<sup>27</sup> Barth favors two descriptions of time in his discussion. The first is the rational-linear concept of time – time as the succession of past,

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<sup>25</sup> On Barth's supralapsarian Christology and view of election see Edwin Christiaan van Driel, "Incarnation Anyway: Arguments for Supralapsarian Christology", PhD diss., Yale University, 2006, 99 ff.

<sup>26</sup> "In the divine plan and purpose actually executed, in the history of the covenant and salvation as it has actually taken place and does take place, we have to do with man as he exists in time. Time is undoubtedly the sphere of this history. Since this is the case, and since the covenant and its history are the ratification and renewal of creation on the one hand, and creation is the presupposition of the covenant on the other, it follows from this that the temporality of creation and its history is a necessity" (III/1, 72).

<sup>27</sup> It must be noted in passing that time, as the *Existenzform* of the creation, is fundamental to Barth's understanding of a universal human nature. Although Barth's anthropology is christologically focused, he still presupposes a universal form of human existence (this can be seen especially in volume III/2, wherein each section of this part volume begins with a christological section and then proceeds to discuss humanity in general). As Stuart McLean notes: "God is the creator not just of the man Jesus, but of all men, so that in all men there is a *basic creaturely form*, a creaturely essence which is given them by God. Further, being able to enter into the covenant revealed in Jesus implies a basic form *in common* between the humanity of Jesus and the humanity of man in general", "Creation and Anthropology" (in *Theology beyond Christendom*. Ed. John Thompson, Princeton Theological Monograph Series, ed. Dikran Y. Hadidian, no. 6 [Allison Park, Penn: Pickwick Publications, 1986]), 127. See as well Wolfe Krötke, "The humanity of the human person in Karl Barth's anthropology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 159-176). Thus while Barth reads anthropology christologically, beginning with the particular, this is not at the expense of a universal human nature. Temporality then constitutes a fundamental piece of his anthropology.

present and future – and the second is allotted time, one’s lifetime.<sup>28</sup> Again, these forms of time need to be filled with human and divine activity. Barth only briefly takes up the objective time of creation, which he discusses in his exegesis of Genesis 1, particularly vv. 1 and 4: the creation of the first day and the creation of the luminaries. The exposition of time beyond human existence however is focused on the purpose of providing humanity with an awareness of their historicity. In this way, cosmic time as well is the indirect basis for covenantal time.<sup>29</sup> Following this, there is an examination of time’s preservation in the doctrine of providence. Here Barth not only makes the point that the creature is preserved in their time for encounter with God, but that this encounter integrally preserves both the freedom of God and the creature. This argument subsumes the traditional discussion of divine foreknowledge and future contingents, which was not only centered on the problem of divine and creaturely freedom but often dominated the discussion of eternity and time.

### 3.2.1 *The Creation of Time*

At the outset of his discussion of time in *CD III/1*, Barth reiterates that time is a creation of eternity, which has its own particular temporality. This clearly evinces the analogical

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<sup>28</sup> In *III/1*, he states that time as “the form of existence of the creature”, “is, in contradistinction to eternity, the one-way sequence and therefore the succession and division of past, present and future; of once, now and then; of the beginning, middle and end; of origin, movement and goal. When God creates and therefore gives reality to another alongside and outside Himself, time begins as the form of existence of this other” (*III/1*, 67-68, cf. 71). Barth assumes these standard descriptions of time are the way in which God created the creature in the cosmos. Other subjective views of time in the western tradition include the cyclical-mythical or the escapism of mystical experience. For a description of these see Achtner, et al, *Dimensions of Time*, 27-53 and 102-108.

<sup>29</sup> Aside from this Barth hesitates to describe the nature and reality of objective time. This is a result of his view that the Bible does not give insight as to the inner relationship between God and creation, unlike the relation of God to humanity. As such, objective time is only examined as it relates to time of humanity, thus Barth does not fully work out the embeddedness of human time in cosmic time. On the embeddedness of subjective time within objective, see Wolfgang Achtner, Stephan Kunz and Thomas Walter, *Dimensions of Time: The Structures of the Time of Humans, of the World, and of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

relation between eternity and time. In discussing the attribute of eternity in II/1, it was noted that God's eternity is not in opposition to time, but is rather an inner readiness of God to create time. More specifically, God's eternity can be considered divine 'time' because there is movement and succession between the divine persons (II/1, 615 and 660). Barth repeats these ideas in III/1, where it is claimed that eternity is "the source of time as it is supreme and absolute time" (67). In fact, God's eternity "is the prototype of time, and as the Eternal He is simultaneously before time, above time, and after time" (ibid).<sup>30</sup> In Barth's view not only does eternity contain its own 'history' or 'temporality,' but it is also the source of all time.

This positive and analogical relation between eternity and time is readily apparent in Barth's dialogue with Augustine. Barth emphasizes two points concerning the initial creation of time in dialogue with the Church Father. First, time begins with creation, and second, creation occurs in time.<sup>31</sup> The first point that time begins with creation is not uncontroversial for Christian theology; the second point is. In answering objections concerning *creatio ex nihilo*, in contrast to the eternity of the world, Augustine argues for the beginning of time with creation in his *Confessions*. The sceptical question "What was God doing before creation?" was meant to weaken the Christian view by placing a certain

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<sup>30</sup> As quoted in chapter one: "He is not non-historical because as the Triune he is in his inner life the basic type and ground of all history. And he is not non-temporal because his eternity is not merely the negation of time, but an inner readiness to create time, because it is supreme and absolute time, and therefore, the source of our time, relative time. But it is true that in this sense, in his pure, divine form of existence [*göttlichen Existenzform*], God is not in time, but before, above and after all time, so that time is really in him. According to his Word and work, God was not satisfied merely with his pure, divine form of existence. His inner glory overflowed outwards. He speaks his Word and acts in his work with and for "another" than himself. This "other" is his creature" (III/1, 68).

<sup>31</sup> "When God creates and therefore gives reality to another alongside and outside Himself, time begins as the form of existence of this other. It is itself, of course, the creation of God (or more correctly, the creation of his eternity). But it actually begins together with His creation, so that we have to say that His creation is the ground and basis of time. But we must also say that His creation takes place in time and therefore has a genuine history" (III/1, 68).

arbitrariness into God's being.<sup>32</sup> It was asked, "Why did he not make the world sooner", or if he decided to make the world would this 'decision' not imply change in God? (Bk. XX.10). Augustine responds to such questions by pointing out that they imply a 'before' and 'after' which is not applicable to a situation before the creation of the world – since God is timeless. That is, time comes with the creation of the world and one cannot ask what God was 'doing', because there is no activity or movement in God (ibid.). Following this, creation is thought to be a timeless act.<sup>33</sup>

While Barth agrees that time began with creation, he questions Augustine's claim that creation is a timeless act. He does so for three basic reasons. First, God's eternal being has its own divine time, and thus any act of God *ad extra*, whether the initial act creation or subsequent acts in time, will be the work of this divine temporality. Second, the works of God in the history of the covenant and Jesus Christ are historical and temporal. Thus, if the character of God's work as covenant partner is the same as his work as creator, then divine creating is not atemporal (III/1, 14-15, 60-61, 68).<sup>34</sup> Third, the Genesis narrative itself implies that not only did God create time but also that he

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<sup>32</sup> *Creatio ex nihilo* could be considered orthodox Christian belief at this point; on the development of the doctrine see Gerhald May, *Creatio ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, trans. by A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994).

<sup>33</sup> Augustine's basic answer was that such questions did not apply because time means movement, and before creation there was no movement because God is unmoving and unchanging. For further analysis of this in Augustine see Knuuttila, "Time and creation in Augustine", *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 103-115, especially 105-107.

<sup>34</sup> As Barth argues: "According to scripture there are no timeless truths, but all truths according to scripture are specific acts of God in which He unveils Himself; acts which as such have an eternal character embracing all times, but also a concretely temporal character. As Jesus Christ Himself is eternal as God and stands as Lord above all times, but is also concretely temporal and in this way the real Lord of the world and His community, so it is with creation. Those who regard God's creation as an eternal but timeless relation of the creature and its existence can certainly boast of a very deep and pious conviction, but they cannot believe it in the Christian and biblical sense. For this timeless relation has nothing whatever to do with God's decree of grace in which God from all eternity has condescended to this creature in His Son in order to exalt it in His Son; nor with the acts in which God has accomplished this decree according to the revelation of Himself" (III/1, 60). For references to the historicity of God's work in *CD* III.1, see 15, 16, 125, 183, 216, 217, 218, and 223.

created *in* time: God continued to create in the seven days. Therefore, to say that creation is timeless is to deny both that God has his own divine temporality and to miss the historical character of divine activity. Rather than beginning the discussion in an apologetical mode, then, Barth constructs his view with reference to what he considers the positive revelation in scripture. In this way, creaturely time is a creation of God's eternity. The covenantal purpose of time will become apparent in the next subsection.

The difference between Augustine and Barth then is Barth's insistence that eternity is not timeless. While for Augustine God acts within time, this does not lead him to suggest that eternity has its own distinct temporality.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, for Barth God's eternity has a distinct temporality because God is triune and acts within time.

### ***3.2.2 Objective Time and Human Historicity***

Further along in III/1 the creation of time resurfaces in Barth's exegesis of Genesis 1. Similar to various classical expositions, the core of III/1 is a theological exegesis of the first two chapters of Genesis. In subsection 41.2, "Creation as the External Basis of the Covenant," Barth examines Genesis 1 arguing that it gives an ordered account of God's creating the cosmos and humanity that is directed to the covenant. This culminates in the creation of humanity in the *imago dei* and God's Sabbath rest. Thus Barth maintains that Genesis 1 establishes creation as the theatre (III/1, 99, 101) or house (III/1, 181) of God's covenantal works. Conversely, in subsection 41.3, "The Covenant as the Internal Basis of

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<sup>35</sup> This is not to say that Augustine refuses to see God working in time. A fuller examination (including not only Genesis commentaries and the *Confessions* but *The City of God*) would reveal that Augustine does see God working in time. In *The Trinity*, Augustine even suggests that the temporal missions of the Son and Spirit are founded upon eternal triune relations (IV.25 ff). Yet he does not go so far as Barth to suggest that there is a distinct temporality in God's eternity. Augustine's apologetical concerns likely prevented him from moving in this direction.

Creation,” Barth exegetes Genesis 2 arguing that the covenantal relation between God and humanity is ‘prefigured’ when humanity is given a place to live and an opportunity to respond to God’s word and command (III/1, 232). Barth’s exposition of these two chapters supports his view that “Creation is one long preparation, and therefore the being and existence of the creature one long readiness, for what God will intend and do with it in the history of the covenant” (III/1, 231).<sup>36</sup>

Embedded within the exegesis of Genesis 1 is the oft-neglected discussion of objective time. In fact, Barth seems only to note it in passing. For Barth, as for many commentators, the first three days are concerned with the creation of light, sky, and land, while the next three ‘fill’ these days with luminaries, birds, fish, animals and humanity.<sup>37</sup> That is, while the first three days describe the creation of time and space, providing the home for creatures, the last three days describe “the furnishing of the cosmos” (III/1, 156). On the first day, God calls into existence light, which is followed by darkness, and thus creates the first day, while on the fourth day, the luminaries of the sun, moon, and stars are created to mediate the light of the first day and thus make measured objective

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<sup>36</sup> Barth, however, does not claim that these texts are historical the way in which other scriptural texts appear. On the one hand, he refuses to view Genesis 1 as a revealed scientific cosmology to be taken literally. Yet, on the other, he is unwilling to view it as pure mythology, although it contains myth (Barth however does not specify which parts of the saga are considered mythological). For Barth, myth implies a story constructed to tell timeless truth (III/1, 84-87). Creation and creation history, however, are not timeless truths. The logic here is important: since God the Creator is also the God of the covenant, and it is clear that God acts historically and temporally in this dealings with humanity in the covenant, then the Genesis texts are not timeless mythology. They refer to historical action by God. The speech and operation of God in these texts, moreover, connects them with the rest of the Pentateuch (III/1, 90). Thus, while Genesis 1 and 2 do not purport to tell history in the modern sense of the word, they still testify to God’s creating activity as historical. Barth, as seen above, argues that creation is a temporal act. “The history of creation is ‘non-historical’ or, to be more precise, pre-historical history” (III/1, 80). The term Barth attaches to this genre is *saga* (III/1, 81). Thus, Genesis points to the theological reality of creation, which is at the same time historical actuality. Though it is obviously not observed and recorded history in the modern sense. Given this particular genre, then, there is interplay between a natural description of creation and symbolic interpretation. When considering the luminaries of the fourth day, for example, Barth argues that the text points not only to God’s actual creation but also to the covenantal God behind these acts; the God whose works are symbolically described in terms of light (III/1, 165). It is such interplay that, for Barth, is preserved under the concept of saga.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Word Publishing: London, 1987), 6-7.



time a possibility. Yet the units of time created by God (day, week, *etc.*), are created for human historical existence. In this way, human historicity is embedded within cosmic time.

Barth explains the commencing of time with the creation of the first day as the first of God's historical works *ad extra*, when eternity creates time.

He had spoken and His Word was followed by a fulfilment: there was light, and it was separated from darkness. The *opus Dei ad extra* had for the first time become a finished event. A reality that is different from God had taken on form and existence. And then finally God had called the light day. . . . But this means that with this crowning naming of light God's accomplished work received the form of time. Time as such came into being, and was at once made a day, the first day. It is the naming which characterised God's accomplished work as an historical act, as the first in the series of all God's other historical acts. It was not in an instant of an eternal moment, nor in an indefinite time, but in a day limited by an evening that the *opus Dei ad extra* became an event. It is in such a day that it obviously wills to become and will again become an event. It is this fundamental act of the divine compassion and condescension which becomes apparent in the fact that God not only has eternity but also time, and that now He also gives time to His creatures as the living-space appropriate to them; that he not only wills to act uninterruptedly, in accordance with the constancy of His own nature, but that He also wills, as He is able, to do so interruptedly in individual, concrete and, of course, finite acts, in accordance with the finitude of the created reality distinct from Himself (III/1, 130).<sup>38</sup>

This passage points out not only the emergence of time, co-existent with the creation of light, and thus the first of God's works, but also the character of God's work's *ad extra*. As noted already, creation is not a "timeless act" for Barth, since God creates and acts only historically and concretely in time. Also important to note is the twofold manner in which God acts toward creation: uninterruptedly and interruptedly. God in his constancy will preserve creation uninterruptedly and in his freedom act interruptedly, in concrete ways. Yet most significant for the present discussion is the appropriate "living space" created for human existence, the gift of human historicity.

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<sup>38</sup> Earlier it is stated: "Having this function, and constituting this declaration, it is called by God "day." The first day comes, and time and the cosmos in time commence, as light comes into being by the Word of God and this declaration is made. And it is in the same way that time will continue" (III/1, 117).

Furthermore, contrary to views that would take the creation of ‘day’ in Gen. 1: 3-5 only figuratively, Barth argues that these verses speak of real objective time. “For it has something very remarkable to say on this point, namely, that God created time: not just time in general, but our time, the actual time in which each creature actually lives; or concretely time as a unit, i.e., the day, and time as a sequence, i.e., the week; and that He created it by giving to light the name day” (III/1, 125).<sup>39</sup> Though the passage speaks in the form of saga Barth insists it is concerned with the reality of days and week, the objective time that is meant for the creature. Note that Barth’s description is quite minimal - there is the unit of day and the sequence of week. Thus he does not explain the connection between time and the cosmic processes. He argues instead that the objective reality of time is a creation of the Word of God (III/1, 129).

The exposition of objective time is found again in the exegesis of the fourth day of the creation narrative. Genesis 1: 14-19 states that God called forth the sun, moon, and stars so that they may govern the sky during the day and night. The luminaries then act as the objective measurement of time, allowing humanity to make their way in time. Barth states that they “are the objective measure of time and space; the objective clock and objective compass with the help of which man can orientate himself and thus be capable of history” (III/1, 162). He explains this at length, stating that the luminaries control the shape of time to include days, months, seasons and years, which has both cultural and

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<sup>39</sup> Barth insists this is in reference to real objective time: “According to these verses, God created day quite irrespective of what we know or think we know to be the cause of evening and morning, and therefore the cause of the reality of day” (III/1, 125). This is reiterated a page later: “For everything depends on the fact that what is in question in this passage is concretely our time and not just indefinite periods of time but measured and limited time and therefore real days” (III/1, 126). Or, “The fact that God calls the light day means formally that the day as our unit of time is not an arbitrary human invention or convention, but a divine work and institution. The day is thus given to the creature as the sphere of its existence. It is not originally and naturally as the disposal of the creature but at the disposal of God. Day is light adopted and consecrated by God in His gracious good-pleasure – dedicated and ordained for His special service and therefore for the declaration of His will” (ibid).

historical significance.<sup>40</sup> For Barth then, the luminaries control the plurality of times associated with biological and cultural life: weather, navigation, agriculture, as well as the historical existence of human life. In this way, there is an integration of objective and subjective time. The days, seasons and years are created by God in order that humanity may live in time, and thus historically. The anthropocentricity here is unmistakable. The luminaries prepare man “for his activity as the earthly subject of the history appointed for him by God” (III/1, 162). Thus their ruling is to allow humanity to be not only aware of its natural existence as such but to be open to history and, more importantly, the history in which humanity will be encountered by God.<sup>41</sup> In fact, the “proceeding works all aimed generally at man, or rather at God’s relationship with man. But from this point onwards everything aims particularly at man’s interested partnership in his relationship with God” (III/1, 157).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> “It is their diversity and alternation alone which give to man an awareness of day and night as such, making it possible for him to distinguish the one from the other. And so it is they which are to him in this basic function of dividing day and night signs or signals as they are described in v. 14. In this connection we can think of the weather, and the four points of the compass, and the “seasons” for agriculture and navigation (whose objective meaning has a recognisable correspondence in the life of nature, plants and beasts), and the possibilities of demarcation for “days and years,” and therefore the means of fixing and reckoning time. The service which they render is to make it possible for man – assuming that he for his part can and does realise this – to live a life which is not merely dreamy and vegetative, but which is marked by the wakeful consciousness of time and of history. This is what they can and should and will do. As a repetition and representation of the divine creation of light, they prepare the cosmos not merely for the presence of man but for his activity as the earthly subject of the history appointed for him by God. They make it possible for him to be a participant and responsible witness and not merely a spectator of the process by which day is continually formed out for evening and morning” (III/1, 162, cf., 158).

<sup>41</sup> “Their whole diffusion of brightness and warmth, and all the other determinations which may emanate from them, are all summed up in the fact that they dispense the objective possibility of a human awareness of time and place; thus making it possible for man as a creature to have a history with God” (III/1, 163). Barth is emphatic on this point: “There could be time, there could be natural history and human history, even without these luminaries. But without them there could not be the time and history in which man, surrounded by the animal kingdom, can play a conscious and active part as a partner of the Creator” (III/1, 157). To make the same point in reference to the symbol of light see III/1, 156-157. Or, “Nor must we abstract from Gen. 1.14 f. the fact that the history which it has in view, the *content* of the time which sun, moon and stars are created to measure is not something indefinite, but the specific history of salvation which commences with the creation of light and receives its direction and purpose from the God of Israel” (III/1, 163, italics added.).

<sup>42</sup> Barth defends his anthropocentric interpretation by critiquing both ancient and modern cosmologies, which tend to ignore the purpose of creation: the relation between God and humanity. In the first place,

Barth's view of objective time may be summarized with the following comments. In the first place, the articulation of objective time is a theological one. That is, he is concerned not merely to argue that time is an objective reality, but to state the theological function of time. God creates time and space in order that the human creature may exist historically, which is the external basis wherein covenantal history is actualized. Moreover, Barth presupposes that objective time is a part of the cosmic process. Within the discussion of the first and fourth days he points out that time is objectively measured and a part of the natural order. The luminaries created on day four (the sun, moon and stars) are positioned by God to be objective measurement of time. Since Barth only gives an exposition of objective time in its relation to the time of humanity, however, there is no consideration of how eternity relates to cosmic time. While this dissertation will demonstrate the triune pattern of eternity's relation to human temporality, there is little construction of how the triune God relates to the created order and its time. Barth presupposes that there is a *direct* relation between God and non-human creation, but he suggests that there is no biblical knowledge of how this relation is to be understood. Thus theologically, Barth reasons, the internal relation between eternity and subjective time can be discerned but not the internal relation between eternity and objective time.<sup>43</sup> It

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Barth sees a certain demythologization of ancient views of the luminaries as deities in their devaluation to mere instruments in the service of God (III/1, 159-160). Modern cosmology, moreover, in its tendency to examine the cosmos without reference to the purposes of God, exhibits the same refusal to acknowledge anthropocentricity via the covenant (III/1, 160). According to Barth, then, both ancient and modern cosmologies, either in deifying creation or ignoring its relation to the covenant, misplace or ignore a proper anthropocentrism.

<sup>43</sup> As Barth states in III/2: "We do not know what time means for animals or plants, or for the rest of the universe. We live in constant relationship to the rest of the universe. Therefore, since we ourselves are in time, we may conclude or suspect that time is the form of existence of everything created. At any rate, the mode of existence of the earthly cosmos as observed and conceived by us shows countless analogies to our own to support this view. . . . Moreover the biblical accounts of creation, especially the first, seem clearly to imply that time was created simultaneously with the universe as its form of existence. Like man the whole universe is in time as created by God and therefore real. . . . Indeed, we do not know what it means

may be asked of Barth, however, does not all of creation, and thus its times, have a place in the reconciliation and redemption of the world through Christ and the Spirit (Rom 8:18-25)? This refusal to reflect more on the relation of objective and subjective times will surface in the next chapter when Barth's view of time in the eschaton is questioned. He suggests that time ceases to exist in the eschaton, which is not only problematic for humanity but for cosmic time as well. It will be suggested that a more rigorous attempt to think of subjective and objective times together would aid a better eschatological understanding of time.

### ***3.2.3 The Preserving of Time***

Theologically following the act of creating time is that of preserving it. Barth discusses the preservation of time in the doctrine of providence in III/3, which contains two pertinent and related themes. First, the eternal God preserves creaturely time in anticipation of covenantal encounter, and second, this encounter preserves and protects both the freedom of God and the freedom of the creature. The first theme will serve the next section of the chapter, as God preserves the creature even in its allotted and *fallen* time for the possible participation in gracious time. The second theme is Barth's alternative to the problem of divine foreknowledge and future contingents. This problem has often governed the problem of eternity and time, at least since Boethius and it is even found in the work of Augustine.<sup>44</sup> Typically the discussion has focused on the formal problem that if God knows all future times then this implies they are fixed and therefore

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for beings in the earthly cosmos to be in time. We have no means of observing or conceiving of their temporality. But we can observe and conceive our own" (521).

<sup>44</sup> See section 1.1.2 in the first chapter.

the freedom of the creature is illusory.<sup>45</sup> While Barth does not altogether neglect such formal questions, he defends a version of prescience in II/1 (558 ff), his focus in III/3 is the encounter of God and humanity in covenantal partnership. Thus the terms of the debate are superceded. God's will and purposes are pursued in the course of time and history as he graciously pursues the creature in every temporal moment. God's eternal election of humanity through Christ does not preclude the actual becoming of history, but in fact includes it, and in such a manner that protects the autonomy and freedom of both God and humanity in their relation and encounter in time and history.<sup>46</sup> For Barth, the eternal God encounters humans in their time – even in the limitations of allotted time – in a way that preserves their freedom as creatures.

In the doctrine of providence Barth makes use of a threefold rubric adopted from Protestant scholasticism: divine preserving (*conservatio*), accompanying (*concursus*) and ruling (*gubernatio*). With these divisions Barth argues for both divine and creaturely freedom and the necessity of their interaction. The point of the divine preserving (*conservatio*) is the “upholding and sustaining [of the creature's] individual existence – the existence which He gave to it as the Creator and which is different from His own

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<sup>45</sup> Of course, the traditional answer is no, foreknowledge does not imply a fixed future. Of the vast amount of literature, see for example Linda Zagzebski, “Omniscience, Time, and Freedom” in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Religion*. Edited by William E. Mann (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005): 3-25. Or, William Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), who argues for an ‘openness’ of God and the future. Barth's approach has the advantage of a dynamic view of God's work in time and history which positively moves beyond the philosophical conundrum.

<sup>46</sup> John Colwell's comments on election in Barth illumines this point: “Just as God's eternity includes, and does not preclude, man's time, just as God's eternal decision includes, and does not preclude, the actualization of that decision in the event of Jesus Christ, so the ontological definition of man in Jesus Christ includes, and does not preclude, the actual participation of man in that election. The relationship between Jesus Christ and other men is not just ontological, it is also authentically dynamic, though the dynamic is never independent of the ontological. The participation of man in the election of Jesus Christ is an event of God's Triunity: it occurs in the primal decision of the Father, it occurs in the actualization of that decision in the Son, and it occurs in the realization of that decision in the Holy Spirit” (*Actuality and Provisionality: Eternity and Election in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1989: 282).

existence – and by giving to this existence its continuity” (III/3, 58). The focus of *conservatio* is the sustaining of the creature in the autonomy of its existence. Conversely, the point of divine accompanying (*concursum*) is that God exists alongside and with the creature even as he gives them its proper time and space. While the life of the creature has a limited time span, allotted by God, the divine being lives before, during and after the limited time of the creature.<sup>47</sup> The third theme, divine ruling (*gubernatio*), qualifies the other two. While preserving and accompaniment focus on the autonomy of the creature and God respectively, divine ruling focuses on the purpose and direction of divine providence. God does not preserve and co-exist with the creature and creation without a particular *telos*.<sup>48</sup>

On the first theme, the general preservation of time, four interspersed points can be extracted. In the discussion of divine preserving (*conservatio*) Barth first states that the preservation of time is the continuation of created time. “But the statement that God preserves the creature means much more than that He gave it time. When he created it, He might well have given it time in order not to preserve it indefinitely. . . . But if He really sustains it, this means that He gives it more time, that He confirms it in its being in time” (III/3, 61). This preservation, second, encompasses the full multiplicity of times in

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<sup>47</sup> While Barth cannot be described as panentheistic he does make a strong case for the close relation between God and creation. Yet he continuously maintains that this is an asymmetrical relation and that God is not a part of creation. The language of containment was used in the first chapter to describe this (see section 1.2.3, note 58). Here in III/3 he states: “In Him, and not somewhere near Him, we live and move and have our being, and not on the basis of our self determination, or of the determination of a field of force within which, or a system of norms under which, we may happen to find ourselves” (III/3,130). Barth’s careful qualification is seen in the further divisions of accompanying under the rubric of divine preceding (*praecurrit*), accompanying (*concurrit*) and following (*succurrit*). By adding preceding and following to accompaniment he enforces the point that the divine accompanying is fuller than simply co-existing with the limited life of the creature. It may also be noted that this exposition of divine accompaniment is making a similar point as the discussion of pre-, supra- and posttemporality in CD II/1, though Barth has in mind allotted time here and not the full history of creation as such.

<sup>48</sup> The formal points Barth makes under the divine ruling includes: 1) God alone rules; 2) God himself is the meaning and purpose of his rule; 3) God rules in transcendence; 4) God rules creaturely occurrence by ordering it; 5) God controls creaturely activity; and 6) God directs creaturely occurrence to a common goal.

the created order, both subjective and objective.<sup>49</sup> And third, humanity in its time, along with all creaturely species, and even history itself, is preserved with limits (III/3, 61). Barth rejects both the immortality of the creature and the eternality of creation.<sup>50</sup> This allotted time, however, does not mean the life of the creature is “partial, transitory or imperfect” (ibid) or “an evil necessity, an obscure fate” (III/3, 85) but that even in its limitation there is an opportunity to respond to the covenant of grace.<sup>51</sup> Fourth, the divine preserving of the creature in allotted time is the result of God’s eternity. In discussing the divine accompanying, which surrounds the time of the creature, Barth states that it is the work of the eternal God:

In its totality, the conception of God accompanying the creature on its own path includes not merely His preceding and accompanying it as the Lord, but also His following it, again as the Lord. And this “following” as well as the “preceding” must be related to the eternal being of God as well as to his temporal action. God is eternal. It is as the eternal God that He acts in time. And this means that He acts not merely before the work of the creature as this work occurs within the limits of its own time, not merely contemporaneously with it, but also after this work is concluded, and therefore after the time allotted to it has come to an end. God was, and was at work, even when the creature had not commenced its work. God is, and is at work, in the accomplishment of this work. God will be, and will still be at work in relation to this work, when the creature and its work have already attained their goal (III/3, 151).

Here eternity as pure duration (‘was’, ‘is’ and ‘will be’) surrounds the time of the creature. God was before the creature, accompanies it, and will be after the life of the creature ends. Since this enveloping of time will be examined with fallen time, it is

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<sup>49</sup> “Man may continue to be man. Individuals may continue as such. Natural and historical groupings may continue. Humanity itself may continue as the sum of the temporal and spatial totality of human creation on earth and under heaven and in relation to the whole conceivable and inconceivable cosmos ” (III/3, 84). Barth similarly writes later: “The very fact that this God rules as Creator means that in their own way, and at their own time and place, all things are allowed to be, and live, and work, and occupy their own sphere, and exercise their own effect upon their environment, and fulfill the circle of their destiny” (III/3, 148).

<sup>50</sup> On Barth’s rejection of the soul’s immortality see Nielsen, “Karl Barth on Time and Eternity”, 12-13, 14.

<sup>51</sup> This will become more obvious when discussing fallen time. Though here he states: “Hence we may see that there is no contradiction between the death and end and passing of the individual and of creation as a whole, and its eternal preservation by God. For in its relationship to Jesus Christ, in its participation in the continuing history of His people from the beginning of the world to the end, each in its limited time and space can receive and enjoy its own perfectly satisfying participation in eternal life in fellowship with God. It does not have anything more than a finite preservation. Only in that finite preservation can it participate in the history of Jesus Christ and His people, and therefore in eternal life” (III/3, 63).



suffice to note that the eternal God in his fatherly providence proceeds, accompanies, and follows the allotted time of the creature.

This description of God's preserving of time – since his eternity is pure duration – is complemented in the doctrine of providence with the discussion of divine and creaturely encounter in time. This second theme is Barth's alternative to the problem of divine knowledge and future contingents. Instead of considering whether or not humans are free in light of divine foreknowledge, he variously argues for the autonomy and freedom of God and the creature in their covenantal encounter and final fellowship in the eschaton.

At times the argument takes on a formal tone. Under the discussion of divine accompanying (*concursum*), for example, he argues for three interrelated themes. First, God co-exists with the creature as the living God, in all the richness and particular activity of the divine being.<sup>52</sup> Second, the divine accompaniment is a co-operation. When God works he does not bypass the activity of the creature. "Just as He Himself is active in His freedom, the creature can also be active in its freedom. God Himself can guarantee this to the creature. It is His creature. And even the freedom in which it can work is His gift" (III/2, 92). Yet, third, this co-operation is asymmetrical since God accompanies as Lord (III/3, 93). God is the creator and sustainer of the creature and so it is not just any form of accompaniment. Similarly, a major portion of the discussion of divine ruling (*gubernatio*) makes a formal argument for preserving both the freedom of God and the freedom of the creature (III/3, 157-175). Here there is sustained attention given to the

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<sup>52</sup> Barth states: "in all the richness of His divine being, in all the definitiveness of His will and counsel towards the creature in its own activity. Thus the activity of the creature takes place in its co-existence with God, in the presence of God, His *praesentia actiosa*. It is therefore accompanied and surrounded by God's own activity" (III/3, 92).

divine permission bestowed upon the creature. God controls creaturely activity by sustaining and permitting the creature to exist within its own sphere (III/3, 165-166). Barth argues that the creature has its own dignity and activity even under God's ruling; there is no contradiction between the ruling of God and the freedom of the creature.<sup>53</sup> God's ruling gives the creature time and space for its own free activity.<sup>54</sup> So the basic argument is that God's providential activity ensures that both God and the creature co-exist in a way that preserves the freedom and activity of both, even while God is still Lord over the creature. This basic argument can be termed a "non-competitive relation" between God and humanity.<sup>55</sup>

The success of Barth's proposal however, relies on dogmatic content. He admits that his reflections rest on the first article of the creed, on the 'Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth' (III/3, 176 ff). Or, the subject of general world providence is the same subject revealed in the covenant. The "King of Israel is the King of the world" (III/3, 176), and the "I am" who concretely reveals himself in the Old and New Testaments is the subject of world governance.<sup>56</sup> More specifically, the foundation of this

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<sup>53</sup> As he states: "God has created and He preserves the creature, and in so doing He gives to it a sphere in which to work. And the work of the creature is the object of His divine ordering. The fact that He controls it means that He is the Lord of the creature even while it has its own activity . . . Its character and dignity, its individuality as a creature, are safeguarded in the mere fact that He confirms His relation to it and its relation to Him" (III/3, 165).

<sup>54</sup> This ordering and fulfillment, moreover, includes both the particularity of all created existence (III/3, 168) and the "mutual relationship between the individual creatures and creaturely groupings" (III/3, 169). Barth summarizes: "It is He who arranges that His creatures can praise Him together, and therefore truly as individuals. It is he who arranges this *nexus rerum et actionum*, and therefore creation itself, both in its individual parts and also in its totality, and in either case for His own glory. And in doing this, He rules and orders all world-occurrence" (III/3, 170).

<sup>55</sup> The term 'non-competitive relation' is from Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 2 ff. See as well her earlier work, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), especially chapters 2 and 3. Though she occasionally interacts with Barth the term is used for her own conceptualization.

<sup>56</sup> As Barth states: "The rule of God as opposed to the control and outworking of a natural or spiritual cosmic principle is characterised by the fact that it is there in the particular events attested in the Old and New Testaments, in the "I am" spoken and actualised by the King of Israel, in the covenant of free grace

ruling is the eternal decision of the triune God to graciously turn toward humanity.<sup>57</sup> The basis of his answer to the problem of divine and human freedom resides in the living God of scriptures, which is coupled with the actualistic language of encounter.

For example, when reflecting on the actualization of God's eternal divine will, Barth highlights that this is a relational and dynamic concept. It is not to be thought of as a secretly "fixed plan which precedes the creation of the world and therefore all temporal occurrence" (III/3, 164). Rather:

The plan of God is, and consists, and is divine, in the fact that He actually carries it out, that by His power His decision continually becomes an event. This is its essence and content. The divine activity in time is identical with His willing, so that the divine willing is not somewhere behind this activity but has to be perceived and adored within it, and the activity cannot be a later fulfillment of His willing, nor can it be understood as such. It is in the temporal activity of ordering that the divine order is realized, and it is because God causes it to be realized in time that it is eternal (III/3, 164-165).

Based on Barth's actualistic ontology, this passage argues for the dynamic unity of God's pretemporal will and its actualization within time. This ordering, moreover, is "a continuing operation by which an occurrence in time takes place in accordance with a definite plan, and is determined and formed and directed through constantly changing situations and stages . . . The rule of God is the order of God in this active sense, His ordering of all temporal occurrence" (III/3, 164).<sup>58</sup> God's eternal will, for Barth then, is

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instituted and executed, promised and fulfilled by Him, that it has the centre which controls and is normative for everything else. The power which rules the world is the power which is active and manifest here as the power of this King" (III/3, 183).

<sup>57</sup> "He Himself, the Son of the Father and the Father of the Son, is love, and in His Son, as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer, He is love to another, to the creature which needs His love, which can live only by His love, which may and must live by this love. The glory of God is in His being as the One who loves eternally. The greatness of His glory is in the fact that His love is actualised" (III/3, 187, corrected).

<sup>58</sup> Similarly: "And why is it the case that God orders creaturely events, that from all eternity and yet also at every moment He is Himself both the Planner and the plan, the *ordinator* and the *ordo*? The answer is that in the supremacy of His free grace, in His zeal for this own glory and therefore in His love for the creature, in His transcendence over and in the contradictions of the world, He has pursued a definite course, executing His eternal will in a temporal history, moving from promise to fulfillment, from Word to act, from grace to judgment, and back to a new and inconceivably greater grace, and yet through it all remaining exactly the same" (III/3, 188).

not a fixed plan that mechanically predetermines all times, but rather is constantly working through all times to bring this will to completion. Toward the end of the discussion on divine governance, Barth finally makes reference to the concrete encounter between God and humanity found in the scriptures: “If we look at this factual relationship, and therefore at the rule of the God of Israel, we see that it is actually true that in the world-governance of God everything has to be and is absolutely under God, and yet everything attains in freedom to its own validity and honour” (III/3, 189). The argument for divine and human freedom rests on the encounter between God and humanity as attested in the scriptures.

This encounter has a particular end, moreover. God ultimately directs all creaturely activity toward an end that includes both the glorification of God and the eschatological glorification of the creature. While humans have a particular goal in mind for their action, “it is God who decides where and how it will actually culminate, what will be its upshot... And this is true both when the culmination and effect correspond more or less to the creaturely activity and also when either by its non-existence or its different form and bearing it is a complete surprise in relation to it” (III/3, 167). Even while human freedom may be directed to a particular end, ultimately God judges and decides on the final effects of human action.<sup>59</sup> The goal of God’s ruling, finally, is both the glorification of God and the creature.<sup>60</sup>

God follows his pretemporal will in encountering the creature in its own time and space. While the creature’s action may not follow God’s will, he determines the final

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<sup>59</sup> This is evident earlier in the section when discussing God’s eternal preservation of time. In the eschatological recapitulation of all times God judges and preserves the times of creation, see III/3, 87 ff.

<sup>60</sup> “God controls all things [for] . . . His own glory as Creator, and in it the justification, deliverance, salvation, and ultimately the glorification of the creature as it realizes its particular existence as the means of glorifying the Creator” (III/3, 168).

outcome of the creature's history in his eschatological judgment. This occurs, Barth argues, in a way that maintains the freedom of God and the creature, even while God is Lord. So besides the more general view that God preserves the creature in its time in order to have covenantal partnership, Barth's defense of divine and human freedom supplants the traditional discussion of divine foreknowledge and future contingents. Not only does Barth discuss the creation of time, then, but he is also concerned with God's preserving it, in all its variety and complexity, so that the covenantal history and fellowship may occur. However, the human partner, in his freedom, refuses the divine intention and created time becomes fallen time. But for Barth, God preserves the creature even in its fallen time.

### **3.3. Fallen Time**

While the divine purpose for created time and its preservation is covenantal fellowship, humanity refuses this and its time becomes fallen. The *Existenzform* remains, as humanity still lives in the flow of past, present, future, and within the limit of allotted time, though the being and activity therein is one of human sin. Consequently the experience of time is fundamentally one of insecurity and fear, insecurity in light of the fleeting present and fear in the face of inevitable death. Thus the qualitative difference of fallen time arises from the lived 'content' of sinful existence. Yet, as shall be demonstrated, Barth insists that God preserves the creature in its fallen time as to provide him with an opportunity to respond to his gracious call. Barth first makes mention of fallen time at the beginning of III/1, in relation to created and gracious time, though the

most substantial exposition of it occurs in III/2, where there is a full-fledged phenomenology of fallen time. Both of these discussions need examination.

In III/1, fallen time is described as the time of human sin, when the time given for fellowship with God and others is misused. Time thus loses its purpose, meaning and centre. Barth gives the following description:

[It is] the time of man as isolated from God and fallen into sin. It is the time whose flux has become a flight. It is the time in which there is no real present and therefore no real past and future, no centre and therefore no beginning and no end, or a beginning and end only as the appearance of a centre which is in reality the one and only thing and in one respect or another is not true and proper time. It is the time which, like an insoluble riddle, seems as though it must necessarily be finite as well as infinite, but no less necessarily cannot be either the one or the other. It is the time of which – although it is our only time – it can unfortunately be maintained only as a hypothesis that it is even related to a real absolute time as its origin or goal or secret content, thus having the character of reality. It is time without any recognizable ground or meaning in eternity. This is how time appears and must appear when it is no longer an order established by God and to be appropriated and acknowledged by man, but a human work and institution. This is the form it must take in the imagination and for the existence of the man who is not content to enjoy and treat it as something loaned to him, but tries to possess and use it as his very own, as the predicate of his thinking, willing and existence. As the time of lost man it can only be lost time (III/1, 72, cf. as well III/2, 525- 526).

Fallen time, then, refers to temporal existence as it is cut off from the eternity of God.

When time is not seen as a gift (“something loaned”), and it loses its centre in relation to God (“without any recognizable ground or meaning in eternity”) then its experience is a reflection of fallen humanity. Created time instead of a mere flux – the succession of past, present and future - becomes a “flight”. Its nature is seen as “an insoluble riddle”, or merely an appearance. Time is seen as a predicate of sinful humanity’s “thinking, willing and existence” and not as a predicate of God’s eternity. In other words, the *form* of creaturely time is filled without its true *content*.

Besides this basic definition, it is important to note that fallen time does not negate the reality of created time. As mentioned above, for Barth God created humanity with a universal structure: *imago Dei*, ensouled bodies, and existence in time. Within

Barth's anthropology these three features of the human being are not destroyed by sin. Since God has determined humanity for fellowship with himself in Jesus Christ, any attempt to deny the purpose of God for humanity (sin) is ultimately an impossibility.<sup>61</sup> In the case of temporality, it is clear that time as the *Existenzform* of the creature remains despite sin. It is only that the purpose of time, as fellowship with the creator, is unacknowledged, ignored, or turned away.

Following in III/2, Barth provides his remarkable phenomenology of fallen time. Here he weaves together a complex discussion that answers both ancient and modern concerns of human temporality while employing both phenomenological description and theological response.<sup>62</sup> The ancient problem is distilled in Augustine's *Confessions*. Humans only experience time in the present, yet this present is illusive and constantly slipping away (Bk.XI.20). Barth describes this as time from the *inside*, concerned with the conscious experience of past, present, and future. The individual subject experiences this as memory, intuition and expectation. The question here is how do humans live in the transitory now? Barth answers this problem with reference to the definition of eternity as the simultaneity of past, present and future - so that all pasts are remembered, all presents are accompanied, and all futures anticipated. Thus, in Barth's mind, the human experience in time may be transformed from insecurity and uncertainty to gratitude, trust, and faith in the midst of God's eternal presence.

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<sup>61</sup> As Webster explains: "To decide for sin is not to decide for a possibility which, however dreadful it may be, is equally as real an actualization of human being as the life of obedience to God. To decide for sin is to negate what one inescapably is as a human being, and therefore to adopt an impossibility as it were merely one more way of being a creature", *Karl Barth*, 102. See as well Wolf Krötke, "The humanity of the human person in Karl Barth's anthropology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 165-66.

<sup>62</sup> John Colwell's examination of human temporality covers some of the same material as this next section, *Actuality and Provisionality*, 131-149. The present interpretation differs, however, on these points: human time is viewed in light of God's providence, Barth uses the categories of inner and outer time, and there is attention paid to Barth's use of a phenomenology of time.

In modern phenomenology another problem for human temporality comes to the fore. While not neglecting discussion of the fleeting present altogether, the authentic experience of time (to use Heidegger's terms) is related to the anticipation of death.<sup>63</sup> This is the idea of allotted time, time bracketed by birth and death, with a focus on the movement toward death. Barth terms this problem as time from the *outside*. The concern is not the fleetingness of the present but that one comes from non-being and will return to non-being. The question here is how do human's live knowing their time is limited? Barth answers again with reference to the eternal God. However, instead of using a formal definition such as *simul* or pure duration, he takes up the acts of the eternal God in time to rethink the beginning and end of human life. According to Barth, one's individual death is merely a *sign* of God taking on the wrath of divine judgment on the cross. The human subject never experiences death in the sense of divine wrath, which Barth terms the 'second death.' This reconstitutes the situation of the human subject from anxiety in the face of death to faith and hope.

In the doctrine of creation Barth has generally avoided dialogue with other disciplines.<sup>64</sup> Yet in these subsections, as mentioned, Barth sees fit to present phenomenological and theological discussions together.<sup>65</sup> As will be evident, the

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<sup>63</sup> On the role of temporality in modern phenomenology see Robert L. Dostal, "Time and phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger" in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 141-169. He argues that the experience of time is a foundational problem in modern philosophy, running through Kant and Husserl into Heidegger, though it is never properly resolved. On the importance of death for Heidegger's schema see Piotr Hoffman, "Death, time, history: Division II of *Being and Time*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, 195-214.

<sup>64</sup> Earlier in III/2 (71 ff) Barth presents a sustained discussion of the phenomenon of humanity (he takes up naturalism, idealism, existentialism, and theistic anthropology) though he critiques these approaches for a failure to relate humanity to the authentic humanity found in Jesus Christ. The difference in the later section of III/2 under discussion is that Barth himself uses a phenomenological method and is not merely critiquing the use of it by others.

<sup>65</sup> The term phenomenology is being used here in a general sense. Barth does not take up any of the methodological issues found in phenomenology as such (description, reduction/bracketing, essence, intentionality, etc.). But his approach does fit into Merleau-Ponty's general description of phenomenology:



phenomenon of time must be understood, critiqued, and appropriated to theological concerns, but nonetheless Barth does present a sustained phenomenological description.

As Nielsen explains:

Barth does not use the term “phenomenology” but speaks of “*Erscheinung*”, appearance, which may be assumed to mean the same thing. Phenomenology is not an approach Barth avails himself of under normal circumstances and closer scrutiny reveals that nor does he here. It figures, rather, as one strand in a more complex structure which aims at showing that a purely phenomenological analysis ends in a theological aporia, i.e. an irresolvable knot. The implication, in other words, is that a theologically acceptable approach to the problem of time needs to be informed by a component quite distinct from the phenomenon of time itself.<sup>66</sup>

### 3.3.1 *Eternity and the Fleeting Now*

Like Augustine before him, Barth relates the problem of the transitory and fleeting present to God’s eternity. Unlike Augustine, however, who views time as something to be ultimately escaped in the goal of union with God,<sup>67</sup> Barth sees the temporal ‘now’ in light of God’s accompanying presence and argues it as an opportunity for covenantal relation with God. The fleeting now is not to be escaped but is to be seen as an opportunity. Barth’s main assertion is that time is not a monstrosity but a gift of God’s fatherly goodness. And again like Augustine, this experience of the present contains reflection on

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it “tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the casual explanations which the scientist, the historian, or the sociologist may be able to provide” (“What is phenomenology?” in *Phenomenology of Religion: Eight Modern Descriptions of the Essence of Religion*. Edited by Joseph Dabney Bettis [New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1969]: 13). For a discussion of phenomenology as a movement see Richard Schmitt, “Phenomenology”, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 6. Editor in Chief Paul Edwards (New York and London: Macmillan Publishing Company and The Free Press, 1967): 135-151.

<sup>66</sup> Bent Flemming Nielsen, “Time and Eternity”, 9. Or, as Barth explains his method: “Always against the background of God’s eternity, we have tried step by step to isolate human time – the time created and given by God – from its distorted and obscured manifestation, and to study and present it in and for itself. We began with an analysis of time in the distorted and sinister form we know only too well . . . We then proceeded to analyse time in the reality in which it may be seen as the time given us by God” (III/2, 551).

<sup>67</sup> See W.J. Torrance Kirby, “Praise as the Soul’s overcoming of Time in the *Confessions* of Augustine”, *Pro Ecclesia* 6:3 (1997): 333-350.

memory and anticipation, which, when used properly, empowers the creature to live in time with confidence and hope.

Barth first reviews “the phenomenon [of time] as it presents itself to us”, which is “our own movement from the past through to the future, of the fact what we were yesterday and are today and will be tomorrow” (III/2, 512). The past “is the time which we leave and are in no longer” (ibid), while the future “is the time which we do not yet have but perhaps will have” (III/2, 513). Both the memory of the past and the anticipation of the future are problematic since they are an elusive substitute for their reality. Even the present, which ought to provide the most certainty, is presented by Barth as “a step from darkness to darkness, from the ‘no longer’ to the ‘not yet,’ and therefore a continual deprivation of what we were and had in favour of a continual grasping of what we will (perhaps) be and have” (III/2, 514). For Barth, reflecting on the phenomenon of time shows the ambiguity, darkness, and enigma surrounding the human experience. Philosophical thinking of time can only lead to the conclusion that time is an uncertain riddle (III/2, 514). In fact, such reflection on time without christological moorings is merely a description of *sinful humanity in time*. “The man who lives in that monstrous situation . . . is the man who is alienated from his Creator and therefore from himself, from his creaturely nature, and who has to pay for his rebellion against God by living in contradiction with himself, in contradiction with his God-given nature” (517). Such a contradiction is exposed in Jesus Christ, according to Barth.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> “In the existence of the man Jesus it is decided and revealed that God did not at all create man in that state of falling ‘from cliff to cliff’; that it is not at all His will which is manifested in the fact that our being in time is very different from the creaturely nature given by Him; and that He is determined to vindicate and protect His right as Creator and ours as His creatures in face of the monstrous perversion and corruption in which we exist” (III/2, 517-518).

Therefore, time as the form of existence of the creature must be thought of in correspondence to God's eternity and be seen as willed by God from eternity for covenantal relation.<sup>69</sup> Given the analogical relation between eternity and time, Barth reflects again on the phenomenon of the past, present and future, relating the temporal modes to God's eternity, and thereby re-describing them anew. This means that the response of anxiety in the face of the ambiguity, even monstrosity, of temporality is replaced with a response of faith and gratitude. In the following interaction between the phenomenon and gift of time, eternity is defined as the *simul* of past, present and future.

The phenomenon of the present is experienced subjectively between recollection and expectation, but this way between past and future is hardly secure (III/2, 527-528). The insecurity of the present can be overcome however by realizing that the elusive now of the present is under and with God's now:

Primarily, however, it is not we who are now but God who is now: God who created us and is in the process of rescuing and preserving us; God who is not dismayed at our sin, and does not cease to be for us, nor reverse our determination to be for Him and in mutual fellowship; God in all the defiance of our unfaithfulness and His own faithfulness. He is now primarily; and we secondarily (III/2, 529).

Barth defends God's presence in our now with reference to the *simul* of eternity. In doing so, he can suggest that God's eternity is truly present to the human now even while transcending it, since eternity anticipates, is synchronic, and recapitulates all times.

He is now as Creator. But this means that there is first a divine stepping from the past to the future. This is His present. We speak of His eternity, in which the past is not "no

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<sup>69</sup> "Eternity is not created. Eternity is God Himself. For as God is self-existent, He is also His own dimension. But time is willed and created by God as a reality distinct from Himself. It is willed and created as the universe is willed and created, and in the universe man. It is willed and created to be our dimension, corresponding to His. This must obviously mean that God willed and created time as the dimension of the life He ordained for us when we were willed and created, and therefore as the dimension of a life in communion with Himself as the eternal and living God, and also in relationship with our fellow-men, to whom He has given that same dimension for the same life in communion with Himself. Time was in fact willed and created in order that there might take place His dealings in the covenant with man, which finds its counterpart in the relationship between man and his fellows. It is for this reason and in this sense that time is the form of our existence" (III/2, 526-27).

longer” nor the future “not yet,” in which therefore the Now has duration and extension. It is in His eternity that God is now. But we do not speak of God’s abstract eternity, but of the eternity of His free love, in which He took and takes and will take time for our sakes, in which He wills to be for us and also wills that we should be for Him and therefore in mutual fellowship (III/2, 530).

The present, then, is a stable reality for human experience because God accompanies it in his love and grace. This implies, moreover, that the present is not a neutral existence, but an opportunity for fellowship and encounter with the covenantal God and other human beings. “What is this transition, then, but the offer, the summons, the invitation, to be with God now, to be present with Him, to make this transition with Him, recognizing that He always precedes us, not without us, but for us and on our behalf” (III/2, 531). The present therefore is an opportunity to fulfill one’s created purpose.

While Barth admits that the past may possibly continue in the present, since humans are made up of their past - “I am still the same person I was yesterday” (III/2, 533)<sup>70</sup> - he suggests that there is no guarantee of this continuity; the past in fact ceases to exist. The unreality of the past, then, casts a shadow over the present and future, for they too are doomed to pass into this unreality.<sup>71</sup> Overcoming the problem of the past is attempted either by remembering, keeping the past alive in various histories, or trying to forget the past, often manifested as belief in progress, a turn to the future. Yet, the attempt to remember the past carries no guarantee and the desire to forget it is

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<sup>70</sup> “As I reach the frontier and cross into the future, I am not a mere cipher, a blank sheet of paper. I am gifted and burdened, freed and enslaved, enriched and impoverished, credited and committed, strengthened and weakened, inclined, directed and determined, by the many earlier transitions I have made in the past and right up to this point. I am what all my past life has made me” (III/2, 533).

<sup>71</sup> “And this raises the disturbing suspicion that even our present and future are hastening towards the past; that that fatal line will be drawn again and again; that our present and all our future being are incontrovertibly condemned to undergo that transformation and therefore to become past being in the sense described, and as such to be no more. From this standpoint again it would seem as if we have no real time” (III/2, 524).

irresponsible. Humanity, according to Barth, usually lives with a combination of both (III/2, 534-535).

But again Barth contrasts the problems associated with the past to God's eternity, which contains the coinherence of past, present, and future, and thus its own past and remembrance.<sup>72</sup> Thus, one's past is not lost to God, even as it stands under his judgment.

According to Barth, because God preserves all pasts in his eternity:

Our being in time with its regressive duration and extension not only was real but is real. It is not lost. . . . We are in our whole time, in the whole sequence of its parts, and not just in the one part we call the present. For our time is the dimension of our whole life. If our whole time is the gift of God, then God also pledges to maintain its reality as whole (III/2, 537).

This reality of the past, which makes up the sequence of each lifetime, is in fact guaranteed by God.<sup>73</sup>

Since lives can be seen as a whole, as a gift of God under his preservation, the solutions of recollection and forgetfulness can be seen in a new light. With regard to remembering, on the one hand, one ought to look back in gratitude and try not to escape the past; while on the other hand, humans ought not to be trapped in the past, confined to its grip.<sup>74</sup> In the same way, the phenomenon of forgetting is balanced in light of God's

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<sup>72</sup> "Primarily, however, it is not we who were, but God. Even then God was our Creator, Deliverer and Preserver. He then continued to be for us in spite of our enmity against Him. . . . For there is a Then, a genuine past, in God's eternity, as surely as it is the eternity of the living God. Of course, no lines are drawn there, the past is not left behind, nor does it fade. The God who was, is now, and ever shall be. It is in the coinherence of past, present and future that His eternity is original, authentic and creative time. And the eternal God was then, in the past, the surety and pledge of the reality of our created time and of our real being in it" (III/2, 535-536). Again: "More than that, God's eternity is the eternity in which He did what was necessary for our being, for our deliverance and preservation, for securing us against destruction. He was from of old our Creator, Father and Redeemer. He was moved in Himself for us long before He executed this movement, and especially as He did so, and does not cease to do so. In this 'He did,' which does not come to an end, finally becoming a 'no longer,' He was over us and with us when we were in our highly problematical being as a past being" (III/2, 536).

<sup>73</sup> "We are really the persons we were in the whole duration and extent of our past, because in it we are before God, to whom we owed everything but were also responsible for everything" (III/2, 538).

<sup>74</sup> "Memory can enable us to live also but not exclusively in the past. We can live in the past but not by it. . . . As it really was and is, it is before the eyes of God and not of man – our own but a hidden reality.

eternity. Forgetting is a positive aspect of our consciousness; it “is a good thing that God draws this veil over the past even without our asking. In so doing, He allows us to live today for tomorrow with just the few memories we need of what was” (III/2, 540). Yet one does not have to forget all in order to live: “There is every reason to think that it is God’s good purpose that these fragments of the past should belong to our life in the present and the future” (ibid).

Like the phenomenon of the past, Barth admits that the future is not real as such, as it is only anticipated.<sup>75</sup> Yet the experience of anticipation is also wrought with difficulty. There is in fact much insecurity in anticipating the future, not only in whether one’s plans will work out, but in the end of individual existence in death.<sup>76</sup> The human response to this uncertainty and insecurity, according to Barth, is again twofold. One may posture themselves in an unreflective, frivolous, optimistic, and activist mode; not concerned with the end or uncertainty of the future. Or, one may take a reflective, preoccupied, pessimistic, and quietist mode; preoccupied with the certain end and uncertain ends of the future (III/2, 542-544). Neither of these options is appropriate for Barth. To be purely unreflective is naïve and careless, while being purely reflective and preoccupied with the future is paralyzing.<sup>77</sup> The way out of this dilemma is again by

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Because it is safe in the hands of God, we are freed from any positive or negative paralysis in relation to it” (III/2, 539-540).

<sup>75</sup> “As we are, we anticipate the future. We project ourselves into the future. We see and will ourselves as we shall be. We act as though our future being had already arrived. To this extent we are determined by it. Our thoughts, feelings, actions and reactions are coloured by specific hopes and fears. All our human activity, but also all our human experience and suffering, hastens towards a *telos* . . . At any rate, whether we are conscious of it or not, the present is always openly or secretly pregnant with the future” (III/2, 541).

<sup>76</sup> “To be sure, the terrible end can come only once, and it may still be a long way off. But come it will, and therefore the future which precedes it cannot be other than an unending terror. There is little true consolation in a prospect like this. But this is in fact the prospect which faces our being in time in this third tense” (III/2, 542).

<sup>77</sup> “This terrible threat may overwhelm us at any moment, surprising us like an armed man and depriving us all the consolation we had ordered for ourselves against it. Once we are aware of it, it becomes

reflecting on the eternal God, whose life has a genuine future.<sup>78</sup> The eternal God, with his future, accompanies and guarantees each future, which is part of each lifetime seen as a whole. Thus humanity must not live in either a mode of naïve unreflecting or anxious preoccupation with the uncertain future, but rather live in gratitude and responsibility in the allotted time that is given to each individual (III/2, 547- 550).

Barth, then, sees the problem of the fleeting now – variously experienced as remembering, perception, and anticipation – in light of God’s eternity. The problems associated with recollecting and forgetting the past and reflective and unreflective anticipation of the future are resolved by relating them to the simultaneity of past, present, and future in God’s eternal life. For Barth, this realization of God’s divine accompanying – with its genuine past, present and future - creates in the human subject the ability to see her life as a whole, to see it as an opportunity for covenantal fellowship with God, in gratitude and faithfulness. Like Augustine then, the problem of human temporality is resolved with reference to God’s eternity. For Barth, though, God’s eternity is analogously related to all modes of time and reconstitutes the subjective experience of time. Unlike Augustine, human temporality is not something to be escaped then, but the possibility of encounter with God.<sup>79</sup>

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depressingly clear that we have nothing else to look for but unending terror, even before the dreaded prospect actually comes, and we must order our lives accordingly” (III/2, 544).

<sup>78</sup> “But between Him and us there will be a connection, for in His eternity – it is the eternity of the living God – there is also a genuine Then ... But this eternal God will guarantee the reality of our future too (however long or short it may be), just as He guarantees it even now and has always done so. He will give it to us as the dimension of the life which He has appointed for us” (III/2, 545).

<sup>79</sup> See W.J. Torrance Kirby, “Praise as the Soul’s overcoming of Time in the *Confessions* of Augustine”, *Pro Ecclesia* 6: 3 (1997): 333-350.

### 3.3.2 *Jesus Christ and the Movement toward Death*

While Barth does not cite Heidegger in III/2, he was obviously familiar with his work - especially through his conversations with Bultmann<sup>80</sup> - and definitely takes up the philosopher's concern on the limited time of individuals. As Piotr Hoffman summarizes Heidegger: "Dasein's authenticity requires the lucid acceptance of one's own death, it is precisely because Dasein's totality can be revealed only in its being-toward-death."<sup>81</sup> Yet Barth's ontology is fundamentally different than his contemporary's and thus his answer to the problem of individual movement toward death is not the totalizing force of the movement toward death. Rather, the totalizing force of individual existence is the God who has reconciled humanity to himself in the cross of Jesus Christ. Individual death, in Barth's view, is reduced to a sign of the 'second death' or wrath of God. Thus death is not to be feared but to be met with confidence since God, who is the Lord of death, lovingly meets one at their end.<sup>82</sup> Barth continues his phenomenological and theological conversation. But instead of describing time from the transitory present, the focus

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<sup>80</sup> See Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*. Trans. John Bowden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 161.

<sup>81</sup> Piotr Hoffman, "Death, time, history: Division II of *Being and Time*", in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, 196.

<sup>82</sup> Barth's discussion here is not confined to phenomenological concerns but also with a theology of death. In the history of Christian thought there have been two main ideas concerning humanity and death. The first and most dominant, closely following Greek thought, is concerned with the immortality of the soul. Death in this view is the release of the immortal soul from the body. The second and more recently accepted is that humans are created with a finite boundary and death is natural (see Jüngel, *Death: the riddle and the mystery*. Translated by Iain and Ute Nicol [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974], 41 ff., and Bent Flemming Nielsen, "Time and Eternity", 13-14). Barth argues for the second option, that death is the natural end of human existence and there is no 'part' of the human person that exists subsequent to death. Barth does not indicate here how he understood the continuity of human existence after death. Fleeming Nielson suggests that for Barth an individual's time is preserved in God's eternity, though he is unsure if and how this relates with a temporal, future eschaton; see "Time and Eternity" 18-19. Barth seems to suggest such an 'intermediate preservation' of individual times in God's eternity until the final eschaton (III/3, 87 ff).



becomes on individual allotted time having a definite beginning and an ever-approaching and inevitable end.<sup>83</sup>

The last three subsections of §47 are concerned with this allotted time. The last two, 'Beginning Time' and 'Ending Time', will be the focus of more sustained attention. In 'Allotted Time,' the first subsection, Barth defends this form of time as the good and natural way in which God created human existence by rejecting unending duration in time and immortality. While humans, created in the image of God, are constituted to live in relation to God and fellow humanity, and thus ought to be given time to perfect these relations, this does not imply unending duration.<sup>84</sup> Barth first argues negatively that it is not necessarily the case that limitless duration would guarantee the perfection of humanity's relation to God and one another (III/2, 559-561ff). A long or limitless duration would only mean limitless opportunity, not fulfillment; The creature "would be condemned to perpetual wanting and asking and therefore dissatisfaction. Could there be any better picture of life in hell than enduring life in enduring time?" (III/2, 562).<sup>85</sup> Yet positively, the limits of one's life are placed there by God and are not abstract limits. That is, God is the neighbor on all sides (III/2, 562-66). And in this surrounding of humanity,

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<sup>83</sup> "His time is the allotted span, i.e., the limited space, which he needs for this fulfillment [of his life] and which is given him for this purpose. This span begins at a certain point, lasts for a certain period and finally comes to an end. Man is, therefore, in this span, and not before or after it. It is only in this way, as allotted time, what time is his time" (III/2, 554).

<sup>84</sup> "Even in the wildest perversions and distortions, it is human life, and has the determination to be lived for God and one's fellow-men. To be unfathomable and inexhaustible is proper to it, as its craving for duration is legitimate. It rightly protests against the fact that it has an allotted span of time, for if it is to fulfill its determination it would seem to need unending time" (III/2, 556). Or, "Life under the Word of God demands duration and therefore more than an allotted span. For it never seems as though it can have enough time to fulfill the determination which it is given under the Word of God, and every 'only,' every limit, can only mean a lack or non-fulfillment" (III/2, 557).

<sup>85</sup> "No infinity of space or everlasting time can achieve or even guarantee this negation [of everything which negates], this removal of restrictions, this realization, which consists in the perfection of the relationship to God and fellow-man which it aspires" (III/2, 561).

there is a possibility for a real encounter “in speech and action” (III/2, 565). Not only within one’s allotted time, but also outside of it:

There is no part of our time which is not as such also in His. It is, so to speak, embedded in His eternity. But as we are thus in God’s time, He limits ours. He appoints its beginning before which we were not, and its end after which we shall be no longer. And in this he is to us in a particular way the gracious God. This is shown in the fact that the very points where we emerge from non-existence and return to non-existence, we are confronted in a particular way by the gracious God. For at these points we are referred wholly and absolutely to the fact that He is our gracious God (III/2, 568).<sup>86</sup>

Thus the idea of allotted time, in contrast to an unending duration in time, is appropriate for the life of human beings. There is no guarantee that unending life would bring the result of proper relations with God and fellow humans. In fact, Barth argues, God gives humans an allotted time in order to respond to his gracious call.

Allotted time has a beginning and end. In terms of phenomenological description, because both the beginning and end of life point to one’s origin and return to non-being they create perpetual anxiety for the human subject, constantly relating one’s existence to non-existence. Given this plight, it is difficult to see how allotted time is a gift from God. As Barth suggests:

We have described our being in time as a flight from our non-being from which we come, a flight which is finally destined to be futile if we must ultimately die and again find ourselves confronted by non-being. Is there any other way of seeing and putting it? Obviously this is the only way we know of. But if our life is a flight, and a futile one at that; if it is a story of fear and failure; if it is therefore a twofold terror, how can it be the good creation of God? (III/2, 594).

Reflecting on the limitations, Barth argues, only leads one to conclude that life is a flight lived in fear, failure, and even terror.

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<sup>86</sup> Or: “We have been speaking of a God who is not without man or against him, but for him. He is the God who far from thinking it beneath Him made it His glory eternally to elect Himself for man and man for Himself. He is the eternal self-grounded and self-satisfying majesty, but in the full freedom and sovereignty of His work as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer addressed wholly to another, to man who cannot do anything for it, who cannot merit the divine address, or correspond to it, but can only receive it as a gift, the gift to which he owes everything” (III/2, 567).

While he admits that one's beginning is not as problematic as one's end, not casting the same shadow over the individual, there is still darkness and uncertainty concerning it.<sup>87</sup> In fact, Barth argues that uncertainty and non-being in relation to our beginning "carry and bring with us from our beginning a lurking terror which in virtue of the irreversible direction of our life and our time takes the opposite form of fear to our end, but which in both its latent and patent form is essentially one and the same fear of the term set to our life, of the allotment of a fixed span for our time" (III/2, 573).<sup>88</sup> Similar to his previous reflections on the past, the human response to the shadow of the past is often one of historical searching at both individual and collective levels.<sup>89</sup> Though Barth admits there are legitimate reasons for remembering, it can also be "a passionate attack on our allotted span of time" (III/2, 576). The answer for Barth to the shadow carried forward is once again found in the gracious God. "We certainly come from non-being, but we do not come from nothing. We do not come from an abyss which has spewed us out only to swallow us up again. God is not nothing nor chaos" (III/2, 576). The beginning of allotted time, then, is only problematic without knowledge that the

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<sup>87</sup> "Our beginning is indeed behind us and constantly recedes. . . . Yet it points to the same fact and confronts us with the same problem as our end: that our being is bordered by our non-being; that our non-being behind and before is a most terrible threat to our being; that we are menaced by approaching annihilation; and that our being thus seems to be a mere illusion and our life irretrievably forfeit" (III/2, 572).

<sup>88</sup> In connection with this, Barth has little time for some of the attempts to speculate on the origin of the soul and its beginning (the topic of a small print section, III/2, 573-574), but simply states that in "the terms of a more biblical view of man, there was a time when I myself as the soul of my body, I myself as the unity and totality of my psycho-somatic existence, did not yet exist, but I began to be" (III/2, 574).

<sup>89</sup> "He has an urge to carve out for himself living space and therefore time at the point where he was not. He is anxious to dispel the shadow which haunts him from the past, and makes good the deficiency under which he suffers from this quarter. He seeks light and fullness there too" (III/2, 575). Barth continues: "He cannot bear to think that this dimension of life never belonged to him. Therefore he cannot leave history alone. He cannot accept the fact that he comes from non-being. Therefore he fills the gap by plunging into it with his historical investigations and discoveries" (III/2, 576).

gracious God goes before and with each life.<sup>90</sup> Thus the shadow of non-being in the beginning is overcome with knowledge that the electing, perfect, triune God was before us.

The more pressing issue for Barth, however, is the movement toward death that monopolizes allotted time. Barth now asks the question of whether or not death is a natural and good end to human life as it is created and determined by God. The problem is first analyzed by phenomenological description and discussing pertinent biblical material. Through this, it is concluded that death as the end of human life seems unnatural and unsuitable for the creature made in the image of God. But after distinguishing between two views of death found in scripture (what Barth terms “death as a sign” and the “second” or “eternal” death), and relating the discussion to the cross, resurrection, and final return of Jesus Christ, Barth eventually affirms that death is the appropriate and good end for a human life.

Beginning with phenomenological reflection and description, Barth suggests death is more urgent than the beginning of one’s life for two basic reasons: first, life desires life, and second, each life moves forward toward death. Life itself is a phenomenon that seeks to survive, flourish, and reproduce itself. “And the real disquiet arising from the fact that our existence in time comes to an end consists in the fact that the point will come when, still alive and therefore still involved in that flight from non-existence, still hungering and thirsting after further life, we shall not be able to live any

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<sup>90</sup> “Before we were, this gracious God was our gracious God: the God who even when we were not was not without us but in all that He was Himself was for us; . . . for us the origin and fullness of all perfection. His inner life as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, His will and purpose in relation to heaven, earth, and ourselves, His already accomplished and uninterrupted work in execution of it – this was the content of the time before our time, the meaning of the pre-history before our history. Hence there is nothing mysterious or terrifying about the time before we were. It does not really entail any deficiency or shadow” (III/2, 577).

further” (III/2, 587). This forward movement and natural drive for life however is overridden with anxiety because of the inevitability of death. Our “life in time – irrespective of whether we are conscious of it – is in fact a time fraught with anxiety and care. It is overshadowed with death” (III/2, 588). Compounding this general experience of anxiety is religious guilt. If allotted time is created for fellowship with God and fellow humans, then it follows that humans fail terribly in this designation. Since this is the case, allotted time and its end in death can only mean accumulated guilt and judgment before God.<sup>91</sup> For these reasons, Barth leads his readers to think of death as unnatural and evil, especially in the face of God’s judgment.

He responds to the problem of death by arguing that individual death is a *sign* of God’s judgment, not the judgment itself. This is the core of Barth’s argument in this section. While the movement toward death brings the prospect of judgment, “there is a possibility of our being spared this death because Another has suffered it in His death for us” (III/2, 597). Barth argues that Jesus Christ took upon himself the ‘eternal judgment’ or the ‘second death’ on the cross in order that humanity would not have to suffer it.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> “With all our life up to this point, with our life as it is now concluded and a thing of the past, we shall meet Him and be wholly dependent upon Him. That we shall be no more will mean concretely that our past will be only one of total guilt and retrogression – one long failure. Can we doubt that for this reason death must inevitably seem to be negative and have only the character of an unqualified evil?” (III/2, 596). Or: “For when it meets us, as it undoubtedly does, it meets us as sinful and guilty men with whom God cannot finally do anything but whom He can only regret having made. For man has failed as His creature. He has not used the previous freedom in which he was privileged to exist before God. He has squandered it away in the most incredible manner. He can hope for nothing better than to be hewn down and cast into the fire” (III/2, 597).

<sup>92</sup> Barth writes: “The only point which has now to be stressed about the significance of this event is that by undergoing death in His person Jesus provided a total and conclusive revelation of its character. For He suffered death as the judgment of God. It would be out of place to say here that He did so as the sign of God’s judgment. Here, in the person of the Messiah, it is God Himself, His embodied grace and help, who is genuinely and definitively present, both as Judge and Judged. He judges as He created and established between Himself and man the justice which has to fall on man, so that he had to suffer what he had deserved – death as a consuming force, eternal torment and utter darkness. But He is also judged as, knowing neither sin nor guilt, He caused this judgment to fall on Himself in place of the many guilty sinners, so that it availed for them all, and the judgment suffered by Him was fulfilled on them in Him, and

Thus Jesus Christ, as fully God and fully human, is not only the judge but also the judged. Jesus Christ takes on the eternal judgment that humans deserve in light of their sin and guilt.<sup>93</sup> Death as the end of each individual life, as the sign of judgment, is to be distinguished from death as the judgment that Jesus Christ took upon himself. Death as the end of allotted time, according to Barth, is not the full judgment for which our sin and guilt calls.<sup>94</sup>

The term ‘second death’ (δεύτερος θάνατος), found in Rev. 20 vv. 6 and 14, refers to a “lake of fire” which is to consume Death, Hades, and those whose names are not found in the “book of life” (vv. 14-15). Augustine in the *City of God* (XXI), whose interpretation of hell has had a significant influence in western Christendom, takes this

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their dying no longer has to be this dying, the suffering of punishment which they have deserved, but only its sign” (III/2, 600, cf. 603).

<sup>93</sup> “Here the alienation from God becomes an annihilatingly painful existence in opposition to Him. Here being in death becomes punishment, torment, outer darkness, the worm, and all positively painful because the antithesis in which God here acts cannot be a natural confrontation, but must inevitably consist in the fact that infinite suffering is imposed upon the creature which God created and destined for Himself, when God reacted against this creature as it deserves. It is, of course, true that this man is the Son of God. In Him God Himself suffers what guilty man had to suffer by way of eternal punishment. This alone gives the suffering of this man its representative power. This is what makes it the power by which the world is reconciled to God” (III/2, 603-604).

<sup>94</sup> The idea of Jesus assuming the wrath of God on the cross has often been questioned in contemporary theology, especially in light of God’s love. David Lauber, however, correctly argues that the idea of Jesus Christ taking on the second or eternal death on the cross must be understood within the overall context of Barth’s doctrine of the atonement (David Lauber, *Barth on the Descent into Hell: God, Atonement and the Christian Life* [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004]). He notes that within the doctrine of God (CD II/1) God’s wrath is understood within the context of God’s love. The death of Jesus does not in some way appease an angry God, so that this death turns God from wrath to favour. Rather, “God’s love is the source of the reconciling significance of Christ’s death” (ibid., 14, see 12 ff). Jesus Christ suffers the wrath and judgment of God that is rightfully due sinful humanity: “The love of God, when faced with resistance by sinful humanity, takes the form of wrath in order to deal effectively with this resistance, which results in the removal of humanity from its miserable condition” (ibid., 17). For humanity this means that “Jesus Christ is our reconciliation and we are reconciled to God in Christ through our participation in and with Christ” (ibid., 20). Here in CD III/2, the wrath of God on the cross is described as this second death. Lauber explains the significance of this for Barth: “By enduring death as the full weight of God’s judgment – death as the ‘second death’ – Jesus Christ spares humanity from the necessity of having to suffer the ‘second death’. God’s act of judgment in the death of Jesus Christ is God’s act of salvation of humanity. Death as the ‘second death’, ‘eternal corruption’, and ‘eternal punishment’ has been relegated to the past through the death of Jesus Christ” (ibid., 26). By taking on this second death, which is the judgment or wrath of God on sinful humanity, individual human death is only a sign of God’s judgment, it is not the fullness of death as the judgment of God.

reference literally to refer to a description of an eternal and everlasting punishment.<sup>95</sup> Yet Barth suggests the second death to be something that Christ takes upon himself. Thus he maintains the meaning of the biblical passage only in the sense that there is an ultimate judgment of God on death and humanity, but states the cross is the place of this and not an end-time event. Barth's view of individual judgment in the eschaton is a purifying judgment.<sup>96</sup>

As a sign of judgment, however, individual death still carries meaning. Barth makes three points in this connection. First, death exceeds, overshadows, and calls into question human greatness and grandeur. There is no one exempt from death. Even the incarnate Son of God is not exempt from the end of his allotted time (III/2, 601-602). Second, the death to which each individual moves implies the threat of eternal corruption and judgment (III/2, 602-604). Though no human is to experience the judgment of the second death, the end of each is a sign that points to our guilt and to the cross. Third, "death is the goal which is the appropriate reward for the life of man as it is actually lived" (III/2, 604). Humanity's estimation of itself cannot come from a measuring stick

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<sup>95</sup> For a comparison of four views on hell and eternal life (eternal punishment, universalism, annihilationism, and reverent agnosticism), see Hunsinger, "Hellfire and Damnation: Four Ancient and Modern Views" in *Disruptive Grace*, 226-249. He describes Barth's view under reverent agnosticism. That is, Barth refuses to choose between "all are saved" and "not all are saved", 242 ff. On Augustine's view see 229 ff.

<sup>96</sup> See Hunsinger, "Hellfire and Damnation", 246 ff. For a brief statement of this see Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*. Translated by G. T. Thompson (New York: Harper & Row, 1959): 134-136. For example: "In the biblical world of thought the judge is not primarily the one who rewards some and punishes the others; he is the man who creates order and restores what has been destroyed. We may go to meet this judge, this restoration or, better, the revelation of this restoration with unconditioned confidence, because we come from His revelation" (*Dogmatics in Outline*, 135).

Another closely connected issue that Barth avoids in this section is the intermediate state. Fleeming Nielson suggests that for Barth an individual's time is preserved in God's eternity, though he is unsure if and how this relates with a temporal, future eschaton; see "Time and Eternity" 18-19. Barth seems to suggest such an 'intermediate preservation' of individual times in God's eternity though this is not fully expounded in relation to the final eschaton (III/3, 87 ff). It is clear that Barth thought of the final eschaton as a future event with the return of Jesus Christ. It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that the continuity of human existence after death is not based on the immortality of the soul but the preservation of 'our time' in God's eternity until its final judgment and restoration in the eschaton. The nature of this preservation until the eschaton is not expounded, thus it is unclear if Barth had some sort of universal purgatory in mind.

based on experience and reflection, no matter how pessimistic or optimistic, for the cross implies that humanity is guilty of sin.<sup>97</sup> In these three negative points, death is nevertheless only a *threat* to human existence.

After reflecting on the cross, Barth interprets the allotted end with reference to the resurrection and second coming – the heavenly session being conspicuously absent. With the resurrection of Jesus he argues there is a relativization of death.<sup>98</sup> The Christian community, which lives in the light of the cross and resurrection, is aware that it is living in the last days, awaiting the final and general revelation of Jesus Christ (III/2, 622).<sup>99</sup> Believers await this final and general revelation that will also be their own glorification (III/2, 623).<sup>100</sup> What is more, echoing an earlier section, Barth reasons that if Jesus Christ has accomplished salvation for humanity by taking on death in its different forms and believers await their eschatological glorification, then the completion of his work in

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<sup>97</sup> Barth argues that the sinfulness of humanity is not to be measured by any other law, since God's verdict on human sin is presented in the cross. In connection to this, it is interesting to note that Barth makes his only references to Martin Heidegger and John Paul Sartre in connection with this discussion of law, Jewish or otherwise, as a yardstick to measure humanity's sin. The point is that existentialism is merely another attempt to define human fallenness apart from the revelation of the gospel and its definition of sin (III/2, 605).

<sup>98</sup> "Even the sentence of death which seems to have been already pronounced serves only to drive the Christian as never before to trust and hope in God as the One who raises the dead. The question now is not where God is, but what has become of the victory and power of death (I Cor. 15: 55). Man can now look back and down, not upon a past life overcome by death, but upon defeated death itself. Hence these two elements, life (incessantly hastening to its end) and death (I Cor. 3:22; Rom 8:38) are no longer contrasted as in the OT. They are placed alongside one another as two neutral possibilities and surveyed from a higher standpoint (Rom. 8:38)" (III/2, 620).

<sup>99</sup> "What is to happen in time as the meaning of the cosmos existing in time has happened in this event. Those who believe in Jesus know that they – and not they only but all other men as well, though they are still unaware of the fact – live in the last day, and no longer have before them any other time but the time of this last day" (III/2, 622).

<sup>100</sup> Barth makes the connection between the cross, resurrection and second coming in the following way. The *cross* is the "event in which man's sin and guilt and consequent death are abolished and time is fulfilled", while the *resurrection* is the "preliminary indication of this event establishing faith in Jesus as the Deliver from death" (III/2, 623). There is also a relationship between the *resurrection* of Jesus as "the preliminary indication inaugurating the last time and establishing the Church and its mission and His *return in glory* as the conclusive, general and definitive revelation of the event" (ibid.). The faith of humanity in response to the being and work of Jesus Christ means the relativization of death and the ability to look down and back to it; not forward in fear. Thus humanity, as it is awakened to faith in Jesus Christ, is gathered around him and looks upon death without fear (III/2, 620 ff., cf. 605ff).



humanity requires finitude for this to be effective. An infinite temporal existence for humanity could only mean that humanity “should only be able to sin infinitely and even quantitatively multiply our guilt on an infinite scale” (III/2, 631). For faith in Jesus Christ to take effect human life must end, only then could one throw oneself “conclusively and definitively and exclusively on God and therefore concretely on Jesus Christ as our deliverer from the wrathful judgment of the second death” (III/2, 630). Thus to “belong to Him we must be finite and not infinite. Finitude, then, is not intrinsically negative and evil. There is no reason why it should not be an anthropological necessity, a determination of true and natural man” (III/2, 631).<sup>101</sup> For these various reasons, death as the end of human life and death as the punishment of God are not to be equated. Death as the end of human life can be viewed as a natural end created by God (III/2, 628-30).

Barth begins with the phenomenological description, suggesting that life desires life and that death seems to be the unwelcome end to human existence. Jesus Christ however has taken on the second death and thus the death of the individual is relativized.<sup>102</sup> Those who live by faith in the Christian community look back and down

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<sup>101</sup> Similarly, Barth makes the point that God confronts the individual in death (III/2, 607 ff). Even death itself is under divine control, it is a “servant” or appointed an “office” which is controlled by God, who is Lord of Death (III/2, 608-609). Thus, it must be concluded that humanity is not really to fear death, “but only God” (III/2, 610). Yet the Lord of Death is also the gracious God who turns to sinful humanity in the revelation and work of Jesus Christ.

<sup>102</sup> For a discussion of death deeply influenced by Barth (as well as Jüngel and Moltmann) and yet intersecting with personal experience, see Alan E. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001), 404-435. Though instead of viewing death twofold, Lewis takes up death in three ways: death as the appropriate end of life (406-416), death as a demonic force (416- 426), and death as defeated (426 –435). See as well Jüngel, who takes up different meanings of death including natural death, death as a curse, and the second death. He eschews any reference to the second or eternal death if it means an everlasting punishment and suffering of individuals, *Death*, 88-94. For a thorough critique of Lewis’ work, especially in relation to immutability and impassibility, see Thomas Weinandy, “Easter Saturday and the Suffering of God: The Theology of Alan E. Lewis”, *IJST* 5:1 (March 2003): 62-76. For Weinandy’s fuller discussion of impassibility see his *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000).

More recently, Balthasar’s view of Holy Saturday has come under critique. Alyssa Pitstick argues that Balthasar consciously breaks with the Catholic tradition when he interprets Holy Saturday in terms of the Son suffering further judgement. On this, see the lively discussion between her and Edward Oaks,

on death because its power has been defeated in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But they also look forward, because the resurrection points to the second coming and the final fulfillment in the eschaton. This relativization of death means that death in the negative sense and death as a natural phenomenon are not identical. In fact, Barth argues, the end of human life provides one the opportunity to throw oneself on the grace of God. Given the revelation of the eternal God in time and history, one's life is not to be overshadowed and defined by the movement toward death. Rather, life provides an opportunity to know and encounter the loving God. This will become clearer in the next two chapters.

The experience that fills and constitutes fallen time, whether the anxiety of the transitory present or the fear in the movement toward death, is merely a penultimate description. Anxiety and fear ought to be overcome in light of the presence and activity of the eternal God. In the first case, God is present in all three modes of past, present, and future; while in the second, the Christian believer realizes there is no need to fear death at the end of allotted time. Death is merely a sign of God's true judgment enacted on the cross. Barth answers phenomenological problems of time, from both the inside and outside, with reference to 'totalizing force' of God's eternal being and activity. Allotted time for Barth is not a problem, but is the opportunity and possibility to encounter the triune God in covenantal partnership. This is why God preserves the creature in fatherly goodness and patience even in their fallen time.

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"Balthasar, Hell, and Heresy: An Exchange", *First Things* 168 (December 2006): 25-32; and "More on Balthasar, Hell, and Heresy", *First Things* 169 (January 2007): 16-19. For Pitstick's fuller argument see *Light in Darkness: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ's Descent into Hell* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). It cannot be doubted that Balthasar departs from the traditional Catholic doctrine. The question remains however what type of status does the descent have and does this constitute heresy if there is less uniformity of the doctrine in the tradition than Pitstick assumes. For a discussion along these lines, see Paul J. Griffiths, "Is there a Doctrine of the Descent into Hell?", *Pro Ecclesia* 17:3: 257-180.

### 3.4. Fulfilled or Gracious Time

Humanity in fallen time is not lost to the eternal God however, for the creature is still an object of God's love. Besides created and fallen time, then, in III/1 Barth offers the third category of fulfilled or gracious time. This is time in a renewed fellowship with the creator. With this third form Barth attempts to describe how God in his gracious movement retrieves the purpose of created time and thereby heals the fallen time of humanity. The forms of time, then, are filled anew with the gracious activity of the triune God, which not only includes the work of the Son in reconciliation but human participation by faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. Though fulfilled time will be analyzed more thoroughly in the next two chapters, a brief description of what Barth means by this is given here.

Gracious time or fulfilled time is primarily the time of Jesus Christ, and secondarily the time of Israel and the church. All time moves to and from the time of Jesus Christ. Barth expresses his view both in formal and analytical terms as well as in material and historical ones. The formal explanation, for example, is found in the following statement on the contemporaneity of Jesus Christ:

The incarnate Word of God *is*. But this means that it was and will be. But again it was never "not yet," and it will never be "no more." On the contrary, it is "now" even as it is "once" (and to that extent "no more"); and it is also "now" even as it is "then" (and to that extent "not yet"). It is a perfect temporal present, and for that reason a perfect temporal past and future. It enters fully into the succession and separation of the times which together constitute time, and transforms this succession and separation into full contemporaneity (III/1, 73-74).

Barth holds together here not only the language of eternity and time but also the Chalcedonian Christology of *vere Deus* and *vere homo*. As fully God, Jesus Christ participates in the eternity of God. As examined in the first chapter, the *simul* of eternity was interpreted to mean not only that there is no loss or division of the three modes in

God's eternity but that all futures are anticipated by, all pasts are recapitulated in, and all presents are synchronic with eternity. In this first sense fulfilled time is contemporary with all human time since it is anticipated, recapitulated, and synchronic with all time. Thus the time of Jesus Christ was never "not yet" and it will never be "no more" because of its participation in divine anticipation, recapitulation, and synchronicity. As fully human, Jesus Christ also participates in human temporality. This means that fulfilled time must have the succession of past, present and future that is fundamental for created time. Thus while it is "now", it was also "once" or "then" as it is also "not yet". There was a time when the lifetime of Jesus Christ was not yet, and with his death, there was a time when it was no more. Thus Jesus Christ participates in human temporality.

Yet the time of Jesus Christ ruptures the usual structure of allotted time; its "not yet" was anticipated in God's eternal election of Jesus Christ, and its "no more" is fundamentally qualified in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Thus Jesus Christ as the resurrected and ascended Lord both participates in and transforms human temporality. In his contemporary "now" there is succession, but it will not finally pass away since it also participates in eternity.

Gracious time is also expressed using historical narrative, with the time of Jesus Christ as the centre of this narrative. "Real time, in this case, is primarily the life-time of Jesus Christ, the turning point, the transition, the decision which were accomplished in His death and resurrection; together with the time preceding and following this event in the history of Israel and the existence of the Christian Church" (III/1, 76). Here Barth does not characterize the time of Israel as that of expectation, as he does earlier (I/2, 70 ff.), though he does give a description of believer's participation in fulfilled time:

And so He returns it to us in order that we might have it again “our time,” the time of grace addressed to us, even when we had lost it as “our” time, the time of the sin committed by us. He thus invites us in faith in Him to become contemporaries of genuine time, so that in Him and by Him we, too, have real time. . . . Really to have time is to be in Him and with Him, in virtue of our participation in His present, on the road from this past into this future. Really to have time is – *simul peccator et iustus* – to live in this transition (*transitus*), and to go with Him from the one to the other. This real time which we are privileged to have in and with Jesus Christ is God’s time of grace – the time of the old and new covenants (III/1, 74).

With the awakening of faith, then, believers participate in fulfilled time and live in the transition from fallen time to fulfilled time. It is a transition that is only complete in the eschaton, but it is still a true participation by faith in the contemporaneity with Jesus Christ.<sup>103</sup>

### 3.5. Conclusion

While it was once commonplace to suggest that Barth leaves no room for human temporality and history, given his unrelenting focus on God’s life and revelation,<sup>104</sup> it has been demonstrated that this is not the case. Barth’s theology of the first article in fact includes a complex understanding of time that takes great care to protect the reality, necessity, and appropriateness of human time. In the first place, time is a good creation of the Father intended for covenantal partnership. This includes time as the succession of past, present, and future, and allotted time. There are even hints that Barth understood

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<sup>103</sup> Barth’s description here of human participation in gracious time is a nascent form of what will be later described as ecclesial time. Two important elements of ecclesial time are mentioned. First, the basis of ecclesial time is the fulfilled time of Jesus Christ. Barth eventually develops this into the conception of the threefold *parousia* of Jesus Christ. The first *parousia* of Jesus Christ during the forty days and the final appearance in the eschaton are intermitted by the ascension time. This is the time of the Church, the time between the times. Second, participation in fulfilled time is attained by faith in Jesus Christ. To participate in his time is a matter of being awakened to Christian faith. Missing, however, is the activity of the Holy Spirit in this participation. In volume IV Barth will make it clear that the time of the Christian church is the work of the Holy Spirit in gathering, upbuilding, and sending the Christian community.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Roberts makes the strongest conclusions in this regard, “Barth’s Doctrine of Time”, 143-146; though Brandenburg provides a similar conclusion, “Der Zeit – und Geschichtsbegriff bei Karl Barth,” 358.

human temporality within the context of the rest of creation, though this is not thoroughly fleshed out. Time created is also time preserved. And so in the doctrine of providence Barth takes care to articulate God's preserving of time in order that covenantal activity may take place. The creation and preservation of time correspond to the Father's eternal role in the divine life and reflect his goodness and patience. The human creature rejects the true purpose of time, however, and the forms of time are filled anew with his sinful activity. The experience of the present 'now' is the source of anxiety rather than opportunity, and the movement toward death creates fear rather than hope and promise for eternal life. But even in fallen time the eternal God is present and active, and so the succession of time can be experienced as an opportunity and the end of allotted time with hope. But this is only possible because God does not leave humanity alone in its fallen time. Following created time and its preservation by the Father is the gracious response of another time. The being and activity of God in response to fallen time retrieves the purpose of created time and heals fallen time in the expecting time of Israel, the fulfilled time of Jesus Christ, and the responding time of the Church. This gracious time is the 'time of' renewed communion and the fulfilling of God's purposes for temporality itself. Barth's focus on Jesus Christ fulfilling time and the human response enabled by the Spirit in ecclesial time will be the foci of the next two chapters.

## Chapter Four

### *Anticipatio et Recapitulatio: Christology and Time*

Evidence of Barth's christocentrism abounds in his discussions of time. He makes some of the following claims concerning Jesus Christ and time, for example: "The *raison d'être* of all time, both past and future, is that there should be this fulfillment at this particular time" (III/2, 459); Jesus Christ is the "Contemporary of all men" (III/2, 440); and past, present, and future are not "an absolute barrier" but "for Him in His time a gateway" (III/2, 464). It is quite clear that Christology is central for Barth's view of the eternity-time relation, though it is less clear whether or not it can be coherently understood and what implications flow from it. This chapter suggests that Barth does have a coherent view of Christology and time, even if it is at times opaque, though there are features of his exposition that may be questioned.

An explication of Barth's view of Christology and time begins however not with the birth of Jesus Christ in first-century Palestine but in the pretemporal triune life and the election of the Son to become incarnate in history. This election of his history is the internal basis of created time itself, and the purpose and meaning of the history of Israel. Thus, both creation history and the history of Israel move toward the fulfillment of time in Jesus of Nazareth. But the fulfilling of time by the God-man also includes the rupturing of allotted time in Jesus' resurrection and ascension. That is, the life of Jesus Christ, with its own movement toward death, substantially alters human temporality because his time does not end with death but continues from the resurrection. In fact, his continuing history gives direction and meaning to not only the time of the Christian

community and individual believers, but to history itself on the way to the eschaton. For Barth, then, Jesus-history is the concern of pretemporality, supratemporality, and posttemporality.<sup>1</sup> To put it otherwise, the history of Jesus Christ is God's one event of reconciliation by which all other times and history are conditioned and constituted.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that the times of nations and individuals, and even creation itself, lose their particularity, but that the particular history of the God-man is the presupposition and meaning of all other times. They exist for his time.

Barth's complex discussions incorporate the doctrines of the Trinity and election, definitions of eternity, Chalcedonian ontology, the NT narrative, and the forms of time already examined, however. This is not to mention that the passages discussing Christology and time have their own distinct purposes, as they are found in the doctrines of creation and reconciliation. Interpreting Christology and time, then, is no simple task. In order to distil a coherent interpretation from the pertinent sections of *CD* III and IV, the categories of *anticipation* and *recapitulation* will be employed. Similar to the use of

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<sup>1</sup> The term Jesus-history is used by Douglas Farrow in *Ascension and Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, 6) as shorthand for the life and work of Christ, considered both in its ontological integrity as the expression of his person and in its functional, episodic diversity. The term will be used in a similar way here, without prejudice to the issue of Farrow's differences from Barth (*ibid.*, 241ff.). The term 'God-man' is also used in the present work, in a fully Chalcedonian sense, Barth's concern about the use and abuse of this term notwithstanding (*CD* IV/2, 115).

<sup>2</sup> On the unity of the various works of God in Barth, Hunsinger writes the following while reflecting on the eschatological function of the Spirit: "But in this consummation it will not be another work than it was as the finished work of Jesus Christ for our sakes on the cross, nor will it be another work than it is in our reception of it here and now by the Spirit, nor again will it be another work than it already has been from before the foundation of the world in God's pretemporal decision of election. The final consummation toward which this work is moving; the cross on which it was accomplished; the sending of the Spirit through which it is contemporized, revealed, and imparted here and now; the primordial decision of election by which it is ground in eternity – all these are not to be set along one another, Barth proposes, as though they were separate events that are only externally or narratively connected. They are rather to be seen as distinctive and irreplaceable variations of one and the same event", "The Mediator of Communion", in *Disruptive Grace*, 173. See, as well, Bruce McCormack, "Justitia aliena: Karl Barth in Conversation with the Evangelical Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness" in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*. Ed. Bruce McCormack (Grand Rapids and Edinburgh: Baker Academic and Rutherford House, 2006): 181-182.



anticipation in the discussion of *simul*, this refers to the anticipation of the Christological fulfillment of time in pretemporal election, created time, and the history of Israel. The doctrine of ἀνακεφαλαίωσις or *recapitulatio*, which has its origin in Paul and was used more systematically by Irenaeus, refers to both the retrieving and redirecting of time. Jesus-history retrieves the original intent of created time – that is, proper covenantal relations - and in so doing heals fallen time. But his filling of time is not static; Jesus-history continues in the flow of time and history on the way to the eschaton. In fact, the movement of Jesus Christ redirects all time and history toward their eschatological completion. The various episodes of Jesus-history are included in this redirecting: the resurrection and forty days, the ascension and heavenly session, and his return in the eschaton.

The Son's particular 'filling' of time then includes this retrieval and redirecting activity. His time, moreover, not only presupposes the creation and preserving of time by the Father, but is also the answer to fallen time and the basis of ecclesial time. Thus Barth's christological reading of time must be considered within the full breadth of the analogy between eternity and time. For Barth, because the eternal Son (in his sonship, *filiatio*) is the intra-divine basis of "manifestation" and "revelation" (I/1, 363) and following this is elected to be incarnate, he takes up human temporality in the incarnation. The fulfilling of time by the Son is analogous to his eternal role within the divine life and a result of his eternal election. Since he is begotten by the Father, and with the Father spirates the Spirit, he is sent into time and subsequently sends the Spirit to awaken believers to his contemporaneity.

#### 4.1. Anticipation

Viewed under the first theme of this interpretation, the fulfilled time of Jesus Christ was anticipated in the pretemporal election of the Son to become incarnate. And just as the covenant is the internal basis of creation, so the time of Jesus Christ is the prototype of created time and the purpose and meaning of the history of Israel. In places, Barth even views the pre-resurrected life of Jesus as anticipating his fulfilling of time beginning in the resurrection. The fulfilling of time by the Son is anticipated in these various other times. “Time may seem to move into the void but it is actually moving towards this event” (III/2, 459). This is evident in various discussions of *CD* III/1 and III/2.

As noted in the last chapter, given Barth’s view of election in *CD* II/2, he can state that God creates because of the election of the Son.<sup>3</sup> In a sense, this eternal decree and will before creation compels God to create.<sup>4</sup> This is reflected in Barth’s view that gracious or fulfilled time is the prototype and ground of created time. Just as the incarnation is not primarily a response to human sin but of God’s will for fellowship with humanity, so gracious time is not merely a response to fallen time but the goal of created time itself. Barth reasons the following in *CD* III/1:

If it is true that the world and man are created in Jesus Christ, i.e., for His sake and for Him, in actualization of the compassion in which from all eternity God turned to the creature in the person of His Son bearing and presenting it, then creation does not precede reconciliation but follows it. . . . In this case, too, the first and genuine time which is the prototype of time is not the time of creation but that of the reconciliation for which the world and man were created in the will and by the operation of God (III/1, 76).

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<sup>3</sup> “In respect of His Son who was to become man and the Bearer of human sin, God loved man and man’s whole world from all eternity, even before it was created, and in and in spite of its absolute lowliness and non-godliness, indeed its anti-godliness. He created it because He loved it in His Son who because of its transgressions stood before Him eternally as the Rejected and Crucified” (III/1, 50-51).

<sup>4</sup> See III/1, 18 and 56.

Therefore, while created time was first in the sequence of times actualized by God, it was not first in the eternal determination of God's will. The time of grace, centred on the incarnation, is first in God's eternal decision.

This is more fully developed in III/2, § 47.1 "Jesus, Lord of Time." But first a word on the context of III/2 would be helpful since it provides substantial material for this chapter. In this important subsection Barth is seeking to ground the reality of human temporality – defined both as the flow of past, present, and future, and allotted time – in the time and history of Jesus Christ. The basic purpose is to set the temporal *Existenzform* of the creature on christological moorings, which follows the basic method of his anthropology. Barth argues that if Jesus Christ participates in these forms of temporality then their reality is established and they can be viewed as a good gift of the Creator.<sup>5</sup> Giving this claim theological force, moreover, is Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and humanity. The human creature was created in time to live out its existence in the twofold and reciprocal relation with God and other humans. Jesus Christ lives out this twofold relation, but as *vere Deus* and *vere homo* he is the true representative of God to humanity and humanity to God (III/2, 438 ff). The being and activity of the Son incarnate thus fills anew created temporality even while participating in God's eternity. In expounding this, § 47.1 is divided into two basic sections, Jesus Christ in relation to time from the 'outside' (allotted time) (III/2, 439 ff) and from the 'inside' (the experience of past, present, and future) (III/2, 466 ff). The discussion of Jesus Christ and allotted time is further divided into the first history of Jesus Christ, from his birth to death (III/2, 440-

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<sup>5</sup> Earlier in the *Dogmatics* Barth hesitates to incorporate non-theological concepts of time (I/2, 45 ff, especially the small print sections). The discussion of III/2 is to some extent, then, a countermand to the earlier discussions, though it could be argued that the *theological* divisions of time in III/2 are consistent developments of I/2.

41), and the second history of Jesus Christ, his subsequent history following the resurrection (III/2, 441 ff). Following this, Jesus Christ in relation to present, past, and future is expounded (III/2, 466) following the order of Rev. 1:8: “I am the Alpha and the Omega . . . who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”<sup>6</sup> It is within the discussion of Jesus and the past that anticipation is made clear.

Barth articulates his reflection on Jesus and the past from the perspective of the NT community during Easter-time, the forty days. He looks back to the pre-Easter history of Jesus, the history of Israel, initial creation, and the pretemporal eternity of God. To reverse the order, fulfilled time is anticipated in the following modes: it was elected in pretemporal eternity, was the internal basis of created time, expected and prefigured in Israel, and began, albeit hidden, with Jesus’ incarnation and lifetime.

Barth first takes up the pre-Easter or first history of Jesus: his death on the cross, the parting from his disciples, his going up to Jerusalem, the journey into Galilee, words and deeds during his lifetime, and a few glimpses from his infancy and boyhood. The fulfillment of time secretly begins with the life of Jesus, “the great dividing line is secretly but very really drawn which marks off the new age from the old. Here there lives and moves and acts and suffers the Lord who reveals Himself as such at the resurrection, and then in the power of this revelation builds, maintains and rules his community until the new age is consummated” (III/2, 474). The lifetime of Jesus both inaugurates and anticipates the christologically filling and fulfillment of time. In a fine print section Barth discusses the transfiguration, baptism, and infancy narratives, describing them as

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<sup>6</sup> The three divisions of the main text end with a reference to Rev 1:8 (III/2, 468, 478, and 493).

anticipating the time of Easter, just as Easter anticipates the final *parousia* (III/2, 478).<sup>7</sup>

In the pre-Easter lifetime of Jesus the fullness of time is present, though concealed, awaiting the second history of Jesus Christ beginning with the resurrection.

Barth gazes further back from the forty days to the history of Israel. For the “appearance of the man Jesus from 1 to 30 A.D. is not to be taken as an arbitrary intervention of God” (III/2, 475). Jesus-history was expected and prefigured in the history of Israel, and is thus its fulfillment.<sup>8</sup> To think of the relationship in a reverse manner, the time of Israel moves toward the time of Jesus Christ. “Hence, although in and of itself this time was not His time, in virtue of its content as the history in which He was prefigured and expected it was His time. He was the Lord of this history too, because He was the goal and meaning of this time before” (III/2, 476).<sup>9</sup> Later in the section, when discussing the second history of Jesus Christ, Barth reflects on the biblical idea of “appointed times” (καιροὶ ἱδίοι, Titus 1:3) found in the OT; sabbatical year, jubilee year,

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<sup>7</sup> Describing the function of the transfiguration, Barth states “its purpose in the pre-Easter period is obviously to demonstrate that even in this time, although in concealment, He was actually and properly the One He was revealed to be in His resurrection. And even this time was not without transitory indications of His true and proper being” (ibid., 478). Both the baptism and infancy narratives, as well, anticipate who Jesus *is*, even before he completes his work (ibid., 479-480). Barth summarizes: “And thus the way in which the Gospels look back to this beginning shows the height from which the forward-looking apostolic Church descends. It descends indeed from the mount of transfiguration. It has not created its ‘Christ of today.’ But as He was the same yesterday, revealed by the angels at His birth, confirmed by a voice from heaven on the banks of the Jordan, and transfigured on the mount, He himself has created the church” (III/2, 480).

<sup>8</sup> “The apostolic community of Jews and Gentiles regarded itself as the people of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob now come to its promised goal. The Lord Christ was for it the Messiah to whom the Old Testament had pointed forward, the Son of Man and the Servant of God. His teaching was the authoritative exposition of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms of Israel. His cross was the confirmation of Israel’s faithlessness and even the greater faithfulness with which God had called and led the fathers. The acts of Jesus, and His resurrection as the crown of all His acts, was the disclosure of revelation of the reality, so long concealed, of the covenant between God and his people” (III/2, 475). For Barth, some of the NT evidence for this includes the old man Simeon holding the baby Jesus and declaring he had seen Israel’s salvation (Luke 2:30 ff). He also points out various references in Paul and the Gospels (III/2, 481).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the “Time of expectation” in I/2, 70 ff.

and the weekly Sabbath.<sup>10</sup> The most important of the OT appointed times, the weekly Sabbath, is an appointed time to share in God's freedom, festivity, and joy as reflected in the Sabbath of Genesis 1.<sup>11</sup> Yet for Barth, the Sabbath and the other appointed times point to the greater fulfillment in Jesus Christ.<sup>12</sup> While the Israelites did not see this fulfillment, the apostolic church did in Jesus-history (III/2, 458).

Next, Barth relates Jesus Christ to the beginning of time itself in the act of creation and primal history. This relation was already encountered in the discussion of created, fallen, and fulfilled time above. Based on the relation of covenant and creation, he states that the New Testament community "saw in the man Jesus, prophetically prefigured and expected in Israel, and finally appearing in His own time, the real object of God's foresight and foreordination in the creation and ordering of reality distinct from Himself" (III/2, 476-477).<sup>13</sup> In connection with this, Barth insists that the *logos* or Son of God is not to be thought of in abstraction from Jesus of Nazareth, thus reaffirming his rejection of an abstract *logos asarkos*.<sup>14</sup> One is not to think of the eternal Son apart from

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<sup>10</sup> He defines appointed times as "the times which God has adopted for His purpose and therefore made his own" (III/2, 456). Lying behind this, as Barth admits a few pages later, is a view of time as an empty vessel needing to be filled. Time is "empty in both the negative and positive sense: empty of this content and empty for this content" (III/2, 461). This is commensurate with the examination of the last two chapters in which time as the form of existence of the human creature is created in order to be filled with the encounter with God and with other humans.

<sup>11</sup> "Man now has time as well, the time of life. And primarily, and not just conclusively, it is this time, the day of the Lord, and therefore the time to be a witness of God's completion of His work and His rest, sharing in His Sabbath freedom, Sabbath festivity and Sabbath joy" (ibid).

<sup>12</sup> The "first creation saga points clearly and unmistakably to the fact that the created time series is to include a special time of the salvation planned by God for the whole of His creation" (III/2, 458).

<sup>13</sup> He explains his logic in the following: "If ... Jesus is the One who was to come as the fulfilled reality of the covenant, is it speculation to say that even the time of creation was His time? To the extent that it was the time when the Creator began to execute His will, it too was His time; the time when He was the primary, proper object of this divine will, foreseen and foreordained in the creation of all things" (III/2, 477).

<sup>14</sup> Barth reflects on the following passages: John 1:1, 1 John 1:1; 2:13 f; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15-17; 2:10; Heb 1:2; 1:10; and Rev. 3:14. As he explains: "the whole wisdom and power of the Creator at the beginning of all being were concretely the power and wisdom which appeared and were revealed in the man Jesus: that He was the purpose and ground of the divine creative action at the beginning of all times. It was in this way, not abstractly in His Son, but concretely in the giving of His only Son, in the unity of His Son with the

the *incarnandus* and from fulfilled time.<sup>15</sup> The time of Jesus Christ is anticipated then as the presupposition and goal of created time and creation history.

Barth completes the gaze back with pretemporal eternity. Here he simply argues that just as the fulfillment of time was concealed in his lifetime, expected in the time of Israel, the internal basis of creation, so too “He had been in the counsel of God before creation and therefore before all time” (III/2, 477). He rhetorically asks, “How can it be denied that in God’s free plan and resolve He was before the beginning of time and all things, and therefore that He was really, supremely and fully, that He divinely was?” (ibid.). In the plan and purpose of God’s pretemporality, in the commission of the Father and the obedience of the Son, the fulfilled time of Jesus Christ was thus anticipated.<sup>16</sup> In explaining this, Barth carefully protects both the anticipation of Jesus-history in pretemporal eternity and its historical actuality and particularity in time. First, based on the *simul* of past, present and future,<sup>17</sup> Barth states that the “man Jesus is in this genuine

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Son of Man Jesus of Nazareth (Jn. 3:16), that God willed to demonstrate His love to the world, having already loved it in creating it” (III/2, 483).

<sup>15</sup> Barth’s view of the *logos asarkos* was discussed above in Chapter Three. Although Barth’s caution on the use of the *logos asarkos* is important, it was still asked if Barth could have given a fuller account of the Son’s agency in the initial creation. In this way, Barth’s view is important critically, yet less developed constructively.

<sup>16</sup> *CD* II/1 was published in 1940, a few years after Barth heard the decisive paper by Pierre Maury in June 1936 in Geneva, and thus bears hints of what was to come in II/2. Though the important exposition of eternal election is found of course in *CD* II/2, elements of it also occur in II/1 in discussing God’s pretemporality, though without the focus on double predestination. For example: “In this pure divine time there took place that free display of the divine grace and mercy and patience, that free resolve to which time owes its existence, its content and its goal. The name in which this is manifested and known to us is Jesus Christ. To say that everything is predestined, that everything comes from God’s free, eternal love which penetrates and rules time from eternity, is just the same as to say simply that everything is determined in Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ is before all time, and therefore eternally the Son and the Word of God, God himself in His turning to the world, the sum and substance of God in so far as God chose to create and give time, to take time to Himself, and finally to fix for time its end and goal in His eternal hereafter. In this turning to the world, and with it to a time distinct from His eternity, this God, Yahweh Sabaoth, is identical with Jesus Christ” (II/1, 622). On Maury’s influence on Barth’s doctrine of election see McCormack, *Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic*, 455 ff.

<sup>17</sup> “This eternity included not only the present and future, but also the past. God’s eternity does not invalidate past, present and future, and therefore time; it legitimates them. In it they have their origin and true character. In it yesterday, today and tomorrow are one, and in their unity genuine and real” (III/2, 484).

and real yesterday of God's eternity, which is anterior to all other yesterdays, including the yesterday of creation" (III/2, 484). Second, this anticipation of Jesus Christ in pretemporal eternity does not diminish the singularity involved in first century Palestine.<sup>18</sup> The predestination of Jesus-history does not exclude the *becoming* inherent in the eternal Son taking up flesh, and thus time, in the incarnation. This becoming is present in God's pretemporality by way of anticipation.<sup>19</sup>

## 4.2. Recapitulation

The second major theme in this interpretation of Christology and time is recapitulation. The sparse evidence that Barth himself might be thinking of Jesus-history in terms of recapitulation is found in his reflection on Ephesians 1:10:<sup>20</sup>

The One who wills and accomplishes and reveals the *anakephalaisis* also wills and accomplishes and reveals the 'fulfillment of the times.' It is with the summing up of all created being in Christ as its Head that the καιροί – the individual times of individual created things – are not cancelled or destroyed but fulfilled. None of these times moved into the void. They all moved towards this goal, this event, and therefore this particular time (III/2, 459).

While Barth does not exploit recapitulation in the discussion of Christology and time, he clearly saw the recapitulating work of the Son to include the summing up of all times.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> "It would be a complete misunderstanding if we were to object that the singularity of this event and its eternity as attested in these passages [John 1:1; 17:24; 1 Peter 1:20; Eph 1:4; Rev 13:8] are mutually exclusive. On the contrary, these passages accentuate its absolute singularity by insisting on its predetermination from all eternity. A thing which is resolved from all eternity necessarily has the character of absolute singularity. At this last and highest state, the pre-existence of the man Jesus coincides with His eternal predestination and election, which includes the election of Israel, of the Church, and of every individual member of His body" (III/2, 484-485).

<sup>19</sup> As mentioned in the first chapter, Roberts sees a contradiction between eternal election and its realization in time ("Karl Barth's Doctrine of Time", 118-19). This does not take account of the movement from pretemporal election and decision to supratemporal becoming and actualization.

<sup>20</sup> The passage reads: "With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of all time, to gather up (ανακεφαλαιωσασθαι) all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (vv. 8b-10, NRSV).

<sup>21</sup> Farrow briefly suggests that Barth's doctrine of time contains his version of recapitulation; see *Ascension and Ecclesial*, 231, and "Ascension and Atonement", 78.



It will prove to be a useful schema from which to view his discussions found in both § 47.1, “Jesus, Lord of Time”, in III/2, and § 59.3, “The Verdict of the Father”, in IV/1.<sup>22</sup>

The first theologian to make extensive use of ἀνακεφαλαίωσις or *recapitulation* was Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130-c.200). In his context, ἀνακεφαλαίωσις was a formal term of Greek grammar and rhetoric referring to the “summary or recapitulation of a narrative.”<sup>23</sup> While Irenaeus was likely trained in Greek rhetoric his use of the term is materially controlled by his theological concerns, using the biblical narrative with special reference to the being and work of Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup> As John Lawson states, Irenaeus develops the doctrine that the activity of Jesus Christ was a “going over the ground again.”<sup>25</sup>

Jesus Christ went over the same ground as Adam, but in the reverse direction. He placed Himself in the same circumstances as Adam, and was confronted with the same choices. At every point where Adam weakly yielded, slipping down to destruction, Christ heroically resisted, and at the cost of His agony retrieved the disaster. . . . The benefits of this victory can pass to mankind, because Christ was acting as the Champion of humanity.<sup>26</sup>

Important to note in Lawson’s description is what may be called the logic and movement of *retrieval* and *redirection*. Jesus Christ goes over the same ground again as Adam, though resisting instead of yielding, and then becomes the champion whose benefits “can pass to mankind”. Similarly, Douglas Farrow states that Irenaeus’ version of recapitulation has a “reduplicative force – the logic of *transformation* as well as of

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<sup>22</sup> Admittedly, this is a limited selection, but it does provide sufficient material to demonstrate the present interpretation and further exposition would only supplement this. For example, § 69.2 “The Light of Life” will not be taken up.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 50.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53.

<sup>25</sup> John Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London: Epworth Press, 1948), 143.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 144-45. For further discussions of recapitulation see William Rowe, “Myth and Counter-Myth: Irenaeus’ Story of Salvation” in *Interpreting Tradition: The Art of Theological Reflection*. Ed. Jane Kopas (Cico, California: Scholars Press 1989): 39-54; Trevor Hart, “Irenaeus, Recapitulation and Physical Redemption,” in *Christ in our Place: The Humanity of God in Christ for the Reconciliation of the World. Essays Presented to Professor James Torrance*. Eds. Trevor Hart and Daniel Thimell (Exeter and Allison Park: Paternoster Press and Pickwick Publications, 1989): 152-81.

*headship*,” wherein the christological movements of descent and ascent “do not cancel, but *restore* and *consummate*, human existence.”<sup>27</sup>

In the rest of this chapter the reduplicating force of “transformation” and “headship” will be explained under retrieval and redirecting. The fulfilling-time of Jesus Christ retrieves the true purpose of created time, as the locus of covenantal relations between God and humanity, and redirects all time and history on the way to the eschaton. All other times find their true meaning in the particular time ‘filled’ with the being and activity of Jesus Christ.

#### **4.2.1 Retrieval**

Through his mediating history Jesus Christ retrieves and restores the original purpose of created time and heals fallen time. As already maintained, temporality as an *Existenzform* of the creature is meant for covenantal relations with God and others, but this has been obscured and corrupted by sinful and fallen existence. Therefore, the particular history of Jesus Christ, his being and activity in time, renews the communion between God and humanity and thereby retrieves the original intent of created time and heals fallen time.

The clearest expression of this retrieval is found in the discussion of time in III/1 where Barth relates fulfilled or gracious time to created and fallen time. In fulfilled time, the forms of time are filled anew with the gracious activity of the triune God, centering

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<sup>27</sup> *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 56, italics added. Or, in temporal terms, “creation time and fallen time – though quite distinct – are brought together in Christ, and that the conflict between them is overcome at his own expense” (ibid., 58). He summarizes Irenaeus’ view with two other foci: 1) there is a focus on the particular dispensation of Jesus Christ, from which the rest of creation is to be understood; 2) from this particularity not only is the integrity of Jesus Christ preserved but the integrity of every other particular (ibid., 53-56). These two points of recapitulation are also found in Barth’s christocentric reading of time. For example, it should be clear by now that Barth understands all other histories, even that of creation, from the particular history of Jesus Christ. In the last chapter it was also argued that human temporality itself is grounded in the covenantal purposes of God, and thus finds its meaning in the fulfillment of time by the Son.

on the work of the Son in reconciliation but also including human participation by the work of the Holy Spirit. In the first place, fulfilled or gracious time is the answer to the problem of fallen time. Barth suggests that “Within ‘our’ time, i.e., the time of the man who has fallen into sin and is isolated from God, there is initiated with God’s acceptance of man in grace the new time which God has for us and which, now that we have lost the time loaned to us, He wills to give to us again as the time of grace” (III/1, 73). And while our fallen time “was condemned to perish as lost time” in Jesus Christ it was “exalted as a new and true and fulfilled time, i.e., a time ruled by God” (ibid.). In fact, both gracious time and created time are time in fellowship with the creator. Concerning created time Barth states that “at its divinely ordained centre stands in a clear, definite relation to God’s own, absolute time; which from this centre has also reality and stability” (III/1, 75). He correlates this with gracious time: “In this way the time of grace, the time of Jesus Christ, is the clear and perfect counterpart to the time of creation. Like it, and in contrast to ‘our’ empty time, it is fulfilled time” (ibid). Barth even suggests that created and fulfilled time “are undoubtedly identical in nature, and the meaning and content of the time of grace are unquestionably those of the preparatory time of creation” (ibid). Yet while created time is a ‘commencing time’, and it begins with the initial act of creation, the same cannot be said of gracious time, as it is a response to fallen time (ibid). Fulfilled or gracious time is actualized in the covenant of grace culminating in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Clearly for Barth, then, the Son’s mediating history retrieves the original intent of created time, ‘time for’ fellowship with God, and in so doing heals fallen time. They are similar in content since created and fulfilled time are both times of fellowship, while

different in sequence and responsibility. Created time is first in sequence -- it originates at the initial creation -- while fulfilled time occurs in Israel, Jesus Christ, and the Church. Yet fulfilled time is not only the response to fallen time but also the prototype and purpose of created time itself, and thus carries a different responsibility. Created time is the theatre for covenantal partnership, while fulfilled time is the actual drama -- why the theatre was built in the first place.

#### **4.2.2 *Redirection***

The second component in the recapitulation of time is redirecting. The particular history of Jesus Christ redirects all times as they move toward the eschaton. Time “may seem to move out of the void, but it is actually moving from this event” (III/2, 459). The full narrative of Jesus-history – his life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and final return – constitutes this redirection. The basic anatomy of Barth’s view is that the resurrection demonstrates that Jesus Christ is the living One and thus contemporaneous with all subsequent times. He lived an allotted life like all others but his resurrection inaugurates a new and eternal history in which, as the God-man, he is contemporary and present in all subsequent times, although his presence and activity varies depending on the episode under consideration. During the *forty days* Jesus Christ was immediately and visibly present as God the reconciler in a particular, limited, and proleptic way. With the *heavenly session* he is mediately and invisibly present in a particular, limited, and proleptic way by the work of the Spirit (especially in word, sacraments, and spiritual gifts). Finally, in the *eschaton* he will be immediately and visibly present to humanity in a universal, unlimited, and final way. The being and activity of the incarnate Son fills and

fulfills time in these modes. In expounding this redirecting of Jesus-history pertinent sections of III/2 and IV/1 will be examined.

While all episodes in Jesus-history contribute to this redirecting, there are some critical questions to be asked of Barth's view. As noted in the first chapter, Ford suggests that Barth's description of the forty days as the final fulfillment of eternity in time is unwarranted. The resurrection appearances rather belong to a series of events that point forward to a final fulfillment in the eschaton; they signify promise as much as fulfillment. Farrow follows this by suggesting that the theological reason for such finality during the resurrection time is Barth's view of the cross. The cross for Barth is the completion of salvation, where the Judge is judged in our place. The resurrection is then viewed as the unveiling of this completion. Farrow argues, especially in regard to *CD IV*, that this soteriological completion is a result of, first, Barth identifying the states of humiliation and exaltation with the descent of God and the ascent of humanity respectively on the cross; and second, of a basic negative correlativity between God and creation that requires reconciliation in God himself, which is then manifested on the cross. Farrow, rejecting these two themes, argues that the two states be seen as the movement of the *God-man* and suggests that the ascension, heavenly session, and final eschaton be given fuller soteriological import.

From these critiques two basic concerns arise. First, articulating the time of Jesus Christ must protect the successive nature of Jesus-history, with each episode in its sequential relation to the others. In other words, one episode of Jesus-history is not to carry emphasis or meaning that is due another. Within this concern, the proleptic nature of Jesus-history needs to be maintained; as Ford suggested, the episodes of Jesus-history

point forward to eschatological fulfillment. Second, Jesus-history must be soteriologically related to the time of humanity. The contemporaneity of Jesus Christ must direct and condition all other times, so that human temporality is understood in relation to his particular history. In this way each episode of Jesus-history constitutes the true meaning and content of concurrent time and history. Barth generally takes up these two concerns, though there are problems.

#### 4.2.2.1 *Jesus' Pre-Easter Life*

Before turning to Easter time, the pre-Easter history of Jesus Christ must first be noted. As mentioned above, for Barth the life of Jesus in one sense anticipates the fulfilling of time during the forty days. Yet he also suggests that it is the beginning of fulfilled time itself. In other places, moreover, Barth is simply content to state that Jesus had an allotted lifetime like every other human.<sup>28</sup> So while Barth does not emphasize the soteriological significance of Jesus' pre-Easter history - except for the cross, of course – he does view it as the beginning of fulfilled time in a hidden and proleptic way.

When expounding the time of Jesus Christ with reference to the idea of “appointed times” (καιροῖς ἰδίοις, Titus 1:3), Barth suggests Jesus' pre-Easter history inaugurates fulfilled time.<sup>29</sup> For example, in examining Galatians 4, Barth makes two

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<sup>28</sup> For example, when discussing Jesus-history in relation to allotted time Barth argues that Jesus has a history like every other human. The “time bounded at one end by His birth and at the other by His death; a fixed span with a particular duration within the duration of created time as a whole; the time for his being as the soul of his body” (III/2, 440). For it “is this history – the history which is inseparable from his temporality – that the man Jesus lives and is the eternal salvation of all men in their different times” (III/2, 441). This is confirmed for Barth in that the NT writers do not shy away from historical specifics, such as mention of Pontius Pilate or the exact times mentioned in the passion narrative, separating the gospel from myth. The historical character of the NT witness, in Barth's view, was the best defence in the early church against forms of Docetism (ibid.).

<sup>29</sup> Appointed times are simply defined as “the times which God has adopted for His purpose and therefore made his own” (III/2, 456).

important points. First, when the Son of God “entered the temporality which is that of each and every man” the “fullness of time” arrived (ibid., 459). Second, given this, all other times are relativized, either moving toward or away from this one fulfilled time.<sup>30</sup> After discussing the Pauline passages, Barth turns to the Gospels, particularly Mark 1:14 ff, which contains the statement of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry: “The time is fulfilled (πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς), and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news” (1:15). Barth notes a tension between time being “fulfilled” (πεπλήρωται) and “is at hand” or “has drawn near” (ἤγγικεν). The first term “implies that the eschatological salvation is no longer just a future expectation, but a present reality” (III/2, 460), while the second “implies that the irruption of the kingdom into history is imminent” (ibid.), that is, still to come.<sup>31</sup> Thus for Barth the life and ministry of Jesus inaugurates the fulfilment of time but mainly in a way that anticipates Easter-time.

What becomes clear in these discussions however is that the pre-Easter life of Jesus, his first history, carries little soteriological effectiveness (except for the cross). But this episode of Jesus-history contributes to the redirecting of time as the historical beginning of a life that will *eventually* retrieve and redirect all times; it is generally viewed as proleptic and anticipatory of Easter-time.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> “The *raison d’être* of all time, both past and future, is that there should be this fulfillment at this particular time. Time may seem to move into the void but it is actually moving towards this event; just as it may seem to move out of the void, but it is actually moving from this event. The fulfillment of time has now ‘come,’ epitomizing all the coming and going of time. Henceforth all time can be regarded only as time fulfilled in this particular time” (III/2, 459, cf. 461 as well).

<sup>31</sup> Evidence of the fulfillment of time, for Barth, is seen in Jesus casting out demons and his miracles, while the kingdom’s coming is evidenced in the messianic secret.

<sup>32</sup> Of course, it may be the case that Barth elsewhere bestows more soteriological importance on the pre-Golgotha life of Jesus, but its importance is fairly lean here. A full alternative cannot be developed here, only a few suggestions. Irenaeus includes not only the cross but suggests the birth (corporeality) and temptations (obedience) of Jesus as effective for salvation as well (See, for example, Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 124 f. In *Against Heresies*, see III.18.7, III.21.10, and V.21.1-3.). In part III of *Summa*

#### 4.2.2.2 Resurrection and Easter Time

The resurrection has various functions in Barth's theology. Dale Dawson, in his study spanning from *The Resurrection of the Dead* (1924) to *CD IV/3* (1959), notes not only the role of the resurrection in unveiling Jesus Christ as the Son of God, but also "the conviction that the resurrection is the event, the way and the power, of the turning of Jesus Christ, in all he had accomplished for us, to us. . . . [The] resurrection for Barth has to do with the movement of Jesus Christ in the fullness of his reconciling work from the christological sphere to the sphere of other human beings."<sup>33</sup> It seems then that the redirecting force of recapitulation begins for Barth with the resurrection and Easter time. While there is much evidence for the unveiling function of the resurrection, the basic impetus of this for the discussion of temporality is that Christ's second history is inaugurated, and as the living One Jesus is contemporaneous with all subsequent time and history. Yet his contemporaneity is differentiated for each episode following the resurrection. Easter time is the first *parousia* of Jesus Christ, the time of his immediate, visible, and audible presence as the Son of God and Reconciler between God and humanity. This presence is known only by the disciples and early church through his appearances during the forty days. This is followed by his mediated and invisible presence by the Spirit during ascension time to the Church, and finally the immediate and visible presence to all in the eschaton. While Barth often uses language that suggests a finality during the forty days suitable only for the eschaton, he nevertheless argues that it

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*Theologica*, there is much reflection by Aquinas on the life of Jesus Christ. His baptism is to lead others into baptism (q. 39.2.1); his temptation strengthens, warns, exemplifies, and leads believer to overcome temptation (q. 41); the miracles confirm his union (q. 43); while his transfiguration is a sign of his future work to come (q. 45). See, as well, some of his reflections on the ascension and heavenly session (qq. 53, 56, 58, and 59).

<sup>33</sup> Dale Dawson, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth*, 3, see 4 as well.



is a proleptic episode, anticipating ascension time and the final *parousia*, and sees it in sequential relation to the other episodes of Jesus-history. The resurrection and Easter time get sustained attention in both III/2 and IV/1.

In III/2, when relating Jesus Christ to allotted time, Barth views the resurrection and forty days as the beginning of a ‘Second History’ beyond the ‘First History.’<sup>34</sup> In the first place, he argues, contra Bultmann and others, that the resurrection is an event that occurred in a particular time and place, and that the resurrection and forty days are really Easter *history* and Easter *time*.<sup>35</sup> Belief in the resurrection was not the product of apostolic preaching but was the result of “the recollection which concretely created and fashioned this faith and preaching, embraced this time, the time of the forty days” (III/2, 442). Barth defends the historicity of the resurrection again in IV/1, stating that it is an event in time and space, an act of God, and thus historical (IV/1, 333-342). It is of course

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<sup>34</sup> Also important for Barth here is that the resurrected One is the basic epistemological presupposition of the first Christian communities. “It is impossible to read any text of the New Testament in the sense intended by its authors, by the apostles who stand behind them, or by the first communities, without an awareness that they either explicitly assert or at least tacitly assume that the Jesus of whom they speak and to whom they refer in some way is the One who appeared to His disciples at this particular time as the Resurrected from the dead. All the other things they know of Him, his words and acts, are regarded in the light of this particular event, and are as it were irradiated by its light” (III/2, 442).

<sup>35</sup> Barth critiques the views of Kümmel, Cullmann, and Bultmann. Kümmel, in Barth’s view, simply neglects the resurrection. Cullmann marginalizes it to the end of his book on time and suggests that the NT has a particular conception of time; “an ascending line with a series of aeons” (III/2, 443). For Barth, however, the NT writers begin with the particularity of the resurrection and only move from there to general conceptions of time – if they even had any. But clearly it is Bultmann whom Barth has in his sights. According to Barth, for Bultmann belief in the resurrection is explained with reference to the rise of faith as a result of NT preaching (See Rudolf Bultmann, “New Testament and Mythology” in *Kerygma and Myth*. Edited by Hans Werner Bartsch [New York: Harper and Row, 1961]: 1-44, esp. 40 ff.), for Barth faith “in the risen Lord springs from His historical manifestation, and . . . not from the rise of faith in Him” (III/2, 443). As Barth points out, Bultmann admits his view of the resurrection is not that of the NT writers themselves, but is based on his demythologization and existentialist method of interpretation (III/2, 444-45). To counter Bultmann, Barth exposes and critiques five of Bultmann’s “dogmatic presuppositions”: 1) Christian theological statements are true only if they are genuine elements in the “Christian understanding of human existence”, which is based on “statements on the inner life of man” (III/2, 446-47); 2) An event in time can only be alleged to have happened if it is verifiable by modern historical scholarship; 3) Events which are inaccessible to “historical verification” are “merely a blind acceptance of a piece of mythology, an arbitrary act, descent from faith to works, a dishonest *sacrificium intellectus*” (III/2, 446); 4) The modern worldview is incompatible with any type of mythical worldview; 5) Any statement compatible with the mythical worldview must be rejected (III/2, 446-47).

different than the cross in that there is no direct account of its occurrence; there is the sign of the empty tomb and the appearances of the risen Jesus to the disciples. As such, it cannot be viewed as historical in the same way as the cross, and in relation to the criteria of modern historical research it is clearly not historical (IV/1, 334-36).<sup>36</sup> Since it is an act of God beyond human observation and agency, moreover, it can be termed a ‘saga’ or ‘legend’, analogous to the original creation.<sup>37</sup> Yet it is truly an event in time and space,<sup>38</sup> and central in understanding Jesus-history.<sup>39</sup>

After critiquing Bultmann in III/2, Barth explains the significance of the resurrection for the time of Jesus. While Barth notes this as the time of the man Jesus,<sup>40</sup> his emphasis lies more on the *vere Deus* of Chalcedon - the resurrection is the unveiling of Jesus Christ as God.<sup>41</sup> He states that “the *man* Jesus was manifested among them in the mode of *God*” (III/2, 448). While previously his deity had been “veiled,” during the “forty days the presence of God in the presence of the man Jesus was no longer a paradox. . . . He has been veiled, but He was now wholly and unequivocally and

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<sup>36</sup> “If in modern scholarship ‘historical ground’ means the outline of an event as it can be seen in its ‘How’ independently of the standpoint of the onlooker, as it can be presented in this way, as it can be proved in itself and in its general and more specific context and in relation to the analogies of other events, as it can be established as having certainly taken place, then the New Testament itself does not enable us to state that we are on ‘historical ground’ in relation to the event here recorded” (IV/1, 335).

<sup>37</sup> For a brief discussion of this see section 3.2.2 in Chapter Three, especially note 36.

<sup>38</sup> We cannot “interpret it as though it has never happened at all, or not happened in time and space in the same way as the death of Jesus Christ, or finally had happened only in faith or in the form of the formation and development of faith. Even the use of the terms ‘saga’ and ‘legend’ does not force us to interpret it in this way” (IV/1, 336).

<sup>39</sup> “It must not be overlooked that in this event we have to do on the one hand with the *telos*, the culminating point of the previously recorded concrete history of the life and suffering and death of Jesus Christ which attained its end with His resurrection, and on the other hand with the beginning of the equally concrete history of faith in Him, of the existence of the community which receives and proclaims His Word, Himself as the living Word of God” (IV/1, 336).

<sup>40</sup> This is evidenced in the anti-docetic fine print discussions; see *ibid.*, 441, 448 and 455.

<sup>41</sup> This is commensurate with Barth’s focus in *CD I/1* where he views the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the ‘unveiling’ of the second person of the Trinity. Barth consistently connects the resurrection of Jesus Christ with unveiling, especially as it initiates the self-revelation of Jesus Christ, by the Spirit, to believers. Again, Dawson’s work makes this point clear, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth*. For his discussion of III/2 see Chapter 6.

irrevocably manifest” (III/2, 449, cf. 451). Barth continues: “There takes place for them [the disciples] the total, final, irrevocable and eternal manifestation of God himself. God Himself, the object and ground of their faith, was present as the man Jesus was present in this way” (III/2, 449). It is for this reason that in the NT the title of *Kyrios* is applied to Jesus (III/2, 450).<sup>42</sup>

The language Barth uses to describe this unveiling (“total, final . . . eternal manifestation of God”) surely cannot be justified if the further history of Jesus and the Church are to be seen in their successive integrity. As Ford comments on this section in III/2: “The distortion is that the content of the Gospel accounts of the resurrection appearances does not bear out Barth’s claim that they represent a unique fulfillment and completeness, a manifestation of eternity in time. They have more the character of ‘sendings’ into the future, and there is at least as much promise as fulfillment.”<sup>43</sup> Barth’s description, then, distorts the view of the forty days as but one episode of the Son recapitulating time.

Yet why does Barth construct his view in this way? Ford’s suggestion that Barth moves beyond the literary function of the forty days is only descriptive. It may be argued that the veiling-unveiling-imparting schema is combined here with Chalcedonian ontology (*vere Deus*) to alter the NT narrative. As noted in the first chapter, Barth’s discussion of revelation in I/1 uses this schema to argue for the self-revelation of God as

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<sup>42</sup> In connection with this, Barth states that Easter time illuminates the whole life of Jesus, previous to the resurrection, for the recollection of the church. “The Easter history opened their eyes to the nature of this man and His history, to the previously concealed character of this history as salvation history . . . This is what illuminated and explained the whole history of this man in His time. This was the light in which this whole history – for it was the history of the same man who had now encountered them as alive from the dead – was revealed as the appearance of God and therefore as incomparable salvation history, as the “once” which is absolutely distinguished from each and every other ‘once’” (III/2, 454-455). Clearly for Barth, then, the resurrection is the unveiling of the identity of Jesus Christ as fully God.

<sup>43</sup> *Barth and God’s Story*, 145.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In this view, the resurrection is the unveiling of the identity of Jesus as the Son of God, and this unveiling must have the sense of finality because the unveiling is identified with *vere Deus*.<sup>44</sup> But by identifying the moment of unveiling in revelation solely with the fully God of Chalcedon, Barth imposes an interpretation of the forty days not suggested by the narrative. To explain this critique Colin Gunton's distinction between the saving activity that is revealed and the God who reveals this may be noted:

[W]hile it is undoubtedly true that God identifies himself through the action of the Spirit to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the focus of that action, as is shown by those confessions on which the New Testament centres and which its writers receive and transmit to others, is the salvation brought by Jesus of Nazareth. *The centre is not divine self-identification but divine saving action*. Thus it is preferable to say that revelation is first of all a function of that divine action by which the redemption of the creation is achieved in such a way that human blindness and ignorance are also removed. To that extent the doctrine of revelation should be understood to be a function of the doctrine of salvation.<sup>45</sup>

Thus while Barth is correct in maintaining that God is revealed through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, its function as unveiling the identity of the Son cannot inhibit one from understanding the soteriological purpose of the resurrection. So while “there seems little doubt that the resurrection is, from an epistemological point of view, the revelatory event *par excellence*, confirming as it does the revelations of the previous narratives,” it “is an eschatological event, and as such an anticipation of final revelation.”<sup>46</sup> It seems, then, that Barth's description of resurrection time as the final fulfillment of eternity in time is unwarranted if its proleptic function is to be preserved; and there is evidence of this in Barth as well.

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<sup>44</sup> On Barth's view of revelation as a triune event see Trevor Hart, “Revelation” in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 37-56. On Barth's early use of the veiling-unveiling dialect see McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 269-70, 274, and 327-28.

<sup>45</sup> Colin Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation: The 1993 Warfield Lectures* (London: T&T Clark, 1995), 111, italics in the original.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

The resurrection and its relation to time are taken up again in *CD* IV/1, though the context here is the doctrine of reconciliation and the concern is the resurrection's relation to the cross. In IV/1 not only does the resurrection inaugurate a new history, as in III/2, but also the emphatic language of final fulfillment is absent. The unveiling function of the resurrection shifts to the atonement achieved on the cross and not merely Jesus' identity as the Son of God (epistemology follows soteriology). This enables Barth to appreciate the proleptic nature of the resurrection and forty days and view it in its successive relation to other episodes of Jesus-history.

The most focused discussion of time in IV/1 is found in discussing the resurrection's relation to the cross in the "The Verdict of the Father", § 59.3.<sup>47</sup> In this subsection Barth has two basic concerns. The primary concern is to explain the resurrection as the necessary complement to the crucifixion.<sup>48</sup> While it is clear that the reconciliation between God and humanity is complete on the cross, Barth now wishes to show how this is unveiled to and appropriated by humanity. This is the transition

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<sup>47</sup> Even before this, the opening of § 59 immediately evinces Barth's concern with time and history: "The atonement is history. To know it, we must know it as such. To think of it, we must think of it as such. To speak of it, we must tell it as history" (IV/1, 157). It is a particular history, but it is "the most basic history of every man" (ibid.).

<sup>48</sup> In § 59 Barth expounds the first of three forms of the doctrine of reconciliation. The obedience of the Son of God occurs as he takes up human flesh and dies on the cross. The first subsection, "The Way of the Son of God into the Far Country," focuses on the condescension of the eternal Son in humble obedience to the will of the eternal Father. According to Barth, this was the presupposition of the NT and the post-apostolic communities, and a belief that was settled in the Creeds (IV/1, 159-162). The obedience and suffering of Jesus Christ is also the sum of God's covenantal history with Israel (IV/1, 166 ff). While the first section answers who the servant is, the Son of God, the second subsection, "The Judge Judged in our Place," answers the question why he became a servant (IV/1, 211). Barth answers this by interpreting the cross as the event of the incarnate Son of God becoming humanity's righteousness, because as the judge (Son of God) he was judged (as man) in the judgment (suffered, crucified and died) (IV/1, 231-254). In this way, he was the satisfaction of the righteousness of God (IV/1, 256 ff). As Barth summarizes: "The passion of Jesus Christ is the judgment of God in which the Judge Himself was the judged. And as such it is at its heart and centre the victory which has been for us, in our place, in the battle against sin" (IV/1, 254). The discussion of the resurrection and the time of Jesus Christ, therefore, are based on the incarnate Son's death on the cross as the satisfaction for sin.

paragraph from Christology to anthropology.<sup>49</sup> The secondary concern is the problem of faith and history.<sup>50</sup> The distance between *Christus pro nobis tunc* and *Christus pro nobis nunc* is reflected in Lessing's dictum that there is a separation between the necessary truths of reason and the contingent truths of history. As quoted by Barth, Lessing states: "this is the gaping and wide chasm which I cannot cross, however often and seriously I have attempted the leap" (IV/1, 287). The usual Christian attempts to overcome this problem include mediation in not only existential religious experience, as in Bultmann and Herrmann, but also in recollection through tradition and scripture, which can be assumed to refer Roman Catholicism and other forms of Protestantism (IV/1, 287-88). Such attempts to bridge Christ 'then' to Christ 'now' are critiqued by Barth, forms of what may be termed pseudo-contemporaneity. According to Barth, this modern problem and its religious counterparts have "more the character of a technical difficulty" than "that of a spiritual or a genuine theological problem" (IV/1, 288). The distance between Jesus Christ and the rest of humanity is in reality a hermeneutological separation; "on the one hand it is God for man, on the other man against God" (IV/1, 290).<sup>51</sup> In other words, Lessing's problem is one of sinful humanity in its fallen time.

But how is Jesus Christ contemporaneous with all humanity in its times? First, Barth reiterates that Jesus Christ was the one representative on the cross and that there has occurred a real objective alteration of the situation between God and humanity.<sup>52</sup> This

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<sup>49</sup> As he puts it: "There is a great gulf between 'Jesus Christ for us' and ourselves as those who in this supremely perfect word are summoned to regard ourselves as those for whom He is and acts" (IV/1, 286).

<sup>50</sup> One can discern at work Barth's "intensive, although for the most part quiet, debate with Rudolf Bultmann" (IV/1, ix).

<sup>51</sup> The genuineness of Lessing's problem arises from "a very genuine need: the need to hide ourselves (like Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden) from Jesus Christ as He makes Himself present and mediates Himself to us" (IV/1, 292).

<sup>52</sup> There has occurred an "immeasurable alteration in our situation, in our whole existence, which has taken place in Him, which His being and activity inexorably brings with it" (IV/1, 289).

was the point of his previous two subsections. Second, the transition into the anthropological sphere is enabled by the resurrection. The resurrection is the event and occurrence that inaugurates the second history of Jesus Christ beyond that of death. In what follows, Barth argues that true contemporaneity is found in Jesus Christ, the living Saviour, and not the pseudo-contemporaneity from human recollection or experience (though mediation does play a role during ascension time). Barth's secondary concern of faith and history is answered then with reference to the primary focus of the subsection: the relation between the cross and resurrection.

Barth's exposition of the resurrection in its relation to the cross includes five points, though it is the third that receives sustained attention from Barth and is the most important for the present discussion.<sup>53</sup> First, the resurrection must be an act by the same God who judged man in Jesus Christ (IV/1, 300-304). While the cross is the obedience of the incarnate Son and the judgment of God in unity, the resurrection does not contain the element of human agency, rather "it is exclusively the act of God" (IV/1, 300).<sup>54</sup> Given that it is an act of the same God, moreover, the resurrection has as its aim the unveiling of

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<sup>53</sup> Briefly, 1) the resurrection must be by the same God who judged humanity in Jesus Christ; 2) The resurrection must be clearly distinguished from the cross; 3) It must stand in a meaningful relationship with the cross; 4) It must have the character of a particular event that has taken place in time and space; 5) This second act must form a unity with the first (IV/1, 297-98).

<sup>54</sup> More specifically, it is an act of the Father by the Spirit on the Son, and thus a trinitarian event: "Certainly in the resurrection of Jesus Christ we have to do with a movement and action which took place not merely in human history but first and foremost in God himself, a movement and action in which Jesus Christ as the Son of God had no less part than in His humiliation to the death of the cross, yet only as a pure object and recipient of the grace of God" (IV/1, 304). Later Barth expands the view, adding that it is an act of the Father on the Son by the Spirit: "As we say, it was the very model of a gracious act of God, the Son of God as such being active only as the recipient, God the Father alone being the One who acts, and God the Holy Spirit alone the One who mediates His action and revelation" (IV/1, 356, cf 308-09). In discussing the third point, he also expands the agency of the Spirit. At the end of a small print section he gives a brief exposition of the Spirit's agency in the resurrection (IV/1, 308-09). He also speaks of the Spirit coming on the human Jesus. That is, the work of the Spirit is briefly mentioned beyond Pentecost, which is generally the place where the Spirit is discussed. This insight however is not exploited by Barth, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

salvation achieved by the Son to humanity.<sup>55</sup> Second, the resurrection must be clearly distinguished from the cross with its own particular character (IV/1, 304-309). While it is the revelation of the work of Jesus Christ on Golgotha, it is also the vindication of the work of the cross. It is not merely the revelation and declaration of the positive content of the cross, but is also the Father's declaring the justification of the Son, the verdict of the Father.<sup>56</sup>

With the third point, Barth expounds the meaning of the resurrection in its relation to the cross (IV/1, 309-333). While assuming the alteration of the human situation on the cross, in which there is a new creation and ultimate *telos* for human existence and time,<sup>57</sup> the resurrection is the unveiling of the atonement made there and inaugurates the further history of the crucified and living Saviour. This is articulated with reference to the twofold *parousia* of the forty days and the final eschaton, along with the interim time of

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<sup>55</sup> "The glory of the Word made flesh (Jn. 1:14), the Kingdom of God which had drawn near to them in bodily form, the obedience of the Son of God, His death in our place and for our redemption, for the restoration of our peace with God – all this as the mystery of the way of the man Jesus, and of the end of that way on the cross of Golgotha, was first revealed to them and perceived by them when the event was already past. . . . The perception was mediated to them when on the third day, Easter Day, He came amongst them again in such a way that His presence as the man He had been (had been!) was and could be exclusively and therefore unequivocally the act of God without any component of human will and action" (IV/1, 302, cf. 308). The problems associated with the theme of unveiling will be examined shortly in discussing the final eschaton.

<sup>56</sup> "To that extent it was the expression and fulfillment of the sentence of the Father on the way which he had gone – His judicial sentence that the action and passion of Jesus Christ were not apart from or against Him, but according to His good and holy will, that it was not to our destruction but our salvation. It was a second act of justice after the first to the extent that it was divine approval and acknowledgement of the obedience given by Jesus Christ, the acceptance of His sacrifice, the proclamation and bringing into force of the consequences, the saving consequences, of His action and passion in our place" (IV/1, 305).

<sup>57</sup> "It is an existence in the presence of the One who was and will be. He is its *terminus a quo* and its *terminus ad quem*. It is an existence in that alteration, that is, in that differentiated relationship between the death and the resurrection of Christ. When a man is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed, everything has become new. This means that the event of the end of the world which took place once and for all in Jesus Christ is the presupposition of an old man, and the event of the beginning of the new world which took place once and for all in Jesus Christ is the goal of a new man, and because the goal, therefore the truth and power of the sequence of human existence as it moves toward this goal. The world and every man exist in this alteration" (IV/1, 311-12, cf. 316).



the Church.<sup>58</sup> Barth sees this as the crux of the subsection, which is concerned with the transition from the ontic to the noetic.

To reflect on this transition Barth again takes up the problem of time, now issuing a clearer response. He has already rejected views that suggest the relation of faith and history is fulfilled anthropologically – whether by religious and existential experience or recollection through the mediums of scripture, preaching and tradition. Such attempts are a form of pseudo-contemporaneity. For Barth, the problem of contemporaneity is only solved with reference to the risen and living Jesus Christ, who is Lord of time. As “the One who was in [his allotted time] He became and is the Lord of all time, eternal as God Himself is eternal, and therefore present in all time” (IV/1, 313). The resurrection reveals “His eternal being and therefore His present-day being every day of our time” (ibid.). As the one mediator between God and humanity he is “active and at work once and for all” (ibid.). In fact, “His history did not become dead history. It was history in His time to become as such eternal history – the history of God with the men of all times, and therefore taking place here and now as it did then. He is the living Saviour” (IV/1, 314).

In the fourth point of the subsection, Barth states that the resurrection is an event in time and space, an act of God and thus historical (IV/1, 333-342). The fifth and last point Barth makes is that the resurrection must form a unity with the cross and the rest of redemptive history (IV/1, 342-346). The unity of the cross and the resurrection arises, first, from the unity of God and his election *in se*.<sup>59</sup> Second, the unity of God’s work *ad*

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<sup>58</sup> In other words, the “possibility is disclosed, this necessity created, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, or more exactly, the being of the crucified Jesus Christ raised from the dead in His twofold form as the One who has come and is present and the One who is present and has still to come” (IV/1, 333).

<sup>59</sup> This unity derives from the “one God who is at work on the basis of His one election and decision by and to the one Jesus Christ with the one goal of the reconciliation of the world with Himself, the conversion of man to Him” (IV/1, 342). Therefore, “this work of grace [resurrection] and obedience [cross] as the act of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one work” (IV/1, 343).

*extra* is found in the full redemptive history of Jesus Christ.<sup>60</sup> That is, while the cross and resurrection are central for Barth, Jesus-history does not end there: “But the life of the Resurrected as the life of the Crucified, as it began in that Easter period, and needs no new beginning, is an eternal life, a life which is also continuous in time. And that means that God, and we too, have to do with the Crucified only as the Resurrected, with the one event of His death, only as it has the continuing form of His life” (IV/1, 343-44).

In the discussion of the resurrection and time in IV, there is little indication that the resurrection is the fulfillment of eternity in time, as found in III/2. The emphasis of the unveiling function of the resurrection shifts to the atoning work of the cross and not the identity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the focus is soteriological rather than epistemological. There seems to be more attention to the narrative sequence of the cross and resurrection (and to be seen shortly, the ascension and eschaton), and not on the Chalcedonian identity of Jesus Christ as the *vere Deus*. Yet in both III/2 and IV/1, the resurrection and forty days inaugurate the second history of Jesus Christ which demonstrates that he is the living One. As the living One he continues to be active in time and is contemporaneous with all subsequent history. The mode of his presence during the forty days, more clearly noted in III/2, is that of his immediate, visible, and audible presence as the Son of God and mediator between God and humanity.

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<sup>60</sup> Here the recapitulating work of Jesus-history is clearly evident: “In this unity the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are together the history of Jesus Christ, and as such the redemptive history to which everything earlier that we might call redemptive history in the wider sense moved and pointed, and from which everything later that we might call redemptive history in the wider sense derives and witnesses” (IV/1, 343).

#### 4.2.2.3 *Ascension and Heavenly Session*

Following the resurrection and Easter time is the ascension and heavenly session. This is the time of Christ's invisible presence and activity to the community mediated by the Holy Spirit, especially in word, sacraments, and other spiritual gifts. This episode of Jesus-history has a distinct mode of Christ's contemporaneity and thus fills time in this way. In comparison to the resurrection and forty days, however, the ascension and heavenly session receive sparse treatment. There is even a tendency for Barth to deny the ascension as an event. The reason for this seems to be his focus on the cross and resurrection and a general uncertainty as to the nature of the ascension. The result is that Barth uses the dialectic of visible-invisible to describe the christological mediation during the heavenly session and not presence-absence.<sup>61</sup> Following this, as will become clearer in the next chapter, the Spirit's mediating work through ecclesial practices is less than robust. Despite these problematic features, Barth's description of the ascension and heavenly session do seem to uphold this as a separate episode and its proleptic nature is noted, though the soteriological importance of it is downplayed. Thus it is fair to say that Barth has an underdeveloped theology of the ascension and heavenly session in both III/2 and in IV/1.

Barth's treatment of the ascension in III/2 is found in two places: first, in the discussion of the "Second History" of Jesus Christ in relation to allotted time, and, second, in discussing Jesus Christ in relation to the present. In the first discussion, Barth gives an exposition of the ascension and the concept of 'appointed times' (καιροῖς ἰδίαις) in relation to the forty days. In a fine print exposition, Barth views the ascension, along

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<sup>61</sup> For criticism of this 'invisible presence' in Barth see Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 250 ff.

with the empty tomb, as *signs* of resurrection time.<sup>62</sup> The empty tomb and ascension “mark the limits of the Easter period, at one end the empty tomb, and at the other end the ascension”, “. . . they are both indicated rather than described; the one as an introduction, the other as a conclusion” (III/2, 452). He also adds that some gospel writers “do not refer to the ascension as a concrete event” (III/2, 453). Undoubtedly Barth is correct in stating that the empty tomb is a sign,<sup>63</sup> but surely he is mistaken to deny that the ascension is an event in Jesus-history. Even his description of the ascension does not support this claim.

In a review of Andrew Burgess’ *The Ascension in Karl Barth*, Benjamin Myers criticizes the idea of the ascension as a spatial event.<sup>64</sup> He reasons:

So on the one hand, Christian theology has a right and a responsibility to re-think the concepts of ‘space’ and ‘time’ from the standpoint of Jesus’ resurrection and ascension. But on the other hand, the account of space and time that we thus formulate cannot simply be a mythology; as a minimal requirement, it must cohere with what we already know from other sources about the nature of space and time.<sup>65</sup>

He makes reference to Barth for his case:

[To] say that Jesus is ascended is to make a *theological* statement about God’s exaltation of the crucified Jesus. It need not be regarded as a quasi-historical description of Jesus’ movement through space, or as a statement about the ‘physical location’ of Jesus. Rather, and more straightforwardly, it is (in Barth’s words) the confession that the crucified and risen Jesus ‘went to God’.<sup>66</sup>

Yet cannot the ascension be seen as both a spatial-temporal event and a theological statement? To deny the ascension as a spatial-temporal event is to submit theological

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<sup>62</sup> The ascension is a sign that “points forward and upward, thus serving a positive function”, but “again the ascension – Jesus’ disappearance into heaven – is the sign of the Resurrected, not the Resurrected Himself” (III/2, 453). But could it not be said that Jesus is the ascended One as well?

<sup>63</sup> As he reasons: “The empty tomb is not the same thing as the resurrection. It is not the appearance of the living; it is only its presupposition. Hence it is only the sign, although an indispensable sign. Christians do not believe in the empty tomb, but in the living Christ” (III/2, 453).

<sup>64</sup> Myers, “Andrew Burgess: The Ascension in Karl Barth.” He writes: “to conceive of this ‘agency’ in terms of an ascended physical body seems rather problematic. I wonder whether it is intelligible – either scientifically or theologically – to speak of the risen Jesus as though he were simply removed to a different spatial location? What does it mean to say that Jesus ‘departs ‘physically’ in the event of the ascension’ (p. 26)? Or that ‘Jesus is ‘physically’ located somewhere other than the church and sacraments’ (p. 187)?” (<http://faiththeology.blogspot.com/2007/01/andrew-burgess-ascension-in-karl-barth.html>).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

mysteries to philosophical and scientific problems (which, nonetheless, ought to be dealt with) and miss the theological import of Christ's absence. If the ascension is denied as a spatial event does this not mean that Barth finally succumbs to Bultmann's criteria that theological statements must adhere to a modern worldview (which for Bultmann implied a Newtonian worldview, a closed mechanical nexus of cause and effect)?<sup>67</sup> But Myers' reading of Barth may not be totally accurate.

While Barth's focus is theological he still *describes* the ascension as an event in Jesus-history, even if he *suggests* it is only a sign. He begins by describing the ascension as Jesus' disappearance into heaven. Heaven is defined as the "sum of the inaccessible and incomprehensible side of the created world" (III/2, 453).<sup>68</sup> When Jesus ascended "He entered the side of the created world which was provisionally inaccessible and incomprehensible" (III/2, 454). But oddly, this disappearance is not described as an event; rather it is the sign of Jesus' "hidden presence," evidenced for Barth in the biblical language of clouds surrounding the ascension story (Acts 1:9) (*ibid.*).<sup>69</sup> Barth also points to the unique role and identity of the ascended one: "who in provisional distinction from all other men lives on the God-ward side of the universe, sharing His throne, existing and acting in the mode of God, and therefore to be remembered as such, to be known once for all as this exalted creature, this exalted man, and henceforth to be accepted as the One

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<sup>67</sup> For a defense of the historicity of the ascension see Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, Chapter 2; and for an attempt to deal with the physical problem of Jesus' bodily absence see van Driel, "Incarnation Anyway", 239 ff.; on the general importance of the ascension see N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), especially Chapter 7.

<sup>68</sup> He continues: "so that, although it is not God Himself, it is the throne of God, the creaturely correspondence to his glory, which is veiled from man, and cannot be disclosed except on His initiative" (III/2, 453).

<sup>69</sup> The visible/invisible distinction rather than the presence/absence distinction will become important when Barth defines the *parousia* further in CD IV.

who exists in this form to all eternity” (ibid.). What is more, the proleptic function of the ascension is noted as well:

He reveals Himself not only as the One who according to Mt. 28:20 will be with them in this heavenly mode of existence all the days, even to the consummation (συντέλεια) of the age, but also as the One who will come again to usher in this consummation. The ascension is the proleptic sign of the *parousia*, pointing to the Son of Man who will finally and visibly emerge from the concealment of His heavenly existence and come on the clouds of heaven (Mt. 24:30) (ibid.).

While Barth suggests the ascension is merely a sign, he does seem to give it positive content. The resurrected Jesus Christ disappeared to the God-ward side of creation and is now hidden and present to his followers. The ascension also indicates that he will come again ushering in the eschaton, thus its proleptic nature. In other words, the ascension focuses believers upward and forward. Perhaps the criticism that may be brought against Barth in this passage is the failure to differentiate between the empty tomb and the ascension. Both may be signs of the resurrected one, but the empty tomb is a spatial location whereas the ascension is something that happens to Jesus; it is an event and an act.

Barth also takes up the ascension in III/2 when discussing Jesus Christ and the present. Here he gives this episode in Jesus-history fuller content with reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit and the sacramental life of the church. Ascension time or the heavenly session is time ‘for’ the activity of the risen and hidden Lord by his Holy Spirit. Barth again states that for the NT community “the man Jesus is really but transcendentally present” (III/2, 467). His time overlaps “objectively as it were the present time of the apostles and their communities. . . . These men do not make or feel or know themselves the contemporaries of Jesus. It is not they who become or are this. It is Jesus who becomes and is their Contemporary” (ibid.). Barth argues that the transcendent

and hidden presence of the exalted man Jesus is the foundation for the life of the church. The time and history of the church is lived in the presence of the ascended One, who is truly Lord over all time. Following this, the church is to make known to the world the reconciliation completed in the cross and resurrection.<sup>70</sup>

Jesus Christ's presence and agency is distinct, however, from the contemporaneity of other humans. His presence is known and experienced through the work of the Holy Spirit, which includes preaching, sacraments, and other spiritual gifts. "The fact that He lives at the right hand of God means that even now He is absolutely present temporally. And to His own on their further journey into time, in and with the witness continually to be proclaimed and heard by them, He has given them His Spirit, the Holy Spirit" (ibid). Following this, the hidden presence of Christ occurs with the sacraments, but it is not limited to them,<sup>71</sup> or through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>72</sup> Although there is minimal development here,<sup>73</sup> Barth does present an ascension and ecclesial time as 'filled' with

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<sup>70</sup> "Thus its continuation and formation here and now can only be a faithful imitation of their 'citizenship in heaven' as it is already actualized proleptically in the man Jesus; an act of faithfulness to the constitution under which they are placed already as God's citizens and members of His household. Their life's work can only be to make known to others who do not know it the lordship of Jesus Christ over the world and men and therefore their time as they themselves know it" (III/2, 467).

<sup>71</sup> "There is obviously no baptism or Lord's Supper without His real presence as very God and very Man, both body and soul. But this presence cannot be regarded as restricted to what were later called 'sacraments.' For these are only a symbolical expression of the fact that in its worship the community is gathered directly around Jesus Himself, and lives by and with Him, but that through faith He rules over the hearts and lives of all even apart from worship" (III/2, 467-68). It seems, then, that for Barth the sacraments are optional in light of the hidden presence of Jesus Christ. What counts is knowing that Jesus Christ is invisibly present (though scripture plays a more essential role).

<sup>72</sup> "Hence the gifts of prophecy, teaching, leadership and service, and hence also miracles in the community. Hence, too, the royal freedom of the children of God, but hence also in Christ's stead the apostolic word of witness, the word of knowledge, direction and exhortation. All these are possible because 'Christians' have the Spirit and are led by Him" (III/2, 468).

<sup>73</sup> While Barth is developing a theology of ascension here, oddly the fine print section that provides exegetical support focuses almost exclusively on the forty days. His discussion of Paul's conversion, for example, is likened and grouped with the forty day appearances and is followed by a discussion of the Emmaus road encounter (III/2, 470-72). One might expect a discussion of Hebrews instead. For a discussion of ascension in the NT see Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, Chapter Two, as well as NT references to the ascension and a brief diagram of the structure of Hebrews in appendix A, 275-277 and 279-280.

the activity Christ by his Spirit – in word, sacrament, and other spiritual gifts. So in the present time, the time of the community before the eschaton, Jesus is contemporaneous by the work of the Holy Spirit.

A discussion of the ascension in connection to the resurrection is found in ‘The Verdict of the Father’ in IV/1 as well. Immediately after declaring the risen Christ Lord of time, Barth provides a fine print section on the intercession or ascension time.<sup>74</sup> Here he reflects on a number of NT passages, eventually focusing on Hebrews, which includes statements on Jesus as high priest, whose sacrifice has power forever and who gains an eternal redemption.<sup>75</sup> The activity of the ascended Lord also includes making intercession for the Church (Heb 7:25). This is summed up in the temporal language of Hebrews 13:8: He is “the same yesterday, today and forever” (IV/1, 314). The intercession, in fact, is related to the main question of the subsection, “How does the atonement made then and there come to us and become our atonement?” (ibid.). The answer lies in recognizing that the Living Lord “is in eternity and therefore today now, at this very hour, our active and effective Representative and Advocate before God and therefore the real basis of our justification and hope” (IV/1, 314-15). So rather than being caught up in the problem of the necessary truths of reason and the contingent truths of history, believers are to realize the reality of their present moment under Christ.<sup>76</sup> The human response is not to be preoccupied with questions of how Christ is made relevant,

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<sup>74</sup> As he states: “He not only did but does stand before God for us”, and “he who died, yea rather, who is risen, is at the right hand of God” (IV/1, 314).

<sup>75</sup> These include Rom 8:34 f; I John 2:1f; the high priestly prayer of John 17, and Hebrews 4:14, 5:6, 6:20, 7:17, 7:24, 8:1, 9:12, and 10:14, 19.

<sup>76</sup> “There is no moment in which Jesus Christ is not Judge and High Priest and accomplishes all these things. There is no moment in which this perfect tense is not a present. There is no moment in which He does not stand before God as our Representative who there suffered and died for us and therefore speaks for us. There is no moment in which we are viewed and treated by God except in light of this *repraesentatio* and *oblatio* of His Son” (IV/1, 315).



but rather to offer “prayer in the name of Jesus” (IV/1, 314-15).<sup>77</sup> Though he does not provide a more detailed exposition of the intercessory activity, it is evident Barth holds it as a basic dogmatic presupposition.

Despite this brief exposition of the intercession, the structural problem of *CD IV* in relation to the *triplex munus* still remains. That is, following a Chalcedonian logic rather than the descent and ascent of the God-man, the role of High Priest corresponds to the descent of God, King to the ascent of man, and Prophet to the God-man. Jesus Christ as high priest in this schema is reserved for the cross and a full exposition of the ascended high priesthood is undeveloped.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, for Barth, the contemporaneity of Jesus Christ, and consequently the solution to the problem of faith and history, is based on the ascended Lord and his representative work.

After making clear the basis of contemporaneity in the resurrected and ascended One, Barth moves to the anthropological sphere. Here it is the time of the community that corresponds to the reality of the crucified, risen, and ascended Christ. The beginning of this time occurs with the end of the forty days in the ascension. While the forty days were the direct, visible, and audible *parousia* of Jesus Christ in time and space, this time came to an end. As in III/2, the ascension is viewed as a sign. But the focus here is not the ascension as the signification of the end of the forty days, but as the “sign of His exaltation to the right hand of God, to eternal life and rule; of this transition to a presence which is eternal and therefore embraces all times” (IV/1, 318). There begins, then,

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<sup>77</sup> Prayer “which we expect to be heard only . . . because God has loved and loves and will love the one who offers it as a lost sinner in Jesus Christ, because therefore, Jesus Christ has come between this one and God, and is there between today and every day” (IV/1, 314-15).

<sup>78</sup> According to T. Torrance, after he pointed out the lack of exposition of ascension activity in *CD IV* to Barth in their last conversation, Barth suggested that Torrance rewrite parts of *CD IV* to supplement this! See *Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 133-35. See as well Farrow, “Karl Barth on the Ascension”, 141-143.

another form of his *parousia*, which is characterized “as a time in which He was no longer, or not yet again, directly revealed and visible and audible and perceptible (as He had been) either to the disciples, the community, or the world” (ibid.). And as in III/2, this intercession time of his invisible presence needs mediation in the corresponding time of the community. While Barth earlier rejected proclamation, tradition, and recollection as mediation in IV/1, if they are understood as the human effort to bridge the historical horizons of present and past, he now views them under the mediating work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>79</sup> The work of the ascended Lord by the Spirit necessarily includes these forms of mediation.<sup>80</sup> Within this time of the community, moreover, there is the human response of repenting, believing, and accepting the altered situation between God and humanity. This provides the basis and telos of the community.<sup>81</sup> Thus, Christians exist in the activity of receiving the gift of salvation in faith and then making it known to the rest of humanity.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> “There began a time in which He was and continues to be and ever again will be directly present and revealed and active in the community by His Spirit, the power of His accomplished resurrection (although not, of course, without that mediating ministry)” (IV/1, 318). Or, “It understands and attests the Crucified, therefore, as the Resurrected, the One who for us took His place for ever at the right hand of the Father, who therefore lives and reigns in every age, who from there speaks and acts and works on earth, in human history, by His Spirit, in the power of His resurrection as it is disclosed and given to His disciples and enlightens and guides them” (IV/1, 319).

<sup>80</sup> In a note on scripture, in particular, Barth argues that the believer cannot expect to look at the texts assembled by the NT community as typical historical sources since they are the instrument of the living Lord as he reveals who he is to the community (IV/1, 320). For a description of this mediation, with a focus on scripture, see Andrew Burgess, *The Ascension in Karl Barth*. For a bibliology that places scripture within the ontological context of God’s self-revealing work see John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>81</sup> As Barth explains: “What remains for them is high and appropriate and joyful and stringent enough – to welcome the divine verdict, to take it seriously with full responsibility, not to keep their knowledge of it to themselves, but by the witness of their existence and proclamation to make known to the world which is still blind and deaf to this verdict the alteration which has in fact taken place by it. Their existence in the world depends upon the fact that this alone is their particular gift and task” (IV/1, 317, 318-19).

<sup>82</sup> Or, when discussing the fifth point, Barth suggests the commitment and struggle needed for Christian life. Because Jesus lives humanity too receives new direction, but he is not an easy going Lord, Barth suggests, “But he is stern in that He prevents us from going back or looking back, demanding that we should take up our little cross – our cross, not His – and follow Him, but follow Him where He Himself has long since carried His own, by way of Golgotha to the throne of God, to lay it down there with all the sin

This time of the Church and its faith is based moreover on the outpouring of the Spirit. Later in the subsection Barth states more explicitly the importance of the outpouring of the Spirit for the faith of the community. Again, in contrast to Bultmann and others who would have belief in the resurrection as a predicate of apostolic faith or preaching,<sup>83</sup> Barth insists that the resurrected One is the foundation of the community's faith and the work of the Spirit is the actual cause of this faith.<sup>84</sup> The foundation of the forty days and his ascension thereafter only become real in faith for the disciples through the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus Pentecost is fundamental for understanding the beginning of the interim time. As found in I/1, the Spirit completes the movement of God by impartation; which will be the subject of the next chapter.

Barth struggles with the ascension and the heavenly session. They are only discussed in relation to the resurrection and often in fine print sections. Clearly for Barth, the resurrection is the focal point in the redirecting work of recapitulation. There are various reasons for this. There is the basic focus on the resurrection and forty days because this is the first episode in the second history of Jesus Christ, which is denied by Bultmann and others. Yet it is also clear that the resurrection functions as an unveiling event. In III/2 it unveils the identity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and in IV/1 it unveils the atonement for humanity completed on the cross. Following these functions, the resurrection takes on the temporal role of a transition event. It is the transition to the

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and guilt of the whole world, with our death, and to receive in our name as the obedience Son of the Father the grace of everlasting life" (IV/1, 345).

<sup>83</sup> Barth here critiques views that try and do away with the historical character of the resurrection, in particular Schleiermacher, Seeberg, and Biedermann, IV/1, 340-41.

<sup>84</sup> As he explains: "It is only in and with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that the faith of the disciples is revealed as such and becomes a historical factor. It is only there that they become what they are here ordained and commissioned to be – those who bear the *kerygma*. It is only there that the community develops from its original form as the company of disciples believing in the living Jesus Christ into the Church which grows and expands in the world. It is only there that there is laid the indispensable foundation of this building which does inevitably follow the Easter happening" (IV/1, 338).

further history of Jesus Christ that includes the appropriation by believers of the completed work on the cross. Only in light of this defence and exposition of the resurrection do the ascension (as a sign) and heavenly session receive attention. The nature of ascension time, moreover, is a veiling, the time of the hidden presence of the risen Lord who mediates his presence to believers in word and sacrament by the agency of the Spirit.

#### *4.2.2.4 The Eschatological Completion of Time: Hints, Problems, and Suggestions*

The redirecting of time by Jesus-history does not end with ascension time; its completion occurs with the glorious return – or, as Barth prefers the unveiling -- of the resurrected and ascended One. The recapitulating history of the incarnate Son culminates in the final return of the Son in glory to judge the living and the dead. What was anticipated in pretemporality, and actualized supratemporally, will come to completion posttemporally.

It has been argued thus far that time formally understood (either as allotted time or the rational-linear past, present, future) is something of an empty vessel that needs to be filled. This ‘filling’ of time means that time is ‘of’ or ‘for’ this or that activity. It has been argued that the Father creates time for covenantal relations (created time), while sinful humanity rejects this and uses time for rebellious activity and existence (fallen time), but God graciously intervenes in the history of Israel, Jesus Christ, and the Church.

Following this interpretation, with the completion of time one would expect Barth to suggest how the being and activity of the Son fills time anew in the eschaton, thus allowing humanity to share in eternal life as redeemed creatures; implying some sort of eschatological temporality suitable for this eternal life. While there is some indication

that Barth thought of Jesus Christ filling and fulfilling time in such a manner, there is also evidence that for Barth time as the *Existenzform* of creature ceases to exist. If this is the case, it is unclear how the reciprocal, asymmetrical, and covenantal relations between God and humanity are fulfilled in the eschaton. If time is the *Existenzform* of the creature wherein relations with God and other humans occur, then there must be some form of time if these relations are to be perfected. That is, it is difficult to conceive of eternal *life* for humans in their eschatological existence without some form of temporality. To explain this unresolved tension in Barth, the material that suggests the being and activity of Jesus Christ finally fulfilling time will be examined first and the material suggesting the cessation of temporality in the eschaton second.

While during ascension time Jesus Christ is invisibly present and mediates himself to believers in word and sacrament by the Spirit, his final return in glory to judge the living and the dead will mean his visible, audible, and universal presence. Thus Barth makes it clear that the redirecting movement of Jesus-history will include this future completing activity. There are numerous indications of this in the discussions of time being examined.<sup>85</sup>

In III/2, Barth discusses Jesus Christ in relation to the eschatological future. He makes clear that his being in time is not confined to the past but includes “a being in the future, a coming being” (III/2, 485). Looking from the Easter time of the NT community, Barth peers ahead to Jesus Christ as the Judge, Consummator, and new Creator. In this section, however, there is little exposition of what this final eschaton entails but focuses on Jesus Christ as the foundation of Christian hope and the proleptic nature of the

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<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately, the fine print discussion supporting posttemporality in II/1 (631 ff) is more concerned with Barth’s reading of and relation to eschatological thought since the Reformation, though it is full of important bibliographic material and valuable in this way.

ecclesial time before the final, general, and universal revelation of Jesus Christ.<sup>86</sup> Thus Christian hope is not based on a “progressive immanent development” or a future “Utopia” (III/2, 486), but rather on the visible manifestation of the risen Lord.<sup>87</sup> While Barth admits the NT does not always speak consistently in its eschatology, he argues it always speaks consistently “in all dimensions and relationships christologically” (III/2, 486). In fact, although what the apostles and their community witnessed was nothing short of the conclusive, definitive and general revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ in the resurrection, this is merely a ‘foretaste’ or ‘glimpse’ of the eschaton.<sup>88</sup> And while Jesus’ resurrection and his final return in glory appear to be two separate events, they are already one event for the resurrected One because he who *was* is he who will *come*.<sup>89</sup>

Therefore the Christian is not to think of the last things without thinking of the last One.

The final resurrection, judgment, restoration, and perfection of eternal life are predicates

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<sup>86</sup> The focus is clearly on Jesus Christ as the foundation of Christian eschatology: “As we must never forget, its gaze is always on Him. It may look backwards to His past even as far as the eternal counsel of God. It may look to His present at the right hand of God, from which he rules today by His Spirit. Or it may look to the future and His general and conclusive revelation. But in every case it looks only to Him” (III/2, 492). This is substantiated with exegesis in a fine print section later in the discussion (III/2, 493 ff). Yet throughout the discussion Barth only mentions in passing the general revelation, justification, the new cosmos, and the final kingdom (III/2, 487).

<sup>87</sup> “He who comes is the same as the He who was and who is. The Resurrected Himself, therefore, is already He who comes, who restricts His coming to the circle of His then followers, and then interrupts it, to resume and complete it at a later point. For what took place in the resurrection of Jesus was already in the concealment and temporal isolation of this event the revelation of the kingdom of God, of the gracious Judge of all men, and of the life of all the dead. Nothing which will be has not already taken place on Easter Day – included and anticipated in the person of the one man Jesus. And so Jesus in his coming is simply the risen Jesus resuming and completing His coming and thus vindicating that beginning and promise” (III/2, 489).

<sup>88</sup> He explains: “But his glory, although it was His own, was also His glory for them; His glory as the inheritance of eternal life ordained for them; His glory as the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. This is what encountered the participants in the forty days in His Easter revelation. This is what they were privileged to see and hear and touch, to behold as well as to believe, during this period. . . . They were already witnesses of His full, conclusive, definitive and general revelation. For this revelation is His visibility for and to the creatures as the Saviour of whom He came and was crucified and raised in the whole existence of His own in the community and also in the world of which the community is ordained to be the salt and light. . . . The first disciples received this enlightenment already. They say that it had all been done for them and for the whole world. They were granted at this point a foretaste of their inheritance and a glimpse of the new creation” (III/2, 487-488).

<sup>89</sup> For “Him they are a single event. The resurrection is the anticipation of His *parousia* as His *parousia* is the completion and fulfillment of the resurrection” (III/2, 490).

of his return (ibid.).<sup>90</sup> Thus the foundation of Christian hope rests on the final return and universal unveiling of the one who was resurrected and disappeared into heaven.<sup>91</sup>

There are also glimpses of the final fulfillment of time in the discussion of IV/1. Here again the focus is on the risen Lord as the foundation of eschatological hope for the community. The community not only looks back to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as altering the human situation before God, but also forward to the final and general manifestation of this in the eschaton, the final *parousia* of Jesus.<sup>92</sup> The final *parousia* will mean a definitive unveiling not only for Christians but for all of humanity: the manifestation of the judge, the revelation of their sonship, and a general resurrection of the dead (IV/1, 326).<sup>93</sup> The community is not to look at what is not yet but look to its living Lord who was, is, and will be -- the coming Lord (IV/1, 327-28). This includes the general resurrection, final judgment, and the release of creation from bondage. This consuming work will result from a final, irrevocable, and universal unveiling of his

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<sup>90</sup> Similarly, when summarizing the Gospel of John, Barth states that the successive events of Jesus-history are to be viewed in their connection as one event. "In fulfillment of the promise: 'I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you' (Jn. 14:18), Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and *parousia* are here seen as a single event, with much the same foreshortening of perspective as when we view the whole range of the Alps from the Jura. . . . The fourth gospel shows us that it is necessary to understand the event of Easter and that of the *parousia*, with the intervening history of the community under the present power of the Holy Spirit, as different moments of one and the same act" (III/2, 497).

<sup>91</sup> He rhetorically asks: "Does [the community] realize that the end before it is the consuming coming of the Lord, the glory, the liberation, but also the judgment of the final revelation to which it now moves, so that its present life and action is weighed in the balances of his future?" (ibid). To answer this, Barth examines various Matthean passages: the parable of the ten virgins, Matt 25:1-5; the parable of the talents, Matt 25:14-30; and the discourse on the last judgment, Matt 25:31-46 (III/2, 505-508).

<sup>92</sup> "From the present of the Crucified in which they stand, trusting and obeying the divine verdict, they reach forward to a new and different and complete and definitive form of His presence. . . . From the alteration of the human situation which He has brought about and in which they stand, they stretch out to its definitive manifestation" (IV/1, 323).

<sup>93</sup> For some comments on the general resurrection see IV/1, 329-30; here Barth discusses the hiddenness of the final resurrection in relation to the faith found in the interim period and the sight to be known in the final eschaton.

presence.<sup>94</sup> Thus there is ample evidence for what might be called the eschatological filling and fulfilling of time.

Yet inconsistencies arise when Barth actually reflects on the nature of time in the final consummation. The conceptual tension is seen when comparing the previous passages with his brief discussion of the eternal preservation of all times in III/3.<sup>95</sup> Here Barth wants to make the point that the limited time of each creature is eternally preserved in God's life. While he rejects the necessary immortality of the creature, this does not mean the allotted time of the creature is lost to the eternal God. In the final eschaton and the completion of history, which occurs with the final and general revelation of Jesus

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<sup>94</sup> Despite hinting at the final judgment and resurrection of the dead, Barth still insists that the difference between the penultimate and ultimate *parousia* is one of manifesting what has occurred on the cross: "From both standpoints it is the situation, which has been radically and irrevocably altered in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is only the manifestation of the alteration that is different in the time which moves from the sign of the ascension to its end. It is only a provisional manifestation which will yield to the final in the time of that coming and revelation of the Resurrected which we still await. The one crucified and risen Jesus Christ is the object of New Testament faith and the content of New Testament hope. There can, therefore, be no question of understanding the alteration as more real and complete in its final form and less real and complete in its provisional" (IV/1, 328). Though Barth hints at the eschatological judgment, resurrection, and the salvation of non-human creation in general, this does not include, in his view, an alteration! For Barth, it seems, these final events will be but a manifestation of what has already occurred on the cross. This is problematic. Surely one must see here evidence to support the critiques of Ford and Farrow. Farrow's, in particular, highlights the problems of viewing the atonement as completed on the cross with no expectation of future soteriological alteration. Barth's view of the final eschaton as a universal manifestation of what has occurred on the cross is problematic if he wants to take seriously a resurrection of the dead, final judgment, and the releasing of creation from its bondage. Does not the eschatological redemption include further alteration of the situation between God and humanity even while it completes the salvation inaugurated on the cross?

<sup>95</sup> One significant portion of the discussion is the following: "And the time will come when the created world as a whole will only have been. In the final act of salvation history, i.e., in the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Foundation and Deliverer and Head of the whole of creation, the history of creation will also reach its goal and end. It will not need to progress any further, it will have fulfilled its purpose. Everything that happened in the course of that history will then take place together as a recapitulation of all individual events. It will be made definitive as the temporal end of the creature beyond which it cannot exist any more. Its life will then be over, its movement and development completed, its notes sounded, its colours revealed, its thinking thought, its words said, its deeds done, its contacts and relationships with other creatures and their mutual interaction closed, the possibilities granted to it exploited and exhausted. And in all this it will somehow have a part in that which Jesus Christ has been and done as its Foundation and Deliverer and Head. And since the creature itself will not be there, time which is the form of its existence will not be there. Yet this does not mean that its preservation by God is terminated" (III/3, 87-88).



Christ, the life of the creature is preserved by God's eternity. The creature, so it seems, has a place in eschatological existence.

Yet Barth also states that time and history will end. This includes not only time in general, "the totality of everything that was and is and will be will only have been" (III/3, 90), but also time as the *Existenzform* of the creature, time experienced as the succession of past, present and future and allotted time. He states that the creature "will not need any continuance of temporal existence. And since the creature itself will not be there, time which is the form of existence of the creature will not be there" (III/3, 88). The reason he gives for this termination is the sufficiency of time and history as such. Barth rhetorically asks: "What need has it of more time and duration, of more reality and activity, when in the limits marked off for it God has already given to it all things, namely, Himself, in the person of His Son, when its end was to be manifested as the recipient of that gift?" (III/3, 89). Thus, the limited time of history and individuals is sufficient for God's work with the creature and the human response.

Nevertheless this end of history and time is not destruction but an eternal preservation: "this does not mean that its preservation by God is terminated" (III/3, 88). Barth notes a "recapitulation" of created existence and states that God's preservation of creation and the creature remains. He explains this in negative and positive terms. Negatively, the eternal preservation of the creature means that "its destruction is excluded." Though the creature is a "transitory speck of dust", God's love for it is the last word. Positively, then, the creature "can continue eternally before Him" (III/3, 89). No times will escape the eternal preservation of God.<sup>96</sup> It may be recalled that for Barth

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<sup>96</sup> "Everything will be present to Him exactly as it was or is or will be, in all its reality, in the whole temporal course of its activity, in its strength or weakness, in its majesty or meanness. He will not allow

God's eternity as *simul* not only anticipates and is synchronic with all times but recapitulates all past times, even times beyond human experience.<sup>97</sup> Barth reiterates this in relation to eternal preservation in III/3.<sup>98</sup> Specifically in relation to posttemporality, God's eternity recapitulates all times – all that was, is, and will be.<sup>99</sup> This includes then not only human temporality but also the times of creation, even the history which is not observed by human experience but present to God's eternity: "no wing-beat of the day-fly in far-flung epochs of geological time" will be lost (III/3, 96).

While one may appreciate Barth's view of maintaining the creature after death without resorting to the immortality of the soul, or his insistence that what is preserved is the particular allotted lives that were actually lived (there is no escapism here),<sup>100</sup> the

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anything to perish, but will hold in it the hollow of His hand as He has always done, and does, and will do" (III/3, 90).

<sup>97</sup> See Chapter One, section 1.3.3.

<sup>98</sup> "There was nothing that He could not perceive and know of all that began to be, and was, and was preserved by Him. Nothing could escape Him, or perish. Everything was open and present to Him: everything in its own time and within its own limits; but everything open and present to Him. Similarly, everything that is, as well as everything that was, is open and present to Him, within its own limits. And everything that will be, as well as everything that was and is, will be open and present to Him, within its own limits" (III/3, 89).

<sup>99</sup> He describes the eschatological recapitulation of times in this captivating passage: "And one day – to speak in temporal terms – when the totality of everything that was and is and will be will only have been, then in the totality of its temporal duration it will still be open and present to Him, and therefore preserved: eternally preserved; revealed in all its greatness and littleness; judged according to its rightness or wrongness, its value or lack of value; but revealed in its participation in the love which He Himself has directed towards it. Therefore nothing will escape Him: no aspect of the great game of creation; no moment of human life; no thinking thought; no word spoken . . . no suffering or joy . . . no wing-beat of the day-fly in far-flung epochs of geological time. Everything will be present to Him exactly as it was or is or will be, in all its reality, in the whole temporal course of its activity, in its strength or weakness, in its majesty or meanness. He will not allow anything to perish, but will hold it in the hollow of His hand as He has always done, and does, and will do. He will not be alone in eternity, but with the creature. He will allow it to partake of His own eternal life. And in this way the creature will continue to be, in its limitation, even in its limited temporal duration . . . In all the unrest of its being in time it will be enfolded by the rest of God, and in Him it will itself be at rest in the rest of God. This is the eternal preservation of God. It is not a second preservation side by side with or at the back of the temporal. It is the secret of the temporal. It is the secret of the temporal which is already present in the fullness of truth, which is already in force. And yet it has still to be present in the fullness of truth; it has still to come into force; it has still to be revealed in all its clarity" (III/3, 89-90).

<sup>100</sup> Eberhard Jüngel explains this idea of the preservation of one's limited life in God's eternity: "Salvation then, can only mean that it is *the life man has lived* that is saved, not the man is saved *out* of this life. The meaning of salvation is that God saves this life which we live. It involves the participation of this earthly, limited life in God's eternity; the sharing of this temporally limited life in God's eternity; the participation

termination of temporality altogether is questionable. It is unclear how humans could exist, even in the state of glorification in the eschaton, without some form of temporality. In *CD III/2* Barth defines human nature as *imago dei*, ensouled bodies, and existence in time. How can humanity exist if this universal *Existenzform* is taken away? While allotted time, with its definite beginning and end is transformed, it is unclear what glorified existence in the eschaton, including resurrected embodiment, would look like without some form of temporality. The physicist and theologian John Polkinghorne, for example, calls into question eschatological views that atemporalize human existence. He first explains that time is an essential feature of the universe:

Just as it is intrinsic to humanity to be embodied, so it is surely intrinsic to our being that we are temporal creatures. General relativity has taught us that in this universe space, time and matter all belong together in a single indivisible theoretical embrace. . . . Matter curves spacetime and the geometry of spacetime curves the paths of matter, so together they constitute a package deal.<sup>101</sup>

Furthermore, if eschatological existence is to be a new or transformed creation, and not the destruction of nature as such, then Polkinghorne argues that “human destiny beyond death will no more be atemporal than it will be disembodied, though, once again, there will also be a dimension of discontinuity, so that the ‘time’ of the world to come is not just a prolongation of the time of this world, or simply its immediate successor. Rather, it is a new time altogether, possessing its own independent nature and integrity.”<sup>102</sup> Though Polkinghorne does not elaborate, his hints can be taken to imply that the time of the

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of a life which has incurred guilt in the glory of God. To share in God’s glory means that man is honourably acquitted of his guilt. It is as finite that man’s finite life is *made eternal*. Not by endless extension – there is no immortality of the soul – but through participation in the very life of God. Our life is *hidden* in his life. In this sense the briefest form of the hope of resurrection is the statement: ‘God is my eternity.’ He will make everything whole; everything, including what we have been. Our *person* will then be our *manifest history*” (*Death: the riddle and the mystery*, 120).

<sup>101</sup> John Polkinghorne, *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 156.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 156-157.

eschaton will have a different quality. This would be commensurate with the interpretation of Barth thus far. The difference between created, fallen, and ecclesial time is not time's structure as past, present and future, but whether time is filled with the encounter between God and humanity, or with sinful human action. Barth could have extended such thinking to include time in the eschaton. That is, the successive nature of time would remain though it is 'filled' with the activity of eternal life. The 'quality' of time would result from the eschatological glorification of the creature and creation in the eternal fellowship with God.<sup>103</sup>

There are perhaps different reasons for the eschatological cessation of temporality in Barth's view. Concerning internal dogmatic components, Christiaan van Driel in his recent dissertation connects this ending of creaturely time and space to Barth's doctrine of Nothingness. *Das Nichtige*, the ominous and often ambiguous force arising from God's rejection (the other side of election), lends to the tendency in Barth of what van Driel terms "creational entropy", which implies that "creation in and by itself lapses into evil by ontological necessity."<sup>104</sup> And what "renders whether a being is subject to sin, evil and the threat of *das Nichtige*, depends on whether it is self-grounded or not. . . . For God

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<sup>103</sup> Polkinghorne points to remnants of Greek thinking behind this type of problem: "Behind the ingrained theological suspicion of temporality there hovers the Platonic ghost of the idea that the unchanging is always to be preferred to the changing, that perfection is a static state and not a dynamic process, that being is better than becoming. . . . But there is no necessary connection between change and decay, between temporality and transience" (ibid., 157). For a view of eschatological time which moves in this direction see Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 279 ff; and *Science and Wisdom*. Trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 98 ff. Similarly, in a brief discussion of existence in the eschaton as pure hospitality, which incidentally draws on Irenaeus, see Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 257 ff.

<sup>104</sup> Christiaan van Driel, "Incarnation Anyway: Arguments for Supralapsarian Christology" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2006), 181. Similarly, Douglas Farrow notes the negative correlativity between God and creation evident in various places in the *CD* ("Karl Barth on the Ascension: An Appreciation and Critique", 143 ff). He suggests that there is a "false correlativity and opposition between God and man which appears (in spite of all that Barth has achieved to the contrary) to be a problematic feature of the *Dogmatics* at several levels" (ibid., 147). The origins of this are difficult to detect, perhaps in Barth's version of supralapsarian Christology, his doctrine of nothingness, or even Barth's actualism (ibid.).

to overcome *das Nichtige* is therefore to give it a ‘share in his own life’ – that is, to assume creation in the divine life.”<sup>105</sup> Following this, there is a rejection of human agency, and thus time, in the eschaton. For such an existence “would imply an ontological ‘overagainstness’ between the Creator and the creature; but it is exactly such overagainstness which gives space for creation’s entropy. Only if the creature exists no longer in its own being and agency, but is incorporated in the divine life, is it safe.”<sup>106</sup> If van Driel is correct, Barth’s doctrine of Nothingness leans toward a view of creation in which the creature must lose its agency, and thus time, if it is to have eternal life. This overrides temporality as a permanent feature of the creature’s *Existenzform*.

As for external non-dogmatic components of Barth’s construction, his failure to think more critically about the connection between subjective and objective time may be recalled.<sup>107</sup> As already noted in Chapter Three, although Barth views human existence in general as embodied (soul and body, temporal existence), he does not fully integrate subjective time within the objective, especially the succession of past, present, and future within in the space-time continuum of the cosmos. The objective time of the cosmos is based on its movement, and the subjective time of human consciousness is a result of being embedded within this. But if time as the form of existence of the creature ceases to exist then it is also implied that the movement of the cosmos ceases as well. But to suggest that the cosmos and the creature will cease in all such movement seems too radical a discontinuity between present existence and the eschatological one. So while Barth does place human time within the cosmos he does not critically think this through.

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> The reference to the ‘internal’ and ‘external’ components of Barth’s comes from Ingolf Dalferth; see section 2.1 of the second chapter below.

Could it be that Barth is being misread here? In the same passage he does have some positive content concerning human existence in God's eternal preservation. Barth suggests, for example, that God "will not be alone in eternity, but with the creature. He will allow it to partake of His own eternal life. And in this way the creature will continue to be, in its limitation, even in its limited temporal duration" (III/3, 90). Is this not a positive relation? In the end however this eternal relation is in contrast to existence in time. "In all the unrest of its being in time it will be enfolded by the rest of God, and in Him it will itself be at rest in the rest of God. This is the eternal preservation of God" (ibid.). Despite Barth's positive intentions then, the eternal life with God is an eternal rest, seeming to imply some form of static existence.<sup>108</sup>

The thrust of the interpretation in this dissertation would lead to the idea that the filling and fulfilling of time by the Son, including his coming in glory to judge the living and the dead, would mean an eschatological existence in which the covenantal partnership between God and humanity is fulfilled and the relations between God, humanity, and creation are perfected. One would think that such an existence would mean the continuation of some form of temporality; after all, would not such an embodied existence of the creature be implied in the resurrection of the dead? Such a

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<sup>108</sup> In the earlier work *Credo*, published in German in 1935, Barth briefly discussed eschatological existence, seeming to give human temporality more place: "Resurrection of the flesh means therefore that our existence as *carnal* existence, our heaven and earth as theatre of revolt, our time as time of Pontius Pilate, will be dissolved and changed into an existence, into a heaven and earth, into a time, of *peace* with God without conflict, of that peace which, hidden from our eyes in the flesh of Christ, is already a reality" (*Credo*, translated with a foreword by Robert McAfee Brown. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962: 169). Here Barth suggests an eschatological time of final peace. Yet he is quite cautious in describing what eternal life might look like: "we, who must do our thinking from this time that is known to us, have not the slightest idea what we are saying when we talk either positively or negatively about the time of that God with Whom we shall live in unbroken peace in eternal life. We can spare ourselves many unnecessary pains (for this is really enough to satisfy us) if we hold fast to what is the decisive feature of eternal life: that it is eternal in its being lived in the unveiled light of God and in so far participating in God's own life" (ibid., 171).

view appears problematic for Barth if all forms of time cease to exist in the eschaton, as seems to be his view.

#### **4.3. Conclusion**

Despite such problems, it should be clear that for Barth the fulfilling time by the Son is anticipated in pretemporal eternity and recapitulates all times by retrieving the purpose of created time and redirecting all times toward their fulfillment in the eschaton. In this way, Jesus-history is definitive for the full breadth of God's pretemporal, supratemporal, and posttemporal activity and life. Yet this history is only possible because within the eternal divine life the Father generates the Son, and with the Son gives the Spirit, and because in pretemporality the Son was elected to be the reconciler between God and humanity. The fulfilling time of the Son is thus analogous to his role within the eternal Trinity and his election to become incarnate. This is the eternal intra-divine possibility before the temporal actualization. Yet the recapitulating of time by Jesus Christ also includes human participation by the Holy Spirit in ecclesial time. This is the concern of the next chapter.

## Chapter Five

### **The *Vinculum* of Contemporaneity: The Holy Spirit and the Time of the Community**

When describing human participation in eternity Barth once again rejects theological abstraction. Creaturely participation in eternity is not a matter of the mystical experience of timelessness or belief in the inevitable progress of history toward the Kingdom of God, but rather of believers participating in the reconciling history of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> This occurs penultimately in the time of the church and ultimately in the eschaton.

This time of the community however must be understood within the full scope of the eternity-time relation. According to Barth, the Son was pretemporally elected to become incarnate and mediate the relation between God and humanity. The church and individuals were elected in him. Thus it has been argued that Jesus-history was anticipated in eternity, the creation of time, and the history of Israel. There never was a time without this primal decision of God. But the time of the Son also recapitulates time by retrieving the original purpose of created time and redirecting all times and history toward the eschaton. The relation of eternity and time in this narrative includes the participation of humanity. In Chapter Three it was argued that God in his fatherly goodness and patience created and preserves human temporality for covenantal relations. The creature rejected this divine purpose however, and lives in fallen time. The forms of time remain (rational-linear and allotted time) though the content or quality of creaturely temporality is disrupted by sinful existence. The movement toward death, for example,

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<sup>1</sup> On the mystical experience of timelessness see Achtnr, *et. al.*, *Dimensions of Time*, 103-108. They briefly discuss Plotinus, Augustine, Boethius, Meister Eckhart, Angelus Silesius, and Schleiermacher.



creates an existential experience of anxiety and fear. Barth argues that the human creatures in their allotted times may be filled with hope and promise given the assumption and defeat of the second death by Jesus Christ. In this chapter human participation in Jesus-history will be given fuller exposition as ecclesial time, or, as Barth prefers, the time of the community.<sup>2</sup>

But in keeping with the broader interpretation, Barth's view of the eternity-time relation is an *analogia trinitaria temporis*. The relation between eternity and time, like the relation between God and creation in general, takes an analogical form. God's creation of and work within time corresponds to his eternal triune being. This may be formally or materially expressed. As noted in Chapter Two, the formal relation is expressed by Barth in the correspondence between the simultaneity of beginning, middle, and end within eternity and the beginnings, middles, and ends of created time. The present interpretation focuses on the material route and argues that for Barth, given that eternity is the differentiating and perichoretic life of Father, Son, and Spirit, there is a corresponding trinitarian pattern in Barth's interpretation of time. It has already been established that the creation and preservation of time are appropriated to the Father, and the recapitulating of time to the Son; so now the work of the Spirit in the time of the community will be treated. Appropriating the time of the community to the Spirit follows the lead of Barth's doctrine of the Trinity in I/1 and his exposition in *CD IV*. In the discussion of Barth's doctrine of the Trinity in the first chapter it was noted that the eternal Spirit is the basis of "communion," "end," and "purpose" within the triune life

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<sup>2</sup> 'Ecclesial time', 'time of the community', and the 'history of community' will be used synonymously. The terms 'middle time' and 'interim time' refer to the time between the forty days and the eschaton which may or may not be referring to the time of the community, since, for example, history in general exists in the middle time as well.

(CD I/1, 363).<sup>3</sup> As such, the Holy Spirit is the triune mode of being that imparts God's revelation unto humanity. Thus, in the expositions of CD IV the Spirit works the subjective realization of the objective justification, sanctification, and vocation of humanity accomplished in the reconciling history of Jesus Christ. The Spirit's particular activity includes the gathering, building up, and sending of the Christian community, as well as awakening faith, quickening love, and enlightening hope in individual believers. While the ascended Jesus Christ lives in his heavenly-*Existenzform* the church exists as his earthly-*Existenzform*, which is his creation by the Spirit. Thus the time of the community, ecclesial time, is the time 'of' this particular activity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

Barth's pneumatology, moreover, incorporates basic features of the Christian tradition. Like Basil of Caesarea, the Spirit is the perfecting cause or end, since the Spirit subjectively imparts unto believers the reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> But like Augustine, within the triune life the Spirit is the bond between the Father and the Son.<sup>6</sup> And as the Spirit mediates the relation between the Father and Son in eternity so the Spirit mediates the relation between Jesus-history and the history of the community. As such the Spirit is the bond of contemporaneity. The Holy Spirit's temporal work *ad*

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<sup>3</sup> It may be added, as pointed out in Chapter Three, that the Spirit as the communion between Father and Son is the intra-divine possibility for the existence of the creature as such; see III/1, 56 ff. As David Guretzki states, the Spirit "is antecedently responsible for maintaining the unity and difference between Father and Son in the immanent Trinity and is therefore the ground by which the unity and difference between God and the temporal creature is maintained" ("The Genesis and Systematic Function of the *Filioque* in Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*" [PhD diss., McGill University, 2006], 226).

<sup>4</sup> Since Chapter Three examined the time of individuals, especially how the cross relativizes the despair and fear of movement toward death, this chapter will not focus on the time of individuals in the church. (Individual allotted time could possibly be supplemented in CD IV with the discussion of the faith, love, and hope created in believers by the Holy Spirit.) This chapter, then, will focus on the collective time of the community.

<sup>5</sup> See Basil of Caesarea, *The Treatise on the Holy Spirit*, Chapter XVI, where this is expounded in relation to creation, reconciliation and redemption (in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol 8. Eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994). In speaking of creation he summarizes "bethink thee first, I pray thee, of the original cause of all things that are made, the Father; of the creative cause, the Son; of the perfecting cause, the Spirit" (XVI, 38).

<sup>6</sup> See Augustine, *The Trinity*, Books VIII and IX.

*extra* is analogous to the eternal role *in se*. The work of the Spirit in ecclesial time will be summarized with reference to the internal and external movements of the community. Internally, the Spirit gathers and builds up the community, while externally sending it into the world. In these movements, moreover, the Holy Spirit's temporal work may be characterized as continuous, dynamic, particular, and unifying. The Spirit *continuously* works within the community until the eschaton. This work is *dynamic* as the community itself is history, event, and act; it is *particular* in each here and now; and it *unifies* that which is different (Jesus Christ and the church, and believers with one another).

Despite what can be gleaned of the Spirit's work in ecclesial time, nevertheless one is left wondering if Barth could have said more. The time of the community is the subject of 62.3 in IV/1, yet the bulk of the material used in this chapter arises from pneumatological sections in IV/2 and IV/3. While Barth defines the time of the community in IV/1, this definition is used to mine these later sections since Barth's treatment in IV/1 is quite minimal. What is more, the central argument of this chapter, that there is a correspondence between the Spirit as the eternal and temporal bond, is most clearly explicated in IV/3, almost hidden away at the end of 72.1, "The People of God in World Occurrence". What this indirect route to Barth's view suggests is that ecclesial time as the time of the Spirit is not a major concern of Barth and is thus insufficiently developed. For example, in III/2 Barth provides a sustained discussion of the phenomenon of subjective temporality with both ancient and modern concerns in view. He rethinks the fleetingness of the present and the movement toward death in light of God's preserving of time and the work of the cross. The anxiety and fear of sinful time may be transformed into covenantal fellowship and hope for eternal life. Similar

substantial reflection on ecclesial time is not found in *CD IV*. Thus while the temporal activity of the Spirit as the bond between Jesus-history and the history of the community fills ecclesial time, there is less description of how this changes the quality of time for believers as a collective history. As discussed in Chapter Two, the narrative nature of time suggests that time is ‘for’ or ‘of’ particular activity that qualitatively transforms the experience of time. This occurs in the discussion of *CD III/2* but not in *CD IV* to the degree that would be expected. Nevertheless, what Barth does say still deserves explication.

Before the main exposition and analysis, however, pertinent issues surrounding the Spirit and the church in Barth need attention. These include the mediating role of the Spirit and the more critical issues surrounding the Spirit and the future, the relation of Christology and pneumatology, and ecclesiology.

### **5.1. The Mediator of Communion**

Despite the mass of pneumatological material in the *CD*, the final volume on redemption that was to focus on the Holy Spirit was never written.<sup>7</sup> Yet much of Barth’s pneumatology can be discerned. As Hunsinger notes, “Barth saw ‘revelation’, ‘reconciliation’, and ‘redemption’ as standing in a set of relationships that were subtle, flexible, and complex.”<sup>8</sup> Thus there is sufficient pneumatological material in the

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<sup>7</sup> As Hunsinger explains: “Everything about the Spirit as seen less directly from the standpoints of revelation and reconciliation was, from the standpoint of redemption, to have been placed at centre stage, redescribed teleologically as a whole, and thereby amplified and enriched. . . . Whereas from the standpoint of reconciliation, the work of the Spirit served the work of Christ; from the standpoint of redemption, the work of Christ served the work of the Spirit” (“The Mediator of Communion: Karl Barth’s doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 149-50).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

doctrines of revelation and reconciliation.<sup>9</sup> Important for the present discussion,

Hunsinger also suggests that these three basic movements of Barth's dogmatics

embraced a complex temporality. Revelation and reconciliation each centered inalienably on what had taken place in the life history of Jesus Christ there and then, while yet involving receptive, eucharistic, and participatory moments, continually, here and now. The relationship between what had already taken place 'there and then' and what continues to take place 'here and now' was, in effect, the decisive issue at stake in Barth's doctrine of the Spirit's saving work, as seen from the standpoints of both revelation and reconciliation.<sup>10</sup>

The movement of God in reconciliation includes, then, the work of the Spirit awakening humanity to the fulfilled time of the Son. This is the temporal work of the eternal Spirit in ecclesial time.

Hunsinger correctly summarizes Barth's pneumatology by stating that the Spirit is the mediator of communion. But this mediation is diverse. Hunsinger explicates the trinitarian ground, Christocentric focus, miraculous operation, communal content, eschatological form, diversified application, and universal scope of Barth's pneumatology. First, following Augustine, within the immanent Trinity the "Spirit is the *koinonia* between the Father and the Son, being at once both its mediator (agential) and yet also its mediation (non-agential, or perhaps better, only indirectly agential), but in any case a primordial, concrete form or *hypostasis* of the one being or *ousia* of God."<sup>11</sup> Second, the work of the Spirit has a christocentric focus. "The Spirit mediates the self-impartation of Jesus himself, through which believers are drawn into union with him in

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<sup>9</sup> Besides discussions on the Spirit interspersed throughout the *CD* and the important sections in IV, see as well I/1, § 12; I/2, §§ 16-18; and III/2, § 46.2. For other studies of Barth's pneumatology see Philip Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord: The Pneumatology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981), and John Thompson, *The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Allison Park: Pickwick, 1991). Rosato's patient exposition is marred by the suggestion that Barth's theology is pneumatocentric – even his exposition does not appear to support this. Thompson attempts to correct this conclusion; Barth's pneumatology always follows from his trinitarianism and Christology, Pentecost follows the Cross and Resurrection.

<sup>10</sup> Hunsinger, "The Mediator of Communion", 149.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

order to receive and return his love.”<sup>12</sup> Third, Hunsinger characterizes the operation of the Spirit in believers as miraculous, analogous to the resurrection.<sup>13</sup> Fourth, the work of the Spirit is communal in content. This communal work includes three foci for the believer: communion with Christ, participation in the communion of the Trinity through Christ, and communion with one another in Christ. In all three facets of communion the Spirit is mediator.<sup>14</sup> Fifth, the Spirit’s work is eschatological in form since he awakens and directs believers to the reality of their being in Christ - which is completed on the cross, continues by faith in the middle time, and will be consummated in the eschaton.<sup>15</sup> As for the diversity of its application and universal scope, sixth and seventh, the Spirit applies the one work of reconciliation to each and all in their own time and place, and works universally in that the distinction between Christians and non-Christians is only a provisional reality.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, then, the Spirit is essential to Barth’s project. In sum: “The Holy Spirit mediates the communion between the Father and the Son within the Holy Trinity. This mediating activity is then paradigmatic for every aspect of the Spirit’s work in relation to the world. In various ways the Spirit’s operation in time reiterates his operation in eternity.”<sup>17</sup> That is, his temporal work is analogous to his eternal role.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 161-62.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 162-167. These five pages give an excellent discussion of the relation of divine and human agency in Barth.

<sup>14</sup> Hunsinger defines communion as “love in knowledge, and knowledge in love, thus fellowship and mutual self-giving. It means sharing and participating in the being of another, without the loss of identity by either partner; for in true fellowship the identity of each is not effaced but enhanced; indeed the identity of each is constituted not in isolation but in encounter” (ibid., 168). Furthermore, “The deepest form of communion, as depicted in the New Testament, is mutual indwelling, an I-Thou relation of ineffable spiritual intimacy (*koinonia*). The Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, is at once the mediator of this indwelling and yet also the indwelling itself, the mediator, the mediation, and the very essence of what is mediated. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of *koinonia*” (ibid.).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 173-79.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 179-84.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 185.

## 5.2. Critical Issues concerning Barth's Pneumatology and Ecclesiology

Having noted the mediating role of the Spirit in Barth, both *in se* and *ad extra*, critical questions of Barth's view can now be asked. Three pertinent issues arise. First, it has been suggested that Barth's discussion of the eternity-time axiom is heavily weighted toward God's being and activity in the past, with either the focus on pretemporal election or the work of the cross. While the doctrines of election and reconciliation point us toward God's pretemporality and work on the cross, the work of the Spirit drawing the church toward the eschaton is reduced if not absent altogether.<sup>18</sup> Wolfgang Vondey, for example, suggests that in Barth "the Spirit directs humankind back in time to Christ but does not point forward to the completion of God's work of salvation in the future."<sup>19</sup> While it is true that the Spirit for Barth points humanity toward the new possibilities that are found in the fulfilled time of Jesus Christ, this is not merely a looking back but also a looking forward. From what has been observed in the last chapter and will be explained here, it can be argued that even if pneumatology is 'subsumed' under Christology, the activity of the Spirit in the eschatological future is ingredient to Barth's view.

A second issue, or perhaps a cluster of issues, concern the relation of Christology and pneumatology. The criticisms here suggest that Barth's christocentrism restricts the person and work of the Spirit. This problem is tied to Barth's complex trinitarian

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<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Jenson, *God After God*, 172ff; and Colin Gunton, *Becoming and Being*, 182 ff.

<sup>19</sup> Wolfgang Vondey, "The Holy Spirit and time in contemporary Catholic and Protestant theology", *SJT* 58:4 (2005): 398. Vondey's proposal to read together contemporary scientific notions of time and a more robust view of the Holy Spirit and time is noteworthy and its development is awaited. Yet he does seem to miss the importance of the ascension and present intercession of Jesus Christ when he states that the Spirit "liberates Christ's historical sacrifice on the cross from its temporal coordinates and propels the redemptive act throughout time towards any person in history" (ibid., 409). Such a statement misses the christological movement. The resurrected and living Saviour is contemporary to the community and believers, though his ascension implies an absence that is mediated by the work of the Spirit in the Church. The Spirit's work is not a reaching back but more a reaching forward and up. The crucified Lord is *now* the resurrected and living One.

theology, including his use of the *filioque*, and issues surrounding the agency of the Spirit.

In the first chapter the linear triune movement of Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness was examined. In Barth's view, the Holy Spirit completes the movement of God's self-revelation by imparting this knowledge unto humanity; the Spirit is the third moment in the veiling-unveiling-impartation schema.<sup>20</sup> In *CD IV*, this pattern is again found when the Spirit imparts to believers knowledge of the atonement completed on the cross. Yet this linear-revelation model of the Trinity is combined with other elements as well. Gary Badcock suggests that Barth unsuccessfully combines the linear concept of divine self-communication with a *filioque* doctrine, wherein the Spirit is the bond between Father and Son.<sup>21</sup>

The problem here is that the Holy Spirit is presented as a middle term between the Father and the Son, rather than as the third term in a divine self-communication, bringing the process to fulfillment. The earlier Revealedness paradigm, therefore, is in conflict with the pneumatology enshrined in the *filioque*. The Revealedness idea, in short, ought to issue in an inner-trinitarian version of the pre-Nicene trinitarian taxis 'from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit,' which from the beginning connoted more than the order of transmission in the saving approach of God to the world. Here, too, the Spirit appears truly as the Spirit of the Son, but as the final moment of the divine outreach in

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<sup>20</sup> The criticism that Barth's focus on epistemology and revelation limits his view of the Trinity and salvation is being left out here. For such criticism see Alan Torrance, *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996). Contra this, Hunsinger suggests that Barth's notion of knowledge includes communion; see "Mediator of Communion", 170, n. 25.

<sup>21</sup> Gary Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 181-183. See as well the important discussions by Rowan Williams ("Barth on the Triune God" in S.W. Sykes ed., *Karl Barth: Studies of his Theological Method* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979]: 147-193) and Robert Jenson ("You Wonder Where the Spirit Went", *Pro Ecclesia* 2:3: 296-304) who similarly note the de-personalising of the Spirit that the *filioque* implies. Williams seeks to find a more pluralist version of the Trinity in *CD IV*, one that gives fuller agency to the Spirit. James Buckley's reading of Barth's ecclesiology, moreover, attempts to find a deeper Catholicity in Barth than what the *filioque* would appear to limit. According to his interpretation, Barth does more than his *filioque* doctrine supposedly allows. He also supplements Barth's view by expanding on the Spirit as the critic and consoler of the church; see "A Field of Living Fire: Karl Barth on the Spirit and the Church", *Modern Theology* 10:1 (January 1994): 81-102; especially 91 and 97 for Barth's deeper catholicity. For a positive reading of the *filioque* in Barth see Hunsinger, "The Mediator of Communion", 154-57; and Guretzki, "*Filioque* in Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*."



the economic sense, and as the third moment of the divine overflow from the Father in the inner-trinitarian sense.<sup>22</sup>

Thus Badcock sees a tension between the *filioque* doctrine, especially as the Spirit is understood as the bond between Father and Son and the idea of the Spirit imparting salvation unto believers. Barth's exposition in *CD* IV however views the linear-revelation and *filioque* models in conjunction. As will be argued below, it is precisely *as* the Spirit is the eternal bond between Father and Son that the Spirit is the mediation between Jesus Christ and believers, the third moment in the triune movement toward humanity. The Spirit's temporal role *ad extra* is analogous to his eternal role *in se*.

Another issue closely related to Barth's use of the *filioque* is the charge of pneumatological subordination. It is suggested that Barth reduces or collapses the work and person of the Spirit into that of the Son; practically resulting in a binitarianism rather than a trinitarianism.<sup>23</sup> In his recent dissertation David Guretzki has thoroughly examined Barth's use of the *filioque*. He rightly concludes that Barth is no subordinationist if this means denying the divinity of the Spirit, which the *filioque* protects, or even the ontic work of the Spirit. But he does point out that Barth generally reads NT passages on the relation of the Spirit and Jesus Christ "through the lens of the post-resurrection, post-ascension giving of the Spirit."<sup>24</sup> Thus it may be the case that this restricts the relation of the Spirit to the humanity of Jesus Christ throughout the *CD* – though this is not a focus of his study.<sup>25</sup> He does suggest however that Barth's use of the *filioque* to describe the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Jenson makes the strongest case for this, see "You Wonder Where the Spirit Went"; while Williams has some similar criticisms, "Barth on the Triune God." Hunsinger notes both agential and non-agential description of the Spirit, but does not suggest this as problematic, "The Mediator of Communion", 153.

<sup>24</sup> David Guretzki, "*Filioque* in Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*", 262.

<sup>25</sup> In other words, that the Son is the giver of the Spirit ought not to displace the fact that he was conceived and anointed by the Spirit (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:20; Luke 3: 21-22; and Luke 4:16-19). Or, as James Buckley

eternal relation of the Father and Son implies a non-agential view of the Spirit: “the Spirit is technically not an external ‘agent’ to the Father and Son, but is internally related to Father and Son as the one who proceeds eternally from their shared being as the Father of the Son, and the Son of the Father.”<sup>26</sup> This will be apparent in the exposition below when it is pointed out that the Spirit is the self-attestation of Jesus Christ and his work is confirmatory. Fully examining these questions in Barth lies beyond the following discussion. It will only be suggested that Barth oscillates between agential and non-agential description of the Spirit, at times seeming to collapse the work of the Spirit into the agency of the Son.

A third issue concerns the tendency of Barth toward a disembodied ecclesiology. To be noted below, the focus of Barth’s ecclesiology is on its invisible Lord who acts in and upon believers by the Spirit. In this account the church is the event of his presence by

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rhetorically asks, what “about the story of the Spirit in creation, speaking through the prophets, the One of whom Jesus was conceived and who descended upon (Mk 1:10) and abided with (John 1:32) Jesus and who raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 4:1)?” (“A Field of Living Fire”, 88). Perhaps the best way of describing this tendency in Barth is to say that his pneumatology is “Pentecostally-centered” (Guretzki, “*Filioque* in Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*”, 262). There is evidence in Barth, however, that the Spirit is central for the birth and incarnation; see Hunsinger, “The Mediator of Communion”, 160; and Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord*, 68-69. Yet in Barth this does not lead to a corresponding relation of the Son and Spirit in the immanent Trinity. Guretzki, for example, critiques Barth’s view that the Spirit’s work in Jesus’ birth and baptism concerns his humanity and does not lead to reflection on eternal trinitarian relations. Barth is inconsistent, since the sending of the Spirit at Pentecost is by the risen and ascended human, Jesus Christ. If Pentecost was the result of the human Jesus sending the Spirit, which leads to the *filioque*, then more reflection on the Spirit’s coming on Jesus in the gospels could lead to a complementary inner trinitarian relation (“*Filioque* in Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*”, 169 f). Guretzki does not pursue his critique of Barth’s Pentecosto-centrism into questioning the *filioque* itself. The strength of his study is pointing out the positive functions of the *filioque* in protecting the divinity of the Spirit and ensuring the unity of Jesus Christ’s and the Spirit’s work *ad extra*. For a study focused on re-conceiving inner trinitarian relations with attention to a fuller view of the Spirit, though not in specific dialogue with Barth, see Thomas Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995).

<sup>26</sup> Guretzki, “*Filioque* in Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*”, 254. Note here that this is not a double procession; the Spirit does not proceed from *both* the Father and the Son. This is one of the corrections Guretzki makes to interpreters of Barth: “the Spirit proceeds from the-common-being-of-the-Father-and-the-Son” (*ibid.*, 177-178, italics removed).

the Spirit, but not essentially embodied in concrete ecclesial practices or institutions. The church for Barth, it seems, is occasionalistic.<sup>27</sup>

Nicholas Healy diagnoses well this problem in Barth. To begin with, Barth has three main ecclesiological principles. The creedal rule, first, states that “the church is an object of belief . . . insofar as it is the ‘event’ (CD IV/1 651) of the calling and upbuilding of people by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>28</sup> Second, the human agency rule suggests “that the reality of the church is made concrete and visible in the form of human activity.”<sup>29</sup> The third and more fundamental rule, christological primacy, “requires that we understand ecclesiology to be a function of Christology.”<sup>30</sup>

The problem, as Healy sees it, is the reduction of human agency. This is evident when Barth chooses *concepts* over *narrative* to describe the church, leading to an unnecessary bifurcation: “[The] church defined as the Body of Christ leads him to make a strong logical distinction between the true and concrete church, on the one hand, and the church of merely human and therefore sinful agency on the other.”<sup>31</sup> There is a sharp distinction between the true, real, *wirkliche Kirche* and the apparent, make-believe,

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<sup>27</sup> Occasionalism is the theory that denies efficient causality between physical objects, implying that God is the immediate cause of every physical event. This view is not being attributed to Barth. Rather the term is used to describe Barth’s tendency to abstract ecclesiology from continuous concrete practices and institutions, focusing instead on the community as an event of the Spirit. It seems that the practices and forms of ecclesial life are tangential and secondary, not permanent or necessary, as the church is an event that happens from time to time. The historical cause and effect of ecclesial life, if you will, may or may not cohere with the true church since the true church is an event of the invisible Lord by his Spirit that is not necessarily continuously embodied in ecclesial practices. Barth’s ecclesiology is occasionalist in that God is the immediate cause of the church as event while ecclesial embodiment, the concrete cause and effect of ecclesial life and practice, seems optional.

<sup>28</sup> Nicholas Healy, “The Logic of Karl Barth’s Ecclesiology: Analysis, Assessment and Proposed Modifications”, *Modern Theology* 10:3 (July 1994): 254-55. Healy, it should be noted, provides a more positive reading of Barth’s ecclesiology in “Karl Barth’s ecclesiology reconsidered”, *SJT* 57:3 (2004): 287-299. In this later article he appreciates more Barth’s primary focus on the church as the work of Jesus Christ by his Spirit. Nevertheless, on my view, his 1994 critique still highlights a weakness in Barth’s ecclesiology.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

*Scheinkirche*. This logical distinction however threatens to turn into a real distinction. For example, Barth cannot discuss the “sinfulness of the church *qua* church”, but resorts to the *Scheinkirche*:

But by doing so he seems to be saying that the church which is really (*wirklich*) the church is in essence a perfect reality. Indeed, such a view would seem to follow necessarily from the definition of the church as denotatively the Body of Christ, for Christ, of course, does not sin. So when the ‘church’ sins it cannot be the action of the Body of Christ. It must therefore be something else that sins, some other entity, namely the ‘false’ church. At such time, the true church must be understood either as non-existent or else perhaps existent in another place. According to Barth, then, sometimes at least the unfaithful Bride of Christ is a different entity than the true Body of Christ.<sup>32</sup>

In the end, Healy continues, Barth’s ecclesiology leans toward abstract concepts. In scripture, by contrast, there is no “division between the empirical church and its essential reality. God is regarded as continually present and active within the one, all-too-human church, a church that remains such in spite of its faithlessness. Scripture speaks both theologically *and* concretely about Israel and the church.”<sup>33</sup> In other words, Barth divides the true church from the ongoing history of the community. Healy’s proposed modification is to recover narrative and not rely solely on concepts for ecclesiology. Narrative would allow for the concrete lived experience and particularity of ecclesial existence.<sup>34</sup> Yet the recovery of narrative may only be a result of what is really needed, a more robust and embodied pneumatology.

Reinhard Hütter insightfully examines Barth’s ‘dialectical catholicity’ as a critique of both Roman Catholicism and liberal Neo-Protestantism. According to Barth, both ecclesiologies misconstrue theological identity and authority; the first locates these

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<sup>32</sup> Healy, “The Logic of Karl Barth’s Ecclesiology”, 259. Or, again, in relation to human agency: “Human actions do not have a sacramental quality, for they can neither cause nor actively mediate God’s presence. What we do in the church is only a medium that may or may not be used by the ‘true and primary acting Subject’ (CD IV/3.2 757). The goal of our work is achieved only if it is accompanied by the work of Jesus Christ. . . . Rather like John the Baptist, then, the church’s function as sign is to point away from itself to Jesus Christ” (ibid., 261).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 266 ff.

in the institutional church the second in the modern turn to the self.<sup>35</sup> Barth criticizes both these views by beginning with eternal election. Barth's view of election, Hütter points out,

secures the Gospel protologically not as an unavoidable expression of God's nature, but as the free eternal decision of God's will to determine all of the Triune God's activity in time through the election of Christ. The eternal reality of this election is mirrored by a community in which God's act in Christ becomes public for all of humanity and whose vocation is nothing less and else than witnessing to God's election in Christ by communicating it to all the world through word and witness.<sup>36</sup>

Following this, the "one true Church can only exist as an event in which, due to the Holy Spirit's action, the human witness fully coincides with its referent, God's graceful election of Christ. . . . Only eschatologically in the full consummation of all will the Church coincide perpetually with its referent."<sup>37</sup> This "transcendental ecclesiology" allows Barth to critique both Roman Catholicism and Neo-Protestantism because the identity of the church is never fully embodied, whether in institutional structures or individualism. "In other words," and this is where catholicity is predicated of Barth's view, "ecclesial difference does not matter as long as the nature and location of the identity of Christ's Body is rightly understood."<sup>38</sup> The problem with focusing on the eschaton as the place of perfect correspondence between human response and divine election is that the practise and institution of the church in the middle time is downplayed. Hütter's modification of Barth's transcendental or disembodied

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<sup>35</sup> Reinhard Hütter, "Karl Barth's 'Dialectical Catholicity': *Sic et Non*", *Modern Theology* 16:2 (April 2000), 142.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

ecclesiology is on the right track. He turns to pneumatological embodiment in concrete ecclesial practices, specifically Luther.<sup>39</sup>

This problem with Barth's ecclesiology has already been anticipated in the examination of Christology and time. Following Ford and Farrow, it was noted that Barth's view of completed salvation on the cross renders ecclesial existence merely a noetic participation. Hütter is correct that an embodied pneumatology with concrete ecclesial practices is needed, but it might also be added that this is necessary not only because Barth has a transcendental view of the church, but because salvation is completed on the cross. A fuller view of salvation is needed, one in which the regeneration of believers in the church through concrete pneumatological practices complements the judgment of sin on the cross.<sup>40</sup> The critical issues surrounding Barth's view of the church arise then from christological and pneumatological issues, and not necessarily from his actualism or his conceptual use of the Body of Christ.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 149 ff. These include: "(1) the proclamation of God's Word and its reception in faith, confession, and deed, (2) baptism, (3) Lord's Supper, (4) the office of the keys, (5) ordination and ordained office, (6) prayer, doxology, catechesis, and (7) the way of the cross" (ibid., 149-150). Given this strong focus on ecclesial practice it is not surprising that Hütter has subsequently been received into the Roman Catholic Communion. Though he does not develop the insight in the direction of ecclesiology, Dawson makes a similar point when he argues that Barth could have complemented the idea that the Spirit was the self-attestation of Jesus Christ with a fuller view of the *Creator Spiritus* wherein the Spirit is given a more distinct role: "If, in the event of the *Auferweckung* the Spirit is active while Jesus is willingly and wholly passive, we have the basis for a supplementary development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as agent of the transition from Jesus Christ to others, not only as the Spirit of the Lord but also as life-giving Spirit", (*The Resurrection in Karl Barth*, 224-25).

<sup>40</sup> Even Hunsinger admits Barth could have made more room for "gradual or cumulative regeneration within the spiritual life of the believer. Although such a place cannot be completely ruled out (e.g., IV/2, pp. 566, 794), it seems undeniable that in Barth's soteriology this aspect is underdeveloped and excessively diminished" ("The Mediator of Communion", 167-68). Jenson suggests that a non-*filioque*/non-*vinculum* view of the Spirit would lead to a fuller view of the Spirit's agency and greater appreciation for the church as a soteriological instrument; see "You Wonder Where the Spirit Went", 302 ff. Of course, Jenson's own solution to this issue is not unproblematic; see Burgess, *Ascension in Karl Barth*, Chapter Eight.

<sup>41</sup> As discussed in Chapter One, there is basic agreement with Farrow in critiquing Barth's crucicentrism, especially in Barth's appropriations of descent-ascent and the *triplex munus* in CD IV. Yet there is less suspicion of Barth's actualism (see *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 244 ff, 286 f, and 291 ff, and "Ascension in Karl Barth", 147). Alternatively, it may be argued that the actualistic and covenantal ontology Barth develops could help articulate a greater emphasis on Jesus-history beyond the cross, resurrection, and

The problems of pneumatological agency and ecclesial disembodiment manifest themselves in the discussions of ecclesial time. First, in the subsection “The Time of the Community” there is little mention of the Spirit’s mediating role, which has to be traced elsewhere. And, second, while eventually in *CD IV* Barth does suggest how the work of Jesus Christ by the Spirit fills the time of the community with various activities there is little description how this activity changes the quality of time for the body of believers. Nevertheless, it is still the case that Barth’s view of ecclesial time can be appropriately described as pneumatological. The time of the church, which is the time of Christ’s invisible presence before the final *parousia*, is created by the mediating activity of the eternal Spirit. This basic dogmatic outline deserves exposition.

### **5.3. Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Community**

Before examining the activity of the community under the rubric of internal and external movements, the general relation of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the community in *CD IV* needs to be noted. This relation is fundamental for all that follows. This discussion will draw from both § 62, “The Holy Spirit and the Gathering of the Christian Community,” and § 72.1, “The People of God in World Occurrence.”

Barth defines the Christian community as the ‘earthly-historical form of the existence of Jesus Christ,’ which corresponds to his ‘heavenly-historical form of existence.’ Throughout his discussion Barth makes it clear that the being of the church exists “only as a definite history takes place,” when it is gathered by Jesus Christ through

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Easter time (which is important for Farrow’s critique, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 249 ff). On Barth’s ontology see Bruce McCormack, *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), especially the essays in “Part 3: Karl Barth’s Theological Ontology.”

the Spirit.<sup>42</sup> He substantiates his actualistic view by suggesting that the terms ἐκκλησία and *communio* imply the being of an event (IV/1, 651-52). This actuality and historicity is clear in his basic definition of the church:

The community is the earthly-historical form of existence [*Existenzform*] of Jesus Christ Himself. . . . The Church is His body, created and continually renewed by the awakening power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ also lives as the Crucified and Risen in a heavenly-historical form of existence; at the right hand of the Father, before whom He is the advocate and intercessor of all men as the Judge who was judged in their place, the One who was obedient for them all, their justification. But He does not live only and exclusively in this form, enclosed within it. . . . He Himself lives in a special element of this history created and controlled by Him. He therefore lives in an earthy-historical form of existence within it. This particular element of human history, this earthly-historical form of existence of Jesus Christ, is the Christian community. He is the Head of this body, the community. And it is the body which has its Head in Him (IV/1, 661).<sup>43</sup>

The being of the community then is constituted by the reality of the crucified, risen, and ascended Lord. In his absence, or as Barth prefers ‘invisibility,’<sup>44</sup> the Son sends his Spirit to awaken and sustain humanity in this new existence. Moreover, since it exists from its living Lord and his Spirit, the community “can only follow the movement of His life;” it

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<sup>42</sup> “To describe its being we must abandon the usual distinctions between being and act, status and dynamic, essence and existence. Its act is its being, its status its dynamic, its essence its existence. The Church *is* when it takes place that God lets certain men live as His servants, His friends, His children, the witnesses of the reconciliation of the world with Himself as it has taken place in Jesus Christ” (IV/1, 650). At the beginning of the paragraph itself Barth makes it clear that the history of believers is to be understood as enclosed within Jesus-history. “The one reality of the atonement has both an objective and a subjective side in so far as . . . it is both a divine act and offer and also an active human participation in it: the unique history of Jesus Christ; but enclosed and exemplified in this is the history of many other men of many other ages” (IV/1, 643).

<sup>43</sup> Or, in relation to the completed work of atonement: “because He is its Head, the Christian community which is His body is the gathering of those men whom already before all others He has made willing and ready for life under the divine verdict executed in His death and revealed in His resurrection from the dead. . . . The verdict of God pronounced in Him not only on them but on the whole world is accepted by them and in force. It has found in them open ears and a ready heart. Ultimately the community will not be alone in this. . . . But this will not take place in the continuity of earthly history, but in its breaking off, in the end and goal of all time as brought about by God the Father (again in the – general – revelation of Jesus Christ)” (IV/1, 661).

<sup>44</sup> A question worth pursuing in Barth’s ecclesiology is his use of visibility-invisibility dialectic instead of presence-absence. Is there enough absence in the invisibility? This could be connected to his view of the ascension for example; see Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 250 ff.



“can reflect and illustrate and that way attest in its own activity His activity” (IV/1, 662).

This awakened humanity, his body, is his earthly-historical *Existenzform*.<sup>45</sup>

Barth supports this definition of the church with an exposition of Paul’s metaphor of the church as the Body of Christ. Like the term *Existenzform*, *σῶμα* has a definite temporal and historical meaning, referring to life and activity, whether positively or negatively.<sup>46</sup> As used by Barth, *σῶμα* refers primarily to Jesus Christ, crucified and raised, and only secondarily to the followers of Jesus gathered by the Spirit. The first use, according to Barth, is a reference to the dead body of Jesus Christ on the cross, where he was the representative of all human bodies and their earthly existence.<sup>47</sup> Next Barth notes the resurrected body and Easter time.<sup>48</sup> Here the salvation of humanity accomplished with his representative death are known to those whom he encountered during this time (IV/1, 644). The mystery of the community, then, is first and foremost the mystery of Jesus Christ himself.<sup>49</sup> He founds, governs, and directs those of humanity who by faith know the secret of historical existence.

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<sup>45</sup> The term *Existenzform* is the same term used in Barth’s anthropology when he describes the temporality of the creature. It connotes the conditions of living in space and time, meant for covenantal relation with God and humanity.

<sup>46</sup> Body (*σῶμα*) is defined as “the seat of the earthly-historical life, so that being in it can indicate the time of man’s being on earth, and the *σῶμα* in which he lives the limitation of that time. But *σῶμα* is also the medium of man’s experience and suffering, the organ or instrument of his activity” (IV/1, 663).

<sup>47</sup> “In Him it was all humanity in its corruption and lostness, its earthly-historical existence under the determination of the fall, which was judged and executed and destroyed, and in that way liberated for a new determination, for its being as a new humanity” (IV/1, 663).

<sup>48</sup> Here he explains the resurrection as a work of the Spirit, a rare place in which the Spirit is agential and active toward Jesus Christ. “Without the Holy Spirit the body of Jesus Christ and in it all humanity can only be dead. But the body of Jesus Christ was not a body abandoned by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has shown Himself to it as the life-giving Spirit. The body of this One who was slain has become a body which is alive by the Spirit: *σῶμα πνευματικόν* (1 Cor. 15:44)” (IV/1, 664). Here is the connection that Dawson is looking for, though it is undeveloped; Dawson, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth*, 224 ff.

<sup>49</sup> “It is His body which includes them all to their salvation and the salvation of the world. Because it includes them, it is their body and they are His body. In Him they themselves have turned away from sin and flesh and death as their past and have turned to the right and life of their future. His mystery is theirs. Having been given life by the Spirit, and Himself a life-giving Spirit, He has made it know to them – His election and birth and calling and institution as their Head and the Head of all men, His earthly-historical

This definition of the church as the earthly-historical *Existenzform* of Jesus Christ underlies the major discussions of ecclesiology in *CD* IV. It is the theoretical support for the inclusion of the history of the community in Jesus-history. Thus when the activity of the Holy Spirit in ecclesial time is noted, it is never abstracted from the being and activity of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's creation of the community arises from the agency of the risen and ascended Lord.

Barth takes great pains then to ground the subjective realization of the atonement, or the "active participation of man in the divine act of reconciliation" (IV/1, 643), in the objective reality of Jesus-history. But it is the Holy Spirit that ensures this enclosure of the many histories into the one.<sup>50</sup> With reference to Luther, Tertullian, and Augustine Barth explains the work of the Spirit:

We speak of human experience and action when we speak of the community and faith, and therefore of the subjective realization of the atonement. Yet it is that human experience and action which is not of man's 'own reason and power' or in virtue of his own capacity, resolve or effort, but (Luther) 'the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and maintained me in a right faith, as He calls and gathers and enlightens the whole of Christendom, keeping it to Jesus Christ in the true and only faith.' The Holy Spirit is the *doctor veritatis* (Tertullian), the *digitus Dei* (Augustine) by whom this takes place (IV/1, 645).<sup>51</sup>

Specific features of Barth's relating of Christology and pneumatology need mentioning.

In the first place, the Spirit's work within the community *is the self-attestation of Jesus Christ*. The Spirit is the form and power in which the Son makes his completed work

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existence as that of their Representative and Substitute and Advocate, and therefore as the truth of their own earthly-historical existence" (IV/1, 644).

<sup>50</sup> Barth points to previous sections of the *CD* that dealt with the noetic complement: I/1 §§ 6 and 12, I/2 §§ 16-18, and II/2, § 25.

<sup>51</sup> Or later, when Barth asks why the community is the body of Jesus Christ, his earthly-historical form of existence, the answer is decisively pneumatological: "Because the community and those who belong to it have received the 'manifestation of the Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:13) in the unity and diversity of His gifts (Rom. 12:6), because they have 'drunk' with Him (1 Cor. 12:13) and therefore are free to confess Jesus as *Kyrios* (1 Cor. 12:3)" (IV/1, 666). The body of Christ are the people in time and space awakened by the Holy Spirit (IV/1, 666).

manifest to humanity.<sup>52</sup> Closely following this, the work of the Spirit is *confirmatory and secondary*:

There can be no doubt that the work of the Holy Spirit is merely to ‘realise subjectively’ the election of Jesus Christ and His work as done and proclaimed in time, to reveal and bring it to men and women. By the work of the Holy Spirit the body of Christ, as it is by God’s decree from all eternity and as it has become in virtue of His act in time, acquires in all its hiddenness historical dimensions. The Holy Spirit awakens the ‘poor praise on earth’ appropriate to that eternal-temporal occurrence (IV/1, 667).

As suggested above, while it cannot be denied that Jesus Christ sends the Spirit or that the Spirit attests to the history of Jesus Christ, drawing individual histories into his, it seems here that Barth dissolves the agency of the Spirit into the Son’s, thereby limiting the role of the Spirit.<sup>53</sup>

Nevertheless, for Barth the Spirit is the bond of contemporaneity. As the history of Jesus Christ continues, so the Holy Spirit ensures his contemporaneity.

[The Spirit] is the form of [Jesus Christ’s] action, in which His action is not excluded and does not cease because it has taken place, in which it cannot become the object of historical impartation or abstract doctrine. It is the form of His action in which this action continues, in which it is made present to the man to whom He gives Himself and who receives Him as the action which in its singularity takes place today, in which as he is free to know and grasp it in faith, as he participates in it, it makes Him its contemporary. It is the form of His action in which this action hastens from His resurrection as its first revelation to a few to its final and general revelation to all (IV/1, 648).

These features of the relation of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the community remain throughout *CD IV*. The relation between Jesus-history and the history of the community

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<sup>52</sup> “It is strange but true that fundamentally and in general practice we cannot say more of the Holy Spirit and His work than that He is the power in which Jesus Christ attests himself, attests Himself effectively, creating in man response and obedience. We describe Him as His awakening power. Later we will have to describe Him as His quickening and enlightening power. . . . But fundamentally and generally there is no more to say of Him than that He is the power of Jesus Christ in which it takes place that there are men who can and must find and see that He is theirs and they are His, that their history is genuinely enclosed in His and His history is equally genuinely enclosed in theirs” (IV/1, 648).

<sup>53</sup> Barth even suggests that beyond the description of the Spirit’s attestation and confirmation of Jesus Christ “there did not emerge any doctrine of the Holy Spirit and His work even in the secondary and later theology of the Church” (IV/1, 649). Perhaps it is not incidental that the *filioque* is reiterated throughout this discussion. A few pages earlier Barth made explicit reference to the *filioque*: “He is the Spirit of God, God Himself, as He eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son, as He unites the Father and the Son in eternal love, as He must be worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, because he is of one substance with them” (IV/1, 646).

is generally couched in terms of the twofold *Existenzform* of Jesus Christ. And in all cases the mediating or bonding between these two histories is the work of the Holy Spirit: the self-attesting and confirming power of Jesus Christ.<sup>54</sup>

Further description of the Spirit's work in the community is tucked away at the end of § 72.1, "The People of God in World-Occurrence." At the end of this subsection Barth asks how it is that the community lives and persists in world-occurrence. In answering, he finally explicates the christological and pneumatological foundations of ecclesial time - which has in fact been assumed throughout the subsection.<sup>55</sup> The redirecting theme of recapitulation is evident here as Jesus Christ is the head of his body, his earthly-historical *Existenzform* (IV/3, 752 - 758).<sup>56</sup> The community acquires the

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<sup>54</sup> Another theme worth noting in passing is the asymmetrical relation between the Holy Spirit and the Christian community. It follows for Barth that even while the Spirit creates faith and freedom in the community and the individual, they cannot "subjugate or possess or control Him, directing and overruling His work" (IV/1, 646). This means that the response to the Spirit "can only be one of obedience and of prayer for His new coming and witness and quickening: *Veni creator Spiritus*" (IV/1, 647). This founds Barth's rejection of liberal pneumatology. Barth emphasizes the point that, contra liberal ecclesiology, the eternal Spirit must not be confused with other spirits. "The Holy Spirit, for whose work the community, and in and with the community the believing Christian, is thankful, is not the spirit of the world, nor is He the spirit of the community, nor is He the spirit of any individual Christian, but He is the Spirit of God, God Himself, as He eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son, as He unites the Father and the Son in eternal love, as He must be worship and glorified together with the Father and the Son, because he is of one substance with them" (IV/1, 646). Here Barth uses the *filioque* and the Augustinian view of the Spirit as the bond of love to defend the divinity of the Spirit and separate his view from liberal ecclesiologies that tend to blur the distinction between the divine Spirit and created spirits. Rosato, in *The Spirit as Lord*, repeatedly points out Barth's distinguishing himself from his liberal predecessors.

<sup>55</sup> On the continuous presence of Jesus Christ see 686, 706, 707 and 716; for references to the Holy Spirit as the self-attestation of Jesus Christ see 686 and 706.

<sup>56</sup> As mentioned, this is Barth's form of the *totus Christus*. In a brief small print section, however, Barth hints at a third form of Christ's existence. This third form is Jesus Christ as Lord of all the cosmos and world history: "do we not have to conceive and declare a third form of existence of Jesus Christ, a third predicate of His being, i.e., His being as *Pantocrator* who already reigns, as the principle of lordship in world-occurrence?" (IV/3, 756). Barth leaves this brief note unexplained. Is he thinking of Christ as Lord who preserves creation in the middle time, or of the future eschatological unveiling of Christ's Lordship over creation? Perhaps it is both.

movement and direction of its history from its head; it “exists as He, Jesus Christ, exists” (IV/3, 754).<sup>57</sup>

But the christological basis includes the pneumatological. As Christ’s self-attesting power,<sup>58</sup> the Spirit mediates the asymmetrical relation between Jesus Christ and the community.<sup>59</sup> To explicate this work of the Holy Spirit, Barth begins with the role of the Holy Spirit in the eternal life of God and suggests that this corresponds to the Spirit’s work within the community:

Just as the Holy Spirit, as Himself an eternal divine ‘person’ or mode of being, as the Spirit of the Father and the Son (*qui ex Patre Filioque procedit*), is the bond of peace between the two, so in the historical work of reconciliation He is the One who constitutes and guarantees the unity of the *totus Christus*, i.e., of Jesus Christ in the heights and in the depths, in His transcendence and in His immanence. He is the One who constitutes and guarantees the unity in which He is at one and the same time the heavenly Head with God and the earthly body with his community. This co-ordination and unity is the work of the active grace of God (IV/3, 760).

Clearly for Barth there is an analogical relation between the Spirit’s role *in se* and his work *ad extra*. Just as the Spirit is the bond between Father and Son, so too he is the bond between Jesus Christ and his body.<sup>60</sup> The Holy Spirit is the power “of the co-ordination

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<sup>57</sup> Or, “the being of the community is a predicate or dimension of the being of Jesus Christ Himself. In this full and strict sense it belongs to Him and is His property” (IV/3, 754). He is the subject, and the community the predicate, contra Schleiermacher (ibid.).

<sup>58</sup> “The Holy Spirit is the power of God proper to the being of Jesus Christ in the exercise and operation of which He causes His community to become what it is. It is the power of His Holy Spirit as the creative power of the Word which calls it, it takes place that it exists as He, Jesus Christ, exists. As He wields this divine power of His in relation to it, its being eventuates as the second and earthly-historical predicate” (IV/3, 759).

<sup>59</sup> This power of God in the Holy Spirit is gracious; it comes from God to humanity and does not arise from the community itself (contra Schleiermacher), IV/3, 759.

<sup>60</sup> Evidence of this eternal and temporal relation is found in IV/1 as well. At the beginning of § 62 Barth gives a description of the work of the Spirit in terms of God’s address to humanity. “God’s self-attestation makes what He does the Word which is spoken to this man and received and accepted by him. The Holy Spirit is God in this His self-attestation – God in the power which quickens man to his profitable and living knowledge of His action. He is God intervening and acting for man, addressing Himself to him, in such a way that He says Yes to Himself and this makes possible and necessary man’s human Yes to Him” (IV/1, 645). Here an allusion to the Spirit’s role *in se* as well as the work *ad extra* can be discerned. First, there is “He says Yes to Himself”, that occurs in the divine being as election – which is made possible not only by the Father and Son but the Spirit as well (see for example CD III/1, 56, which was noted in chapter two). Second, the Spirit makes possible and necessary humanity’s “Yes to God.” (Jüngel puts the trinitarian

of the being of Jesus Christ and that of His community as distinct from and yet enclosed within it” (ibid.).

In these few pages there is also some indication as to the character of the Spirit’s work in the history of the community. In the first place, this work is *dynamic*. The bonding or mediating work of the Spirit is ongoing in the history of the community. The

relationship of the being of Jesus Christ to that of His community is not static nor immobile, but mobile and dynamic, and therefore historical. As the act of the Holy Spirit which underlies the existence of the community takes place in the order of the being of Jesus Christ and His community, the latter existing as He exists, so this order of the being of Jesus Christ and his community is the order of grace, the order of the act of the Holy Spirit, the community existing as Jesus Christ causes it to exist by His Holy Spirit (IV/3, 759).

Or, to put it otherwise, the community “is a history which takes place as Jesus Christ exercises His power, as this power is operative as the power of His calling Word, and therefore as the gracious power of the Holy Spirit” (IV/3, 761). But, second, this dynamic co-ordinating is *particular*. The Spirit works in the particularity of time and the diversity of place. His Word

does not only go out into all lands and even to the ends of the world (Ps 19:4), but here and now is heard by very human ears and received and understood by very human reason. . . . here and now in human faith and love and hope and knowledge, its echo in human confession at his specific time and place. In the work of the Holy Spirit it takes place that Jesus Christ is present and received in the life of His community of this or that century, land or place (IV/3, 761).

Following this, third, the Holy Spirit *unifies that which is different*. A correspondence occurs between the divine and human, protecting the being and freedom of both, without mixing.<sup>61</sup> The work of the Spirit “is to bring and to hold them together, not to identify, intermingle nor confound them, not to change the one into the other nor to merge the one

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discussion of election and activity in terms of the divine Yes and the corresponding human Yes. See *God’s Being is in Becoming*, 88-89).

<sup>61</sup> This work is the “the divine working, being and action on the one side and the human on the other, the creative freedom and act on the one side and the creaturely on the other, the eternal reality and possibility on the one side and the temporal on the other” (IV/3, 761).

into the other, but to co-ordinate them, to make them parallel, to bring them into harmony and therefore to bind them into a true unity” (IV/3, 761).<sup>62</sup>

The work of the Spirit that fills the time of the community in its internal and external movements is dynamic, particular, and unifying. The Spirit *continuously* works within the community until the eschaton. This work is *dynamic* as the community itself is history, event, and act; it is *particular* in each here and now; and it *unifies* that which is different (Jesus Christ and the church, and believers with one another).<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the eternal Spirit, who is the bond between the Father and the Son, mediates between Jesus-history and the history of the community. The history of the community occurs when the Holy Spirit works continuously, dynamically, and particularly, unifying the history of the Son and temporal history of creatures.

#### 5.4. The Holy Spirit and the Time of the Community

Ecclesial time is the time of the being and activity of the Christian community between the forty days and the eschaton. This history of the community follows and corresponds to Jesus-history, as the witnessing community is the creation of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. Barth’s exposition of the activity of the community in the middle time may be summarized under the rubric of internal and external movements. Internally, the

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<sup>62</sup> “In other words, it all takes place in the gracious act of the gracious power of the Holy Spirit which co-ordinates the different elements and constitutes and guarantees their unity. In virtue of this gracious act it is always true and actual that the Head does not live without His body nor the body without its head, but that the Head, Jesus Christ, lives with and in His community, and the body, His community with and in Him. In virtue of the gracious act of the Holy Spirit, who is Himself God, *Dominus, vivificans, cum Patre et Filio simul adorandus et glorificandus*, there exists and persists . . . the people of God in world occurrence” (IV/3, 762).

<sup>63</sup> These descriptions of the Spirit’s work are similar to Hunsinger’s. Here the trinitarian ground, christocentric and eschatological focuses are assumed, while the communal content is described as unifying and the diversified application is applied to the particular of each here and now. As a discussion of the time of the community the continual and dynamic work of the Spirit is highlighted.

community is gathered and built up, externally it is sent into the world to witness to God's reconciling work.<sup>64</sup> This is the activity that 'fills' the time of the community. But Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit conducts these movements. In explicating ecclesial time it will be argued therefore that the Holy Spirit is the bond between Jesus-history and the history of the community, ensuring a correspondence in general history to the recapitulating history of the risen and ascended Lord. This work as the *vinculum* of contemporaneity can be characterized as *continuous, dynamic, particular, and unifying*.

Discerning this interpretation however is not straightforward. Barth's discussion in § 62.3, "The Time of the Community," does not do full justice to the work of the Spirit in the ecclesial time. In that subsection Barth defines the "time of the community [as] the time between the first *parousia* of Jesus Christ and the second" (IV/1, 725).<sup>65</sup> The time of the community is the historical and eschatological existence of believers between the forty days and the final eschaton. This time has a pneumatological concentration: "[In] this movement by His Holy Spirit He Himself is invisibly present as the living Head in the midst of it as His body" (IV/1, 725).<sup>66</sup>

However, one might expect more detail here on the particular activity and work of the Spirit that constitutes ecclesial time. But what is found is Barth struggling with the

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<sup>64</sup> The use of 'internal' and 'external' to describe the activity of the community are appropriations. It will be obvious that the activities Barth lists under the sending of the community also build it up.

<sup>65</sup> The term *parousia* refers to "the immediate visible presence and action of the living Jesus Christ Himself" (IV/1, 725). The first occurrence of his visible presence and action took place with the resurrection and the forty days, when he appeared "as the Judge who was judged for the unjust." The second occurrence is "His final coming in His revelation as the Judge of the quick and the dead" (ibid). Later Barth will define a threefold *parousia* (IV/3, 293 ff), the second being the *invisible* presence and action of Jesus Christ during ascension time, and the third being the final visible manifestation of the eschaton. Though the terminology is different, the substance is the same; the time of the community is the time of Christ's invisible presence and action by the Holy Spirit in and with the community during the middle time.

<sup>66</sup> The parallel with Barth's discussion of human temporality is again evident. Just as individual humans have a limited time with a definite beginning and end, so now the time of the church has a definite beginning and end.



nature and necessity of ecclesial time itself. He examines the community's strength and weakness, and lastly, answers the question as to why there is this time at all. Why didn't God usher in the eschaton with the resurrection of Jesus since he had already judged humanity on the cross?<sup>67</sup> In order to substantiate the present trinitarian interpretation, further analysis of *CD IV* is needed. If, as suggested, ecclesial time is the 'time of' the Spirit's activity in and with the community, then this will need to be filled out elsewhere. Thus the pneumatological interpretation of ecclesial time being offered must be gleaned from § 67, "The Holy Spirit and the Upbuilding of the Christian Community" in IV/2 and § 72 "The Holy Spirit and the Sending of the Christian Community" in IV/3. The downside of this indirect approach to the time of the community is that Barth does not describe ecclesial time qualitatively. The narrative approach to time includes description of how the experience of time changes depending on the activity within it. Because Barth in fact spends little time reflecting on the nature of ecclesial time, he does not substantiate the discussion of temporality as he did with subjective time in III/2.

Nevertheless, the following analysis and explication will have three parts. In the first there is an examination of the time of the community in relation to history in general. The history of the community is but one history in the multitude of histories that occur in general world-occurrence. In the two parts that follow, there is an exposition of the Holy Spirit's work in the internal movement of building up the community and the external

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<sup>67</sup> The strength and weakness of the community centres on both its beginning with the resurrection and its ending in the eschaton. It is strong because it knows that the whole of history is moving toward its end in the universal unveiling of Jesus Christ as Lord (IV/1, 725 ff). But the community only lives this in faith and not sight. Thus ecclesial time is also weak (IV/1, 728 ff). Nevertheless, the community is strong in the final analysis because the Holy Spirit is the author of its faith (IV/1, 733). What is more, God does not usher history into eschatological completion because he desires a response from humanity to the completed work of reconciliation (IV/1, 737).

movement of sending it into the world.<sup>68</sup> In both cases the work of the Spirit as the bond of contemporaneity is evident.

#### 5.4.1 Ecclesial Time in General World-Occurrence

The trinitarian breadth of Barth's interpretation of time becomes obvious in the discussion of § 72.1 "The People of God in World-Occurrence".<sup>69</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Two, Barth incorporates various forms of time in the *Church Dogmatics*. Much attention was given to subjective forms of time – rational-linear time and allotted time. Barth also briefly discusses time as a feature of the cosmos in general, namely as the place in which human time is embedded. A fourth form is the broad category of general world history or general world-occurrence: the history of the cosmos and humanity in the widest possible sense; the history of creation itself and of multiple empires, nations, and cultures of human history.<sup>70</sup>

But, again, Barth understands this collective form of time in light of his trinitarian and covenantal ontology. He describes general world-occurrence as the history which *hominum confusione et Dei providentia regitur*. General world-occurrence takes place

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<sup>68</sup> This exposition does not by-pass the gathering of the community (§ 62) since this paragraph has been discussed in the previous section. Nevertheless, the focus of the internal movement of the community will be on § 67.

<sup>69</sup> The context of IV/3, "Jesus Christ, the True Witness," is the prophetic work of the God-man. Barth explicates Jesus Christ as the one true witness and mediator. He has already established Jesus Christ as the Lord who became servant (*vere Deus*, High Priest) in IV/1, and the Servant who became Lord (*vere homo*, King) in IV/2. Now his concern is the declaration to the world of the accomplished reconciliation completed on the cross. The pneumatological sections of IV/3 are concerned, then, with the sending of the community to the world, § 72, and Christian hope, § 73.

<sup>70</sup> "There co-exists with [the community] . . . the whole cosmos both in its wider sense as the cosmos of all reality distinct from God and created and ruled by Him, and also in its narrower and concrete sense as the cosmos of men and humanity. Its history as it takes place is surrounded by the history of the cosmos, and everywhere affected and in part determined by it" (IV/3, 684). This of course is similar to creation history (III/1, 42 ff), though human history in general is included here.

under God's fatherly providence (IV/3, 687 ff),<sup>71</sup> but is also the history and time of human confusion. On the one hand humanity lives in light of God's good creation (IV/3, 695), while on the other, "there is the reality and operation of the absurd, of nothingness, grounded in no possibility given by God, neither elected nor willed by God, but existing only *per nefas*" (IV/3, 696). In this confusion, Nothingness, "the negation of the good creation of God, becomes the master, controller and ruler of this creation, and the good creation of God is set in the service and under the control of its own negation" (IV/3, 697).<sup>72</sup>

But from the perspective of the Christian community time and history are not merely the dialectic between divine providence and human confusion. For Barth, there is a third term wherein the community may truly see itself. This third term is the work of God's grace in the person of Jesus Christ, the one mediator between God and humanity. Contra Hegel, Jesus Christ is not a third term in the sense of a human concept or product of human thought, but the event of God's gracious action (IV/3, 706-14).<sup>73</sup> It is the free and sovereign power of God actualized in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ who speaks by his Holy Spirit (IV/3, 709). But God's answer to the problem of the power of nothingness over his good creation will not be complete until the eschaton. Thus there

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<sup>71</sup> This is reflected in the Old Testament where the nations outside of Israel are under God's providence, though the focus is on the salvation brought through the chosen nation (IV/3, 688-693).

<sup>72</sup> Barth points to war as evidence of this, wherein even times of peace are "a continual preparation for war" (IV/3, 699). He mentions the atomic bomb of as an illustration of human confusion in the face of God's good creation (IV/3, 701).

<sup>73</sup> "Jesus Christ is a living human person who comes and speaks and acts with the claim and authority of God, and in relation to whom there can be no question whatever of controlling and using Him to grasp or master this or that even in the sphere of thought" (IV/3, 706). Thus Barth is careful to distinguish this dialectic from a Hegelian one. Jesus-history as a third term is not a synthesis between thesis (God's good creation) and antithesis (human sin as a result of nothingness), but a term that is above them both (IV/3, 703-706). According to Barth, the difference in his own dialectic is that providence and confusion remain distinct and are not two stages on a third way (IV/3, 704). The third term, moreover, is not a human possibility. Humanity cannot "go beyond that twofold view in his own strength or by his own choice, finding and fixing a supposedly superior point in the void" (IV/3, 705).

is still time for the community: “*time for* the community to proclaim the Word of Jesus Christ and what has taken place in Him; *time for* the world to receive this Word” (IV/3, 714, italics added). In faith the community awaits the final and universal revelation of Jesus Christ and thus participates in world history in a different light.<sup>74</sup> The time of the community then is time for proclaiming the reconciliation accomplished in Christ to the world, and time for the world to receive it, as all of history is moving toward its completion.<sup>75</sup>

Much as in the discussion of created, fallen, and gracious time in *CD* III, here the form of time is thus understood in light of Barth’s trinitarian, covenantal, and actualistic ontology. Yet the form of time is different. In IV/3, Barth is thinking of time in larger collective forms. In the context of general world-occurrence, the time of the community is but one small history in the grand march of history itself. But these collective forms of time are understood theologically. General history is under the providential control of the Father but also the force of sin and nothingness. But God responds to this in the history of Jesus Christ and the community. Therefore, the time of the community, as a collective history, is simultaneous preserved, fallen, and gracious time. Much as the individual may experience allotted time in either anxiety or hope, so the community lives in history itself not merely in the face of confusion but in light of the final redemption that is to come. The time of the community is to be understood then in Barth’s larger trinitarian and covenantal narrative.

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<sup>74</sup> It “anticipates the appearance of that which already is but is not yet manifested. . . . [It] affirms already the transformation in which world-occurrence will be presented to it and to all humanity in the final, universal and definitive revelation of Jesus Christ” (IV/3, 716).

<sup>75</sup> In this subsection Barth also asks how the people of God is to see itself in world-occurrence (IV/3, 721 ff). This corresponds to the external movement of the community, which is given explication below, thus the topic can be bypassed.

#### 5.4.2 *The Internal Movement of the Community*

The time of the community as the collective history of believers in general world-occurrence contains two simultaneous movements. The first is its internal movement of being gathered and established into a body, while the second is its being sent into the world to bear witness to the accomplished reconciliation between God and humanity. Thus within general world-occurrence, which is the preserving work of the Father, and corresponding to Jesus-history, the Holy Spirit creates this double movement of the community which fills ecclesial time. In this way, the time of the Spirit complements the times of the Father and Son. The examination of the internal movement of the community will focus on § 67, “The Holy Spirit and the Upbuilding of the Christian Community.” Here Barth is turning to the effects of sanctification in humanity.<sup>76</sup> This is unfolded using the NT metaphor of the upbuilding (οἰκοδομή) of the community, which is described as both growth (αὐξεῖν, αὐξάνειν) and upholding, and illustrated with a discussion of church order and law. Throughout the discussion the continuous, dynamic, particular, and unifying work of the Spirit is evident.<sup>77</sup> Thus ecclesial time is appropriated as pneumatological.

The term “upbuilding” (οἰκοδομή) encapsulates what Barth aims to say about the community in this paragraph (IV/2, 626).<sup>78</sup> The term is a reference to the Christian

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<sup>76</sup> Found in *CD* IV/2, this section follows the sanctification of humanity in the exaltation of Jesus Christ, the servant who is Lord. The sin overcome in the sanctification of humanity is sloth. The sanctifying activity of the risen and ascended Lord through his Spirit upon the community is the establishing of the community.

<sup>77</sup> Indeed, the temporal work of Jesus Christ and the Spirit are evident throughout the paragraph. The time of the community is mentioned nine times and discussed more directly (695-698), while the continuous presence of Jesus Christ is directly examined (695-698 and 710-711) it is noted in thirteen other places. References to the work of the Holy Spirit in the community are found on fifteen occasions, while the Spirit as the power and activity of Jesus Christ is found in over twenty places.

<sup>78</sup> For a small print exposition and reflection of οἰκοδομή in various NT texts, see IV/2, 628-630.

community and not individuals in isolation.<sup>79</sup> The point of the term, moreover, is not the final construction of a building as such but “of the actual occurrence, the event, the fulfillment, the work of edification, and therefore the construction of a building” (IV/2, 627). Emphasis is thus placed on “the actual work of construction. It is as this work takes place that the Church is the true Church” (IV/2, 630).<sup>80</sup> And much like regular construction, the building of the community is integration. “These men need to be brought together, to be constituted, established and maintained as a common being – one people capable of unanimous action” (IV/2, 635). As the community “allows the Holy Spirit to exercise it in self-integration, it is the true Church, prepared to look and move forward, to give this provisional representation, and thus to offer the witness which is the meaning and its existence in world-history” (IV/2, 636). For Barth, the building of the community is centred in its worship; the community is *εκκλησία* (IV/2, 638). In fact, common worship is the central event of the community wherein it is given direction for its movement in being built up.<sup>81</sup> The building of the community necessarily includes divine agency. In regular construction there is a master builder with a definite plan and an ending, and with the community there is one Lord who “continually” gives directions (IV/2, 631). The triune God works to build the community: “It is in and through the man

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<sup>79</sup> The community in “its individual members and through their reciprocal ministry, is edified, and lets itself be edified, and edifies itself” (IV/2, 627).

<sup>80</sup> This focus on the event nature of construction seems to prevent Barth from taking the building metaphor into a more Roman Catholic direction on the institutional church.

<sup>81</sup> “This is the point where in its totality it becomes a concrete event at a specific time and place. Here all Christians are present and not merely a few individuals. ... And here, as they are summoned in the power of the Holy Spirit of their risen Lord to look forward together to His future manifestation and their own *eschaton*, they are commonly set in motion in the direction of the goal of their edification as given and set for the community as the end of the last time” (IV/2, 639).

Jesus in the power of His Spirit that the one God is at work in the upbuilding of His community” (IV/2, 633).<sup>82</sup>

Throughout the discussion the bonding work of the Spirit in the history of the community is explicated as well.<sup>83</sup> For example, Barth discusses the ‘True Church’ with reference to the visible/invisible dialectic. Similar to the discussion in IV/1 (652ff), he argues that the church’s visibility is only possible because of the invisible work of Jesus Christ and His Spirit.<sup>84</sup> Here the continuous work of the Spirit is necessary to the being and existence of the community.<sup>85</sup> Or, when the true church emerges from the sinful action of Christians, traditions, and institutions, the Spirit’s continuous work makes this possible:

If it is also visible as a true Church, this means that the victory of the divine operation, the mighty act of the Holy Spirit in the face of the sinfulness of human action, finds further expression in a free emergence and outshining of the true Church from the concealment in which it is enveloped by the sinfulness of all human volition (and therefore of ecclesiastical), and in which it must continue to be enveloped apart from this continuation of the operation of the Holy Spirit (IV/2, 619).

This section also contains discussion of the community as the provisional representation of the accomplished reconciliation between God and humanity. As a provisional representation, the community has both a final goal and a role to play in the interim time. The goal is the definitive and universal revelation of Jesus Christ as the

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<sup>82</sup> “The Christian community is what it is as He Himself is present and speaks and acts as the Author (in the fullest sense of the term); as it is therefore His community, and its history is basically His history” (IV/2, 633).

<sup>83</sup> Even before Barth discusses upbuilding he reiterates the basis of this inward movement of the community in the work of the risen and ascended Lord by the Holy Spirit. While the subject is human activity in the church there is no turning “our back on the action of God in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit and to occupy ourselves *in abstracto* with a being and work of men as its result” (IV/2, 615).

<sup>84</sup> “But it is this *human* construct, the Christian Church, because and as God is at work in it by His Holy Spirit. In virtue of this happening, which is of divine origin and takes place for men and to them as the determination of their human action, the true Church truly is and arises and continues and lives in the twofold sense that God is at work and that there is a human work which He occasions and fashions” (IV/2, 616).

<sup>85</sup> “The Christian community, the true Church, arises and is only as the Holy Spirit works – the quickening power of the living Lord Jesus Christ. And it continues and is only as He sanctifies man and their human work, building up them and their work into the true Church” (IV/2, 617).

saviour of all; while its role in the interim time is to be “a witness to all others, representing the sanctification which has already come upon them too in Jesus Christ” (IV/2, 620). Thus the “meaning and content of our time – the last time – is the fulfillment of this provisional representation as the task of the community of Jesus Christ” (IV/2, 621). The impetus and direction of ecclesial time, moreover, is found in Jesus-history.<sup>86</sup> But this christological basis is incomplete without the pneumatological intervention:

Jesus the Lord, in the quickening power of His Holy Spirit, is the One who acts where this provisional representation takes place, and therefore where the true Church is an event. . . . We are speaking, therefore, of the history of this race in the sequence of its human thoughts and efforts and achievements. But we are speaking of the history in which it is unfit, but continually fitted, in and with its human thought and word and will and work to make this provisional representation. More precisely, we are speaking of the history in which God continually sets this people on the way and in movement, continually indicating both the goal and the direction towards it (IV/2, 623).

Thus, the work of Jesus Christ by the Spirit continuously enables the church to fill its time.<sup>87</sup> Here again the bonding activity of the Spirit is evident. It is dynamic since the community is act, event, and history; particular in “the sequence” of human thought, activity, and effort; unifying that which is different by making fit what is unfit; and continually directing the community to its goal.

Barth expands on the building of the community by discussing both its growth and its being upheld. He discusses the growth (*αυξειν, αυξάνειν*) of the community both extensively and intensively. With the aid of Bonhoeffer, Barth begins with a brief exposition of the church as a communion of saints. The communion of saints is the event in which, by the Holy Spirit, the *sancti* (saints) are engaged in *sancta* (holy acts) (IV/2,

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<sup>86</sup> It is based on the saving address of God to humanity which “is not a self-enclosed saving fact either far behind us or high above us. It is a living redemptive happening which takes place” (IV/2, 621). Referring to Heb. 13:8, Jesus Christ is “not merely yesterday and forever, but today – in the intervening time which is our time” (IV/2, 622). Or, “For the Jesus Christ who rules the world *ad dexteram Patris omnipotentis* is identical with the King of this people of His which on earth finds itself on this way and in this movement. He is revealed only and can be claimed only in the history ruled by Him” (IV/2, 622).

<sup>87</sup> As Jesus Christ acts with his Spirit “to and with His people, *this people fills with His activity the time given to itself and the world*” (IV/2, 623, italics added).



641-643).<sup>88</sup> The growth of the community is the saints engaged in these acts. The unifying activity of the Spirit is central for this work:

Communion is an action in which on the basis of an existing union (*unio*) many men are engaged in a common movement towards the same union. This takes place in the power and operation of the Holy Spirit, and the corresponding action of those who are assembled and quickened by Him. Communion takes place as this divine and human work is in train (IV/2, 641, cf 642 as well).

The extensive, or quantitative, growth of the community may be described numerically or geographically (IV/2, 645). But this extensive growth, which comes from within, is not a matter of the church perpetuating itself in some complete form since its final extension is an eschatological reality.<sup>89</sup> It is the “intensive, vertical and spiritual growth,” then, which is truly significant.<sup>90</sup> The true growth of the community is the growth of Christians in a fellowship of activities.

The immanent power enabling this growth however is not merely the work of Christians in their holy activities. The immanent power is the ascended and exalted Jesus Christ working by His Spirit.<sup>91</sup> The unifying work of the Holy Spirit is evident. Not only is the Holy Spirit “the self-attestation of the risen and living Lord Jesus... but also the particular, factual sanctification of Christians – their union with Him and therefore with one another” (IV/2, 651). It is in “the Holy Spirit as the self-attestation of Jesus they thus

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<sup>88</sup> Barth gives a partial list of such acts: the community is a fellowship of knowledge, confession, worship, penitence, prayer, service, hope, prophesy, proclamation of the gospel, prayer, and liturgy (IV/2, 643).

<sup>89</sup> Barth rejects then the growth of the community merely in terms of outward political and social influence (IV/2, 648). Rather its “glory will be manifest when that of its Lord is manifest to the world. In the time between it is thankful for all the necessary space that it is granted in the world to fulfill its task. But the enlargement (or diminution) of this space has nothing whatever to do with its nature and commission” (IV/2, 648).

<sup>90</sup> “In short, the progress of the Church . . . denotes in the New Testament primarily and predominately, although not exclusively, spiritual progress; the progress of the *sancti* in their relationship to the *sancta*. Progress means that they go forward together on the appointed way from their origin to their goal. . . . And it finds in this progress the true form of the growth of the community has to owe to the power immanent within it. It is in this happening that there is actualized its true nature and essence; its appointment to give a provisional representation within the old humanity of the new humanity sanctified already in Jesus Christ” (IV/2, 650-51).

<sup>91</sup> The “community lives as the communion of saints because and as Jesus lives. Jesus is the power of the life immanent within it” (IV/2, 651).

know themselves in and with Him; themselves in their union with Him, and also with one another, in the fellowship of faith and love in which they express themselves as His and find self-awareness as this people which has a common descent” (ibid.). Thus the

Holy Spirit achieves the *communio sanctorum* and causes it to grow (intensively and extensively). It lives by His power – from the very first and on all its way and ways in the realisation of the relationship of the *sancti* to the *sancta* right up to its goal at the end of all history when it will meet the *eschaton* which will be the *eschaton* of the cosmos (IV/2, 652).

The Holy Spirit as the self-attesting power of Jesus Christ is continuously active in the time of the church, creating union between Jesus Christ and believers and enabling the saints to grow as they participate in the holy activities of the community.

This growth of the community is also explained with reference to the definition of the church as the body of Christ, Barth’s version of the *totus Christus*. To begin, Jesus Christ is remote and transcendent from the community.<sup>92</sup> But again this distance between the risen and ascended Lord and his body is mediated by His Holy Spirit:

If in spite of this He is still at work in earthly history, and in the community as it exists in it, by the quickening power of His Holy Spirit, we can certainly call this His operation at a distance. From the point to which there is no way ... He overcomes that abyss in the Holy Spirit, operating here from that exalted status, working in time, in which the *communio sanctorum* is an event and has its history in many events, from the eternity of the life which He has in common with God. The man Jesus has also that form of existence, so that it is quite true that His action towards His community in the quickening power of the Holy Spirit is a remote operation (IV/2, 652).

Thus, according to Barth, Jesus Christ also exists in his earthly-historical *Existenzform*.<sup>93</sup> Again, the second form of existence is a work of the Holy Spirit, creating unity and bringing together that which is different and particular, making the community one

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<sup>92</sup> In his heavenly form of existence at the right hand of the Father he “is separated from [the community] by an abyss which cannot be bridged. He is even hidden from it in God (Col. 3:3)” (IV/2, 652).

<sup>93</sup> This is “the form in which, in the sovereignty of the same God, He also exists here and now with sinners in this history which has not yet concluded” (IV/2, 653).

body.<sup>94</sup> The Spirit is the bond that ensures that that which is different, particular, and separate grows into the one history of the community. As such, the Spirit enables the community to be a provisional representation in this interim time.<sup>95</sup>

With the concept of the upholding of the community, Barth is concerned with how it is that the community is preserved given its weakness in the world. That is, how it is that the community is maintained and preserved in the world given both outward and inward threats. The outward threats relate to the church's extensive growth,<sup>96</sup> while inward threats relate to its intensive health, arising from the fact that believers are still sinners (IV/2, 665-66).<sup>97</sup> Despite these threats, the community "cannot and will not actually be destroyed. It is indestructible" (IV/2, 672). Barth argues that the preservation of the community against both internal and external threats occurs in its attention to the scriptures (IV/2, 673-674). But again this preserving function of the scriptures must be understood in light of the continuing work of the risen Lord.<sup>98</sup> The Holy Spirit, moreover, mediates this hidden presence of the risen Lord through the scriptures. When the scriptures are read and heard within the church "there concretely His Holy Spirit comes

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<sup>94</sup> "Similarly, His Holy Spirit is one. As the quickening power which accomplishes sanctification, He comes down with utter novelty and strangeness from above (as described in the story of Pentecost) and thus constitutes an absolute basis and starting-point. But as the same power He also rules and works in these events, in the sequence and multiplicity, of the temporal history of the *communio sanctorum* which is still the *communio peccatorum*, in all the relativities of that which is called Christian and ecclesiastical and even theological life" (IV/2, 653).

<sup>95</sup> Only in "this mighty work, the community lives and grows within the world – an anticipation, a provisional representation, of the sanctification of all men as it has taken place in Him, of the new humanity reconciled with God" (IV/2, 654).

<sup>96</sup> These include either active pressure, even persecution, or passive toleration, ignoring, or relativizing (IV/2, 663-65).

<sup>97</sup> These come in the form of alienation (secularization), when the community is directed away from its true being, or self-glorification (sacralization), when the church is concerned with its own self-preservation and power in relation to the world around it (IV/2, 667-670).

<sup>98</sup> The scriptures are his instrument: "He verifies Scripture simply by the fact that He is its content; that as it is read and heard He Himself is present to speak and act as the living Lord of the Church. There concretely, as the One who was and is and will be according to the word of the prophets and apostles, He exits for the world and community of our time – the last time" (IV/2, 675).

and works and rules. It is thus true already that from there concretely the Church is upheld by the Holy Spirit” (IV/2, 675).

In the last subsection of § 67, “The Order of the Community,” Barth examines the life of the community in terms of order and law. The growth and preservation of the community is not ad hoc or haphazard but orderly and with form (IV/2, 676-677). The centre of the community’s order moreover is found in public worship (IV/2, 678-79). The bulk of the discussion centres on the presuppositions of true Church law: it is a law of service, a liturgical law, a living law, and an exemplary law.<sup>99</sup> These presuppositions “will always be normative for every true Church law” (IV/2, 689).<sup>100</sup>

A few illustrations from this discussion will demonstrate that the orderly growth of the community is viewed within Jesus-history, and therefore is the bonding work of the Spirit. This is evident, for example, with the discussion of the second presupposition: church law is liturgical (IV/2, 695–710). Earlier Barth argued that the centre of upbuilding itself is worship. Here he reiterates this by suggesting that worship is the centre of order, where church law “has its original seat” (IV/2, 695). But even this central happening is derived from the christological agency: Jesus-history directs and controls

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<sup>99</sup> Before this, however, Barth mentions the basis of church law and the law of church and state. The basis of church law is found in the sanctification of humanity in Jesus Christ, who directs his community in their corresponding obedience (IV/2, 680). As such it is a law that is “sought and found and established and administered in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ” (IV/2, 682). The voice of the Lord is that which is attested in scripture. “It is concretely to Scripture that the community has to listen in the question of law and order, in the conflict against ecclesiastical lawlessness and disorder” (IV/2, 682-683). The law of church and state is recognition that the law of the state is a *ius circa sacra* and not *ius in sacra*. In fact, to be taken up later in the discussion, church law can be an example to state law.

<sup>100</sup> As such, Barth’s discussion is a dogmatic account of order and law, the details of which belong to canon law itself (IV/2, 678).

the liturgy.<sup>101</sup> Barth emphasizes the being of Jesus Christ as both *history* and a *particular* history.<sup>102</sup>

Following this, the community corresponds to his historicity and particularity. This is a result of the Spirit's dynamic and particular work. "If His community then, created and ruled and upheld by His Holy Spirit in the time between His resurrection and His return in glory, is His body . . . it is inevitable that His particular history, both as history and in its particularity, should be actively and recognisably reflected and represented in its life" (IV/2, 696). Thus the community "is itself history. . . It is an event. Otherwise it is not the Christian community" (ibid.). Moreover, while the church exists in the individual lives of Christians dispersed throughout society, wearing "working clothes of an anonymity," it comes together in its particularity in worship (IV/2, 697-698).<sup>103</sup> Thus the living Lord gathers the community together by the Holy Spirit as a particular

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<sup>101</sup> "According to Holy Scripture Jesus Christ is the One who exists in a history – His own particular history – within universal history. In virtue of His resurrection from the dead He will be this One, and therefore the Head of His community, in every age and to all eternity" (IV/2, 695).

<sup>102</sup> As history, Jesus Christ "is the man who not only went but still goes and always will go the way from Bethlehem to Golgotha. The One who goes this way is manifested on Easter Day as the living Lord, and His Spirit, His quickening power, is the Holy Spirit, who has created and rules and upholds the Christian community. The being of the Head of the community is the event of the life of this man" (IV/2, 695). As a particular history, to use Lessing's phrase a 'contingent fact of history', the "event of this life is indissolubly connected with His name. It is the event which exhausts itself in this name – concrete, limited in time and space, singular and unique. It is this event and not another" (IV/2, 696). It is only in this particular history that the God-man fulfills the covenant and establishes reconciliation between God and humanity. In his particular history "there was and is and comes true God and true man, the humiliated Son of God and the exalted Son of Man, the One who fulfills the covenant between God and man, the Reconciler of the world with God, the Word which was in the beginning with God will also be His final Word, his eternal Word. In heaven, hidden in God, He whose being is this once for all act, this particular history, is the Head of His community" (IV/2, 696). For a critical discussion of Barth's appropriation of the descent and ascent theme noted here see Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 243 ff.

<sup>103</sup> It is noteworthy that Barth's focus on worship here does not lead him to reflect on the sacraments. This is true even in the next section when the external movement of the community is summarized with the various forms of ministry in speech and action.

event and history focused in worship. The law and order of the community arises from this centre.<sup>104</sup>

The third basic presupposition of church law is that it is living law (IV/2, 710-718). As living, Barth optimistically suggests that church law is changing from worse to better. This growth of the law is possible, moreover, because Jesus Christ is living and works by the Spirit in every movement of his life.<sup>105</sup> In following this, the community maintains a posture of listening obedience to its Lord.<sup>106</sup> As it listens to its Lord and is directed by the Holy Spirit church law must be open to new developments (IV/2, 711-713).<sup>107</sup> This growth of the law may also be understood under the constraints of time. The church lives in the transition from the past, through the present, into the future. The law of the past, since it arose out of obedience, was necessary. And, therefore, the church is to adhere today to the law of yesterday. But just as it is obedient to the law of yesterday it must also be ready to be obedient to new and developed law today.<sup>108</sup> Thus, both the law of the past and present are provisional since they are seen under the work of the

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<sup>104</sup> Barth, then, explains how church law is liturgical. First, all law has its origin in divine worship; it is liturgical in its seat (IV/2, 698). Second, church law is liturgical in its source; church law finds its direction in worship. But this direction is found in its head, the living Jesus Christ (IV/2, 706). Third, as liturgical law it has its proper theme. Thus it “has to guard its peculiar basis and source” (IV/2, 709).

<sup>105</sup> “But His person as attested in Holy Scripture lives today and tomorrow in all its historical singularity. And as this living person He rules and upholds and orders His community; He Himself at every moment in the quickening power of the Holy Spirit” (IV/2, 710).

<sup>106</sup> Thus it “cannot be moved by the spirit of the age, by political and social changes and revolutions in the world around, or by the whims and vacillations of Christians. But the Holy Spirit, by whom the Lord is attested in Holy Scripture speaks to it, necessarily sets and keeps it in motion. No dynamic from below can or should have any influence on Church law. To the extent that this takes place, it ceases to be Church law. But it is certainly not Church laws if it is not always wide open to the dynamic from above, both in its development and then its continuance and application” (IV/2, 711).

<sup>107</sup> For where “there is the genuine dynamic from above, the power of the Holy Spirit (who is obviously no sceptic), the community cannot refuse this venture” (IV/2, 711).

<sup>108</sup> For yesterday it was “genuinely praying and working. And it was not obedient to its own or an alien spirit, but to the Holy Spirit, so that along the lines of yesterday it may still think that it will be obedient today” (IV/2, 714). While “Today – until tomorrow, until it takes further order! It will not regard it as an eternal work or law, or even as one which is created and valid for all ages” (ibid.).

continuous presence of Jesus Christ.<sup>109</sup> But this temporal transition is not a spinning of the tires. As it moves from the past to the future under His lordship in the Holy Spirit, the community moves from worse to better canon law. “It will always have to move away from the worse and move forward to the better. If it were not somewhere engaged in this movement, it would be a sure sign that the Holy Spirit had left it and it had lost the attitude of obedience to its Lord” (IV/2, 716). In this transition, moreover, it will legitimately assume very different forms “at different times and places” (IV/2, 717). The Spirit, therefore, continually works as the community listens to its Lord, in each particular time and space.<sup>110</sup>

The internal movement of the community, its being built up, includes its extensive and intensive growth and upholding, illustrated in its being an orderly community. The focus for Barth in this internal activity of the community is the living Lord who operates in the history of the community by His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit continually and dynamically works in each particular time uniting Jesus-history with the history of the

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<sup>109</sup> “It honours its past because it lived in its past with and therefore under Jesus Christ. And as it honours it, it looks to the future in which it longs and hopes and is sure that it will again live with and under Jesus Christ. In respect of its order, as generally, it lives in the transition from the one to the other” (IV/2, 716).

<sup>110</sup> The continual work Jesus Christ by his Spirit is hinted at in the last presupposition as well. The fourth and last presupposition of all church law is that it is exemplary. Since the church is a provisional representation of humanity sanctified in Jesus Christ, its law “is a pattern for the formation and administration of human law generally, and therefore of the law of other political, economic, cultural and other human societies” (IV/2, 719). This exemplification consists in being a witness and “a reminder of the law of the kingdom of God already set up on earth in Jesus Christ, and a promise of its future manifestation”, toward which both the church and the world are moving (IV/2, 721). Barth even suggests a final eschatological law (IV/2, 720). This exemplary role implies a twofold function. First, it has the critical task of reminding other forms of law of their limitations, of their not being the last word (IV/2, 721). But second, this provisional representation of God’s law in the law of the church may in fact serve the positive function of changing other forms of law from worse to better (IV/2, 722). This is possible from the perspective of the community because the risen and ascended Jesus Christ is also the Lord of the world and its law (IV/2, 725). There is to be expected, then, some correspondence between church law and other laws. In fact, “Jesus Christ is the King over all men and all things, and as such He is not idle even *extra muros ecclesiae*” (IV/2, 724). But this exemplary role is not alien for the community because it lives itself “by the fact that it must continually let itself be corrected by the Word and Spirit of its Lord” (IV/2, 726).

community. This internal activity of the Spirit fills ecclesial time as it grows and is upheld in an orderly fashion.

#### ***5.4.3 The External Movement of the Community***

The time of the community is also filled with external movement. That is, the community, as a provisional representation, is sent into the world to witness to the reconciliation established in Jesus Christ. This external movement is the subject of § 72, “The Holy Spirit and the Sending of the Christian Community” in IV/3. Barth expounds this external movement by first making the argument that the community’s responsibility to the world is essential to its being the body of Christ. He then describes the task of the community as confessing Jesus Christ as God’s ‘Yes’ to humanity, while finally he examines the actual forms of ministry in their witnessing to the world. At important junctures of the discussion Barth reiterates the basis of the community’s being sent into the world with reference to the work of Jesus Christ and His Spirit.<sup>111</sup> This external movement of the church is a result of the Spirit’s work as the continuous bond between Jesus-history and the history of the Church. Again the work of the Spirit can be characterized as continuous, dynamic, particular, and unifying.

Barth argues that the community is for the world not merely because it is creaturely itself but also because its being follows that of God’s work under the Lordship

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<sup>111</sup> As in IV/2, the discussion of the church in IV/3 affirms that it is act, event, and history. Thus the temporal nature of the church and the work of Jesus Christ and the Spirit in it underlie all discussions. Jesus Christ’s continuous presence is noted at least fourteen times, the work of the Holy Spirit in and with the community nearly thirty times, and the Holy Spirit as the meditation between Jesus Christ and the community twenty times. While explicit reference to ‘the time of the community’ (714, 755, 757, 815, 840, and 883) is less frequent, it is clear throughout that the history and time of the community as the work of Jesus Christ and His Spirit is presupposed in all that Barth takes up.



of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit (IV/3, 763).<sup>112</sup> In fact, the Holy Spirit's sending of the community is fundamental to its being, for its being called-out-of is also its being called-into the world.<sup>113</sup> But this being-for-the-world needs the foundation and direction of divine agency. Barth explains this with four points.

In the first place, the origin and continuation of the mission of the church to the world is achieved by the continuous power of the Holy Spirit (IV/3, 786-87). The Holy Spirit enables the church "to give its own corresponding, and to that extent appropriate, and to that extent obedient answer to the Word of God spoken to and reasonably received by it" (IV/3, 786, cf 787 as well). Second, this work of the Holy Spirit in human spontaneity and freedom consists in its confession of Jesus Christ (IV/3, 787ff). And third, Jesus Christ, as the risen and ascended Lord, is the continuous and active agent in the community by the Spirit.<sup>114</sup> In arguing the fourth point, that the community is the likeness or image of Jesus Christ, Barth argues that the community participates in the prophecy of Jesus Christ and calls the world to him.<sup>115</sup> This calling activity, empowered by the Holy Spirit, fills ecclesial time in the interim.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Specifically, the Father sends both the Son and the community: "The one God who sends Him as the Father also sends them through the Son. Again, they are comparable because they have the same goal. He and they are both sent into the world, which means very generally that they are directed to the world and exist for it" (IV/3, 768).

<sup>113</sup> "The work of the Holy Spirit in the gathering and upbuilding of the community . . . cannot merely lead to the blind alley of a new qualification, enhancement, deepening and enrichment of this being of the community as such. . . . The enlightening power of the Holy Spirit draws and impels and presses beyond its being as such, beyond all the reception and experience of its members, beyond all that is promised to them personally" (IV/3, 764).

<sup>114</sup> "He Himself, risen from the dead, does not only exist eternally in heaven at the right hand of the Father as Head, but also in His prophetic office, as the living Word of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, as the Head of His body, and therefore historically on earth within world-occurrence. As the One He was and is and will be, He Himself goes through the twilight and obscurity of this lingering time with the humanity reconciled to God in Him but not yet redeemed. He did not merely live once; He also lives today with us and like us. He does not merely live, speak and act, the Son of God, as the Lord over time; he also lives, speaks and acts, the Son of Man, in time and therefore as a participant in what takes places as our history in time" (IV/3, 790).

<sup>115</sup> "The purpose of its existence is the subsequent and provisional representation of the calling of all humanity and all creatures to the service of God as it has gone forth in Jesus Christ. The origin and goal of

Next Barth describes what the community in the world is to do. He expounds the task of the community in reference to its content (IV/3, 797-801), to whom it is directed (IV/3, 801-812), and its purity (IV/3, 812-824). In short, the content of the task is to confess Jesus Christ as the ‘Yes’ of God to humanity. This ‘Yes’ of God is God with humanity, and thus humanity as the object of God’s goodness (IV/3, 800). Following this, the Yes of God is directed to humanity. Not humanity as understood in other forms of knowledge, but humanity that is loved by God and addressed in the gospel.<sup>117</sup> As for the purity of the content, Barth suggests that there are two basic dangers toward which the church may drift. It can either fail to see that the Word addressed to humanity is a living word, thus failing in its prophetic witness by sliding into neutrality, or it can fail to see the Word as constant, thus accommodating the gospel for other religious or philosophical messages which appear more relevant.

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the ways of God, which took place initially but perfectly in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and which will take place definitively and no less perfectly in His final appearing, is the calling of every man and indeed of all creation to the service of God. The function of the community is to follow and yet at the same time to precede His universal call” (IV/3, 793). In the church there takes place “a subsequent and provisional fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus Christ which takes up the Easter message and anticipates the ‘Behold, I make all things new’ (Rev. 21:5) of the last day . . . in virtue of His presence and action in the Holy Spirit by which it is constituted in this time between the times, as a reflection and replica of the glory which is His alone, in participation in it, and therefore with its own glory as the representation, indication and likeness of His prophecy” (IV/3, 794).

<sup>116</sup> “The ongoing of this calling of the world to the service of God takes place in the likeness of the community founded, maintained and guided by the power of His Holy Spirit, between the *terminus a quo* of its history and its *terminus ad quem*, here and now, in every hour of our time which is the time between the times. This time is not, therefore, a vacuum between the other two. It is the time of the *parousia* of Jesus Christ in its second and middle form, in the power of His Holy Spirit; and therefore it is especially the time of the community (CD IV/1, § 62.3). This time is given the community in order that it may be to the world an indication, representation and likeness of its calling in Jesus Christ to the service of God as it proceeds in this time between. In this sense it is given it for its own supreme joy, which is not, however, its joy in itself, but can only be its joy in this ongoing calling of the world, and therefore in the progress of the mission of its Lord and hence of its own mission to the world, namely, joy in the fact that it may be in and to the world a likeness of the kingdom of God which has come but is still to come, and therefore that in this sense it may exist for the world” (IV/3, 794-795).

<sup>117</sup> Thus “we have to distinguish between what the Gospel sees man to be in himself in virtue of his ignorance, and what it also sees him to be in virtue of the work of God and the Word of God addressed to his ignorance” (IV/3, 809). Thus, every human being is in fact a potential Christian: the community is “concerned with a creature ordained to know and realize his membership of the body of Christ. It has to encounter him as such” (IV/3, 810).

Here Barth makes it clear, especially in discussing the livingness of the Word, that the risen and ascended Lord is constantly present by the Holy Spirit and thereby maintains the purity of Christian witness. The Spirit's work in this purifying is particular and continuous. Barth rhetorically asks, is "there really any *hic et nunc* in which it may maintain with good conscience that it cannot hear the living Word of its living Lord spoken to this *hic et nunc*?" (IV/3, 815). In fact,

there can be no doubt that, when its relevance to specific times and situations is taken from it, intentionally or unintentionally the Gospel is no longer preached as the declaration of the risen Jesus Christ who rules at the right hand of the Father Almighty but who also by His Holy Spirit lives and acts and speaks in the ongoing earthly and temporal history of the world and the Church (IV/3, 816).

Thus the mediating Spirit ensures that the prophetic Word of Jesus Christ is continuously heard and thus maintains the purity of the message.

Barth finally comes to the actual forms of the ministry in the last subsection of § 72. While previous sections have dealt with the being and message of the church as it is sent into the world, Barth is concerned here with what the church actually practises in the interim time. These forms of ministry fill the time of the church in its external movement into the world. The forms are divided between forms of speech and forms of action – with the understanding that each category is contained in the other. The forms of speech include praise of God, preaching, teaching, evangelism, missions, and theology (IV/3, 865-882). The forms of action include prayer, curing of souls, personal examples, the diaconate, prophetic action, and establishing fellowship (IV/3, 882-901). These forms will not be rehearsed in detail since the concern here is to describe how the forms are a result of the mediating activity of the Spirit in ecclesial time.<sup>118</sup> Yet even though the

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<sup>118</sup> Barth first discusses the character and nature of ministry before the forms. The character of the ministry is definite, limited, and full of promise (IV/3, 830-843). This is basically a clarification of the content of the

Spirit fills ecclesial time in this way, Barth does not move toward any reflection on how these activities transform the experience of time for the community.

Nevertheless, that Barth is thinking of the Spirit's temporal work is evinced in the preamble (of sorts) to discussing the forms. Here he gives a brief exposition of the difference and unity of the forms of ministry. The forms of ministry are integrated and manifold, there is a unity in witness but a differentiation in form. Within this dialectic the role of the Holy Spirit as the bond between Jesus-history and the history of believers is central. In this case, the Holy Spirit ensures that the diversity, variety, and particularity of the forms are united to the one purpose of witnessing to the work of Jesus Christ.<sup>119</sup> Again, the Holy Spirit is the bond not only between Christ and his body but also between the many members in the body.

Barth supports the Holy Spirit's work in the diversity and unity of ministry with a reflection on a few Pauline passages (1 Cor 12:4 ff, Rom 12:3ff, and Eph 4:1 ff). Barth takes the terms *χαρίσματα* (spiritual gifts), *διακονίαι* (services), and *ενεργήματα* (activities) as synonymous. In fact, all the forms of ministry in which the church is a witness are united in purpose and united under its Lord by the work of the Holy Spirit.

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message discussed earlier in the paragraph. The nature of ministry is the declaration, explanation, and application of the gospel (IV/3, 843-854). In both of these discussions Barth presumes the continuing presence of Jesus Christ by his Spirit in the time of the community. For example, when discussing the definite character of ministry he states: "As the living Word of God in the calling, enlightening and awakening power of the Holy Spirit, He marches through the history of humanity which hastens to its goal and end, continually moving from our yesterday, through our today into our tomorrow. Yet he does not do so alone. He is accompanied by the community gathered, built up and sent by His attestation. He is surrounded by the people established and characterized by the ministry laid upon it. Thus the ministry of this people also takes place in the course, in the constantly changing stages and situations, of ongoing human history" (IV/3, 831).

<sup>119</sup> These gifts are particular, specific and diverse: "Their divine calling and endowment are as such manifold. They are always new and different. There are specific in each and every case. They demand of each and all specific attention, specific obedience and specific faithfulness. And the more openly they are received by each and all, the more will the ministry and witness of the community necessarily display *de facto* as well as *de iure* an integrated multiplicity" (IV/3, 855-856). They are "created and therefore justified and sanctified by the power of the Spirit of the eternally rich God enlightening the community" (IV/3, 855).

This is expounded with three points. First, the one body has many members. This is recognition of the plurality of gifts, ministries and works as not a “necessary evil, but right and good and inwardly necessary” (IV/3, 857).<sup>120</sup> In fact the diversity and particularity of gifts is not accidental but are “works of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit. As χαρίσματα, they are forms of the one χάρις addressed to the community as such and operative in it. The very unity of the ministry of the community demands and creates its multiplicity” (ibid.). Second, the many are one body. This diversity of gifts, ministries and works is right and necessary because they “do not arise or exist for themselves but for all, for the totality of the life and work of the community” (IV/3, 857).<sup>121</sup> In fact, “all these groups with their particular tendencies must keep rigidly to the rule that they have not to exist or act for themselves . . . but with the selfless desire to serve and with openness on every side to all others and to the whole” (IV/3, 858).

The unity and multiplicity of the forms in one body, however, is only found in the “one ministry and witness of the one Son of God and Son of Man” (IV/3, 858). Thus it is as Paul “looks up to this Head that he understands as he does the community, the unity and plurality of its ministry and witness, and the relation of the fellowship to the fellowships, and that he is so certain of the one Spirit and yet also of the multiplicity of His gifts” (IV/3, 859). But the Holy Spirit ensures that the unity of the diverse gifts within the community corresponds to the unity of its head, Jesus Christ. “The Holy Spirit

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<sup>120</sup> “For good or ill the one body lives in the plurality of its members. The one ministry of the community is performed *de facto* and *de iure* in the multiplicity of the ministries discharged in it” (IV/3, 857).

<sup>121</sup> As Barth summarizes Paul: “Hardly any other admonition is so frequent in Paul’s Epistles as that which urges Christians to seek one and the same thing, to be of the same mind, and to serve one another in humility. These are not general moral exhortations to unity, peace and neighbourly love. . . . Nor is it merely a matter of human imperfection, but it rests on the divine will and order, that all these particularities as such should not have and keep their limits. In virtue of their origin in God, in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, it is made impossible that any one of them . . . should break loose and swallow the others, finally making itself out to be the one ministry or the one fellowship of ministry, and acting as such” (IV/3, 858).

of χάρις with the unity and integration of His χαρίσματα is the Spirit, and only the Spirit, in whom it is known and confessed that Jesus is the *Kyrios* (1 Cor. 12:3). Where this Spirit is and works, there the union arises in which as such freedom rules, and there freedom rules which as such creates union” (IV/3, 859). All that follows, then, in Barth’s discussion of the forms of ministry is work of the Holy Spirit enabling the diverse gifts, services, and activities to witness to the reconciliation found in Jesus Christ.<sup>122</sup> This unifying action of the Spirit, bringing together the diversity of gifts, continually fills the time of the church.

The external movement of the community, its being sent into the world, is essential to its being. Its task is to proclaim the gospel, God’s ‘Yes’ to humanity in Jesus Christ, in a diversity of forms. This diversity of forms is united in its purpose to witness to Jesus Christ, to participate in his prophetic office. The focus for Barth in this external activity of the community is the living Lord who operates in the history of the community by His Holy Spirit. Again, the Holy Spirit continually and dynamically works in each particular time uniting Jesus-history with the history of the community in order that the community may witness to the world by proclaiming the gospel.

### 5.5. Conclusion

The creating and preserving of time by the Father and the recapitulating of time by the Son would be incomplete without the ecclesial time of the Spirit. Whereas the Father’s work establishes time and history as the place in which the covenant may be enacted, the times of Jesus Christ and His Spirit fill and fulfill creaturely time by rescuing humanity

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<sup>122</sup> There is occasional mention of the Spirit’s work in the discussion of the forms; see IV/3, 861, 871, 888, and 898.

from sinful time and directing the community toward the eschaton. What is more, the times of the Father, Son, and Spirit correspond or are analogous to the life and roles of the triune persons *in se* (which is eternity). The Father as the triune basis of origin creates time; the Son as the focus of pretemporal election and the triune basis “manifestation” and “revelation” (*CD* I/1, 363) recapitulates time; and the Holy Spirit as the bond of communion between the Father and Son is the bond of contemporaneity between Jesus-history and the history of the community. In this way, Barth’s view of the eternity-time relation may be termed an *analogia trinitaria temporis*.

In this narration of time the Holy Spirit is the *vinculum* of contemporaneity, creating the history of the community to correspond and thus participate in Jesus-history. The Holy Spirit, as the self-attestation of Jesus Christ, is the divine power that gathers, builds, and sends the community. The activity that fills the time of the community can be summarized as internal and external movements. Internally, the community is gathered and built up. This has been illustrated with a focus on the building of the community. The community extensively and intensively grows and is upheld in an orderly fashion. The external movement of the community is its being sent into the world to witness to the reconciling history of Jesus Christ. This witnessing occurs in manifold forms that are united by the Holy Spirit to participate in the prophetic office of Jesus Christ. These manifold movements ‘fill’ the time of the community. In these internal and external movements, moreover, the Holy Spirit works continuously, dynamically, and particularly, unifying the history of Jesus Christ and the history of the community. In this way, ecclesial time may be appropriated to the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, however, while this interpretation of ecclesial time is an accurate summary of what Barth presents throughout

*CD IV*, it is still the case that he does not reflect directly on the nature, experience, and phenomenon of ecclesial time as such. This issue and others, as well as Barth's positive contributions, will be briefly taken up in the following conclusion.



## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion**

“The theological concept of eternity must be set free from the Babylonian captivity of an abstract opposite to the concept of time” (II/1, 611).

This statement captures Barth’s basic desire to define the perfection of eternity with reference to the content of the Christian faith. That Barth made strides towards fulfilling this should now be obvious. But how far does Barth take the discussion forward? What, if the basic contours of his thought are followed, remains to be done? What criticisms might be made? In view of what he set out to do, it could be argued that Barth remained faithful to his insights, even adding to them, but still did not fulfill the inherent potential found in the turn to central Christian doctrines for relating eternity and time. Barth’s achievements first need to be reviewed, however.

#### **6.1. Barth’s Contributions**

Barth’s contribution to the discussion of eternity and time in the western tradition begins with his definition of eternity and follows with the narrative relation between eternity and time. Both of these features suggest the analogical relation of eternity and time. This is to be expected, for as noted in Chapter Two, there is no proper Christian view of the God-world relation without evidence of analogy in one form or another.<sup>1</sup> Barth identifies eternity as the life of Father, Son, and Spirit. Eternity is not motionless or timeless, but rather divine motion and divine time. This allows Barth to construct a positive relation

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, it is not that analogy is an overarching concept that is valid in its own right, but that it is a useful tool in explaining the Christian view of things.

between eternity and time evinced in the trinitarian pattern of created, recapitulated, and ecclesial time.

The major thinkers in the Christian tradition defined eternity with use of the *via negativa*. For them eternity is defined in its difference from time and nearly always thought of in a negative relation to time.<sup>2</sup> The theological value of the traditional approach, however, is the insistence on maintaining the *ontological distinction* between eternity and time. Eternity is not time, and God is not under the control of time, he does not succumb to the decay and fragility of human temporality. Though he does not end here, Barth in fact affirms this aspect of the traditional discussion. He can state the following, for example: “Time can have nothing to do with God. . . . It is quite correct, as in older theology, to understand the idea of eternity and therefore God Himself in this clear antithesis. In the sense mentioned, it is in fact non-temporality” (II/1, 608). Following this, there is also found in the traditional discussion a notion of the *asymmetrical relation* between eternity and time. Eternity creates and controls time; eternity is the prototype and time the type. There is an element then of a *via positiva* (or *via causalitatus*) in which there is a creative and preserving relation between eternity and time. Again Barth affirms this. Eternity “decides and conditions all beginning, succession and end. It controls them. It is itself that which begins in all beginnings, continues in all successions and ends in all endings” (II/1, 610). But this is where the basic similarities end and the limits of the traditional approach arise. How is there to be a positive relation between eternity and time if eternity is motionless? Is it really coherent to suggest that the living God of Christian scriptures, who creates and acts within time, is timeless?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See the discussion in Chapter One.

<sup>3</sup> Again, see Alasdair Heron, “The Time of God” in *Gottes Zukunft - Zukunft der Welt*, 231-239.

The advantage of Barth's position is that he actually follows through with the *via triplex*. Not simply content with the ontological distinction (*via negativa*) and the asymmetrical relation (*via positiva*), Barth defines eternity as its own divine time (*via eminentiae*). Eternity, as the ordered and moving life of Father, Son, and Spirit, is supremely temporal. "And God does not first create multiplicity and movement, but He is one and simple, He is constant, in such a way that all multiplicity and movement have their prototype and pre-existence in Himself. Time, too, pre-exists in this way in Him, in His eternity, as His creation" (II/1, 612). Because of this, there is a positive and truly analogous relation between eternity and time.<sup>4</sup> Traditional views, under the influence of Greek thought, did not follow through by defining eternity in such a way. For Barth eternity is the true prototype of the succession and movement of created time – and thus the analogous relation between eternity and time.

Yet the varied discussions throughout the *Church Dogmatics* move beyond this merely formal depiction of the eternity-time relation. Barth not only defines eternity as pure duration – the simultaneity of beginning, middle, and end – but also assimilates temporality within the contours of his dogmatic concerns. Thus the discussion of time takes on more of a material or narrative form as the *CD* proceeds along the creedal lines of creation, reconciliation, and redemption. With the help of Ricoeur it was argued that time is best understood in relation to narrative, time is 'for' or 'of' particular activity that is directed toward an end. Time is not merely understood quantitatively but also

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<sup>4</sup> The distinction between univocal, equivocal, and analogous language and relations corresponds to the distinction between the *via positiva*, *via negativa*, and *via eminentiae*. In Thomas Aquinas, for example, the *via positiva* undergirds the discussion of univocity, the *via negativa* the equivocal, and the *via eminentiae* the final defense of analogy. Because God's being contains a divine temporality as eternity (*via eminentiae*) then the relation between eternity and time is analogous. The concerns of the ontological distinction (equivocacy, *via negativa*) and asymmetrical relation (univocity, *via positiva*) are maintained and strengthened.

qualitatively since the experience of time changes depending on the relations and ends occurring within it. Similarly for Barth, created time is not simply the flow of past, present, and future but the opportunity for covenantal relation with God and fellow humanity. And despite the fact that created time becomes fallen time, God faithfully preserves the creature in their time in order to provide an opportunity to respond to fulfilled or gracious time. This fulfilled or gracious time, as it is termed in III/1, is expanded in later discussions to include the recapitulation of time by the Son and the work of the Holy Spirit in the time of the community.

That Barth had in mind such a full narrative, even in *CD* II/1, is evinced in his description of eternity as pretemporality, supratemporality, and posttemporality (619 ff.). The breadth of this threefold division suggests that time and history are enclosed within eternity, as God lives before time, accompanies time, and will live after time has run its course. God prepares for time, especially in the election of Jesus Christ to become incarnate, enacts his will by creating and preserving time, enters time in Jesus Christ, and will complete time in the eschaton. Although not expounded in II/1, there is also brief mention of the idea that general world history finds its meaning in Israel and the Church (II/1, 623-25).

This threefold division, moreover, is decisively christocentric. In the discussion of pretemporality the election of Jesus Christ to become incarnate is the true purpose of God's 'pre-time'.

For this pre-time is the pure time of the Father and the Son in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And in this pure divine time there took place the appointment of the eternal Son for the temporal world, there occurred the readiness of the Son to do the will of the eternal Father, and there ruled the peace of the eternal Spirit – the very thing later revealed at the heart of created time in Jesus Christ. In this pure divine time there took place that free display of the divine grace and mercy and patience, that free resolve to which time owes its existence, its content and its goal (II/1, 622).

What is more, when supratemporality is discussed the focus is on Jesus Christ as the turning point between the past and the future, between sin and salvation. In him the past of death and sin is overcome, while the future of life and salvation is open (II/1, 626-629). Here Barth seems to be thinking of the fleetingness of the present in the flux of time and not history itself – as becomes the case in III/2 and IV/1. Nevertheless, the contemporaneity of Jesus Christ is the focal point.<sup>5</sup> This Christological focus remains in the highly developed discussions of later volumes, which has been illustrated under the rubric of anticipation and recapitulation.

What is missing, however, is mention of the Holy Spirit and time and any substantial discussion of posttemporality. In discussing posttemporality, for example, there is little content to indicate what Barth actually means by this; the small print section, for example, is a discussion of the historical relation between pre, supra, and posttemporality from the Reformers, through Protestant Liberalism, into the modern focus on eschatology – including Barth's own work in *Romans*. The point Barth is making is that the three forms of God's eternity need to be thought of together, as one is not to be favored over another (II/1, 640). As noted in Chapter Four, minimal content is given to posttemporality later in the *Dogmatics*, though this is not without problems. This, along with the neglect of the Holy Spirit, will be discussed below. Nevertheless, at the end of his discussion of eternity in *CD* II/1 Barth states that in "the future course of dogmatics we shall often have occasion to think of both the distinction and the unity in God's eternity" (II/1, 640). The return to the theme of eternity and time throughout *CD* III and IV has been the focus of the present interpretation of Barth's *analogia trinitaria temporis*.

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<sup>5</sup> See Hunsinger, "Mysterium Trinitatis: Karl Barth's Conception of Eternity," 203-205.

The first locus of this interpretation is the Father's work in creating and preserving time. Examining pertinent sections of III/1-III/3, Chapter Three outlined Barth's view of time as the theatre for covenantal activity and relations. Time is a fundamental structure of human existence, a gift meant to enable covenantal relations with God and other humans. Barth's favorite forms of time, rational-linear time and allotted time, are understood in this way. There is also evidence in his exegesis of Genesis 1 that Barth understood human temporality within the context of cosmic and natural times, though this is not thoroughly explicated. In the doctrine of providence Barth takes care to articulate God's preserving of time in order that covenantal activity may take place. The creating and preserving of time are analogous to the Father's role as origin in the divine life and reflect his goodness and patience. Humanity rejects the true purpose of time, however, and the forms of time are filled anew with sinful activity. Following Augustine, Barth expresses the fleetingness of the present 'now' as a source of anxiety rather than opportunity, and, following Heidegger, the movement toward death elicits fear and not the hope of eternal life. Despite this sinful time, God preserves creatures in their time and the passage of time may become a possibility for fellowship and the movement toward death may be filled with hope. This is only possible, however, since God responds to fallen time with fulfilled or gracious time, begun in Israel and revealed in Jesus Christ and the church. There is, then, a new time of reconciliation. This fulfilled or gracious time is examined in the following two chapters.

The second and central locus of Barth's analogy between eternity and time is Christology. Within the triune life the Father generates the Son, and with the Son gives the Spirit. In God's pretemporality, moreover, the Son was elected to be the reconciler

between God and humanity. Thus the fulfilling of time by the Son is analogous to his role within the immanent Trinity and his election to become incarnate. The relation of Jesus Christ and time was expounded with the conceptual use of anticipation and recapitulation. For Barth, the fulfillment of time by the Son is anticipated in pretemporal eternity, created time, and the history of Israel. It also recapitulates all times by retrieving the true purpose of created time and by redirecting all times toward their eschatological fulfillment. The redirecting of time includes the various episodes of Jesus-history: pre-Easter life, resurrection and forty days, ascension and intercession, and the final return in glory. There was concern expressed in reference to Easter time, since Barth's description of it sometimes suggests the fulfillment of eternity in time – though this becomes tempered throughout his discussion. There were also some questions concerning eschatology and time, which are addressed below. What becomes clear, however, is that Jesus-history is definitive for the full breadth of God's pretemporal, supratemporal, and posttemporal activity and life.

The third locus of this interpretation is the ecclesial time of the Holy Spirit. The work of the eternal Spirit in time and history complements the creation of time by the Father and the recapitulating of time by the incarnate Son. Ecclesial time, the history of believers in the middle time, beginning with the ascension and ending with the eschaton, is the time of the Holy Spirit awakening believers to the new reality found in Jesus-history. As the self-attestation of the Son, the Spirit awakens believers to the fact that their histories are enclosed within the history of Jesus Christ and that he is their contemporary. The Spirit's work in ecclesial time was summarized with reference to the internal and external movements of the community. Internally, the Spirit gathers and

builds up the community, while externally sends it into the world. Within these movements the Holy Spirit's temporal work was characterized as continuous, dynamic, particular, and unifying. In this way, Barth presents the eternal Spirit as the bond of contemporaneity. The Spirit's work in ecclesial time is analogous to his eternal role as the bond between the Father and the Son. Just as he is the mediator and bond of eternal life so he is the mediator and bond of salvific contemporaneity. The appropriation of ecclesial time to the Holy Spirit, however, is the most contentious appropriation that the present interpretation makes. As will be discussed below, this locus of the interpretation is least explicit in Barth and leaves one wanting more in terms of describing ecclesial time.

Nevertheless, Barth's *analogia trinitaria temporis* can be summarized as follows. God's triune being is the perichoretic, differentiating, and electing life of Father, Son, and Spirit. This life contains its own movement, its own time, which is eternity. This dynamic eternity is the primary analogate of created time, which is the secondary analogate. Eternity's creation of and work within time reiterates or corresponds to this triune life. This is reflected in the creation of time by the Father, the recapitulating of time by the incarnate Son, and the work in ecclesial time by the Spirit. In this way, there is an analogy between eternity and time in Barth's theology.

This trinitarian interpretation of the analogy between eternity and time supplements well studies of eternity that have noted the importance of Barth's trinitarianism and christocentrism. Given the focus on *CD* III and IV, this dissertation seems to have uncovered something of the full breadth of Barth's conceptualization of this important theme; this is the main contribution of the project. While it does not



examine all the discussions of temporality in the *CD* it does provide a stable hypothesis that may be tested in other places of Barth's *oeuvre*.<sup>6</sup> It seems fair to conclude that he does not reintroduce atemporality into his theological construction; both the triune movement of God *in se* and his gracious movement toward the creature *ad extra* are central for his view of eternity. It is safe to say, then, that in Barth there is no "grin of the timeless cat,"<sup>7</sup> and certainly no "cancerous *Doppelgänger* ... perfecting in exquisite form what could be seen as the most profound and systematically consistent theological alienation [sic] of the natural order ever achieved."<sup>8</sup> Rather, for Barth, God creates and sustains the creature in time, while reconciling humanity to himself in the recapitulating time of Jesus Christ, which includes human participation by the Spirit in the time of the community.

Given the parameters of this study, moreover, there are still historical and genetic questions that may be more fully examined. In the first place, the relation of Barth's view in the *CD* to his earlier work in *Romans*, *The Göttingen Dogmatics*, and *Die christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf*, may be more fully explored as some of these connections were only briefly noted. This would also help discern Barth's connection to his theological predecessors on this issue. For example, in the small print discussion under posttemporality in II/1 (631 ff) Barth gives something of biographical reflection on his relation to eschatological thought since the Reformation. He suggests, for example, his eschatological turn in connection with the elder Blumhardt and Franz Overbeck (634 ff). A full genealogy of eternity and time in Barth would have to take these and other sources

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<sup>6</sup> Various discussions have been passed over, for example: I/2, 45 ff; III/4, 372 f, 569 ff, and 580 ff; and IV/3.1, 165 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Jenson, *God after God*, 154.

<sup>8</sup> Richard H. Roberts, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Time: Its Nature and Implications" in *Karl Barth: Studies in his Theological Method*, 124.

into consideration, even while noting Barth's attempt for a more balanced treatment of pretemporality, supratemporality, and posttemporality in the *CD*.

Another avenue worth exploring is comparing Barth with predecessors he does not mention as influencing him. Take Hegel for example.<sup>9</sup> A key element in Barth's view of eternity is God's livingness and self-movement. How does this conceptually relate to the idea of movement in Hegel's philosophy and philosophy of religion? Barth states at the end of his chapter on Hegel in *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* that in Hegel there is "a great problem and a great disappointment, but perhaps also a great promise."<sup>10</sup> The problem and disappointment for Barth centers on Hegel's failure to recognize the freedom of God, which led to the collapsing of God into human reason and reducing doctrines such as sin and reconciliation into necessary stages of the dialectical movement of human thinking toward truth.<sup>11</sup> Yet wherein lays the promise? Surely it is not within Hegel's view of humanity's confidence in reason, the subject of the first two points of Barth's chapter. But perhaps it is that Hegel viewed God as *living*. While Hegel's living God was in fact "the living man", Barth also argues that Hegel "saw God's aliveness well, and saw it better than many theologians."<sup>12</sup> How is the livingness of God found in Barth related to similar ideas in Hegel, despite the obvious differences? This seems to be worthy of further exploration.

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<sup>9</sup> One may also include Hegel's university roommate Friedrich Schelling, who also articulated a trinitarian pattern of times; see Eberhard Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming*, 29 nt57.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*. New Edition. Trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 407.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 403-405.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 405.

## 6.2. Toward a Trinitarian Theology of Eternity and Time: Lacunae and Criticism

It should be obvious that the basic contours of Barth's *analogia trinitaria temporis* provide a fertile ground from which to construct a theology of eternity and time. This much should be clear from the interpretation that has been presented. Yet despite the possibilities arising from Barth's discussions, there are still lacunae to fill and problems to be overcome if a fuller theology of eternity and time is to be realized. Two lacunae and two basic criticisms will be noted. Of course, the constructive opinions that follow remain on the level of suggestions and conjectures.

The benefits of Barth's view for a contemporary theology of eternity and time deserve brief summary. In the first place, Barth defines eternity, even when using formal categories such as pure duration and *simul*, with reference to the triunity of God. The perfection of eternity, like all of the perfections, is commentary on the living God and is not merely defined in abstraction from time. Second, a Christian theology of time ought to evince some form of the trinitarian pattern of times. For Barth, this includes the Father's creating and preserving of time, the incarnate Son's entering time, and the Spirit's work among and in humanity as they come to participate in salvation. This takes account of the appropriations necessary to God's trinitarian work.<sup>13</sup> Third, Barth understands time to be for covenantal relations. He does not merely describe time as the flow of past, present, and future or as allotted time, but understands these *Existenzformen* as foundational for relations with God and fellow humanity. This understanding of time falls within what Paul Ricoeur describes as narrative time. In Barth's view, the narrative of God's creating, reconciling, and redeeming the creature dictates how time is

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Welker makes suggestions along these lines in "God's Eternity, God's Temporality, and Trinitarian Theology."

understood. Following Barth, a Christian theology of eternity and time would reject a merely quantitative and formal description of time since God creates time with a distinct purpose. Fourth, within Barth's view non-theological forms of time are incorporated. While Barth has sometimes been criticized for not dialoging with other disciplines it ought to be clear that his theology of time incorporates both ancient and modern discussions of time with a fair degree of ease and creativity. As noted in Chapter Two, Ingolf Dalferth argues that Barth includes both internal (theological) and external (non-theological) components in his dogmatic construction, while the former always takes priority.<sup>14</sup> One strength of Barth's approach is the ability to read different views of time within his theological ontology.

Fifth, underlying these positive contributions of Barth is a methodological shift. Barth may be compared with analytical philosophy of religion on this point. In the past few decades the debate in this field has centered on whether or not God is atemporal. Some continue to defend a view of eternity as timelessness, while the majority of scholars seek to articulate some form of temporality. Within the latter group, this ranges from those who seem to collapse eternity into time to those who support some form of interventionism – God is timeless but occasionally acts within time. While a fuller engagement with this range of opinion is well beyond this project, the following methodological difference should be noted. From what can be gathered, the search for a coherent view of eternity and time in analytical philosophy has not sufficiently taken account of the fecundity of Christian belief. That is, the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation, for example, are not given the centrality they deserve. There is often a basic assumption by those defending some form of divine temporality that God acts in history

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<sup>14</sup> Ingolf Dalferth, *Theology and Philosophy*, 121 ff.

and thus is not atemporal, but the dynamic movement of the triune life *in se* is not exploited. It is even suggested that eternity cannot be measured.<sup>15</sup> It may be argued, however, that the best platform from which to develop an argument for divine temporality is the life and movement of the divine persons *in se* and *ad extra*. While eternity is not the movement of created time itself and is ontologically distinct from time, such a dynamic definition of eternity can be viewed as the true basis of created time. God's eternity can be 'measured' if described in trinitarian terms.<sup>16</sup> It seems that the contemporary analytical discussion has not moved from the *via positiva* and *via negativa* into a *via eminentiae*. While there are analytical defenses of God's creation of and action within time (*via positiva*), there is less discussion of how God's being contains its own time (*via eminentiae*). Christian philosophers working on this theme might take note of this methodological distinction in Barth's view.

Despite these positive contributions, there are still concerns with Barth's position that need to be addressed. These issues are not concerned with the fundamental method or outline of Barth's position but seek to correct his position from within. Taking heed of these concerns could aid in moving toward a fuller theology of eternity and time. There are two lacunae and two points of criticism that need mention.

The first lacuna is the failure of Barth to explicitly reflect on the nature of time as such. While Barth takes temporality as a major preoccupation in the *CD*, he more or less assumes popular notions of time without critically reflecting on them. For example, as pointed out in Chapters Three and Four, while Barth suggests that human temporality is

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<sup>15</sup> As Alan Padgett states, God's "time (eternity) is infinite and immeasurable", *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time*, 2; see 126 ff as well.

<sup>16</sup> See Alasdair Heron, "The Time of God." Analytical philosopher of religion Brian Leftow notes the applicability of temporal predicates to God's eternity as well; see "Response to '*Mysterium Trinitatis*,'" 196 ff.

embedded within the time of the cosmos he does not systematically reflect on this. It has been suggested that Barth's ambiguity toward eschatological time may have been avoided by reflecting on the relation of subjective and objective times more systematically.<sup>17</sup> In Barth's defense, it may be noted that the discussions of temporality in *CD* III and IV are located within larger dogmatic concerns, thus temporality is not always the direction subject of investigation. Nevertheless, anyone wishing to theologize on eternity and time would do well to reflect on the nature and plurality of time, even while subjugating such reflection to dogmatic concerns.<sup>18</sup>

Closely following this, a second lacuna is incorporating notions of time from modern science. If non-theological forms of time are readily incorporated by Barth, then it would be reasonable to follow this through with the inclusion of scientific views of time. For, as Barth wrote on the relation of theology and science in the preface of III/1, "future workers in the field of the Christian doctrine of creation will find many problems

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<sup>17</sup> Although not without problems, Wolfgang Achtner, *et. al.*, in *Dimensions of Time* make an attempt to integrate endogenous and exogenous times, though they do not set the discussions of time under an overarching narrative of God's work to the degree Barth does.

<sup>18</sup> Not surprisingly, theologians incorporate discussions of time into theological ontology in differing degrees. Michael Welker calls for a trinitarian pattern in understanding time, though he makes less use of the immanent Trinity to define eternity than does Barth; see "God's Eternity, God's Temporality, and Trinitarian Theology", *Theology Today* 55:3 (Oct 1998): 317-328. Moltmann understands well the fulfilling of time in eschatological existence (see *The Coming of God*, 279 ff, and *Science and Wisdom*, 98 ff), but is less inclined to speak of God's eternal life *in se* as temporal, though he does suggest that God is spacious in his perichoretic life (*Science and Wisdom*, 117 f). Moltmann also seems to favour posttemporality over pretemporality and supratemporality. John Polkinghorne was also positively cited for his articulation of an eschatological understanding of time. Yet his view of eternity is dipolar (similar to process theology), in that God is both atemporal and temporal (*Science and the Trinity*, 104 ff). This fails to take up God's trinitarian life *in se* to the degree necessary. In her wide-ranging work *Time & Eternity: The Question of Time in Church, Science, and Theology* (Philadelphia and London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2005), Antje Jackelén summarizes well various discussions of time, recognizing the importance of narrative, relationality, and eschatology. Yet there is no controlling theological ontology or narrative to guide the discussion. Thus the need of placing various understandings of time into a theological framework is evident in contemporary theology.

worth pondering in defining the point and manner of this twofold boundary”(x).<sup>19</sup> There are two basic discussions that could be taken up.

First, there is the deep time of cosmic and biological evolution. It is standard scientific opinion that the universe is over 13 billion years old, the world around 4.5 billion years old, and life itself around 3.8 billion. It is assumed that creation and its creatures have gradually evolved over this time. A Christian theology of time could incorporate these developments.<sup>20</sup> In the first place, as noted in Chapter Three, Barth views the Genesis narratives of creation as saga. They are neither timeless myth nor are they literal descriptions of what occurred with creation. Though they do refer to the actual creation of the universe and time by God, they do not provide a scientific description of the time of creation in the modern sense. In other words, they suggest *that* God created the world with and in time and not *how* he did so. Following this, it may be argued that notions of deep time can be subjugated within a doctrine of creation and preservation. For Barth, creation is the initial direct act of God to bring the world and time into existence, while in providence God indirectly preserves that which has been

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<sup>19</sup> There seem to be a number of reasons for Barth’s hesitancy in dealing with the natural sciences. In the first place, Barth admitted that he did not possess the training and skill in mathematics in order to dialogue with science. (He admitted this to T. F. Torrance in their last conversation; see T. F. Torrance, *Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990], 135). Second, methodologically, he assumes the autonomy and neutrality of academic disciplines. Each discipline has an object of its own and there is no apparent need for dialogue with other disciplines. (See III/2, 198-202. Barth’s point is that biology, ethics, existentialism, and theistic anthropology do not have knowledge of real humanity, as known through Jesus Christ – though he does insist these disciplines have their own genuine knowledge). Third, Barth assumes the supremacy of theology in relation to other disciplines. Theology goes beyond any other science because it provides the true meaning for human existence – this is the thrust of § 44 (III/2). It may be argued, however, that these concerns may be insufficient since Barth in fact does incorporate non-theological thought into his *Dogmatics* – though giving them secondary importance in relation to theological loci.

<sup>20</sup> For examples of how theists have incorporated deep time see Ted Peters and Martinez Hewlett, *Evolution from Creation to New Creation: Conflict, Conversation, and Convergence* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2003), especially chapters 6 and 7. Unfortunately, there is a tendency in the dialogue between theology and science to displace the dogmatic distinctions of creation and preservation that would help place deep time theologically.

created. While a Christian doctrine of creation and providence would need to critique materialist presuppositions found in evolutionary theory, there is room to subsume basic claims of evolutionary theory. For example, evolutionary science has demonstrated that time began at a distinct and distant point in the past and that life has gradually evolved over long periods of time. Such claims are commensurate with *creatio ex nihilo* and God's preserving of time, and may be subsumed under these doctrines. The major break that would have to be made with Barth's view is that there needs to be some form of continuing creation to account for evolution, whereas Barth only views creation as the initial and direct act of God.<sup>21</sup>

A second issue with time in modern science is the discovery of the space-time continuum in relativity theory. Here there is a move away from the Newtonian view of absolute space and time to a relative view in which space, time, energy, and matter are fundamentally related.<sup>22</sup> This discovery of time may seem to be less a threat than notions of deep time, which challenged traditional opinions on the age of the cosmos and life. Yet it may also be argued that different notions of time are more commensurate with Christian theology than others. In other words, neutrality in relation to scientific notions of space and time is not favorable to critical dialogue.

The work of one of Barth's ablest students illustrates this. Like Barth, Thomas Torrance argues that the purpose of Christian theology, like any other science, is rational

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<sup>21</sup> For an example of such an attempt see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 2, esp. 118 ff.

<sup>22</sup> It might be noted that some traditional assumptions about time are still applicable in relation to relative time. The time of relativity is still unidirectional and thus the modes of past, present, and future are still applicable – not only in a particular frame of reference but also in comparing different frames of reference. The major difference is that there is no universal 'now' of absolute time which all times relate to. The reference point in comparing different time frames is the constant of the speed of light as opposed to an absolute now. In everyday experience, moreover, the relativity of time is not observable as it can only be noticed when approaching the speed of light. What is more, the notions of endogenous and exogenous time are still relevant as well as the rational-linear and duration definitions.



engagement with the object of its inquiry: the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. For this reason it is improper both for theology to take up the rational methods of other disciplines and for other disciplines to critique theology from the ‘outside.’<sup>23</sup> Unlike Barth, however, Torrance makes a significant attempt to draw out the methodological and epistemological similarities and dissimilarities between theology and the other disciplines.<sup>24</sup> This posture also enables him to critically engage with scientific discussions of space and time. His first major attempt at this was *Space, Time and Incarnation*.<sup>25</sup> In this brief work, which actually focuses more on the concept of space, Torrance argues that the central doctrines of creation and incarnation are more commensurate with a relational view of the space-time continuum than with receptacle notions of space.<sup>26</sup> In fact, he argues that the receptacle concept of space, from Aristotle to Newton, has led to dualistic thinking on the God-world relation, thus making a doctrine such as the incarnation difficult to articulate. Christian theology, then, must think of the incarnation as the central place to construct the God-world relation and thus reject the receptacle notion of space in favor for a relational

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<sup>23</sup> This is a focus of *Theological Science*, where he compares theological method with that of other academic disciplines. Torrance argues that all scientific activity is committed to the object of its inquiry and that the methods of each discipline are tied to their respective objects. On the independence of each science he writes: “A dogmatic science of this kind, whether it be in physics or theology, will not allow another department of knowledge working in quite a different field to dictate to it on its own ground, either in prescribing its methods or in predetermining its results – that would be the bad sort of dogmatizing which unfortunately theology encounters today not infrequently from the side of ‘scientism’ and from some philosophical empiricists” (*Theological Science* [New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969], 341).

<sup>24</sup> *Theological Science* not only dialogues with the philosophy of science and western philosophy but is also indebted to Karl Barth’s theological epistemology as found in *CD II/1. Theological Science*, unfortunately, was published in 1969, one year after the death of Barth, thus Barth himself was not able to comment on the work. Torrance does recall from their last conversation, however, that Barth did allow for parallels between his method and other sciences; see *Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian*, 129-130.

<sup>25</sup> *Space, Time and Incarnation* (New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969). The follow-up to this work, *Space, Time and Resurrection*, was originally intended to take up the concept of time in scientific and philosophic discourse and relate it to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. *Space, Time and Resurrection*, however, discusses the resurrection in biblical and theological terms.

<sup>26</sup> The receptacle notion of space refers to the idea that space is a container that controls matter within it. Often space is considered closed and finite. The relational notion of space, however, suggests that space, time and matter are interrelated and affect one another, as in modern relativity theory.

view. In *Divine and Contingent Order* he takes up again space-time concepts and makes a similar argument. In particular, he finds Newton's concept of absolute space and time wanting in that it gives rise to a dualist separation of God and creation. This basic deism with its closed mechanistic view of space and time contributed, in Torrance's opinion, to Newton's own Arianism.<sup>27</sup> Yet Torrance reserves a positive assessment for the work of Einstein and modern physics.<sup>28</sup> What this implies is that the movement from an absolute view of space and time to the relative and relational view is commensurate with Christian belief: "the basic ideas of classical Christian theology as to the relation between God and the universe are emancipated, as it were, from the constrictions of a dualistic outlook in which a god of inertial motion and a determinate universe governed by necessary relations are correlated with each other" (21, see 40 ff. as well)

The point here is not whether Torrance's reading of classical and contemporary physics is correct,<sup>29</sup> but to suggest that in contrast to Barth Torrance advances a critical

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<sup>27</sup> Torrance summarizes the effects of Newton's views in the following way: "Behind all that development, however, and fostering it, lay a contradiction in Newton's theology, between his concept of God as an inertial power, detached in his absoluteness, and his concept of God's role within the mechanistic or causal system of the world. The fall away of the latter left Western thought geared to a massive deism, in which God cannot be thought of as interacting with the universe he has made without interfering in its natural operations, which ruled out any idea of miracle as some unacceptable suspension of natural law" (*Divine and Contingent Order* [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1981], 10).

<sup>28</sup> He summarizes the difference in contemporary physics with the following: "Everything changes, however, when space is no longer regarded as empty but filled with matter and energy, and when time enters effectively into the equation as an inalienable ingredient in the intervening relations between particles or events affecting their configuration – that is, when all absolutes fall away, and space and time are no longer regarded as empty of unvarying containers but as relations intrinsic to the on-going contingent processes of the universe, so that particles or events are to be regarded as spatially and temporally extended and not as simply contained in space and time. And the change is deeper still when the concept of space-time is introduced, and thus the continuous, dynamic metrical field, with a reciprocal action between it and the constituent matter and energy of the universe, unifying and ordering everything within it... [This view eliminated] the damaging dualism in Newtonian physics, replacing its rigid absolutes in the foundations of science with a more profoundly objective, unitary dynamic relatedness inherent in the structure of the universe, invariant for any and every observer, but which cannot be constructed in terms of a closed axiomatic framework" (ibid., 13, cf. 14 and 35 as well).

<sup>29</sup> For an appreciative exposition of Torrance's view of natural theology and dialogue with science see Part Two of Alister McGrath, *Thomas F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (T & T Clark: Edinburgh, 1999), esp. 175 ff. For some criticism of Torrance's scientific appropriations see John Polkinghorne, *Faith,*

and constructive stance toward scientific views of space and time. Torrance argues that time in relativity theory is more commensurate with central Christian doctrines than classical notions. Following such a procedure, it would seem quite possible for theologians to dialogue with scientific notions of time - whether from cosmology, biology, or physics. The strength of Torrance's method is the ability to prioritize dogmatic concerns and subjugate scientific notions of time to these. Thus, if one keeps in mind the specifically theological definition of eternity, with reference to the triune God, and the full breadth of God's work within the economy of salvation, then dialogue with time in modern science turns out to be quite fruitful, even necessary.

As for more direct criticisms of what Barth actually presents, the issues of pneumatology and time and eschatological time need to be noted. A fuller trinitarian view of the eternity-time relation ought to develop these themes more fully than what Barth himself presents. It should be clear from the last chapter that Barth has a pneumatologically underdeveloped view of time. While the discussions of eternity and time in *CD* II/1, as well as *CD* III and IV, are christologically concentrated they do not contain a robust explication of the Holy Spirit and time. For example, Barth scarcely mentions the work of the Spirit in 62.3, "The Time of the Community" (IV/1), though in fact this subsection is found under pneumatology. Therefore, in the last chapter the other pneumatological sections of *CD* IV had to be mined in order to piece together the connection between the Holy Spirit and ecclesial time. If one locus of the present

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*Science and Understanding* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 173 ff. It should be noted however that Polkinghorne applauds Torrance's assumption that theology and the other sciences are to be methodologically and epistemologically controlled by their particular objects, Torrance's emphasis on relational space-time, and the focus on the incarnation as the place for Christian theology to begin the dialogue with scientific cosmologies (181 ff).

interpretation can be accused of ‘reading into’ or of being overly favorable to Barth it would be the last chapter.

What Barth actually does say on the Spirit and time seems to be a fruitful dogmatic basis from which to begin reflections. For example, in III/2 Barth presents a sustained phenomenological discussion on human temporality that accounts for the anxiety experienced in light of time’s fleetingness and the movement toward death. This experience is recast in light of God’s preserving presence and his work on the cross so that time is experienced as a possibility for fellowship and the movement toward death with hope. There is a full description of how the subjective experience of time may be transformed from anxiety and fear to hope and possibility. As for ecclesial time, Barth has been interpreted as saying that the Holy Spirit is the bond between Jesus-history and the history of the community, as the Spirit continuously mediates Christ’s presence to the particular and diverse times of believers. While this is a solid beginning, the discussions in *CD IV* do not suggest how the fragility and weakness of the time of the community is transformed by the work of the Spirit into stability and strength. While Barth does this earlier in the *Dogmatics* for the time of individual, this is not followed through with the time of the community. But this may have been a possibility. Barth, for example, provides a comprehensive list of the activities that fill the time of the community, which are the work of the Holy Spirit in contemporizing the presence of the ascended and risen Lord. These include forms of speech and forms of action (IV/3, 865 ff). But the next step is to ask how the experience of time within the community is transformed through these practices. It has been argued throughout that a proper understanding of time suggests that time is for covenantal relations. Following this, the activity and relations that occur

within time dictate and control the *quality* of time. As Michael Welker suggests, a pneumatological view of time is not merely a time filled with spiritual and liturgical practices but a time that transforms human life through these practices.<sup>30</sup> It is not that Barth views the time of the community as void of the Spirit's work in ecclesial practice, but that the connection between these practices and the transformative and qualitative nature of ecclesial time is neglected. Therefore, a trinitarian account of the relation of eternity and time ought to include a more robust account of the Spirit's work in ecclesial time.<sup>31</sup>

It might be noted that this deeper connection between the Holy Spirit and time was not found at the beginning of Barth's discussion in *CD* II/1 either. While Barth was able to supplement the discussion of II/1 by adding the creation and preservation of time by the Father, there is less development on the Holy Spirit and time. It is difficult to assess why this is left underdeveloped. Perhaps Barth did not see the importance of

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<sup>30</sup> Drawing on the work of biblical scholar Patrick Miller, Welker describes this time of the Spirit with reference to spiritual practice, worship, and liturgy: "God does not simply want to dispose of and dominate creatures. God looks for a living relation to the creatures, a relation in which God is again and again invoked, persuaded, assailed and praised, asked in prayer, and glorified. In searching for and asking for God's living presence, but also in the experience of this presence, we come up with a third form of time, which, however, does not gain clear religious forms of expression without historical memory and cultic continuity. I would like to term this temporal form *the complex of salvific kairological times*" (Welker, "God's Eternity, God's Temporality, and Trinitarian Theology," 326). On this as a transformative time of the Spirit he writes: "Through the activity of the Spirit, certain constellations of creatures are again and again torn from certain constancies and historical processes of development in corrective and healing manners. Through the Spirit, the historical times do not only become *kairoi*, fruitful and fulfilled times. Through the Spirit, God's creative powers are mediated and become known as saving and renewing powers that, without interruption, act upon and through creatures. Life, which seemed destined to perish, is renewed. . . . Through the *overcoming power of the renewing and reviving times* of the Spirit, creatures participate in God's eternal life; they are drawn into and become involved in this life" (ibid.).

<sup>31</sup> For example, how does ecclesial time give hope to believers? How does ecclesial time become a time of strength through spiritual practice and liturgy? How does ecclesial time alter the posture of the church in relation to the world in the middle time? How is the time of the community an anticipation of final eschatological time? Such questions could be asked and attempts to answer them could be made within a more robust view of ecclesial time. For some of these connections, especially in relation to public time, see Randi Rashkover and C.C. Pecknold eds. *Liturgy, Time, and the Politics of Redemption* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006). See for example Scott Bader-Saye, "Figuring Time: Providence and Politics," 91-111; and Pecknold, "Liturgy, Time, and the Politics of Redemption: Concluding Unscientific Postscript," 229-244.

thinking of ecclesial time in such a transformative way. Yet the fact that Barth spent such effort with phenomenological description in *CD* III/2 suggests he was aware that time takes on qualitative dimensions. It is more likely that the problem is symptomatic of Barth's pneumatology in general. It was noted in the last chapter that the problems of Barth's pneumatology might not necessarily arise from the *filioque* but from a lack of exegesis and consideration of the Spirit in general. It may simply be the case that Barth's pneumatology suffers from what Colin Gunton described as "the under-determination of the person of the Holy Spirit in almost all areas of dogmatics," which he suggested is endemic to western theology in general.<sup>32</sup> Whatever the answer, it is still the case that Barth's pneumatology provides a basic dogmatic outline from which a fuller account of ecclesial time may begin.

Lastly, there were also some questions concerning Barth's brief treatment of time in the eschaton. In *CD* III/3, he seems to suggest that time as the *Existenzform* of the creature is done away with. It was argued that this might be a result of his tendency toward 'creational entropy.' It was also suggested that if Barth had thought through more thoroughly the relation of subjective and objective time (his focus is nearly always on creaturely temporality) then the dissolution of creaturely time in the eschaton would have implied too much discontinuity between the present state of creation and the new creation to come. A fuller account of the eternity-time relation would need to include an account of eschatological temporality. If eschatological existence is eternal *life* then this must include some form of activity and thus some form of time. If relations and activity only

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<sup>32</sup> Colin Gunton, *Theology through the Theologians: Selected Essays, 1972-1995* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 1996), 86.

occur in and with time, as Barth suggests, then the eschatological fulfillment of God's relationship with his creatures ought to include some form of temporality.

Nevertheless, these criticisms aside, Barth's theology of eternity and time provides excellent moorings from which to construct a contemporary view. He allows the central doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation to guide the definition of eternity and its relation to time. In God's pretemporal life the Son was elected to take up his particular history. Jesus-history and its fulfilling of time is the true basis of the initial creating and preserving of time by the Father and the foundation for the Spirit's work in ecclesial time. The Son's fulfilling of time is the true purpose of all time and history as they will be completed in the eschaton. Thinking about the nature of time itself, including important notions of time in modern science, as well as a more robust reflection on the Spirit's work in ecclesial time and corrections to eschatological time could only add to the strengths of Barth's foundations. The basic strength of Barth's view is that he has a *Christian* doctrine of eternity and its relation to time. He insists that one must think and speak of this important attribute only on the basis of who God has revealed himself to be in the gospel of Jesus Christ: the electing, perichoretic, and differentiated life of Father, Son, and Spirit. Such a thoroughly *theological* perspective would definitely aid a contemporary articulation of eternity and its relation to time.

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