Brunner's Criticism of Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election
ABSTRACT

Title: "Emil Brunner's Criticism of Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election"


Brunner criticizes Barth's central concept that Jesus Christ is electing God and elected man, his "universalism," and his denigration of faith. Brunner believes that Barth's chief thesis fails to satisfy the biblical criteria. He asserts that Barth's understanding of "double predestination" leads to universalism. He also argues that Barth's approach to theology is so "objective" that it leaves no real room for the decision of faith. The thesis accepts Brunner's criticism of Barth's interpretation of Jesus as electing and elected, but expresses reservation on Barth's "universalism" and his "objectivism."

While the first impression is that Brunner and Barth have two widely differing interpretations of election, a closer reading reveals a surprising degree of similarity.

It is argued that Barth does make some extreme statements, yet the reform of the doctrine of election is seen to lie in the direction that Barth and Brunner indicate.
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EMIL BRUNNER'S CRITICISM OF KARL BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

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CHAPTER ONE

JESUS CHRIST AS ELECTING GOD AND ELECTED MAN IN KARL BARTH'S

DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

The unifying concept in Karl Barth's doctrine of election is Jesus Christ as electing God and elected man. This first chapter shall present a brief résumé of his doctrine of election. This will provide a general outline of his interpretation of predestination and will demonstrate that the key to his theory is Jesus Christ viewed as electing and elected.

Most of what Barth has written on this subject is found in Chapter VII, Volume II, Part 2, of the Church Dogmatics and is presented in four sections. The first section is "The Problem of a Correct Doctrine of the Election of Grace." In turn, this is divided into three sub-sections the first of which is "The Orientation of the Doctrine." Predestination is clearly to be regarded as Gospel, as good news, indeed as the "sum (1) of the Gospel" (p.91). It is taken to be part of the doctrine of God (p.9). That is, what we mean by the word "God" is now in part defined by the concept of election. The orientation is a departure from Calvinism in that election is not interpreted as synonymous with double predestination. Barth speaks of the "shadow" under which this doctrine is now seen and he states as his avowed purpose the dispersal of this shadow (p.13).

But how is this shadow to be dispersed? This question leads to

(1) When page numbers are given following a quotation they will invariably refer to the chief source for this thesis, namely Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics, Volume II, Part 2, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1957.
the section on "The Foundation of the Doctrine" and the first clear statement of the Christocentric nature of his interpretation. The foundation of the doctrine is clearly to be in the Scriptures (p. 35), but these in turn lead one to Jesus Christ (p. 91). This foundation is chosen in deliberate contrast to other norms -- tradition, utility, experience, and providence. In this section Barth also presents an incisive analysis of the Calvinist emphasis on the hidden decree. To say that predestination is ultimately grounded upon such a decree is also to say that God has a will apart from Jesus Christ and that Christ is not God's final word to mankind. If one is to attempt to restore this emphasis on the hidden decree one is therefore implying that the foundation of the doctrine is other than Christ or the Scriptures. In this section Barth presents some concepts that will be greatly expanded in the following parts:

"There is no greater depth in God's being and work than that revealed in these happenings and under this name [Jesus]" (p. 54). Christ is seen as the elect man: "... If we would know what election is, what it is to be elected by God, then we must look away from all others, and excluding all side-glances or secondary thoughts we must look only upon the name of Jesus Christ..." (pp. 58-59). Jesus Christ is seen not only as "the basis of the doctrine of election" (p. 60), but it is claimed that "... knowledge of election is only a distinctive form of the knowledge of Jesus Christ." (p. 60).

Barth then discusses "The Place of the Doctrine in Dogmatics." Why is the doctrine considered here and not elsewhere? Why is it placed within the doctrine of God? The answer is that election has to do with grace. It is the election of grace. The church must "... never speak as though it had to do with someone other than the gracious God" (p. 93).
Barth writes that "... God Himself does not will to be God, and is not God except as One who elects" (p.77). The special function of the doctrine is seen as bearing witness to this truth and its place regarded as enabling it to fulfill this purpose.

Part two greatly expands the interpretation of the role of Christ in election, and is entitled "The Election of Jesus Christ." Christ is in his own person "the election of grace" (p.95). He is both the elected one and the elector (p.105). Many Scripture references are cited to establish that Christ is unique and that we are elected "in Him." The focus, however, falls upon John 1.1-3, and Ephesians 1.4. After arriving at a certain interpretation of the former, Barth seems to understand many other passages, and especially Ephesians 1.4 in its light. The full meaning of "in Him" is therefore regarded as pointing to Jesus as elector and elected. This is a difficult and a problematic area of Barth's study and will receive detailed attention in our next Chapter.

It is important to realize that for Barth election has to do with a primal decision made within the Trinity: "The fact that God is means that from all eternity God is active in His inner relationships as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ... The origin of the proclamation within God Himself is predestination" (p.175). Predestination is thus the divine act of will itself and not some result of that will (p.181). Enormous emphasis, therefore, is placed on what might be termed supra-history: "The secret of everything that takes place in the world is the decision of God which eternally precedes it" (p.185). It is little wonder, then, that in his discussion of Infralapsarianism—Supralapsarianism, Barth sides decisively with the latter albeit in a form that is "purified."
His views are well-stated in the following quotation:

What Supralapsarianism was trying to say was that in the beginning of all things, in the eternal purposes of God before the world and before history, there was the electing God and elected man, the merciful and just God and ever against that God from all eternity home labilis, man sinful and lost . . . On the contrary, Infrac- lapsarianism closes all doors which might open in this direction. It ordains another decree ever and above that of predestination, the decree of creation and providence, and that of the fall (p.143).

But if traditional Supralapsarianism is normally regarded as excessively stern in its interpretation of God's will, the reverse can probably be said of Barth's theory. This may also be discerned in his particular understanding of double predestination. God is said primarily to have "elected or predestinated Himself" (p. 162). God has " . . . ascribed to man the former, election, salvation and life; and to Himself He has ascribed the latter, reprobation, perdition, and death " (p. 163). God bears man's rejection (p.165). That is the meaning of double election for Barth.

Barth once more returns to an attack on the hidden decree. The will of God is Jesus Christ (p. 157). It does not reside in some hidden decree.(p. 158). The will of God in the election of Jesus Christ is the key thought that he presents: "The substitution of the election of Jesus Christ for the decretum absolutum is, then, the decisive point in the amendment of the doctrine of predestination. It enables us for the first time to show and to say that we can really believe in divine election " (p.161).

The third part of Chapter VII is "The Election of the Community." We note that this is considered before the election of the individual, and must realize the deliberate nature of this order. This part is a sustained
exegesis of Romans 9-11, a section of the Scriptures often taken as the *locus classicus* of individual election - reprobation but which is rather considered by Barth as probing the relation between Israel and the church and an inquiry into Israel's unbelief. The emphasis that emerges from Barth's study of these critically important chapters of the Bible has to do with the oneness of the community of faith from which vantage point alone the election of the individual must be perceived. (pp. 196-197). The object of election is "... neither Israel for itself, nor the Church for itself, but both together in their unity" (p.199). Yet even within this discussion Christ is recognized as the source of God's tolerance of Israel's unbelief and hence the reason why this community must be accepted in a deep and an abiding unity. Barth writes that "... what matters about Israel is not Israel, but the Christ promised to Israel and Israel for his sake." Christ is the key to God's continued acceptance of Israel: "In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God Himself has cancelled both the *finitus* of the Jewish rejection of Christ and also that of the rejection of the Jews, acknowledging against the will of Israel, His own will with Israel ... " (p.291). In the passage which Barth regards as the "focal point of the whole exposition" (of Romans 9-11), the parable of the potter in chapter 9, Christ is interpreted as the vessel of mercy referred to in Romans 9.23 and is prefigured in Moses, David, and the prophets (p.228). In speaking of Moses and Pharaoh, Barth goes to the extent of saying that God "... uses them both as witnesses to Jesus Christ, each in his own way" (p.223).

Clearly, this third part is also dominated by the unifying thought of Jesus Christ as the key to election.

The fourth and last part of Chapter VII is "The Election of the Individual." Though this comes last in his treatment of the doctrine of election, it cannot be said that he denigrates the place of the individual. Barth presents a brief and fascinating survey of the development of the situation whereby almost the entire concentration of the study of the doctrine of predestination became focused on the individual. In this development Barth finds a mirror for the general spiritual history of the West (p. 306). He remarks that it is no coincidence that Augustine, the father of the classical doctrine, was also the first writer of Christian autobiography. The decisive change whereby predestination became concerned almost totally with the individual rather than the community, however, was in Calvin (p. 307). This, claims Barth, paved the way eventually for Pietism, Rationalism, and even secular individualism (p. 308).

And yet Barth's concern in this part is to point to the fact that there is indeed a proper place for the individual in predestination and that the doctrine is so stated that the individual is not lost in the community. Barth writes that "It is individuals who are chosen and not the totality of men" (p. 313). Man, then, is predestined as an individual and not merely as a member of a group (p. 314).

A consideration of individual election leads him to deliberate on a number of other issues. One such is man's choice of evil: "In defiance of God and to his own destruction, he [man] may indeed behave and conduct himself as isolated man, and therefore as man rejected by God" (p. 316). But the most this individual may do is to "represent" this
man. He cannot be this man "... for in Jesus Christ God has ascribed this to Himself ... and taken it away from man " (pp.316-317). Another issue is that of assurance. This is one of those questions which illuminates the whole doctrine of election and the inadequacy of the traditional formulations: "The need for total revision of this dogma is plainly shown by the history of this subsidiary problem " (p.339). Assurance, as Barth interprets it, while accompanied by inner joy, is based not on self-examination, or emotion, but rather upon Christ's election and the believer's election " in and with " Christ's election (p.339).

Barth also deals at length with God's election of individual men in the Bible. He points to a tradition of the "... continually operative principle of the distinguishing choice ... " and "... the freedom with which this choice cuts across and contradicts all distinctions that are humanly regulated or planned on the basis of human predilections " (p.356). However, even in this choice, it is not the case that those who are not chosen are utterly rejected. They are blessed in their own way and have their own destiny to fulfill (p.356).

We are told that the divine election ceases to differentiate among individuals with the end of the patriarchal tales of Genesis (p.356). Israel as a whole is thus separated from all peoples (p.356). With the emphasis of election now falling upon the nation as a whole, Barth proceeds to a consideration of some matters which lie at the heart of the national concern and the national religion. For this reason he ponders the place of sacrifice in the Old Testament. He believes that the sacrifices spoken of in Leviticus, chapter 14, for instance, point to Christ. Even the sacrificial system in its own way "prefigures not only Christ but..."
election, for the sacrifices were for the sake of others. In this way the symbolism which was so deeply a part of that system points to Christ and to the election of Christ. In considering national institutions he writes also of the role of kingship in the Old Testament and reminds us that kings were 

the anointed ones. Barth's discussion ranges over the lives of Saul, David, and Jonathan, through each of whom, it is claimed, God worked. We are also reminded that "

. . . the Israelite kingdom is the prototype and copy of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ " (p. 390). Thus even within this detailed consideration of election within the Old Testament Barth has no hesitation in asserting Christ as the one witnessed to.

Barth also inquires into " The Determination of the Elect." That is, what is the destiny of the elect? To what is the elect one elected? The answer given is that he is chosen to be " . . . the kind of man for whom Jesus Christ is . . . " and that he is elected " . . . in and with the community of Jesus Christ " (p.410). Thus Christ and his community are the determination, goal, and content of the life of the elect (p.411). This determination, specifically, is to be loved: " Obviously, no man can be anything other or better than this — one who is loved by God " (p.411). The elect thus are in the service of God and of Christ, the " apostle of grace " (p.415). The elect constitute an apostolate of grace and indeed this is the meaning and life of the Christian community (p.415).

Barth now raises the question of universalism. In spite of his sweeping view of double predestination which seems to rule out reprobation of any kind, he specifically warns against universalism ( as in the doctrine of apokatastasis) (p.417). But he warns also against
a denial of the doctrine (p.418). His position is to maintain the freedom of divine grace: "It belongs to God Himself to determine and to know what it means that God was reconciling the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5.19)" (p.419). The concern of the elect is always with this reconciliation: "This is the determination under which they live" (p.419). He concludes this sub-section of part four by stating: "If God elects a man, it is that he may be a witness to Jesus Christ and therefore a proclaimer of His own glory" (p.449).

The last sub-section is "The Determination of the Rejected." A rejected man is "... one who isolates himself from God by resisting his electing as it has taken place in Jesus Christ." (p.449). He reiterates his denial of double predestination as it has normally been understood (p.450). Even here one may see his Christocentrism. The rejected one does not constitute an independent entity. His being is a "beingwith" (p.453). That is, it exists only as relation to the elect — to Christ and to the man elected in Him (p.453). It is a shadow existence, one that "yields and dissolves and dissipates" (p.453). And yet it is deadly enough and serious enough within the limits set by God. The point is that the rejected have no final validity because of the very nature of their opposition which exists only as a relation. Indeed, rejection has to be seen in the light of Christ's act: he has borne the rejection of the rejected ("With Jesus Christ the rejected can only have been rejected. He cannot be rejected any more" (p.453)).

The closing part now deals with Judas Iscariot "... the character in which the problem of the rejected is concentrated and
developed in the New Testament . . . " (p.458). This rejected one, of course, was in the closest possible proximity to Christ. Judas alone of the twelve was, like Jesus, of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of David (p.459). He was clearly one of the inner group, "Judas, one of the twelve." He shared — however passively — the inner life of the twelve. Evidently he ate of the Last Supper, or at least none of the Synoptists denied that he did so (p.459). The New Testament account does not state that which some assume, that Judas was not a genuine apostle. He too, we must surmise, confessed Jesus as the Christ (John 6.68f.).

What, in fact, was Judas' betrayal? It was a "handing over" of Jesus to the authorities; it was the revealing to them of a convenient time when Jesus could be arrested with the least possible disturbance. The essential fact here is that Jesus was delivered by one of his own disciples and that from within the church. Here the church " . . . stands and acts in identity with the Israel which rejected its Messiah . . . " (p.460). The sin of Judas contains this mystery and this paradox that " . . . the more profoundly and comprehensively we attempt to formulate the sin and guilt of Judas, the more nearly his will and deed approach what neither he himself willed and did, nor the people of Israel, nor the Gentiles at whose head he finally appears — the more nearly his will and deed approach what God willed and did in this matter . . . " (p.501). At the moment of ultimate rebellion, strangely, the rebel acts in accordance with God's will. At the point where sin reaches its fullest, there grace overflows (Romans 5.20). Indeed, in its own way, the action of Judas is indispensable in the drama of salvation (p.502).

In a closing paragraph, Barth proclaims his belief that God wills
that Judas also should hear the Gospel and with it the promise of his
election (p. 506). His determination is "... to hear and say that he is
a rejected man elected" (p. 560).

This concludes our brief résumé of Barth's Chapter on election
in the Church Dogmatics. Our purpose was to demonstrate the general nature
of his interpretation and to show that the essence of his theory resides
in his particular understanding of Jesus Christ as electing God and elected
man. In order fairly to assess Barth's position one must argue for
or against this central and dominating concept. We have seen that Barth
takes the Bible as the foundation of his theory. It will have to be asked
how accurately he has read the Bible. Indeed, this will emerge as the
central question.

With this general introduction to Barth's thoughts on election,
we now turn to Brunner's criticisms.
CHAPTER TWO

BRUNNER'S CRITICISM OF BARTH'S CENTRAL CONCEPT

Brunner's theology of election is very similar to Barth's with the marked exception of the latter's central concept. It is important, however, to realize that Brunner ascribes great importance to this doctrine, that he believes firmly in the sola gratia, but that he rejects any notion of a hidden decree. Indeed, for him as well as Barth, election must be regarded only as in Christ. Likewise, Brunner energetically rejects the determinism that has often accompanied belief in election, as well double predestination (and its opposite, universalism). Election then must be stated in harmony with the Bible. But to do so is to speak of it only on the basis of the revelation in Jesus Christ. Yet it is precisely these two concerns that lead him to attack Barth's chief insight. His criticism, in essence, is that Barth's twofold thesis of Jesus as electing God and elected man lacks support from the Scriptures. Connected with this charge is the allegation that Barth is resorting to a "natural theology" — theorizing on the basis of statements which are biblical but which nonetheless cannot be proved by the scriptures. That is, Barth goes beyond that which the evidence allows. Clearly, these two theologians share the same premise, that the foundation of their theology is the Bible. The question has to do with "... loyalty to the explicit witness of the Scriptures."

(2) ibid., p.347.
(3) ibid., p.347.
(4) ibid., p.347.
(5) ibid., p.351.
(6) ibid., p.314.
Brunner's criticism points to a very important issue, for it is not as though he were concerned to be biblical and Barth unconcerned about the biblical foundation for his theory. Rather both desire to maintain the Bible as the foundation of their dogmatics in general and in the reconstruction of the doctrine of election in particular. Barth himself devotes considerable space in his *Church Dogmatics*, II,2, to presenting lengthy exegesis of passages he considers relevant to the inquiry. However, what complicates matters, I believe, is Barth's particular reading of the Bible. The appeal to the Scriptures does not appear to be in dispute in this controversy; rather is the question the way in which the Bible is read.

What is Barth's approach and how would he defend himself in presenting it? A full discussion of this question would entail a detailed examination of the *Church Dogmatics*, I,1, and especially Chapter I, "The Word of God as the Criterion of Dogmatics." We find there a biblicism but not a simple biblicism. The Word of God is not simply to be equated with the Bible. In itself it is not revelation but rather is witness to revelation. The Bible is God's Word "so far as God lets it be His word, so far as God speaks through it." Barth writes of this in the present volume under discussion and questions the hermeneutical concept behind much of the traditional exegesis upon which the Calvinist doctrine of election was founded. He writes that the words of the Bible point us to the Word and that "Beside and above and behind this Word there is none other" (p.150). This Word is Jesus Christ (p.150). It appears then that Christ is the proper hermeneutical principle for the interpretation of the Bible. This becomes thus a basis for what we might term theological exegesis. Indeed pondering Barth's complete identification of the Word with Jesus, would it be going

too far to term his interpretation Christological exegesis? Certainly this suggestion is inherent in the accusation commonly made of his *Dogmatics* that they are Christomonistic, a charge to which we shall have to give attention at a later point in this thesis.

Whatever else is said of his exegesis it can scarcely be denied (1) that it has a speculative character. Barth provides a most illuminating comment on his general approach in his remark on the speculative character of Supralapsarianism. It will be recalled that in the examination he gives to the Supralapsarian-Infralapsarian controversy, Barth argues forcefully for what is termed a "purified Supralapsarianism," one which stresses in the strongest possible terms the decisions made by God before the foundation of the world, but these in the direction of grace rather than in that of the harsh proclamations of the classic doctrine. That is, in Barth's view, the rejected one is Jesus Christ who has borne our rejection. Thus rejection is indeed established before the foundation of the world—but not man's, rather Christ's. Thus the form of his theory does coincide with the classic doctrine, but the content bears only the most tenuous relation to Supralapsarianism as that term is normally understood. In his clever diagnosis of the controversy, Barth raises the question of the speculative basis of Supralapsarianism. The answers to his own question provide insight into the speculative basis of his own exegesis; especially is this the case when one recalls that he argues for a type of Supralapsarianism. He writes that the doctrine is "... not quite so speculative as a first and general glance would suggest... but it is rather... something in the nature of a sally against speculative theology in

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(1) For instance, we may refer to Prof. Wile's review of Church *Dogmatics*, II,2, in *Theology*, number 62, 1959: "There is a tendency towards loose affirmations of a speculative character which all conform to the professed basis of Barth's thought."
general "(p.135). "They became," he writes, "speculative in the bad sense only in the abstract use which they permitted themselves to make of the biblical concepts of mercy and justice" (p.135). Their failing, then, was not speculation. Rather it was a failure to see Christ at the centre of all God's work and way. "They were speculative in that they did not start with the concrete form of these questions and of God Himself." (p. 135). Thus Barth argues not against theorizing, but theorizing on an incorrect basis. He does not say that it is wrong to speculate. He says that speculation in some cases is inevitable — as a defence against bad speculation, and that in every case it must be established on the Word of God, Jesus Christ. This way of reasoning is carried on in his defence of Jesus as electing God and elected man. In answer to the question as to how one knows that Christ is elector and elected, he replies: "We may ask the older exponents of the doctrine how they on their side know about a God and man who in the last analysis are unknown. If we do, we shall be brought up against constructs which more closely resemble philosophical reflection on the origin and development of being than they do the confession of a Christian understanding of God and man" (p.148). The claim then, that we do not know something in turn raises the question of how do we know that we do not know? Again, this sort of reasoning is meant to justify the speculative nature of Barth's own theory. However, this procedure he believes to be governed by the Bible: "The decisive point is the reading of the Bible itself" (p.148). He appeals, as did the older theologians, to Romans 9-11 and using the normal canons of exegesis offers a variant interpretation: to election as it is witnessed to in those passages than the one offered by the older Calvinist interpreters.

(1) See Appendix One.
Barth claims that these interpreters forgot to adhere to "... the coherent whole of scriptural witness " (p.152) The passages dealing with predestination, like all passages " must. be read in the context of the whole Bible and that means with an understanding that the Word of God is the content of the Bible " (p.152). Barth writes that the departure from this principle made the older doctrine of predestination inevitable (p.152). It is probably true to say that adherence to his principle of interpretation likewise makes his doctrine inevitable.

In response to this general approach several important and serious questions expressing reservations about this hermeneutics need to be asked. How far, for instance, can one apply human logic to the doctrine of predestination? Did not Calvinism become bogged down precisely because it tried to be logical about the ways of God with man? Thus, reading of God's election of people to salvation, Calvinists thought it logical to speak of God's election to damnation as well. That, of course, is Calvinism at what we might term its toughest, but the general way of reasoning is not unrepresentative of Calvin himself. Can one object to Calvinism on these grounds and then allow the application of logic to Scriptural data to establish a new doctrine of election?

(1) John Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, London, James Clarke and Co., 1957, Henry Beveridge, trans., Vol.II, p.210: "We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once and for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment."
As important as this question is, the other one dealing with Barth's appeal to the coherent whole of the biblical record. This principle on first reading appears sound enough. What Barth seems to be saying is that we must ever keep the end in view. That is, we must always have a sense of perspective in our reading of the Bible. The end, after all, has to do with God's graciousness supremely as it is seen in the Word. If that were all he was asserting one could not argue with him, for to argue would be to quibble. But let us realize that he is saying much more than this and indeed that he is appealing to a principle of hermeneutics which is new and which we must regard as highly dubious. The salient point in exegesis has always been the immediate context of a verse or passage -- its "situation in life" as the German scholars would say. This does not mean that therefore one may forget the overall thrust of the Bible as a whole. But likewise it does not mean that we can subordinate the immediate context to the total one. To do so would be disastrous to the scientific study of the Scriptures. Thus we would suggest that it is not good enough to offer a theological exegesis of the Bible, or at least there is no harm in that so long as one is willing to have one's interpretation judged by the normal canons of biblical inquiry. It is insufficient to assert that the invoking of these standards is an appeal to a simple biblicalism. After all, Barth is the one who has said that his foundation is biblical and that the final question has to do with the "reading" of the Bible itself. Perhaps doctrine needs to be founded on something more speculative than biblical interpretation.

Certainly Reformed Theology which has been most strident of all Christian groups in its demand for a biblical theology has evolved a tradition of its own and one indeed which has assumed life of its own quite apart from
Scriptures. Barth does present a strong argument for showing the compatibility of his central thesis with the evidence of Scripture. He, however, to be doing more than this. His contention is that the Bible itself supports his interpretation of Jesus as elector and elected. I believe that on the normal canons of the scientific exegesis of the Scriptures this assertion can be shown to be wrong and hence Brunner's criticism validated. Brunner in turn may be going too far in calling Barth's general approach natural theology. After all, the basis is always held to be biblical. At any rate, that is a secondary matter to the one before us, and it would not be helpful to begin a discussion of natural theology in a Barth-Brunner controversy. The reader will know that this subject is not without emotion in the writings of these two theologians. Once begun such a discussion would go on at very great length. Moreover, what Brunner really means when he accuses Barth of engaging in natural theologizing is that his doctrine of election is unscriptural and this especially when he speaks of Jesus as electing God and elected man.

Brunner does not deny a basic role to Christ in election. His argument rather is that Barth in recovering a tremendously important emphasis -- the role of Christ in election -- has gone too far in his interpretation. His criticism, then, is aimed at restoring a proper balance. He writes as follows:

To the question: Who elects and who is elected? — each time the answer is, Jesus Christ. Now it cannot be denied that Jesus Christ as the Son of His Love, as the One upon whom the θεοφανία, the 'bene-placitum' of God, rests, is the Elect of God and that, on the other hand as the One who Himself calls His own to Himself, He is the One who elects. But, above all, the fundamental idea in this view is that to speak of Election means to speak of Jesus Christ, in entire harmony with the witness of the Scriptures.

And yet we cannot accept this view: that the Subject of the Eternal election is Jesus Christ. Where the New Testament speaks of the eternal election of the faithful in Christ Jesus, the Subject of Election is solely, and without exception, God, just as the Subject of Creation solely, and without exception, is God. Jesus Christ is the Mediator of Election, as He is the Mediator of Creation. In Him, through Him, but not by Him we are elect, as the world has been created in Him, through Him, and unto Him, but not by Him. (1)

We turn now to consider Barth's argument in the light of Brunner's criticism. As I understand it, the general approach of his reasoning is as follows. A basic idea is that predestination means not only "... God's election of man ... but of Himself" (p.3). To miss this statement made on the very first page of Chapter VII is to overlook a concept that is completely essential for an understanding of his doctrine.

If predestination refers to God's decision to act in a certain way, then what is the basis of that decision? The answer is found in Christ. How do we know? The answer is that a theological exegesis of the Bible provides us with evidence. A passage with prominence not only in Barth's doctrine of election but in his theology as a whole is John 1.1-3. He reasons that Jesus is the Logos and that deity is ascribed to the Logos. If this is the case then Jesus must be involved in election. Indeed, more, for he writes that "... electing consists in this Word" (p.100). Barth's fascination

with these verses in John is partly to be explained by the connection between the concept "Word" and the concept "election," for election after all is a type of 'calling.' Then, too, these verses seem to be the high point in New Testament Christology. In a sense, they constitute the end, the culmination, of Christology. But if that is so, then they also form the beginning. Later we shall see that this is the locus for Barth's particular theory of Jesus Christ as the eternally existing God-man. This theory Brunner also assails. It is important not only for its relevance to trinitarian theology but also as an essential part of Barth's concept that Jesus is also the elected man. Barth's argument then turns to a general appeal to a host of verses in the New Testament which speak in lofty terms of Christ. For instance, if He is "... the first-born of every creature," and if in all things he must have "the pre-eminence," and if He is "the beginning, the first-born from the dead" then, "... if that is true, ... in the name and person of Jesus Christ we are called upon to recognize the Word of God, the decree of God, and the election of God" (p.99). We must recognize the Word as God's election (p.99). Jesus Christ is "... the election of God before which and without which and beside which God cannot make any other choices" (p. 94).

It can and should be admitted that Jesus Christ is active in election. One can support this notion easily from an understanding of the unity that exists within the Trinity. This partly explains Barth's

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attention to John 1.1-3 (p. 96). But exactly the same reasoning can therefore be applied to the Holy Spirit as Barth admits: "It is also true that He does not elect alone, but in company with the electing Father and the Holy Spirit" (p. 105). In this sense there is no need to dispute Barth's thesis. But, of course, Barth goes beyond this assertion. He is anxious to avoid driving any sort of wedge between God's decision and Jesus' election. That is, there is no hidden decree, because Jesus himself is God's decree, and we search in vain for any other will of God than that revealed in the Word. Barth is driven by a certain logic that he finds irresistible. If Jesus is God's Word, then he is God's communication with mankind (p.97). If that is so, then there is no other communication, no other will. But how then, do we ensure that there is no other will? We do so by seeing in Jesus the electing God: "If Jesus Christ is only elected and not also and primarily the Elector, what shall we really know at all of a divine electing and our election?" (p.105). The assertion that "... Jesus Christ is elected man, can be understood only in the light of it" (p. 103). That is, we must first see Christ as electing God and then see him as elected man. But what scriptural evidence have we that Jesus is electing God other than this general sense of the unity we find within the Trinity? In answer, Barth replies that we must see Christ as electing God in John 13.18; 15.16, 19. These verses must be interpreted in their strictest sense. These verses assume special importance in his argument since they are the only ones which make outright reference in all of the Bible to Christ's electing. Elsewhere his case must rest on inference. The question, however, is how widely these verses are to be

(1) Barth's argument is on p.106 and following: in the light of John 3.35, 6.65, 14.1, 15.5, 17.2, the electing of the disciples by Jesus must be seen as "an act of divine sovereignty." Reference is also made to Matthew 11.27, and 16. 17, as well as other verses which bear on Christ's authority.
interpreted; do they refer to the election of the apostolate alone or
to all Christians? John 13.18 reads: "I speak not of you all; I know
whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that
eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." John 15.16
reads: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you
that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:
that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."
Verse 19 of the same chapter is "If ye were of the world, the world would
love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you
out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Barth interprets these
verses in the light of the many statements in John which attest to Jesus'
unique nature (e.g. John 5.26; 15.5; 17.1-5; etc.). He writes: "In the
light of these passages the electing of the disciples ascribed to Jesus
must be understood not merely as a function undertaken by Him in an in-
strumental and representative capacity, but rather as an act of divine
sovereignty in which there is seen in a particular way the primal and
basic decision of God which is also that of Jesus Christ" (p. 106).

In sharp contrast to this interpretation we have that of
Berkouwer that "It has been remarked already that Barth's appeal
to Scripture for his doctrine of Christ as subject of election is
limited almost wholly to a few passages in the Gospel of John which
speak of Christ's calling and election of the apostolate," and "... we
must insist that these passages in John which stress election by
Christ are precisely those which present his unique call to the apostolate."

Let us now examine the verses in question.

(1) G.C. Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans,
1960, pp.157-158.
Clearly, since the first step is to subject these verses to rigorous exegesis, it is mandatory that we consult at least some of the leading students of The Gospel According to Saint John.

J.H. Bernard, writing for the esteemed International Critical Commentary, comments on the word τίμω τοῦτο in John 13.18 as follows:

'I know the kind of men whom I chose,' sc. when selecting the Twelve out of a larger company of disciples. (1)

His comment on John 15.16 is:

... the apostles were henceforth His chosen friends, and herein was encouragement for them who were so soon to take up their mission in the absence of their Master. (2)

His observation on the word ἔλεγχε of the same verse is:

... [it] is used as here to mark the moment when the apostles were selected from the larger body of disciples. (3)

A distinguished contemporary scholar, C.K. Barrett, writes on John 13.18 as follows:

... the meaning of these words (ἐγνώσα αὐτοὺς τίμω τοῦτο ἔλεγχε) and their connection with the following sentence are not clear. They may mean (a) I know whom I have really chosen and of course I have not really chosen Judas; or (b) I know (the character of) those whom I have chosen. (4)

On John 15.16 he writes:

In the gospel narratives, however ... Jesus chooses, calls, and appoints his disciples. The initiative is entirely his; the ἐγνώσω is emphatic. (5)

This same observation is made with regard to John 15.19. (6)

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(2) ibid., p.488.
(3) ibid., p.488.
(5) ibid., p.398.
(6) ibid., p.400.
R.H. Lightfoot sees reference in John 13.16, 19 to Jesus' choice of Judas:

If these verses are considered along with 2.24-25, 6.64-70, St. John's teaching seems clear that, when Judas was chosen as one of the twelve, the Lord was aware what the result would be. He now reveals that the reason for his choice was the fulfilment of Scripture... (1)

John Marsh of Mansfield College, Oxford, comes closest to Barth's idea. He interprets John 13.18 in the following way:

Inevitably a difficult verse; it is not easy for ordinary men to penetrate into the area where the incarnate Word shares in the omniscience, the omnipotence and the all-inclusive providence of God as he works out the salvation of all men. But the issues must be stated. The words can mean either that Jesus has chosen Judas... or that Jesus has not really chosen Judas, as he has chosen the other eleven... to the present writer it seems more suitable to the whole context of John's thought to suppose that the former meaning is intended. (2)

This is widened considerably in his comment on John 15.16:

This makes it plain for those at the Last Supper and for every generation of disciples since, that, however much things may appear, and even feel, to the contrary, it is Christ who has chosen them to be disciples, not they themselves. The initiative in Christian life is with the Lord. (3)

Of these four commentators only one even comes close to supporting Barth's interpretation of these verses. The context of each of these passages is clearly Jesus' choice of his disciples and apostles... Even Principal Marsh's remarks should only be taken to support Barth in the most cautious of manners. We are not

now contending that Christ is not active in election. Nor can it be denied that election is in him. The issue before us is whether or not Christ is the subject of election in the unique sense which Barth describes.

Barth's exegesis of John offers special difficulties. It is evident that his own mind is steeped in this Gospel and probably it, more than anything else, has influenced his theology of election. Perhaps that in itself is a clue, for it is the most reflective of the Gospels and at the same time most theological. Each Gospel writer has his own point of view. But no Gospel is shaped to quite such an extent by the writer's meditation on history as this one. Clement of Alexandria, an ancient commentator to be sure, wrote: "Last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospels, being urged by his friends and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual (pneumatikon) Gospel." For this reason, it could perhaps be argued that the passages dealing with Jesus' conversation with the disciples in the upper room is not an historical record but theological reflection on some events of the days preceding the crucifixion. If that is the case, some sort of brief could be made for interpreting John theologically and in the spirit of his own writing. As the latest Gospel it, perhaps, would have the widest understanding of the word "disciple" and would therefore allow it more easily to have a broad reference. When one adds to this the truly unique portrait of the Christ that is found in the rest of John the stage is indeed set for the dramatic entry of Barth's interpretation.

But this exegesis lacks proof: other Johannine verses counter it, and the texts discussed are most doubtful in their support of Barth.

(2) See John 6.37,44, 14.28,31.
The other verses to which Barth directs our attention do indeed speak of Christ in the loftiest terms, but they do not say that Jesus is electing God. Among these verses are Colossians 1.15, 18; 2.20; and 1 Corinthians 15.20, 2 Corinthians 4.4. These and all of the verses upon which Barth constructs his interpretation could be quoted and yet the decisive statement of Christ as elector would be missing. We would be left with an argument that has logical force to it, but which is nonetheless also debatable. An example of this sort of reasoning is the following:

And how can even the Word of God give us assurance on this point if this Word, if Jesus Christ, is not really the electing God, not the election itself, not our election, but only an elected means whereby the electing God — electing elsewhere and in some other way — executes that which He has decreed, concerning those whom He has — elsewhere, and in some other way — elected? The fact that Calvin in particular not only did not answer but did not even perceive this question is the decisive objection which we have to bring against his whole doctrine of predestination... All the dubious features of Calvin's doctrine result from the basic failing that in the last analysis he separates God and Jesus Christ, thinking that what was in the beginning with God must be sought elsewhere than in Jesus Christ. (p.111).

But even this does not force one to conclude that Barth's position is correct. Why can it not be said that God's will is the election of Christ (as in fact the Scriptures assert) and that this provides us with all the assurance against a Deus nudus absconditus who produces hidden decrees for man's damnation? Has Barth really shown any necessity for going beyond this conclusion which is so amply supported by the Bible? Does his view lead to a type of Christo-monism that so identifies God with Christ that no freedom is ascribed to God apart from Christ? Is the freedom of God, then, in question? Before we inquire into these and related questions let us examine the most critical verse in Barth's case and one which even Brunner terms "... the locus classicus of the ... doctrine of election,"

Ephesians 1.4.

As we have already noted in Chapter One, Karl Barth lays great stress on a particular interpretation of Ephesians 1.4. While this is the focus of his theory of Christ as the elected man, reference should also be made to Ephesians 1.9, and to 2 Timothy 1.9. Barth's reasoning is that if Christ is only the executor of God's decree then we are not elect in Christ but only for Christ (p.112). His interpretation of Ephesians 1.4 is that we are elect in his person, in his will and in his own divine choice (p.117). He writes:

For where can Jesus Christ derive the authority and power to be the Lord and Head of others, and how can they be elect 'in Him' and how can they see their own election in Him the first of the elect and how can they find in His election the assurance of their own if He is only the object of election and not the Subject, if He is only an elect creature and not primarily and supremely the electing Creator? Obviously in a strict and serious sense we can never say of any creature that other creatures are elect 'in it', that it is their Lord and Head, and that in its election they can and should have assurance of their own... Thus the second assertion [that Christ is elected man] rests on the first, and for the sake of the second the first ought never to be denied or passed over (p.116).

Jesus Christ, then, is not merely one of the elect but the elect of God. From the very beginning (from eternity itself) as elected man He does not stand alongside the rest of the elect, but before and above them as the One who is originally and properly the elect. From the very beginning (from eternity itself) there are not other elect together with or apart from Him, but as Eph.1.4 tells us, only 'in' Him. 'In' Him does not simply mean with Him, together with Him, in His company. Nor does it mean only through Him, by means of that which He as elected man can be and do for them. 'In Him' means in His person, in His will, in His own divine choice, in the basic decision of God which He fulfills over against every man... And so they are elect 'in Him', in and with His own election... But it must be said further that his election is the original all-inclusive election... For this reason we must now learn really to recognize in Him not only the electing God but also elected man (pp. 116-117).

Thus while the concept "in Him" relates to both factors -- Christ as electing and elected -- it refers supremely to him as elected man.
We must now inquire into the exact meaning of the phrase ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ. In particular, we must ask if the meaning that Barth gives to this phrase is also the meaning that is to be found in the New Testament. Again, the question before us has to do with Barth's interpretation of the Bible.

We would do well to quote the two chief verses in Ephesians which provide the focus for Barth's comment. In referring to these verses, we should be reminded that the concept of being "in Christ" occurs (with variations) some thirty times in the epistle.

The two verses are as follows:

Ephesians 1.4 ΚΑΘΩΣ ἐν ΧΡΙΣΤΩ ἘΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΠΡΟΚΑΤΑΒΟΛΗΣ ΚΩΣΜΟΥ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΥΜΝΟΣ ΣΙΓΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΚΑΤΕΝΟΙΩΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΚΑΤεΝΟιΩν ΑΥΤΟΥ;

Ephesians 1.5 ΠΡΟΟΡΙΣΕΑς ΥΜΝΟΣ ΕΙΣ ΕΙΔΟΠΟΙΗΣΙΝ ΕΙς Ιησου Χριστου ΕΙς Αυτον Κατενοιων Ἐν Εν ΧΡΙΣΤΩ ΕΙς ΑΥΤΩ ΚΑΤΕΝΟΙΩΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ;

We have already cited Barth's exegesis: "In Him" means "...in His person, in His will, in His own divine choice." (p. 117).

Christ is both electing God and elected Man.

"In Him" is obviously a metaphor. But what precisely does it mean, and how literally are we to take it? C.H. Dodd offers the following helpful interpretation:

In Christ (a phrase which governs the whole of this passage, and, indeed, in some sort the whole Epistle) is an expression apparently coined by Paul on the model of the common expression 'in the Spirit'. The underlying metaphor is derived from space-relations: Christ is thought of as the encompassing atmosphere (as it were) of the true life of the Christian community (which, according to another metaphor, is his 'body'). It stands for the idea that Christians are in such inconceivably intimate spiritual relations with their Lord...that he may be regarded as in some sort an 'inclusive personality'...

This certainly seems like a fair interpretation of the passage. There is of course doubt that Ephesians is Pauline, but if it is then we have here one more, of many, striking metaphors of the relation of Christ to the believer. It is probable that none is more dramatic or far-reaching than this one which represents Christ as an inclusive personality. It may well be that this sort of relation between a spiritual leader and his followers is unique in the history of world religions. Clearly, Christ is seen as having a very special status. He is seen in Ephesians in his cosmic dimensions. He is the "cosmic Christ." But nevertheless we must recall that in spite of the unique portrait being presented of Christ he is still not spoken of as the subject of election. God is the subject and Christ is the means of election. We are elect Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Both of the verses quoted provide a clear subject and a clear object. In neither case is Christ seen as subject. As Brunner remarks, in all cases in Scripture where the subject of election is clearly and unequivocally expressed that subject is God. That this distinction is maintained in precisely that passage that most clearly delineates (along, admittedly, with several other passages, e.g. John 1.1-2 and Colossians 1) Christ's cosmic dimensions should give one special pause before accepting Barth's interpretation. Here again we might raise the question of hermeneutics. Once more we must insist that while the context of any passage is the whole Bible, nonetheless this is to be subordinated to the immediate context of the passage under discussion. One must not approach this passage with one's mind made up.
The French scholar, Henri Bouillard, in acknowledging... the contribution that Barth has made also raises questions on the controversial nature of his main thesis: "Qu'il soit le sujet de l'élection c'est beaucoup net." As we have done, he cites Brunner saying that "le sujet en est toujours exclusivement Dieu" and comments accordingly on Ephesians 1.3-5: "Ici, comme ailleurs, le Christ apparaît médiateur et non sujet de l'élection éternelle." He also poses two questions by way of argument with Barth: "Puisque, d'après l'Évangile de Jean, le Christ, Verbe incarné, est un avec le Père, ne s'ensuit-il pas qu'il est aussi, avec le Père et le Saint-Esprit, le Dieu qui élit" and "Mais suit-il de là que l'on puisse attribuer au Fils ou au Verbe l'acte de la prédestination, que le Nouveau Testament attribue au Père?" In answer to this last question we can only reiterate that the evidence of the New Testament seems strongly to indicate that Barth goes well beyond the meaning of "in Him" in verses such as Ephesians 1.4. Perhaps there is a certain logic to his approach. But earlier he had objected to the application of human logic to the Scriptures with regard to the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination. How then can a procedure that is found wanting in an earlier matter now be used without contradiction? Biblical evidence seems to be lacking for his theory both that Christ is subject and object of election. Even an appeal to Luke 9.35 yields no further support: nothing is said here about Jesus being the only elect man.

(2) Ibid., p.153.
(3) Ibid., p.153.
This brings us to the second main tenet of Barth's doctrine, that Jesus is elected man. This concept is criticized by Brunner also:

The second main article of his doctrine is thus expressed: Jesus Christ is the only Elect Man. In order to develop this point further he has to make a third statement: 'Jesus the eternally Elect Man' (p.111), 'the pre-existing God-Man, who, as such, is the eternal ground of all election' (p.119).

No special proof is required to show that the Bible contains no such doctrine, nor that no theory of this kind has ever been formulated by any theologian. If the eternal pre-existence of the God-Man were a fact, then the Incarnation would no longer be an Event at all: no longer would it be the great miracle of Christmas. In the New Testament the new element is the fact that the eternal Son of God became Man, and that henceforth through His Resurrection and Ascension, in Him humanity has received a share in the heavenly glory; yet in this view of Barth's, all this is now anticipated, as it were, torn out of the sphere of history, and set within the pre-temporal sphere, in the pre-existence of the Logos. The results of this new truth would be extraordinary; fortunately Barth does not attempt to deduce them. The idea of the pre-existent Divine Humanity is an ad hoc artificial theory of the theological thinker, who can only carry through his argument that the Man Jesus is the Only Elect Human being by means of this theory. (1)

Two other scholars, A.D.R. Polman, and Colin Brown express agreement with Brunner's criticism. (2)

J.K.S. Reid, however, expresses a theory very similar to Barth's in an article in the Scottish Journal of Theology. Indeed, there can be little doubt that his article (in two parts) is meant largely to be an introduction to Barth's doctrine of election for the English-speaking world. It is of added interest that his article is the very first one in the first issue of that important journal. Also in essential agreement with Barth is another British scholar, Herbert Hartwell, who has written a most thoughtful book on Barth's theology. He writes as follows:

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Paradoxical as this statement may appear, seeing that the Godman Jesus Christ did not come into being until the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, it makes sense if we take into account Barth's teaching that in the eternal election of God before time, Jesus Christ, and in and with Him men, is the first, that is, the primary object and content of the principal and basic will of God, and that the Old and the New Testaments testify to this Jesus Christ either in expectation or recollection. (1)

Quite a different interpretation is offered by Henri Bouillard who is of the opinion that Brunner himself is mistaken in his understanding of Barth:

Brunner déclare qu'avec cette thèse l'incarnation n'est plus un événement dans l'histoire. En réalité, il y a là une méprise. Barth ne supprime pas l'événement historique de Jésus; il affirme son présupposé éternel. Ce que préexiste éternellement à l'histoire c'est le Verbum incarnandum, sujet et objet de l'élection, et non le Verbum incarnatum, qui n'en est que l'objet dans le décret divin. (2)

The fact of this disagreement among interpreters of Barth points, I believe, to a certain lack of clarity in Barth's presentation. His intention is crystal clear. Just as he was most intent that no wedge be driven between God's will and God's will in Jesus Christ (thus making room for the dreaded hidden decree), so now he is equally concerned that no wedge be driven between Jesus as the Logos and Jesus as the Logos to be incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. From all eternity it was the will of God that the Logos be the one who has to be incarnate. There is no other will of God behind this will. Jesus Christ, God's basic decision in favour of man, is election: "In its simplest and most comprehensive form the dogma of predestination consists, then, in the assertion that the divine predestination is the election of Jesus Christ" (p.102). Thus is the elect man and we are elect in him: "In the predestination of the man

(2) Henri Bouillard, op. cit., p. 154.
Jesus we see what predestination is always and everywhere — the acceptance and reception of man only by the free grace of God (p. 118).

Barth's logic, then, appears to involve a meditation on the phrase "in Him." This, along with other scriptural evidence (much of which is open to debate) leads him to see Jesus as the elect man. We are elect in him because He first of all is elected, and because predestination primarily refers to God's election of himself. In order to be the only elect one, there must be a sense in which he is the eternally elect man, the God-man. But we must ask if it is really necessary to go beyond the assertion that he is the God-man in intention? Indeed, in essence, is this not all Barth is saying? It is very strange that though there is evidence that he does speak of the eternally existing God-man that concept as such remains somewhat in the background. Brunner himself observes that Barth does not draw the conclusions from his theory that might be drawn.

Barth's theory of the eternally elect man, the God-man, Jesus, is found in scattered passages in connection with the doctrine of election in Church Dogmatics II.2, IV.1, and IV.2. His exegesis of John 1.1-2 has played a role of special prominence in this theory:

But again, the statement in Jn.1.2: "the same (οὗτος ὁ Λόγος) was in the beginning with God" would be a meaningless repetition of the second statement in Jn.1.1 if it were not an anticipation of the incarnate Logos attested and declared by John the Baptist in the words: "this was he (οὗτος ὁ Λόγος) who coming after me is preferred before me, for he was before me." (πρὸ ἐμοῦ ὁ προτέρους ἔμεθα Λόγος). The result is that we cannot possibly refer abstractly to the eternal Logos ... ... (1)

Thus it can be said that "At no level or time can we have to do with God without having also to do with this man" (2). So also "The true humanity of Jesus Christ, as the humanity of the Son, was and is and

(1) Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV.2, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1958, p.33.
(2) Karl Barth, ibid., p.33.
will be the primary content of God's election of grace, i.e., of the
divine decision and action which are not preceded by any higher apart
from the trinitarian happening of the life of God . . . . (1)

But perhaps Volume IV, 1 of the Dogmatics better expresses
his thoughts:

If it is true that God became man, then in this we have to recognize and
respect His eternal will and purpose and resolve . . . and behind which
we cannot go, behind which we do not have to reckon with any Son of God
in Himself, with any λόγος Ἰεσοῦς with any other Word of God than
that which was made flesh. According to the free and gracious will of
God the eternal Son of God is Jesus Christ, as He lived and died and rose
again in time and none other. (2)

A few pages later Barth becomes even more explicit:

In this free act of the election of grace the Son of the Father is no longer
just the eternal Logos, but, as such, as very God from all eternity, He
is also the very God and very man He will become in time. In the divine
act of predestination there pre-exists the Jesus Christ who as the Son of
the eternal Father and the child of the Virgin Mary will become and be
the Mediator of the covenant between God and man, the One who accomplishes
the act of atonement. (3)

The arguments that we find in Volume II, 2 are essentially as
above, although it should be added that Barth also offers further exegesis
of scriptural passages which he considers to be relevant (p.99).

Whatever our reaction to Barth's theory we must not allow
ourselves to overlook the fact that he is recovering for the church
a meaningful exegesis of the concept "in Him." It will become evident
that he has gone too far in his interpretation and that it is more than
doubtful that scriptural support can be found for the extreme theory of
Jesus Christ as the eternal God-man. But nonetheless it must be said
most clearly that the Bible does teach us that our election is "in Him."

(1) Karl Barth, ibid., p.31
(2) Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV,1, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark,
1956, p. 52.
(3) ibid., p.66.
Whatever else this means it teaches us that we are elect because of him. An analogy may well be drawn from the legal world of estates and wills. A man dies and leaves in his will a large sum for his son. But suppose that the son, in turn, is married and has children. It is not at all necessary that they be mentioned in the will (presuming a normal marriage and normal parental relations) for the children to receive the full benefit of the estate. They are "in him" — in their father, so to speak. They are "elected" to wealth simply by being children of their father. So, apparently, there is scriptural support for the idea that we are elect "in" Christ, and that he is the elect of the Father. This, however, does not mean that it is wrong, therefore, to speak of our election. Indeed, the Bible clearly does speak of this election. The phrase "in Him" however, is an attempt to make clear and distinct the ground of the predestination: the grace of God in Jesus Christ and nothing else.

But in order to carry through the logic of this conception Barth believes that it is necessary to show that the Logos was determined to be the Logos sarkos from eternity. All that Barth needs to insist upon is, this determination, this intention, this Verbum incarnandum. I do not see that Barth has demonstrated any necessity for the theory of Verbum incarnatum. Likewise the scriptural proof he claims to find for the theory is insufficient to erect such a major edifice of theology. His chief argument suggests that John 1.2 has a reference forward to the incarnate Christ and not backward to John 1.1, the Word eternally existing. But two very important arguments can be brought against this interpretation. In the first place, it is not at all unreasonable for the author to be engaging
in the literary device of emphasis through repetition. Certainly this occurs frequently enough in the Bible to be familiar and especially is this the case in the Psalms. One need not demonstrate that this is part of the author's prose style for the simple reason that what he is asserting in John 1.1 does bear emphasis. The second argument is that it is strange that so important a doctrine is not made more explicit in the remaining chapters of the Gospel. To be sure we read of the glory which our Lord had with the Father before the foundation of the world (John 17.5,24). But those verses cannot be taken as proof of the explicit theory Barth is presenting for they do not pretend to be answering the questions to which his theory is the answer. Also, they leave open the question of "what kind of glory did Jesus have before the foundation of the world?"

It must be admitted that Barth is making a most important and penetrating point in attempting to ensure that we do not conceive of the Logos in abstracto. Just as his argument against the hidden decree is almost classic in its utterance — any future statement of such a doctrine must take account of his reasoning — so now does he deepen our understanding of the person of Christ and of the way in which we must conceive of him. This section is marked by a creative flow of ideas many of which are breathtaking in their brilliance and indeed in their daring. However there is a certain lack of system in Barth's theology which we shall have to comment on later and which partly explains the presence of the concept of the eternal God-man but which nevertheless does not play the role it might have had it been further developed.

This section also helps us to understand why and how Barth can
consider himself to be within the Reformed tradition. In the Preface he writes of his regret at having had to depart from Calvin as much as he had. Yet within the Chapter he makes it clear that he is still essentially within the Reformed tradition. How can this be in a doctrine which rejects double predestination and which enunciates a new theory of Jesus as elector and elected? The answer has to do with the sovereignty of grace and with the refusal to have anything to do with synergism. Both of these within his doctrine are related directly to the matter under discussion. If election is primarily the predestination of God, then what room is there for the merit of man? If the object of election is Jesus then what room is there for the goodness of man? If we are elect in Him, elect only because he is the elect one, then there is no room whatever for the co-operation of man in his election. Thus do we find at the very heart of his interpretation the most Calvinist of doctrines, the graciousness of God understood as in Jesus Christ:

The fact that God makes this movement, the institution of the covenant, the primal decision 'in Jesus Christ' which is the basis and goal of all His works — that is grace . . . . This love of God is His grace . . . (pp.9-10).

Before we leave this question of Brunner's criticism of Barth's understanding of Jesus as elect man (a criticism which we have seen to be in the main accurate) it would do to remind ourselves of the broader references that are possible to the "in" concepts in the NT — "in Christ," "in Him," and perhaps also the "body" metaphor as applied to the church. To be sure we are elect in Christ. But the concept of "in Christ" is

(1) On pages 60-76 Barth argues that this concept of election in Christ is not a new one. He successfully points to antecedents in the Reformation period but still admits that the concept was not developed sufficiently.
wider than that of election, as basic as that is. An excellent recent study of this question is found in *The Phenomenon of the New Testament* (1) by Prof. C.F.D. Moule of Cambridge University. The burden of Prof. Moule's discussion has to do with the precise meaning of the word ἐν in the phrase "in Christ." As might be imagined the word ἐν is used in a variety of ways in the New Testament, but the one which concerns us is the ἐν of incorporation and this is given special attention in a chapter entitled "The Corporate Christ." Prof. Moule writes:

Examples of this incorporative use are the following. First there are such phrases as 'those who are in Christ Jesus' e.g. Romans 8.1 .... Still more decisive is the parallel in 1 Corinthians 15.22 between being 'in Adam' -- that is, incorporated in humanity, part of the human race -- and being 'in Christ'. Finally --to go no further -- there is Philippians 3.8f., where Paul says that his ambition is to be found in Christ (ἐν ... ἐναγηνομένῳ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνσωματωθήσεται --'finding myself incorporated in him' -- NEB). (2)

The personal language consistently used disallows the thought (3) of this being some sort of physical incorporation. Christ rather is seen as an incorporating figure, an inclusive figure, much like his title Son of Man which is a human figure symbolizing "the martyr-group of loyal (4) Jews coming through persecution and vindicated by God." If this is a correct understanding, if the Son of Man concept does elucidate the "in Christ" concept, then it is seen that Jesus interpreted his mission in terms of corporate activity. (5) We are then in Christ in the sense that we take part in his corporate mission to mankind, and that with him we form a new humanity. This does not mean that we are not elected in him.

What it does mean is that our conception of his inclusive nature is broadened.

(3) C.F.D. Moule, *op. cit.*, p.27.
(4) C.F.D. Moule, *op. cit.*, p.34.
(5) *ibid.*, p.34.
Thus far we have been probing Barth’s central thesis in the light of Brunner’s criticism that it is unscriptural. While we have not attempted to assess all of Barth’s exegesis, we have tried to arrive at a fair estimate of those passages which virtually any reader would deem crucial to carrying the burden of this theory. Our conclusion thus far is to accept Brunner’s opinion that Barth’s theory lacks sufficient biblical foundation. However, the positive element in our assessment needs to be stressed quite as much, for in the very process of stating a view that most readers would find extreme Barth is recovering important biblical elements of the doctrine of election for the church. Chief of these is the notion of election in Christ and the consequent critique of the hidden decree that occurs when one contemplates this belief. He has written that this is his chief criticism of Calvin, that in the last analysis he separates God and Christ. Likewise, this juncture must be seen as the parting of the ways for Barth from the traditional Reformed doctrine of predestination. The substitution of Jesus Christ for the hidden decree he claims is the decisive amendment to the Calvinist doctrine of election: “It enables us for the first time to show and to say that we can really believe in the divine election” (p.161). Earlier he had quoted Milton who had written: “I may go to hell, but such a God (as that of the Calvinistic teaching) will never command my respect” (p.13). In this regard Milton had spoken for a host of Christian people who found the Calvinist doctrine —scriptural or unscriptural —unbelievable. Pursuing this line of reasoning Barth has claimed that election is Gospel (p.13). It is good news. It is evangel. Far from causing a shadow under which people must labour in fear, it is
the assurance that God’s grace has come to us in Jesus Christ. First and foremost election is "The Election of Grace" — as the title to section 32 states. Election is part of the doctrine of God, and proceeds from the freedom of God. Thus in election we are given assurance of the nature of God himself, that God does not will to be God without man. Thus does Barth present us with a doctrine which in so many ways has the form of Reformed doctrine (with its emphasis on God’s sovereignty) but which comes indeed, as is its intention, as good news, as a breath of fresh air blowing through the stuffy rooms of traditional Reformed interpretations of predestination. All of these are positive accomplishments which must be gratefully acknowledged even though we do not accept his thought that Jesus is electing God and the sole elect man.

Before we leave this discussion of Barth’s central thesis there are two other observations which Brunner makes and which should be cited. The first has to do with the freedom of God. This question relates most directly to the question of whether or not Barth is a universalist. This we shall consider in a separate chapter and along with it God’s freedom or otherwise to choose outside of Christ. Brunner thinks that Barth has so limited the freedom of God that his doctrine inevitably leads to universalism. The second observation has to do with an oft-repeated judgment of Barth, namely that he frequently can be accused of what may be termed Christomonism... Brunner also raises this in connection with his accusation of universalism, but the matter might, as well, be raised here. After all the central thesis does have to do with the primacy of Christ. We have given reasons for stating that Barth’s judgment is extreme. Can his view in this regard also be termed Christ-Monism?

(1) For Brunner’s comment see The Christian Doctrine of God, op.cit., p.314.
Brunner writes as follows:

Here a mistaken emphasis upon 'Christ alone' has led to a 'solution' which is no less dangerous than the opposite view which it desires to rule out. It is the same erroneous Christ-Homism which we have met already in the doctrine of the Trinity; the absolute equation of God and Christ, by means of which the Son, from being the Mediator of Creation becomes the Creator, which leads necessarily to the view that the Son is the Subject of the eternal Election, and in so doing the idea of Judgment is ignored and the possibility of being finally lost is eliminated. (1)

Brunner's words are echoed in Polman's remarks:

Barth immediately posits the foundation of all of his entire dogmatics: Everything which God says about Himself and which we have to say about God, is anchored in the name of Jesus Christ. With Christ we must begin and with him we must end and outside of him there is no kind of knowledge about God. This position is usually called his Christomonistic principle (Christ alone) or incarnational principle (the restriction of revelation to the incarnation, the becoming flesh). And it is this basic principle that governs Barth's view of predestination . . . Whatever else may change Barth remains true to his basic Christomonistic position and he models every doctrine according to this basic conviction . . . Barth does not read carefully and painstakingly all Biblical data respecting predestination in order to draw a conclusion. All data is from the start set under his Christomonistic scheme. (2)

We have here a major accusation not only of Barth's doctrine of election but also of his theology as a whole. Involved in this is the hermeneutical question which we dealt with briefly at the start of this chapter. Certainly on any reading of the Dogmatics the impression of the centrality of Jesus Christ dominates. That this is so in predestination is, by now, surely obvious. But there is a reductionist tendency in his theology which tends to see every doctrine through Jesus Christ. His doctrine of the scriptures finds its focus in Jesus Christ who is the Word of God. Indeed, what he means by revelation is Jesus Christ. His doctrine of creation is grounded on an understanding of the covenant which in turn is centred on Christ. Within the covenant is the election of God (through Christ) and

(1) Emil Brunner, ibid., p.315.
(2) A.D.R. Polman, Barth, op.cit., pp.32-33.
and the command of God. Even his doctrine of man begins with reflection on Christ as the ideal man. Of course, we are not surprised that his bulky treatment of the doctrine of reconciliation centres on Christ as well. There is reason for believing that Barth is the most Christ-conscious theologian who ever lived. While it is nothing short of marvellous how illuminating this approach can be, yet it does make one suspicious that in fact what we have operating here is a questionable hermeneutical principle.

When Barth was on his tour of North America a few years ago a question period was held at Princeton Theological Seminary at which time a student asked him about this matter. In response to the question Barth gave a definition of Christomonism which seems to confuse the issue: "Christomonism would mean that Christ alone is real and that all other men are only apparently real . . . ." Clearly, he rejects the notion that his theology is Christomonistic: "Sound theology cannot be either dualistic or monistic. The Gospel defies all 'isms' including dualism and monism. Sound theology can only be 'unionistic' uniting God and man; Christomonism (that's an old catchword!) was invented by an old friend of mine whose name I will not mention. . . . Christomonism is excluded by the very meaning and goal of God's and man's union in Jesus Christ."

We have here a major misunderstanding, for Brunner defines Christo-Monism quite differently than does Barth. Brunner and Polman are not saying that Barth asserts one sole reality, that of Jesus Christ. Rather they claim an arrogation of God's role by Christ and the consequent

(2) Karl Barth, ibid., p.172.
pressure of this understanding in biblical interpretation. Perhaps Brunner, in his turn is extreme in speaking of the "absolute equation of God and Christ," but in a somewhat looser sense Barth certainly can be accused of Christomonism in his doctrine of election. What else is it when he is spoken of as electing God and the only elect man? If that is not Christomonism, it would be difficult to know to what one might ascribe the word. Brunner's point is precisely that with which we have dealt: God is the subject of election and Christ the mediator. Barth in claiming that Christ is the subject and object of election is being untrue to the Bible.

But this question also relates to hermeneutics. In a much earlier writing Brunner had charged Barth with "a one-sided concept of revelation," and had stated: "He acknowledges only the act, the event of revelation, but never anything revealed..." Brunner suggests another approach:

But that is only one side of the biblical concept of revelation: the other side is its very opposite. It is the fact that God speaks to me here and now because he has spoken... the Bible is the 'fact of revelation' of God. It is true that the Scriptures become the Word of God for me only through the Holy Spirit. But they become the Word of God for me and they become it because they already are it. (2)

Here then is a direct assault on Barthian interpretation.

These several questions, of Christomonism, of revelation, of hermeneutics are all related ones. If Christomonism were a valid approach — if one could reduce doctrine eventually to Christology and arrogate to Christ the role of God — then undoubtedly revelation would be as Barth under-

(2) Emil Brunner, ibid., p.49.
stands it, and his hermeneutics would also be inevitable. Much of this becomes then a matter of one's precise conception of the Trinity. For our purposes, however, the problem relates to Christ's role in election and Christomonism as a principle of biblical interpretation.

Christ is considered by Barth as God's sole revelation. This, of course, has been opposed by Brunner who, on the other hand, must never be seen as a defender of a sort of easy-going type of natural theology.

But many other critics have had misgivings about his views as well. In particular this great emphasis on the Word of God leading to a type of Christological interpretation of the Bible results in speculation which cannot really be tested exegetically:

It was but a short step to the conclusion that the New Testament is only a relative statement of the word of God. It was not until Barth's commentary

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(1) Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, London, Lutterworth, 1962 (first published in 1939), English trans. by Olive Wyon, p. 527, writes: "... I am myself partly to blame for the curious fact that to-day many people regard me as the champion of 'natural theology' in the usual sense of the word, although actually I hold the diametrically opposite view."

(2) Carl E. Braaten, in History and Hermeneutics, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1966, p. 14, writes: "Jesus Christ is ... in Barth's theology the sole revelation of God ... We have several serious reservations about the christomonistic idea of revelation. A fair attention to the Biblical evidence will show, in the first place, that Jesus Christ is not the sole medium of revelation and, in the second place, that much more than revelation was accomplished by him." He adds (p.15) that "Jesus Christ is the sole Savior, not the sole revealer."

He also quotes Wolfhart Pannenberg: "Both theological questions, that of pure historicity and that of the supra-historical ground of faith, have a common extra-theological motive. Their common starting-point is to be seen in the fact that critical-historical investigation as the scientific verification of events did not seem to leave any room for redemptive events. Therefore the theology of redemptive history fled into a harbor supposedly safe from the critical flood-tide, the harbor of supra-history, — or with Barth, of prehistory." (p. 28, quoted from "Redemptive Event and History," Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics, C. Westermann, ed., John Knox Press, 1964).
on Romans that the force of the discovery began to be felt; if the text is a human word and therefore historically conditioned, it is not the text that is the word of God, but the text itself is already the interpretation of the Word of God. Barth's methodology, as he describes it in the Preface of the second edition of the *Römerbrief*, is to live with the text until it disappears and one is confronted with the divine word itself . . . If it is God's Word that is the object of exegetical endeavours, the process is at a dead end, for this word is not accessible to the exegete as an object for scrutiny. (1)

There are therefore substantial grounds for agreeing with Brunner that Barth is engaging in speculation in his doctrine of election and in the interpretation of the Bible that forms the background to his views. The decisive criticism of his hermeneutics is stated above: in subordinating the word of God to the Word of God Barth in effect enters an area where it is impossible to settle a dispute, for the ground of his theory is reflection on the Bible and not the Bible itself. This is what Brunner meant when he accused Barth of engaging in "natural theology." There are sound reasons then, for believing that Barth has yielded to what might well be termed Christomonism in his doctrine of election and that this same principle has had a tremendous effect on his hermeneutics. (2)


(2) I would refer also to the observation made by Arnold Come in *An Introduction to Barth's Dogmatics* for Preachers, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1963, p. 132: "All of the critiques that have been levelled against the Dogmatics lead in one way or another to the general charge that he has reduced all theology to Christology."
CHAPTER THREE

DOES KARL BARTH'S VIEW OF ELECTION LEAD TO UNIVERSALISM?

In the last chapter we referred to the fact that Barth regarded the substitution of Jesus Christ for the *decretum absolutum* as the key alteration to the Calvinist understanding of election (p.161). There is a positive side to that, namely that we are elect in Christ. The negative side, however, takes an unexpected twist. It is that reprobation has also been borne by Christ (pages 161 and following). This is Barth's interpretation of double predestination, and it would appear to be a conception which has an intent exactly opposite to Calvin's. If Calvin's doctrine would lead some to despair and put the matter of predestination under the shadow of the hidden decree, one wonders if Barth's doctrine has not the opposite effect. Does this mean universalism? If Christ has borne our rejection, then on what possible grounds could one conceive of any further rejection? Barth attempts to deal with this sort of question in the fourth part of his presentation, and especially in the last section of that part, "The Determination of the Rejected."

Certainly many of his utterances sound like universalism. We read that "In defiance of God and to his own destruction, he [man] may indeed behave and conduct himself as isolated man, and therefore as the man rejected by God" (p.316). But the most this individual may do is to "represent" this man. He cannot be this man "... for in Jesus Christ God has ascribed this to Himself ... and taken it away from man" (pp.316-

(1) Universalism is the theory that all will be saved.
Man, therefore, "... cannot reverse or change the eternal decision of God by which He regards, considers, and wills, man not in his isolation over against Him, but in His Son Jesus " (p.317). The attempt to live the life of one rejected by God is an " objective impossibility " (p.346). Barth asserts that the elect are "... obviously to be found in the sphere of the divine election of grace ... But the others are also to be found there " (p.346). Even if a man acts as though he were rejected he could not bring down upon himself again "the sword of God's wrath now that it has fallen " (p.349).

Do not these statements lead one to assume that Barth is a universalist? Apparently yes — if one were to judge from Barth's critics. But Barth himself does not draw this conclusion. He warns against the doctrine of the apokatastasis (p.417). But then he proceeds to warn against a denial of this doctrine (p. 422). His position is to defend the freedom of God in election: "It belongs to God Himself to determine and to know what it means that God was reconciling the world to Himself ( 2 Corinthians 5.19) " (p.419). Whatever else is said, it must be understood that Barth himself denies universalism.

Exactly this same position can be seen in some of his other writings. In his discussion of "The Doctrine of Creation" Barth also reminds us of the election of Jesus Christ. Again he strikes the dominant note of triumph that sounds through his writings: "We are forbidden to take sin more seriously than grace, or even as seriously as grace;" "If God has elected any other man to Himself in spite of his sin, He has done so primarily and originally because He eternally elected this man, and in and with Him this other as a member of the body of which Jesus is the Head" "A sum of the whole message of the New Testament may very well be found in the question of Romans 8.31: 'If God be for us, who can be against us ?'"

(1) Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, III, 2, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1960, p.41. (2) Karl Barth, ibid., p.42. (3) Karl Barth, ibid., p. 213.
In an even more recent writing, The Humanity of God, Barth pointedly deals with the question of his "universalism." He writes:

Does this mean universalism? I wish here to make only three short observations, in which one is to detect no position for or against that which passes among us under that term.

1. One should not surrender himself in any case to the panic which this word seems to spread abroad, before informing himself exactly concerning its possible sense or non-sense.

2. One should at least be stimulated by the passage Colossians 1.19, which admittedly states that God has determined through His Son as His image and as the first-bom of the whole Creation "to reconcile all things (να ἐξανακτήσῃ όλα) to Himself," to consider whether the concept could not perhaps have a good meaning. The same can be said of parallel passages.

3. One question should for a moment be asked, in view of the 'danger' with which one may see this concept gradually surrounded. What of the 'danger' of the eternally-skeptical-critical theologian who is ever and again suspiciously questioning, because fundamentally always legalistic and therefore in the main morosely gloomy? Is not his presence among us currently more threatening than that of the unbecomingly cheerful indifferentism or even antinomianism to which one with a certain understanding of universalism could in fact deliver himself? This much is certain, that we have no theological right to set any sort of limits to the loving-kindness of God which has appeared in Jesus Christ. Our theological duty is to see and understand it as being still greater than we had seen before. (1)

Again, this is the same position as the one found in

Eugenics II,2: the defense of the freedom of God.

Is this, however, a correct understanding of Barth? Brunner, in the strongest of terms, attacks Barth's doctrine at this point for two reasons. In the first place he asserts that this interpretation results in the denial of the freedom of God, and this denial entails universalism. In the second place he claims that Barth goes "much further" than universalism. What Brunner means is that no theologian has

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(3) Emil Brunner, ibid., p.348.
been quite so explicit in maintaining that "... through Jesus Christ, all believers and unbelievers are saved from the wrath of God and participate in redemption through Christ." In se stating his case Barth is going against ecclesiastical tradition and "the clear teaching of the New Testament." Yet again the question becomes that which of the reading of the Bible, the very ground upon which Barth himself chooses to build his theological house.

In gathering Brunner's criticisms we might also refer to an article which he wrote in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* entitled "Observations on Karl Barth's 'Doctrine of Man'." Two observations in particular may be quoted here. The first has to do with a question of Barth's style. For instance, perhaps the following is a partial explanation of the confusion in answering the question if he is a universalist:

"Again and again, it has occurred to me that you understand Barth best when you take him not so much as a systematic theologian but as one who has first one insight and then another, which he puts into words as they come without worrying whether they fit closely together in a system."

He then accuses Barth of furthering universalism:

Above all this argument resumes a line of thought from the doctrine of election to the effect that in Christ all men, believers or unbelievers, are elected and cannot be lost. This doctrine that even at that stage occasioned some misgivings is now developed to a point which makes us look at it even more askance. In brief, because every man in virtue of his creation is in Christ, everyone has therefore a share in the redemption whether he believes or not, everyone is 'a member of the Body

of the Head'.

He then adds a comment which should make us even more cautious in our attempt to comprehend exactly what Barth is saying: "Such then seems to be the hidden unity of Barthian thought. And yet I do not venture to say: This is what Barth means; I can only ask: Is this really what he means?"

The chief problem that seems to emerge from this brief survey of Barth's answer to the question as to whether or not one ought to hold the doctrine of the *apokatastasis* has to do with the structure of his own doctrine. That is, given his premises, ought he not to be a thoroughgoing universalist? That is what Brunner is getting at in attacking so vehemently Barth's idea of God's freedom. If Jesus is the only rejected man, Brunner claims, then all men must be saved. There is no room for any further rejection. He acknowledges, for instance, that Barth does deny the doctrine of the *apokatastasis*, but is nonetheless able to cite the sort of extreme remarks which we have quoted earlier. We have then a question of structure: premises that do not seem to lead to obvious conclusions.

This, roughly, is also the position taken by G.C. Berkouwer, who quotes from a lecture that Barth gave in Debreczen, Hungary, shortly after the second World War in which Barth said: "We can be certain that God's lordship is and will be total in all, but what this signifies for us we must leave to God. And therefore, we dare not say that in the universal grace damnation is eliminated. The Holy Scriptures speak of

(3) Brunner asserts that Barth's interpretation so binds God's will to Christ that God's freedom is denied. On the contrary, writes Brunner, "... God has freedom in Christ to elect, and outside of Jesus to reject. But if Jesus Christ Himself becomes the Subject of eternal Election then there is no divine freedom in Christ to elect, outside of Christ to reject." See p. 314, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, op. cit.
(1) Because of this and other statements made by Barth, Berkouwer arrives at the conclusion that we also have reached namely that "We are confronted with the indisputable fact that Barth has himself rejected the doctrine of the apokatastasis." (2)

Yet Berkouwer summarizes his investigation by saying that "There is no alternative to concluding that Barth's refusal to accept the apokatastasis cannot be harmonized with the fundamental structure of his doctrine of election."

It cannot be denied that Barth's language is extreme, so much so that one can scarcely fault Brunner in raising the issue of God's freedom. In Barth's theology God seems to have tied himself so much to Jesus Christ that it would appear that He has no freedom outside of Christ. Brunner's concern at this point is perhaps best expressed in the following words:

This Biblical view, however is connected with the distinction between the works which the Father does in the Son and those which He does in the sphere which is darkness and death, which thus has no part or lot in the Son, who is Light, Life, Salvation. Thus the web of the true doctrine of Election is inextricably entangled with the correct doctrine of the Triune God. (4)

In Brunner's estimate "the Biblical view" to which he refers is a dialectical tension between wrath and mercy. Interestingly, his conclusion also rests on the freedom of God.

New it must be clearly understood that Barth himself argues almost fiercely for an understanding of election as coming from God's


(2) G.C. Berkouwer, ibid., p.112.

(3) G.C. Berkouwer, ibid., p.116.

freedom. He states this in the most explicit of terms in the earliest part of Chapter VII of *Dogmatics II.*,2 : "God's decision in Jesus Christ is a gracious decision . . . In it He does something which He has no need to do, which He is not constrained to do" (p.9), " . . . the grace of God is absolutely free and thereby divine" (p.19), and " . . . the freedom of God . . . [is] His election of grace" (p.24). But perhaps a statement in the opening part of Chapter VIII is most illuminating: "Indeed He [Jesus Christ] lived out the freedom in which God from all eternity has bound and tied Himself for His own sake for our good" (p.606).

Barth here seems to be admitting that God's freedom is now limited, but that this is so because he has in his freedom limited himself. God may not, in Barth's system, have freedom to reject people outside of Christ, but this is itself a limitation which he has accepted in freedom. But Brunner is saying more than this. He is saying that on biblical grounds one must see rejection of man as residing in God's freedom apart from Christ. For instance, the Bible never speaks of the wrath of Christ but only of the wrath of God. He can be " . . . other than the One revealed in Jesus Christ as Light and Life, namely the Hidden God, who as such operates not in the Word and its light, but in that which is not 'word' or 'knowledge' in darkness . . . the Deus nudus, who does not veil Himself in the form of the Son of Man—the terrible Majesty, which is 'intolerable to all creation'".

At this juncture we are entering a dispute that properly belongs to an examination of the doctrine of the Trinity. However, it may be observed that Brunner himself is, perhaps, on dangerous grounds in his criticism. It is evident that he is trying to be faithful to the large details of the scriptural witness which point (in his opinion) to a dialectic leaving unsettled the question of universalism. But is the ontological ground of this dialectic truly, as he believes, the separation of the Father from the Son, or as he understands it the freedom of the Father? The biblical cited in the footnotes of the passage wherein he deals with this matter do not really carry the burden of his conclusion. It is true that the Bible ascribes wrath to God alone, but it is also true that judgment is committed to the Son, as it is that the Son utters some fairly harsh words (as, for instance, in several of the parables). Thus if there is a tendency for Barth to see a greater unity within the Trinity than the classic doctrine has traditionally allowed, perhaps Brunner in turn is permitting a greater separation. For the purposes of this thesis the question of whether or not Barth is untrue to the biblical witness in binding the will of the Father to the Son and thus restricting the freedom of God will have to be left an open one, to be decided only in the light of an intensive investigation into his doctrine of the Trinity. However, let it be understood that this "binding" itself rests in God's freedom. Brunner's observation, then, is a contentious one and itself needs assessment.

Even this matter of God's freedom is really background (insofar as the doctrine of election is concerned) to the charge that structurally Barth should be a universalist. Both Brunner and Berkouwer
clearly think that he should. How shall this charge be answered?

There appear to be three possible answers to this question in defense of Barth. The first is simply that he does not make as great a virtue as some would want out of consistency. The second — related closely to the first — is the view that he believes in a sort of "higher logic" which surpasses human logic and thus does not need to draw the obvious conclusion. The third questions the assertion that the premises really are as explicit as some believe. Perhaps the same ambiguity pertains to them as was found in our examination of the notion of the eternally existing God-man?

The first answer is suggested by Giovanni Miegge: "One should remember first Barth's constant refusal to yield to the temptation of systematic thought. Even in the Dogmatik his thoughts remain prophetic, not speculative, although at the cost of apparent contradictions, as for example in the doctrine of predestination." (1)

The second and third answers are forwarded by Herbert Hartwell:

Legically, this latter position would entail the doctrine of the apokatastasis, the teaching of universal salvation. However, believing in a higher divine logic which surpasses the logic of the finite human mind, Barth maintains in view of the freedom of the divine grace and on scriptural grounds that the question of whether or not ultimately all men will be saved must remain an open one. If this is true, one might wonder why in that case he feels justified to speak of Jesus Christ as the only rejected, and one might ask whether we have here another example of his peculiar method first to make an unqualified statement and to qualify it afterwards. However, as his teaching on 'The Determination of the Rejected' and on 'The Perdition of Man' shows, the meaning of the proposition of Jesus Christ as the only rejected is the limited one that Jesus Christ is the only one who from all eternity was

intended to suffer the penalty of death, whereas by his vicarious sacrificial death the way to eternal salvation would be, and actually has been, opened to all men; in other words, the sins of the latter, because of the forgiveness of sins offered in Jesus Christ, no longer necessarily and unavoidably result in rejection. Thus, from eternity, God's will in Jesus Christ is directed towards the salvation of all men 'in intention'; rejection cannot again become the portion of those who, having heard the call of Jesus Christ, believe in Him and thus, through faith in Him, become the children of God. (1)

The very least that we must allow is that verbally Barth is inconsistent. Indeed, we have already cited Brunner in this regard. Brunner believes that one best understands Barth by knowing that this is his style. Attendant upon this inconsistency is a certain looseness of phrasing. If Barth means that Christ is the only reject man in intention then why does he not say so? Since he leaves open the question of universalism is it not mandatory to place this qualification upon his "double predestination"? Perhaps, also, Barth is governed by a certain "higher logic," but if he is then we find ourselves within the same circle as our discussion of his hermeneutics: on what basis does one assess his "higher logic"? If one cannot measure his interpretation of the Bible by normal exegesis, and if one cannot assess his "higher logic" by logic, then does this not make an end of all debate? Yet, one must tread very carefully at this point. If one can say that Barth is inconsistent, may not the same be said of the Bible? After all, extreme statements on both sides of the question are found in Holy Writ. Yet we speak of the Bible's position as dialectical. Cannot the same be said of Barth's position? I believe it can.

(1) Herbert Hartwell, op. cit., p.110.
We must realize the great detail of the fourth part of Chapter VII of *Dogmatics II*, 2. In pondering the determination of the rejected he is also grappling with the most difficult of all theological problems, the question of evil. He sees both these questions as being resolved in a dialectical understanding of the relation between God and his creation. Thus, in spite of Brunner's harsh and not unfounded criticisms, the rather strange observation may be made that in fact they both believe in the same answers to these questions: the freedom of God and the solution to the problem of rejection within the framework of a dialectic.

Before we consider the above further, it should be remarked that Barth also has another concern: that of steering a new course between Arminianism and Calvinism and yet remaining faithful to the Reformed dedication to the grace of God as sovereign in Jesus Christ. Some readers may be tempted not to take Barth's "Calvinism" seriously, and yet I am convinced that a fair reading of *Dogmatics II*, 2 will lead one to see that his doctrine must in large part be understood in the light of Calvin's concern for the sovereignty of grace. One may grasp the original genius of Barth's view if one sees the debate in this context. Barth's disdain for Arminianism is only too evident both here and elsewhere in his dogmatics. Having seen where Arminianism has lead historically, and

(1) "There can be no doubt that the Remonstrants were, in fact, the last exponents of an understanding of the Reformation which Erasmus had once represented against Luther and later Castellio against Calvin; an understanding which can and should be interpreted in the light of the persistence of mediaeval semi-Pelagianism no less than in the Renaissance. And as the last exponents of that understanding they were also the first exponents of a modern Christianity which is characterized by the same ambiguity. They were the first Neo-Protestants of the Church. . ." (p. 67).
yet knowing also the shadow under which the traditional Calvinist interpretation has operated, where then, does one go in a modern statement of the doctrine of election? Barth’s answer has been to stay within the framework of Calvinism and yet to revise the content through a Christological interpretation of election and the decrees of God. His attempt may well have led him into some extreme statements, but in the light of what he was attempting the result is brilliant. It is chiefly valuable however, less in being a defensible statement of the doctrine than in being a remarkable stimulus to our thinking.

Barth, then, may well have been inconsistent in not drawing normal conclusions from his premises. But it then needs to be asked: if he allows for reprobation (as he does), then in what sense do the reprobate have a standing in the universe? Does he make any attempt to harmonize this with his earlier statements? If Jesus is the rejected man, then in what sense are others rejected? One may use Barth’s own vocabulary and inquire into the "determination" of the rejected.

(1) See also the article by Joseph D. Bettis, "Is Karl Barth a Universalist?" the Scottish Journal of Theology, December, 1967. Bettis agrees that Barth is not a universalist: "Barth’s intention is clear: he rejects universalism because the logic of the universalist position is based on false understanding of the goodness of God’s love. And Barth intends to argue that eternal reprobation can be a manifestation of God’s love" (pp.429 - 430). It should also be noted that Bettis agrees that Barth’s remarks in The Humanity of God while appearing to go further towards universalism essentially express the position in Dogmatics II,2.(p.427). Bettis is also the one who points to the fact that Barth is attempting to find new options in the old debate between Arminian and Calvinist (p.423 and p.426).
Barth deals with this question in its most specific form in Section 34, part four, "The Determination of the Rejected." He begins this part by asserting that "A 'rejected' man is one who isolates himself from God by resisting his election as it has taken place in Jesus Christ" (p.449). Yet even this resisting is within the will of God:

"The proposition from which we must start is that in the determination of the rejected we have to do with the will of God in what is by definition a wholly different sense than in the determination of the elect" (p.450). He develops this idea in the following way: "The one will of God which determines both is here the almighty, holy, and compassionate non-willing of God. No eternal covenant of wrath corresponds on the one side to the external covenant of grace on the other" (p.450). Thus the rejected exist in the sphere of God's non-willing. The rejected man is the one who is not willed by God (p.450). To understand Barth's position on the question of the determination of the rejected one must grapple with this difficult concept of God's non-willing.

Barth is careful to assert that the being of the rejected is not an independent entity. It is a "beingwith" (p.453). That is, it exists only in its relationship to the elect — to Christ, and to the man elected in Him (p.453). It is a shadow existence, one that "yields and dissolves and dissipates" (p.453). And yet, it is deadly enough and serious enough within the limits set it by God (p.453). The rejected have no final validity because of the very nature of their opposition which exists only in relation. Indeed, the fact of rejection has to be seen in the light of Christ's act: he has borne the rejection of the rejected.
The determination of the rejected is also explained as a symbol. The rejected one represents "... the world and the individual insofar as they are in need of the divine election" (p.455). He manifests that which is denied and overcome by the Gospel: "... the purpose of the divine election of grace is to grant to this man who in and of himself has no future, a future in covenant with God " (p.457).

This leads Barth to a lengthy discourse on Judas Iscariot, "... the character in which the problem of the rejected is concentrated and developed in the New Testament ... " (p.459). We have already referred to his exposition of the role of Judas in Chapter One, and therefore we do not propose to present Barth's argument in detail. However, the leading conclusions he draws involve the fact that the New Testament gives no decision on Judas' ultimate fate (p.476). Thus in Judas we find the situation which involves "... the contrast between the irresistible divine grace of Jesus Christ and a hostility of man towards this grace which humanly speaking is immovable" (p.477). In a comment of special relevance to the questions with which we are now dealing, he writes:

This contrast remains in the situation of proclamation. Judas is placed in this contrast and it is in this contrast that the rejected will recognize himself, and that Peter knew himself to be in solidarity with Judas. This is the open contrast of which the Church and every member of the Church must think when the question of the final rejection of men is raised. The Church will not preach an \( \text{ἀπὸ Κατὰ Στῆναι} \) nor will it preach a powerless grace of Jesus Christ or a wickedness of men which is too powerful for it. But without weakening of the contrast, and also without any arbitrary dualism, it will preach the overwhelming power of grace and the weakness of human wickedness in face of it. For this is how the ' for ' of Jesus and the ' against ' of Judas undoubtedly confront one another. We may not know whether it led to the conversion of Judas or not, but this is how it always is in the situation of proclamation. The rejected cannot escape this situation and its relation of opposites. He cannot extricate himself from this order. He will necessarily confirm it and even in his own way be active in it. And in the New Testament this divine determination of the rejected is unambiguously clear even, and especially in the person and act of Judas (p.477).
Judas' act then can only be judged as sin and guilt. But even in his guilt it must be affirmed that "... his determination is ultimately positive" (p.504). Judas, one of the twelve, and one to whom the concept of election is applied, experiences the fact that his election "... excels and outshines and controls his rejection..." (p.504). Indeed, Judas reminds us of the Jewish rejection of Jesus: "Judas, the ἐκπέμψατο Ἰς, in his concentrated attack upon Israel's Messiah does only what the elect people of Israel had always done towards its God, thus finally showing itself in its totality to be the nation rejected by God" (p.505).

In the closing paragraph Barth proclaims his belief that God wills that "he too" (Judas) should hear the Gospel and with it the promise of his election (p.506). He reminds us again that "... the rejected as such has no independent existence in the presence of God" (p.506). His determination is "... to hear and say that he is a rejected man elected" (p.506). Barth then concludes his study with the following words:

He [the rejected] is determined to hear and say that he is a rejected man elected. This is what the elect of the New Testament are — rejected men elected in and from their rejection, men in whom Judas lived, but was also slain as in the case of Paul. They are rejected who as such are summoned to faith. They are rejected who on the basis of the election of Jesus Christ and looking to the fact that He delivered Himself up for them believe in their election (p.506).
It will have to be admitted that Section 34, part four, is a very difficult one indeed. Barth is clearly arguing for the possibility of reprobation, as the title of this part itself indicates. Yet in the very process of arguing for it, he is trying to leave the question an open one. His handling of the role of Judas is witness to this. The contradictions of such a procedure, I believe, are more apparent than real and must largely be interpreted in the light of the difficulty of sketching the dialectical tension involved.

It is not, therefore, accurate to say that Barth leaves no room for reprobation. I would draw a parallel between his discussion of reprobation and his consideration of nothingness in *Church Dogmatics*, III,3. The problem is not how, on Barth's premises, one may allow room for reprobation. Rather, the problem in its most basic form is how can there be evil in the world at all? Another way of stating this question is how can there be nothingness in a world of which God is sovereign? Barth's treatment of nothingness is difficult and complex. He writes that nothingness is the reality against which God himself willed to become a creature. He goes so far as to assert that "The true nothingness is that which brought Jesus Christ to the cross and that which defeated him." His discussion of nothingness, as is his view of predestination, is Christocentric: "The objective ground of our knowledge of nothingness is Jesus Christ." Nothingness "is" precisely in God's relationship to it. It is "not nothing." It is not to be

(2) Karl Barth, *ibid.*, p.306.
(3) Karl Barth, *ibid.*, p.349.
equated with what is not. It is an objective reality. It is "... that from which God separates Himself and in face of which He asserts Himself and exerts His positive will." Of special importance to our consideration of election is this comment: "The ontic context in which nothingness is real is that of God's activity as grounded in His election of His activity as the Creator, as the Lord of His creatures, as the King of the covenant between Himself and man which is the goal and purpose of His creation." This thought is expanded in the following two paragraphs:

If the biblical conception of the God whose activity is grounded in election and is therefore holy, fades or disappears, there will also fade and disappear the knowledge of nothingness, for it will necessarily become pointless. Nothingness has no existence and cannot be known except as the object of God's activity as always a holy activity. The biblical conception as we now recall it, is as follows. God elects, and therefore rejects what He does not will. He says Yes, and therefore says No to that which He does not say Yes. He works according to His purpose, and in so doing rejects and dismisses all that gainsays it. Both of these activities grounded in His election and decision are necessary elements in His sovereign action. He is Lord both on the right hand and on the left. (4)

It is of major importance that we do not become involved at this point in the logical dialectic that if God loves, elects, and affirms eternally, He must also hate and therefore reject and negate eternally. There is nothing to make God's activity on the left hand as necessary and perpetual as His activity on the right. (5)

Just as Barth allows for this nothingness in life and sees the profound questions it entails, so also does he allow for reprobation.

(1) Ibid., pp.349-350.
(2) Ibid., p.351.
(3) Ibid., p.351.
(4) Ibid., p.351.
(5) Ibid., p.361.
with its equally profound implication. But the point is that he views the whole matter from a perspective which sees election as good news. Election is Gospel. So also is his view of creation for creation is "the external basis of the covenant," and what is covenant if it is not good news? That which dominates Barth's thinking is the Gospel—the triumph of grace. Hence he refuses to see a parallel between election and reprobation. The last sentence quoted from the section on "Nothingness" bears repeating: "There is nothing to make God's activity on the left hand as necessary and perpetual as His activity on the right."

If we realize that at bottom to grapple with the problem of reprobation is to grapple with the problem of evil we shall not be too hasty to find fault with Barth's presentation. Just as evil must not be seen as a second "god" in the universe (for this leads to the wholly unacceptable position of dualism) so also it would seem that reprobation must be viewed as a "being with," as that which has objective standing only in relation to God, only in relation to that which God does not will, only as a parallel to that nothingness which God does not will and yet which "is" precisely because he does not will it. If Jesus Christ is indeed the will of God, what else can we say but that God wills the election of all men and that there is no Calvinist double decree? Reprobation then can exist as only that which he does not will and yet that which has no existence without him.

If this is difficult both to follow and to understand we

(1) Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III, 1, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1958. In this volume Barth has an entire section on this matter.
can only reply that the problem of evil is difficult as well. I do not think that it is sufficient to criticize Barth's theory at this point without being able to offer a better alternative. The problem of evil is notoriously difficult and it may well be the case that no adequate solution has been found or ever will be found to it and to all the further questions it entails.

(1) Jacob Jocz, in *The Covenant: A Theology of Human Destiny*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1968, questions whether or not Barth has really remained within the limits of the biblical revelation in his doctrine. He writes: "More recently, Barth has applied himself to the problem of evil, attempting to provide a dialectical solution: evil is not so much a reality in itself as a reality arising from the force of the Divine No. Barth describes evil as "das Nichtige", which does not mean 'nothingness', but rather describes the negative character of the **Mihil**" (p.36). He then adds this comment: "It is a question, however, whether Barth has managed to remain within the legitimate confines of historic revelation in his theology of evil. His elaboration of the concept of 'chaos' is more reminiscent of a metaphysical approach than of biblical exegesis" (p.37).

G.S. Hendry, in a review of *Church Dogmatics II.2*, in *Theology Today*, 1958, p.403, remarks on a certain vagueness in Barth's style: "A certain looseness or even equivocation in Barth's use of the term 'rejection' [.is. found] . . . Sometimes it is used of God's rejection of man, sometimes of man's rejection of God."

J.D. Bettis, op. cit., argues that reprobation itself, in Barth's theory, can be understood to proceed from God's love. The disobedient man is "like a man walking down on the up-escalator. His activity is not halted, but its effectiveness is nullified" (p.430). Bettis remarks that "Barth does not mean that disobedience is only subjectively real and has no ontological reality as Brunner claims. By this phrase Barth shows that disobedience is ineffective; it is impossible for men to escape from the love of God" (p.431). Bettis also believes that Barth clearly allows for reprobation: "But it can be argued that in Christ the eventual end of disobedience has already been achieved. This is the point of those who claim that Barth's theology leads to universalism . . . . Barth's reply is clear. The threat of eternal rejection remains a real threat (Church Dogmatics, IV.3, First Half, p.477) (pp.432-433).
It may be remarked that Brunner himself takes an approach
to the problem of evil that is not unlike that of Barth and this even to
the point of speaking of "not-willing." He writes:

... we know that God does not will our sin, but that He does not allow
our sin to drive Him out of our lives. Even as sinners we remain under
God's Hand ... What we have done against His will has already been,
from the very beginning, part of His plan. How this can be, we do not
know; this interplay of 'not-willing' and 'not-doing' on the one hand,
with the will that plans and rules on the other, is something far beyond
our understanding. It has no analogies with the world with which we are
familiar. (1)

The above is also a reminder yet again that Brunner is no
easy proponent of a natural theology. Barth himself would argue against
analogies because they assumed an analogia entis which is but another
form of natural theology and he demands an analogia fidei which is
a recognition of revelation in Jesus Christ. It is helpful, therefore, to
have Brunner's comment before us, for part of the reason we find the notion
of God's non-willing so difficult is that there is nothing precisely to
which we might compare it; there is no human analogy. The paradox emerges,
however, that Brunner, the supposed defender of "natural theology," refuses to
speculate and remains content to say very little about God's non-willing.
Barth, however, elaborates his thought at great length. It is true that
one can question how close he remains to the Bible in this expansion of
his thought. But a close reading of his discussion of "nothingness" will
lead one to appreciate yet further the remark he made in connection with
Supralapsarianism that that doctrine was not so much speculation as defense

(1) Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption,
Dogmatics II, London, Lutterworth Press, 1960 (First published
against bad speculation. *Church Dogmatics* III,3, "God and Nothingness," is a truly masterful dealing with the theme, and one which ranges with remarkable insight over the spectrum of Christian and non-Christian thought. For instance, (if it is not too strange to say), he seems to understand Sartre better than Sartre understands himself. Barth appreciates the tremendous force that nothingness has had in philosophy and the resurgence of interest in this concept in recent years. His survey of great thinkers such as Leibniz, Schleiermacher, Heidegger, and Sartre, raises the question if in fact such speculative thinking is not a necessity? At any rate, it is within this dialectic that one must understand the role he ascribes to rejection and thus genuinely and really enforce his denial of universalism.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESPONSIBILITY

The third chief area of Brunner's criticism of Barth's doctrine of election may well be termed responsibility. This is a wide topic and includes not only the doctrine of election but also that of revelation and the doctrine of man. This general charge that Brunner makes can, in its turn, be divided into three parts:

i) Objectivism: the charge that Barth makes a "forcible severance of revelation and faith." (1)

ii) "Theologismus": "The error of substituting theology for personal faith." (2)

iii) Responsibility: A belief that his doctrine of election does away with the need for personal faith.

It will be recognized that all of these serious accusations are related to one another. I think that it is not unfair to Brunner's intent to group the three of them under the one heading of "Responsibility." However, of the three, the first relates most to a theology of election and for that reason will command our greatest attention.

With reference to this latter, Brunner writes as follows:

The answer to this question [of Barth's 'universalism'] lies in an element peculiar to his teaching, which has always been characteristic and permeates his teaching as a whole: namely, its 'objectivism', that

(2) Emil Brunner, ibid., p. 237.
(3) Emil Brunner, ibid., pp.349-351.
is, the forcible severance of revelation and faith, or rather -- since Barth also naturally wished to make a basis for faith -- the view that in comparison with revelation, with the objective Word of God, the subjective element, faith, is not on the same level, but is on a much lower plane.

Whereas in the message of the New Testament, Christ and faith, participation in salvation in Christ and faith, Justification and faith, absolutely belong together, and are on exactly the same level, so that we may say: 'Where there is no faith, there Christ is not; where there is no faith, there, too, there is no salvation in Christ,' Barth does not admit that this correlation exists . . . .

Once again we must say: It may be that this 'objectivism', this 'relativization' of faith, may seem illuminating to many and may evoke their enthusiastic agreement. But there is one thing that even they cannot gainsay: that in so doing they are in clear opposition to the teaching of the New Testament . . . .

First of all, the result is that the real decision only takes place in the objective sphere and not in the subjective sphere. Thus: the decision has been made in Jesus Christ -- for all men. Whether they know it or not, believe it or not, is not so important. The main point is that they are saved. They are like people who seem to be perishing in a stormy sea. But in reality they are not in a sea in which one can drown, but in shallow water, where it is impossible to drown. Only they do not know it. Hence the transition from unbelief to faith is not the transition from 'being-lost' to 'being-saved'. This turning-point does not exist, since it is no longer possible to be lost. . . . there remains no room for man to make a real decision. (1)(2)

Barth's "objectivism" is on a continuum with his Supralapsarianism, and the emphasis that we have found in his theology on what might be termed suprahistory. Brunner's claim is that this emphasis does violence to the New Testament description of faith.

Very closely related to the above is the assertion that Barth is guilty of "theologism," a word that is explained by Brunner's editor as "The error of substituting theology for personal faith.".

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(1) Emil Brunner, ibid., pp.349-351.
I believe that "theologismus" is identical with the chief concern that Brunner has in his exceedingly perceptive book *Truth As Encounter*. The above, first published in an English edition in 1964, is largely a reprint of the earlier *The Divine-Human Encounter*, first published in English in 1944 (and in German in 1938, hence before *Church Dogmatics* II,2). The difference between the two books resides in Part One, and this includes a sharp attack on Barth on the one hand and Bultmann on the other. Respectively, they are charged with "objectivism" and "subjectivism".

We might take the following as examples of this general criticism:

Just as significant is his [Barth's] increasing alienation from Kierkegaard's existential and dynamic view of apostolic faith, and from his searing criticism of 'Christianity'... .

Nothing indicates more clearly his loss of earlier insight—learned from Kierkegaard—that faith is an existence, than this absurd connection of existence with theology. There is indeed such a thing as believing, or Christian existence, but no such thing as theological existence... .

... for him, faith is only 'the subjective realization of an objective res' (KD,IV, l, 828)... .

But if we inquire about the real, deepest reason for this later declension from the standpoint of the original Barthian theology, we must see it in an objectivism— that was just as far away from the center of the Biblical faith of the Reformers as the subjectivism of the theology of Schleiermacher which Barth attacks... .

... accordingly, Barth does not deal with faith until near the end of his Dogmatics, and makes it clear there that faith has a very subordinate place in comparison with the revelation of God. Here we have certainly the antipodes of Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith*, but this antipodes is just as far from the Biblical witness to God and Christ, which is always a witness of faith, as Schleiermacher. The correlation of the truth of revelation and the truth of faith that we find in the Bible and the Reformers is shattered, and the place of a divine truth that discloses itself only to faith is taken by a metaphysical speculation about God. (1)

The third point of criticism coincides with the title of this chapter. It is the accusation that Barth's doctrine of election denigrates the responsibility of man. Once more it must be said that the relation of this is exceedingly close to the first two points of criticism. It must also be said that this concept touches a raw nerve in the Barth-Brunner debate, for it involves not merely one's conception of election, but also the tremendously complicated dispute over natural theology to which we have already alluded. I have chosen the general title "Responsibility" for this chapter because to question the role of faith in salvation leads to obvious doubts about the place of human responsibility in it. If that is true, then is it further the case that there is a denigration of responsibility in general? Put in its broadest terms, this leads to the question of the relation of history to God's work before the foundation of the world. This matter of responsibility goes well back in the Barth-Brunner controversy:

... only a completely theological anthropology, which begins with the great central truths of the Christian faith — the Trinity, Election, and Incarnation — and is directed towards the final Redemption, will be in a position, without causing new misunderstandings, to show clearly my concern, as against Karl Barth, namely man's responsibility. It is that alone, and not any weakening of the doctrine of the sola gratia, which causes me to hold fast to the Biblical doctrine of a general or 'natural' revelation of God, in spite of all that may be said to the contrary. (1)

Brunner clearly relates ethics and responsibility in general to a proper understanding of election, although he does not assert that Barth's doctrine of election destroys human accountability. For Brunner the Christian ethic is an "ethic of election." (2)

The chief question that emerges from these three accusations for our purposes is whether or not Barth can, in any meaningful sense, leave room for human faith? That is, just as when one is faced with his doctrine of double predestination one is virtually forced to ask "Should Barth not, therefore, be a universalist?" So now it must be asked if he leaves room for faith.

Brunner believes that he does not. In so believing he finds himself in the company of a large number of critics.

(1) S.A. Matczak, Karl Barth on God, New York, St. Paul Publications, 1962, pp. 168-169, writes:

"... the problem of personal belief still lacks clarity in Barth's explanation. This obscurity becomes more evident if we remember that the Bible requires a personal subjective belief for our eternal salvation and that Barth accepts it." "Our final judgment on Barth's doctrine of predestination is that he presents clearly enough his theory of why we are objectively predestined but leaves unsettled the problem of subjective belief." "The main objection against Barth's position may be centred on the fact that for him faith has no rational foundation whatever."


"Eduard Bess objects to Barth's doctrine of predestination because it tends to deny history ... [but] Barth's view is not so undialectical as often appears. Balthasar concedes this when he reminds us that Barth's tendency towards idealism is in tension with a steadfast emphasis on the historical revelation of Jesus" (p. 120, note 22).

"Catholic critics, on the other hand, tend to criticize Barth's emphasis, not for its limitations upon God's freedom, but for its implicit denial of man and the immanent freedom he possesses apart from and as the condition of salvation. Thus Balthasar, after defending Barth at other points of typical criticism, protests that 'the priority of Christ in no wise demands (as Barth tends to insist) that the whole of creation must necessarily be pressed painfully into a Christological scheme.' Hans Kung makes the same point when he asks if Barth's view finally touches man in his historical existence. 'In fact, is not man as God's covenant partner finally omitted?' (pp. 123-124)."

Osborn himself makes the following comment: "As Barth's doctrine of predestination appears to swallow up the historical deed of Christ, so now his doctrine of the person and work of Christ appears to eliminate the event of faith and reduce faith and the work of the Church to relative meaninglessness. This judgement is rather unanimous among Barth's critics" (p. 147, note 138).
As one examines Barth's doctrine of election as it is in Chapter VII of Church Dogmatics II,2 one will discover that virtually no space is given to this problem of the relation of faith to predestination. It needs to be asked if this omission can be subjected to criticism.

I believe that this procedure is true to the biblical model of election. The Bible does discuss the meaning of faith. It also discusses election. But the Bible does not see the relation of the one to the other as a great problem to be agonized over. The need for faith is stated, as is the fact of election, but the vexed question of how the two fit together is apparently not a major issue. If such is the case, then there is no demonstrable necessity for Barth to have included a theology of faith within his doctrine of election.

There is one notable exception to the above in Chapter VII. It is the clear and explicit denial of synergism:

There is no synergism of any kind in the history of Jesus Christ's election, for in this history neither the sin of man nor the prayer of man can play the part of an autonomous mystery, as man's decision complementary to God's. There can be no co-operation or reciprocal action of any kind between any such mystery in man and the mystery of the predestinating God. (p.194).

The reason for Barth's approach, and for his opposition to synergism, resides in the very basic concept of his interpretation of predestination, namely the God primarily elects Himself. If that is true —

(1) Appendix One will attempt to demonstrate that even Romans 9-11 has been misunderstood in this regard.
(2) Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God, op. cit.,on p. 312 makes a comment that has a bearing on the relation of faith to election: " Hence the evidence of the New Testament does not contain a trace of that whole complex of problems connected with the doctrine of Predestination, dealing especially with moral freedom and responsibility."
and it should be understood that this is the very central point of his doctrine — then clearly there can be no room for man's work in salvation. Grace alone as it is in Jesus Christ is the ground of our election. Put in this way the rejection of synergism becomes inevitable.

Yet Barth does consider faith in his Church Dogmatics, though not until IV, I. Here a key definition of faith is offered, one which Brunner has severely attacked:

It is a subjective realization. That is, as a human activity it consists in the subjectivisation of an objective res, which in its existence and essence and dignity and scope takes precedence of this subjectivisation and therefore of the human subject active in it, being independent of and superior to this subject and what he does or does not do. (1)

However, faith is regarded by no means simply as a human act for the freedom to believe is itself something given by the Holy Spirit and the Spirit is that same awakening power which makes faith a sort of self-evident act, and yet all the more free for that very reason. Though Barth sees the "point of contact" of the Gospel with man not in any natural theology but rather in the Holy Spirit, freedom is nonetheless still an emphasis in his theology of faith: that faith is a free human act.

The active aspect of faith in human terms is expressed in three words: (4) "acknowledgement, recognition, and confession." To some extent all three of these are ways of knowing. In the German, Barth is playing on the word kennen and writes of anerkennen, erkennen, and bekennen. This three-fold approach is inspired by the older dogmatics which gave the classical

(1) Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV, I, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1956, p. 742.
(2) Karl Barth, ibid., pp. 746 and 748.
(3) Karl Barth, ibid., p. 757.
(4) Karl Barth, ibid., p. 758.
definition of faith as taking place in the three acts of notitia, assensus, and fiducia. Barth writes that "The recognition and confession of faith are included in and follow from the fact that they are originally and properly an acknowledgment, the free act of obedience." But the object of all of this, the res itself is Jesus Christ — not creed, dogma, Church, or even statements about Christ.

If one recognizes the above, that for Barth faith is more than the subjective appropriation of a res, that it includes the work of the Holy Spirit in one's life, and that it is an attitude which leads to the "humility of obedience," then one must ask if Brunner is not being somewhat unfair in his criticism of Barth's view of faith.

Indeed, Brunner's concept of faith, in its turn, has been criticized for being overly subjective. Brunner, however, has asserted that he answers this criticism in his Dogmatics, Vol.III, chapters 13 and 16. The accusation against Brunner, however, at least serves to point out the difficulty of stating a conception of faith that is faithful both to the subjective and objective elements in the Bible. As we have noted, it is true that Barth writes of faith as "the subjectivisation of an objective res ", but is not all that he writes about faith as humility, faith as emptiness before God, more than a counter-balance to this concept?

Yet there is undoubtedly a sense in which Brunner's attack is true. The Bible does say more about faith — vastly more — than

(1) Karl Barth, ibid., p. 758.
(2) Karl Barth, ibid., p. 758.
(3) Karl Barth, ibid., p. 620.
his system seems to allow. We need only to be reminded of Jesus' frequent
appeals for faith, of St. Paul's key notion of justification by faith,
and of the concept of "believe in" in the Gospel of St. John. Barth, on
the other hand, far from following this biblical model, appears to be
stating his theology in reaction to the subjectivism of liberal thought.
This background, it must be understood, forms an important part of Barth's
theological heritage. It was against theological liberalism that he reacted
in his famous commentary on Romans. One may then say that this reaction
continues throughout the Church Dogmatics with their emphasis on the ob-
jective work of God in Jesus Christ. But it must also be said that Barth's
view of faith has been worked out in relation to the highly subjective
opinions of Rudolph Bultmann whose interpretation of faith Barth criticizes
as being somewhat parallel to the Roman Catholic interpretation of the
mass in its conception that faith is a re-enactment of the death and re-
surrection of Christ.

However, Barth seems to have adopted this course of action
with deliberation. He writes: "We shall give to the individual Christian
and his faith the attention which he demands, but it must be at this
point — not at the beginning of our way, but briefly at the end."
He writes of "the individual Christian with his puny faith." Faith
must be Christologically understood and interpreted in the light of the
role of Christ: "Of the three factors — justification, faith, and Christ
— the basic and controlling one is obviously the last." Therefore,

(1) Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV,1, op. cit., p.767.
(2) Karl Barth, ibid., p.741.
(3) Karl Barth, ibid., p.741.
(4) Karl Barth, ibid., p.639.
one may attempt to attack Barth's system of theology because it brings faith in only near the end. But one cannot assume for a moment that this is an accidental procedure or that it is done as an afterthought. Barth begins with God and ends with man. In so doing, he believes that he is following things as they really are.

Brunner, however, is not merely asserting that Barth's view of faith is inadequate. He is saying that Barth does not really allow for faith at all, and that the event of faith is swept up in the decision of God which precedes human history. One wonders in response to this question if any theological system which places stress upon the sovereignty of grace sufficiently allows for faith without at the same time entertaining some degree of paradox. Certainly if one took many of Barth's statements at face value and sought then their logical implication, one would express the same reservations that Brunner and many other critics have expressed. But in the previous chapter we have attempted to show that Barth's doctrine is not so undialectical as some people believe; that many of his remarks must be interpreted through a sense of style, and that the logic he obeys is a "higher logic" of the Word of God. In speaking of his style we mean that he has the habit of making what appears to be an extreme and unqualified statement and then of qualifying it afterwards. By "higher logic" we refer to his hermeneutics which we have already discussed in Chapter Two. In this way, as we have attempted to demonstrate in the last chapter, Barth does allow for reprobation and cannot fairly be charged with universalism. If reprobation is a possibility then the event of faith assumes a degree of importance it could not have otherwise. It will be recognized that Brunner's
concern for Barth's view of faith is an outcome primarily of his belief that Barth is one who goes "beyond universalism". We are therefore denying one of the premises on which Brunner constructs his accusation.

What now do we make of the three charges which Brunner brings to Barth's theology of election and which we have gathered under the general heading of "responsibility"?

Is Barth guilty of "objectivism: the forcible severance of revelation and faith"? Indeed, is 'guilty' in any sense an apt choice of words? Does it really matter whether or not one is objective in this sense?

Certainly it cannot be denied that he is an objectivist. Brunner is quite right that for Barth faith is "not on the same level but is on a much lower place" than revelation. Barth would be the first to admit this — and the first to defend the position that this is the only proper procedure for a theologian of the Word of God. Barth does separate faith and revelation, but it is not at all self-evident that this procedure is unscriptural. When one reads Barth one readily sees that for him revelation centres on Jesus Christ. But as one reads further and ponders his understanding of revelation it becomes clear that there is a sense in which he understands election itself to be revelation. If that is so, if election is God's great self-determination to reveal himself in Jesus Christ, then faith clearly becomes separated from revelation. What can man do in this primary decision of God to act in a certain way? The answer is nothing whatever. I believe that it is in this sense that we must interpret his opposition to all synergism: "faith as such cannot contribute anything (1) to our justification." Is it by any means certain that this description

(1) Karl Barth, ibid., p. 617.
of God's saving act is not founded on the Bible? No, indeed, the reverse seems to be the case, for the very doctrine of predestination is premised on the intent of God "before the foundation of the world!"

Thus Barth can rightly be said to be an objectivist. This, however, is not an accusation to be made simply against his doctrine of election and of faith but probably against his whole theological method. Yet we cannot for the purposes of this thesis assume that Brunner is right and Barth is wrong with regard to a theology of revelation. Indeed, it can be argued that when one takes into account Barth's emphasis on the role of the Spirit in faith that his interpretation of faith is not so far from Brunner's as the latter himself supposes.

Brunner's second charge of "theologismus" is closely related to the first, and can be answered in the same manner. Does Barth really substitute theology for personal faith? The answer, I believe, is yes, if one is able to stop with his definition of faith as the subjective reception of a res. But we have already given reasons which show that his grasp of faith is vastly broader than that definition. For him faith is not merely an intellectual thing but a personal relation with God through the Holy Spirit, a relation which depends on the freedom of man and genuinely demands a decision. This faith is meant to result in and is characterized by humility which leads to obedience. This humility, clearly, is not meant simply to be the reception of theological knowledge, but rather is indicative of a deep and profound attitude towards God. I do not think that any fair reading of the section "Justification by Faith Alone" in Church Dogmatics IV, I will allow the charge of "theologismus" against Barth's theology to stand. Barth shows himself essentially to be in deep agreement with
the Reformed conception of faith. In this regard he approvingly cites both Luther and Calvin, and adopts a critique of Trent's teaching on justification by faith that is entirely compatible with traditional Reformation theology. In short, if Barth is guilty of "theologismus" then apparently so also are Luther and Calvin.

The third charge, lack of "responsibility," depends to a large degree on one's estimate of the first two if one is to judge its validity. Yet the issue it represents is wider than the nature of faith and includes the question of natural theology. Perhaps this issue has caused such heated debate not only because it is symbolic of the division between Barth's theology and Brunner's doctrine, but also because in a very real way it is the point at which they are closest. As one reads both of these great teachers, it becomes fairly apparent that in the best sense of the word they are evangelicals. That is, their theology is evangelical in intent. It is meant as a modern statement of the evangel, the good news. Barth took the way of objectivism as perhaps the only possible way given the theological climate of the early part of this century. But his aim was clear: the recovery of the Gospel. For him the way was revelation through Jesus Christ alone: through God alone, God is known. Brunner's purpose was identical in its commitment to the recovery of the Gospel. But, though one can never accuse him of compromising grace, his "starting-point," his way of presenting the evangel, included an emphasis on man's responsibility. The inner wisdom of this approach was clear: people are always interested in themselves. Man may be agnostic about God; but man is never agnostic about himself. Thus for Brunner a fairly early theological interest was a Christian anthropology (Man in Revolt, 1937). Barth's massive treatment

(1) Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, op. cit., writes on p. 82: "No man is a cynic where his own claim to be considered is concerned!"
of the doctrine of man comes correspondingly later. Much of what Brunner has to say in *Man in Revolt* fits very well under his own phrase coined some years later, "Missionary Theology." Brunner, then, believing in a "point of contact" in man, attempted to reach man with the Gospel in an eminently logical way: by starting to discuss the Christian understanding of man, and by sharing his conception of man's responsibility. The whole procedure, of course, presupposes a certain theology. Brunner, then, developed his theology partially in accordance with this concept of responsibility. Therefore a theology such as Barth's which began so uncompromisingly at the other end could only appear to him to result in denigrating the responsibility of man.

Here again we ask if this charge can really stand before a fair reading of Barth's estimate of faith. I believe that it cannot, and this largely on grounds already expressed. If one is not a universalist, and if one believes in a faith which is characterized by humility leading to obedience, then one can scarcely be said to be lacking in sensitivity to the responsibility attendant upon personal faith. Barth, however, wishes to remain a Calvinist in his interpretation of faith as proceeding from the Holy Spirit. Faith may come from a man's free decision, but that freedom itself proceeds from God: "A man does not have this freedom unless the Son makes him free." Indeed, Barth maintains that a person is only

(1) We should note that this issue of the evangelical intention of the respective theologies of Barth and Brunner is by no means a side issue. Barth has clearly stated that his aim in the doctrine of election is once more to recover it as Gospel. This approach to the doctrine is shared by Brunner. But we should also note that the old debate of one's approach to those outside the faith is by no means a settled one. What is the prolegomenon to evangelism? That the answer to this question is uncertain indicates the continuing importance of the issue.

(2) Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV,1, p.745.
free in this freedom which God gives him. Brunner, on the other hand, while most anxious to retain the sola gratia, sees man as being much more personally responsible for his own salvation than does Barth. At this point, of course, we enter a very familiar dispute: this is the Calvinist-Arminian controversy but restricted to this one point alone. Barth wishes to remain faithful to his conception of the work of Christ, to his Supralapsarianism, to the sovereignty of grace. Brunner sees the problem surrounding personal faith as resting on a confusion, and thus stresses personal responsibility in faith strongly, while remaining quite committed to the sola gratia of salvation. But while Brunner may appear to be an "Arminian" in this matter and Barth a Calvinist, a close reading of their respective positions suggests that in essentials there is no real difference between them.

Perhaps the real issue between Barth and Brunner on the question of faith and election has to do with consistency. Brunner insists

(1) Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God, op. cit., p. 316, writes: "The mistaken view of faith, however, also affected the understanding of Election. Election thus became 'determination.'" "Behind this dangerous doctrinal development there lies a fatal confusion of ideas. What these theologians really want to say is that of himself man is incapable of doing the will of God and of believing in Christ, and thus that faith and freedom are wholly the gift of God. That, in point of fact, is the teaching of the Bible ... But all this lies within the dimension: 'Word-responsibility', 'Divine Person - human person'. This means that man can never earn grace, and further that he cannot even rightly understand the word of grace and believe it, save as the Holy Spirit opens his heart to do so. But in all this man remains 'person', and the transaction between God and man remains a personal one, something which takes place within the sphere of responsibility ... grace is a personal act ... ."
on consistency and achieves it with marvellous clarity in the three volumes of his *Dogmatics*. Barth, however, often fails to draw conclusions that his premises would appear to force upon him. In this case, if he really were consistent, it seems unlikely that he either would or could leave room for reprobation or a meaningful personal faith. Of course, what brings him to both of these is his attempt to be faithful to the biblical record. There is a sense, therefore, in which Brunner's three charges are all valid — if only Barth were consistent! But they are not valid precisely because he is not consistent.

(1) Robert T. Osborn, *Freedom in Modern Theology*, op. cit., p.179, writes:

"Once again we have been made aware of the unsystematic nature of Barth's theology. We have seen him insist that Christian knowledge is a testimony to the freedom and actuality of the Word. And yet he now insists, in his last volume, that the victory of the Word is contingent upon the freedom of man's response to the Word, that indeed, man is free to refuse the Word and suffer damnation."
CHAPTER FIVE

AGREEMENT BETWEEN KARL BARTH AND EMIL BRUNNER ON THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

While the chief subject of this thesis is Brunner's criticisms of Barth's doctrine of election, nevertheless there is ample reason for pointing out the marked similarities between them. It is so often thought that they stand on opposite sides of theological issues that it is helpful and important to demonstrate their essential agreement on this significant doctrine. Indeed, one must not misunderstand the nature of the dialogue that has gone on between Barth and Brunner. It is not as though they each worked through their theological opinions and then viewed dialogue as something extra, something added. Rather, for both of them, dialectic belongs to the very task of constructing a theology. Though an element of harshness has crept into their public debates, their final stand was always to remain open to criticism. Thus Barth would never have claimed to be a Barthian. And Brunner wished only to participate in a "theology on the march." For him "being finished" was "almost identical" with being dead. Yet the very fact of that debate, conducted in such robust style, has sometimes cloaked their essential agreement on so many matters of foundational importance to Christian Faith.

In the first place, we should note that Barth and Brunner are decidedly agreed upon their intention. They wish to re-work the doctrine of election, freeing it of speculation and recovering the biblical insight that election is of grace.

Barth speaks of this in most explicit terms in his Preface to Chapter VII:

The work has this peculiarity, that in it I have had to leave the framework of the theological tradition to a far greater extent than in the first part on the doctrine of God. I would have preferred to follow Calvin's doctrine of predestination much more closely, instead of departing from it so radically . . . . As I let the Bible itself speak to me on these matters, as I meditated upon what I seemed to hear, I was driven irresistibly to reconstruction. (p.x, Preface).

Brunner, writing in *Man in Revolt*, speaks of anthropology as interpreted by Christian Faith (and with it the doctrine of election) as " . . . burdened with certain fundamental axioms, wrongly regarded (1) as Biblical truth.". What he says about election in that work, and later in *The Christian Doctrine of God*, is demonstration that he too has left the theological tradition of which Barth speaks. There are many points at which they have both re-worked the tradition. The action of man in faith is not regarded as mere passivity. Election is no longer assumed to deal merely with individual election. Most of all, the doctrine of a hidden decree apart from Jesus Christ is attacked jointly by them.

Though we have already observed that Brunner attacks Barth for what he believes is Barth's speculative interpretation of election, nonetheless in a general way they are united against the theorizing.

of traditional Calvinism. It is speculation, and not biblical truth, which is the foundation of the Calvinist theory of double predestination and the hidden decree. It is especially this latter which had crept in almost as an assumed thing, an axiom virtually taken for granted, that Barth and Brunner attack most vehemently:

From the outset I would observe that in the main tendency there is firm agreement between the doctrine of Barth and that which is represented in this book: Barth's concern is the same as ours, namely, the desire to state the doctrine of Election which is in harmony with revelation and the thought of the Bible as a whole; hence it is our common concern to reject the speculative doctrine of Predestination inaugurated by Augustine, the most intense expression of which is Calvin's doctrine of the Double Decree. Our concern is that Election never be mentioned save on the basis of the revelation in Jesus Christ, that we only know the 'divine decree' in Jesus Christ, and that we have nothing to teach about a 'hidden decree' of God concerning those who do not accept the promise of Jesus Christ. (1)

Finding themselves united in this way, Barth and Brunner are one in rediscovering the fact that election is of grace. Barth commences his discussion of the doctrine of election by pondering the implications of believing that election is election of grace. Brunner in indicating that Christ is the foundation of election is doing that as well:

The call that is addressed to me through Jesus Christ from all eternity calls me to my eternal destiny. To be called from the eternity of God to eternal communion with God — that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Briefly, that is the meaning of the New Testament message of eternal election. (2)

In words that are strikingly similar to the above, Barth has written: "To be determined by God's election is the final — but really the final mystery of every human life" (p.43). Thus do both Barth

(1) Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God, op. cit., pp.346-347. We have made reference to some of these remarks earlier, on page 12, but quote this passage now in its entirety because of its great importance for the question at hand. This quotation forms the obvious focus for the contention that in the main Brunner and Barth have a similar doctrine of election.

(2) Emil Brunner, ibid., p.305.
and Brunner declare election to be good news, Gospel, a message of gladness rather than of darkness and gloom.

A second point of agreement, in addition to the intention which they share together, has to do with the foundation of the doctrine. We do not need to repeat ourselves at this juncture in indicating again that both of them believe that they are going back to a fresh reading of the Bible in reconstructing the doctrine. Together they find, in so doing, that the centre of this doctrine is Jesus Christ. They re-work the doctrine from a Christological standpoint, though Barth is far more radical in this regard (as we have seen) than Brunner. We have already examined the differences that have thus arisen in their interpretation of predestination. Nevertheless we do well to remind ourselves of the essential similarity of their foundation. Barth especially has provided a trenchant commentary on the other foundations theologians have used in developing their understanding of election (in Chapter VII, Section 32, Sub-section 2, "The Foundation of the Doctrine"). His inquiry reminds us forcibly that the foundation Barth and Brunner have chosen has not been self-evident in the history of theology.

A third point of agreement has to do with the marked affinity between what Brunner means by revelation and Barth means by election. If we recall that Barth deliberately places the doctrine of election within the doctrine of God, and that for Barth election has to do with God's intention to act in a certain way, the following quotation from Brunner takes on great significance in our endeavour to find links between their respective interpretations:
Once more we see the close connexion between God's Nature and His revelation. Because He is, and wills to be, the Holy One, He reveals Himself . . . . In His revelation the 'otherwise' hidden being of God is expressed. In what sense God is the Holy One, only comes out where His Holiness manifests itself as electing revelation and revealing election. Thus the position is not, that first of all God is 'something', and then, later on, reveals what He is; rather, we may say that it is God's very nature to want to reveal Himself, since it springs from His Holiness.

To this let us compare Barth's words: "As we have to do with Jesus Christ, we have to do with the electing God. For election is obviously the first and basic and decisive thing which we have always to say concerning this revelation" (p. 54). Since for Barth revelation is Jesus Christ, is it too much to suggest that therefore election constitutes revelation?

Barth's doctrine of election seems to occupy a position within his theology similar to that which revelation occupies within Brunner's. If in the early part of the Church Dogmatics the decisive factor is a theology of the Word of God, in the later part, after II,2, the decisive insight appears to be Jesus Christ as electing God and elect man. John Godsey, who has written an instructive article entitled "The Architecture of Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics," asserts that there is great structural prominence to Barth's doctrine of election. Thus Barth's concept of election is central to his theology as a whole, as well as to his idea of revelation. Brunner, on the other hand, has allowed

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(2) F.L. Herzog, "Theologian of the Word of God", Theology Today, 1956-1957, writes on p.316: "There is a shift in the Dogmatics which Balthasar calls a shift from Word of God to Jesus Christ; God and man."
(3) John Godsey, "The Architecture of Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics," 1956, the Scottish Journal of Theology, writes, p.236: "In Chapter 7 we come to an architectural positioning of decisive importance within the Church Dogmatics."
his attention to revelation to influence much of his thought. His anthropology, his emphasis on the role of man's decision in the dialectic of salvation, his "natural theology" — all of these presuppose certain decisions about revelation. Of course, nowhere is this more truly the case than in his diagnosis of truth as encounter and in his opposition to what he terms "objectivism" (Barth) and "subjectivism" (Bultmann) in theology.

In indicating other areas of agreement between Barth and Brunner we will not repeat two of the observations that emerged from our study in the last chapter, namely that they both have an evangelical intention in their theology (and nowhere is this more evident than in their handling of the theme of predestination), and that, though their respective comprehensions of faith appear at first to be worlds apart, they are nonetheless much closer than even they admit. The chief points of agreement are the first three, and the shared concern for evangelism. To these may be added agreement on creation and covenant, providence, and the concept of rejection and evil as God's non-willing.

Barth sees the covenant as part of God's election:

"Jesus Christ was the choice or election of God in respect of this reality. He was the election of God's grace as directed towards man. He was the election of God's covenant with man" (p.102). In this insight

(1) David Cairns, "The Theology of Emil Brunner," the Scottish Journal of Theology, 1948, p.294, writes: "As a theologian, Emil Brunner has always had two main concerns: first the exposition of the special revelation of God which culminated in Christ, and its maintenance as something distinct from the general revelation of God . . . and secondly, the evaluation of this general revelation from the standpoint of faith in the special revelation."
Barth is following Coccejus: "We are following an important insight of J. Coccejus (S. Theol., 1662, c.37,2) when we trace back the concept of predestination to the biblical concept of the covenant or testament, the self-committal first revealed to Noah (Gen.9.14) ... " (p.102).

Barth carries this thought through to his theology of creation wherein creation is the "external basis of the covenant" and the covenant is (1) "the internal basis of creation." This, too, is connected with Barth's supralapsarianism: "He[God] wills and posits the creature neither out of caprice nor of necessity, but because He has loved it from eternity." (2)

This love Barth would explain in terms of election through Christ leading to the covenant.

Brunner expresses a similar thought in the following way:

The Creation of the world is connected with the doctrine of Election by the fact that the mediator of both is the Son, the Son whom God loved before the foundation of the world. He is the Son-Logos, who as the Incarnate One, gives us both the knowledge of Election and the knowledge that the world has been created through the Son, in the Son, and unto the Son. Thus the origin, meaning, and purpose of the world are only to be perceived where faith is present in the historical revelation of the love of God ... becomes the assurance of eternal election ... The Creation is subordinate to Election ... The way of truth proceeds from the historical revelation to the eternal Election, and only through that to the Creation. This is of decisive importance in the understanding of Election itself. (3)

The above demonstrates a remarkable correspondence of thought between these two thinkers. Their general approach to creation itself is thus dictated by their strong commitment to the centrality of

(1) These are the titles of two section in the Church dogmatics, III,1, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1958. See p.94ff. and p.228 ff.
(2) Karl Barth, Church dogmatics, III, 1, ibid., p. 95.
election in the biblical revelation. In particular, the above reminds
us that, though Brunner's concern for evangelism often directs him
to place stress on man and man's decision in salvation, his prime dedication
as a theologian firmly remains with the centrality of God: "The message
of the Bible, therefore, is this: God, not man, is the centre; this truth
must be expressed not only in theory but in practice." (1)

A very similar sort of agreement is found in their respective
considerations of the relation of providence to election. In pondering
the meaning and nature of election it is very easy to presuppose a
certain concept of providence and then to attempt to subsume one's
deliberations on election under that heading. Both Barth and Brunner
view this as a dangerous procedure and offer a most clever remedy: they
insist that providence be seen through election and not election through
providence. Brunner writes:

In faith in the God revealed in Christ, I know that God not only 'calls
me by my name', but that also, quite personally, He has included me in
His plan for the world . . . . I am one whom God has called to Himself,
and this personal election is never to be severed from His Providence
. . . . For this is what Election means; and it is only from the standpoint
of Election that we can think of Providence at all. For there we are not
thinking of the Providence of a deity known to us through metaphysics
but of the providence of God the Father, made known to us in Jesus Christ
. . . . (2)

What Barth says on this subject is virtually identical: "May
it not be that it is as the electing God that He is the Almighty and not

(1) Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, op. cit., p.9.
vice versa?" (p.45). Barth attacks with special anger this notion of God's providence as naked might as it is worked out in Calvinist writings and in a modern-day "disciple" of Calvin's, L. Boettner. It is at this point especially that he sees a departure from and a betrayal of the biblical testimony. If the "shadow" of which he speaks has to do with the hidden decree, then so much of the energy and terror of the traditional Calvinist doctrine comes from this present source which completely misunderstands God's sovereignty.

The last region of agreement which we shall mention has to do with Barth and Brunner's interpretation of evil as coming from God's "non-willing." That is, they both have a dialectical view of both evil and reprobation. Since we have dealt with this on page 65 of this thesis we shall not go into this further except to say that perhaps this issue more than any other indicates how they can be so close and yet so far from one another. We recall that Brunner criticized Barth for not allowing precisely this dialectic which Barth, subsequently presents with great brilliance in his chapter of "Nothingness." This reminds us once more of that which we have already reiterated several times: that Barth is not systematic, and that he is inconsistent. It is difficult to decide whether this is a virtue or a vice. Certainly many of Brunner's criticisms

(1) Calvin, however, considered providence along with creation, rather than predestination; though Barth asks if nevertheless some of Calvin's ideas on election are a product of a certain concept of sovereignty (p.46). Barth denies that Boettner is really following Calvin and claims that he is in the tradition of the "older Reformed method as used by Gomarus" (p.47).
ought to hold — as we suggested in the last Chapter. But so often they do not because Barth simply goes on to fill in what appeared to be gaps in earlier editions of the *Dogmatics*. If one were to come to the conclusion that this lack of systemization is a fault, it would nonetheless be helpful to realize that, perhaps, this is the price to be paid for a theological method that proceeds by bursts of fresh insights and abounds in enormous energy. Contemporary theological thought has thus been immeasurably enriched by Karl Barth. In the light of this accomplishment, lack of system appears a small price to pay.

This appreciation, of course, is not meant to suggest that there is *no* systematic coherence to his thought. That thought certainly would not bear examination. Nor should it be implied that Barth would not wish to defend lack of consistency on grounds of the higher logic of the Word of God.
We have been attempting to assess the accuracy of Brunner's criticisms of Barth's doctrine of election. After a brief survey of Barth's leading thoughts on this subject we concluded in Chapter Two that Brunner's rejection of Barth's central thesis was fair: only a highly speculative theological exegesis of the Bible could support such a position. Nonetheless, the debate over the role of Christ in election was witness to the Christo-centric nature of Brunner's position as well as Barth's. In Chapter Three we indicated that Barth was not a universalist, but that probably he should be, given the nature of his premises, and especially his view of "double predestination." Just as Chapter Two constantly made us ask questions about the Bible, so Chapter Three raised the question of logic and consistency. The problem of Barth's "universalism" in a peculiar way leads to this latter problem. We did not attempt to reach any conclusion as to the validity of an unsystematic theology. It seems that a proper evaluation of Barth will constantly be required to refer to a prior assessment of his theological method. Chapter Four, which dealt with Responsibility in Barth and raised the question of the relation of faith to election, really depended on the conclusions arrived at in the prior chapter. Rightly or wrongly, we have accepted at face value Barth's
assertions both that he is not a universalist and that he sees faith as a necessary part of salvation. In Chapter Five we indicated that the areas of agreement between them were much larger than the areas of disagreement. Some of the differences between them are more apparent than real, and in the midst of any consideration of diversity in their views we must point to an essential similarity.

Our examination of Barth's theology of election has constantly driven us to question Barth's basic theological method. This, in turn, raises the question of his purpose. What exactly is he trying to do in the Church Dogmatics? How viable is this procedure that is apparently unwilling to draw obvious conclusions and which makes such little attempt to be systematic? In the final analysis these questions really have to do with the nature of life and the nature of ultimate reality. Perhaps this "reality" itself has contradictions which it is not at all inadmissible to allow in one's theology? Should not theology mirror life and reality?

I believe that the most penetrating observation on his theological method was made by Barth himself when he wrote in his doctrine of Creation on the music of Mozart. This music is itself an important clue to his approach to theology. Barth writes:

Why is it possible to hold that Mozart has a place in theology, especially in the doctrine of creation and also in eschatology . . . ? It is possible to give him this position because he knew something about creation in its total goodness that neither the real fathers of the Church, nor our Reformers, neither the orthodox nor the Liberals, neither the exponents of natural theology, nor those heavily armed with the 'Word of God', and certainly not the Existentialists, nor indeed, any other great musicians before and after him, either know or can express and maintain as he did . . . .
He heard the negative only in and with the positive . . . He never heard only the one in abstraction . . . . he did not produce merely his own music but that of creation . . . .

I make this interposition here, before turning to chaos, because in the music of Mozart — and I wonder whether the same can be said of any other works before or after — we have clear and convincing proof that it is a slander on creation to charge it with a share in chaos because it includes a Yes and a No, as though orientated to God on the one side and to chaos on the other. Mozart causes us to hear that even on the latter side, and therefore in its totality, creation praises its Master and is therefore perfect. Here on the threshold of our problem — and it is no small achievement — Mozart has created order for those who have ears to hear, and he has done it better than any scientific deduction could. This is the point I wish to make. (1)

Is it saying too much that Barth, also, has created order for those who have ears to hear — an order which takes account of the contradictions of life but which is also firmly convinced of God's goodness and love? At any rate, it becomes clear that Barth is not trying to write a systematic theology in the ordinary sense of the word. He appears to believe that the theological enterprise is too great for that technique of systematization. As one ponders his method one comes to appreciate that this is radical theology in the basic meaning of the word "radical" — one that attempts to go back to the roots. Thus his procedure presupposes a certain view of life and of reality, and this approach is by no means easily destroyed by negative criticism. But its limitation is precisely that which we have already charged his hermeneutics with; that here we enter a sphere where final decision becomes impossible. But then, perhaps it is the case that every theology rests on some such decision as to the nature of reality, and that this decision in its turn presents the structural framework within which that theology is

(1) K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, III,3, op.cit., pp.298-299.
created.

As one ponders the conclusions of this study, it seems important to ask what guidelines emerge for a contemporary statement of the doctrine of election? If some of Barth's statements are doubtful, what positive and fairly certain concepts emerge from his work? Some suggested guidelines follow.

Perhaps the most helpful idea, in very practical terms, is the refusal to use (at any rate on the popular level) the word predestination and to substitute for it the word election. This is exactly what Barth and Brunner have done. The word predestination is so encrusted with ideas which now have to be rejected that the very use of the word is a block to meaningful discussion. For too many people "predestination" means double predestination with its attendant thoughts of determinism, and God exercising his providence in naked power. The shadow of which Barth speaks extends not only to the theology of predestination but to the actual use of the word itself. How much more helpful — and how much more biblical — is the word election. More clearly than "predestination," it indicates that election is on a continuum with covenant. These are two parts of a single entity. When one sees them together, it becomes unmistakably clear that one is dealing with an issue that is near or at the very heart of the Bible.

Another guideline that seems virtually conclusive is
to regard election as proceeding from grace. Again, Barth and Brunner are completely in accord in this matter. Election does not proceed from providence, or omniscience, or from anything else other than grace. This grace is not meant to be seen as some sort of principle apart from Jesus Christ but is rather to be considered as personified in Him. If Barth has presented what we must regard as an extreme interpretation of Ephesian 1.4, we must nevertheless realize that he has recovered now, for all time, the thought that election is in Christ. No future statement of the doctrine can be made without taking into account this fundamental thought. Both Barth and Brunner are most concerned to be Christ-centred in their exposition of election, and their united witness, in a general way, seems the only possible route to the recovery of election as Gospel. After all, what is the Gospel but Jesus Christ? The doctrine of election is primarily indicating that the roots of that Gospel extend far back, even into pre-history. At first it seemed daring for Barth to speak of election as Gospel in the light of the confusion the doctrine caused in most people's minds. But as one reads his thoughts on the subject, one is grasped by the inner logic of his position, and even excited by the thought that one could turn this terrifying doctrine into "the sum of the Gospel!" Thus to see election as proceeding from grace is also to see election as "in Christ," and to think in this way is to put oneself on the road to recovering the biblical doctrine of election.

Yet another conclusion, which finds virtually unanimous support in the literature on election, is the thought that the election of the
individual should come only after the election of the community. We
made reference to this in Chapter One but have not dealt with it in the
body of our thesis chiefly because Brunner has not criticized Barth on
this matter. I think that it can be taken that his silence on this matter
suggests agreement; certainly this approach is in keeping with the general
tenor of Brunner's description of the doctrine. It is this impression
that predestination means individual election or reprobation that partially
accounts for the unfortunate history of the doctrine. Once more, it
must be said that virtually on any fair reading of the Bible the stress
in this matter will be seen to rest on the collective aspect. In the
Old Testament the people as a whole are chosen. In the New Testament
the focus is on the corporate entity of the people of Christ, and almost
never is it said that individuals are predestinated. However, this is by
no means to say that there is no such thing as an individual purpose in
election. There certainly is, as for instance in the election of the
patriarchs. But the perspective, generally speaking, from which election
must be grasped is the community.

If this is understood, a vastly healthier situation with
regard to this doctrine will emerge. No longer will the focus be upon
the individual, and upon his feelings. His assurance will not rest upon
a " feeling " which the Holy Spirit will communicate to him. Rather it
will be found in the fact that Jesus Christ is the one " in whom " he is
elect and that this same one is faithful to his purpose and promise.
If this is grasped it should also lead one to a fuller appreciation
of the nature of the Christian community. After all, what is the purpose of the community? Could it not be said that this purpose resides in fulfilling its calling, its election, and that this must be done in a corporate way? Perhaps, then, it is here that a theology of mission must begin. Israel of old was meant to be a "light to the nations." What is the Church meant to be? Perhaps it is meant to be part of the election of the One who became a servant, and thus is meant to be a servant Church.

It can be seen, then, that freeing election from a solely individualistic approach permits one to think creatively on several themes that pertain to election. A theology of mission, in particular, may well have its beginning here.

Yet another conclusion, which might be suggested as part of a modern statement of election has to do with faith. Though Brunner is more concerned than Barth with the role of faith, we have seen that they have an essentially similar comprehension of faith. They both state election as Gospel and as a fact of God's self-determination. But they also accept the need for personal belief. Brunner especially has enriched our understanding by delineating the need for personal involvement in belief. I believe that it must be stated as a conclusion that both these factors are essential in a modern understanding of election: God's self-determination and man's belief. The attempt to relate the one to the other must always be done within personal categories, and the traditional temptation to yield to a determinism must be resisted. As one ponders the inter-relation


(2) Emil Brunner, *ibid.*, p.211: "... faith ... and it is this which is the fundamental plan on which our Dogmatics are built!"
between the two factors one readily apprehends the difficulty of making any adequate statement. For that reason Brunner is helpful in insisting that this relation is *sui generis*. That is, part of our difficulty lies in not having anything to which we might compare this relationship. When one considers that one is now speaking of God and of the relation of man to God in faith, one should not be surprised that analogies do not come readily to mind. Indeed, would not such an analogy be suggestive of the *analogia entis* which Barth so strongly detests?

There is little use making a modern affirmation of election without following Brunner's example and emphatically denying determinism. It must be realized that predestination has meant determinism in so many cases in the past. In the practical sense at least, Barth has been unwise to leave his presentation of faith until so late in his *Dogmatics*. We recall that very little is said about this matter in *Dogmatics II,1*.

It would be difficult to read Barth and Brunner without coming away with very definite ideas on double predestination. Brunner clearly rejects the notion. Barth accepts it, but so radically alters the concept that what emerges bears as little relation to the doctrine by that name as does the day to the night. It appears overwhelmingly the case that the argument against the traditional interpretation of double predestination is valid and that hence one must speak against it. Yet again, we remind ourselves that when a person uses the word "predestination" he often as not means double predestination. It
therefore becomes a matter of some urgency that we declare ourselves
with unmistakable clarity on this subject: the traditional conception
of double predestination must be abandoned as unscriptural. When
one does this, and adds to it the realization that the hidden decree
is also no longer tenable, it becomes apparent that one must depart
from traditional Calvinism most decisively in this doctrine.

If double predestination cannot be accepted, so also
its opposite, universalism, must be rejected. The grounds of that
rejection are scriptural. The way of interpreting the possibility of
damnation (and consequently of the existence of evil itself) may well
be the dialectical method that both Barth and Brunner use.

In concluding this general declaration of what appears
necessary in a modern presentation of the doctrine of election we would
acknowledge Barth and Brunner's belief that this is the entrance into
understanding the meaning of life. Brunner has written that "Either
life has an eternal meaning or it has no meaning at all."

This meaning is found in the Christ: "The Son is the meaning of the world,
for whom God in free decision determines and creates the world." This
message finds its center in the doctrine of election: "To be called
from the eternity of God to eternal communion with God — that is the

(1) See the chapter (number 23) on "The Problem of Double Predestination"
(2) See Appendix 2 wherein Barth's view of election is compared to that
of The Westminster Confession of Faith.
(4) Emil Brunner, ibid., p.304.
(5) Emil Brunner, ibid., p.308.
Gospel of Jesus Christ. Briefly, that is the meaning of the New Testament message of eternal election. Barth has said much the same thing in writing that "To be determined by God's election is the final — but really the final mystery of every human life" (p.43). We have already referred to this conviction of Barth's.

What are Barth and Brunner saying? They are expressing their belief that if election is the beginning of God's ways with mankind then it is also the end. If election has to do with God's self-determination, then it has also to do with man's determination. The Bible, indeed, is explicit on this matter: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8.29). God's self-determination is expressed in Christ. Man's destination is to be in Christ and conformed to his image. Perhaps this way of a theology of election can enrich our interpretation of those difficult verses in the Epistles (and especially in Galatians and Ephesians) which speak of putting on Christ (e.g. Galatians 2.20, Ephesians 4.20, 24).

Finally, it should be remarked, that in view of the modern disinterest in this doctrine, there should be modern statements of election: from pulpit, from Church School classrooms, from writers. The most indisputable factor that emerges from a study of Barth and Brunner on this subject is their belief in the importance of the doctrine.

We have seen that Barth has become so convinced of the essential nature of election for the elucidation of Christian truth that he has allowed the form of much of his *Dogmatics* to be shaped by the central insight that Jesus is both electing God and elected man. When one contemplates the fact that Barth and Brunner, two of the greatest of twentieth century theologians, have such a high estimate of the importance of election, it becomes nothing short of astonishing that the doctrine within the modern Church has fallen into a comparative state of neglect. It seems probable that some impoverishment in spiritual values will be the result of such a procedure. However, it must be admitted that the past history of the doctrine is so unfortunate as to make the present neglect at least partially understandable and perhaps even excuseable.
IS ROMANS 9-11 THE LOCUS CLASSICUS OF PREDESTINATION?

There are many parts of the Bible that speak of predestination. For instance, a detailed consideration can be given to the Old Testament as a whole from the viewpoint of election. It could be indicated that the history of Israel in every era had a certain understanding of this doctrine. Likewise, many passages in the New Testament and especially in John deal with election. Why then single out Romans 9-11 for special attention?

We do this simply because it has been considered as the locus classicus of that doctrine. This has been especially the case within the Reformed Churches. One need read Calvin's Institutes, Book III, Chapter XXI, and Chapter XXII only very casually before this becomes evident, though it must be admitted that there are also to be found in Calvin's references to John and Ephesians. These chapters have assumed special significance in the history of the doctrine because on a certain type of reading they do seem to be about individual election and reprobation. Thus this section of the Bible almost takes on the aspect of being a test case. We cannot present any detailed assessment of what the Bible as a whole means by election. But we can address some basic
questions to these three chapters. Do they support or deny Barth's theories?

We must recall that Barth himself presents a detailed discussion of these chapters. For him, they witness to the essential unity of Israel and the Church together. Indeed this theme is the title which he gives to section 34, "The Election of the Community." In my estimation this is a sound approach to Romans 9-11, for the theme with which Paul is grappling has to do with an essentially missionary problem: the unbelief of the Jews. That is the question before Paul, and the chapters must be understood as being within the framework that it provides. In Barth's opinion Israel continues to be the elected community of God (p.198, and p.203). Yet the Church "... draws its life from Israel and Israel itself lives in it. It is the realization of the life of the community of God which is Israel's own destiny" (p. 205). Barth also reasons that these chapters do not speak of a decretum absolutum, nor is their subject the election or reprobation of the individual:

It was perhaps the decisive exegetical error of the classical doctrine of predestination that — being more concerned about the things of men (although to their advantage) than the things of God — it thought to see the scope of Rom. 9.15 in the personal situation and destiny of Moses and Pharaoh ..... But the point at issue here is precisely how the diversity of the personal situation and destiny of Israelite man, which conditioned by the divine predetermination, is so characteristic of the history and life of the chosen people Israel, does not contradict but corresponds to the election of Israel and the righteousness of the mercy of its God (p.221).

(1) George Peter Richardson, Israel in the Apostolic Church, Cambridge, The University Press, SNTS Monograph Series, Number 19, 1969, would question the sort of assertion Barth makes on p.300 "'All Israel' is the community of those elected by God ... both from Jew and Gentile" and yet would agree that "The Church has no existence apart from Israel and has no separate identity." (p.130, Richardson).
Can one then, take Romans 9-11 as the *locus classicus* of the doctrine of predestination?

G.C. Berkouwer, an eminent Reformed theologian, writes that "There has been much discussion about the meaning of Romans 9-11. It is being accepted more and more that this passage is not concerned primarily with establishing a *locus de praedestinatione* as an analysis of individual election or rejection, but rather with certain problems which arise in the history of salvation." (1)

Alan Richardson, an Anglican theologian and specialist in New Testament studies, writes: "The clue to Romans 9-11, and to what is sometimes (not very happily) called Paul's philosophy of history is to be found in the phrase εκλογήν πρὸς Θεοῦ. It means 'God's purpose in history which operates by means of the principle of election'." He argues that εκλογή means 'election' in the sense of 'principle of selection'. (2)

Part of the problem of the interpretation of the section as a whole is that too often readers have assumed that election

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(3) Ibid., p.273.
here means individual election. The context, however, is clearly about Israel: "Paul deals with Israel's rejection. He must show that this rejection which on the surface looks like a frustration of God's declared purpose in the Old Testament is neither unforeseen nor unprovided for in the divine plan." Paul maintains that "... God is in full control of the cause of events from beginning to end. It is he who establishes Abraham's line in the first instance (9.7), he who prefers Jacob to Esau (9.13), he who determines who shall be 'my people' or 'not my people' (9.25f.), he who breaks off branches here, and grafts on others there (11.17-24).

The foundation principles of Paul's interpretation of the history of Israel are a) that 'the gifts of God are irrevocable' (11.29), and b) that 'God has consigned all men (including Israel) to disobedience that he may have mercy upon all (including Israel)'. (11.32)."

Now it is clear that Romans 9-11 does deal with predestination. But that which has been taken to constitute it as the locus classicus of that doctrine rests, in fact, upon a misunderstanding. The focus is not, as often supposed, the individual's election or reprobation. Indeed, the apparent particularism of some passages (e.g. Romans 9.13 "Jacob I have loved, but Esau have I hated")

(2) Ibid., p. 948.
is open to other interpretations and is also counter-balanced by other verses which suggest a much broader context (e.g. Romans 11.26 "... and so all Israel shall be saved"). But nevertheless Romans 9.13, along with several other verses in these three chapters, is difficult to interpret and has a special relevance to one's understanding of the doctrine of election. What shall we understand by the apparently Calvinistic verses Romans 9.13, 20, 21? Do they lend direct support to a strict Calvinistic view of election?

We have just referred to Romans 9.13, "Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated." This verse is often taken as an example of individual election. The suggestion is that some are predestined to eternal salvation while others are predestined to eternal damnation. But what does the verse actually say? It asserts simply that God has chosen to extend the promise to Abraham through one branch of the family and not the other. Nothing is said of eternal salvation or damnation. The words "love" and "hate" are, to be sure, extreme, but they need be taken as constituting nothing more than examples of heightened anthropomorphism. Indeed as we examine the lives of Jacob and Esau we observe the unusual happening. Esau became a singularly prosperous man. Is that an example of God's "hate"?

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(1) F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, London, The Tyndale Press, 1957, p.193 writes: "This is from Malachi 1.2f. where it is the nations of Israel and Edom rather than their individual ancestors Jacob and Esau that are in view."  

W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1926, p.246, write: "... it is quite clear that St. Paul throughout has in mind in each case the descendants as well as the ancestors..."
We have in this verse, then, an example of God's purpose operating through a principle of selection. As Sanday and Headlam write: "As will become apparent later, Paul's argument is to show that throughout God's action there is running a 'purpose according to election.' He does not therefore wish to say that it is merely God's love or hate that has guided Him." Thus whatever else one may see in this verse one cannot take from it an example of election-reprobation in the sense that one is saved and the other damned through the election of God.

Yet another difficult verse is Romans 9.20 "O man who art thou that repliest against God?" C.H. Dodd calls this the weakest point of the Epistle. Is it that? Is it an attempt to justify the idea of election-reprobation as that is commonly understood? T.W. Manson writes his assessment in these terms:

In his eagerness to silence anything that looks like criticism of the Almighty, he (Paul) bluntly insists that God is not accountable to anyone. But behind what looks like bluster, lies the deep conviction that in God's hands — and only there — absolute power cannot corrupt at all; and that only by absolute trust in God can a man discover for himself that this is so. (4)

(1) ibid., pp. 246-247.
(2) C.K. Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans, London, A. and C. Black, 1957, p. 183, writes: "For what Paul has established is the freedom of God in grace. It is impossible for his Jewish interlocutor to reply: Very well! I am descended from Abraham through Isaac (not Ishmael) and Jacob (not Esau); therefore, I must stand within the promise. To argue in this way is to say: 'God was free in the days of the patriarchs, but is no longer free now — which is absurd'."
(4) T.W. Manson, op. cit., p. 948.
Pierre Maury's interpretation also runs counter to Dodd's:

This is not, as it is ordinarily interpreted, the tyrannical order of the sovereign using his power to impose silence; taking the whole context into consideration, it simply means: "O man, who art thou to set thyself up against my mercy, thou who belongest to the very people who I suffer and save?" (1)

Maury also suggests that this should remind us of the parable of the labourers hired at different times all of whom received exactly the same wages. He also reminds us of another verse in this connection: "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all." (Romans 11.32). In comment on Romans 9. 17, 18, dealing with the "hardening" of Pharaoh's heart Maury writes: "the will to harden is not in God equivalent to the will to save . . . . We are not required to balance the one against the other. The great misfortune and sometimes unfaithfulness of the classic doctors was that they thought that in this balance, in this parallelism, they were asserting the fulness of the positive grace." (2)

Another difficult verse that has occasioned much comment is Romans 9.21: "Hath not the potter power over the clay?"

The suggestion has been made that this also implies election —reprobation

A comment that Karl Barth makes in the Foreword of this book is of special relevance to this thesis. Barth writes of Maury: "One can certainly say that it was he who contributed decisively to giving my thoughts on this point their fundamental direction."

(2) ibid., p.20.
The reader is also referred to the interpretation of Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., in which they write: "We must not soften the passage. On the other hand we must not read into it more than it contains: as, for example, Calvin does. He imports various extraneous ideas, that Paul speaks of election to salvation and of reprobation to death . . . " p. 258.
and that while election may be said to be of grace few would care to claim that reprobation is also of grace. (1)

In this verse Paul may well have had in mind Jeremiah 18.6, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as the potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, o house of Israel." The verse is clear reference to God's authority in history especially as exercised over Israel. But this does not mean, therefore, that in the view of Scripture men and women are like lumps of clay. The emphasis is on the potter, but interpreters have often shifted the emphasis to the clay. The analogy is more about potters than about pots and this analogy is not as brutal or intolerant as so often thought. Indeed, is it brutal or intolerant at all? After all the potter does make pots to some purpose and therefore the analogy teaches us that God has a purpose in his creation as well as control over it. Jeremiah 18.3 expresses this thought by implication: "Then I went down to the potter's house and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it." We must also remind ourselves of another significant verse in this same chapter of Jeremiah, namely, verse 8 with reference also to verse 10: "If that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of that evil that I have

(1) F.F.Bruce, op. cit., p. 195, writes: "Cf. 2 Timothy 2.20. where however the vessels are made of various materials and those which are 'to dishonour' are simply designed for less noble or ornamental (but not necessarily less useful) purpose than those which are 'to honour'."
thought to do unto them . . . . If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them. " Both in Jeremiah and in Romans we see the principle of selection in action. If there is arbitrariness, it is the arbitrary nature of mercy and of grace. H.H. Rowley has commented on this idea in the following words:

I have always found it hard to understand why it should be supposed that there is anything morally repugnant in God's electing one nation for one purpose and another for another, or one man for one purpose and another for another. It is probably largely because of the notion of election to heaven or to hell, which men have introduced into this question. The vessel of dishonour is thought of as a child of hell. (1)

For these reasons we may conclude that Barth's doctrine of election finds general support from a study of Romans 9-11. Here we discover a special zeal for the sovereignty and the freedom of God. This zeal Barth shares totally. But unlike the Reformed fathers this does not lead him to believe in double predestination as that term is normally understood. Clearly, here election is seen to be of grace. So also, we must understand that Romans 9-11 is not the locus classicus of predestination for its main theme is not individual election and reprobation. The theme rather is God's freedom in grace and the essentially practical missionary problem Paul faced through the unbelief of the Jews. Barth is correct, we believe, in departing from the traditional Calvinistic interpretation of Romans 9-11.

(2) Barth's interpretation seems generally to be favoured by the leading commentators. We list here, briefly, some of the main observations of distinguished interpreters of Romans.
Emil Brunner, *The Letter to the Romans*, London, The Lutterworth Press, 1959, p.87, writes: "Of a double decree (predestination) one leading to eternal life and the other to eternal damnation this passage teaches just as little as any other part of Holy Scripture."

C.K.Barrett, *op. cit.*, P. 185, writes: "Mercy . . . is the keynote of chapters 9-11." In an observation of special interest to readers of Barth, he writes: "It is important to recall here that the seed of Abraham contracted till it became ultimately Christ (see 6.11). This means that election does not take place (as might at first appear from Paul's example) arbitrarily or fortuitously; it takes place always and only in Christ. They are elect who are in him; they who are elect are in him (cf. Galatians 3.29). It is failure to remember this that causes confusion over Paul's doctrine of election and predestination."

F.F.Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 190, comments on this passage as a whole: "It is a pity that in some schools of theological thought the doctrine of election has been formulated to an excessive degree on the basis of this preliminary stage in Paul's present argument without adequate account being taken of his further exposition of God's purpose in election at the conclusion of the argument."

Sanday and Headlam, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-250, comment on this passage as follows: "The Jew believed that his race was joined to God by a covenant which nothing could dissolve, and that he and his people alone were the centre of all God's action in the creation and government of the world. This idea Paul combats. "Paul broadens his Jewish conception of election in these chapters: "The world, not Israel, is the final end of God's action. This is the key to the explanation of the great difficulty of the rejection of Israel."
APPENDIX TWO

KARL BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF ELECTION COMPARED TO THE TEACHING OF THE
WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

It is probable that the classic expression of
the doctrine of predestination in the English-speaking world
is found in The Westminster Confession of Faith. The importance of
this Confession in the Reformed Churches, and in Christendom in general,
has been very great indeed. It is, however, common knowledge that the
Confession gives great prominence to the doctrine of predestination.
The place of that doctrine within the Confession has subsequently
given the Reformed Churches a certain image in the eyes of the world
that is (I believe) less than desirable. It is not untrue to say
that many people outside of the Reformed Churches know this and
little more about them. It becomes, therefore, urgent for members
of the Reformed Churches to make a modern assessment of predestination.
It seems that a useful way of doing this is to make a comparison of Barth's
teachings with the Confession.

While the Confession continues as the subordinate
standard of several Reformed Churches, it must be admitted that the
relation of ministers to that standard is increasingly tenuous. The
Confession is clearly seen as a standard which is subordinate to Scripture and through this open door many, probably the majority, of Canadian Presbyterian ministers march only too eagerly. A contemporary study of the Confession widely in use in both Knox College and The Presbyterian College goes to the explicit length of asserting the following:

The awesome doctrine of the 'double decree' or 'double predestination,' which has often been regarded as the distinctive feature of the Reformed Faith, is no longer held by the Presbyterian Churches in the form in which it is set forth in this chapter. (1)

My own experience within The Presbyterian Church in Canada decidedly coincides with that opinion. But nonetheless the fact remains that this Confession remains as our only subordinate standard. For these reasons it is difficult to convey the precise importance of comparing Barth's views with that of the Confession. In one way it is so very important. But in another way it is to enter a battle which very few indeed seem interested in fighting.

Barth emphatically places himself within the general Reformed position because of that tradition's clear and uncompromising emphasis on the sovereignty of grace. On this matter he heartily embraces the Reformed tradition expressed in Calvin and virtually all of the classic Reformed Confessions. Barth and The Westminster Confession of Faith are in strong accord that election is of God's free choice. For grace to be sovereign it must also be free. This is the great point of agreement between Barth and the Confession.

But the differences soon are only too evident. Virtually from his opening paragraph Barth is determined to proclaim election as Gospel, indeed the sum of the Gospel. Election for him is seen as

light and not as darkness, as joy, and not as gloom. And indeed, this
is the atmosphere of his exposition of the doctrine. It was because
of such an atmosphere and because of his insistence on the primacy
of grace that Berkouwer could write of The Triumph of Grace in the
Theology of Karl Barth. But it seems that the exact reverse is true
of the Confession. While it clearly speaks of grace, the atmosphere
is one of gloom and dread: "The rest of mankind God was pleased
according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will... to pass
by and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin and to the
praise of his glorious justice" (III, 7).

It is generally thought that the Confession teaches
double predestination. While it is true that its position comes very
close to that and indeed the end result is tantamount to double pre-
destination, nonetheless, strictly speaking, one has to admit that
it does not teach that doctrine. It does not speak of reprobation
and goes only so far as to speak of "... others fore-ordained to
everlasting death" (III, 2). But that is indeed strong enough for the
modern reader. The contrast between this view and that of Barth's is
very great. The whole thrust of his theory of "double predestination"
is exactly the reverse of this. For him Christ is the one who bore the
rejection of the rejected. And while it is clear that he does not espouse
universalism or the doctrine of the apokatastasis his theory nevertheless

1931, p.770, comments: "It does not teach... that God eternally
foreordained men for sin and damnation; but it does teach that out
of the fallen mass of corruption God elected a definite number of
men to salvation and passed by the rest leaving them to the just
punishment for their sins. This is severe and harsh enough, but
very different from a decree of eternal reprobation which term
occurs nowhere in the Confession."
brings him as close to those views as it is possible to come without actually adopting them.

The Confession speaks of predestination not under that heading at all, but rather under the title "Of God's Eternal Decrees." This is a most accurate heading for it brings us to that which is really at the heart of the Calvinist doctrine of election and that which Barth sees as being virtually the main foe of his own theory. While Barth may not have sufficiently appreciated that even for the Calvinist position election is of grace yet there is still reason for believing that his attack on the hidden decrees and hence on the Confession is well-founded. Again, the criteria are biblical. Barth's position in essence is that the Confession and all positions which argue for a hidden decree are unbiblical. He develops this by assessing the biblical interpretation of the role of Christ in election. While our conclusion was that he goes too far in seeing Jesus as "Electing God and Elected Man," his argument that there is no other decree apart from that of Jesus Christ is both convincing and biblical and indeed is convincing because it is biblical. He reaches back to the supposed primal decision of God which presumably constitutes the basis of election and demands to know if God has any other will than his will in Christ. He claims that Christ is God's decision, and develops strongly and decisively the view that grace means the grace of God in Jesus Christ. I regard the Confession's separation of the decree of God from Jesus Christ as the basic error not only in its doctrine of election but in the entire approach to the Christian Faith. This, more than anything else, I believe, accounts for
the particularly cold tone one finds in it.

The presentation of the Confession also does not really allow for human freedom despite verbal protestations to the contrary. Verbally it speaks of the liberty or contingency of second causes (III,1), but the facts of its approach to those things which constitute human freedom belie the words. The Confession asserts that man has lost the ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation (XI,3). In the chapter on "Of Effectual Calling" we read that "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit . . . ." (XII,2).

Barth also protests against synergism. He speaks of his view of election as embracing irresistible grace. But the portrait of man that emerges in his writings is not that of an automaton who is incapable of decision. In spite of his position with regard to synergism we have already noted that in a later edition of the Dogmatics he allows for faith as a human response and yet attempts to retain the sovereignty of grace. This is also clear in his attempt to describe the determination of the rejected. They exist in the sphere of God's non-willing.

Judas' act of betrayal was indeed his action but was yet over-ruled by

(1) Barth states: "There is no synergism of any kind in the history of Jesus Christ's election, for in this history neither the sin of man nor the prayer of man can play the part of an autonomous mystery, as man's decision complementary to God's." (p.194).
(2) Barth speaks of "... the irresistible divine grace of Jesus Christ" (p.477).
(3) In Church Dogmatics, IV,1, op.cit., he writes that faith is a "free human act" (p.757).
God. At the point at which he was most in rebellion against God, at that moment he most fully accomplished the will of God.

Thus there is a certain agreement with Barth and the Confession, but the end result genuinely does differ. For Barth, grace is sovereign but there is considerable evidence that he sees man as alive and participating in faith. Some may wish to argue—as we have already suggested—that this is inconsistent on his part. But the point, at this juncture, is that the concern is present in Barth and absent in the Confession. There is here an area of real contrast. One may well ask if Barth sufficiently allows for the development of a viable doctrine of man. Material for debate on both sides of that question seem to be there in his writings. But the modern reader will probably not even allow that there is room for debate of the same question with regard to the Confession. While admittedly modernity is not the sole criterion of theology, yet it must be acknowledged that the Confession presents us with what can only be termed a questionable doctrine of man. At any rate, here is a point of contrast.

(1) The reader will recognize that we are now considering Barthian anthropology. In this regard I would quote twice from Arnold Comen's An Introduction to Barth's Dogmatics for Preachers, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1963. On pages 151-152 he writes the following: "The relativizing of history in the Dogmatics assumes its most problematic form in the placing of a question mark over the reality of man as a responsible subject distinct from God. In fact, the adequacy of Barth's anthropology will probably be the main point around which the uncertainty and debate will revolve for some time into the future. He has frankly admitted that he approached the problem of creation with some reluctance . . . . " On p. 432, Comen writes: "God's Spirit does not operate mechanically or by infusion toward man, but God deliberately preserves a distance from man so that there can be dialogue, intercourse, and drama between them."

The first quotation indicates the fact of debate on this matter; but the second, I believe, indicates that the contrast between Barth and the Confession is a real one.
The Confession in the very act of stressing the freedom of divine grace inadvertently brings into question God's own freedom: "God from all eternity did . . . ordain whatsoever comes to pass" (III,1). Barth, on the other hand, strongly objects to a mechanical exposition of the will of God. He endorses Peter Barth's contribution in this regard to the Congrès International de Théologie Calviniste held in Geneva in 1936. For Peter Barth " . . . God has entered into a mysteriously living relation to us men." Karl Barth agrees that this is an improvement over a mechanistic interpretation of the divine will. For him, predestination " . . . did indeed happen in the bosom of God before all time, but for this very reason it happens and happens again before every moment of time" (p.191). The failure of Calvin and of Calvinism was not in having an insufficiently developed notion of the "living" factor of God's will. It was rather " . . . due to their non-adherence to the rule that the will of God as such, and therefore predestination, must be sought and found only in the work of God, i.e., in the core and purpose of that work, the name and person of Jesus Christ" (p.191). In other words God's decree is not hidden; it is Christ himself.

(1) See pages 188-194 of the Church Dogmatics, II,2, for a discussion of this matter.
(2) ibid., pp.189-190.
(3) ibid., pp. 190-191.
Some would wish to argue that the Confession limits human freedom only to those things which accompany salvation. The will to good is not lost. The will to good with regard to those things which bring salvation is (XI,3). It might even be pointed out — and correctly — that in election Barth gives no role to man whatsoever, for election is a transaction within the Trinity. And yet, as Barth goes on to explain how man is involved in that election through faith, clearly a dialectical element, not always appreciated as being present in Barth, is stressed. The Confession has within it a terrifying consistency. Within certain eras of history this consistency and this logic must have been overwhelmingly attractive. But this question brings us yet again to a matter which we find recur with frequency, namely the question of the role of human logic in an interpretation of divine election. This we have already discussed within the first chapter of this thesis. Barth is not nearly so vulnerable as he appears on a first reading. On biblical grounds, wherein we discover no parallel between election and reprobation, on grounds of a certain "higher logic" wherein one questions most seriously the application of human logic to revelation, and on grounds that the Bible speaks very clearly of human involvement in the act of faith, we can side with Barth's interpretation more easily than that of the Confession's, and maintain that this is a point of contrast.

The Confession, contrary to some popular notions does speak of election "in Christ." We read of "faith in Christ" and "redeemed by Christ" in III,6. In III,5, we specifically are told that the elect are "chosen in Christ." Yet it cannot be denied that
while the seeds of a significant concept are present in these words, they were not allowed to grow. The words are there, but the concept as a developed idea which undergirds and structures the doctrine of election is not to be found. For Barth, of course, the concept of election "in Christ" is the very key to his understanding of the doctrine.

Virtually every page of Barth's writing on election breathes the spirit of compassion and light and joy. Election is good news, Gospel, for him. In the essentially sombre atmosphere of the Confession election is quite as threatening as it is reassuring. If one is of the elect then the doctrine comes as light. But even then it appears that assurance of one's election is regarded as uncertain and it would be distressing, to say the least, to contemplate how many may have been "passed by." Thus the atmosphere is a point of contrast as well. For Barth, it is light. For the Confession, the end impression is that of a shadow—perhaps with streaks of light here and there—but shadow nonetheless. One, perhaps unexpected, ray of light is the Confession's view of infants who die at birth or shortly after birth. In XII,3, we read: "E lect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word." This is consistent with the Confession's understanding of the divine decrees. Yet even here one wonders about the non-elect infants who die and the non-elect persons who for real psychological or social reasons do not
or cannot hear the Gospel. As more and more the Church comes to live with the insights of the social sciences, psychological and sociological determinants of belief are freely admitted. But if these analyses apply to belief, they apply also to unbelief. This simple thought seems to have occurred to surprisingly few people, and yet its relevance to one's doctrine of election is of great importance. These, after all, are the insights of today. These, as well as our interpretation of the Scriptures will determine our doctrine of election, for the issue is just that which Barth states: can we believe the doctrine and in what form? The modern reader will find the Confession's doctrine quite simply unbelievable because it clashes with too many insights that the social scientists have brought to bear on the psychology of belief and unbelief. Perhaps nothing is so objectionable in the Confession than its very cold attitude to the fate of the non-elect. At the very point at which it should evince concern, it resorts to abstract theology:

The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice. (III, 7).

But the sombre atmosphere is quite rightly analysed by Barth as its separation of the decrees from God's decision in Christ. Here the Confession can be met on its own ground, that of Scriptural interpretation. We have already given reasons supporting Barth and contradicting the Confession.

The last contrast between Barth and the Confession to which we shall refer is that the latter almost totally restricts its conception
of predestination to individuals. Barth speaks of election in Christ
first, then the election of the community, and only lastly of the
election of the individual. The root of this clear contrast will
probably go back to different interpretations of Romans 9 - 11.
The Bible provides little evidence that will permit a solely or even
a primarily individualistic interpretation of election. We have already
given reasons for rejecting a narrowly individualistic approach to election.

(1) It is intriguing to note that a study prepared by The Articles of Faith
Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada totally accepts Barth's
reconstruction. The study, never officially adopted, was prepared
in the 1940's and is obtainable in An Historical Digest of the Work
in Articles of Faith, 1942 - 1967, The Presbyterian Church in Canada,
50 Wynford Drive, Don Mills, Ontario. I should want to criticize the
study for accepting Barth in an almost uncritical fashion. Certainly
there is this to the study: that here we have an example of a committee
almost totally dominated by the thought of Barth on a given subject.

It is of interest that the Confession of 1967 of the United Presbyterian
Church in the United States contains no reference at all to predestination,
though, being structured by the theme of reconciliation, many of the
purposes of election are present. That is, one could easily maintain
that we are elected to be part of God's reconciling community. However
the silence of the Confession of 1967 on this subject stands in total
and utter contrast with the position of The Westminster Confession of
Faith.
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