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THE TRINITY IN THE LATER BARTH: A MAJOR SHIFT?

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Abstract. In this article I show a change in Barth's understanding of the Trinity. At first I describe the doctrine of the Trinity as it is in the framework of Barth's doctrine of the Word of God. After that I shall show the implicit concept of the Trinity in the framework of the doctrines of election, creation and reconciliation, i.e., in the later volumes of the "Church Dogmatics". I argue that the difference is due to Barth taking more seriously the "distance" and the "otherness" between the first and the second persons in the divine economy. At the end of the article I show that the change in the doctrine of the Trinity is accompanied with the change in Barth's understanding of revelation.

Karl Barth is one of the most famous protestant theologians in our century. Considering the great number of appreciative treatments of him by Roman Catholic theologians, then it is perhaps justified to call him one of the western "church fathers" of the twentieth century. Among the many areas of systematic theology where his importance has been acknowledged, the doctrine of the Trinity is not the least. Jenson is probably right saying that "It is ... from Barth that twentieth-century theology has learned that the doctrine of the Trinity has explanatory and interpretative use for the whole of theology; it is by him that the current vigorous revival of trinitarian reflection was enabled" (Jenson 1989:42)

The number of works about Barth is huge. Even the number of works on his doctrine of the Trinity is large. The best of them treat this doctrine as it is presented explicitly in the first volume of Barth's "Church Dogmatics" (Gunton 1978, Jenson 1982, Jüngel 1976). This volume was published in 1932 and the second half of the third part of the fourth volume was published in 1960. Therefore it should not be surprising if Barth's theology had gone through a change during this period. Many authors have pointed to this change (von Balthasar 1972, McCormack 1995). But they have not made any analysis of the shift in the doctrine of the Trinity. As far as I know only Jüngel has pointed to the changes in the understanding of this doctrine in the later Barth (Jüngel 1983:371).

In this article I am going to show a change in Barth's understanding of the Trinity. At first I am describing this doctrine as it is in the framework of Barth's concept of the Word of God, i.e., in the first part of the first volume of his "Church Dogmatics". After this I shall show the implicit concept of the Trinity in the framework of the doctrines of election, creation and reconciliation, i.e., in the later volumes of the "Church Dogmatics".

According to Barth, God's being is being in act. The answer to the question: what is God doing, is that he is revealing. God reveals himself as the lord (Barth CD I/1:360). According to Barth the statement that God reveals himself as the lord is the very root of the doctrine of the Trinity (Barth CD I/1:353). For him the doctrine of the Trinity is an analysis of this statement (Barth CD I/1:354). Thus the starting-point for him is the event of revelation or statement about revelation.

Revelation is God's self-interpretation. First he interprets himself to himself, i.e., it is a process of God's self-understanding. And secondly he interprets himself to human beings. What God is or does externally for us he is or does antecedently from eternity in himself.

In himself God knows himself or makes himself known to himself in his Word (Barth CD I/1:499). The same Word is his relation to men. But the Word is not only knowledge, it is also self-presentation. Or perhaps it is better to say that it is self-knowledge as it is his self-presentation to himself. In revelation God makes himself external (Williams 1979:185f).

According to Barth the basis of the doctrine of the Trinity is the event of revelation. Therefore this doctrine depends on the conceptualisation of this event. It is of decisive importance how Barth imagines this event.

For Barth in revelation God, who in principle cannot be unveiled, unveils himself (Barth CD I/1:362). Thus the main structure of revelation is veiling-unveiling. But there is a third additional element because in himself man is not able to acknowledge God's unveiling. The acknowledgement of revelation, the unveiledness is part of revelation.

Here revelation is actually a cognitive event: God tells men who he is. For Barth the veiling corresponds to the subject of revelation, that is to the revealer; the unveiling corresponds to the predicate, that is to the revelation, and the unveiledness corresponds to the object of revelation, that is to the revealedness.

Now, it is crucial that for Barth this structure of revelation corresponds to the structure of the Trinity (Barth CD I/1:361). The revelatory event specifies the distinctive characters of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So he says that "the formal individual characteristics of the three modes of existence can quite well be read off from the concept of revelation – what actually constitutes the modes of existence – namely, the characteristics due to their relation to one another" (Barth CD I/1:417) In revelation as in self-unveiling God takes form. God differentiates himself from himself. As the Lord he has the freedom to do this, the freedom to be unlike himself. For Barth this is God's sonship. But at the same time God remains the same. God is free even in taking form. He is free not

to take form. This is his lordship second time. Barth sees in this God's being as the Father. In revelation God is revealed to concrete men and not just generally. Whether one recognises in the form of God revelation or not, is an act of God. God is free to become God to specific men. This is God's lordship third time. For Barth that means that he is the Holy Spirit (Barth CD I/1:363–370).

The three modes of being of God "evolve" from one another in the same way as do the three different moments of the one event of revelation. The Son proceeds from the Father as revelation proceeds from the revealer and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son and therefore also from the father as the revealedness proceeds from revelation and through that from the revealer. God's self-impartment proceeds from his unveiling and his unveiling proceeds from his veiling. The model of the Trinity is as linear as is the model of revelation.

Thus the access to the concept of the mode of being of God is, according to Barth, through the analysis of the concept of revelation. The modes of existence are characterised by the three different aspects of God's activity in the one event of revelation.

For Barth the divine modes of being are not personalities in the modern sense. For this reason he prefers to call them modes of being and not persons as in traditional theology (Barth CD I/1:412f). An essential characteristic of the personality is its self-consciousness (Barth CD I/1:410), the I-ness. Personality is an individuality which has its own will. Personality is a free subject. Barth defines personality as a knowing, willing and acting I (Barth CD II/1:284).

For Barth God is personality, but he is only one personality. Therefore there are not three I-s, not three subjects in God, but only one I, only one subject. God is not a threefold individuality (Barth CD II/1:297). He is thrice one divine I (Barth CD I/1:403). Barth is afraid that the three I-s or subjects can lead into tritheism, the three different wills connected with three separate I-s would destroy the unity of the one God.

Barth has developed this understanding of the event of revelation, and on this basis his doctrine of the Trinity in the framework of the doctrine of the Word of God which is actually for him the prolegomena to dogmatics. According to him the function of the prolegomena is to understand the epistemological path of dogmatics, its particular way of knowledge. Its main question is how is knowledge of God possible and more specifically how is theology possible. And Barth's answer is that the knowledge is real and therefore possible because God reveals himself. Thus he develops and presents his doctrine of the Trinity in a strong connection with epistemology. The Trinity explains the reality and possibility of the knowledge of God. This is its main function. Of course Barth has never reduced this doctrine to this function. But nevertheless the shape of this doctrine is determined by the theological epistemology. The conceptuality of the Trinity relies on the epistemological conceptuality.

It has been suggested by many theologians, e.g. by W. Pannenberg (1991) and R. Williams (1979) that this understanding of the Trinity is close to the model of

the Trinity where the trinitarian distinctions are derived from the self-differentiation of the single absolute spirit in its self-awareness. Barth's God is the self-conscious Absolute.

This is the explicit doctrine of the Trinity as it is developed by Barth at the beginning of his voluminous "Church Dogmatics." In his later theology he did not return explicitly to this doctrine. But in the doctrines, which he developed in the later volumes of his dogmatics, an understanding of the Trinity is at least implicitly present. It was impossible to speak about the eternal election, about creation and especially about christology and soteriology without referring to the Trinity. Those later doctrines demand considerations of the doctrine of the Trinity as this doctrine identifies the God who is active in the election, creation and salvation.

In the following part of this article I am trying to reconstruct his implicit understanding of the Trinity on the ground of fragments taken from the later volumes of the "Church Dogmatics."

In the first volume of his dogmatics Barth said that the essence of God is his lordship (Barth CD I/1:401). But later, in his doctrine of God he asserts that the essence or nature of God is freedom and love (Barth CD II/1:322). Freedom is here the same thing which was characterised earlier by the word "lordship." The new aspect is love.

For Barth the divine love is not the love which is describable by a general idea of love but it is unique as is unique the revelation in which we are given insight to this love (Barth CD II/1:276). God's act which tells us what the divine love is, is according to Barth the fact that God seeks and creates fellowship between himself and human beings (Barth CD II/1:276). This God's act which is directed to men, this creation of fellowship between himself and his creature, is based on the relationship which is inside God himself, it is based on the intratrinitarian fellowship (Barth CD II/1:285).

Now the question is: between whom is this intratrinitarian fellowship, between whom is this love? According to Barth one can understand this divine love only if one thinks about God as the Trinity. There must be a diversity and difference in God for the existence of love and fellowship. Barth uses the image of space to express the non-identity of the two divine modes between whom there is fellowship. Thus he says that there is proximity and remoteness in God (Barth CD II/1:462).

But Barth uses other models as well to explain the difference in God. The begetting of the Son by the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and from the Son is an inner movement in God. Accordingly there is a "before" and an "after". In Barth's opinion there is thus a principle of time in God. And the time is what indicates the separatedness of the two elements. And at the same time it indicates their mutual relation – the order in the Trinity (Barth CD II/1:615).

The Son is the other whom the Father loves and who loves the Father. There is an eternal fellowship between them. Now there is a question who these two are who love one another in the Trinity. The mutual love and fellowship seem to demand the existence of two separate personalities. I suppose that Barth would answer this question that in the context of the intratrinitarian fellowship the person of the Father is the subject or personality *par excellence* and the Son is a subject only because he is the repetition of the first subject.¹ The Son as the subject is the subject second time.

If the second mode of the divine being in the Trinity is only a repetition of the first one then it seems to be more proper to speak about self-love of God than about mutual love in God. There is the Father's love of the Son but the Son's love of the Father seems to be questionable if the Son is not in some way a separate personality. In another context, in discussing the love between God and a human being, Barth himself admits that to be able to love one has to be person, that is, a knowing, willing and acting I. Man is a person because God is the person (Barth CD II/1:284). Man is a person only through fellowship with God. Now if a human being is a person through fellowship with God, then why the Son is not a person through fellowship with the Father. We have to think on Barth's assertion that God's love to creature is grounded in his antecedent love to the other in eternity. Primarily God is in fellowship in himself and only secondarily he is in fellowship with his creature.

Therefore the concept of the intratrinitarian mutual love and fellowship demands that the persons of the Father and the Son must be in some way at least quasi-personal beings.

The questionability of the concept of the Trinity as it is developed by Barth in the first volume of his "Church Dogmatics," appears again if we turn to his doctrine of election.

For Barth the divine election is not a simple act where God elects humanity or some human beings. According to him the structure of this event is more complicated. Primarily God elects himself, the Father elects the Son. And in his Son he elects the humanity of his Son, that means that he elects the man Jesus Christ and only through this man he elects finally the whole humanity. This election as primarily the election of himself and secondarily the election of his creature, is not an optional act of God. This is the essential and constitutive act of God. Through this act God exists. According to Barth the eternal election is identical with the decision in which God wishes to be and actually is God (Barth CD II/2:76).

The Son is both the object of the election – the father elects him, and at the same time he is not only passive, he is the subject of election as well. There is one act of election but the father and the Son fulfil this act differently. According to Barth the decision of the Father is to establish a covenant with humanity by giving

¹ Thus Barth says that "every distinction of His being and working is simply a repetition and corroboration of the one being." (Barth CD II/1:445).

up his Son for the humanity. The decision of the Son is to be obedient and to become man and to offer himself (Barth CD II/2:101). The same election is made in two different ways, but it is executed differently.

The roles of the Father and the Son are different not only in the doctrine of the eternal election. Their difference appears more clearly in Barth's treatment of the doctrine of reconciliation.

According to Barth the fallenness of the creature demands destruction of the creature. But God himself in the person of his Son has taken the place of human beings. He himself chooses to be rejected instead of us. The Son undergoes the judgement under which we had passed (Barth CD IV/1:222). In the event of reconciliation God represents a human being against himself. In this event there occurs an exchange. Barth says that "He took our place, and was made sin for us, we are made the righteous of God in Him, because we are put in His place" (Barth CD IV/1:75).

In this event of reconciliation God has two roles – he is the judge and he is the judged, he is the accuser and he is the accused. God as the Father is the one who condemns and destroys and justifies and God as the Son is the one who is primarily condemned and justified. Although both the Father and the Son are guided by the same will, nevertheless they are fulfilling in some way opposite roles. It makes sense if instead of being two roles inside the one divine subject, there were in the Trinity two different subjects fulfilling accordingly two different roles.

According to Barth the meaning of deity can be learned only from what took place in Christ (Barth CD IV/1:177). Therefore he asserts that humility and obedience are essential aspects of God's nature. But he says further that humility is proper to his nature in his mode of being as the Son (Barth CD IV/2:42). And this obedience is not an obedience generally, but the obedience in relation to the Father. Being obedient, becoming a human being or using Barth's famous words "going into the far country" is not the role of the Father. There are two distinctly separated roles. Barth says about God that he himself has become a stranger in him (Barth CD IV/1:170). The Son has become a stranger to the Father. The basis of the determination of the Son to become man and thus the basis of his humanity and obedience is in the immanent Trinity. The Son is obedient already antecedently in the Trinity (Barth CD IV/2:43)

From time to time Barth himself talks about the Son as the subject who acts in reconciliation, either in connection with the hypostatic union with his humanity (Barth CD IV/2:29) or as the subject who sends the Holy Spirit (Barth CD IV/2:325).

We can go further in distinguishing these two subjects in Barth's doctrine of reconciliation. There is an event where one mode of the divine being is clearly distinguished from the other one. For Barth this event is resurrection. Here only the Father is active and the Son is passive. The resurrection is the verdict of God where God acts in his mode of existence as the Father (Barth CD IV/1:334).

Barth asserts that in himself God is historical. The earthly history of Jesus Christ is a reflection of the history which is in God himself. For Barth this is not direct reflection. This inward life is, in the words of Barth, the history in the partnership. Therefore there is distance and confrontation, encounter and partnership (Barth CD IV/2:344f). If this history takes place in the Spirit, according to Barth, then it is characterised by freedom. But if these two modes of being, that is the Father and the Son, are not personalities, that is if one is only the repetition of the other, if the Son is only the reflection of the Father, then we cannot speak either about the history or about the freedom. In this case it is just a natural process. Barth emphasises very strongly that the intratrinitarian history is a history in the Spirit and therefore is not the circular course of a natural process. And if the witness of the earthly history, the narrative of the gospels presents the Father-Son relationship as the relationship between two personalities, and if this is characterised by Barth as the unfolding of a drama (Barth CD IV/3:136), can we then assume that in itself, in the immanent Trinity this relationship is only between two impersonal entities? Is this encounter only a monologue? Does the drama not require the taking part of real personalities?

There are some *loci* where understanding Barth's thought demands strongly an interpretation of the two modes of the divine being as two personalities. In those passages he asserts that the Son was and actually still is rejected by God the Father (Barth CD IV/3:394f,635f). Barth has not elaborated these ideas further. Here the relationship between the Father and the Son is something more than otherness or being a stranger. The rejection of the Son on the cross by the Father is the climax of the Son's going to the far country. And it makes sense only if it is the real rejection of the one who can be rejected by one who can reject.

According to Karl Barth there is no I without the Thou. The I-Thou relationship is constitutive for personalities (Barth CD IV/2:745). The essentiality of this relationship is not limited by the creaturely sphere. So in the doctrine of creation he says that "the one God is in Himself not only I but also I and Thou." And he continues saying that "the I-Thou relationship is the only genuine distinction in the one divine being" (Barth CD III/1:196)

It is well known that Barth was against the concept of *analogia entis*, at least as he understood it. He thought that the doctrine of *analogia entis* put God and the world together into an overarching ontological continuity and thus made God cease to be God. Instead of that he used a concept of analogy of relations. For him the intradivine relationship between the Father and the Son is analogical to the relationship between God the Creator and man. But a relationship between two human beings is analogical to the intratrinitarian relationship as well. The Father-Son relationship is reflected in the human encounter of "I" and "Thou", especially between man and woman. For Barth the reality of this relationship, the relationship between male and female is the genuine *imago Dei* in humanity. He says that "the *tertium comparationis*, the analogy between God and man, is simply the existence of the I and the Thou in confrontation. This is first constitutive for

God, and then for man created by God. To remove it is tantamount to removing the divine from God as well as the human from man " (Barth CD III/1:185).

For Barth this analogy is not a ground for moving from the human I-Thou relationship to the divine I-Thou relationship. Looking at the *imago Dei* one cannot understand the *Deus* but one can understand the *imago Dei* if one looks at the *Deus*. One will know what the human I and Thou are if one knows the divine I and Thou. And, according to Barth, the only place where one can get the knowledge about the divine I and Thou is the event of revelation as it is witnessed in Scripture. Thus what the real I-Thou relation is, one can conclude from the relationship between God the Father and God the Son as he is incarnate in Jesus Christ.

According to Barth the I and the Thou do not exist outside mutual relationship. But he says more about this relationship. This relationship is an encounter. It is something which neither of them can evade. In this encounter both sides have their validity and dignity (Barth CD III/2:248). There is a space between the I and the Thou. We can describe the necessary distance between them by the concept of freedom. The distance means the uniqueness of both persons of this relationship. Thus freedom is an essential characteristic of the I-Thou relationship. In the framework of his doctrine of creation Barth guarantees the necessary uniqueness to the two members of the divine I-Thou relationship. And he describes the Father-Son relationship as an encounter, partnership and confrontation (Barth CD IV/2:343). Therefore the Father-Son relationship is like the human I-Thou relationship, or to put it more correctly: the human I-Thou relationship is analogical to the intratrinitarian Father-Son relationship.

Now there is a question whether the I of the Son in the Trinity is actually the I of Jesus Christ. If it is not, then what has been said does not make sense because then all talk about the intratrinitarian I-Thou relationship is a pure speculation.

According to Barth the λόγος ἄσασαρκος, the Son outside the hypostatic union with humanity, in his words "a formless Christ," is an unacceptable abstraction (Barth CD III/1:54). In his later theology the second divine person never existed without the hypostatic union. For Barth the man Jesus is included in the intratrinitarian περιχωρησις (Barth CD III/2:65). This assertion is an assertion about the eternal election.

The important thing is that the personal character of the Son in the Trinity is constituted by the hypostatic union with the humanity. The being of humanity in the Trinity guarantees the concreteness and individuality of the second divine person. It defends him against the character of a "formless principle." Therefore the Other in the Trinity is the Son in his hypostatic union with the humanity.

In his christology Barth follows an ancient theological tradition according to which Christ's humanity is anhypostatical (Barth CD IV/2:49). That means that his humanity does not have independent existence. But this does not mean for Barth that he is without a human soul. As soul is the bearer of individuality and

personality (Barth CD IV/3:885), thus Christ has a human personality (Barth CD IV/2:91)

But in what way can Barth maintain at the same time the role of the Son as the subject in Christ and the existence of the human soul of Christ without asserting that there are two subjects in Christ, without asserting that there are two I's in Christ?

The humanity of Christ is the image of the Son *par excellence*. For Barth the humanity is parallel to Christ's divinity (Barth CD IV/2:166). Although he admits the existence of two different wills in Jesus Christ, nevertheless his human will is not independent from his divine will (Barth CD I/2:158). The first one is determined by the second one (Barth CD IV/2:116).

Barth uses even stronger expressions on the singular identity of Jesus Christ. So he says that God himself is the subject of Christ's human decisions, resolves and actions (Barth CD IV/3:40). In the framework of the doctrine of reconciliation Barth actually identifies the divine I of the second person of the Trinity with the I of the human personality of Jesus (Barth CD IV/1:199; IV/2:50).

Those two centres are identical first of all not on the level of being, as the divine and creature remain different, but they are identical on the level of action. According to Barth there are not two personalities in Jesus Christ. His human centre of action and encounter is the image of his divine centre of action and encounter. They coincide as far as they are active.² But outside an action they do not exist. The human centre exists as far as it coincides with the divine one. They are separate only as static entities. But this is an abstraction which is unacceptable for Barth.

Up to now I have concentrated on the first and the second persons of the Trinity. But in the theology of Barth the Holy Spirit has an important role as well. If the objective aspect of revelation and reconciliation is realised by the Son, then the subjective aspect of it is realised by the Spirit.

According to Barth the Holy Spirit has various functions in the divine economy. Through him human nature is assumed into unity with the Son. He is the power which unites two natures which by definition cannot be united (Barth CD I/2:199). Additionally the Spirit is the mode of divine being which binds Christ with the human nature generally. This is not a hypostatic union. This unity occurs in the encounter between Jesus Christ and a human being. It is rather a moral unity. This is not a generally valid principle. It happens only when and where the Spirit is active, when and where he brings forth this encounter. This encounter is actually a community of God and man. In this community both God and man are free and open for one another. The creaturely pole of this meeting is made open and free by the Holy Spirit. This is not an achievement of humanity. According to Barth the Holy Spirit alone unites the qualitatively different divine

² In his treatment of Barth's christology Charles Waldrop (Waldrop 1984:116) has pointed to the fact that according to Barth there is one agent or subject in Christ. This subject or centre of action is the Son and not the divine essence.

and human being. Through the Holy Spirit God overcomes the transcendence which is between him and man, he bridges the abyss which separates the divinity from the humanity. For Barth the Holy Spirit is the transcendent possibility of human being's contact with God. He makes possible and real the presence of man to God and the presence of God to man. In this act the Spirit restores the real selfhood of a human being which is damaged.

The function of the Spirit, according to Barth, is to unite not only such essentially different entities as divinity and humanity.³ He fulfills similar function inside the sphere of creation as well. As we saw above for Barth human existence is an existence in relationship and encounter. The precondition of the human I-Thou encounter is that both members must be free and open to one another. In the fallen state this human disposition is distorted but not destroyed. According to Barth the real and true encounter between two human beings occurs only if the Holy Spirit acts. The Spirit is the mediator who makes possible the freedom and love without which there is no union between human beings (Barth CD IV/2:747). The Spirit makes the I and the Thou in a human encounter open to one another. He makes them to realise and fulfil their true humanity. As in the case of divine-human, so here in a human encounter the Spirit again is the mediator who overcomes the abyss between those two who meet in him.

One can now say that in the theology of Barth the main function of the Holy Spirit on the level of economy is to unite different entities – whether divinity and humanity in Christ or Jesus Christ with ordinary human beings or two human beings with each other. His role in the divine-human encounter is analogical to his role in a meeting of two human beings. This is not surprising if we think on Barth's conception of the *analogia relationis*. The relationship between Christ and man has an analogy in the relationship of human being to a human being. In both cases there is an I-Thou relationship. In both cases the function of the Spirit is basically the same.

As I said earlier, according to Barth the *analogia relationis* is not limited by the God-humanity and human-human relationships. The main *analogans* is the intratrinitarian relationship between the Father and the Son. Therefore it is not surprising that according to Barth the Holy Spirit has an intratrinitarian function which is analogical to his function in the economy. Or it is more correct to say the other way around: Spirit's function in the economy is analogical to his function in the immanent Trinity. Philip Rosato says that in the theology of Barth "there must be a corresponding function of the Holy Spirit within God's own essence which grounds and typifies His function among men in history. If the Holy Spirit is the love of the Father and the Son externally communicated and imparted to man, then the basis of this saving action or function must rest in the ontic construction

³ Smail (Smail 1986:104) reproaches Barth for reducing the Spirit to a mere relationship "so that one is left wondering if there is any need to go on describing him as a distinct 'person' or ... a distinct 'mode of being.'" In my opinion in Barth's theology the Spirit is a distinct divine mode of being because he bridges the in principle unbridgeable gap between God and man.

of God Himself. A communion and participation, an act of impartation and an act of love must exist in the very essence of God" (Rosato 1981:62).

Barth has already developed the concept of the Spirit and its function in the immanent Trinity in the first volume of his "Church Dogmatics." The Holy Spirit has mediating position between the first and the second mode of the divine being. The essence of the Spirit is the complete consubstantial communion between the Father and the Son (Barth CD I/1:551). He describes this communion as love (Barth CD I/1:549). With this Barth is in line with the main western tradition which began at least with Augustine.

In explaining the role of the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity, Barth goes further. According to him the Spirit is the guarantee of the unity of the Trinity. Special expression of this is the western concept of the filioque. There is a distance between the Father and the Son and therefore there is a need for a special guarantee of their unity (Barth CD I/1:552).

As I said above, in the theology of later Barth the Father-Son relationship is characterised by dynamics, history and freedom. The Holy Spirit is the mediator who guarantees these characteristics.

So the general function of the Holy Spirit is to bring and hold together that which is different. The need for a special mode of the divine being to mediate and to unite the two other modes indicates that the two other persons are dangerously separated without the third. It indicates that in Barth's theology the two are in some way unable to communicate with one another themselves. It indicates that the distance between the two is in some way infinite, that is, the otherness in God is real and not relative.

So there are virtually two different concepts of the Trinity in Barth's theology. The first one is grounded in the axiomatic statement that God reveals himself as the lord. The doctrine of the Trinity is the result of the analysis of this statement and what is denoted by this statement. There is only one subject in this Trinity.

The second concept of the Trinity which is implicitly in Barth's doctrines of election, creation and reconciliation is grounded in his treatment of the event of salvation. According to this implicit concept the distance between the Father and the Son is considerable. They are personalities. In my opinion there is a major shift in Barth's understanding of personhood. Instead of a willing and acting self-conscious I a personality is defined now through an I-Thou relationship. And the archetype of this is the Father-Son relationship. This is a shift from Augustinian to a more Cappadocian understanding of the Trinity.

One central idea which is both in the prolegomena and in the later volumes of his "Church Dogmatics" is the idea of unity in the Trinity. In the prolegomena the unity of the Trinity was the unity of the one divine essence, or at least Barth put the main emphasis on this unity. But in the later volumes it has shifted. It seems that Barth is no longer satisfied with it. Now the emphasis is on the unity in the Spirit. The Father and the Son are unified in the Holy Spirit. The guarantee of the unity is no longer the divine essence. The guarantee is the Holy Spirit. Because of

Barth's richer understanding of christology and soteriology, there is a wider differentiation between the Father and the Son in the Trinity than there was according to the doctrine of the Trinity in the first volume. And this demands a different sort of unity.

For Barth the concept of the Trinity is closely connected with the concept of revelation. Therefore it is not surprising that the two different concepts of the Trinity signify different understandings of revelation. The first concept of the Trinity is grounded in a linear concept of revelation. Here God reveals his lordship. Revelation is God's self-interpretation, antecedently to himself and then to his creature. Revelation is God's speaking, his speech to a human being (Barth CD I/1:349). In the doctrine of the Word of God Barth describes and explains the event of revelation predominantly in terms of knowing or becoming known: God gives himself to be known, he makes himself known (Barth CD I/1:499). Barth says that "incarnation was needed in order that God might become manifest to us" (Barth CD I/2:43).

In his later theology, especially in his doctrine of reconciliation Barth's concept of revelation has become much richer. The guiding concept for understanding revelation is now reconciliation. In the context of the doctrine of the Word of God Barth did not deny that revelation and reconciliation were connected but nevertheless there the event of reconciliation did not play any role in the forming of the concept of revelation. In his later theology revelation is grounded in justification and sanctification, that is in reconciliation (Barth CD IV/3:212). Revelation is only a part, and not the primary part, of reconciliation. Revelation is actually the revelation of reconciliation. According to Barth the event of atonement (i.e., the alteration of human situation) takes place in the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Resurrection is manifestation of this alteration. The description and explanation of reconciliation in terms of obedience of the Son and satisfaction by the Son demands the treatment of the second mode of the divine being as a personality. Thus God does not reveal only his lordship but also his love. The moment of history is not absent from Barth's doctrine of the Word of God. But it is more vigorous in his doctrine of reconciliation. Here Barth does not avoid calling this history dramatic. He says that "we can speak of the being, activity and speech of Jesus Christ only in relation to specific events, only in the form of the narration of a history and histories. If Christology as the description of this being, activity and speech is to be anything more than an obscure metaphysics, in all its parts and aspects it can be only the unfolding of a drama" (Barth CD IV/3:136). This quotation helps to understand the change in the concept of revelation and therefore also the change in the concept of the Trinity. Moving from the doctrine of the Word of God to the doctrine of reconciliation, Barth increases essentially the use of the biblical narratives. David Ford (Ford 1981:24) has shown the relevance of this change to the change in the concept of revelation. John McIntyre (McIntyre 1966:159ff) has also demonstrated the change in Barth's understanding of revelation. According to D.Ford (Ford

1981:31) the reason for this change is in the fact that "Barth places increasing emphasis on the story of Jesus Christ as the expression of the divine essence." It seems to me that the story is not only the story of the divine essence but it is also the story, and perhaps first of all, of the person of Christ and therefore of the second person of the Trinity.⁴ Thus the gospel story reveals the relationship between the divine persons. But by elaborating the concept of the second divine person, the emphasis on the narrative also elaborates and changes the concept of the Trinity.

One can argue that the concept of revelation in Barth's later theology is not in contradiction with the concept of revelation as it is explicitly presented in the doctrine of the Word of God. That is true. The later concept does not deny what the first one says. But it says much more, it is much richer. It does not contradict Barth's statement that in revelation God reveals himself as the lord. But additionally the later concept of revelation says that God reveals that he has reconciled himself with his creature and it says how God has achieved the reconciliation. Thus the later concept of revelation takes into account the doctrines of election and creation, christology and soteriology. Therefore it is not surprising that the concept of the Trinity which is implicitly present in his later theology is different from the one which is in the context of the doctrine of the Word of God. There the concept of the Trinity gives the identity of the Christian God. But this identity has to rely on the acts of God which are thoroughly treated in the doctrines of election, creation and reconciliation. It has been said that Barth's method of putting the concept of the Trinity at the beginning of his dogmatics is an essential advantage.⁵ But on the basis of this study one cannot be sure about this advantage.⁶ It could become a philosophical-theological preconception and its role could be similar to that of natural theology. Fortunately Barth himself did not much take into account his explicit doctrine of the Trinity. The first volume of the "Church Dogmatics" is inessential to understanding the later volumes. And the implicit concept of the Trinity is essentially different from the one in the first volume.

One of the basic structures of Barth's thought is the I-thou relationship (Smail 1986:89). But in his former and in his later doctrines of the Trinity this relationship has a different meaning. In his explicit doctrine this relationship is

⁴ "Barth has a stronghold against post-Kantian theories of the self for the true self is now described in a series of events told in a realistic story" (Ford 1981:168).

⁵ "Barth's chief innovation in trinitarian thought lies in the new home which he hammered out for the doctrine, namely, its place among the prolegomena to Christian theology" (Leslie 1991:43).

⁶ Tillich (1984:285) says that "it was a mistake of Barth to start his Prolegomena with what, so to speak, are the Postlegomena, the doctrine of the Trinity." German scholar Rosenthal (1976:148) says "Wenn die Trinitätslehre Interpretation der Offenbarung ist, kann sie nicht gut in einem Anhang oder Schlussabschnitt behandelt werden." He continues saying that the doctrine of the Trinity must follow christology and pneumatology.

dominant as the God-man relationship. In his later theology the dominating structure is the Father-Son relationship as the I-thou relation.

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