KARL BARTH'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

by

DEREK SHANNON MELANSON

B.A., Mount Allison University, 1995

Thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts (Theology)

Acadia University
Spring Convocation 1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Karl Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer, both as a model prayer and as a model for the Christian life. For Barth, and much of the Christian tradition, the Lord's Prayer is the model of *all* Christian prayer, and his exposition of the prayer in *Prayer* as a model is examined particularly against his Reformation influences. Christian prayer cannot be separated from the Christian life; the two are inextricably interwoven in Barthian terms. Barth's (ultimately unfinished) exposition of the Lord's Prayer as a theological description of the ground and nature of Christian action in *The Christian Life* is also analysed. Through this study it is evident that Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer provides a more biblically faithful and theologically sound approach to Christian prayer than many other interpretations of prayer given in recent decades. It is also clear that Barth's presentation lends the church a more substantive account of the relation between prayer and ethics without collapsing the former into the latter. Thus, Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer has both theoretical and practical significance for the individual Christian believer and the church at large.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my genuine appreciation to the faculty and staff of Acadia Divinity College, who have supported, encouraged, and challenged me over the three years of my study here. By God's grace they have consistently modeled Christian faithfulness and integrity in the midst of the academy, and such examples will see me in good stead as I continue my academic studies. I think especially of Dr. Allison Trites, whose gracious presence and loving spirit, total lack of pretension, and clear and abiding faith in the living God, says as much or perhaps more about the nature of Christian scholarship, than his tireless and fruitful efforts in biblical studies.

I also think of my advisor, Dr. Roy Williams, who has displayed an inspiring combination of biblical faith and theological substance. I appreciated greatly my many classes with him. During the writing of this thesis he has been a consistent encouragement, and it has often been after meeting or speaking with him that I found myself at my most productive. In that sense, he has been a true mentor and teacher, something which is all too often missing in the academy today.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the many brothers and sisters in Christ I have encountered through Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in Atlantic Canada, whether staff or students. Many have proven themselves both mentors and friends. They have often been a source of guidance and inspiration in my own walk with the Lord, not least in the area of prayer. It has been a joy, a challenge, and a blessing to be involved in serving in university ministry with all of them. It is to them that I dedicate this thesis.

The Lord's Prayer is the most perfect of prayers.
Thomas Aquinas

Prayer does not blind us to this world;
it asks God for eyes to see it in light of God's righteousness in Christ.
Allen Verhey

To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning
of an uprising against the disorder of the world.
Karl Barth

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Barth's Significance as a Theologian

If there is any consensus concerning Neo-Orthodox theologian Karl Barth, it is that he remains the single most influential theological mind of the twentieth-century. Moreover, he is often mentioned in the same breath as such notable figures of Christian theology as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin; and this because of his massive and original contribution to theology.[1] It is Barth who initiated the theological shift from the nineteenth to the twentieth-century when he launched his sustained attack against Protestant Liberalism, exemplified by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, and Adolf von Harnack. In fact, it is with *Der Römerbrief*, his commentary on Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, that many scholars date the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth-century of theology.[2] One of Barth's most notable students, Eberhard Jüngel, says that

> Karl Barth is the most significant Protestant theologian since Schleiermacher, [and his] personal and literary influence profoundly changed the shape of Christian theology across confessional boundaries, significantly altered the

---

[1] Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove: IVP Press, 1992), 63. Cf. Daniel Jenkins, "Karl Barth," in eds., Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman, *A Handbook of Christian Theologians* enl. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 396.

[2] For a discussion of Barth's *Der Römerbrief* see John D. Godsey, "The Interpretation of Romans in the History of the Christian Faith," *Interpretation* 34 (1980): 3-16, and William Nicholls, *Systematic and Philosophical Theology*, The Pelican Guide to Modern Theology Vol.1 (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), 83-100.

> direction of the Protestant church, and also left an unmistakable imprint on the politics and cultural life of the twentieth century.[3]

Writing in 1973, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance remark that the ongoing demand for English translations of Karl Barth's work "belies the ever-recurring rumours that Barth's influence is on the wane."[4] Judging from the continuing spate of recent publications that deal with the theology of Karl Barth, it is also evident that this remains the case even at the present time.[5] Most recently, Barth's influence can be seen in the Postliberal movement, of which he is considered a forerunner.[6]

There are a number of ways in which Barth's significance can be seen. First, it is because of Barth that there has been a vigorous renewal of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity in the latter half of the twentieth-century. As American theologian Robert W. Jenson says, "it is from Barth that twentieth-century theology has learned that the doctrine of the Trinity has explanatory and interpretive *use* for the whole of theology."[7]

---

[3] Eberhard Jüngel, *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy*, trans. Garrett E. Paul (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 22.

[4] G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, "Editor's Preface," in Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 2nd ed. trans. G.W. Bromiley, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), vii.

[5] Some of the more recent studies include: David E. Demson, *Hans Frei & Karl Barth: Different Ways of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); John Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconcilation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Mary Kathleen Cunningham, *What Is Theological Exegesis? Interpretation and Use of Scripture in Barth's Doctrine of Election* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1995); and Scott C. Saye, "The Wild and Crooked Tree: Barth, Fish, and Interpretative Communities," *Modern Theology* 12:4(1996): 435-458. Colin Gunton notes this as well, saying "at a time when his theology has generally been judged to have its day, this is a strange phenomenon." See Gunton, "The Christian Life. Church Dogmatics Volume IV Part 4, Lecture Fragments (Review)," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36:3 (1983), 398.

[6] Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm, eds., *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals & Postliberals in Conversation* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 11.

[7] Robert W. Jenson, "Karl Barth," in David F. Ford, ed, *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 42. For further

Second, Barth also redressed the issue of biblical authority in theology, something which had been sorely lacking in Protestant Liberalism.[8] Of course, Barth's approach to scripture is not one that finds universal approval.[9] Yet, irrespective of one's evaluation of Barth's hermeneutical method or exegesis, his was an attempt at a truly *biblical* dogmatics. As Daniel Jenkins notes, Barth "has made us see that when the great words of Scripture seem stale and platitudinous, it is not because they are no longer 'relevant' but because we ourselves are no longer in the right place for hearing what they have to say."[10]

These first two dimensions of Barth's vast theological project were a result of the rejection of his own theological forebears, and involved a reorientation of the task of theology itself. In addition, both of these contributions are intimately connected with Barth's reevaluation of theological method, and his decision to be utterly reliant upon the

---

study on Barth's influence on trinitarian theology, and on trinitarian theology in the twentieth-century generally, see John Thompson, *Modern Trinitarian Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[8] Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Authority of Scripture in Karl Barth," in eds., D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic Books, 1986), 275 - 294. Bromiley comments that neither Barth in his earlier theological stage, nor Protestant Liberalism had ever explicitly rejected biblical authority. As Bromiley says, Barth "had thought he was preaching its [scripture's] message with his presentation of the Liberal and social version of Christianity. The crisis of the war years involved biblical authority not in the sense of a return to acceptance from total rejection but in the sense of a return to biblical teaching from an understanding that had obscured it and in that way eroded its authority [p. 276]." Yet, one of the hallmarks of Enlightenment thinking was the rejection of all authority outside of the autonomous human self and human reason. Thus, Protestant Liberalism, having been influenced by this epistemological paradigm, and in its extreme approach to the historical-critical method, had to be predisposed to a certain view of authority to employ this method in the way it did. Consequently, a rejection of Scripture's authority would seem to be at least a partial source of the extremes of nineteenth-century biblical criticism, rather than simply its result.

[9] See Richard A. Muller, "What I haven't Learned From Barth," *The Reformed Journal* 37(1987): 17f., where Muller he says that its [*Der Römerbrief*'s] radically existential approach taught me more about the impact of Kierkegaard than the impact of Paul on Barth's thought. Genuine contact with the text of Romans is minimal in Barth's essay."

[10] Jenkins, "Karl Barth", 401.

perogatives established by Christian revelation.[11] Ultimately, *this* is his most important contribution: his willingness to stand against the tide of current thinking, both in theological *and* biblical scholarship, and to redefine the nature and task of theology and the grounds upon which talk of God is made both possible and intelligible.

The Contemporary Situation

It is Barth's overall significance that lends credence to the importance of exploring his understanding of the Lord's Prayer. Given that his exposition of the prayer stands largely within the classic Reformation tradition as a response to Protestant Liberalism, it is also the case that his exposition provides a means of recovering the meaning of the classic prayer for today, especially when the traditional conception of Christian prayer has been superceded by various aberrations. Before briefly touching upon Barth's interest in prayer, then, it is important to highlight the contemporary situation, both in the church and in the academy.

In his 1988 book, *The Struggle of Prayer*, Donald G. Bloesch writes that "there can be no doubt that authentic, evangelical prayer is now in eclipse . . . no longer petition to a personal God and intercession on behalf of the world, prayer is now an experience of spirituality, entering into the depth dimension of existence."[12] Within the parameters of the Church the understanding of prayer and its actual practice are not necessarily what

---

[11] Many are critical of Barth's method, calling it "fideistic." For an examination of this accusation see Steven G. Smith, "Karl Barth and Fideism: A Reconsideration," *Anglican Theological Review* 66 (1984): 64-78.

[12] Donald G. Bloesch, *The Struggle of Prayer* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1988), 11.

they once were. For instance, Kenneth Hagin, a prominent figure in the charismatic movement, advocates the denigration of petitionary prayer and the emphasizing of praise.[13] As R. Gregor Smith comments, "It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the vast mass of even conscientious church members have entirely relinquished the habit of private prayer in any of the conventional forms."[14] Even in the midst of the current fascination with spirituality[15], the traditional struggle for spiritual maturity characteristic of past generations of Christian believers is singularly absent, according to Bloesch.[16] Jacques Ellul says that there is "a drying up of private prayer. People read the Bible less, meditate less, and pray individually less and less."[17] Yet, Reginald Bibby reports that not only have half the population of Canada experienced God's presence, but that one in two pray privately, either on a daily or weekly basis.[18] However, it is apparent that observable shifts have occurred in the understanding of prayer which demonstrate a divergence from

---

[13] Kenneth Hagin, *Praying to Get Results* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Evangelistic Association, 1974), 160.

[14] R. Gregor Smith, *Secular Christianity* (London: Collins, 1966), 207. Cf. Donald G. Bloesch, *The Crisis of Piety: Essays Toward a Theology of the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1988), 1.

[15] A relatively recent and fascinating exploration of the interest in, and manifestation of, spirituality throughout Canada in all its diversity, Christian and otherwise, is Ron Graham, *God's Dominion: A Sceptic's Quest* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990).

[16] Bloesch, *Struggle of Prayer*, 11.

[17] Jacques Ellul, *Prayer and the Modern Man* trans C. Edward Hopkin (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970), 100.

[18] Reginald Bibby, *Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddard, 1993), 128, 129. Bibby also reports that only 25% indicate that they *never* pray. It needs to be noted that there is no distinction made here between Christians and people either of other faiths, or of no official religious affiliation.

the scriptural model, particularly that taught by Jesus Christ himself when asked by his disciples to "teach us to pray."[19]

The academy is not immune to this shift in understanding, and even the phrase Bloesch uses, "depth dimension of existence", has a remarkably Tillichian ring to it. When Paul Tillich himself was asked by a student if he prayed, he thought for a moment and answered, "I meditate."[20] Writing thirty years ago, Walter Wagoner says this of theological students:

> Students suffer from the general syndrome of Protestant churches: they've become artful dodgers of a disciplined prayer life. They use social action, spiritual guruism - in the form of psychological counseling - and a scrupulously academic approach to the study of religion as a substitute to evade the problem of a totally religious prayer.[21]

This perspective is given a starker expression by Helmut Thielicke when he says that "the time when prayer meant knocking on a door that would then open . . . has gone. The hour has come when God is a door that is permamently closed, when transcendence is silent, when the empirical consciousness posits its frequencies as absolute."[22]

---

[19] Luke 11: 1 - 4. Jesus responds to the disciples' request by teaching them the prayer commonly known as the 'Our Father' or 'Lord's Prayer.' This demonstrates that to understand a biblical model of prayer, this prayer ought to play a central and determining role, coming as it does from the lips of Jesus himself.

[20] Quoted in *The Presbyterian Journal* 27 (1969), 12. See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 127, 213, 224, 267, 289, for more of his comments on prayer.

[21] Walter Wagoner, "Can Modern Man Pray?" *Newsweek* 72 (1968): 38. Cf. *Bulletin 42: Part 3 1996: Procedures, Standards, and Criteria for Membership* (Pittsburg: The Association of Theological Schools, 1996), 40, 42, 75, 76, where the Association specifically highlights the importance and necessity of spiritual formation and discipline in the context of theological education.

[22] Helmut Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith* trans G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), vol.1, 114.

Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science movement, states that prayer is the "affirmation of Principle Allness."[23] Catholic theologian Gregory Baum sees prayer not as communication with divine reality, but thinks that prayer "is to be in touch with oneself in a new way."[24] For Matthew Fox, prayer is a "radical response to life."[25] For Paul van Buren and J.A.T. Robinson, prayer is collapsed into ethics.[26] Thus, the contemporary situation involves both an interest in spirituality and prayer as well as understandings of prayer that diverge from the scriptural example and teaching, chiefly exemplified by Jesus himself. As Bloesch says, "Much of the spirituality in question proves to be based on the cultural quest for meaning rather than loyalty to the biblical imperatives."[27]

Barth's Interest in Prayer

In contrast to these preceding views, there is Barth's interest in prayer, which is the result of a number of interrelated factors. First, it is a result of his reorientation of theological method, particularly insofar as this was positively influenced by his study of

---

[23] Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (Boston: Trustees under the will of Mary Baker G. Eddy, 1934), 7.

[24] Gregory Baum, *Man Becoming: God in Secular Experience* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 264.

[25] Matthew Fox, *On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 16ff, 49ff. Fox's influences include existentialism, mysticism, and process thought.

[26] J.A.T. Robinson, *Exploration Into God* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 123; and cf. Robinson, *Honest to God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 105. Barth's understanding of prayer and ethics provides a more biblically and theologically sound alternative to Robinson.

[27] Bloesch, *Crisis of Piety*, x.

Anselm.[28] Thus for Barth, prayer is *the* condition of *intelligere* and theology; it is the condition which relativizes all other conditions. As he says:

> Right knowledge is conditioned by the prevenient and co-operating grace of God. This general condition and also the fact that this grace must ever be sought by prayer already imply that the ultimate and decisive capacity for the *intellectus fidei* does not belong to human reason acting on its own but has always to be bestowed on human reason as surely as *intelligere* is a *voluntarius effectus*.[29]

This methodological principle is also made clear in Barth's *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction* where he describes prayer as the "first and basic act of theological work."[30] In addition he also says that "theological work does not merely begin with prayer and is not merely accompanied by it; in its totality it is peculiar and characteristic of theology that it can be performed only in the act of prayer."[31] Indeed, he also comments that theological work is, in the last analysis, "A question of prayer and the answer to prayer."[32] In addition, in *The Humanity of God* Barth argues that "it is imperative to

---

[28] *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum, Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of His Theological Scheme* trans. Ian W. Robertson (London: SCM Press, 1960), 11, 12, and 35 - 40.

[29] Barth, *Anselm*, 37.

[30] Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction* trans. Grover Foley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 160. The chapter on prayer is notably the first in the section entitled, 'Theological Work', and the whole chapter explicates the relationship between theology and prayer and is essentially a discussion of theological method.

[31] Ibid. Here Barth notes that this is partly because of the danger to which theology is exposed - through doubt and temptation - and the hope that is enclosed within its work. Suffice it to say that prayer is part of Barth's basic theological method. Cf. George S. Hendry, "The Life Line of Theology," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* LXV (1972): 22 - 30, for a discussion of the importance of the practice of prayer for theology; and Frances Rice McCormick, "Sabbath Rest: A Theological Imperative According to Karl Barth," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62 (1994): 539 - 552, for a similar discussion. Hendry discusses Barth throughout his article, and takes note that Barth is the only major theologian of the twentieth-century to give serious attention to prayer. This has also been noted by Perry LeFevre, *Understandings of Prayer* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 28.

[32] Barth, *Anselm*, 40.

recognize the essence of theology as lying in the liturgical action of adoration, thanksgiving and petition. . . . [This] is one of the most profound descriptions of theological method."[33] Thus, it is no coincidence that at the beginning of his first lectures on dogmatics, Barth put the prayer of Thomas Aquinas: "Merciful God, I pray thee to grant me, if it please thee, ardour to desire thee, diligence to seek thee, wisdom to know thee and skill to speak to the glory of thy name. Amen."[34] The relationship between prayer and theology can be expressed in an old maxim which is found in Augustine, Medieval theologians, and the Reformers: *lex credendi lex orandi*.[35]

Second, it is also clear that for Barth prayer becomes important because for the Reformers and the Reformation prayer was also important; Barth's theology of prayer is partly an attempt to recover emphases of Reformation theology, so his recovery of the importance of prayer for theological work follows from this. As he says, the Reformers of

---

[33] Barth, *The Humanity of God* trans. Thomas Wieser and John Thomas (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), 90.

[34] Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts* trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 154 - 155. Jan Milic Lochman notes the quandary of discussing the theological nature of prayer: "Prayer is a movement of the heart, whereas theology is a conceptual exercise . . . can we combine the two? I believe that it is possible and even necessary to relate the two . . . heart and mind cannot be separated from one another." See Lochman, *The Lord's Prayer* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 1. Cf. P.T. Forsyth, *The Soul of Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 9, where he says that "it is a difficult and even formidable thing to write on prayer, and one fears to touch the Ark."; R.F. Shepherd, "Putting Prayer on the Theological Agenda," *Theology Today* 27(1970): 81 - 87, where he says that "no act of man so bristles with theological presuppositions" as prayer, which means that it needs to be studied in its own right as the 'central perspective' from which other theological issues are studied"; and Andrew Louth, *Theology and Spirituality* (Oxford: SLG Press, 1994).

[35] The law of believing is the law of praying.

the church prayed and were of one mind concerning the importance and significance of prayer.[36]

A third significant element in Barth's interest in prayer is that he draws an explicit connection between prayer and ethics. His last major published work, albeit posthumous and unfinished, was an exposition of the Lord's Prayer as a model for *The Christian Life*.[37] As Perry LeFevre states, "Barth offered a theology of prayer that not only put prayer at the center of Christian life but that seemed to confirm its traditional meaning."[38] The present author has previously explored this connection between prayer and ethics in Barth's thinking as well.[39]

Barth's understanding of prayer, and the importance it played in his theological method, is due in large part to his reaction to Protestant Liberalism.[40] In fact, the first two

---

[36] Barth, *Prayer* 2nd ed. ed. Don E. Saliers, trans Sara F. Terrien (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 23, 24. Significant also is both the fact that Barth begins his remarks in this book by discussing the Reformers and that this book is an interpretation of the Lord's Prayer. Barth's understanding of prayer has been compared and contrasted with Calvin's on a couple of occasions, demonstrating that some connection exists between the two, despite existing tension. See John Kelsay, "Prayer and Ethics: Reflections on Calvin and Barth," *Harvard Theological Review* 82:2 (1989): 169 - 184; and Han Chul-Ha, "Belief and Unbelief in Prayer: A Comparison Between Calvin and Karl Barth," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 9 (1985): 348 - 358. Barth himself wrote an essay on Calvin's understanding of the Lord's Prayer, "Calvin," *Theologische Existenz Heute* 37(1936): 3 - 22. This article is in German and there is no English translation available. The present author attempted to locate a possible translator, but to no avail. For a brief discussion on prayer in the Reformation see Friedrich Heiler, *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion* trans and ed. Samuel McComb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 131, 132. Heiler's study is a classic in literature on prayer.

[37] *Church Dogmatics*, IV.4, *Lecture Fragments* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981).

[38] LeFevre, 28.

[39] Derek Melanson, "The Invocation of the Christian Life: Prayer and Ethics in Karl Barth's Thought," in *Full of the Holy Spirit and Faith: Essays Presented in Honour of Dr. Allison A. Trites, Pastor, Teacher, Scholar* ed. Scott A. Dunham (Wolfville: Gaspereau Press, 1997), 63 - 87.

[40] LeFevre, 28.

factors already noted above are in some sense dependent upon this one basic fact: that theology could not be done in the same way, in the manner of Schleiermacher[41], Ritschl, and Harnack, in the wake of the First World War. Thus, the largest direct factor in Barth's recognition of the importance of prayer is his reorientation of the theological task itself. In turn, as LeFevre says, Barth's understanding of prayer is also directly tied to his doctrine of God:

> The root and ground of prayer for Barth is both the action of God and the helplessness of man apart from God. If this is the human situation, that man is approached by God and that no approach is possible from the human side, then the necessity of prayer becomes clear, for God's approach contains within it the command to pray . . . The nature, kind, and quality of prayer together with the certainty that it will be answered and heard will be determined by the nature and character of the revelation and of the revealer. On such a ground Barth develops his theology of prayer.[42]

Barth's interest in, and understanding of, prayer is also significant because he is the *only* major twentieth-century Protestant dogmatic theologian to tackle it as a major theological topic.[43] More than that, G.W. Bromiley says that in Barth there is "the ultimate orienting of theology to worship."[44] Indeed, at least one study has been done that argues that Barth's theology is liturgically oriented.[45]

---

[41] Indeed, Barth refers to Schleiermacher's conception of prayer as "the supreme and most intimate act of self-help." See *The Christian Life*, 103.

[42] LeFevre, 30.

[43] Ibid., 28.

[44] Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *An Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 249.

[45] John Arnold Berntsen, "The Liturgical Orientation of Karl Barth's Theology." (PhD Diss. Emory University, 1985). Berntsen has a chapter entitled, 'The Rule of Prayer and Theological Method'. Cf. Ellul, vii, where he quotes Maillot as saying, "To write a theology of prayer would be to write theology in its entirety"; Lochman, 2, where he says "the liturgy does not take place outside theological reflection even though it transcends the conceptual. Conversely, and with even broader implications, theology takes place in the context of liturgy. It itself is a liturgical matter"; Karl Barth, *God In Action* trans. Elmer G.

For Barth, prayer is central to the theological task, an important theological topic in itself, and is intimately connected with the Christian life, or ethics. Clearly, these are reasons enough to explore Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer. This is true especially considering Barth's assertion that in the 'Our Father' the church has the perfect example of prayer,[46] not to mention that Barth's two major treatises on prayer are expositions of the Lord's Prayer rooted in the Reformation and in the broader church tradition. Moreover, at least one writer cites the importance of Barth's understanding of prayer as a way "to challenge Western Christianity's deeply entrenched spiritual malaise", and also notes that "the significance Barth attaches to the Lord's Prayer for the ordering of prayer can hardly be over-emphasized."[47]

The first of these two treatises is *Prayer*, a series of French lectures on the Lord's Prayer given by Barth at Neuchatel between 1947 and 1949. In this little volume, Barth gives an exposition of the Lord's Prayer "according to the catechisms of the Reformation", particularly Luther, Calvin, and the Heidelberg Catechism. While this is true, Barth does not present an *uncritical* understanding of his Reformation forebears.[48]

Homrighausen (Manhasset: Round Table Press, 1963), 43, where Barth says theology "has a definite function in the Church's liturgy"; and James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, & The Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 9, 10, where he says that "if out of the the confessional (kerygmatic) statements of the Bible come doxological statements, Christian dogmatics unfolds from reflection on doxology. True theology is done in the presence of God in the midst of a worshiping community."

[46] *Church Dogmatics*, III.4, 112; *Christian Life*, 44; and *Prayer*, 43.

[47] Kenneth L. Schmidt, "Karl Barth's Theology of Prayer." (PhD Diss, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1980), 1, 2, and 191. Schmidt here also notes the importance of Barth's understanding of prayer for his theological method.

[48] Olive Wyon, "Prayer," *Theology Today* 11(1955): 561-562. Cf. Philip H. Pfatteicher, "Prayer [2nd ed.]," *Worship* 60:1(1986): 90-91 for another book review.

The second work of especial relevance to this discussion is Barth's posthumous work, *The Christian Life*. Published in English in 1981, this book forms the unfinished ethical section of the fourth volume of the *Church Dogmatics*, the doctrine of reconciliation. The book itself is a discussion of the Christian life centered around an exposition of the invocation and first two petitions of the Lord's Prayer; and although incomplete and fragmentary in nature, is an important clue to how Barth was moving in his last days. That being said, the advice of Eberhard Jüngel is pertinent to this discussion: "We are not certain that what we are dealing with here is the final form of Barth's thinking which he considered ready for publication."[49] Also important to this discussion of Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer is the section on prayer in *Church Dogmatics III/4, The Doctrine of Creation*[50]; here, as in *The Christian Life*, Barth discusses prayer in the context of ethics. Barth also has a commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, *The Heidelberg Catechism For Today*.

---

[49] Eberhard Jüngel, "Invocation of God as the Ethical Ground of Christian Action: Introductory remarks on the posthumous fragments of Karl Barth's ethics of the doctrine of reconciliation," in Jüngel, *Theological Essays* trans. J.B. Webster (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 154. There are a number of other articles and essays that discuss Barth's *Christian Life* which prove useful and important in this discussion: John Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 174 - 213; J.B. Webster, "The Christian in Revolt: Some Reflections on *The Christian Life*," in Nigel Biggar, ed. *Reckoning With Barth: Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth's Birth* (London: Mowbray, 1988), 119 - 144; Donald K. Mckim, "Karl Barth on the Lord's Prayer," *Center Journal* 2:1 (1982): 81 - 99; Charles C. Dickinson, "Church Dogmatics IV/4," in H.-Martin Rumscheidt, ed. *Karl Barth in Re-View: Posthumous Works Reviewed and Assessed* (Pennsylvania: Pickwick Press, 1981), 43 - 53; Jean-Luc Blondel, "Prayer and Struggle: Karl Barth's 'The Christian Life'," *St. Luke's Journal of Theology* 23(1980): 105 - 115. Book reviews of this posthumous Barthian publication include: Colin Gunton, "*The Christian Life*," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36:3(1983), 398 - 400; William M. Longsworth, "Theological foundations for Ethics," *Quarterly Review* 3(1983): 92 - 100; and John S. Reist, Jr., "Barthian Ostraca: Ethical and Epistolary Fragments," *The Journal of Religion* 63(1983): 281 - 289.

[50] trans. A.T. MacKay, T.H. Parker, Harold Knight, et. al. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961), 87 - 115.

There is also a chapter on prayer in *Evangelical Theology* that provides part of the larger framework of Barth's understanding of prayer.[51]

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer, and in order to do this it will have to consider several facets of this understanding. In the second chapter an intellectual biography of Barth places him in his historical context. This discussion includes an account of Barth's Protestant Liberal theological heritage, with particular regard to theologians Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, and Adolf von Harnack. This is significant because Barth's understanding of prayer is itself involved in his larger response to Protestant Liberalism, as can be seen in his book, *Anselm.* The various stages in Barth's theological development also form a part of this discussion.

Chapter three is an examination of the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer. Thus, here there is an examination of how Barth thinks the Lord's Prayer shapes, or ought to shape, Christian prayer generally. It is a prayer descriptive of the relationship between God and his children, and of the priorities and concerns definitive of Christian prayer. Both the importance and meaning of the Lord's Prayer as a model are discussed. Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer is a critical repristination of the Reformation understanding over against the nineteenth-century Liberal interpretation.

Chapter four examines the relationship in Barth's thought between the Lord's Prayer and ethics. It analyzes Barth's understanding of the importance of the prayer as a model for the Christian life. The meaning of the Lord's Prayer as a paradigm for ethics is first dealt with through a number of concepts: ethics as an ethic of love and freedom,

---

[51] Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, 159 - 170.

Barth's use of analogy, the invocation of God, the object of invocation, the subject of invocation, and then the first two petitions, all as discussed by Barth in *The Christian Life.*

Since Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer is examined in its function as a model prayer and as a model of the Christian life, the use of primary sources in chapters three and four reflects this division. Barth's *Prayer* is an exposition in the tradition of Reformation catechisms, and this is seen in his opening with general and introductory remarks on prayer and then proceeding with the exposition proper. It is this book, then, that this study concentrates on when discussing the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer. Subsequently, since Barth's *The Christian Life* is a partial exposition of the Lord's Prayer as a model of Christian ethics, chapter four is based primarily on his discussion in this work. This being said, both chapters three and four make use of both of these sources; this division simply reflects Barth's own treatment of the topic.

Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer is not without its difficulties, and chapter five will survey some of the particular problems associated with Barth's thinking in this regard. Here, Barth's thought concerning prayer and ethics, the nature of the divine command, and particular ethical problems, come into consideration. Of course, along with criticisms of Barth's discussion of the Lord's prayer, as both a model prayer and as a model for the Christian life, there are several contributions that he makes which provide an alternative to the confusing plethora of voices concerning Christian prayer that are noted above. Especially since Barth considers his theology, or *dogmatics*, a churchly enterprise, it is the value of his thought for the Christian church which is of importance for the purposes of this thesis. Therefore, there is no immediate value for the non-believing

community in Barth's discussion of the Lord's Prayer. Considering Barth's theological method and emphases, this is not a surprise. This last chapter concludes with suggestions for further study, dimensions which only emerge on the periphery in this study, but nonetheless deserve further attention.

CHAPTER TWO

INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY

Barth's 19th Century Background & Theological Heritage

> The nineteenth century brought a new kind of search for the basis and foundation of theology itself; a fresh attempt to bring human awareness and experience into the center of theological study; the forging of more specialised techniques for the literary and historical study of the Bible, techniques whose application helped to raise what were often felt to be disturbing and challenging questions about its meaning and relevance as well as about the standing and authority of established Christian doctrines; and the sharp new question whether Christian theology ought to be subsumed under some more general study of religion and religions.[1]

The above quotation from Alasdair C. Heron highlights the more prominent and central features of nineteenth-century Protestant Liberal theology, and there are certain figures who during this epoch play a greater role in shaping the thought of Karl Barth than others, and against whom he reacted most strongly. These same figures represent the spirit of Protestant Liberalism more definitively than others and are credited with the widest dissemination of its influence throughout continental European theological and biblical scholarship. In order to appreciate and understand Karl Barth himself, students of theology must first come to terms with his theological heritage. The three figures that this

---

[1] Alasdair I.C. Heron, *A Century of Protestant Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 68. Although Heron is considered a standard work on twentieth-century Christian theology and the preceding developments, other helpful surveys of Modern theology include Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology*; Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age*; John Macquarrie, *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought*; Martin E. Marty, eds., *A Handbook of Christian Theologians*; William Nicholls, *Systematic and Philosophical Theology*; Otto W. Heick, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 2; and David F. Ford, ed., *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 1 [Fuller bibliographical information is included either in other footnotes or the select bibliography].

section will therefore concentrate on, for reasons which will become clear, are Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack, and the father of Modern Protestant theology, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher.

The developments in philosophy and science wrought by the Enlightenment focused upon the elevation of human reason over what was regarded as 'superstition', earning it the designation, the Age of Reason. This era placed enormous confidence in the capacity of human rationality. The principle of reason meant that a fundamental order and structure lay within all of reality and was evidenced in the workings of the human mind. Enlightenment thinkers concluded that the human mind was able to discern and come to know the structure inherent in the external world of nature. Subsequently, since thinkers from this period believed the orderly structure of nature was the result of divine design, the laws of God became the laws of nature, because in the latter the former could be discerned and discovered.[2] This led to the Enlightenment principle of 'autonomy', because as Grenz and Olson state, "No longer would simple appeal to the teaching office of the church, the Bible, or Christian dogma be sufficient to bring about the compliance in belief or conduct. The individual would now test all such external claims to authority."[3] In the words of Immanuel Kant:

> Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. "Have Courage to use your own reason" - that is the motto of Enlightenment.[4]

---

[2] Grenz and Olson, 20 - 22.

[3] Ibid., 21.

[4] Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *What is Enlightenment?* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1959), 85.

Challenges to the Christian faith initiated by the Enlightenment included challenges to biblical authority[5], supernaturalism[6], and natural religion. However, philosophical challenges to Enlightenment thinking were not slow in coming, and they came, from Hume, Kant, and Lessing.[7] Their thought raised the twin issues of epistemology and history, which were to be equally pressing for those seeking to do theology in the wake of the Enlightenment and its critics.[8] It is against this environment that nineteenth-century theologians, those who most deeply influenced Barth, have to be understood.

According to Richard R. Niebuhr, "Religiously speaking, we must concede the nineteenth century to Schleiermacher."[9] Indeed, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768 - 1834) is generally considered the father of Modern Protestant theology, and his

---

[5] As Heron says, "the way was open to the conclusion that the Bible should simply be treated as a collection of ancient religious literature with no special claims to be heard or accepted except where it happened to express some general religious 'principle' that could be recognised as universally valid - the kernel within the husk." As will be seen this is one of the emphases of Liberal Protestantism. See Heron, 5.

[6] This challenge was especially acute in regard to miracles. However, Heron makes the important and interesting point that both parties, those on the side of orthodoxy and the rationalists, defined miracles in the same way: "Both had in the background the idea that the universe is a machine which is normally wholly determined by causal laws, and that a miracle is a temporary suspension of these laws." Such an understanding is questionable on both biblical and scientific grounds. See Heron, 7.

[7] Lessing's famous dictum, "the accidental truths of history can never become the necessary truths of reason" epitomizes the modern view that "the real content of revelation is in principle detachable from the particular history through which it has been manifested." See Heron, 20

[8] Mortimer J. Adler, *Ten Philosophical Mistakes: Basic Errors in Modern Thought - How They Came About, Their Consequences, and How to Avoid Them* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1985). In this book Adler demonstrates basic difficulties with modern thought, particularly the problem of thinkers attempting to correct their predecessors conclusions while remaining tied to their presuppositions.

[9] In "Friedrich Schleiermacher," in *A Handbook of Modern Theologians*, 17.

influence can hardly be overestimated.[10] Even though most Christians have not heard of him, "his ideas about religion in general and Christianity in particular have trickled down to them" via pastors, church leaders, theological educators, etc.[11]

With a pietistic background with its roots in Moravianism, Schleiermacher began to develop doubts about key doctrines of orthodox Protestantism early in his education. Yet, even with his skepticism about certain doctrines, he never lost his pietistic emphasis; his drift away from orthodox Protestant theology continued during his university studies. During the 1790's Schleiermacher became deeply influenced by a new movement -- Romanticism -- which was a reaction to the cold rationalism of Enlightenment philosophy. This movement placed great emphasis upon human feelings, imagination, and intuition. It was for his circle of friends, all equally Romanticists, that he composed his first major work, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers.*[12] Here is where Schleiermacher's famous definition of religion, 'a feeling of absolute dependence', is first found.[13] The Romanticists were still children of the Enlightenment in that they shared the suspicion of authority and dogmatism, but instead of relying upon a cold rationalism they wished to recover a sense of human feeling and intuition. It was "in the Romantic emphasis on feeling [that] Schleiermacher found his clue for reconstructing Christianity so that it would not conflict with the fundamental spirit of modern culture."[14] Niebuhr regards the

---

[10] Otto W. Heick, *A History of Christian Thought, vol. II* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 182, 183.

[11] Grenz and Olson, 39.

[12] trans. Terrence N. Tice (Richmond: John Knox, 1969).

[13] Heick, 170, 171.

[14] Grenz and Olson, 43.

interaction between religion and intellectual culture to be Schleiermacher's most important methodological principle.[15]

Although it is true that Schleiermacher accepted Kant's demolition of rational, philosophical knowledge of God, he also saw Kant's turn to practical reason or ethics as inadequate. Thus, neither metaphysics nor ethics form the heart of religion; and if religion cannot be reduced to either knowing or doing, then it is lost to sight altogether.[16]

For Schleiermacher there is a level of being beyond and below that of knowing and doing; it is at this furthest depth that the genuine religious impulse arises and lives.[17] This is experienced as an immediate self-consciousness that he describes as "the common element in all howsoever diverse expressions of piety, by which these are cojointly distinguished from other feelings, or, in other words, the self-identical essence of piety, is this: the consciousness of being absolutely dependent, or, which is the same thing, of being in relation with God."[18] Essentially, Schleiermacher sought to construct Christian theology upon the edifice of human experience; theology had to become, in his estimation, the *human* reflection upon the human *experience* of God, the experience of absolute dependence.

Though Schleiermacher was able to establish religion as fundamental to human nature, and not as reducible to something else, he reduced religion to human experience and theology to anthropology. Dogmas and doctrines were not objective truths of

---

[15] Niebuhr, 26.

[16] Heron, 23.

[17] Ibid., 24.

[18] Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* 2nd ed. H.R Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart, eds. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 12.

revelation, but rather were alien to religion in its purest form and only constituted human attempts to set forth piety in speech.[19] Moreover, Christian doctrine is not to be drawn primarily or exclusively from Scripture, but "all doctrines properly so called must be extracted from the Christian religious self-consciousness, *i.e.* the inward experience of Christian people."[20]

This methodology was to have a great effect upon the theological reflection of the next two centuries, and for Schleiermacher himself this approach included the redefinition of orthodox belief in terms of human experience, as well as the possibility of jettisoning whatever did not meet with this criteria. For instance, the doctrine of the Trinity was relegated to the position of an appendix in his *magnum opus*, *The Christian Faith*. When Schleiermacher states that "this doctrine itself, as ecclesiastically framed, is not an immediate utterance concerning the Christian self-consciousness, but only a combination of such utterances"[21], it is clear that he makes Christian experience the judge of Christian theology.

Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) wrote that "in reference to method [Schleiermacher] is my predecessor."[22] For Ritschl the theological task was that of reconceiving faith with the modern world in purview, and this placed him in the Schleiermachean tradition. Ritschl

---

[19] Schleiermacher, 76.

[20] Ibid., 265.

[21] Ibid., 738.

[22] Albrecht Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik* (Bonn: Marcus, 1881), 54, quoted in A. Durwood Foster, "Albrecht Ritschl," in *A Handbook of Modern Theologians*, 52.

who was to become the most influential exponent of classical Protestant Liberalism, and the terms "Ritschlian" and "Protestant Liberalism" are nearly synonymous.[23]

Ritschl differentiated between scientific and religious knowledge, holding to an Enlightenment view of scientific knowledge and defining religious knowledge as value judgements concerning reality.[24] Consequently, Ritschl rejected the dependence of theology upon metaphysics, because this was an illegitimate intermingling of scientific and religious knowledge. Philosophical proofs for the existence of God treat God as an object, whereas theology ought to be concerned about God only insofar as He affects the lives of human beings on the moral plane. Of the greatest significance is achieving the highest good, which is found in the Kingdom of God as revealed in Jesus Christ .[25] This means that the task of theology is to construct a series of value judgments based solely on the way in which God affects the lives of believers, and how these affects meet the highest good. For Ritschl, the primary norm for theological investigation was not the Bible in and of itself, but the "kernel in the husk" as determined by sound historical-critical scholarship.[26]

---

[23] Grenz and Olson, 51.

[24] Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* trans. H.R. Mackintosh and A.B. Macauley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900), 203 - 213. Ritschl's explanation of these two forms of knowledge includes an acknowledgement that even science inevitably includes some value judgements because it is impossible for either the scientist or philosopher to be purely objective. However, he does make a distinction between "concomitant" and "independent" value judgements, holding that religion only moves in the sphere of the latter, which are perceptions of moral ends or moral hindrances.

[25] Grenz and Olson, 54.

[26] David L. Mueller, *An Introduction to the Theology of Albrecht Ritschl* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 45 - 47.

Ritschl's theology gave rise to an entire school of liberal theologians whose influence permeated the major Protestant churches in Europe and America at the turn of the century, and at this time Adolf von Harnack (1851 - 1930) was the most brilliant and popular advocate of Liberal or "Ritschlian" theology. Harnack enjoyed esteem from both students, who flocked to his lecture by the hundreds, and from political figures, most notably Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany. It was Harnack's association with the Kaiser that was one of the factors which led to Barth's turning against him.[27]

His widest influence came through a series of lectures published under the title *What Is Christianity?*[28] Here he attempted to discern, in the Liberal tradition, the kernel of Christianity within the husk of accumulated Christian history and tradition, including the accretions of the gospels themselves. His thesis was that Jesus' message had only to do with the Father and not himself.[29] For Harnack, this gospel consisted of three interrelated truths: "*Firstly, the kingdom of God and its coming. Secondly, God the Father and the infinite value of the human soul. Thirdly, the higher righteousness and the commandment of love.*"[30]

In each of the Protestant Liberal theologians there are identifying characteristics that, however distinct the thinkers may be, are still present. First, Liberalism was committed to reconstructing theology in such a way that took Enlightenment

---

[27] More information on Harnack's association with Kaiser Wilhelm, WW I, and Barth's reaction, is given below under the next section of this chapter. Particularly when one contrasts the theology and ethics of Harnack and Barth, for instance, one sees the importance of the relation between theology and ethics, and that the latter necessarily follows from the former.

[28] 2nd ed., rev., trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901).

[29] Harnack, 154.

[30] Harnack, 55.

developments seriously; it was the "maximum acknowledgement of the claims of modern thought."[31] Second, there was an emphasis on the freedom of the individual Christian thinker to criticize and recontruct traditional doctrines. These Protestant Liberals had a profound appreciation of the communal nature of Christian truth, yet resolutely reserved the right to break with tradition when it seemed right and necessary. Third, Liberal theology tended to emphasize the practical or ethical aspect of Christianity: Ritschl and his followers attempted to moralize all doctrine by centering all theological discourse on the concept of the Kingdom of God. Fourth and finally, Liberal thinkers continued the trend towards emphasizing the *immanence* over the *transcendence* of God[32] which had begun with the Enlightenment. This amounted to an emphasis upon the *continuity* between God and humankind rather than the *discontinuity* that characterized pre-Enlightenment theology. This was more than simply a shift in emphasis in theological method, as it became determinative for Christian doctrines that they be interpreted with Enlightenment presuppositions and principles: for instance, Christ was no longer the God-man who invaded time from eternity, but he was rather the exemplary human, an ideal different in *degree* but not in *kind*.[33] It was within this atmosphere that the young Karl Barth found himself breathing, especially during his years of study and earlier years of development.

---

[31] Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, vol.1, 1799 - 1870* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 142.

[32] The book by Grenz and Olson is organized by the pendulum represented by the recurring shifts from transcendence to immanence, and vice-versa. It is an especially helpful guide to the Enlighenment and nineteenth century backdrop against which the scenery of twentieth century theology is played out.

[33] Grenz and Olson, 53.

Barth's Life & Development as a Theologian

Karl Barth was born in the Swiss town of Basel on May 10, 1886, as the son of a New Testament professor, Fritz Barth; his was "a churchly and academic family" of the Swiss Reformed tradition, conservative in orientation.[34] It was on March 23, 1902, the eve of his confirmation, that the young Karl resolved to pursue a career as a theologian, but, in his own words, "Not with preaching and pastoral care and so on in mind, but in the hope that through such a course of study I might reach a proper understanding of the creed in place of the rather hazy ideas that I had at the time."[35] In 1904 he began study at the University of Berne, with his father's "kind but earnest guidance and advice." There his first impressions of theology did not penetrate very deeply, and he recounts the wisdom there as being dryly and tediously presented.[36] Two years later, after having concluded the first stage of his study, Barth went to the University of Berlin, a decision that amounted to a compromise between his interest in Marburg and his father's preference for either Halle or Greifswald. Here he studied intensively, and above all under Adolf von Harnack; there he heard Harnack's "great lectures on the history of dogma." Harnack was *the* theologian of the day, and one of the finest exponents of Ritschlian

---

[34] Grenz and Olson, 66.

[35] Quoted in Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts* trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 31. This particular biographical source is the most helpful because it relies so greatly upon Barth's own autobiographical material, and the majority of Busch's text consists of direct quotations of Barth himself. Other biographical sources for Barth include: John Bowden, *Karl Barth* (London: SCM Press, 1971); Eberhard Jüngel, *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy*; William Nicholls, *Systematic and Philosophical Theology*, 75 - 149 [More complete bibliographical information for these works is given above].

[36] Busch, 33. Quite significantly, in April of 1906 Barth gave his first lecture in Berne to the academic Protestant Theological Society on 'The Original form of the Lord's Prayer.' This demonstrates that even as a student Barth had an interest in the Lord's Prayer that found its way into his work. Thus, the seeds for the later development of his thought on the Lord's Prayer were planted at an early stage of his academic career.

theology. Barth developed a deep admiration for him. Even at this early stage Barth had begun to diverge from the 'positive line' of his father and, not long after turning to a study of Schleiermacher, he became a follower of Wilhelm Herrmann, whom he "absorbed through every pore."[37] This development his father had hoped to prevent. It was the reason he opposed Karl's going to Marburg, where Herrmann taught.[38] It was through Herrmann's book, *Ethics*, that his own "personal interest in theology began" and reading it only strengthened his resolve to go to Marburg. But this was not to be; at least not yet.

In an attempt to guide Karl's life into a more moderate course, his father sent him to Tübingen, thinking that perhaps it was time for Barth, with his liberal propensities, to hear some 'positive theology.' So, in October of 1907, Barth went to Tübingen, and he soon found the theological faculty there to be "a wretched hole."[39] His time there was short and in April of 1908 his father finally conceded to Barth's desire to attend the University of Marburg. And so here Barth could finally experience directly the tutelage of systematic theologian Wilhelm Herrmann. Despite Herrmann's affinity with Ritschlian liberalism, his theology was also to be distinguished from old liberalism and it was from him that Barth began to develop a Christocentric impulse.[40] During the course of his theological education, then, Barth eventually arrived at a theological position within

---

[37] Bromiley, "The Authority of Scripture in Karl Barth", 275.

[38] Busch., 39, 40. Barth later recalled with gratitude his father's direction and guidance, and undoubtedly the upbringing in a conservative Swiss Reformed setting never entirely left him. See Bromiley, 275.

[39] Busch, 43.

[40] Nicholls, 77.

classic Protestant Liberalism, accepting wholesale the road paved by Schleiermacher, Troeltsch, Ritschl, Harnack, and Herrmann.

On Wednesday, November 4th, 1908, Barth was ordained to the ministry of the Reformed Church and on August 18, 1909, he said his farewell to Marburg. Soon thereafter, in September, he left for Geneva to take a position as *pasteur suffragant* to the German-speaking congregation of the *eglise nationale*.[41] Upon the chief pastor's departure the next October, Barth had to tend to the congregation for six months singlehandedly. It is also worth noting that here he occasionally preached in the same great hall in which Calvin had lectured three and a half centuries earlier.[42] These early sermons were very academic and liberal. Barth himself remarked, "I'm afraid Calvin would hardly have been very pleased at the sermons which I preached in his pulpit then."[43]

An unmistakably significant new period of Barth's life began in 1911, when, as his father before him, he went as a pastor to the village of Safenwil. It was a small parish in a village on the border between Switzerland and Germany which at that time was changing considerably, as it was becoming increasingly industrialized. Most of the people in his congregation worked in a factory and Barth often found himself taking sides with them in industrial disputes. It was in Safenwil where Barth became interested in the Religious Socialism of Hermann Kutter and Leonhard Ragaz.[44] As Bromiley notes, "so forcefully

---

[41] Busch, 52.

[42] Grenz and Olson, 66.

[43] Busch, 54.

[44] Heick, 271. The influence of this movement upon Barth's outlook is reflected in a paper where he interprets the Kingdom of God in terms of God's lordship, rather than human achievement and progress. Notably, this article was written prior to *Der Römerbrief*, indicating that Barth's inherited

did he identify himself with the Social Democratic Party that he gained notoriety as 'the red parson of Safenwil' and considered running for political office."[45] Here, Barth's time became occupied with ministry, and his occupation with theology was for years reduced to the preparation of sermons and classes. He was devoted to the congregation in Safenwil, and he even thought that his later theology had its roots in his ministry at that time.[46]

During this period there were a number of factors which began to erode Barth's liberal stance. First, since the Reformed tradition normally takes preaching extremely seriously, Barth was expected to convey the word of God to the worshippers in his parish; this tradition even survived in the heyday of Liberal theology. According to one of the Reformed formularies, '*praedicatio verbi dei est verbi dei.*'[47] This heavy responsibility, which Barth inevitably found resting upon his shoulders, was one of the factors in his eventual disillusionment with, and disassociation from, Liberal theology. By its very nature, Liberal theology was not well adapted to preaching; it did not understand the relationship of God and human beings through Scripture in the traditional Reformed fashion. As it has been shown above, Liberal theology begins with an academic analysis of human religion, and suggests that people ought to focus on heightening their religious responses. The motives of Liberal theology were also academic and they "wished to find an objective starting-point for the study of Christianity in an age when the prestige of

---

liberalism was at least beginning to weaken. See Karl Barth, "Der Glaube an den persönlichen Gott," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* (1914): 21-32, 65-95.

[45] Bromiley, 275.

[46] Heick, 60, 61.

[47] "The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God."

science was rapidly growing."[48] Once confronted on a practical level with the regular task of preaching, Barth found Liberal theology useless, and he turned away from it and turned to the Bible, where he hoped to find a central message which he could identify as God's Word. Concerned about the "textual basis" of his preaching, Barth asked himself what was God's Word, and was he preaching it?[49]

Second, there was Barth's acquaintance with the Blumhardts, which was related to Barth's concern regarding pulpit ministry.[50] Christoph Blumhardt was a remarkable preacher and pastor, and many of his ideas cut across the theological currents of the time. Christoph was the son of Johann Christoph Blumhardt, who as a preacher had revitalized the pietist tradition through the renewed emphasis upon the Kingdom of God. Although Liberals understood the Kingdom of God as the eventual fulfillment in the world of the ideals of 'the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God'[51], the Blumhardts were ahead of their time in suggesting, as twentieth-century biblical scholarship eventually would, that it meant rather "the sovereignty of God in the world, effectively reasserted through the victory of Jesus over the demonic powers that keep men bound by evil and alienated from God."[52] Their message was summed up in the phrase, 'Jesus is victor',

---

[48] Nicholls, 80.

[49] Barth, *Karl Barth - Rudolf Bultmann Letters, 1922 - 1966* trans. G.W. Bromiley, eds. Bernd Jaspert and G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 154.

[50] Bromiley, 276.

[51] For an example of this approach see Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, 21 - 80.

[52] Nicholls, 78.

which Barth himself said is the best summary of what he wishes to say as a theologian.[53] As Barth's biographer Eberhard Busch says:

> Important was the fundamental connection in Blumhardt's thought between knowledge of God and the Christian hope for the future; through this [Barth] learned to understand God afresh as the radical renewer of the world who is at the same time himself completely and utterly new. For Barth this could be -- and had to be -- the starting point for further developments.[54]

A third factor in the dissolving of Barth's liberal loyalties was his involvement and eventual disillusionment with religious socialism. As noted above, Barth's parish in Safenwil was composed almost entirely of factory workers, and as a result of Blumhardt's influence he eventually reached the same conclusion as Blumhardt: if Christianity is popularly associated with the middle class then he ought to balance the situation with his own actions. As a result, Barth joined the Social Democratic Party in Switzerland, although he did not enter political life in the narrow sense of that term.[55] Learned partially from the Blumhardts, Barth's religious socialism was also learned from the religious

---

[53] Nicholls, 78. Cf. Barth, *The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics*, IV.4, *Lecture Fragments* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), 256ff., where Barth refers to the Blumhardts as those who positively restored the meaning of the Kingdom of God.

[54] Busch, 85.

[55] Barth's involvement with political matters did not cease with his disillusionment with socialism, but continued particularly during World War II, when he was intimately connected with the Confessing Church movement in Germany which stood steadfast against the German Church which at that time was essentially becoming 'Nazified.' His involvement with the Confessing Church, which also involved Dietrich Bonhoeffer, included his drafting of the movement's "Barmen Declaration", the official statement of their stance, which Barth says he wrote "while the others were taking their afternoon nap [See Bowden, 72]." His involvement was rooted very much in his theology at this point just as it had been in his earlier days -- now it was rooted in the centrality of Christ and his Lordship over the church, whereas previously his political activity was rooted in Protestant Liberalism and the emphases associated therewith. See Bowden, *Karl Barth*, 68 - 86 and Busch, 216 - 248, for accounts of Barth's specific involvement. For information regarding the Confessing Church movement see, Shelley Baranowski, *The Confessing Church, Conservative Elites, and the Nazi State* (Queenston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986); Kenneth Barnes, "Protestant Social Thought and the Nazi State, 1933 - 1937," *Journal of Church and State* 29 (1987): 47 - 62; Ernst C. Helmreich, "The Nature and Structure of the Confessing Church in Germany Under Hitler," *Journal of Church and State* 12 (1970): 405 - 420; and Donald D. Wall, "The Confessing Church and the Second World War," *Journal of Church and State* 23 (1981): 15 - 34.

socialists Kutter and Ragaz.[56] However strong their influence, Barth's enthusiasm for religious socialism waned. "The failure of the German Social Democrats to resist militarism brought him serious disillusionment regarding the possibilities of political and social progress."[57] It was through these influences -- religious socialism, the Blumhardts and the experience of pastoral ministry -- that Barth's theology began to move from its liberal foundations, and to gather weight as it moved. One event in particular, however, initiated the final break, a break which would herald a new era in Christian theology, and mark his final split with nineteenth-century Protestant Liberalism.

It was on August 1, 1914, that Barth's life and work was irrevocably altered -- that day World War I broke out.[58] On this day, in addition to the outbreak of the war itself, something else finally triggered Barth's theological reversal. As he said:

> For me personally, one day in the beginnning of August of that year stands out as a black day, on which ninety-three German intellectuals, among whom I was horrified to discover almost all of my hitherto revered theological teachers, published a profession of support for the war policy of Kaiser Wilhelm II and his counsellors. Amazed by their attitude, I realised that I could no longer follow their ethics and dogmatics, or their understandings of the Bible and history, and that the theology of the nineteenth century no longer had any future for me.[59]

---

[56] Nicholls, 79.

[57] Bromiley, 276.

[58] For a full discussion of World War I see Hugh Thomas, *An Unfinished History of the World* (rev. ed., London: Papermac, 1995), 643 - 662.

[59] Barth, *Evangelische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Zurich: Zollikon, 1957), 6, quoted in Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology: 1750-1900* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 124. In fact, in addition to being one of Barth's former teachers who gave their support to the Kaiser, Adolf von Harnack also wrote a speech for the Kaiser, which was delivered at the beginning of the war. See Busch, 95.

In the midst of this turmoil, both political and personal, Barth and his friend, Eduard Thurneysen, were searching for a means of starting anew, "And at the time it was clearer *that* something had tc happen than *what* should happen."[60] It was certainly the case that they could no longer share the fruit of Schleiermacher and Barth briefly considered a new study of Kant, while Thurneysen raised the possibility of studying Hegel. Both these options were rejected. Also important in Barth's reaction to the First World War and to the actions of his former mentors, is that he already had a conviction which would later find formal expression in his *Church Dogmatics*: namely, that ethics and dogmatics go together. As Nicholls says, "Ethics can be used to test the validity of a theology. The ethics of his own teachers had now been shown up as faulty . . . so there must be something wrong with their theology too."[61]

Ultimately, Barth was pressed to return to Scripture, and as he said,

> We tried to learn our theological ABC all over again, beginning by reading and interpreting the writing of the Old and New Testaments, more thoughtfully than ever before . . . . [and] I sat under an apple tree and began to apply myself to Romans with all the resources that were available to me at the time.[62]

In doing this Barth saw something quite plainly, something that no one in the German academic tradition had seen for a long time.

> The theme of the Bible, contrary to the critical and to the orthodox exegesis which we had inherited, certainly could not be man's religion and religious

---

[60] Busch, 97.

[61] Nicholls, 81. The events of WW I made clear to Barth that religion could easily assume the form of, in his words, an "intellectual 42 cm. cannon." Here he encountered "the ethical and political complaisance and fecklessness of his liberal theological heritage." Cf. Nigel Biggar, "Hearing God's Command and Thinking about What's Right: With and Beyond Barth," in ed. Nigel Biggar, *Reckoning with Barth: Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth's Birth* (London: Mowbray, 1988), 101.

[62] Busch, 97. Cf. Bromiley, 276.

> morality and certainly not his secret divinity. The stone wall we ran up against was that the theme of the Bible is the deity of *God*, more exactly God's *deity* - God's independence and particular character, not only in relation to the natural but also to the spiritual cosmos; God's absolutely unique existence, might and initiative, above all, in his relation to man. Only in this manner were we able to understand the voice of the Old and New Testaments. Only in this perspective did we feel we could henceforth be theologians, and in particular, preachers - ministers of the divine Word.[63]

So Barth turned to *Romans* and what he discovered was, to quote the title of one his earliest essays, "The Strange New World within the Bible."[64] It was this very discovery that captivated him and held his attention. He set out to write a commentary and the first edition of *Der Römerbrief* was published in 1919; it represented a direct break with Barth's Liberal inheritance, directly attacking human religiosity through his emphasis on the Kierkegaardian notion of the "Wholly Other" nature of God. However, it was the second, entirely rewritten edition which "fell like a bomb on the playground of the theologians", to use the words of the German Roman Catholic theologian Karl Adam.[65]

What was new was not the source of the exposition -- the Pauline *magnum opus* of *Romans* had provided such Christian thinkers as Augustine and Luther with their own starting points -- but rather the manner of Barth's exposition. He confounded biblical scholars by virtually ignoring questions of a historical-critical import that occupied their

---

[63] Barth, *The Humanity of God* trans. Thomas Wieser and John Thomas (Richmond, John Knox Press, 1960), 41.

[64] In Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (London: Hodder, 1928), 28 - 50. This essay was given as a lecture on February 6, 1917, during the writing of *Der Römerbrief*.

[65] Alec R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution: 1789 to the Present Day* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 217.

attention, and some of Barth's own teachers, including Herrmann and Harnack, were puzzled by its unhistorical and uncritical approach.[66]

In *Der Römerbrief* Barth also affirmed the validity of *both* the historical-critical method *and* the doctrine of verbal inspiration, stating that if he were forced to choose between them that he would choose the latter.[67] Essentially it was a criticism of Liberal theology, which Barth believed had turned the Gospel into a religious message that tells humans about their own divinity.[68] Barth was calling for a revolution in theological method[69]: if nineteenth-century Liberal theology was theology "from below", then Barth was seeking to replace it with a theology "from above." As Grenz and Olson say, "throughout the commentary he emphasized the wholly otherness of God, the gospel, eternity and salvation. These great truths, he argued, cannot be built up from universal

---

[66] Grenz and Olson, 67.

[67] Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 1.

[68] For Barth's critique of Schleiermacher and interpretations of this critique see Barth's *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background & History* trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1972), 425 - 473 and *The Theology of Schleiermacher: Lectures at Göttingen, Winter Semester of 1923/24* ed. Dietrich Ritschl, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Michael Despland, "The Theology of Schleiermacher," in H.-M. Rumscheidt, ed. *Karl Barth in Re-View: Posthumous Works Reviewed and Assessed* (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1981), 19 - 30; and James E. Davison, "Can God Speak a Word to Man? Barth's Critique of Schleiermacher's Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37(1984): 189 - 211.

[69] For studies of Barth's theological method see S.W. Sykes, ed, *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Gordon H. Clark, *Karl Barth's Theological Method* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1963); Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971); and George S. Hendry, "The Transcendental Method in the Theology of Karl Barth," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37 (1984): 213-227.

human experience or reason, but must be received in obedience from God's revelation."[70] "This book is the conceptual version of his pastoral and political convulsion."[71]

As a result of the emphasis on the confrontation between God and humanity, *Der Römerbrief* initiated a movement labeled as "dialectical theology" or "crisis theology"[72] , and this placed Barth squarely within the sphere of Kierkegaardian philosophical method.[73] In the preface to the second edition of *Der Römerbrief* Barth admitted his indebtedness to the melancholy Dane:

> If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the "infinite qualitative distinction" between time and eternity, and to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance: "God is in heaven, and thou art on earth." The relation between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy.[74]

Barth's *Der Römerbrief* "became the banner of a generation of the German-speaking church's young pastors and teachers. A childhood memory of groping in a dark church and accidentally yanking the bellrope, to bring the whole village running, became Barth's metaphor for its publication."[75] Largely on account of *Der Römerbrief* Barth was offered a position as professor of Reformed theology at the University of Göttingen; here, his career as a professional teacher and theologian was to begin.

---

[70] Grenz and Olson, 67.

[71] Jenson, 31.

[72] The word "crisis" in this context is taken from the Greek, '*krisis*', meaning judgement.

[73] For Barth's relationship to Kierkegaard see Alastair McKinnon, "Barth's Relation to Kierkegaard: Some Further Light," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 13 (1967): 31 - 41; William W. Wells, "The Reveille That Awakened Karl Barth," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 22 (1979): 223 - 233.

[74] Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 10.

[75] Jenson, 24.

Initially Barth did not lecture in dogmatics, and aware of his own need to study classical theological texts, particularly those of the Reformed tradition, he offered several courses during his first several semesters on the Heidelberg Catechism, Reformed Confessions, Calvin, Zwingli, Schleiermacher, I Corinthians, Ephesians and I John. It was not until 1924 that Barth began preparation for his lectures in dogmatics: "I shall never forget the spring vacation of 1924. I sat in my study in Göttingen, faced with the task of giving lectures on dogmatics for the first time. No one can have been more plagued than I was with the problem, could I do it? and how?"[76] Somewhat unexpectedly, Barth found an answer to this query in Heinrich Heppe's *Reformed Dogmatics*, which was a collection of texts on all the loci of dogmatics from sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century Reformed theologians. Additional aid was located in the parallel compendium of Lutheran sources by H. Schmid. Despite Heppe's stiffness and dreariness, Barth persisted in his study and found himself impressed by the "seriousness, discipline, and depth of the treatment of theological issues by the old Reformed scholars." Although he was not uncritical of these aforementioned scholars, they did provide Barth with a doorway into the riches of the Reformed tradition, and even beyond that into the riches of patristic, medieval, and Reformation theology. During this time, he worked feverishly, sometimes growing dizzy from the intensity of his reflection while preparing these first lectures in dogmatics.[77] Eventually, in 1925, Barth was called to a professorship at the University of Münster, where he stayed for five years, moving to the University of Bonn in 1930. It was

---

[76] Barth, "Foreword," in Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* (repr., Grand Rapids, 1978), v.

[77] Daniel L. Migliore, "Karl Barth's First Lectures in Dogmatics: *Instruction in the Christian Religion*," in Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion, Vol.1* ed. Hannelotte Reiffen, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1991), xix.

during this period that a decisive shift of emphasis began to appear in his writing. Although he did not forsake his adamant rejection of Liberal theology, he did begin to emphasize God's "Yes" in Jesus Christ rather than the "No" that he had been pronouncing for more than a decade.[78]

After *Der Römerbrief* and before the massive *Church Dogmatics*, perhaps the next significant development in Barth's thinking is his encounter with, and work on, Anselm. During his first semester at Bonn he held a seminar on Anselm, and over the following year (1930) he paid a great deal of attention to Anselm's method of thought. By the summer of 1931 he was putting his finishing touches on a book on this scholastic theologian.[79] While many consider his *Nein!*[80] attacking fellow Neo-Orthodox theologian Emil Brunner as the real evidence for his discarding a philosophical or anthropological justification and explanation of Christian doctrine, Barth himself says that his book on Anselm is this evidence. He lamented because it was the book that he wrote "with more loving care than any other", and yet remains one of the least read of his works.[81] Still, this work is considered by many scholars to be Barth's most important expression of his mature theological method. It is a detailed study of Anselm's formula, '*fides quaerens*

---

[78] Grenz and Olson, 68. The "No" refers to not only his rejection of natural theology, but also his emphasis on the "infinite qualitative distinction" between God and humanity and his emphasis then on human sinfulness.

[79] *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum, Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of His Theological Scheme* (London: SCM Press, 1960). Cf. Busch, 205, 206, and Barth, "How I Changed My Mind In This Decade," *The Christian Century* (1939), for his account of this book's significance.

[80] *Natural Theology: "Nature and Grace" by Emil Brunner and the Reply "No!" by Karl Barth* trans. Peter Fraenkel (London: Geoffrey Bles., 1946).

[81] Busch, 206.

intellectum'[82], which now became Barth's model for his theological epistemology. As Barth himself said in the preface to the second edition,

> in this book on Anselm I am working with a vital key, if not the key, to an understanding of that whole process of thought that has impressed me more and more in my *Church Dogmatics* as the only one proper to theology.[83]

The question, of course, is what was the key that impressed itself upon Barth as the only one proper to the task of dogmatics? In his study of Anselm, contrary to many interpretations, Barth argued that Anselm was not a rationalist. Instead he saw Anselm as seeking to bring reason into the service of faith: "Anselm's ontological argument was not an attempt to prove God apart from faith but an attempt to understand with the mind what is already believed by faith."[84]

Further, Barth argued that for Anselm all theology is to be done in the context of prayer and obedience. Consequently, theology cannot be some dispassionate, objective science, but must be "the understanding of God's objective self-revelation in Jesus Christ made possible by grace and faith alone."[85] According to Barth, then, what a theologian needs to discover is "a pure heart, eyes that have been opened, child-like obedience, a life in the Spirit, [and] rich nourishment from Holy Scripture."[86] Thus, the presupposition of

---

[82] 'faith seeking understanding.'

[83] Barth, *Anselm*, 11.

[84] Grenz and Olson, 68. For a discussion of the debate over Barth's interpretation of Anselm see Vincent G. Potter, "Karl Barth and the Ontological Argument," *The Journal of Religion* 45 (1965): 309 - 325. From this article it is clear that there is heated scholarly debate over Barth's handling of Anselm.

[85] Grenz and Olson, 68

[86] Barth, *Anselm*, 34.

correct theology is a life of faith, and a willingness to submit to the authority of Scripture.[87]

It was with this book on Anselm that Barth -- although he never reneged on the negative element and still eschewed any form of natural theology -- began to emphasize the *positive* knowledge of God in God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.[88] His study on Anselm led him to the realization, therefore, that he needed to begin his *Dogmatics* again straight from the beginning.[89] This need to begin afresh was analogous to his having to completely rewrite *Der Römerbrief*. As he says "I could still say what I had said. I wished to do so. But I could not do it in the same way."[90]

From this point Barth's theology is a vast attempt to come to terms with Christian truth on its own premises; his thinking was now to follow the direction of faith.[91] In other words, the theologian needs to "consider the factuality of Christian truth alongside the demonstration of its inner necessity. This factuality is derived from no external necessity, and must be understood as the impetus of its inner necessity."[92]

For Barth, there is a distinction between *systematic* theology and *dogmatic* theology: "A 'system' is a pattern of thought constructed on the basis of a number of concepts chosen in accordance with the criteria of a particular philosophy and developed

---

[87] Ibid., 40.

[88] Grenz and Olson, 68. Cf. Nicholls, 115.

[89] Barth published his first attempt at dogmatics in 1927 as *Christliche Dogmatik* [*Christian Dogmatics*]. See Busch, 205.

[90] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, xi.

[91] Jüngel, 42.

[92] Barth, *Anselm*, 28.

in accordance with a method appropriate to it. But theology cannot be done within the confines and under the pressure of such a strait-jacket."[93] In addition, as Nicholls comments, Barth does not think in a linear fashion but instead his thought moves spirally, or centripetally. He circles around the matter under discussion, observing it from varying angles, continually returning to the matter from a new point of view.[94] An acknowledged Barthian, Robert Jenson, says, too, that "the total work marches to the pattern of the old method of *'loci'*." Consequently, within each topic a complete theology is developed and organized around a single theme, and with each succeeding volume Barth begins his reflection anew.[95]

Having received some intimation of the importance of a christological centre for theology earlier in his life, even if through such a liberal as Herrmann, Barth determined that

> Christian doctrine, if it is to merit its name, and if it is to build up the Christian church in the world as it needs to built up, has to be exclusively and consistently the doctrine of Jesus Christ . . . My new task was to rethink everything that I had said before and to put it quite differently once again, as a theology of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.[96]

---

[93] Busch, 211.

[94] Nicholls, 119.

[95] Jenson, 35

[96] Busch, 210.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LORD'S PRAYER AS A MODEL PRAYER

The Importance of the Lord's Prayer as a Model Prayer

Don E. Saliers says, "From the very beginning the Lord's Prayer has occupied a place of singular honor in the life and liturgy of the Christian churches," and that "it has been central to the formation of faith in every generation and has been interpreted to the faithful and to their children's children by numberless teachers and theologians."[1] Concerning the Lord's Prayer, Tertullian says that in it we have a "summary of the whole gospel."[2] Similarly, Augustine concludes, "Run through all the words of the holy prayers [in Scripture], and I do not think that you will find anything in them that is not contained and included in the Lord's Prayer."[3] The Medieval Scholastic theologian Thomas Aquinas reflects this understanding as well when he says that "the Lord's Prayer is the most perfect of prayers . . . . In it we ask, not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the

---

[1] Don E. Saliers, "Prayer and Theology in Karl Barth," in Karl Barth, *Prayer* 2nd ed. ed. Don E. Saliers, trans. Sara F. Terrien (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 9.

[2] Tertullian, *De orat.* 1: PL 1, 1155, quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* english ed. (Ottawa: CCCB, 1994), 560. In fact, the *Catechism* takes this cue from Tertullian and uses his phrase, "summary of the whole gospel", as the title for the first section in the chapter on the Lord's Prayer. Noted NT scholar Oscar Cullmann refers to the section on prayer in the *Catechism* as perhaps the best in the book. See Cullmann, *Prayer in the New Testament* trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), xvii. For a study on the Lord's Prayer in the fathers see Karlfried Froehlich, "The Lord's Prayer in Patristic Literature," in Daniel L. Migliore, ed . *The Lord's Prayer: Perspectives for Reclaiming Christian Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 71 - 87. Saliers comments briefly on the patristic tradition, noting that Barth's development of the Lord's Prayer is also indebted to the early fathers. See Saliers, 12. Along with the Reformers, Barth also mentions the fathers, specifically Tertullian, as one who saw the importance of the Lord's Prayer. See Karl Barth, *The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics*, IV.4, *Lecture Fragments* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), 50. [Cited hereafter as *Christian Life.*]

[3] Quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 560.

sequence that they should be desired."[4] The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* recognizes the significance of the prayer's location in Matthew's gospel:

> The Sermon on the Mount is teaching for life, the Our Father is a prayer; but in both the one and the other the Spirit of the Lord gives new form to our desires, those inner movements that animate our lives. Jesus teaches us this new life by his words; he teaches us to ask for it by our prayer. The rightness of our life in him will depend on the rightness of our prayer.[5]

There is an intimation in this last quotation from the *Catechism* of the relationship between the Lord's Prayer and the Christian life, or ethics.

The understanding of the Lord's Prayer as a model or paradigm of Christian prayer is also shared by the Reformers. Martin Luther wrote a number of expositions on the Lord's Prayer, including *The German Explanation of the Lord's Prayer for Simple Laity* (1519), *The Little Prayer Book* (1522), and his *Larger Catechism* (1529).[6] Luther also included an exposition of the prayer in his *A Simple Way to Prayer*, which he wrote for his friend Peter the barber.[7] In his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, Luther says that the Lord's Prayer "shows how we are to pray and what we are to pray for."[8] John Calvin

---

[4] Ibid. There is a brief exposition of the Lord's Prayer by Aquinas in *An Aquinas Reader: Selections from the Writings of Thomas Aquinas* ed. Mary T. Clark (New York: Image Books, 1972), 528 - 530. Aquinas uses the prayer as an example of the five qualities that ought to comprise prayer: confidence, orderliness, suitability, devoutness, and humility. He comments here that "the Lord's Prayer is the best of all prayers."

[5] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 560.

[6] Noted in Elsie Anne McKee, "John Calvin's Teaching on the Lord's Prayer," in Migliore, ed., 89.

[7] Martin Luther, *Devotional Works II*, vol. 43, *Luther's Works*, ed. Gustav K. Wiencke (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 187 - 211 [esp. 195 - 198].

[8] Luther, *The Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat*, vol. 21, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 145. Cf. Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, vol. 42, *Luther's Works*, ed. Martin O. Dietrich, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 19.

refers to the Lord's Prayer as the pattern or rule of right praying.[9] Indeed, both Luther and Calvin "weave a rich tapestry of references to the Lord's Prayer into the whole of their theological writings."[10] In The Heidelberg Catechism the Lord's Prayer also plays the central role in the section on prayer. In this work prayer is considered the most important or "chief part of the gratitude which God requires from us." The Lord's Prayer encompasses all that Christian prayer needs to include.[11]

The nineteenth-century theologian, Albrecht Ritschl, also refers to the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer, which demonstrates that Protestant Liberalism retained the traditional viewpoint, at least formally.[12] Ritschlian theology, as mentioned above, is

---

[9] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), III.20.34, and *Calvin: Theological Treatises* trans. J.K.S. Reid (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 122, 123. Cf. Elsie Anne McKee, "John Calvin's Teaching on the Lord's Prayer," in Migliore, ed. *The Lord's Prayer*, 94. Cf., in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, s.v. "Lord's Prayer," by R.G. Gruenler, where the Lord's Prayer is also recognized as a model or pattern for Christian prayer. Gruenler refers to the prayer as a "summary model for properly ordering the priorities of the kingdom."

[10] Saliers, 11. Cf. Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), 228 - 231, for a brief discussion of Calvin's understanding of prayer.

[11] Donald J. Bruggink, *Guilt, Grace, & Gratitude: A Commentary of the Heidelberg Catechism Commemorating Its 400th Anniversary* (Ann Arbor: Eerdmans, 1963), 209. See Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, *The Evangelical Protestant Creeds with Translations* (New York: Harper & Brothers), 307 - 355, for the text of the catechism in both German and English, and Schaff, vol. 1, 529 - 554, for a history of the Heidelberg Catechism. Every commentary or work on the Heidelberg Catechism used in this paper includes its own translation. Other works on the catechism consulted throughout this paper include: G.I. Williamson, *The Heidelberg Catechism: A Study Guide* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1993); J. Van Bruggen, *Annotations to the Heidelberg Catechism* trans. A.H. Oosterhoff (Neerlandia, AB: Inheritance Publications, 1991); Fred H. Klooster, *A Mighty Comfort: The Christian Faith According to the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1990); Andrew Kuyvenhoven, *Comfort & Joy: A Study of the Heidelberg Catechism* Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1988); Allen Verhey, *Living the Heidelberg: The Heidelberg Catechism & the Moral Life*; Karl Barth, *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today* trans. Shirley C. Guthrie, Jr. (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1964); and Cornelius Van Til, *The Triumph of Grace: The Heidelberg Catechism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1962).

[12] Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine* ed. H.R. MacKintosh and A.B. Macaulay 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902.), 643.

regarded as synonymous with Protestant Liberalism. Adolf von Harnack has a brief discussion of the Lord's Prayer as well and, echoing Christian tradition, he says that "there is nothing in the Gospels that tells us more certainly what the Gospel is, and what sort of disposition and temper it produces, than the Lord's Prayer."[13] The point here is that, within the scope of Protestant Liberalism, the Lord's Prayer retained its formal position as a model of Christian prayer.[14]

In light of the position given to the prayer in the history of the Christian tradition as a model of Christian prayer, it is hardly surprising that Barth too accords such importance to the Lord's Prayer. In his *Church Dogmatics*, Barth discusses the criteria of prayer and the final criterion he gives is the form of prayer, namely the Lord's Prayer.[15] Of course, it is not only because of historical precedence that Barth holds this position regarding the Lord's Prayer, but primarily because of the *biblical* example. His understanding of the Lord's Prayer and its importance as a model follows from his more general understanding of the importance and meaning of prayer. The Lord's Prayer is the response Jesus gives his disciples when they ask him to teach them to pray.[16] As Barth says, "Let [our prayer] be patterned after the rule given by the One who knows our needs

---

[13] Adolf von Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders 2nd ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), 71.

[14] Although not in the Protestant Liberal tradition, one book from this period affirms the importance of the Lord's Prayer in its very title: George Boardman, *Studies in the Model Prayer* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1879).

[15] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III.4, *The Doctrine of Creation* trans. A.T. MacKay, T.H. Parker, Harold Knight, et. al. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), 112. [Volumes of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* are cited hereafter with *CD* and the volume, part, and page number.]

[16] Barth, *Prayer*, 37, 43; *CD*, III.4, 112; and *Christian Life*, 44.

better than we ourselves."[17] Thus, Barth's understanding of the importance of the Lord's Prayer, and to some degree its function, follows an extraordinarily rich tradition found in the history of the Christian church.[18] However, it is to Calvin, Luther, and the Heidelberg Catechism that Barth turns to interpret the Lord's Prayer.[19] He looks, therefore, to the Reformers to respond to the Liberal tradition against which he is reacting. Ritschl, for instance, cites the Lord's Prayer as a paradigm, but the interpretation or theology of prayer in Liberal theology is different from that in the Reformers and subsequently in Barth's theology.[20]

The Meaning of the Lord's Prayer as a Model Prayer

To call the Lord's Prayer a model prayer does not mean that Christian believers are merely to repeat this prayer instead of using other words. It is difficult to maintain a position that Christians are only to pray these specific words, considering that the remainder of biblical prayers do not.[21] The idea of the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer is not the simple repetition of these words. All who see the importance of the prayer as a

---

[17] Barth, *Prayer*, 40.

[18] See Robert L. Simpson, *The Interpretation of Prayer in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 41 - 73, for a discussion on the importance of the Lord's Prayer in the understanding of prayer in early Christian history. Cf. Charles Gore, *Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., 1898), for an older study concerning the importance of the Lord's Prayer in the ordering of Christian prayer [see esp. 18, 30].

[19] Barth, *Prayer*, 11, 23.

[20] Perry LeFevre, *Understandings of Prayer* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 9 - 27 for a brief account of the understanding of prayer in Kant, Schleiermacher, Feuerbach, Ritschl, and Herrmann.

[21] In addition to surveying the many examples of biblical prayer to see that this is the case, one may also look at Barth's own prayers. See Barth, *Selected Prayers* trans. Keith R. Crim (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965).

model recognize this: "The prayer is not a set form that he [Jesus] . . . asked his disciples to pray, but illustrates the type of prayer appropriate to the person who worships deeply without hypocrisy."[22] An inwardness of communion with God and spontaneity ought to characterize true prayer.[23] The Lord's Prayer is a pattern, a paradigm, and a form, not a prescription in the sterile sense.[24] As Luther says, "It shows how we are to pray and what we are to pray for."[25] In Barth's own words: "Be content with possessing in the Lord's Prayer a model, but let your prayer arise from the freedom of the heart."[26]

The meaning of the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer is examined in this chapter in two ways. First, its meaning is seen in how Barth develops the petitions.[27] Thus, the first part of this section concentrates upon Barth's actual exposition of the Lord's Prayer, petition by petition, noting the relationship between his understanding and that of the

---

[22] Gruenler, "Lord's Prayer", 650.

[23] *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, s.v. "Prayer"

[24] For instance, Luther in "A Simple Way to Pray" teaches Peter the barber to pray by on the one hand using the Lord's Prayer, and on the other hand, by not restricting praying according to the Lord's Prayer to the precise scriptural words. See Luther, *Devotional Writings II*, 194ff.

[25] Luther, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 145; and Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 21.

[26] Barth, *Prayer*, 26. Cf. Lou Shapiro, "Karl Barth's Understanding of Prayer," *Crux* 24 (1988), 30.

[27] Given that the scope of this thesis does not allow for a more directly exegetical or biblical treatment, the author recommends the following works that deal with the prayer in this way: Oscar Cullmann, *Prayer in the New Testament*, 37 - 69; M.M.B. Turner, "Prayer in the Gospels and Acts," in ed. D.A. Carson, *Teach Us To Pray: Prayer in the Bible and the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 64 - 66; Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* trans. John Bowden, Christoph Burchard, and John Reumann (London: SCM Press, 1967), 82 - 107; E.F. Scott, *The Lord's Prayer: Its Character, Purpose, and Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951); Charles M. Laymon, *The Lord's Prayer in its Biblical Setting* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968); and Philip B. Harner, *Understanding the Lord's Prayer* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). Even though this thesis is dealing with the Lord's Prayer from a strictly *systematic* theological perspective, the insights and contributions of biblical scholarship are not unnoticed nor unused. However, this use is limited.

Reformation (Luther, Calvin, and the Heidelberg Catechism). As a result, this discussion focuses primarily upon Barth's *Prayer*, which is both modeled after the content and form of Reformation catechisms.[28]

Second, the meaning of this prayer as a model is also seen in certain ideas which emerge from the exposition proper: (1) the priority of the prayer, which involves the explicit concern for God's glory and God's cause, seen especially in the division of the prayer; (2) the nature of prayer as primarily petition; (3) an already existing and unique relationship between the addresser and the addressee, as seen in the addressing of God as Father, which opens the way for the possibility of this prayer; (4) and the fact that the prayer uttered is already answered, and how this relates to the assurance that prayer is heard.

The Invocation

First, because of New Testament scholar, Joachim Jeremias, it is clear that addressing God as Father is a unique contribution of Jesus himself.[29] Barth himself notes that "it is Jesus Christ who invites us to address ourselves in prayer to God and to call him

---

[28] Barth's *The Christian Life* is also used, but this posthumous volume concentrates mainly upon the ethical dimension of the Lord's Prayer and as such it is drawn on extensively in the next chapter. Although repetition is kept to a minimum, some is necessary.

[29] Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, 57. Cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), vol.1, 259f., where Pannenberg sees Jeremias' conclusions as needing qualification. At the same time, Pannenberg defends quite strongly the concept of God as Father; Jan Milic Lochman, *The Lord's Prayer* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 17ff., for a discussion of the history of designating God or the divine as 'Father' throughout the history of religion. Like Jeremias, Lochman notes the significant shift in the calling of God Father and how this practice began with Jesus himself with the particularly personal and intimate title, 'Abba'; Harner, *Understanding the Lord's Prayer*, 28 - 33, for a discussion on the idea of God as father in religious history; and *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, s.v. "God," by L.W. Hurtado where he summarizes Jeremias' contribution. Hurtado notes that it is only in Mark's gospel (14: 36) that the designation 'Abba' appears outside of Paul's letters (Rom. 8: 15; Gal. 4: 6).

our Father; Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, who has made himself our brother and makes us his brothers and sisters."[30] Calling God Father is not what human beings do naturally; it is not a conclusion human beings have made about the divine-human relation, but rather it is the direct result of the Sonship of Jesus Christ and the divine-human relationship effected in and by him. Similarly, Lochman notes that the meaning of calling God Father is not self-evident and, moreover, that there are a number of associations the term evokes: "[W]ith the burden of its manifold use in the history of religion and culture, its specific meaning at the head of the Lord's Prayer may easily be misunderstood."[31] This invocation is also based upon a divine command, not human desire or need.[32] Similarly, Luther says that "this lofty word cannot possibly issue from human nature, but must be inspired in man's heart by the Spirit of Christ."[33]

The second thing which Barth notes about the invocation of the Lord's Prayer in his book *Prayer* is that those who are addressing God as "our Father" are not simply anybody, but a specific *us*.[34] The prayer presupposes this *us*, an *us* "created by the order that Jesus gave to follow him."[35] By implication, then, this first-person plural designation implies the communion of those praying with Jesus Christ. There is a definite unity among

---

[30] Barth, *Prayer*, 43.

[31] Lochman, 16. Patricia Wilson-Kastner also notes this in her essay, "Pastoral Theology and the Lord's Prayer: We Dare to Pray," in ed. Daniel L. Migliore, *The Lord's Prayer:Perspectives for Reclaiming Christian Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 110f.

[32] Barth, *Christian Life*, 50.

[33] Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 23. Cf. Barth, *Prayer*, 47.

[34] See Barth, *CD*, III.4, 102ff., for a lengthy discussion of the "we" of the Lord's Prayer as a criterion of true prayer.

[35] Barth, *Prayer*, 43.

those who pray this prayer, or in other words, Christians pray these words in a congregational context, in the *ecclesia*, and not just alone.[36]

Third, Barth believes this *us* involves more than the Christian community. So while on the one hand the invocation includes the unity and communion of those who pray with these words, it also includes through intercession those who do not yet pray this prayer, and who therefore do not yet call upon God as Father. When speaking of Barth's view, Kenneth Schmidt comments, "It is the prayer of Jesus Christ, recited by his community, on behalf of all humanity."[37] Barth even says that believers are in *communion* with those outside the specifically *Christian* communion. And by this he means that "when Christians pray, they are, so to speak, the substitutes for all those who do not pray; and in this sense they are in communion with them in the same manner as Jesus Christ has entered into solidarity with sinners, with a lost human race."[38] Allen Verhey's commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism makes the same point, and he also draws from Calvin, who states that Christians pray "not only for those whom he at present sees and recognizes as such

---

[36] This *us* is also seen this way by commentators on the Heidelberg Catechismas signifying the "family circle of the church universal." See Bruggink, 213. Cf. J. Van Bruggen, 276; Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 60; Barth, *CD*, III.4, 103f.; Douglas John Hall, "The Theology and Ethics of the Lord's Prayer," in Migliore, ed. *The Lord's Prayer*, 131; and Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), vol. 3, 203. Here, Pannenberg also recognizes in his discussion of Christian prayer the importance of the prayers of the individual apart from the community, citing especially the example of Jesus going to solitary places to pray. For a discussion on Jesus' practice of prayer see *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, s.v. "Prayer" by J.D.G. Dunn (In his artical, Dunn draws draws attention to the communal nature of prayer as one of Jesus' emphases). The point that Christian prayer is always corporate is made elsewhere too. Cf. *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, s.v. , "The Theology of Prayer," by Alan Richardson; *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, s.v. "The Lord's Prayer," by Royce Gordon Gruenler; and Edmund P. Clowney, "A Biblical Theology of Prayer," in ed. D.A. Carson, *Teach Us To Pray*, 148.

[37] Kenneth L. Schmidt, "Karl Barth's Theology of Prayer" (PhD Diss, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1980). 191.

[38] Barth, *Prayer*, 44. Cf. *CD*, III.4, 102.

but all men who dwell on earth."[39] That this means unbelievers as well is implied when Calvin also says that "we ought to be drawn with a special affection to those . . . of the household of faith."[40] Elsewhere Barth notes that this "our" in the Our Father presupposes the many who do not call upon God as Father, whether out of ignorance or disobedience.[41] Barth's exposition in this case is a classic Reformation interpretation.

Fourth, Barth notes that human beings do not have a *right* to call upon God as Father: this is a privilege established through the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is by virtue of the ontological relationship between the Father and Jesus Christ that Christians can claim to be God's children. Thus, believers can "claim no other right than that which is given us in the person of Jesus Christ."[42] Calvin makes this point by posing a rhetorical question: "Who would break forth into such rashness as to claim for himself the honor of a son of God unless we had been adopted as children of grace in Christ?"[43] Therefore, calling upon God as Father is possible only through Christ.[44] This is seen in the Heidelberg Catechism also, which says that "God has become our Father through Christ." Commentators on the catechism make it clear that Christian 'sonship' depends upon the

---

[39] A. Verhey, 145. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, III. 20.38; and Elsie Anne McKee, "John Calvin's Teaching on the Lord's Prayer," in Migliore, ed., 97, where she notes that this is "unexpected in someone who is usually identified primarily with predestination!" Cf. Lochman, 26f.

[40] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.20 38.

[41] Barth, *Christian Life*, 50. Cf. Michael H. Crosby, *Thy Will Be Done: Praying the Our Father as Subversive Activity* (New York: Orbis Books, 1977), 22ff., where the author relates the community orientation of the Lord's Prayer to a trinitarian understanding of God, saying that in this prayer "we discover the essential characteristic of God as participative community."

[42] Barth, *Prayer*, 45.

[43] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.20.36.

[44] McKee, 96.

Sonship of Christ and the believers' adoption through Christ.[45] Thus, the influence of the Reformation on Barth is seen. After Barth the same point as the Reformers and the Heidelberg Catechism, he moves on to say that this fatherhood is the *original* of which anything on earth is an image or symbol. God's fatherhood, and consequently our sonship in him, then, are expressive of the full reality of the concepts of 'Father' and 'Son.'[46] That God is Father also implies the children's dependence upon the Father, which is noted by Barth and the Reformers as engendering trust from children who are empty handed.[47] In Edmund Clowney's words, "Prayer requires dependence, but it also requires access."[48] Christ is the ground upon which human beings have access to the Father, on whom they are to depend.

Fifth and finally, the invocation is about more than '*our Father*', but 'our Father *who art in heaven.*' For Barth, that God is in heaven becomes a means of describing God's transcendence. Moreover, God's transcendence, and the related attributes of incomprehensibility, freedom, sovereignty, eternity, and omnipotence, are defined by the goodness of the Father, who has become *our* Father in Jesus Christ. Barth speaks about the limits of philosophical understandings of God's transcendence here, commenting that "no philosophy, be it that of Aristotle, Kant, or Plato, can reach the transcendence of God,

---

[45] Cf. A. Kuyvenhoven, 274; Bruggink, 212; G.I. Williamson, 213; and Van Bruggen, 275.

[46] Barth, *Prayer*, 46. Cf. Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* trans G.T. Thomson (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1949), 42 - 45, for a brief discussion of the fatherhood of God. Both the discussion in *Prayer* and *Dogmatics in Outline* have discussions on God as Father that emphasize that God is *truly* Father, and that human fathers are an image of this "comparably superior" fatherhood, not vice-versa.

[47] Barth, *Prayer*, 45; Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 23, and *Devotional Writings II*, 194; Schaff, vol.3, 351f.; and Calvin, *Institutes*, III.20.40.

[48] Clowney, 141.

for the philosophers go only as far as the limits of the incomprehensible."[49] Instead, this transcendence "is demonstrated, revealed, and actualized in Jesus Christ."[50]

The First Three Petitions: God's Glory as God's Cause

To understand the meaning of the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer, it is helpful to view them as two distinct pairs of three petitions.[51] First, the distinction between the two sets is seen in the priority they establish for prayer. As Barth and others note, the basic division of the prayer is parallel to that of the Ten Commandments: the first three petitions directly concern the glory of God, while the subsequent three deal more directly with the human side of the dialogue of prayer.[52] For Barth, Christian prayer ought to model itself after the Lord's Prayer, particularly in terms of its priorities and concerns, and these priorities and concerns are seen and understood most clearly in this two-fold division. This prioritizing is to shape all of Christian prayer.

---

[49] Barth, *Prayer*, 46.

[50] Ibid.

[51] One difference between Luther and Calvin is that Luther divides the prayer into seven petitions, separating into two petitions the two clauses, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." For Calvin's position on the division into six petitions see his *Institutes*, III.20.35. The Heidelberg Catechism also follows the sixfold division. See Shaff, vol. 3, 354, for Ques. 127 of the catechism. Barth follows the lead of Calvin and the Heidelberg in his own discussion. See Barth, *Prayer*, 81. Cf. *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, s.v. "The Lord's Prayer," by R.G. Gruenler, where he also divides the prayer into two sets of three petitions. See Scott, 78, where he follows Luther's division of the prayer into seven petitions. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* also divides the prayer into seven petitions, in the way same as Luther. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 568. Barth himself assumes this division and does not comment on the difference between Luther and Calvin on this point. In *Prayer*, he discusses the two clauses separately, but at the end of his exposition refers to them both as the fifth petition. Since this thesis is focusing on Barth's exposition, the division into six petitions is accepted. If because of the differences in how the prayer is divided there is significance for the meaning of the forgiveness clauses, that is not explored here.

[52] Cf. Barth, *Prayer*, 47; Bruggink, 214; and Klooster, 109.

The priority of Christian prayer is God's glory, and as John Calvin says, "The first three petitions have been particularly assigned to God's glory . . . because God wills to test us whether we love and worship him freely or for hope of reward."[53] Yet at the same time Calvin acknowledges that nothing contributes to God's glory without also being beneficial for Christians. Moreover, the Lord's Prayer as a whole serves to glorify God, so that even in the last three petitions which concern earthly good and the human condition "the glory of God should be considered."[54] As Saliers notes, Barth himself is influenced by Calvin in that he views the world as the theatre of God's glory: "To make God's name holy on earth as it is in heaven is to acknowledge the divine handiwork and to intend the visible world as the bearer of the name of the Creator."[55] The Heidelberg Catechism reflects this prioritizing when it explains the first petition, 'hallowed by thy name', by saying "help us first of all to know thee rightly, and to hallow, glorify, and praise thee in all thy works."[56] As James M. Reese states, "The entire first part of the prayer is directed to reminding worshipers that all reality exists for the glory and praise of God . . . [and] only when his followers have oriented themselves to the transcendent Father does Jesus

---

[53] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.20.35; *Theological Treatises*, 123. Cf. Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 49, where he says the first petition asks that God's name be honored and his glory dwell in us. However, he gives no indication as seeing the first *three* petitions as emphasizing this concern. And he interprets all three petitions in a very personal and individualistic manner.

[54] Calvin, *Theological Treatises*, 123.

[55] Saliers, 13.

[56] Shaff, vol. 3, 352.

direct them to petitions for personal needs."[57] Barth's understanding, then, follows both the Reformation model as well as contemporary biblical scholarship.

For Barth, since the Lord's Prayer begins with the petitions that concern God's glory, it means that here God is commanding and permitting believers to take an interest in God's cause.[58] This is how Donald Bruggink interprets the Heidelberg Catechism when he says that these first three petitions "invite us to make God's cause our concern."[59] This cause is formulated in the first three petitions: God's name, his kingdom, and his will. It is thus the duty of Christians to pray that God may be victorious, that his cause may reach its fulfillment.[60] This God, who has manifested himself in Jesus Christ, is both perfectly free and self-sufficient. Yet, according to Barth, "God does not wish, then, for his cause to be his alone; he wishes it to be ours as well."[61] Barth puts it this way in his own commentary on the Catechism:

> In Jesus Christ, God becomes visible as the God who does not will to be without man. Therefore man is allowed and commanded in his prayer first of all and above all to participate in the fulfillment of God's plan, work, and will.[62]

---

[57] *The New Dictionary of Theology*, s.v. "Prayer," by James M. Reese. Cf. Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction* trans. Grover Foley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 162, where he says that "every prayer has its beginning when a man puts himself out of the picture. He leaves himself and his work behind in order to once again to recollect that he stands before God."

[58] Barth, *Prayer*, 47. Cf. *CD*, III.4, 103f.

[59] Bruggink, 214.

[60] Barth, *Prayer*, 47.

[61] Ibid., 48.

[62] Barth, *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today* trans. Shirley C. Guthrie, Jr. (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), 114. Cf. *CD*, III.4, 103f., where Barth says that we are "invited and summoned to take up the cause of God and actively to participate in it with our asking."; and Schmidt, 193.

If one follows the order of the prayer itself, God's cause is seen first in the petition, "Hallowed be thy name." To some extent this petition is one whose relevance is questioned by those with a post-Enlightenment outlook. Jan Milic Lochman notes that some would prefer to see the petition "thy kingdom come" as the first real petition, but many who have dealt with the Lord's Prayer instead view the petition "hallowed by thy name" as following naturally from the invocation.[63]

First, the concern for God's glory raises a question: can believers *contribute* to God's glory? Do believers' prayers *increase* the glory of God? Luther himself raises this question.[64] In other words, how are Christians to understand their role within the context of the petition, "Hallowed by thy name?" First, it is important to note that the name of God is the representation of God, and is not, according to Barth, "Simply and immediately identified with God himself."[65]

---

[63] Lochman, 28ff., where he stresses the importance of beginning the petitions with this one, as it deals at a biblical, personal level with the human need for God. Cf. George D. Boardman, *Studies in the Model Prayer*, 35.

[64] Luther, *Sermons I*, vol. 51, *Luther's Works* ed. and trans. John W. Doberstein (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 172.

[65] Barth, *Prayer*, 52. Barth's discussion of God's name in *Christian Life* appears to contradict directly his comments in *Prayer*, particularly when he says "the name is the being itself as it acts and expresses and declares itself towards others." However, Barth is talking about creation as the bearer of God's name in *Prayer*, and thus his insistence on God's name being only the *representation* of God's name seems to be an indication of Barth making the Creator/creation distinction. See *Prayer*, 13, and *Christian Life*, 154ff. Cf. Lochman, 32ff., where he explains the importance and significance of the concept of 'name'; and Walter Luthi, *The Lord's Prayer: An Exposition* trans. Kurt Schoenenberger (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961), 10, says this:

> God has a name. The misery on this earth is nameless, the evil among men is nameless, for the powers of darkness love to be without a name. Nameless, anonymous letters, letters without signatures are usually vulgar. But God is not writer of anonymous letters; God puts His name to everything that He does, effects, and says; God has no need to fear the light of day. The Devil loves anonymity; but God has a name.

Secondly, this petition implies that the people praying know the name of the God to whom they pray, and even presupposes that the prayer itself is answered before it is formulated. As such, then, the Christological basis of the prayer is drawn out, because it is through the incarnation that human beings are made aware of God's name; it is Jesus who reveals God as Father. God's hallowing is God's act[66], and the signs of God's name in creation are seen as they are illuminated by God himself, by revelation.[67] Therefore, the believer's hallowing of God's name through this petition first occurs with the recognition of the prior hallowing of God's name himself through Jesus Christ in the incarnation.[68] This is seen particularly in *Prayer*, when Barth, in discussing this very concept, breaks into a prayer indicative of the point he is making: "Our Father, in heaven, thou hast spoken to us. In thy Son thou hast made thyself Word; thou hast made thyself perceptible and accessible to us in the flesh, in this world . . . . Thou hast taken a human face."[69] In other words, this petition does not imply that Christians glorify God's name in that they *add* to him, but rather they pray that God may be recognized *as God*, realizing that this hallowing

---

[66] As seen in Edmund Clowney, "A Biblical Theology of Prayer," in ed. D.A. Carson, *Teach Us To Pray: Prayer in the Bible and the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 139, 161.

[67] Barth, *Prayer*, 53ff. Cf. Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 27, where he says that "God's name is holy in itself and is not hallowed by us."

[68] See Lochman, 37f., where he notes that the first priority of this first petition is that God hallow his own name. He comments that the early fathers and the Reformers both leapt too quickly to the human task of hallowing God's name: "There is no doubt that the transition to the practical implications must be made, but as a transition, not as the first thing." Cf. Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 27ff., where he discusses the hallowing, or profaning, of God's name with particular reference to Christian behavior.

[69] Barth, *Prayer*, 54. It is characteristic of Barth to move from exposition to the vocative of address, or prayer, in this book.

has already taken place in Christ. This is done additionally through the lives of believers, as other people recognize their good works.[70]

In the next petition, "Thy kingdom come", Barth elaborates on God's cause, first correcting what he perceives as an inadequacy in the Reformation understanding. In addition, Barth makes a clear and obvious distinction between his understanding and that of Protestant Liberalism.

This difference Barth notes is in the eschatological character of the reality of the kingdom of God. Barth says that Luther, for instance, interprets the second petition by saying that the coming of the kingdom occurs with the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that believers may believe God's word and live lives in accordance with this word; the kingdom is equated with the simple fact of God having sent Christ into the world to free sinners from the power of Satan. Barth contends that this is not an explanation of the petition. His problem is not with Luther's theology generally, but rather with his understanding of the second petition.[71] Barth has a similar difficulty with Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism, and he summarizes the Reformation view as follows: "The Reformation understanding, [is] the relating of the coming of the kingdom to what is done, or should be done, in Christian faith and the Christian church in service to the

---

[70] "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 16). Cf. Luther, *Sermons*, 173: "What, then, does it mean to hallow the name of God? This: when our teaching and life are Christian and godly." Cf. *Prayer*, 55, 56. Here Barth breaks into prayer once again. Cf. *Christian Life*, 169, where Barth states that the Reformation understanding of this petition, while not wrong, is truncated in terms of eschatology.

[71] Yet, Luther, in a sermon on the petitions of the Lord's Prayer does recognize both the temporal and eschatological poles of this petiton: "God's kingdom comes to us in two ways: first, here, through the Word, and secondly, in that the future, eternal life is given to us." See Luther, *Sermons I*, 174.

world."[72] In his criticism of Calvin, Barth makes clear the distinction he wishes to draw between himself and his Reformation forerunners:

> What is to be asked for, according to Calvin, is God's gradual seizure of power and final triumph *within* this history, in the changing of bad persons into good, the glory of the people, and the removal of the opposition of some definitely bad persons. The second petition, however, looks to a mighty act that limits and determines from outside the whole of human history with its brighter and darker elements, its advances, halts, and setbacks. It looks to an unequivocal act of the grace of God, to the mystery of the kingdom of God which encounters all that history and limits it in its totality as hope.[73]

For Barth, the Reformation understanding, then, involves a disturbing *de*eschatologizing and legalizing of the content of the kingdom; there is an implicit suggestion that the kingdom is accomplished in this world by Christian achievement. "The Reformers tended to make the doctrine of the kingdom a sub-topic under the doctrine of the church."[74] The Heidelberg exposition does recognize the eschatological dimension, and in his commentary on the catechism Bruggink comments that "this petition has

---

[72] Barth, *Christian Life*, 243. Cf. Lochman, 46, where he says "the secularist temptation is present when consciously or unconsciously God's kingdom is equated with specific earthly ends and the kingdom reaches its goal in the rule of the church. We ourselves build up God's kingdom . . . . Such tendencies are especially present in the modern church." However, Barth's interpretation of the Reformers here may itself be as truncated as he believes their view to be. Luther seems to recognize the character of the kingdom of God as God's act when he says, in *Devotional Writings I*, 41, that :

> Therefore we do not pray, "dear Father, let us come into your kingdom," as though we might journey toward it. But we do say, "May thy kingdom come to us." If we are to receive it at all, God's grace and his kingdom, together with all virtues, must come to us. We will never be able to come into this kingdom. Similarly, Christ came to us from heaven to earth; we did not ascend from earth into heaven to him.

[73] Barth, *Christian Life*, 242. Cf. Ernst Lohmeyer *Our Father: An Introduction to the Lord's Prayer* trans. John Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 99 - 100, where he says that "God's apocalyptically unique and eternal reality and his historically unique activity are regarded as an event which happens here and now and in the future."

[74] Dr. Roy Williams, personal conversation, Dec. 11, 1997.

overtones of the apocalyptic and the eschatological."[75] Barth's problem with this understanding extends beyond the Reformers to both the early Church and more modern or recent interpretations: "Exposition of the second petition has constantly suppressed the point that the kingdom of God is a unique entity or factor not only in relation to the world but also in relation to the Christian world."[76] Again, as in his understanding of the first petition, Barth sees the second petition as already accomplished in Christ. It is God who causes the kingdom to arrive. "It is infinitely beyond our possibilities", . . . and "is totally independent of our powers."[77] Barth's problem with Protestant Liberalism is essentially the same, that the kingdom of God is reduced to the accomplishing of God's will in the present by human, albeit Christian, effort. In fact, Barth explicitly relates the deficiency he sees in Reformation thought in this area to the problem he has with Protestant Liberalism.[78]

Second, while the kingdom is beyond human effort or achievement, Barth still considers it an object of prayer; it concerns the peace and justice of a world which can be only the result of God's work. And this work of God has indeed already come. It is presupposed that those who pray this petition already know this kingdom.[79] For him, this

---

[75] Bruggink, 216f. The answer the Heidelberg Catechism gives to the second petition is: "so govern us by thy Word and Spirit that we may more and more submit ourselves unto thee. Uphold and increase thy church. Destroy the works of the devil, every power that raises itself against thee, and all wicked schemes thought up against thy holy Word, until the full coming of thy kingdom in which thou shalt be all in all." That the question is answered in the form of a prayer indicates that the composers of the catechism viewed the coming of the kingdom as an act of God.

[76] Barth, *Christian Life*, 244.

[77] Barth, *Prayer*, 57.

[78] Barth, *Christian Life*, 242ff. Barth relates his understanding to that of the Blumhardts, and sees in them the positive renewal of the concept of the kingdom of God. See *Christian Life*, 256ff.

[79] "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17: 21).

kingdom has been made manifest and effective in the person and work of Jesus Christ, just as in the hallowing of God's name. Through the events of Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost, Christians announce the kingdom of God that *has* come. Thus, it is in Jesus Christ that the kingdom has effectively arrived, and this provides all the more reason to utter this petition. But, this prayer still needs to be made because this kingdom is also future: "It must come, the future must bear the marks of the past, our past must become our future, and the Lord who has come must come again."[80] The concern with the coming of the kingdom for Barth is the concern for the coming of God himself:

> As God's kingdom is God himself, so God is his kingdom in his own coming: his coming to meet man, to meet the whole of the reality distinct from himself. The second petition looks toward this special dynamic reality, to the coming of God's kingdom as the coming God himself, to its breaking forth and breaking through and breaking into the place where those who pray the petition are, to encounter with them and therefore with all creation.[81]

Third, this coming then, involves the uncovering of a veil which covers "the reality of everything already changed in Jesus Christ"; the prayer is that this reality may be made visible. Through the various dimensions of life -- personal concerns, family life, political involvement, church affairs -- the kingdom is visible. The reality is beneath these things, and believers see as in a mirror, to paraphrase Paul the apostle. Barth says that Christians cannot be sure of their position and, in order for them to see the reality, Jesus himself, the kingdom, must be made visible. As he says: "May the light of God which was in Jesus Christ, in his life, in his death and resurrection, be shed over us, over our whole life . . . ,"

---

[80] Barth, *Prayer*, 59.

[81] Barth, *Christian Life*, 236. Cf. Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 41, where he says "God's kingdom consists in nothing other than piety, decency, purity, gentleness, kindness . . . . [W]e are his kingdom."

[and may] "the secret of earthly life be revealed. This secret has already been revealed, but we do not yet see it . . .[and] we pray that we may be granted the power to see and to understand."[82]

Fourth, and lastly, Barth returns to the exegesis of the Reformers as he highlights the importance of this petition; it is a petition that Christians may see the first signs of the new age in the present day. "May the dawn of this universal day enable us to see ourselves and others as well as the events of our history, in the light of that which is coming ahead of us."[83] It is a petition that asks that Christian faith may be made alive; it asks that believers receive eschatological hope; and it asks that the Holy Spirit may be present within the Church.[84] Praying that the kingdom of God may come means praying that people, Christians and otherwise, would see the present signs of the kingdom; that Christians can be assured that the prayer has been definitely answered in the person and life of Jesus Christ; and that Christians would live between the now and the not yet with hope grounded in the answer to the prayer seen in Jesus Christ, knowing that the prayer for the kingdom itself is evidence of the presence of that kingdom.[85]

While the second petition primarily concerns the eschatological dimension, the third petition, 'thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven', largely concerns the present time. With this petition, believers' prayers focus upon the *now* of the "now and the not

---

[82] Barth, *Prayer*, 60.

[83] Ibid., 61.

[84] Barth mentions that there is a variant reading of the Lord's Prayer in Luke, that adds to this petition, "Thy Holy Spirit come upon us and purify us." His impression is that the Reformers wrote as if taking this variant into account. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, III.20.42.

[85] Barth, *Prayer*, 57.

yet" of God's will.[86] Again, here as before, God's will or cause is to glorify himself as Creator and Lord, and to redeem his creature. As Barth says, "The will of God is to maintain his creature, to save it, and to fulfill his work by the manifestation of his kingdom."[87] That this petition concerns the 'now' of the kingdom is obvious from the petition itself when it says "on earth as it is in heaven." Here Barth says that believers ask that God may "deign to trouble himself with us and with this world."[88]

As in the first two petitions, Barth says that the content of the third petition can only be carried out by God himself; its fulfillment is God's act. Yet, even in the praying of this petition there is a manifestation of God's will, and in this Christians can have assurance that this prayer is being answered. This leads to his third point about this petition, that God's will "is done and . . . is being done ceaselessly in heaven."[89] This gives believers all the more reason to pray these words, and Christians know this is true on account of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit who teaches and confirms it to them. Barth here unfolds the meaning of this petition in much the same way as the previous two. He explains it by saying that believers need to pray that in the midst of the execution of his

---

[86] In biblical theology, it has been NT scholar Oscar Cullmann who developed the famous image, largely lost to our time, of "the now and the not yet", of D-Day and V-Day, as a means of thinking about Christian eschatology. Evangelical NT scholar George Eldon Ladd has also done much to establish a biblically and theologically sound understanding of NT eschatology. See, Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950); and George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); and G.E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* rev. ed. ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

[87] Barth, *Prayer*, 62. Cf. Luther, *Devotional Writings II*, 196. Luther's exposition of this prayer is directed very much at the individual Christian, and "we are asking for nothing else in this petition than the cross, torment, adversity, and sufferings of every kind, since these serve the destruction of our will." See Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 48f.

[88] Barth, *Prayer*, 63.

[89] Ibid.

plan, God would liberate believers from the imperfection of their obedience, enable them to be faithful to the gospel, and grant freedom and remove them from the contradictions of human experience and disobedience. The petition itself unfolds this way in the context of the knowledge that God's will is perfectly accomplished in heaven in Christ, and that once more it is God's cause that is in question. It is God's reign and cause with which Christians are to be concerned, both in this petition and the previous two.[90] As this thesis turns to Barth's exposition of the next three petitions, there is both a notable difference from the first three, and yet a dependence upon them. As Barth says, "On these first three requests hang the freedom, the joy, the alacrity, and the certitude of the other petitions . . . [I]n prayer we walk on the ground of these first three petitions."[91]

The Last Three Petitions: The Christians' Cause as God's Cause

Barth begins his discussion of the second set of petitions by noting that these petitions signal a change in the attitude of the individual praying. This attitude change is simply the consequence of the freedom that dominates the first set of petitions. According to Barth, while the first three are directly related to God, the second set involves a distinct temerity in approaching God.[92] Here, those praying with Jesus Christ direct God to their cause, while in the first set they directed themselves to God's cause. In both cases the prayer is Christologically grounded:

---

[90] Ibid., 64.

[91] Ibid., 48.

[92] And as Edmund Clowney says, "The boldness of the Lord's Prayer is matched by its humility, its simple dependence on the heavenly Father." See Clowney, 142.

> In Jesus Christ, man becomes visible as the man who does not have to be without God. Therefore he is allowed and commanded in his prayer with equal seriousness to bring to God also his own needs and expectations.[93]

Yet, even though this is the case, this change in attitude, as Barth refers to it, is still very much in keeping with the first three petitions.[94] Schmidt notes that for Barth the second set of petitions are both an inversion and a consequence of the first set.[95] Barth says that "as and because [Christians] are invited and summoned to espouse and to participate in the cause of God in their requests, they are also invited and summoned to ask God on His side to espouse and actively participate in their cause."[96] Here, in Barth's own words, believers move on to "prayer properly speaking", with prayer that is direct and imperative. The human cause, dependent as it is upon God's goodness and grace, would be lost if God did not make it his cause also.[97]

It is imperative, however, that this second set of petitions *follow* the first set, and not vice-versa, otherwise it might appear that God is willing to grant petitions in abstraction from his character and will for human beings and all of creation. In other words, the understanding of the last three petitions depends upon the understanding of the first three. In asking God to become involved in the human cause, his glory is still the priority of Christian prayer, because "when we ask God to give us all we need, both

---

[93] Barth, *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today*, 116.

[94] Ibid., 65f.

[95] Schmidt, 196. Cf. Barth, *CD*, III.4, 105; and LeFevre, 41, where he says that "the conjunction of the last three petitions with the first three means that what we need and want must be made to fit into God's design and God's action."

[96] Barth, *CD*, III.4, 105. Cf. Lochman, 83.

[97] Ibid.; Cf. *Prayer*, 65, 66.

outwardly and inwardly, for our existence, we comply with his command to serve him for the sake of his glory."[98] In Calvin's words,

> We do not, indeed, bid farewell to God's glory. . . . God specifically claims the first three petitions and draws us wholly to himself to prove our piety in this way. Then he allows us to look after our own interests, yet under this limitation: that we seek nothing for ourselves without the intention that whatever benefits he confers upon us may show forth his glory, for nothing is more fitting that that we live and die to him.[99]

Similar to Calvin, Schmidt observes this when he says that "according to Barth, when we pray for our cause we are to pray for it more as a means to our faithful participation in God's than as an end in itself."[100]

In introducing these three last petitions, Barth again brings out the significance of the *we* or *us* of the Lord's Prayer, which becomes even more explicit in the second set. Here, the *us*, or Christians, come forward with their own cause, a cause which cannot separate them from the first set or its priorities. This *us* refers to a number of things, including the fellowship of those who are with Jesus Christ; those who are united or in communion with one another because of Jesus Christ; those who think and act in solidarity in the midst of the misery of the human condition by addressing themselves to God; and those who alone know, on account of their union with Christ and one another, the true misery, the "fall and perdition of God's good creature", and that only God can extricate them from this situation.[101]

---

[98] Barth, *Prayer*, 67.

[99] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.20.44. Cf. Lochman, 84; and Barth, *CD*, III.4, 105, where he says that "when we ask for what we ourselves need, our requests follow the same and not a different line as in the first three petitions."

[100] Schmidt, 196. Cf. Barth, *CD*, III.4, 105.

[101] Barth, *Prayer*, 66.

The human cause is first seen in the petition for 'our daily bread', which Lohmeyer calls the heart and center of the Lord's Prayer.[102] To begin, there are some who have questioned the 'earthiness' of this petition, saying there is something of an incongruity in praying for the glory of God and then praying for bread. Someone might well ask what place is there between God's cause and the eschaton for this nearly petty attention to something so transitory, so banal.[103] Little wonder that there has been so much effort spent in the history of the church to spiritualize this petition -- this has happened in Origen, in the younger Luther, and in others, leading on up to the present time. Bread, rather than being understood as simply that which is needed for physical sustainment, is understood in a spiritual sense as God's Word or Christ's mystical body. To make such an interpretative choice the governing one is unjustified both biblically and theologically. Jesus himself demonstrates a concern for the importance of material well-being of human beings, including food. The Reformers interpret the petition this way as well, defining 'bread' as all that is necessary for "the nourishments and needs of the body": food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, land, cattle, money, property, pious husband or wife, pious

---

[102] Lohmeyer, 159.

[103] Gerhard Ebeling, *On Prayer: The Lord's Prayer in Today's World* trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, repr. 1978), 52. Cf. Cullmann, 51, where Cullmann comments that the tendency to think that such an earthly need is incompatible with the earlier, more 'spiritual' petitions, demonstrates a tendency towards Docetism. Lochman gives three reasons for taking seriously the literal understanding of bread: First, the dichotomy set up between the two sets of petitions is a false one, forgetting that the earlier petitions ask, "thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven." Second, the Bible recognizes no rigid dualism between heaven and earth, body and soul. Third, the Bible places a high regard upon eating, for meals, and Jesus himself was called a "glutton and a drunkard." See Lochman, 86 - 88. See Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 52ff., where his discussion of 'bread' focuses upon this more supernatural interpretation: the 'bread' is the Word of God, and "a supernatural bread . . . [which] nourishes him as an immortal and supernatural being." In any case, asking for "daily bread" is hardly petty for a human being who does need such sustenance.

children, faithful public servants, a just government, friends, loyal neighbours, education, honors, and even weather![104]

Barth holds to this Reformation definition of 'bread', while at the same time wanting not to lose sight of the original biblical meaning of the word 'bread' in all its simplicity; he sees this meaning as having two parts in biblical language. One, in asking for bread, Christians are asking for the bare necessity of life, the minimum which they cannot do without. Two, Barth says that in Scripture the word 'bread' is also the temporal sign of God's grace. "In the Bible bodily and temporal life is sacred because it is the promise of the life immortal and eternal."[105]

Barth then points to the eschatological dimension of the petition for bread by saying that this petition "is also associated with that fullness of life which we shall know in the new era, in the world to come."[106] Therefore, bread received in the present is a pledge of the fullness that awaits believers at the eschaton. Here, as before, Barth breaks into the vocative of address in the course of his discussion:

> Give us this minimum which is necessary for the present moment; and the same time, give it to us as a sign, as a pledge anticipating our whole life. According to thy promise, which we are receiving at this moment, we receive also the presence of thine eternal goodness, the assurance that we shall live with thee.[107]

---

[104] Shaff, Vol.3, 83. Cf. Barth, *Prayer*, 69 and *CD*, III.4, 534, 535; Lochman, 85; and Luther, *Sermons I*, 176ff.

[105] Barth, *Prayer*, 70.

[106] Ibid., 70.

[107] Ibid., 70, 71.

A further dimension of this petition which Barth draws out is the anxiety that plagues people about such bread; for prayer needs to replace this anxiety. This anxiety about daily bread, or bread for the temporal morrow, prefigures anxiety for the eternal morrow. This temporal precariousness cannot be compared to that eternal precariousness which has to do with human destiny. Barth asks that this anxiety be transformed into prayer, that Christians as children of God hope for both the daily bread, and the bread which will feed them on the eschatological morrow. The issue then becomes how Christians find this hope, and how they replace the anxiety with this petition. In other words, "Praying to God to give us bread both earthly and celestial, both substantial and supersubstantial, presupposes that we know God as the giver."[108]

While Barth's intention of giving assurance to the believer in propounding an eschatological dimension to the petition for bread is commendable, it yet seems to be an interpretation not solely based on an exegesis of the petition itself. There is an overt earthiness to this petition and though Barth does reaffirm the Reformation exposition of this petition which emphasizes, as already seen above, its earthly concerns, it is a strain on the petition's meaning to eschatologize it as Barth does. Since Barth does criticize the Reformers for what he perceives as a *de*eschatologizing of the kingdom petition, his exposition of the fourth petition is in part a reaction against this perception.

The next aspect of the human cause is forgiveness. The petition, "Forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors"[109], directly implies that in their relationship

---

[108] Barth, *Prayer*, 72.

[109] J. Van Bruggen notes that the 'our' in this petition also implies that believers share in each other's guilt and sin: "Did we warn the other person? Did we set a wrong example?" See Bruggen, 293.

with God, human beings are in default; people come up short of what they owe to God.[110] Here Barth first emphasises human sinfulness over human possibility and comments that "what we do correspond[s] in no wise to what is given us."[111] In the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, "We are not worthy of anything for which we pray, and have not merited it . . . and deserve nothing but punishment."[112] Calvin echoes this when he says that "those who trust that God is satisfied with their own or others' merits, and that by such satisfaction forgiveness of sins is paid for and purchased, share not at all in this free gift."[113]

Consequently, since there is nothing a person can do to earn forgiveness, what they actually owe God is themselves - "our person in its totality" - because it is from God and his goodness that his creatures are sustained and nourished.[114] And this forgiveness means that God regards his creatures as having done no wrong for the guilt in which they find themselves is not held against them. As Barth says, "The right of placing the guilty

---

Surprisingly, despite Barth's persistent emphasis on the corporate nature of the Lord's Prayer, he does not explicitly draw conclusions about the possibility of corporate sin.

[110] Walter Luthi writes that this is "*the* petition, the central one, the kernel of the prayer." See Luthi, *Small Catechism* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1940), 15f., quoted in Bruggink, 221.

[111] Barth, *Prayer*, 74.

[112] Shaff, vol.3, 83. Cf. Luther, *Devotional Writings II*, 197, *Sermons I*, 178. Luther suggests in his "Exposition of the Lord's Prayer for Simple Laymen", that this petition can be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, that God forgives believers when they are unaware of it, and on the other hand that God remits such sins openly, that the believer is aware of forgiveness. "The first type of forgiveness is always necessary; the second is occasionally necessary so that man may not despair." See Luther, *Devotional Writings I*, 63.

[113] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.20.45.

[114] Barth, *Prayer*, 74. Cf. Bruggink, 221: "We owe him ourselves."

again in the position of children of God can only belong to him whom we have offended."[115]

As Christians receive forgiveness, they cannot do otherwise than forgive those who have offended them. As recipients of divine forgiveness, as people who have been forgiven so great a debt, "How could we . . . [not] forgive those who have offended us?"[116] Barth's point here is that those who have experienced God's forgiveness experience a freedom through such grace, one that engenders an impulse towards forgiving others; not having this freedom to forgive others means that they are out of reach of divine forgiveness. It is God's forgiveness that enables Christians to forgive. Having known the spirit of forgiveness, believers themselves receive this spirit of forgiveness.[117] This is precisely what the Heidelberg Catechism means when it says, "We also find this witness of Thy grace in us that it is our full purpose heartily to forgive our neighbour." As G.I. Williamson puts it in his study of the Heidelberg Catechism,

> There are no *real* Christians who are unforgiving, because the same God who grants us forgiveness as a free gift also grants us the free gift of his Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, renewing them, it is not possible for us to remain unforgiving.[118]

Barth's goes on to explain the ground of this forgiveness that God grants. As in the case of the other petitions, this one also carries the note of completion insofar as it is through Christ's *finished* work that this forgiveness is given. Thus, in Christ this pardon is

---

[115] Ibid., 76.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 77. Cf. Luther, *Sermons I*, 179; and Calvin, *Institutes*, III.20.45.

[118] Williamson, 228. Cf. Kuyvenhoven, 305f.; Col. 3:13: "Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you"; and Van Bruggen, 293f.

already granted. It is not a false hope, an imagining, something that believers pray for in vain. In a passage written in the vocative of address, Barth goes on to explain prayerfully what he means by this:

> In thy Son thou hast exchanged the roles between thyself, the holy and just God, and us, perfidious and unjust human beings. Thou hast put thyself in our place so as to reestablish order in our favor. Thou hast obeyed and suffered for us; thou hast abolished our faults, the faults of all humankind. And thou hast done it once and for all.[119]

And just as Barth emphasised the completed nature of earlier petitions, here too he insists that *because* of the completed nature of the petition for forgiveness, Christians must *ask* for this forgiveness. This is a forgiveness that must be appropriated by the person; "it is up to us to believe, to realize this beginning which was inaugurated by the death of Christ."[120]

For Barth, the sixth and final petition, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one'[121], deals with "the great temptation."[122] First, then, in talking about temptation, the petition is not talking about the discipline that is a part of the Christian life.[123] Rather, the petition is speaking of the eschatological temptation.[124] This temptation

---

[119] Barth, *Prayer*, 78.

[120] Ibid., 79.

[121] Luther divides this petition into two separate petitions.

[122] Barth, *Prayer*, 81.

[123] Ibid., 81. Cf. Heb. 12: 5 - 11: "Endure trials for the sake of discipline" (v. 7). Cf. Kuyvenhoven, 307f., where he distinguishes between three kinds of temptation: First, there is the way God's people test God, by daring him to demonstrate his power (Ex. 17:2); second, there is God's discipline; and third, there is the way Satan tempts human beings to sin. Cf. Van Bruggen, 297; and Bruggink, 224f.

is, however, manifested in "minor temptations" such as moral or physical trials, all of which must be distinguished from the action of the devil.[125] Here Barth's understanding of evil emerges.

Evil, or the Evil One, is described by Barth as "the infinite menace of the nothingness that is opposed to God himself." This represents no passing danger, but total fall. This evil does not even belong to creation. For Barth, "It is at the limits of [God's] creation."[126] This evil imposes itself upon creation in the form of sin and death, and it appears in the illegitimate dominion of the Devil.[127]

This acknowledgement of the Evil One is also seen in the Reformers, and is a reality that Christians often pass over too lightly, according to Barth.[128] He considers Satan a real enemy, one "whom we cannot resist unless God comes to our aid."[129] And as

---

[124] Clowney argues that this is the case as well, when he says, "It may be that this last petition of the Lord's Prayer is looking forward to the final onslaught of Satan before Christ comes again." See Clowney, 164.

[125] The Heidelberg Catechism states that "our sworn enemies -- the devil, the world, and our own flesh -- do not cease to attack us", implying that the temptation here spoken of perhaps does mean more than direct attacks from Satan. Cf. Luther, *Sermons I*, 179f.

[126] Barth, *Prayer*, 82.

[127] See Barth, *Church Dogmatics: A Selection with Introduction by Helmut Gollwitzer* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 134 - 147, for a brief introduction to Barth's understanding of evil and nothingness. In introducing the chapter on nothingness, Gollwitzer highlights a number of key points in Barth's understanding: That (1) God is not the author of evil; (2) that evil is evil, or that which is not willed by God; that (3) the title "nothingness" refers to the rejection and overcoming of evil by God, not its non-existence; that (4) evil differs from "the shadow-side of creation"; and (5) that justice is done to the resurrection of Christ only when evil is not taken with final seriousness. See *Church Dogmatics: A Selection*, 134.

[128] In the preface to his popular book *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis says that "there are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight." See *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: MacMillian Publishing Co.,1982), rev. ed., 3.

[129] Barth, *Prayer*, 83. Cf. Shaff, vol. 3, 83f.

before, Barth proceeds in his analysis of this petition to recognize that it is already answered in Jesus Christ. Throughout *Prayer* Barth often breaks from exposition to actual prayer, and here in his discussion he does the same:

> No, our Father, thou dost not do it. How couldst thou do it, thou who hast revealed thyself in thy Son? Thou hast stepped forward to break the powers of this realm of the Devil. Thou hast caused the Devil to fall like lightning from the sky; we have seen him fall. Thou hast triumphed over the shadows by the resurrection of thy Son . . . . Thou hast already snatched us from those jaws.[130]

And as always, because the petition has already been answered in Christ, believers have all the more reason to pray the petition.

The last verse of the Lord's Prayer, the doxology, is recognized by Barth as not belonging to the original text. In this doxology he sees two explanations of meaning, neither of which excludes the other. First, seeing as how it begins with *for*, a relation between it and the final petition can be seen; this relation, Barth suggests, can be clearly seen if the word *for* is replaced with *since.* In other words, the kingdom and power and glory belong to God, and *not* to the realm or sphere of death, sin, and Satan. Second, Barth says that this doxological formula encompasses the whole of the Lord's Prayer. Thus, it becomes a recognition of the human incapacity to accomplish that which is prayed for, and at the same time an acknowledgement of human beings' ultimate dependence upon God for these things to come to pass. "All that we ask of thee can be done only by thee."[131] The 'amen' signifies the certainty or assurance of the prayer, which Barth stresses as a distinct criterion of prayer. It signifies a lack of doubt and the presence of

---

[130] Ibid., 85.

[131] Ibid., 87.

faith for prayer is not a chance undertaking, but is undertaken with conviction before the God who commands prayer. This certainty also signifies the greater certainty of the response over the certainty believers feel concerning their needs and wants. In Barth's own reassuring words, "The most certain element of our prayer is not our requests, but what comes from God: his response."[132]

Key Points in Barth's Exposition of the Lord's Prayer

In Barth's exposition of the Lord's Prayer there are a number of key points which emerge. These concepts serve to underline his understanding of the Lord's Prayer and summarize his exposition. The first concept central to Barth's exposition of the Lord's Prayer is the movement of the prayer itself, and the pattern it sets, by first emphasizing the concern for God's cause, namely his glory. Clowney says this,

> The beautiful simplicity and breath-taking sweep of the Lord's Prayer set it apart. It is distinctive, above all, in its focus on the Father. We first pray that his name be hallowed, his kingdom come, his will be done. Even before the prayer turns to our own needs, it is through and through prayer before the Father in heaven.[133]

This is seen mainly in the division of the prayer into two sets of petitions. This division is described by Schmidt as involving a centripetal and centrifugal movement in Barth's exposition. The former is the movement in which prayer is focused upon its center, the Christological pole, or more specifically in the case of the Lord's Prayer, God's glory and cause. The latter is the movement in which prayer enters into its petitionary

---

[132] Ibid., 88.

[133] Clowney, 163.

stage. Between these two movements, there is on the one hand a similarity and on the other a difference. Schmidt says it this way:

> The similarity of the two movements derives from their both acknowledging and witnessing to God's self-communication in Jesus Christ. The difference stems from the respective ways they do this. The first contemplates God's self-communication as it has already taken place. . . . The second refers to this self-communication as it has yet to take place.[134]

Schmidt notes that this movement is detectable in Barth's discussion of the Lord's Prayer. For instance, Barth understands the invocation as a centripetal movement (or a movement to its centre in Christ), and speaks of it as the praise and adoration of God, which forms the precondition for the petitions, or the centrifugal movement.[135] Moreover, Barth does in fact distinguish the first set of petitions in a manner that seems to fit the division suggested by these two movements[136] when he says,

> in the first three petitions our prayer is a sort of conversation with the Heavenly Father. It is like a sigh. We are dazzled by the grandeur of what occupies us: the name, the kingdom, the will of God himself. We sigh and pray from a certain distance, in a manner almost indirect.[137]

The second important concept in Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer is his argument that prayer is decisively petition. When coming to the second set of petitions, Christians come to "prayer properly speaking."[138] It is also important to note that Barth refers to the Lord's Prayer as a "string of petitions."[139]

---

[134] Schmidt, 159f. Cf. Barth, *CD*, III.3, 256, 248, where Barth explains the distinction himself.

[135] Barth, "Calvin," *Theologische Existenz Heute* 37(1936): 10, as cited in Schmidt, 161.

[136] See Schmidt, 135 - 168, for his discussion on these two movements.

[137] Barth, *Prayer*, 65.

[138] Ibid., 65. Cf. *CD*, III.4, 97 - 102, for a discussion of prayer as decisively petition. See Shapiro, 30, 31. Shapiro believes Barth's assertion of prayer as decisively petition is too strong. He comments that

Third, the meaning of the prayer as a model is seen in the fact that the prayer presumes an already existing relationship between the individual praying and God. This is seen by the fact that those praying the Lord's Prayer are praying not just to anyone, but to a God revealed as *Father*. God is revealed as Father by Jesus, and is our Father through Jesus; Christians have been adopted as sons and daughters on account of Christ's work. Thus, believers already know the God to whom they pray.

Fourth, this relationship provides assurance in the midst of prayer; and this certainty which Christians have in prayer is of a particular sort. This assurance "is the confident anticipation of [the] hearing which accompanies the human request."[140] This certainty also involves more than confidence that prayer *will* be answered, but the assurance that the prayer *has been* answered. The prayers believers utter have been answered in Christ. For, in Jesus, God's name has been glorified, his kingdom has come,

---

either Barth's assertion here is tautologous, or it is an unconvincing, reasoned argument. He is especially dissatisfied with Barth's criticism of more mystical, or affective, forms of Christian spirituality. Cf. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, 208, where he says that "In the Christian understanding of prayer we can deal with petitionary prayer only on the basis of thanksgiving and adoration. If the sayings of Jesus that are handed down in the Gospels refer directly to petitionary prayer, they already presuppose faith and with it the fellowship with God to which thanksgiving and adoration surely give expression."

In any case, Barth, in his discussion in *CD*, III.4 [cited above], relates his conclusion that prayer is definitively petition to the Reformers: Luther, Calvin, and the Heidelberg Catechism. Cf. Han Chul-Ha, "Belief and Unbelief in Prayer: A Comparison Between Calvin and Karl Barth," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 9:4 (1985), 348, where Chul-Ha makes this obvervation. Chul-Ha criticizes Barth in two ways -- on prayer as primarily petition, and the 'we' of prayer to the neglect of the individual private prayer -- but unfortunately he never takes into account more than Barth's discussion in *CD* IV. 4, missing completely Barth's expositions of the Lord's Prayer in *The Christian Life* and *Prayer*. Had he taken these other works into account, perhaps his evaluation could have been more balanced. In criticizing Barth's emphasis on public or community prayer, he says that this misses the point of prayer, that being the necessity of prayer for personal needs. Of course, this flies in the face of not only Barth's understanding of prayer's primary purpose, but also that of the Reformers: the glory and cause of God. In the conclusion there is a more critical discussion of this point.

[139] *CD*, III.3, 268.

[140] Barth, *CD*, III.4, 106. As Clowney says, "What assurance . . . must mark the prayer of those who look to the cross of Jesus Christ and to the throne of his exaltation!" See Clowney, 157.

and his will has been done. In Christ, God's cause has taken on human flesh and the believer's cause has been taken into God himself.[141]

Through the relationship believers have with God, a relationship established by Christ, they are called, commanded, and invited to make God's cause their own in prayer. But more than that, they are also invited to bring their cause before God. Yet, the Christians' cause is not something alien to God's cause, but it is rather the human side of God's cause, insofar as it is determined and guided by it. As Barth makes clear, the last three petitions depend upon the first three.[142] This prayer is also founded upon its answer already given in Christ, thereby securing the assurance that the prayer is heard, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of the Christians' joining in this prayer. The asking and answering of prayer are grounded in what Jesus Christ is and does.[143] To put it succinctly,

> To pray means to take God at his word and to call upon his righteousness which has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ and has come to us as a living Word. Such calling upon God consists in praise and thanksgiving, because God's hearing and fulfilling of our petitions is greater than our desiring, has already been granted, and in and with his Word is already on the way.[144]

This, in Barth's view, is what constitutes the meaning of the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer. He also draws a close connection between prayer and action, and indeed refers to prayer as "the most intimate and effective form of Christian action."[145] Since the

---

[141] Ibid., 108.

[142] Barth, *Prayer*, 48.

[143] LeFevre, 33.

[144] Barth, *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today*, 117.

[145] Barth, *CD*, III.3, 264.

Lord's Prayer is the model prayer, it is hardly surprising, then, that it is this same prayer that forms Barth's final discussion of Christian ethics in *Christian Life*. Therefore, if one is to have a full understanding of the Lord's Prayer in Barth's thinking, one also needs to understand how Barth develops it as the ground of Christian action, life, or ethics. It is to this part of the discussion that this paper now turns.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LORD'S PRAYER AS A MODEL FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Importance of the Lord's Prayer as a Model for the Christian Life

The question of Christian ethics is problematic on Barthian terms. Barth faces this question directly in his book *The Christian Life*, and he does so by examining the priority of Christian action as something arising from the priority of Christian prayer. Already this thesis has examined the importance and meaning of the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer, concluding that this prayer is not to be a model in the literal sense. Instead, it offers believers direct insight into the kind of prioritizing which ought to characterize their prayerful relationship with the Lord who himself directs them to this very prayer. In Barth's estimation, this prayer also offers a paradigm by which to view the nature of Christian action in a world separated from God's righteousness in Christ. Donald K. McKim says,

> Barth saw the Lord's Prayer as tremendously significant for the formation of the Christian life. It shows us the goal of our life of faith, the concerns that should be foremost in our minds, and the passions which should motivate us as we live as the People of God in the Modern world.[1]

Barth's relating the rule of prayer to the rule of action allows Christians to understand that both in their individual, personal existence as sons and daughters of God through Christ, and in their lives in the world, it is the one and the same God who commands and invites believers to "call upon me" (Ps. 50: 15).

---

[1] Donald K. McKim, "Karl Barth on the Lord's Prayer," *Center Journal* 2:1 (1982), 84.

As Lou Shapiro states, there is no antithesis between prayer and ethics in Barth's thinking.[2] Instead, there is a crucial relationship between the two for ethics is a part of Barth's theology of prayer.[3] This is not only the conclusion of Barth's interpreters, but finds expression in Barth himself when he says that "prayer is the most intimate and effective form of Christian action."[4] In addition, prayer is the church's *decisive* work: "The community works, but it also prays. More precisely, it prays as it works. And in praying, it works."[5] Yet, Barth considers prayer more than one important Christian task among others for prayer itself is the medium that properly expresses the Christian life.[6] This chapter examines how this is so in Barth's thinking. It does this by analyzing Barth's exposition of the Lord's Prayer in *The Christian Life*, beginning first with a discussion of the place of ethics in Barth's thinking as an ethics of freedom determined by love. Second, Barth's use of analogy in this context is examined. Third, it discusses Barth's decision to use invocation of God as the motif for ethics. Fourth, following this, there is an examination of Barth's development of the Lord's Prayer (or, the invocation and first two petitions) as a model of the Christian life. In addition, it incorporates the insights of Barth's interpreters, insofar as they themselves discuss this posthumous work. Clearly this

---

[2] Lou Shapiro, "Karl Barth's Understanding of Prayer," *Crux* 24 (1988), 26.

[3] Perry LeFevre, *Understandings of Prayer* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 34.

[4] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III.3, *The Doctrine of Creation* trans G.W. Bromiley and R.J. Erhlich (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960), 264 [Hereafter, volumes of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* are cited as *CD*, with the accompanying volume, part, and page number].

[5] Barth, *CD*, IV.2, 704, and *CD*, IV.3, 882. In chapter one it is demonstrated that for Barth theological work falls under the rubric of Christian prayer.

[6] Shapiro, 26.

also involves a *critical* understanding of Barth's exposition, although the explicitly evaluative material is reserved for the conclusion.

The Meaning of the Lord's Prayer as a Model for the Christian Life

An Ethics of Love and Freedom

Barth understands the special ethics of the doctrines of creation and redemption as being grounded in the special ethics of the doctrine of reconciliation, and it is within the doctrine of reconciliation that Barth develops the Lord's Prayer as an ethical model.[7] In addition, the ethics of the doctrine of reconciliation is an ethic of freedom. Consequently, it is an ethic that respects both the "free disposing of God regarding the concrete meaning and content of his commanding [and] the free responsibility of the action of man."[8] This freedom is grounded in love, and it is one within which God and the human person encounter one another directly -- it is the freedom for both of these subjects to love one another.[9]

---

[7] Karl Barth, *The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics*, IV. 4, *Lecture Fragments* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), 9 [Hereafter cited as *Christian Life*]. Cf. Eberhard Jüngel, "Invocation of God as the Ethical Ground of Christian Action: Introductory remarks on the posthumous fragments of Karl Barth's ethics of the doctrine of reconciliation," in Jüngel's *Theological Essays* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 155, and 165. He comments that it is in Barth's understanding of the doctrine of reconciliation where we find the sharpest expression of the fundamental decision in Barth's theology. More specifically, he says that in Barth's understanding of ethics as prayer, the starting point of the whole *Church Dogmatics* is present in the most acute way. Barth distinguishes between *general* ethics as that which explains the proper will and commandment of God, and *special* ethics as that which examines the actual duty of human persons. See Jean-Luc Blondel, "Prayer and Struggle: Karl Barth's 'The Christian Life'," *St. Luke's Journal of Theology* 23:2 (1980), 106.

[8] Jüngel, 156.

[9] Barth, *Christian Life*, 35. Cf. Jüngel, 158. Similarly, Wolfhart Pannenberg grounds his discussion of Christian prayer in the doctrine of love. See his *Systematic Theology* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), vol. 3, 202 - 211.

Seeing ethics as grounded in freedom and love means for Barth that ethics cannot anticipate the answer to the question, "What shall I do?"[10] This is because the freedom through which ethics is understood has as its referent the event of the encounter between God and the human person.[11] Thus, the form of ethics "will always be the mystery of the commanding God and obedient or disobedient man." As Barth says:

> Ethics, then, cannot itself give direction. It can only give instruction, teaching us how to put that question relevantly and how to look forward openly, attentively, and willingly to the answer that God alone can and does give.

Moreover:

> Ethics, however, can point to the event of the encounter between God and man, to the mystery of the specific divine ordering, directing, and commanding and of the specific human obeying or disobeying. It can give instruction in the art of correct asking about God's will and open hearing of God's command.[12]

Therefore, as an ethic grounded in this manner there need not be concern over any "purely formal structure of a categorical imperative of Christian provenance."[13] Ethics involves asking properly, "What shall I do?", in the context of that encounter between God and the human person.[14] Jean-Luc Blondel notes this as well when he says of Barth's understanding, that "ethics therefore is not a program nor a precise doctrine of action; it is

---

[10] John Webster notes that the question of good human action can too quickly become the question, 'what can I do for God?' The two sides of the relationship are not equal. See his *Barth's Ethics of Reconcilation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 175.

[11] Barth, *Christian Life*, 34. Jüngel says that both the answer *and* the question of ethics owe their origin to this event, which Barth customarily indicates in formal terms as the event of the Word of God. See Jüngel, 165.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Jüngel, 158.

[14] It should be noted that Barth sees the person who asks this question as doing so within a 'we.' As Jüngel says "every 'I' does not pray 'my Father' but to '*our* Father." See Jüngel, 161. Cf. Barth, *Christian Life*, 82. The significance of the 'we' or 'our' of the Lord's Prayer is discussed at length in the preceding chapter of this thesis.

an indicator of the way the questions should be asked and their answers formulated."[15] Jüngel comments that Augustine's phrase, "*Dilige, et quod vis fac*", might be appropriate as an ethical imperative in Barthian terms, especially since as a precept of the human person's will, love sufficiently determines that will for the Christian life so that no further orientation is necessary.[16]

Barth's Use of Analogy in *The Christian Life*

The instructive quality of an ethic grounded in the freedom of love is possible because the love of God that wills and effects salvation for human beings calls for a human action analogous to itself. First, in using analogical language, Barth preserves the ontological distance between God and human beings, as well as emphasizing the partnership between them. Moreover, Barth's exposition of the Lord's Prayer sets out in material terms the analogy between divine and human action. Consequently, Barth does not define the distinction between divine and human action in an abstract way "as a relationless difference of pure dissimilarity."[17] Rather, the relation between divine and human action is given concrete definition as a relation of invocation. In *The Christian Life* it is such considerations that led Barth to describe 'invocation' as "the basic act of the Christian ethos."[18] This very invocation expresses the fact that Christians ask God for what only God can give, such as the hallowing of his name and the coming of his

---

[15] Blondel, 107.

[16] "Love, and do what you like": Augustine, quoted in Jüngel, 158.

[17] Jüngel, 160.

[18] Barth, *The Christian Life*, 102.

kingdom. The goodness of human action consists in this analogical relationship: "Even in its humanity [it] is parallel and analogous to the act of God himself."[19] Second, for Barth, it is this very analogy that prevents ethics from becoming either a legalistic and casuistic ethics or an obscure ethics of the *kairos*.[20]

It is this understanding of the grounding of ethics in this analogous relationship that leads Barth to place the entire ethics of reconciliation under the category of 'invocation of God.' His interest is that in such analogous action the concern lies with the *immediacy* of the encounter between God and the human person. Outlining ethics as an ethics of prayer captures this immediacy. Finally, the fundamental ethical analogy is this: that in the invocation of God whose 'being is in act' Christians are exalted to a life in act that corresponds to God so that in their relation to God they "may and should be truly active."[21]

---

[19] Barth, *Christian Life*, 175. Jüngel notes that the motif of analogy is one that dominates the ethics of the *Church Dogmatics*. See Jüngel, 159.

[20] Ibid., 6. Barth does not disregard entirely the need for a casuistic ethics. As Nigel Biggar rightly notes, Barth does recognize the need to provide moral guidance. In fact, Barth is seen to derive general principles indirectly from scripture and directly from his dogmatic system (Cf. *CD*, III.4, 166, 398). However, that being the case, this does not contradict Barth's critique of causuistry. As Biggar comments, "it is clear that when Barth equates ethics with original sin, he means by it a closed, rationalist system that moves with inexorable logic from first principles through rules to particular cases." See Biggar, "Hearing God's Command and Thinking about What's Right: With and Beyond Barth," in Nigel Biggar, ed. *Reckoning With Barth: Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth's Birth* (London: Mowbray, 1988), 113.

[21] Ibid., 102. See also, *CD*, II.1, 257ff., where Barth discusses the idea that "God is who He is in the act of His revelation." Cf. Jüngel, 161. For a discussion of Barth's understanding of analogy see H.G. Wells, "Barth's Doctrine of Analogy," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 15 (1969): 203 - 213; Christopher Morse, "Raising God's Eyebrows: Some Further Thoughts on the *Analogia Fidei*," *Union Seminary Quarterly* Review 37(1981), 39-49; and Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth* trans. John Drury (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), 100 - 70. Barth attacked the notion of *analogia entis* in favor of *analogia fidei* (See *CD*, I.1, xiii), maintaining that the human understanding of God results from God's self-disclosure in revelation, not from ascribing to God concepts derived apart from his self-disclosure. Wells in his article explains this by referring to Barth's discussion of God's power: "If we say that God's power is omnipotence, we do not merely extend our creaturely notion of power to the infinite degree and ascribe it to God. We do not know. prior to revelation, what God's power means.

Invocation of God

Since, then, Barth cannot concede that there exists good human action apart from human action *analogous* to divine action, his task becomes one of discerning which *responsive* and *analogous* human action properly expresses the Christian life. Barth is seeking a concept that will provide both the form and content for human action, and one that is both authentically human and understood in terms of grace.[22] After considering a number of concepts, Barth finally settles upon 'invocation of God' as the human action that is the first, and ground of all, *good* human action.[23]

J.B. Webster comments that "Barth settles on 'invocation' because it states most clearly the relationship of grace to responsive human action that forms the central theme of the ethics of reconciliation."[24] This enables Barth to understand authentic human action in terms of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. He sees the concept of invocation as the "epitome and common denominator of all that the gracious God expects and wants of man and of all that comes into question as man's obedience to the gracious God."[25]

Rather, we see God's power in his mighty acts [of salvation]. . . . The analogy between God's power and creaturely power, then, can be made only in faith, only within a knowledge of God's revelation." However, Wells also argues that Barth's absolute rejection of the *analogia entis* is flawed, and that Barth's own use of analogy, either the *analogia fidei* or *analogia relationis*, contains an implicit use of the *analogia entis*. See Wells, 208ff. Wells article is a good introduction to this side of Barth's theological method. For Barth's discussion of God's power see *CD*, II.1, 522ff.

[22] Colin Gunton, "Christian Life: Church Dogmatics Volume IV Part 4, Lecture Fragments (Review)," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36:3 (1983), 399.

[23] Other concepts Barth considers in his discussion are the general concept of the 'Christian life', repentance, faith, thanksgiving, and faithfulness. See *Christian Life*, 37 - 42.

[24] J.B. Webster, "The Christian in Revolt: Some Reflections on *The Christian Life*," in Biggar, ed. *Reckoning With Barth*, 124.

[25] Barth, *Christian Life*, 43.

His decision to ground human action in the concept of invocation has seven criteria. First, this action must be distinct to the human person as the partner of God in the covenant of grace established by God. Second, it is an action that must be empowered by the free grace of God. Third, as an action grounded in the divine empowering, it must also be an authentic and specifically human action. Fourth, this action must have central significance for all of the human person's other acts. "It must precede, accompany, and follow the whole of his work."[26] Fifth, in this action, the human person must refer wholly to God. Sixth, the human person must act as one who is not worthy to encounter God, and as one aware of the divine-human distinction. Seventh, the human person does this in response to, and with complete confidence in, the initiative that God has taken.[27]

All these criteria find their sufficient expression in the controlling concept of 'calling upon God.' In explicitly ethical terms, invocation is the basic meaning of every divine command and all human obedience.[28] Jüngel says Barth's understanding of invocation demands that invocation be seen as an action in the strongest sense.[29] The question, then, of what may be called good human action finds its answer in an ethic of prayer.[30] Donald K. McKim says, "The center of the Christian life is the invoking of God,

---

[26] Ibid., 42.

[27] Ibid., 42, 43.

[28] Ibid., 44. Cf. McKim, 82.

[29] Jüngel, 165.

[30] Barth, *Christian Life*, 3. Cf. Jüngel, 164. In the context of Modern formulations of the ethical question, answering the question "what should we do?" with the command to pray is expressly cautioned against by Immanuel Kant: "praying . . . is no more than a *stated wish* directed to a Being who needs no such information regarding the inner disposition of the wisher . . . [so that] nothing is accomplished by it." See I. Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper, 1960), 142, 182.

and the Lord's Prayer is the model *par excellence* of what God permits and commands of us in prayer."[31]

Barth makes a number of other significant points concerning the nature of invocation. First, this invocation "consists very simply . . . in the prayer for the Holy Spirit."[32] As a result, the spiritual life of Christians is one lived in awareness of the immediate presence of God. It is the Holy Spirit who frees believers to live this life of invocation, and in this freedom they live their spiritual lives.[33] Unfortunately, Barth does not address in detail the role of pneumatology in his understanding of prayer. Jürgen Moltmann criticizes Barth's pneumatology as being experientially reductionistic, saying that "as the subjective reality of God's self-revelation, the Holy Spirit remains entirely on God's side, so it can never be experienced by human beings at all."[34]

Second, though this life of invocation is a personal matter, it it not a *private* one. Here Barth makes appropriate use of the opening vocative of the Lord's Prayer, '*our* Father.' The community orientation of the prayer involves the church, but also extends beyond it to encompass all of those for whom Christ remains a stranger. The Christian

---

[31] McKim, 83. Barth's decision to use not only prayer, but the Lord's Prayer, is also hardly arbitrary. As is seen in the preceding chapter, Barth's decision to use the Lord's Prayer as *the* model prayer is based upon the tradition of the church as well as scriptural command.

[32] Ibid., 92.

[33] Ibid., 93. For more thorough discussion on prayer, ethics, freedom, and the Holy Spirit in Barth's thought see Barth, *The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life* trans. R.Birch Hoyle (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1938), 84ff.; Barth, *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today*, 85ff.and Philip J. Rosato, *The Spirit As Lord: The Pneumatology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), 6, 7, 28, 29, and 87 - 91.

[34] See his *The Spirit of Life* trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 6ff., 62ff., 74ff. Moltmann himself discusses the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer.

invocation of God is a "supremely social matter, publicly social, not to say political and even cosmic."[35]

Third, invocation is an integral part of the dealings between God and his human creatures. For Barth, prayer is the *subjective* or *human* factor in these dealings, and concerns what God continues to do. The cooperation between God and human beings has its *sitz-im-leben* in prayer.[36] Admitting the propriety of petitionary prayer directly implies a duality of agency, which therefore rules out any notion of divine sole causality.[37] This contrasts with the typical liberal view of petition, which is disproportionately burdened with the assumptions of rationalism. In the liberal view, the universe is conceived as a machine governed by laws of causality; "it grinds on inexorably."[38] The thought that a whispered prayer could somehow affect the course of events is considered foolish. Ironically, this rationalist argument is often supported by an appeal to *God's* laws.[39] With this in mind Barth is confident to defy the Modern view by arguing that God not only

---

[35] Ibid., 95. The idea that Christians pray for those who do not and cannot pray this prayer is a point discussed in the last chapter, and it is demonstrated there that Barth is here appropriating a Reformation idea.

[36] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 186. Cf. Jüngel, 162.

[37] Ibid. Cf. Barth, *Christian Life*, 85; and *CD* III.3, 274.

[38] Edmund P. Clowney, "A Biblical Theology of Prayer," in ed. D.A. Carson, *Teach Us to Pray: Prayer in the Bible and the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 142f.

[39] Ibid., 143. On the same page Clowney quotes a liberal preacher, who defending his rejection of a physical resurrection of Jesus, says,

> Brought up as we have been in an atmosphere charged with scientific methods and presuppositions, it is hard for us to share the physical interpretation of the [resurrection]. The God we know is not a God who reverses his laws and we find it difficult to imagine that he who decreed that dust is the beginning and end of man's material existence should in this instance reverse that declaration.

hears prayers, but answers, and that "by their invocation, he does something, something new."[40]

Invocation "is the movement in which the children bring themselves to the attention of their Father and cry to him in recollection, clearly reminding themselves that he is their Father and they are his children."[41] The relationship, then, between the children and their Father, is best understood within the context of invocation; invocation is their response to the reconciliation that has taken place in Jesus Christ. For Barth, this movement from the children to the Father, or this invocation, involves "a natural warmth and intimacy" as well. It is to the object and subject of this invocation that the discussion presently turns.

The Object of Invocation

Since 'invocation' is invocation of God, in his book *Evangelical Theology* Barth says, "Human thought and speech cannot be *about* God, but must be directed *toward* God," and "true and proper language concerning God will always be a response to God, which overtly or covertly, explicitly or implicitly, thinks and speaks of God exclusively in the second person."[42] Although Barth is here discussing the nature of theological work specifically, the principle that human speech concerning God must take the form of the

---

[40] Barth, *The Christian Life*, 103. In the same breath Barth criticizes the view of Schleiermacher, calling this theologian's understanding of prayer "the supreme and most intimate act of self-help."

[41] Ibid., 85.

[42] Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction* trans. Grover Foley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 164. Cf. Barth, *Prayer*, ed. Don E. Saliers, trans. Sara F. Terrien (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 44f, where he makes this point by moving from actual exposition of the Lord's Prayer to the vocative of address, or prayer. This move is common in this particular book. Cf. Blondel, 108.

vocative of address is one which follows from his decision to use invocation as a controlling concept for ethics. This is seen in *The Christian Life*, where he makes a similar statement:

> Father! When used in Christian thought and speech as a term for God, the word "Father" is always to be employed and understood in precisely the same sense that it has here in the introit to the Lord's Prayer, namely, as a vocative. If it is a matter of God, then seriously, properly, and strictly Christians cannot speak *about* the Father but only *to* him.[43]

In the above quotation, Barth gives more specific content to the God who is the object of invocation, namely God *the Father*. He devotes several pages of expositions on the concept of 'Father!' as he seeks to demonstrate that the *lex orandi* implies a *lex credendi* which in turn contains a *lex agendi*. His argument is that this vocative is fundamental to the theological grammar of the word, since its case specifies both the priority of God as both subject and agent, as well as human subsequence in relation to him; it retains reference to the antecedent subjectivity of God. Webster also believes that here Barth is securing a theological conviction, that this is "the form which language takes under compulsion from the divine realities which it articulates."[44] "It is invocation of the self-acting Subject-Father, and only thus is it invocation of God."[45]

As Barth concentrates his discussion around the concept of 'Father', he notes a number of important points. First, Barth regards as incontrovertible that God *is* Father apart from human attitudes about the divine: "He is it absolutely *for* them and in no sense

---

[43] Barth, *Christian Life*, 51.

[44] Webster, "The Christian in Revolt," 127. Barth even says that in regard to the Fatherhood of God that Kierkegaard is right, that subjectivity is truth. See *Christian Life*, 53.

[45] Barth, *Christian Life*, 53.

through them."[46] For Barth, the shape of Christian speech examines language from the other end, from the controls set upon it by that to which it refers.[47] Second, making the point even more strongly, Barth asserts that the concept of 'Father' gives definition to the concept of 'God', which would otherwise remain empty and ambivalent.[48] Third, Barth seeks to elucidate the meaning of the concept of God as 'Father', saying that it means "The One without whom the reality distinct from himself would not exist; through whom, however, it does exist, so that it owes to him its existence, form, and meaning, and therefore its unity and interconnection."[49] Fourth, it follows naturally from this then, that if all reality apart from God the Father exists because of God, all reality including human persons are dependent upon God the Father.[50] Barth's fifth and final powerful move in his description of the vocative, is to secure the preceding deliberations upon Christological grounds. It is Jesus Christ who reveals God *as Father*. Believers venture through him to cry, "Abba, Father", and, "As they call upon him as such according to the permission, command, and order of Jesus Christ, God the Father in his nature and existence comes before them unmistakably and irrefutably."[51] The invocation of God as Father is also

---

[46] Ibid., 52. Cf. *Prayer*, 45f.; *Dogmatics in Outline*, 42 - 45, and esp. p. 42. where he says that "The One God is by nature and in eternity the Father"; Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 178; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology: Collected Essays* trans. George H. Kehm (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), vol. 1, 214 and n. 3; and for a contrasting and critical view see Mary Daley, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), esp. p. 105.

[47] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 178.

[48] Barth, *Christian Life*, 53. Cf. McKim, 85.

[49] Ibid., 56.

[50] Ibid., 57. Here, Barth relates the reality of this dependence to Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence", distinguishing his understanding from Schleiermacher's by drawing attention to the contrast between his personal conception of God with Schleiermacher's impersonal "neuter" or "It."

[51] Ibid., 63. Cf. McKim, 86.

based upon the *model* given in Jesus Christ and, by teaching his disciples to pray as such, "He took them up into the movement of his own prayer."

> This imperative of Jesus Christ is thus the basis of the vocative "Father" in the thought and speech of Christians and hence also of their knowledge of the nature and existence of this God, ... Thus our freedom to call upon God as Father is grounded in the way in which Jesus Christ called upon him, and still does so, when he turns to him. Not out of the depths of some capability of our nature, not in the exercise of such a capability, but in the power of the grace displayed and effective in Jesus Christ, in the power of the fellowship which God in the freedom of his love has set up between himself and us, within the new order of being instituted in him, that imperative rings out and the vocative "Father" becomes possible, necessary, and actual in human thought and speech as the basic act of human obedience.[52]

The Subject of Invocation

Barth makes three specific points regarding the subject of invocation. First, as Blondel notes, for Barth the subject of the invocation is not the individual believer, but the children of the Father, the community, or the church.[53] Thus, "The Christian can only call upon *our* Father as God even when he finds himself in the greatest solitude."[54] For Barth, it is also the case that on this side of the eschaton, only Christians can legitimately address God as Father. But, it is also important to point out that for Barth when Christians pray they include all non-Christians in their prayer. He himself says that, "These people cannot cry 'Our Father' without including those with whom they do not live as yet in this union of knowledge and confession because Jesus Christ is still a stranger to them."[55]

---

[52] Ibid., 66.

[53] Blondel, 108.

[54] Barth, *Christian Life*, 82.

[55] McKim, 86. Cf. Barth, *Christian Life*, 82ff, and 100f.; and *Prayer*, 44.

Second, Barth continues to assert the priority of grace in the relationship between 'the Father and his children':

> As a fish can breathe only in water and not on dry land, so Christians can live only as they drink from the fresh spring of the grace which is not natural, which cannot be won, but in which it pleases the Father continually to love his people and to call them his children.[56]

At the root of human agency, which according to Barth takes the form of the community, is the gift of grace. This gift is found in Jesus Christ: "In him! Not outside him! Not without him!"[57]

This second point leads to a third concerning the standing of these children before God the Father within the context of this invocation, and this is a point that troubles some of Barth's critics. Barth says that when believers approach God, making use of their Christ-centered freedom to do so, they must always do so as "inept, inexperienced, unskilled, and immature" children.[58] Christians always remain beginners, as those totally unprepared for the encounter between themselves and God, because otherwise such an encounter is not dependent upon grace. It is here that we come closer to Barth's concern, with his insistence that there can be no mastery or virtuosity when it comes to the spiritual life for the Christian life is neither routine nor art. As Clowney comments, "The Bible does not present an art of prayer; it presents the God of prayer" and more importantly, "Prayer is not introduced as a separate spiritual discipline: it rises as man's answer to God's address."[59] This clearly echoes Barth's view. Barth levels specific criticism at not only

---

[56] Barth, *Christian Life*, 78.

[57] Ibid., 75.

[58] Ibid., 79.

[59] Clowney, 136.

liturgical worship, but at techniques for spiritual formation, citing those found with the Roman Catholic tradition especially.[60]

Barth's concern, to emphasize the priority of grace over human capabilities, does not necessarily mitigate the necessity of Christian maturity. Instead, Barth is calling attention to the need for humility and dependence on behalf of those, however mature, who come before God.[61] This emphasis on grace over any human capacity is also seen in his discussion of thanksgiving and praise. As he argues, "Their thanksgiving and praise can only be that of those who have total need of him and his further free gifts."[62] Consequently, it is because of this very emphasis that Barth is ultimately led to conclude that prayer is primarily petition. He finds confirmation of his view in the Lord's Prayer, which he describes as "pure petition."[63] Barth's discussion of the first two petitions of the Lord's Prayer in *The Christian Life* are central to that understanding.

---

[60] Barth, *Christian Life*, 79.

[61] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 184. This point is also clearly made by Joachim Jeremias. See his *The Prayers of Jesus* trans. John Bowden, Christoph Burchard, and John Reumann (London: SCM Press, 1967), 65. Charles C. Dickinson criticizes Barth on this point, but he seems to misunderstand him here. See C.C. Dickinson, "Church Dogmatics IV/4," in H.-Martin Rumscheidt, ed. *Karl Barth in Re-View: Posthumous Works Reviewed and Assessed* (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1981), 49ff. It is arguable that in Christian terms, the recognition of our unworthiness, and lack of skill, is an indication *of* spiritual maturity, rather than vice-versa.

[62] Barth, *Christian Life*, 88.

[63] Ibid., 89. Cf. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, s.v. "Prayer," by Donald Bloesch and *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, s.v. "Prayer," by Dennis L. Okholm, where they each make this same point. Also see Okholm, "Petitionary Prayer and Providence in Two Contemporary Theological Perspectives: Karl Barth and Norman Pittenger." (PhD Diss. Princeton Theological Seminary, 1986). However, even Schleiermacher, upon surveying the biblical evidence in the gospels, characterized Christian prayer as petition in the name of Jesus. See his *The Christian Faith* eds. H.R. MacKintosh and J.S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 668ff. Cf. also Friedrich Heiler, *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion* trans. and ed. Samuel McComb (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 17, where he says that "the heart of all prayer is petition." Heiler's volume is considered a classic in the literature on prayer.

A Zealous Prayer for God's Honor

As Barth says, Christians live in between the times, under the knowledge of the self-declaration of God whose beginning has already taken place and whose consummation is still to come. As a result, they also live with an unfulfilled desire that results in suffering. This desire is, in Barth's words, "a definite passion," and the suffering Christians undergo is the consequence of God being so well known, yet so unknown or unsanctified in the world, the church, and above all in themselves.[64] This passion is also a very specific one, and Barth relates it directly to the "election and calling to active knowledge and attestation of the work and word of God."[65] Barth also recognizes that this special Christian passion is one among several by which the Christian, as an individual in the world, is affected. He also makes it clear that these other passions have their own validity and legitimacy, but that they need to be seen in the light of this special passion, a passion Barth describes as "Zeal for the Honor of God."[66] In Jüngel's words, here Barth draws our attention to "the spiritual sting in and spur to all worldly action by the Christian."[67]

God's name is desecrated because human side of the situation is one of ambivalence and ambiguity.[68] In explaining Barth on this point Jan Milic Lochman says,

---

[64] Ibid., 111.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 112.

[67] Jüngel, 163.

"The most common and basic form of this desecration is the notorious ambivalence with which we who are already addressed and sought and saved by God nevertheless take so little account of God our Creator and Savior in our lives."[69] Therefore, as Webster explains:

> He expounds the petition as a cry to God to put to an end the regime of ambiguity, hesitancy, and vacillation in respect of God which characterizes the public history of the world, the life of the Christian community, and above all the personal life of the Christian believer.[70]

First, in the world, God is known because he is its Creator, but at the same time he is denied by both theoretical atheism and "religion." Barth sees religion as worse than atheism because it thinks it can find a substitute for the lack of access to 'divinity.' In either case, what we have is what Barth calls the "nostrification of God", or the attempt to make God our own object.[71] Second, God is unknown or denied in the church, which is worse because there the Word of God is known and therefore ought to have priority. The church betrays God in two ways. Either the church preaches *its* truth, or *its* grace, considering itself a continuation of the incarnation, or it compromises the truth by accommodating itself to the world. Third, the ambiguity of faith and ignorance is the problem of the individual believer. The difficulties of the world and of the church are the individual Christian's problems also.[72]

---

[68] Barth, *Christian Life*, 115.

[69] Jan Milic Lochman, *The Lord's Prayer* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 38.

[70] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 192. Cf. McKim, 88.

[71] Blondel, 109. Cf. Barth, *Christian Life*, 230.

[72] Barth, *Christian Life*, 116 - 153. Cf. Lochman, 39ff.

This God for whose honor Christians are to have zeal, Barth argues, is a God both known and unknown. Thus, there are two sides to the situation. This difference between the ignorance and knowledge concerning God revolves around Barth's understanding of the term knowledge. In Barthian terms, 'objective knowledge' is best thought of as the revelation of the truth and reality of God in relation to the creaturely world. This knowledge of God is independent of the subjective apprehension or appropriation of that revelation by human beings. Webster clarifies the matter in the following way:

> [Barth has] a prior conviction that God's act of self-manifestation is noetically fundamental and has priority over the functioning or malfunctioning of human cognition or consciousness. Thus, Barth argues that, in all three spheres, the objective knowledge of God has cognitive precedence over the absence of its realisation in subjective acts of knowing.[73]

What then, does this mean for the petition, "hallowed be thy name"? In the previous chapter, one aspect of Barth's exposition of the Lord's Prayer to which much attention was drawn, is his conviction that this petition has already been answered in Jesus Christ. The hallowing of God's name has occurred definitively in him. Subsequently, because Christians live "in between the times" -- the present and the eschaton -- this is a prayer that God will establish in the subjective realm that which is already secured in the person of Jesus Christ. Herein lies the eschatological dimension of the petition, that there will come a day when the dialectic between the now and not yet will be definitively overcome in Jesus Christ.[74] As such it is a prayer that is part of the human invocation of God, and one that requests that which only God himself can grant.[75]

---

[73] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 193.

[74] McKim, 89.

[75] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 158. Cf. Barth, *Christian Life*, 156, 158, and 167.

In discussing the nature of human agency in relation to this petition, Barth uses the language of correspondence, which both limits and characterizes human action.[76] Another means of understanding this is the concept of analogy (discussed at greater length earlier), which is descriptive of the nature of good human action *as such.* Barth is clearly interested in preserving both the priority of God's grace and activity in Christ, *and* the integrity of human action. At the same time, it is also clear that Barth views the integrity of human action as something to be explained by the priority of God's action. Human action has integrity when it is a response to God's initiative.

Along with asking God to hallow his name, Barth argues that there needs to be another corresponding human action. As those in between the times and as those in Christ who have freedom as the children of the Father, Christians are not absolved of personal responsibility since the law of prayer remains the law of action. Christians cannot come to terms and be content with the current state of things because they cannot be content with ambiguity and ambivalence or with the present desecration of God's name. There needs to be a specific *human* movement that corresponds to the first petition, otherwise the prayer becomes empty. As Barth says, "If their thoughts and words and works were not drawn into this forward movement toward the day, if their lives were unaffected by the petition," then they would not be obedient.[77]

The Christian's task takes the form of a revolt and resistance against the regime of ambivalence, and this task is analogous to the act of God, who is the only one who can hallow his name. This leads Barth to conclude that the task of the Christian community is

---

[76] Barth, *Christian Life*, 175.

[77] Ibid., 169, 180.

to give precedence to the Word of God.[78] For him, it is "the precedence of the Word of God" that is at stake "in the obedience that is to be rendered in agreement with the first petition of the Lord's Prayer."[79] By the Word of God, Barth intends, of course, the "Word of the living Jesus Christ" which in the power of the Spirit is made known to the world, the church, and to Christians as members of the eschatological community. It is this Word that forms the content of the definite and special passion of Christians.

This Word points beyond the present order of vacillation and ambivalence. In Barth's words, "It is . . . the firmly established and intrinsically clear promise of the morning without evening, the truth without contradiction, righteousness without resistance, peace without end."[80] When the Word of God takes precedence, this is a work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, even with the Christian's witness the testifying and verifying by God himself is needed. In this sense, this petition is a prayer for the Holy Spirit.[81]

In dealing with the precedence of the Word of God, Barth narrows in on the individual Christian, and he does so from three angles. First, the personal life of the individual Christian who exists within the tension and contradiction of being both righteous and a sinner. The believer, then, can neither be determined wholly by ignorance of God (intentionally or practically), nor by the knowledge of God. Human action always

---

[78] Blondel, 110.

[79] Barth, *Christian Life*, 175.

[80] Ibid., 177.

[81] Ibid., 181.

occurs between these two opposing poles, and "it is here that God's Word reaches and touches and frees and claims the Christian."[82]

Second, the Christian is not alone, for as a Christian he or she necessarily exists in the church and, in this context, too, there exists the same contradiction as in the Christian's own personal life. Thus, the church is neither Babylon, nor is the church infallible or always holy and pure. The prayer of the Christian is in this case the prayer for the new Jerusalem.

Third, the Christian is also a citizen and child of the world, which means that the Christian is therefore responsible for the world. Barth asserts that "conversion to humble but courageous action in the innermost circle [the individual Christian] is continually commanded of all Christians precisely with a view to their accreditation in the outermost circle [the world]."[83] As Blondel comments, "The world needs neither monasticism nor crusade; in both of them the Church overestimates herself and underestimates the life and the good of the world."[84]

The Word of God, then, is to give the lives of Christians a very specific character, one accessible to both their fellow Christians and to non-Christians. The Word needs to impinge upon the problems and issues that confront people *as people*, and it may mean that they will have to offer an explanation for how this Word does impinge upon their lives. Such a witness is made effective by God alone.[85] And as the evil which rules the

---

[82] Ibid., 185.

[83] Ibid., 195.

[84] Blondel, 111.

[85] Barth, *Christian Life*, 202.

world takes shape in the ambivalence between ignorance and knowledge of God, Christians pray that the name of God would be known, recognized, and made holy, and that God would once and for all put an end to this vacillation between ignorance and knowledge.[86]

The Struggle for Human Righteousness

Barth begins his exposition on the second petition of the prayer in *The Christian Life* by saying that "the genuineness of human zeal for God's honor needs testing."[87] The character of the Christian's zeal as obedience needs confirmation, and such obedience finds this confirmation in the human struggle for righteousness. In the case of the second petition, the nature of Christian action becomes one of revolt, uprising, and entry into a conflict. In biblical terms, this is the "good fight of faith."[88]

Just as the apostle Paul distinguishes between "flesh and blood" and "principalities and powers"[89], Barth indicates clearly that the revolt demanded of Christians is not one directed against people. In fact, quite the opposite is the case; Christians fight *for* all people and they fight against the disorder "which both inwardly and outwardly controls and penetrates and poisons and disrupts all human relations and interconnections."[90] This disorder arises because human beings do not follow the order given by God, that of life in obedience to him, which includes the corresponding form of human fellowship. Human sin

---

[86] Ibid., 203.

[87] Ibid., 205.

[88] I Tim. 6: 12.

[89] Eph. 6: 12.

[90] Barth, *Christian Life*, 211.

is the root of all disorder and, Barth also argues that, where human beings are against God, they are automatically against other human beings. Webster describes Barth's understanding of sin as "not only bold disobedience, but also the impoverishment and belittlement of the sinner, the sinner's reduction to inactivity . . . . [T]he sinner seeks an identity in abstraction from, and opposition to, God's good order."[91] The sin of Adam has within it the sin of Cain and, it is this twofold history that is repeated throughout world history. This disorder manifests itself in what Barth calls "The Lordless Powers" and this is the evil Christians call upon God to set aside in the second petition.

These 'lordless powers' manifest themselves: as spiritual forces and *chthonic* forces. Under the first category Barth places political absolutisms, ideologies in which human ideals become idols, and the love of money, or mammon. The second category, *chthonic* forces, are those natural forces over which humans were given dominion in Gen. 1: 28. Things such as technology, sports, pleasures, and transportation, all fall under this category. In breaking free from God, however, these *chthonic* forces slip free from their control, and instead become forces which "autonomously rumble and work and roll and roar and clatter outside him, without him, past him, and over him."[92] As McKim says, these forces rob people of freedom, while under the pretext of providing such freedom.[93] It is against such 'lordless powers' that the Christian prays in the second petition.

---

[91] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 202.

[92] Ibid., 228. Cf. Lochman, 59f.

[93] McKim, 92. Barth, *Christian Life*, 232.

For Barth, the cry of the second petition, "thy kingdom come", is a cry that this very disorder, that these lordless powers, would once and for all be eliminated and abolished. Fortunately, that such a prayer is uttered is itself evidence of another kingdom beside and above the kingdom of disorder. In this prayer the limit of the lordless powers, the kingdom of disorder, is clearly seen, and with this prayer something new is sought.[94] As a result, the petition has a specifically eschatological content and character.[95] The concern of the second petition is a concern for the coming of God himself:

> As God's kingdom is God himself, so God is his kingdom in his own coming: his coming to meet man, to meet the whole of the reality distinct from himself. The second petition looks toward this special dynamic reality, to the coming of God's kingdom as the coming God himself, to its breaking forth and breaking through and breaking into the place where those who pray the petition are, to encounter with them and therefore with all creation.[96]

The coming of the kingdom is God's decisive act and the prayer for this kingdom presupposes that the kingdom is not within the horizon of possibilities which are realised through human action.[97] In ethical terms, this means that the human work of revolting against disorder is itself enclosed within the prior work of God.[98] As in the case of the hallowing of God's name, then, in analogy to the establishment of the kingdom by God eschatologically, Christians struggle on earth for *human* righteousness by hurrying

---

[94] Barth, *Christian Life*, 235.

[95] McKim, 93.

[96] Barth, *Christian Life*, 236.

[97] For a view more closely aligned with the liberal tradition, see Patricia Wilson-Kastner, "Pastoral Theology and the Lord's Prayer: We Dare to Pray," in ed. Daniel L. Migliore, *The Lord's Prayer: Perspectives for Reclaiming Christian Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 116f.

[98] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 237, 240.

towards that future.[99] As people living in between the times and, since the kingdom has been *proleptically* accomplished in Jesus Christ, Christian action takes on an analogous form to that of God's decisive action. The prayer needs to reflect what it prays for, namely, the sovereignty of God.

Since the prayer *has* already been accomplished in the history of Jesus Christ, Barth argues that it is in this accomplished event that the prayer has its basis. It is a prayer for the consummation or ultimate manifestation of what is already the case. Thus, Barth answers the question, "What is meant . . . by the presence of the kingdom . . . [and] by its coming?", by pointing to the history of Jesus Christ.[100] As in the first century, so now, Christians recollect the event of Christ's coming as well as wait in expectation for the *parousia*. That this is the case, that believers look forward *because* they look backward, Barth argues, is initially because of the very presence of Jesus himself after the resurrection, or today through the gift and work of the Holy Spirit:

> A purely abstract and exclusive looking back to his previous history and to the coming of God's kingdom in it was obviously now forbidden to the disciples, and made completely impossible, by this his appearance and their encounter with him. . . . Looking back to his previous history, to the *then* of the coming of God's kingdom, had to become at once looking forward to his future. . . . It had and has to be said of the Easter history -- this is the self-evident presupposition of the whole of the New Testament -- that he *comes* who came, Jesus the Lord, and that it *comes* that came, the Kingdom of God.[101]

What this means, then, is that the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is identical to the prayer, "come, Lord Jesus." And it is the prayer of Christians, this calling upon God, that

---

[99] Jüngel, 163.

[100] Barth, *Christian Life*, 248f.

[101] Ibid., 255.

is the true and essential thing about the obedience to which they are called and, as such, it surpasses all other possibilities for human revolt against unrighteousness. Yet, even though human action outside of prayer is not as effective as prayer, Barth does not consider this to be a small thing. Rather, Barth exclaims, "If only they knew what a task and what power were entrusted to them when as the children of God they are freed and summoned to hasten to their Father with this prayer to him!"[102]

Barth also argues that praying this prayer, when done with seriousness and sincerity, means that believers are themselves being transformed and "oriented to the point to which they look with the petition." Even this is God's activity, and the heart of the Christian ethic is such that those who are freed and commanded to pray "thy kingdom come" are also freed to live with a view to the coming of the kingdom. As Webster comments, "Prayer is not mere consent, not only a calling upon the strengths of another, but that which actualises the will and energies of the Christian and sets them upon a specific path."[103]

Key Points in *The Christian Life*

Throughout *The Christian Life* Barth is wrestling with the relation between divine action, and the human action which forms the response to God's initiative in Jesus Christ. First, he answers the problematical question with the concept of analogy, preserving the distinction between God and his human creatures. In the context of the second petition,

---

[102] Ibid., 261.

[103] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 211.

Christians can never claim to be able to establish any sort of divine righteousness -- such a presumption is arrogant and foolhardy on Barthian terms.[104] His concern is to construct an account of the relation of God and humanity which refuses the antithetical alternatives of autonomy and heteronomy.[105]

Second, this analogy results in an ethic based upon prayer, and any human righteousness which corresponds to divine righteousness will be something which emerges from this Christian prayer: "The action of those who pray for the coming of God's kingdom . . . will be *kingdom-like*."[106] However, it is kingdom-like in its concern for people, and so while they cannot do for these people what God has done, they are *witnesses* to who this God is and what he has done in Christ. The action corresponds to their calling upon God.

> In so praying they may not and cannot abandon man, man himself in spite of all his disguises. They will always see in him a fellow man and not just a future brother, and they must treat him as such. They must assist him in full commitment in this time between the times and thus bring him the promise and be for him credible witnesses that God, like themselves, has not abandoned him and will not do so, that his kingdom, the kingdom of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has come and will come even for him, that Jesus Christ is his hope too.[107]

---

[104] Barth, *Christian Life*, 264.

[105] Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 212.

[106] Barth, *Christian Life*, 266. Pannenberg says something similar about the relation between prayer and ethics, or between love of God and love of neighbour, when he says that prayer facilitates this relation: "For by prayer love of neighbor is integrated into believers' relation to God as participation in his love for the world. Prayer prevents the practice of neighborly love from becoming simply our own moral work." See his *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 205. This encompasses two of Barth's fundamental convictions: first, that there is an intimate relation between prayer and ethics, and second, that prayer is not only *prior* to any other good human action, but actually determines the goodness of that action.

[107] Ibid., 271.

Finally, Donald McKim summarizes Barth's exposition of the Lord's Prayer in *The Christian Life* by way of three themes, and these themes mirror the threefold division of the book itself. First, Barth shows *the confidence of the Christian life*. Jesus is the fulfullment of the covenant of grace, and in him believers gain access to the Father, who allows no prayer to remain answered. This is possible because Christians pray in the name of Christ, in whom this prayer has already been answered. That Christians receive care and are heard by their heavenly Father is the source of confidence for facing life.

Second, Barth locates *the motivation of the Christian life* in the Christian's passion for God's honor. If the law of prayer is the law of action, then the first petition takes upon added significance. As McKim asks, "What greater impetus or keener incentive can there be than the desire for the name of God and the Word of God to take precedence in all the arenas of life?"

Third, Barth also describes *the task of the Christian life* as one of revolt against lordless powers, a revolt in which Christians' allegiance must always remain to Christ: Christians live always in view of the coming kingdom and their interim struggle must be seen in that light.[108] This task is part of the more comprehensive task of God -- the establishment of God's kingdom in all its power and glory, when ultimately "Jesus is victor!"[109]

---

[108] McKim, 97 - 99.

[109] Barth, *Christian Life*, 259.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

As the most influential theologian of the twentieth-century, Karl Barth is a figure who needs to be reckoned with and one who deserves to be heard. Particularly when he is the only major twentieth-century Protestant dogmatic theologian to allocate space to the subject of prayer, it is incumbent upon those interested in Barth generally, or the concept of prayer specifically, to pay attention to what he has to say.[1] As Daniel Migliore comments, "The Lord's Prayer invites and requires fresh interpretation in every age."[2] Barth gives such an interpretation. A second reason Barth's understanding of prayer, or the Lord's Prayer specifically, demands consideration is that there the fundamental methodological decision in his theology finds its most acute expression.[3]

Summary of Research

Chapter one considered Barth's significance as a theologian, and one reason for this significance mentioned above, is that he is the only twentieth-century theologian to approach prayer as a topic of dogmatic theology. Various views of prayer, both at the popular and academic level, are presented to paint an albeit brief picture of the landscape

---

[1] Perry LeFevre, *Understandings of Prayer* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 28.

[2] Daniel L. Migliore, "Preface," in ed. D.L. Migliore, *The Lord's Prayer: Perspectives for Reclaiming Christian Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 2.

[3] Eberhard Jüngel, "Invocation of God as the Ethical Ground of Christian Action: Introductory remarks on the posthumous fragments of Karl Barth's ethics of the doctrine of reconciliation," in Jüngel, *Theological Essays* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 155, 165.

against which this present study has been conducted. As Bloesch points out in his *Struggle of Prayer*[4], prayer has been and is understood in quite divergent ways (in modern times), especially when compared to the biblical model.[5] The convergence of Barth's interest in prayer, and his giving the Lord's Prayer a central role in determining the nature of Christian prayer, more than justifies the present study.

Chapter two gave an account of Barth's theological development, highlighting both key events in this development and the historical context from which they emerged. Because Barth's interest in prayer is tied directly to his theological method, the question of how he came to adopt this method is of great relevance. It reveals the backdrop against which all Barth's writings need to be understood and assessed from, including his understanding of the Lord's Prayer.[6]

Chapter three discussed the importance and meaning of the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer in Barth's thought. It also took into account that Barth's decision to make the Lord's Prayer a model is not a decision made in isolation. Rather, it is a decision based upon church tradition, reaching back to the early fathers like Tertullian and Augustine, through the Middles Ages with Aquinas, the Reformation with Luther, Calvin, and the Heidelberg Catechism, and up to the Modern period with theologians such as Harnack and Ritschl. This chapter argued that Barth's exposition is a repristination of classic

---

[4] (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1988).

[5] Bloesch, 14ff.

[6] This is especially true since even at an early stage in his career Barth exhibited an interest in the Lord's Prayer. See above, p. 25, n. 36.

Reformation thought, although not an uncritical one, for he corrects what he sees as an inadequate eschatology on the part of the Reformers.

It is evident that for Barth the Lord's Prayer is a model prayer in the priorities it sets for the relation between God and human beings in prayer. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the bare repetition of words. Barth emphasized that while it is a model, prayer ought to "arise from the freedom of the heart."[7] For him, the Lord's Prayer demonstrates that God's glory is the chief focus of Christian prayer, especially in the pattern set by the petitions themselves. The Lord's Prayer itself, according to Barth, models his assertion that prayer is "decisively petition." Prayer modeled on the Lord's Prayer is also prayer to God *as Father* and prayer that is certain of a hearing. The certainty of prayer lies in the fact that the prayer has been definitively answered in Jesus Christ. In Barth's judgment, in Christ, God's cause has taken on human flesh and the believer's cause has been taken into God himself.[8]

Chapter four ultimately remains incomplete, because the subject of attention there Barth never lived to finish, an exposition of the Lord's Prayer as a model for the Christian life. In *The Christian Life*, Barth argues that good Christian action first takes place as an analogous response to God's initiative described in the terms of invocation, or a calling upon God. He resists the tendency to provide precise guidelines or specific directions for ethics and he does so because of his concern to preserve both the freedom of God and the human person in the encounter they have with one another. Ethics provides a way of

---

[7] *Prayer* 2nd ed. trans. Sara F. Terrien, ed. Don E. Saliers (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 26.

[8] *CD*, III.4, 108.

posing the question, "What ought I do?", as opposed to laying out in straightforward terms any exact answers to this question. As mentioned previously, for Barth, outlining ethics as an ethics of prayer preserves the priority of God's grace and determines the nature of the human response to that grace. In addition to prayer itself, good human action consists of giving precedence to the Word of God and in the analogous action of witnessing to what God has done in Christ, so that those for whom Jesus is still a stranger will know that this Jesus "is their hope too."

Critical Issues

To this point, this thesis has not wrestled in detail with any problems which emerge from Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer; this is the task to which this thesis now turns. The first of these difficulties involves Barth's adamant assertion that prayer is decisively petition. This is a stance precipitated by Barth's emphasis on the priority of the grace of God for human beings are always only recipients of God's grace and always need to approach him with open and empty hands.[9] This position is strengthened in Barth's view by the nature of the Lord's Prayer as a "string of petitions."[10] Since this prayer is the paradigm by which all prayer must be modeled, then prayer, by implication, must be definitively petition. Shapiro criticizes Barth's assertion that prayer is decisively petition, by noting that either this is a tautologous statement or a reasoned argument. In other

---

[9] Barth, *CD*, III.4, 97; *Christian Life*, 88.

[10] In distinction to this, Albrecht Ritschl argued that all the petitions in the Lord's Prayer are embraced in the address to God as Father and therefore the motif of thanksgiving predominates. See his *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* trans. H.R. MacKintosh and A.B. Macauley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900), 643, 644. Pannenberg asks if this is not an overstatement. See his *Systematic Theology* trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), Vol. 3, 207.

words, either there is no distinction between prayer and petition -- which of necessity means that other forms of prayer be understood as somehow being petition -- or it is an inference from Barth's other presuppositions regarding the relation between the divine and human subject.[11]

However, Donald Bloesch says, "In the Bible petition and intercession are primary," adding, "The petitionary element is present in all forms of prayer."[12] But if that is the case, what about other forms of prayer such as thanksgiving? Barth sees thanksgiving as the *root* of prayer and he would also contend that petition is somehow present in all forms of prayer. This point regarding thanksgiving is noted by other scholars

---

[11] Lou Shapiro, "Karl Barth's Understanding of Prayer," *Crux* 24:1 (1988), 31. Cf. Han Chul-Ha, "Belief and Unbelief in Prayer: A Comparison Between Calvin and Barth," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 9:8 (1985), 349. Here Chul-Ha criticizes Barth on the grounds that in making prayer decisively petition, and in asserting that we need to approach God for "everything" and not only "something", that the logical outcome of such an position is a God who remains outside the sphere of the particular. However, Barth is asserting, in a rather pauline fashion (Phil. 4: 6), the need for believers to approach God with *all* of our concerns, and is realizing the utter human dependence of human beings upon the providence of God in *all* spheres of life. In fact, if one were to make the statement that believers ought to pray for this concern and not for that, then does not this position fall prey more easily to the criticism Chul-Ha hurls at Barth? While Barth's understanding of prayer as primarily petition may be contested on other grounds, this understanding is impervious to Chul-Ha's critique.

[12] See *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, s.v. "Prayer," by Donald Bloesch, and *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, s.v. "Prayer," by Dennis L. Okholm, where they both make this same point. Both Bloesch and Okholm are probably influenced by Barth. This is evidenced in Bloesch's *Struggle of Prayer*, where there are several references to Barth (p. 175). Also see Okholm, "Petitionary Prayer and Providence in Two Contemporary Theological Perspectives: Karl Barth and Norman Pittenger." (PhD Diss. Princeton Theological Seminary, 1986). However, even Schleiermacher, upon surveying the biblical evidence in the gospels, characterized Christian prayer as petition in the name of Jesus. See his *The Christian Faith* eds. H.R. MacKintosh and J.S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 668ff. Cf. also Friedrich Heiler, *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion* trans. and ed. Samuel McComb (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 17, where he says that "The heart of all prayer is petition." Heiler's volume is considered a classic in the literature on prayer. Edmund Clowney says that "prayer and petition are nearly synonymous." See Clowney, "A Biblical Theology of Prayer," in ed. D.A. Carson, *Teach Us To Pray: Prayer in the Bible and the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990) 151.

and theologians.[13] Chul-Ha also rightly notices that Barth's placing of petition at the center of prayer is the continuing of a Reformation tradition, especially of Calvin.[14]

Another important factor regarding this issue is the background against which Barth made this assertion. Since 1900, biblical scholarship became increasingly uncomfortable with the concept of the supernatural and, specifically of a God who responds to prayer. Such scholarship has resulted in the erosion of the underpinnings of the importance and efficacy of petitionary prayer.[15]

Within the stream of Protestant Liberalism, the value of petitionary prayer has also been either devalued or radically reinterpreted, so that prayer is never seen as having an *effect* upon the will or activity of God.[16] In Patricia Wilson-Kastner's words, "A great deal of Enlightenment Christianity reduced prayer to an exercise of worship in which we

---

[13] Oscar Cullmann also notes that petitionary prayer *presupposes* thanksgiving. See his *Prayer in the New Testament* trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 10. Wolfhart Pannenberg says that "we can deal with petitionary prayer only on the basis of thanksgiving and adoration." See his *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, 208.

[14] Chul-Ha, 348.

[15] *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, s.v. "Prayer," by W.B. Hunter.

[16] Cullmann, 10ff. Among the figures Cullmann cites are Schleiermacher and Ritschl. He also quotes Martin Kahler: "On those Christians who merely want to voice thanksgiving rather than intercession, we simply pass the verdict of the one who knows mens hearts: the Pharisee gives thanks, the publican prays." See Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* eds. H.R. MacKintosh and J.S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 671f., and Albrecht Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion* (1881), in A.T. Swing, *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl* (London, 1901), 265ff., as cited in Cullmann. Here Ritschl says,

> In the concept of prayer as a whole, petition and thanksgiving are not equal parts. For otherwise the error would be encouraged that self-seeking petition may serve as justifiable worship of God, and that one has to return thanks to God only when one's petitions are heard. Instead prayer is represented as a whole and under all circumstances as thanksgiving, praise and recognition and worship of God.

articulate noble sentiments about God and virtue to each other."[17] Barth, then, is also responding directly to this tendency in Protestant Liberalism. For example, Schleiermacher's "presupposition is that there can be no relation of interaction between creature and Creator."[18] Moreover, Schleiermacher also argues that "it [is] . . . a mark of greater and more genuine piety when this entreating kind of prayer is only seldom used by us." For Schleiermacher, using this kind of prayer mean does not mean it is effective.[19]

Perhaps Barth's position regarding petition could have been tempered with more balance for there is some substance to Shapiro's criticism. To Barth's credit, it is important that he did emphasis the *real* value of petitionary prayer, that prayer is something to which God *does* respond, and that prayer changes things. Even if Barth's description of prayer in this case is to some degree biblically unbalanced, his view of God as one who calls his people to participate through prayer is not. Yet, it is also significant that many other theologians and biblical scholars make the same point about prayer as petition, and to that extent Barth can be seen as simply giving a fuller theological explanation to something observed by others. More broadly, Barth's insistence on the nature of prayer as petition attests to the entire event of salvation, because here the human subject can invoke God not only because this God has drawn near to humanity but

---

[17] See her essay, "Pastoral Theology and the Lord's Prayer: We Dare to Pray," in ed. Migliore, *The Lord's Prayer*, 118.

[18] F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* eds. H.R. Macintosh and J.S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 673.

[19] Schleiermacher, *Selected Sermons* trans. Mary F. Wilson (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1890), 43-50.

because this God has lifted humanity to himself.[20] Christian prayer is nothing less than drawing near to the God who himself has drawn so near to humanity in Christ, with the intention that God should give all that is necessary.[21]

The second problem is that of Barth's notion of divine command as the circle within which ethical imperatives are heard and received.[22] There are two main reasons why this notion of God's command is challenged. The first is that "it seems to betoken a moment of essentially private revelation."[23] (That Barth uses the language of event and encounter to describe this, betraying the residual influence of existentialist occasionalism, adds to this difficulty.[24]) This is the objection that Barth's thinking on this matter is essentially fideistic, or is susceptible of neither rational justification nor of rational

---

[20] There are three inter-related influences that led Barth to the emphasis on prayer as petition: the Lord's Prayer is a series of petitions, the Reformed tradition also treats prayer as petition, and the emphasis upon God's grace in Barth's own theology.

[21] See Frances Rice McCormick, "Sabbath Rest: A Theological Imperative According to Karl Barth," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62 (1994), 544. Cf. Barth, *CD*, III.3, 266-274.

[22] For a full-length and detailed study of the concept of command in Barth's ethics see, Yong Gil Maeng, "The Command of God: A study of Karl Barth's Theological Ethics" (PhD Diss. Emory University, 1974).

[23] Nigel Biggar, "Hearing God's Command and Thinking about What's Right: With and Beyond Barth," in ed. Nigel Biggar, *Reckoning With Barth Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth's Birth* (London: Mowbray, 1988), 103.

[24] This is one criticism cited by William M. Longsworth, "Theological Foundations for Ethics (Review)," *Quarterly Review* 3 (1983), 98f. First, the critique that Barth's theology is influenced by existentialism is a much broader criticism than this thesis can possibly deal with. Second, to locate a theologian's theological scheme in a philosophical influence is not automatically to condemn it. However, this being said, it is possible to view Barth's concepts of invocation, the event of encounter in which ethical directives are received, the antecedent subjectivity of God the Father, and the necessity and priority of the vocative of address in speaking of God as Father, as all influenced by his existentialist influence. Other ideas of Barth's, though, such as prayer as decisively petition, the ordering of Christian prayer according to the Lord's Prayer, the notion that prayer and ethics are connected, all have strong precedence in the history of the Christian tradition. Consequently, even if one evaluates the existentialist influence as being negative, this does not necessarily result in having to jettison all of Barth's understanding of prayer. This would be the theological equivalent of "throwing the baby out with the bath water."

criticism. Biggar argues that such an interpretation stems from a selective reading of Barth, for Barth does not mean that hearing God's command involves "a kind of direct and particular inspiration and guidance."[25] Rather, it needs to be stressed that Barth's understanding of the divine command cannot be separated from his doctrine of the Word of God and its relation to scripture. God's command is the Word of God in imperative form, and the hearing of the Word must also occur within the community of the church.[26] Again, it is vital to remember that, for Barth, prayer involves an "us." Given the close connection between prayer and ethics in his thought, this "us" also applies to his understanding of ethics. Both Barth's doctrine of the Word of God and his insistence that this Word be read and understood in the church deflates the criticism that his concept of God's command is fideistic. However, Barth does not explicitly set out to describe how the event of the encounter between God and the Christian community are related to one another. This criticism could have been mitigated by Barth, had he developed more fully his pneumatology in relationship to this encounter through scripture and the church. Again, as it is mentioned above, Barth's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is potentially weak. Questions concerning the role of the Holy Spirit as God's continuing presence in the church and how the Spirit then mediates ethical directives via the scriptures in a community context remain unaddressed in Barthian terms.

The first objection to Barth's notion of command leads to a second, that it precludes precise moral guidance. Werpehowski comments that Barth cannot allow for

---

[25] Barth, *CD*, III.4, 15. Cf. Biggar, 107.

[26] Barth, *CD*, I.2, 588; *CD*, III.4, 9.

any sort of general principle because no prescription for human behaviour exists independently of Jesus Christ.[27] The will of God *is* Jesus Christ. As Werpehowski says, "It is central to theological ethics that it retain what Barth calls its 'offensiveness', its refusal to submit to a general principle outside and independent of itself."[28] Besides, Barth himself denies that an individual must become a *tabula rasa*, and Biggar argues that it is more likely Barth meant that God's command comes *through* normative ethics, not outside them.[29] Barth himself, while critical of any absolutist form of casuistry, abstracted general ethical principles from both his dogmatic system and from scripture.[30]

However, for Barth there is a final gap "between case and rule", which means that logic cannot ultimately answer the question, "What should I do?" Instead, ethics are preparatory and preliminary for they prepare an individual to recognize the divine voice that will give the command. In other words, as it was already argued earlier in this thesis, ethics does not provide instruction as to the answer to the ethical question, but it gives direction as to how the question ought to be asked. This is why Barth outlines Christian ethics as an ethics of prayer; the question needs to be formulated in terms of invocation, in terms of calling upon God.

---

[27] William Werpehowski, "Divine Commands and Philosophical Dilemmas: The Case of Karl Barth," *Dialog* 20 (1981), 21. P.H. Van Ness says that Barth's "paramount concern is to avoid the artificial abstraction of the law from the gospel and the subsequent establishment of human laws which enable human deduction from them to be the substance of Christian ethical reflection." See P.H. Van Ness, "Christian Freedom and Ethical Inquiry," *Calvin Theological Journal* 17 (1982), 48.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Biggar, 112.

[30] Barth, *CD*, III.4, 166, 398. These references to the *Dogmatics* refer to homosexuality as being outside God's will, and to respecting human life, respectively.

Third, in different ways, both Lou Shapiro and John Kelsay criticize Barth for the implications of his understanding of prayer for the nature of Christian spirituality.[31] Their criticisms stem from two other critical points already discussed above, prayer as petition and the notion of command. Shapiro contends that because Barth is insistent that prayer *is* petition, this means that more spiritually affective prayer is unjustified on Barthian terms. He asks if this is ultimately "soul-satisfying?" Of course, Barth would no doubt respond by asserting the priority of prayer described in the Lord's Prayer, that prayer is not first about human need (much less soul satisfaction) but God's cause and glory.[32] As Edmund Clowney says, "Prayer plunges into agony and soars into ecstasy, but it does not seek the heights or depths of experience. It seeks the Lord."[33]

This corresponds with Kelsay's criticism that Barth quite wrongly does not allow for more affective reasons to form part of the argument for prayer's justification. Teleological concerns do not form a part of the answer to the question, "why pray?"[34] Prayer is commanded, and the justification of prayer lies in this command and, by the example provided in the Lord's Prayer, in the glory and will of God.

---

[31] Shapiro, 31; John Kelsay, "Prayer and Ethics: Reflections on Calvin and Barth," *Harvard Theological Review* 82:2 (1989), 169ff.

[32] Barth does allow for contemplation, but such contemplation never is an end in itself. Instead, it is a means by which God elicits a response from the person praying and this response is participation in God's work. See *CD*, III.4, 563f.

[33] Clowney, 136.

[34] Kelsay, 177. Kelsay rightly notes that Barth *does* recognize human need in relation to prayer, and the human recognition that only God can satisfy such need. For Barth, the affective and contemplative dimensions of prayer are significant, but they are part of the facts of prayer, not its justification. Rather, this justification is rooted in God's command.

Barth's rejection of a more affective justification for prayer is of a piece with his general rejection of "anthropocentrism", so it lies in his broader theological concerns and not just his understanding of the Lord's Prayer.[35] It is not within the scope of this thesis to criticize Barth's overall theological concerns, but within the confines of Barth's system his decision is consistent. Suffice it to say that to allow for more affective concerns to provide for prayer's justification smacks of a sort of works-righteousness on Barthian terms.

Suggestions for Further Study

There are five areas that have surfaced in the course of this thesis that warrant greater attention. First, the place of prayer in Barth's theology, and in his method, explicitly demonstrates the relationship between faith and theological scholarship, any separation of the latter from the former is impossible on Barthian terms. Although many criticize Barth for being fideistic, it is also the case that other scholars and theologians have their own presuppositions and even their "faith." Barth simply has decided that, if there is to be a place for faith in theological scholarship, such faith ought to be identified with the God about whom Christian theology attempts to speak. For Barth, this results in authentic objectivity. In relation to this, a more thorough study of Barth's interpretation of Anselm, and of Anselm himself in this regard, would be helpful. Consequently, a more deliberate study of prayer and spirituality in relation to theology and theological method in

[35] Barth is not the only one who argues for the *theo*centrism of the Lord's Prayer. As Daniel Migliore says, "We recognize today how strong the current of anthropocentrism has been in much traditional Christian theology and spirituality. . . . By calling us to attend first to God's honor and reign, and by summoning us to see ourselves -- our needs and our desires -- in relation to God's purposes for the whole creation, the Lord's Prayer continually reforms our spirituality and our theology." See Migliore, "Preface," 2.

Barth's thought would be invaluable, particularly for Christian theologians and scholars who are in the position of having to defend specifically Christian presuppositions within the academy.[36]

Second, especially in the third chapter of this thesis, it is clear that the Reformers had a profound influence upon Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer and that there are many parallels between his exposition and classic Reformation expositions. Barth himself also draws out differences between himself and his Reformed fathers. A study of Barth's understanding of the Reformers, his interpretation of them, and their influence upon his own theology would prove to be a valuable theological resource.[37]

A third possibility for further study is suggested by the fact that Barth himself composed prayers for corporate worship and even has one volume of published prayers.[38] A comparative study between Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer and his own written prayers is needed. Such an investigation would be fruitful, since it would shed light on how a theologian bridges the gap between the church and the academy and on how

---

[36] For one such study see Andrew Louth, *Theology and Spirituality* (Oxford: SLG Press, 1994). Cf. also Donald Bloesch, "Prayer", 866. Barth addresses this relation in both *Evangelical Theology* and *Anselm*.

[37] There are three books by Barth himself which provide a beginning to such a study: *The Theology of John Calvin* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). These 1922 lectures given during Barth's time at Göttingen begin with remarks on the relation between the theology of the Reformation and the Middle Ages. Bromiley himself remarks that this is not the place to turn for a full-scale and complete introduction to Calvin. However, as he says, "the wrestling of one theological giant with another can hardly fail to be exciting and instructive" (pps. ix, x); *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today* trans. Shirley C. Guthrie, Jr. (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964). As helpful as it is, it is somewhat disappointing that Barth's commentary on the Catechism's section on prayer in this book only amounts to six brief remarks; and of course, *Prayer*. Here, the influence of the Reformers upon Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer is clearly seen.

[38] *Selected Prayers* trans. Keith R. Crim (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1965).

theory finds its way into practice and vice-versa. One also cannot help but be curious about whether Barth practiced what he "preached."

Fourth, although this thesis has not been able to adequately draw attention to the fact, Barth was politically involved in the situations of his time. Not only was he influenced by Religious Socialism earlier in his career and, not only was he intimately involved with the Confessing Church movement of the Second World War, he also had a number of writings concerning politics. Given his belief that Christian ethics of necessity is an ethic of prayer, the relationship between his involvement in the historical-political situations during his life and his theology of ethics as an ethic of prayer would also prove relevant to understanding the relationship between the theoretical and the practical in this theologian's life.

Fifth, and finally, one element consistent throughout Barth's exposition and understanding of the Lord's Prayer is his insistence on the finished work of prayer, that the efficacy of the petitions lies in their having been completed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is on this basis that Christians receive both the command to and, assurance in, prayer. Thus, in several ways Barth makes it clear that Christian prayer is Christologically grounded. Consequently, a discussion of the relationship between Barth's distinctive Christology and his understanding of the Lord's Prayer would prove invaluable. Moreover, it is evident throughout Barth's exposition that the Lord's Prayer can prove to be a valuable resource for discussing key points of Christian doctrine within the context of the Christian life and its cornerstone, prayer. These points include the Fatherhood of God and our adoption to sonship in Christ, the community orientation of the Christian life, the

relation between God's cause and human concerns, divine forgiveness, and the eschatological hope that Jesus Christ is victor. In other words, the Lord's Prayer is a resource for exploring the relationship between theology and life, and Barth himself was a theologian whose life and work interpenetrated each other. Elizabeth Achtemeier recalls this of Barth:

> It seems to me that part of the test of any theological system is the evidence of the working of that theology in the life of its author. . . . Some of the leading theologians of the twentieth century fail that test, but Karl Barth did not. The faith he taught produced in him love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness, self-control. He lived by what he believed and the life he lived, he lived to Christ. Perhaps that personal witness has meant more to me than anything else.[39]

Concluding Remarks

At the present time, with the new interest in spirituality, the recovery of an approach to prayer based upon biblical directives is urgent. Indeed, as Migliore insists, "Several marks of the Lord's Prayer seem especially relevant to our spiritual situation at the close of the twentieth century."[40] The term 'spirituality' is itself a nebulous one, and one nearly bereft of specific content at a time when it is defined in such a myriad of ways. D.A. Carson argues that spirituality does not necessarily have anything to do with the Holy Spirit, nor with the Bible. It can mean anything from psychological well-being to the

---

[39] E. Achtemeier, "What I learned From Karl Barth," *The Reformed Journal* 36 (1986): 15.

[40] Migliore, "Preface," 1. These "marks" as Migliore describes them are the *we* orientation of the prayer, its theocentricity, the holistic nature of salvation as including both daily bread and divine forgiveness (as opposed to playing these off each other in a dualistic fashion), and the fact that "prayer is the ever-new beginning of our participation in the work of God in the world. It is the active partnership with God who wills to be God with us, not apart from us." These "marks" are all crucial aspects of Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer.

pursuit of transcendence in a "monistic universe where God and the creation cannot be differentiated" to a variety of ritualistic disciplines designed to bring about a state of mental disassociation.[41]

Unfortunately, evangelicals are also losing a biblically-based spirituality, a spirituality the Reformers nurtured and one which Barth attempts to recover. This is a criticism Bloesch echoes. He also notes the new interest in spirituality, arguing that this necessitates an exploration of the meaning of biblical prayer.[42] Since Barth's concern is a biblically faithful statement of the meaning of the Lord's Prayer, his interpretation has significant bearing on how Christians can address the present situation in regard to prayer and spirituality. As Kenneth Schmidt argues, Barth's understanding of prayer is a way "to challenge Western Christianity's deeply entrenched spiritual malaise", and he notes that "the significance Barth attaches to the Lord's Prayer for the ordering of prayer can hardly be over-emphasized."[43]

In the midst of a climate hostile to traditional understandings of prayer, Barth stands as a distinctive voice in twentieth-century theology. He emphasized petition, which offered a corrective to the notion that God does not intervene in history for he believes prayer *can* affect people's lives and circumstances. He also stood the anthropocentric emphasis of Protestant Liberal theology on its head by arguing that prayer begins with the will, cause, and glory of God (the Reformation), not with the concerns of human beings

---

[41] D.A. Carson, "Learning to Pray," in *Teach Us To Pray*, 14.

[42] Ibid. Cf. Bloesch, *Struggle of Prayer*, 11.

[43] Kenneth L. Schmidt, "Karl Barth's Theology of Prayer." (PhD Diss, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1980), 1, 2, and 191.

(the Enlightenment). The human cause receives its orientation from the priority of God's cause. Knowing that the petitions of the Lord's Prayer have already been definitively answered in Jesus Christ gives Christians an assurance that their prayer will be heard and answered and also lends the prayer an eschatological weight missing in liberal interpretations which emphasize the kingdom of God as something acheived by human action in the world. For Barth, God's kingdom and will are God's accomplishment.

Over and against the nineteenth century Liberals, Barth also re-emphasized the necessity of the relationship between prayer and theological work. This has ethical consequences, and at one level Barth blamed the German Church's capitulation to the Third Reich during World War II to a distinct lack of prayer. As he says in *Evangelical Theology*, it is one thing to have "open windows . . . facing the life of the Church and the world,"[44] but quite another for theologians to turn towards the skylight through which God's word filters into the realm of theology. Protestant Liberals forsook the latter for the former. He felt that "it is time to say that under no circumstances should we, as theologians forsake our theological existence and exchange our rights as first born for a mess of pottage."[45]

Within the parameters of his discussion of the Lord's Prayer, both as a model prayer and as a model for ethics, Barth steers clear of any explicitly "how to" approach. What he provides instead is a theological understanding of the subject matter which he

---

[44] *Evangelical Theology* trans. Grover Foley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 161.

[45] *Theological Existence Today* trans. R. Birch Hoyle (Lexington: American Theological Library Assn., 1962), 17. F.R. McCormick's article, "Sabbath Rest: A Theological Imperative According to Karl Barth," is a wonderful treatment of the necessity of prayer for the theologian in Barthian terms. I direct readers here to explore that topic more fully.

sees as having informative importance for Christian practice. This understanding emerges not only from his Reformation influence, but also from his own distinct theological emphases. Even in *The Christian Life* he avoids giving ethical prescriptions, choosing rather to describe the priority of the divine-human relationship that gives ethical decisions their source and direction.

On this basis, if we are to ask what value Barth's understanding of the Lord's Prayer has for the church or pastor, the answer lies in his theological description, not in any directly practical application, for he does not make any such application.[46] This does not mean his theology of prayer and ethics *cannot* find practical application; and whether one considers his insistence on the Christian's assurance in prayer, the efficacy of petition, or the eschatological orientation of his thought, there is ample theological material from which to draw pastoral and ecclesiastical resources. In the case of *The Christian Life*, however, we are dealing with an unfinished work, therefore conclusions based upon this posthumous publication need to be tentative and cautious.

On the other hand, his book *Prayer*, with its prayerful reflections that often move into the vocative of address, provides a devotional resource with theological substance, which is something missing in our day. Olive Wyon comments:

> [Barth's *Prayer*] needs to be read slowly and pondered, in the spirit of prayer. Read in this way it will yield rich fruit. It should above all bring strength and reassurance to all who find faith and prayer difficult in the midst of the unrest and anxiety of the present time in world history. Barth emphasizes the fact that to pray the Lord's Prayer aright means praying in God's order. . . . Prayer of this kind is greatly needed today, and those who try to pray in this way find themselves set free from anxiety and bewilderment.[47]

---

[46] However, for such an application see Patricia Wilson-Kastner, "Pastoral Theology and the Lord's Prayer: We Dare to Pray," in ed. Migliore, *The Lord's Prayer*, 107 - 124.

[47] Olive Wyon, "Prayer [book review]", *Theology Today* 11 (1955): 561f.

And while Barth does not discuss specifically ethical guidelines in *The Christian Life*, he does so elsewhere in the *Church Dogmatics*.[48]

Barth was a theologian deeply interested in prayer and he was also committed to the biblical and historical church conviction that the epitome of prayer lies in the example given by Jesus to his disciples. In addition, his theological convictions, methodology, and understanding of prayer are closely related. Beginning with his theological presuppositions, he went on to give an exposition of the Lord's Prayer that expressed more acutely than anywhere else the central concerns of his theology. In Barthian terms, prayer and life are inextricably interwoven. For Barth, prayer is the medium through which the Christian life emerges as a life responding in invocation to the God who has graciously granted human beings that freedom in Christ. It is the Lord's Prayer that shapes this invocation.

[48] *CD*, III.4, 166, 398. These references to the *Dogmatics* refer to homosexuality as being outside God's will, and to respecting human life, respectively.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Barth, Karl. *The Word of God and the Word of Man.* London: Hodder, 1928.

_____. *The Epistle to the Romans.* trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

_____ and Eduard Thurneysen. *God's Search For Man: Sermons.* trans. George W. Richards, Elmer G. Homrighausen, and Karl J. Ernst. New York: Round Table Press, 1935.

_____, "Calvin," *Theologische Existenz Heute.* 37: 3-22, 1936.

_____. *The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life.* trans. R.Birch Hoyle. London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1938.

_____. *Dogmatics In Outline.* trans. G.T. Thomson. New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1949.

_____. *Church Dogmatics, I/1, The Doctrine of the Word of God.* 2nd ed. trans. G.W. Bromiley Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975.

_____. *Church Dogmatics, I/2, The Doctrine of the Word of God.* trans. G.T. Thomson and Harold Knight. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956.

_____. *Church Dogmatics, III/3, The Doctrine of Creation.* trans G.W. Bromiley and R.J.Erhlich. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960.

_____. *Church Dogmatics, III/4, The Doctrine of Creation.* trans. A.T. MacKay, T.H. Parker, Harold Knight, et. al. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961.

_____. *Church Dogmatics, IV/2, The Doctrine of Reconciliation.* trans. G.W. Bromiley. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961.

_____. *Church Dogmatics, IV/3, The Doctrine of Reconciliation.* trans. G.W. Bromiley. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1962.

_____. *Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl.* Harper and Brothers, 1959.

_____. *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum, Anselm 's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of His Theological Scheme.* London: SCM Press, 1960.

_____. *The Humanity of God.* trans. Thomas Wieser and John Thomas. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960.

_____. *Theological Existence Today* trans. R. Birch Hoyle. Lexington: American Theological Library Assn., 1962.

_____. *God In Action.* trans. E.G. Homrighausen and Karl J. Ernst. Manhasset, N.Y.: Round Table Press, 1963.

_____. *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction.* trans. Grover Foley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963.

_____. *The Heidelberg Catechism For Today.* trans. Shirley C. Guthrie, Jr. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1964.

_____. *Selected Prayers.* trans. Keith R. Crim. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1965.

_____. *How I Changed My Mind.* ed. J.D. Godsey. St. Andrews Press, 1969.

_____. *The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics, IV/4, Lecture Fragments.* trans. G.W. Bromiley. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981.

_____. *Ethics.* trans. G.W. Bromiley. New York: Seabury Press, 1981.

_____. *The Theology of Schleiermacher: Lectures at Göttingen, Winter Semester of 1923/24.* ed. Dietrich Ritschl, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982.

_____. *Prayer.* 2nd ed. trans. Sara F. Terrien, ed. Don E. Saliers. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1985.

_____. *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion, Vol.1.* ed. Hannelotte Reiffen, trans. G.W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991

_____. *Church Dogmatics: A Selection with Introduction by Helmut Gollwitzer.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.

_____. *The Theology of John Calvin.* trans. G.W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

SECONDARY SOURCES

BOOKS

Adler, Mortimer. *Ten Philosophical Mistakes: Basic Errors in Modern Thought - How They Came About, Their Consequences, and How to Avoid Them.* New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1985.

Barclay, William. *The Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer for Everyman.* New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

Baum, Gregory. *Man Becoming: God in Secular Experience.* New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.

Bibby, Reginald. *Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada.* Toronto: Stoddard, 1993.

Biggar, Nigel, ed. *Reckoning With Barth: Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth's Birth.* London: Mowbray, 1988.

Bloesch, Donald. *The Struggle of Prayer.* San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980.

_____. *The Crisis of Piety: Essays Towards a Theology of the Christian Life.* Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1988.

Boardman, George D. *Studies in the Model Prayer.* New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1879.

Bowden, John. *Karl Barth.* London: SCM Press, 1971.

Bromiley, Geoffrey W. *An Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979.

Bromiley, G.W. and Bernd Jaspert, eds. *Karl Barth - Rudolf Bultmann Letters, 1922 - 1966.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.

Bruggink, Donald J., ed. *Guilt, Grace, & Gratitude: A Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism Commemorating Its 400th Anniversary.* Ann Arbor, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963.

Busch, Eberhard. *Karl Barth: His Life From Letters and Autobiographical Texts.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

Buttrick, George Arthur. *Prayer.* New York: Abingdon Press, 1942.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion, vol. II.* ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973.

_____. *Theological Treatises.* trans. J.K.S Reid. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954.

Carson, D.A., ed. *Teach Us To Pray: Prayer in the Bible and in the World.* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990.

Carson, D.A. and John D. Woodbridge, eds. *Hermenutics, Authority, & Canon.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Ottawa: CCCB, 1992.

Clark, Gordon H. *Karl Barth's Theological Method.* Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and reformed Publishing Company, 1963.

Crosby, Michael H. *Thy Will Be Done: Praying the Our Father as Subversive Activity.* New York: Orbis Books, 1977.

Cullmann, Oscar. *Christ and Time.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950.

_____. *Prayer in the New Testament.* trans. John Bowden. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Daley, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.

Demson, David E. *Hans Frei & Karl Barth: Different Ways of Reading Scripture.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.

Dunham, Scott A., ed. *Full of the Holy Spirit and Faith: Essays Presented in Honour of Dr. Allison A. Trites, Pastor, Teacher, Scholar.* Wolfville: Gaspereaux Press, 1997.

Ebeling, Gerhard. *On Prayer: The Lord's Prayer in Today's World.* trans. J.W. Leitch. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, repr., 1978.

Eddy, Mary Baker. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.* Boston: Trustees under the will of Mary Baker G. Eddy, 1934.

Ellul, Jaques. *Prayer and Modern Man.* trans. C. Edward Hopkin. New York: The Seabury Press, 1970.

Fisher, Simon. *Revelatory Positivism? Barth's Earliest Theology and the Marburg School.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Ford, David F., ed. *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century.* vol. 1. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1989.

Forsyth, P.T. *The Soul of Prayer.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960.

Fox, Matthew. *Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear.* New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

Gibbard, Mark. *Why Pray?* Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1971.

_____. *Twentieth Century Men of Prayer.* London: SCM Press, 1974.

Gore, Charles. *Prayer and the Lord's Prayer.* London: Wells Gardner, Darton, and Co., 1898.

Graham, Ron. *God's Dominion: A Sceptic's Quest.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990.

Grenz, Stanley J., and Roger E. Olson. *20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age.* Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992.

Hagin, Kenneth. *Praying to Get Results.* Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Evangelistic Association, 1974.

Hall, Douglas John. *When You Pray: Thinking Your Way into God's World.* Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1987.

Harnack, Adolf. *What Is Christianity?* NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901.

Harner, Philip B. *Understanding the Lord's Prayer.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

Heick, Otto W. *A History of Christian Thought, vol. II.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.

Heiler, Friedrich. *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion.* trans. Samuel McComb. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.

Heppe, Heinrich. *Reformed Dogmatics.* repr. Grand Rapids, 1978.

Heron, Alastair I.C. *A Century of Protestant Theology.* Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1980.

Hodgson, Leonard. *The Lord's Prayer.* New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1934.

Horner, Phillip B. *Understanding the Lord's Prayer.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

Jeremias, Joachim. *The Prayers of Jesus.* trans. John Bowden, Christoph Burchard, and John Reumann. London: SCM Press, 1967.

Jüngel, Eberhard. *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986.

_____. *Theological Essays.* trans. J.B. Webster. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989.

Kant, Immanuel. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *What is Enlightenment?* New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1959.

_____. *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone.* trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson. New York: Harper, 1960.

Klooster, Fred H. *A Mighty Comfort: The Christian Faith According to the Heidelberg Catechism.* Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 1990.

Kuyvenhoven, Andrew. *Comfort & Joy: A Study of the Heidelberg Catechism.* Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 1988.

Ladd, George Eldon. *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism.* rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

_____. *A Theology of the New Testament.* rev. ed. ed. D.A. Hagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of Christianity, Vol.II, Reformation to the Present.* rev. ed. San Fransico: Harper Collins, 1975.

Laymon, Charles M. *The Lord's Prayer in its Biblical Setting.* New York: Abingdon Press, 1968.

LeFevre, Perry. *Understandings of Prayer.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.

Lewis, C.S. *Prayer: Letters To Malcolm.* Glasgow: Collins, 1978.

_____. *The Screwtape Letters.* rev. ed. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1982.

Lochman, Jan Milic. *The Lord's Prayer.* trans. G.W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.

Lohmeyer, Ernst. *Our Father: An Introduction to the Lord's Prayer.* trans. John Bowden. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Louth, Andrew. *Theology and Spirituality.* Oxford: SLG Press, 1994.

Luthi, Walter. *Small Catechism.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1940.

_____. *The Lord's Prayer: An Exposition.* Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961.

Luther, Martin. *The Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat*, vol. 21, *Luther's Works.* ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956.

_____. *Sermons I*, vol. 51, *Luther's Works.* ed. and trans. John W. Doberstein. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959.

_____. *Devotional Writings I*, vol. 42, *Luther's Works.* ed. Martin O. Dietrich. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.

_____. *Devotional Writings II*, vol. 43, *Luther's Works.* ed. Gustav K. Wienke. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968.

Machen, J. Gresham. *Christianity & Liberalism.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1923.

Macquarrie, John. *20th Century Religious Thought.* London: SCM Press, 1989.

Marty, Martin E., and Dean G. Peerman, eds. *A Handbook of Christian Theologians.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

McGrath, Alister E. *The Making of Modern German Christology: 1750 - 1900.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Migliore, Daniel K., ed. *The Lord's Prayer: Perspectives For Reclaiming Christian Prayer.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation.* trans. Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

Mueller, David L. *An Introduction to the Theology of Albrecht Ritschl.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969.

_____. *Karl Barth.* Makers of the Modern Theological Mind. ed. Bob E. Patterson. Waco: Word Books, 1972.

Nicholls, William. *Systematic and Philosophical Theology.* The Pelican Guide to Modern Theology, vol. 1. Middlesex, England: Pelican Books, 1969.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Basic Questions in Theology: Collected Essays.* trans. George H. Kehm. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970.

_____. *Systematic Theology, vol. 1.* trans. G.W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

_____. *Systematic Theology, vol. 3.* trans. G.W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Phillips, D.Z. *The Concept of Prayer.* London: Koutledge and K. Paul, 1965.

Phillips, Timothy R. and Dennis L. Okholm, eds. *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals & Postliberals in Conversation.* Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996.

Rahner, Karl. *On Prayer.* New York: Paulist Press, 1968.

Ramm, Bernard. *The Evangelical Heritage.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House,1973.

Richards, William K. *A Study of the Lord's Prayer.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1909.

Ritschl, Albrecht. *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation.* Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900.

Robinson, J.A.T. *Honest to God.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963.

_____. *Exploration Into God.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967.

Rosato, S.J., Philip J. *The Spirit As Lord: The Pneumatology of Karl Barth.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981.

Rumscheidt, H.-Martin, ed. *Karl Barth In Re-View: Posthumous Works Reviewed and Assessed.* Pittsburgh, PA: Pickwick Press, 1981.

Scott, E.F. *The Lord's Prayer: Its Character, Purpose and Interpretation.* New York: Scribner, 1951.

Schaff, Philip. *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes, 3 vols.,* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *The Christian Faith.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1928.

_____. *Selected Sermons.* trans. Mary F. Wilson. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890.

Simpson, Robert L. Simpson. *The Interpretation of Prayer in the Early Church.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965.

Sjogren, Per-Olaf. *The Jesus Prayer.* trans. Sydney Linton. London: SPCK, 1975.

Smart, James D., trans. *Revolutionary Theology in the Making: Barth - Thurneysen Correspondence, 1914 - 1925.* Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964.

Smith, R. Gregor. *Secular Christianity.* London: Collins, 1966.

Swing, A.T. *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl.* London: n.p., 1901.

Sykes, S.W., ed. *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.

_____, ed. *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Theilicke, Helmut. *Our Heavenly Father: Sermons on the Lord's Prayer.* trans. John W. Doberstein. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960.

_____. *The Evangelical Faith,vol.1.* trans G.W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology, vol. 1.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Torrance, James B. *Worship, Community & the Triune God of Grace.* Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996.

Tugwell, Simon. *Prayer: Living With God.* Springfield: Templegate, 1975.

_____. *Prayer in Practice.* Springfield: Templegate, 1976.

Van Bruggen, J. *Annotations to the Heidelberg Catechism.* trans. A.H. Oosterhoff. Neerlandia, AB: Inheritance Publications, 1991.

Van Til, Cornelius. *The Triumph of Grace: The Heidelberg Catechism.* Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1962.

Verhey, Allen. *Living the Heidelberg: The Heidelberg Catechism & the Moral Life.*

Vidler, Alec. *The Church in an Age of Revolution: 1789 to the Present Day.* London: Penguin Books, 1971.

von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *The Theology of Karl Barth.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971.

Webster, John. *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Welch, Claude. *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, vol. 1 - 1799-1870.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.

Williamson, G.I. *The Heidelberg Catechism: A Study Guide.* Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1993.

ARTICLES

Elizabeth Achtemeier, "What I Learned From Karl Barth," *The Reformed Journal.* 36: 15-17, 1986.

Almond, Philip C., "Karl Barth and Anthropocentric Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology.* 31: 435-447, 1978.

Blondel, Jean L., "Prayer and Struggle: Karl Barth's The Christian Life," *Saint Luke's Journal of Theology.* 23: 105-115, Mar 1980.

Chul-Ha, Han, "Belief and Unbelief in Prayer: A Comparison Between Calvin and Karl Barth," *Evangelical Review of Theology.* 9: 4: 348-358, Oct 1985.

Crawford, Robert G., "Karl Barth and Philosophy," *Modern Churchman.* 20: no. 1-2: 36-43, 1977.

Davison, James E., "Can God Speak a Word to Man? Barth's Critique of Schleiermacher's Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology.* 37: 189-211, 1984.

Godsey, John D., "The Interpretation of Romans in the History of the Christian Faith," *Interpretation.* 34, no.1: 3-16, 1980.

Gunton, Colin, "The Christian Life. Church Dogmatics Volume IV Part 4, Lecture Fragments," *Scottish Journal of Theology.* 36: 3: 398-400. 1983

Hendry, George S., "The Life Line of Theology," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin.* 65: 22-30, 1972.

_____, "The Transcendental Method in the Theology of Karl Barth," *Scottish Journal of Theology.* 37: 213-227, 1984.

Kelsay, John, "Prayer and Ethics: Reflections on Calvin and Barth," *Harvard Theological Review.* 82: 169-184, Ap 1989.

Kincade, James, "Karl Barth and Philosophy," *The Journal of Religion.* 40: 161-169, 1960.

Longsworth, William M., "Theological Foundations For Ethics," *Quarterly Review.* 3: 92-100, 1983.

McCormick, Frances Rice, "Sabbath Rest: A Theological Imperative According to Karl Barth," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion.* 62: 539-552, 1994.

McIntyre, John, "Analogy," *Scottish Journal of Theology.* 12: 1-20, 1959.

McKin, Donald K., "Karl Barth on the Lord's Prayer," *Center Journal.* 2: 1: 81-99 1982.

McKinnon, Alastair, "Barth's Relation to Kierkegaard: Some Further Light," *Canadian Journal of Theology.* 13: 31-41, 1967.

Morse, Christopher, "Raising God's Eyebrows: Some Further Thoughts on the *Analogia Fidei*," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review.* 37: 39-49, 1981.

Muller, Richard A., "What I Haven't Learned From Barth," *The Reformed Journal.* 37: 16-18, 1987.

Pfatteicher, Philip H., "Prayer [2nd ed.]," *Worship.* 60, no.1: 90-91, 1986.

Potter, Vincent G., "Karl Barth and the Ontological Argument," *The Journal of Religion.* 45: 309-325, 1965.

Reist, Jr. John S., "Barthian Ostraca: Ethical and Epistolary Fragments," *The Journal of Religion.* 63: 281-289, 1983.

Shapiro, Lou, "Karl Barth's Understanding of Prayer," *Crux.* 24: 26-33, Mr 1988.

Shepherd, R.F., "Putting Prayer on the Theological Agenda," *Theology Today.* 27: 81-87, 1970.

Smith, Steven G., "Karl Barth and Fideism: A Reconsideration," *Anglican Theological Review.* 66: 64-78, 1984.

Van Ness, Peter H., "Christian Freedom and Ethical Inquiry," *Calvin Theological Journal*. 17: 26-52, 1982.

Wagoner Walter, "Can Modern Man Pray?" *Newsweek*. 72: 33-38, 1968.

Wells, H.G., "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Analogy," *Canadian Journal of Theology*. 15: 203-213, 1969.

Wells, William W., "The Reveille That Awakened Karl Barth," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. 22: 223-233, 1979.

Werpehowski, William, "Divine Commands and Philosophical Dilemmas: The Case of Karl Barth," *Dialog*. 20: 20-25, 1981.

Wyon, Olive, "Prayer," *Theology Today*. 11: 561-562, 1955.

DICTIONARIES/ ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Coggins, R.J. and J.L. Houlden, eds. *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. London: SCM Press, 1990.

Elwell, Walter A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996.

_____, ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.

Ferguson, Sinclair B. and David F. Wright, eds. *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downers Grove: IVP Press, 1988.

Harrison, Everett F., G.W. Bromiley, and Carl F.H. Henry, eds. *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966.

Komonchak, Joseph A., Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane, eds. *The New Dictionary of Theology*. Hong Kong: Gill and Macmillan, 1987.

Richardson, Alan, ed. *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*. London: SCM Press, 1969.

UNPUBLISHED WORKS/ DISSERTATIONS

Berntsen, John Arnold. "The Liturgical Orientation of Karl Barth's Theology." PhD Diss. Emory University, 1985.

Maeng, Yong Gil. "The Command of God: A Study of Karl Barth's Theological Ethics." PhD Diss. Emory University, 1974.

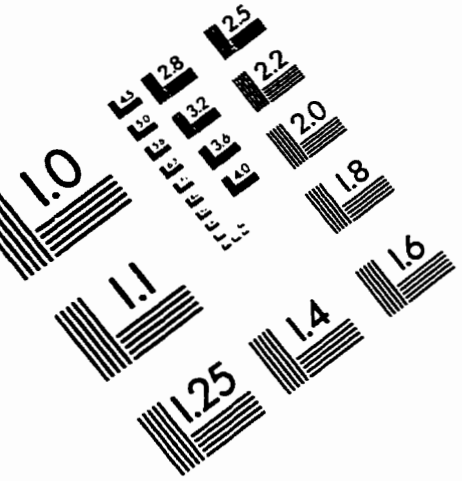
Mangina, Joseph Layton. "The Practical Voice of Dogmatic Theology: Karl Barth on the Christian Life." PhD Diss. Yale University, 1995.

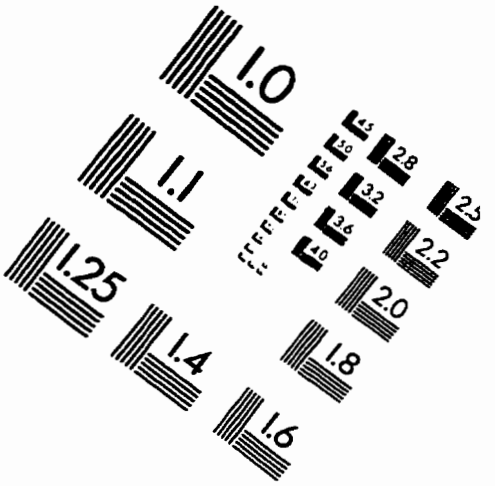
Okholm, Dennis L. "Petitionary Prayer and Providence in Two Contemporary Theological Perspectives: Karl Barth and Norman Pittenger." PhD Diss. Princeton Theological Seminary, 1986.

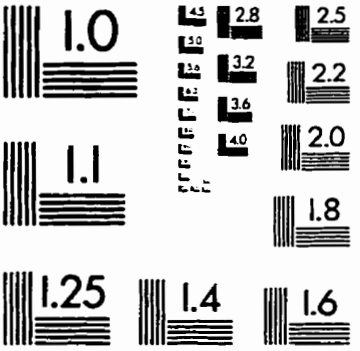
Schmidt, Kenneth L. "Karl Barth's Theology of Prayer." PhD Diss. Princeton Theological Seminary, 1980.

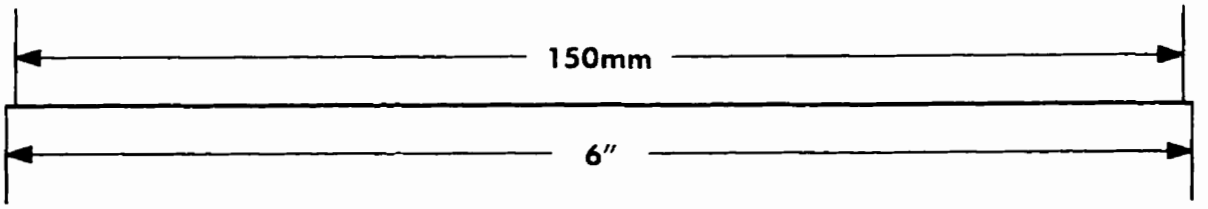
Willis, Robert Eugene."The Ethics of Karl Barth." PhD Diss. San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1967.

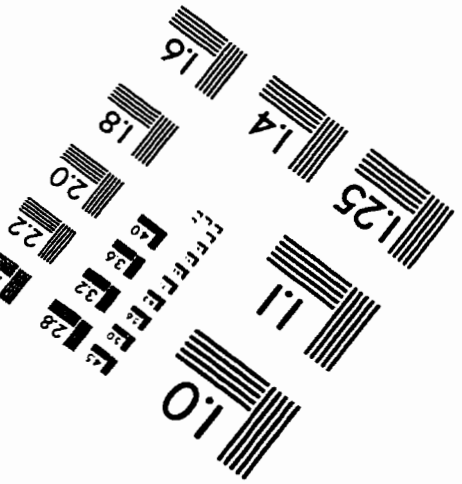
IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

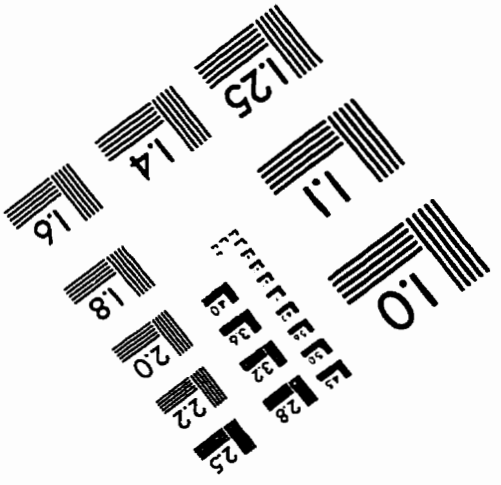












APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989