Karl Barth’s Theology of Joy

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Joy is a recurrent theme in the Church Dogmatics of Karl Barth but it is one which is under-explored. In order to ascertain reasons for this lack, the work of six scholars is explored with regard to the theme of joy, employing the useful though limited “motifs” suggested by Hunsinger.

That the revelation of God has a trinitarian framework, as demonstrated by Barth in CD I, and that God as Trinity is joyful, helps to explain Barth’s understanding of theology as a “joyful science”.

By close attention to Barth’s treatment of the perfections of God (CD II.1), the link which Barth makes with glory and eternity is explored, noting the far-reaching sweep which joy is allowed by contrast with the related theme of beauty. Divine joy is discerned as the response to glory in the inner life of the Trinity, and as such is the quality of God being truly Godself. Joy is seen to be “more than a perfection” and is basic to God’s self-revelation and human response. A dialogue with Jonathan Edwards challenges Barth’s restricted use of beauty in his theology, and highlights the innovation Barth makes by including election in his doctrine of God.

In the context of Barth’s anthropology, paying close attention to his treatment of “being in encounter” (CD III.2), there is an examination of the significance of gladness as the response to divine glory in the life of humanity, and as the crowning of full and free humanness. The study then culminates in a consideration of the role which joy plays in Barth’s doctrine of reconciliation (CD IV) with particular reference to the “Easter event”. A range of critical issues arises from this, and these, together with others gathered from previous chapters, suggests a brief concluding list of questions to Barth.
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Sources of Epigrams

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**
Abbreviations

Abbreviations which are used include:

AAR American Academy of Religion
AB Anchor Bible
BibSac Bibliotheca Sacra
CD Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics
EC Jonathan Edwards, Concerning the End for which God Created the World (in Yale, 8)
EvQ Evangelical Quarterly
EvT Evangelische Theologie
ExpT The Expository Times
FW Jonathan Edwards, Freedom of the Will. (Yale, 1)
GD Karl Barth, Göttingen Dogmatics
Grace Jonathan Edwards, Treatise on Grace
ICC International Critical Commentary
In Sent Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Peter Lombard’s Sentences.
Int Interpretation
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
JPT Journal of Pentecostal Theology
JPTSup Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplementary Volume
JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JTS Journal of Theological Studies
KD Karl Barth, Kirchliche Dogmatik
LA Philo, Legum Allegoria (An Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2)
LCC Library of Christian Classics
LCL Loeb Classical Library
LXX Septuagint
Mind Jonathan Edwards, The Mind (in Yale, 6)
Misc. Jonathan Edwards, The “Miscellanies” (Yale, 13, unless noted)
The subsequent number and title refer to Edwards’ nomenclature.
NICNT New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDNTTh New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology
NIV New International Version
NRSV New Revised Standard Version
NZSTh Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie
OTLib Old Testament Library
Pacifica Pacifica: Journal of the Melbourne College of Divinity
PTMS Princeton Theological Monograph Series
RA Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections, (Yale, 2)
SBL Society of Biblical Literature
Sinners “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God: Sermon on Deut. 32:35,...”.
SJT Scottish Journal of Theology
Standard reference works are cited by abbreviated title (e.g., TDNT 6:123).

In the case of Barth’s Dogmatics, citation is CD (or KD), then Vol. Part. page.

(The revised edition of CD I.1 is referred to throughout.)

Where possible the Yale edition of the Works of Jonathan Edwards is used.

Biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version unless stated.
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Chapter 1

Toward a Theology of Joy

Introduction to the study

Jetzt schlof i frehlig y,
‘s isch luschtig gsi,
Der lieb Gott het recht an mi denkt…

That Karl Barth was a joyful person has been noted by those who knew him and many who have read his work, but the pervasiveness of joy as a theme in his *Church Dogmatics* has only rarely been noted and has not been closely explored. The richness and expansiveness of the *Dogmatics* is sufficient explanation for the neglect of the theme of joy – yet, as this study tries to show, it cannot and should not be ignored.

Whilst it is not a controlling theme or a part of the formal structure which Barth adopted for the *Church Dogmatics*, nevertheless joy plays a significant material role, functioning as a key theme in Barth’s doctrine of God, and carrying a significant burden in his doctrine of election. It is reflected in Barth’s doctrine of humanity, especially the crowning theme of his discussion of “being in encounter” – the theme of gladness. This human dimension, grounded in his theology proper and rooted in his
Chapter 1 Toward a Theology of Joy

doctrine of the Word of God, flourishes in his exploration of Christian vocation, and underscores the praise of the people of God, their worship and witness and the vocation and destiny of the church. An explication of the role of joy in Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* is overdue, and should contribute to an enrichment of a vital and productive aspect of contemporary theology.

The structure of the *Church Dogmatics* rests on a trinitarian framework. For Barth the basic given in dogmatics is the reality of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This underpins his analyses and is the basis of his structure. Chapter 2 examines this aspect of the *Church Dogmatics* with a view to locating the role of dogmatics as a joyful exercise in the broader setting of God and God’s revelation. It does this by recognizing that dogmatics is a human response to God in revelation, and is set in the context of the responses of obedience, love, witness and worship which are incumbent upon those who are recipients of God’s self-revelation. This overview of the theological task in the *Church Dogmatics* is grounded in Barth’s own prolegomena, his Doctrine of the Word of God, the main theme of Volume One of the *Church Dogmatics*. Within this exploration, and using themes found in Barth’s prolegomena, the recurrent motif of joy is noted and, where necessary, illustrated from later volumes of the *Dogmatics*.

That twentieth century theology cannot be understood without reference to the work of Karl Barth has often been noted, and the secondary literature on Barth is rich and extensive. To locate this study within the broader context of Barth scholarship, Chapter 3 provides an overview using a schema suggested by Hunsinger.¹ His six “motifs” are used to consider four previous commentators on Barth. The same structure is used in a closer analysis of two other scholars, Eberhard Jüngel and Alan J. Torrance, whose work is of relevance to this study. The chapter establishes whether others have noted the theme of joy which this thesis suggests is widespread in the *Church Dogmatics*; what it is about their approach which allows or limits recognition of the theme; whether Hunsinger’s motifs help in exposing and analysing the theme of joy; and how the themes might help the further progress of this study.

Whilst Hunsinger’s motifs provide a clear and useful shorthand in Barth studies, they do not, of themselves, help in recognizing the theme of joy. They are an

aid to analysis, but only after the theme is recognized. It is because Hunsinger’s motifs concentrate so heavily on formal and cognitive aspects of Barth’s theology that they fail to capture an aspect which might be described as “affective”. An approach to reading the Church Dogmatics is then proposed which takes the affective aspects seriously. Heeding Hunsinger’s warnings about the futility of a quest to find an all-encompassing theme by which to understand the Church Dogmatics, the study notes that its goal is simply to outline and explore one rich and fertile theme – Barth’s use of joy in his theology. The reading attempts to balance a close attention to detail (noting the risk of submergence) with a broad grasp of how joy connects with other themes. This is undertaken with particular reference to Volume Two of the Church Dogmatics, noting the attention Barth gives to joy amongst the perfections of God.

The close examination of Barth’s use of the concept of joy within his exposition of the perfections of God occupies most of Chapter 4. By noting the limitations which Barth places on his discussion of the beauty of God and the greater freedom he allows joy, I suggest that limitations in his own method, grounded in his own reformed tradition, bias his understanding of divine glory. Nonetheless, the fact that he allows joy such a far-reaching sweep is underlined. An examination of aspects of the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, notably that of beauty, indicates something of Barth’s concerns over use and (in his judgement) misuse of this theme.

The exploration of Barth’s theology by his commentators is often focused on (and thus by) his foundational work on revelation, with the result that a disproportionate emphasis is placed on CD I. However, close attention to CD II suggests that, at least where a theology of joy is concerned, the centre is more usefully located here. This does not deny the importance of CD I, but rather suggests that undue attention to CD I risks blinding Barth scholars to other riches.

A reading of CD II, especially Barth’s treatment of the perfections of God, leads to my hypothesis that Barth’s use of the attribute of joy is tantamount to its use as a “quasi-perfection”. The connection which Barth makes between glory and joy, and the particular and important role which Herrlichkeit plays in Barth’s interpretation of God as Herr, is used to support this proposal.

An exploration beyond the perfections in CD II leads to the observation that in some important respects Barth uses joy as more than a perfection, thus beginning a “revolution” – a revolution which finds some resolution in CD IV, but which remains
nonetheless incomplete. The elevated role played by joy is noted in the context of Barth’s exploration of human response to God – a response which is characterized by gladness. Whilst this amplified role of joy is proposed, the actual constraints which Barth places upon his use of the theme of joy and its related theme, beauty, are noted.

Chapter 5 considers two aspects of Barth’s theology of joy in greater depth. The first, the nature of joy in God, is conducted in dialogue with Jonathan Edwards. Because Edwards probed beauty further than did Barth and also explored divine “happiness”, he provides an ideal “foil” for Barth, enabling clarification of the limits of joy and of beauty in God. The discussion concludes by suggesting that Barth limited his theology of beauty more than was necessary, but notes that the theology of joy which he developed provides hints as to what a Barth-inspired æsthetic might look like.

The second aspect of Barth’s doctrine of God considered in Chapter 5 is election. This is also explored by engagement with Jonathan Edwards. Barth’s radical location of election as part of his doctrine of God contrasts with the traditional view of predestination espoused by Edwards. Based on this analysis, the discontinuity is seen to be within Edwards’ theology, since there is no sense of the “happiness” of God in evidence in his doctrine of predestination. That Barth is able to reconcile his concept of a joyful God with his doctrine of election is an affirmation of the location of election in his doctrine of God. It is also a test of the significance of his theology of joy.

This engagement between Barth and Edwards is undertaken with constant reference to the trinitarian theology of each and by asking questions about the christological and pneumatological aspects as they arise. In both Barth and Edwards the relationality which is foundational to their conceptions of the nature of the Trinity and the constituent divine “persons” is noted, although in the theology of both it is suggested that the role of the Spirit is unnecessarily circumscribed.

The description of God as the one who elects in joy, and to joy, leads to an exploration of the place of joy in human life in Chapter 6. From the vantage point of Barth’s doctrine of creation, and with special reference to the place of humanity in that doctrine, the connection between Barth’s doctrine of God and his anthropology is discussed. A detailed analysis of the text of CD III.2 in particular shows the close connection and also the important differences between Barth’s notions of gratitude and gladness. The latter, especially as it crowns Barth’s analysis of “being in encounter”,
is seen to parallel his placement of joy in God. The implications of this are that joy (in God) and gladness (in humanity) are both describable as aspects of abundance, or affectively focused additions to the core aspects of the divine perfections and human nature.

Despite his remarkable use of happiness as a theme in God, Edwards failed to do what Barth has done: construct a positive theology of God and humanity which can take joy seriously without recourse to negative theology, or a need for antonyms to define terms. The aspects of joy and gladness in Barth’s *Dogmatics* function like an ambush for the unwary, those who would dare to treat God as a mere cognitive construct. By engaging in this affective culmination of both the divine perfections and the basic marks of humanity, Barth suggests a conceptualization of joy which enriches his anthropology. By considering the role of creation as praising God, and by emphasizing the particular role of humanity in creation, Barth suggests that humanity remains unfulfilled without responding to God’s glory in glad obedience. Lack of joy is a symptom of human sinfulness; gladness is a sign of humanity in which persons are truly free to be themselves. Gladness is different from gratitude, but is analogous to it. As grace in God elicits gratitude in humanity, so divine glory evokes human gladness.

The gladness which crowns Barth’s conceptualization of “being in encounter” parallels the joy which characterizes God. This connects the human and divine covenant partners and lays the foundation for consideration of reconciliation as an act of joy, for those called “from glory to glory”.

With the joy of God and gladness of humanity as foundational to an understanding of the covenant, Chapter 7 explores CD IV with the expectation of finding a doctrine saturated with references to joy. Whilst this theme is found, it does not resonate as anticipated. By close analysis of Barth’s theology of the “Easter event” and the “forty days”, and using the motifs of Hunsinger, this apparent lack is described and explained.

The analysis of Barth’s theology of the Easter event allows joy to be seen as a “sign” of glory – in the resurrection this is found in the event as a manifestation of the glory of the “one who loves in freedom”. The glory of the whole Easter event is seen in the resurrection, and it is this which evokes joy. The glory in which humanity participates through the act of God in Jesus Christ, known in the Easter event, is the basis for human joy. As God is fully known as God in glory, so humans are fully
human in sharing in God’s glory and thus in giving glory to God. In God and humanity, the fullness of being oneself (especially oneself with another) is the basis for joy. Joy is being truly oneself.

The limitations on Barth’s development of a theology of joy in CD IV are grounded in his “actualism”, which constricts ongoing “performative” dimensions of the work of God in Jesus Christ in the church. This is partly due to the compression of the Easter event into one act. The consequences of this are noted in the absence of a theology of saints in Barth; his minimal sense of liturgical enactment; a severely circumscribed role for representational art; and an ecclesiology which limits human flourishing – and thus a reduction of the possibility of experiencing human joy. Theological dimensions of this limitation are noted in a weakened pneumatology and a less than fully relational conceptualization of the Trinity.

The dialectical compression which Barth makes of the theologia crucis and the theologia resurrectionis into the theologia gloriae is found to result in a constraint on his own theology of glory which results in a theology of joy which does not flourish as expected. A series of questions are put to Karl Barth. These suggest that the deficiencies may be the product of formal dimensions of the Church Dogmatics, dimensions not easily altered but worthy of challenge, so that joy might be seen to flourish, bringing greater glory to God, and further preparing the saints for the eschaton.
Chapter 2

Joy in the Church Dogmatics

Prolegomena

A quite specific astonishment stands at the beginning of every theological perception, inquiry, and thought, in fact at the root of every theological word. This astonishment is indispensable if theology is to exist and be perpetually renewed as a modest, free, critical, and happy science.

(Karl Barth)

This chapter notes the presence of the theme of joy in Barth’s prolegomena, Volume I of the Church Dogmatics. It serves as an introduction to the fuller study of joy as a theme in later parts of the Church Dogmatics. It notes the preliminary nature of Barth’s treatment of the theme of joy and also shows the scope of his use of the language of joy in relation to the theological task and in relation to broader thematic concerns. It selects three broad areas in which to do this: God as revealer in triune form; humanity’s response to divine grace and revelation; and the broader issues of mission and ethics which derive from these two earlier areas. It then returns to a treatment of the issue of the place and role of dogmatics, noting the imperative that it
remain a joyful science. Whilst the focus of this chapter is Volume I of the *Church Dogmatics*, some mention will be made of Barth’s use of the themes in later volumes to indicate the continuity of the theme and to illustrate its explicit and implicit application.

The major examination of joy undertaken by Barth in the *Church Dogmatics* is under the heading of the perfections of God,\(^1\) where Barth locates joy in God, in the context of God’s glory and eternity. Whilst the theme of joy in God as such is not explored in depth in the first volume of the Dogmatics, it is both mentioned and anticipated. Once it is recognized, its effect on many aspects of Barth’s theology can be seen. This chapter will first note some of the explicit references to joy (and its related theme, beauty) in the early volumes of the *Church Dogmatics*, and will explore its connection to the three major themes mentioned above. It will then return to examine the nature of the theological task as Barth defines it, and will also highlight the implicit presence of joy in various places in Volume I of the *Church Dogmatics*. First, however, let us consider the presence of joy in the person of Karl Barth.

Barth does not fit into any gloomy Germanic theological caricature. His life and his writings show a certain playful ebullience, with the theme of joy recurring in his life and clearly visible in the *Church Dogmatics*. Theology is for Barth the most serious of all possible human undertakings, yet he also argues that it is to be taken as a point of rejoicing and celebration. Following Anselm of Canterbury, Barth encouraged all theologians to rejoice in their work:

> For it is an honour and a joy, an inner necessity and a gracious privilege to serve and therefore to teach the Word of God. Indeed, it is the whole meaning of the Church’s existence.\(^2\)

\(^1\) CD II.1.322-677, esp. 647-66. (References to the Church Dogmatics will be given in the form: CD Volume.Part.Page. The German original of the Kirchliche Dogmatik will be presented in the same form but prefixed with KD. Where a paragraph number is referred to in general - whether in the Church Dogmatics or the “Göttingen Dogmatics” - Barth’s number will follow the § symbol.)

For Barth, the implications of this joyful view of theology extend to the whole life of the Church, because if the teaching church fails to be the hearing church and vice versa, it may be “dispirited, bewildered, joyless or inactive and therefore dead”. As the custodian of this task on the Church’s behalf, the theologian must exude “the joy and confidence that overcome fear”. Whilst Barth took great joy in reading the older theologians, he also notes his sadness at the widespread a priori use of oneness or other ontological concepts at the head of their discussions of the divine attributes. The rich and relational oneness which Barth elucidates in his doctrine of the Trinity is (as we shall see) the basis of his understanding of the inner joy of God, the potentiation of human joy and the fundamental reason why the theological task should be joyful.

Frequent note has been made of the aesthetics of Barth’s structuring of the Church Dogmatics – a structure which reflects Barth’s fundamental view of God, and of his own personal joy in the theological task. The whole of the dogmatic task is an engagement with this “singularly beautiful and joyful science, so that it is only willingly and cheerfully that we can be theologians”. The theological task is joyful because God is joyful. This joyfulness is most conspicuously exemplified in the resurrection event in the life of Jesus Christ. Thus the nature of Christian theology, for Barth, “does really have the character, colours and accents of the Easter event”.

3 CD I.2.854.
4 CD I.2.855.
5 CD II.1.447. The oneness of God is, for Barth, central but not controlling. There can be no trace of a thorough-going and rigid monism, because Christianity is fundamentally divided from Islam in the way it differently asserts the oneness of God. CD II.1.448-9.
6 However, Barth ensures that joyfulness in theology does not become its goal: “Theological clarity and cheerfulness are excellent gifts of God when we enjoy them, but they must not cause us to make the mistake of using the theological and specifically the christological statements which we ourselves can and should make to fill up the space in which only the living Jesus Christ in His self-revelation can affirm what we think we can and must say concerning Him.” CD IV.3.285-6.
7 As T. F. Torrance states in his introduction to the final volume of the Church Dogmatics: The Church Dogmatics is “a marvel of architectonic beauty.” He continues: “Barth’s rigorously scientific theology has maintained such contact with the reality of God that it will be a constant source of surprise and discovery for all who may have something of the same awe and humility, the mingled joy and wonder and responsibility, that characterized Karl Barth himself.” CD IV.4.vi.
8 IV.3.881 “Theologie…doch eine selten schöne Sache, fröhliche Wissenschaft, so daß man nur entweder gerne oder gar nicht Theologe sein kann.” KD IV.3.1010.
9 IV.3.294.
Barth’s primary interest is not in the nature of theology but in the nature of God. His conceptualization of the nature of God has explicit consequences for the subsequent shaping of each doctrine. Nowhere is this more evident than in Barth’s use of the doctrine of the Trinity in developing his doctrine of revelation, and to that we now turn.

2.1 The Trinity and revelation

Barth’s concern to conceive God through the revelation of Jesus Christ as God’s being-in-act suggests a means of understanding the potential for joy in those who are the recipients of the revelation of the God who is inwardly relational and joyful. To develop this we must first note some of the dynamics of Barth’s theology of revelation. The objective and subjective aspects of revelation are centred in the person of Jesus Christ. They are not categories to be used to develop epistemological definitions which risk setting God against God’s act in revelation. The aim, even in the dialectical passages of Volume I, is to assert the unity of God, and God’s united engagement with humanity in the act of revelation, in Jesus Christ himself.\(^{10}\)

It is this constant call to focus on Christ which places Christian life in its context, depending on “Christ, the Word of God, brought to the hearing of man by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who is man’s possibility of being the recipient of divine revelation”,\(^{11}\) and standing against Schleiermacher’s understanding of the essence of theology as found in religious experience.\(^{12}\) For Barth, the measure of humanity is Christ, thus humanity is precluded from claiming to be the “centre, measure and goal of all things”.\(^{13}\) This centrality of Christ as the visible Word of God, as the act of the

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\(^{10}\) “If we want truly and properly to investigate the subjective possibility of revelation, and therefore to understand the Holy Spirit and His work, we must never look at the subjective realities in which He might presumably or actually be seen and experienced. We must look rather at the place from which He comes and at what He brings. We must look at the contents of God’s hand stretched out to us in Him. We must look at the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by Him. We must look to the objective possibility of our communion with Christ. In other words, we must look at Christ Himself.” CD I.2.249.

\(^{11}\) CD I.2.249.

\(^{12}\) CD I.2.290.

\(^{13}\) CD I.2.293. Barth locates a discussion of the Barmen declaration in this context. It stood against the natural theology which inevitably developed from Schleiermacher, and resulted in the rise of German National Socialism. See CD I.2.283-97.
Trinity, also locates what might be called the “affections of God”\(^{14}\) in the context of God’s communion and its abundant overflow.\(^{15}\)

Whilst Barth is, in this section of CD I.1, underscoring the nature of the eternal Son as revealer and is thus less interested in discussing the Son as the manifestation of the intra-trinitarian joy than in a functional discussion of revelation, he notes that the role of the Holy Spirit is also important in maintaining this communion.\(^{16}\)

This sense of the Spirit as the bond of communion and, as we shall see in Chapter 4, the bond of joy in the inner life of the Trinity is of significance for the understanding of the dynamism of revelation and is also basic to the doctrine of God’s perfections. Human response to God, in the receiving of revelation, in praise and mission, is founded upon the nature of God who is in inner communion.\(^{17}\) Whilst Barth is concerned to avoid personalist conceptualizations of the Triune Seinsweisen,\(^{18}\) he nevertheless expounds a relational model of the Trinity. He will brook no separation of the Seinsweisen, but insists on their Zusammenhang and Zusammengehörigkeit.

\(^{14}\) See the discussion of the theology of Jonathan Edwards, in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

\(^{15}\) CD I.2.249.

\(^{16}\) “He (sc. the Holy Spirit) is the common element, or, better, the fellowship, the act of communion, of the Father and the Son. He is the act in which the Father is the Father of the Son or the Speaker of the Word and the Son is the Son of the Father or the Word of the Speaker.” CD I.1.470.

\(^{17}\) See the next section of this chapter.

\(^{18}\) “‘Person’ as used in the Church doctrine of the Trinity bears no direct relation to personality.” CD I.1.351. For Barth’s preference for Seinsweisen see CD I.1.359-62. This is well examined by Alan J. Torrance, Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation with special reference to Volume One of Karl Barth’s Church Dogmatics, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1996, 216-62 (especially 239-41). Torrance’s focus is narrowed, due to his limitation of his discussions to CD I, which, despite its fundamental importance for an understanding of Barth’s approach to theology, is not his final word on the Trinity. Torrance’s development of the concepts of analogia relationis and analogia fidei in this context, and the exploration of their interrelatedness, is helpful. However, Torrance’s return to explore Barth’s trinitarian theology in the context of Volume I alone loses the point at which he aims – the doxological participation which he claims moves him beyond the limitations of Barth’s model. Alan Torrance moves from the limitations of Barth’s model which he perceives in his reading of CD I.1 - but ends very similarly to Barth’s position as outlined in later volumes of the Church Dogmatics.
We should note Barth’s consistent call to keep theology focused on and by its central “object” – God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who is revealed as triune. It is the trinitarian dynamic, the recognition of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which provides grounding for Barth’s whole theological undertaking and a basis for the theme of particularity and universality which recurs throughout Barth’s theology. It is this uniqueness and particularity within the Trinity which is found to inform much of Barth’s thinking, not only about the divine nature but also in other aspects of his theology, including its fundamental shape.

It is in this context of the revelatory and salvific act of the triune God in Jesus Christ that we turn to consider briefly the prolegomenal development of Barth’s anthropology in Volume I of the *Church Dogmatics*.

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19 “The one God reveals Himself according to Scripture as the redeemer, i.e., as the Lord who sets us free. As such He is the Holy Spirit, by receiving whom we become the children of God, because, as the Spirit of love of God the Father and the Son, He is so antecedently in Himself.” CD I.1.448.

Also, “The essence of God is the essence of God as divine being. The essence of God is the Godhead of God.” CD I.1.349.

Barth develops his theology with the doctrine of the Trinity as its form and interpretive means. This is not unique, but had not been undertaken in any thoroughgoing fashion since Peter Lombard and Bonaventure. Barth himself notes this. CD I.1.300.

2.2 Human response to revelation

Barth does not (in CD I) explore the nature of humanity in the light of the relationality of the Trinity, but rather under the broad rubric of revelation. This in itself should remind us of the limitations of trying to derive a whole theological anthropology from CD I alone. Nevertheless, we can identify strong indications of the direction Barth will take in developing an anthropology which endorses the centrality of joy. The most important of these is found in his discussion of the “Life of the Children of God”:

If we are seekers of God, and to that extent lovers of God, this can be definitely and unequivocally proved and maintained of the children of God only by the one thing: that in all circumstances and in every connexion they rejoice if their seeking is not in vain, if therefore the One whom they seek allows Himself to be found by them, if in that way He confirms the fact that He has sought and found them, before they ever sought Him. How can they not rejoice when God really confronts them, when the One whom they loved loves them again and anew, as He had already loved them before, when He is therefore present to them in His Word, in Jesus Christ, when He speaks with them, and acts on them? Is He not a faithful God because He does so? And how can they not rejoice that He is so faithful?

The response which Barth describes as definitive of the children of God is not only love, as might be expected but also rejoicing. Thus the veracity of Christian love is that it rejoices in being found by God. The centre of this finding is God’s loving act of revelation in Jesus Christ. Here we are confronted with Barth’s understanding of God as Trinity who acts in love and freedom to reveal himself to those he loves. God’s freedom and love undergird the act of revelation. It is an expression of divine grace. In being loved “again and anew” by God, humanity is confronted by God’s faithfulness. It is in God’s faithfulness that humans who are found are to rejoice, not on the basis of their own zeal, but God’s own grace. The nature of God’s revealing

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21 Alan Torrance points out, however, that it can be so described and analyzed. See Torrance, Persons in Communion, 180-9 for a detailed description of the potential for redefining the analogia relationis to include and explicate the analogia entis in its Thomistic form and the analogia fidei (or, as Torrance notes, the analogia gratia) in Barth.

22 CD I.2.392.

23 Although he affirms the importance of love as response in this section and many other contexts. See, for instance, CD I.2.393.

24 CD I.2.393.

25 See further CD I.1.332-3.
love has its parallel in Barth’s understanding of God’s gracious election of humanity (which we will discuss in Chapter 5). Both are gracious and glorious acts, grounded in God’s triune relational love, freedom and joyfulness, whose benefits overflow to humanity in Christ and by the Spirit.

For Barth a touchstone of true love (and of rightly received revelation) is joy. The proof of true Christian love is seen in that those who are “genuine seekers after God…do not withdraw but stand fast, and joyfully, with a Yes which comes from all their heart and soul and mind and strength, even when they find God”.

As Barth goes on to emphasize, they even rejoice in the grace of discipline. This rejoicing is rooted in a knowledge that the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ is the one true God, and that the nature of God is love. The summons of God to those “in the far country” is a constant theme in Barth. It is a liberating theme because the God who calls is love, holiness and freedom. God engenders joy and that joy can be found and fulfilled in obedience, precisely because God is Himself love, freedom and joy.

The grace found in joyful acceptance of God’s self-revelatory action is the catalyst for good works and obedience. Such delight in God leads to delight in the law of God, as evinced in scripture, in the Psalms in particular. Barth stresses this, drawing to our attention “a necessary and legitimate delight in the Law of God” as well as noting the “desire,…gladness and…pleasure in its commands and precepts. (Ps 119:4 and passim)” This is, paradoxically, the basis of the freedom of the (Christian) person, and the basis of the ethics of Christian life which is intimately integrated with

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26 CD I.2.393.
27 CD I.2.393: “Grace demands of them (sc. Christians) that they trust only in grace, and live only by grace—and by grace really live. If that be God, the Son of God and the Word of God, who can rejoice at it? Who in seeking after God ever sought after that? We can only reply that the children of God rejoice in it. This and this alone is what the children of God have sought. Therefore the children of God are not disillusioned or embittered. They do not turn away, they do not return to that pretended love at a distance, when the Beloved One is seen to be like this, and meets them in this way. For the children of God there is nothing bitter about the severity of the Law from which there is no escape”.
28 CD II.1.654, where he notes particularly Ps 1:2; 112:1 and Rom 7:22.
29 CD II.1.654. Thus: “It is not true that the lines of Joachim Neander which run: ‘Hast thou not seen, How thy heart’s wishes have been Granted in what He ordaineth,’ are a pudendum in our hymn books, as some of the over-zealous maintain.” CD II.1.654.
30 “Love is the freedom into which the love of God has transferred us. Does it not absorb and suck up all the reservations which we can and do make against it[?] Does it not transform them into reasons for and not against a willing and joyful obedience?” CD I.2.396.
the theological task for Barth. Here the imperative to obey is located in God’s own revelation as love. Obedience is the means to engagement with the freedom of God and is also the means to knowing the joy of God, because this joyful freedom is the nature of God. Barth’s theology always leads into ethics, because Jesus Christ as God’s act is also God’s call to humanity to acceptance of God, obedience to God, and joy in God.

This joyful obedience, the product of divine grace, leads to an understanding of love which “cannot be understood except as the thankfulness which the believer owes to God in His revealing and reconciling work”. The measure of that thankfulness is in the living out of the second of the two commandments in Christ’s summary of the law (Mk 12). Barth explores this in detail to support his contention that:

…no praise of God is serious, or can be taken seriously, if it is apart from or in addition to the commandment: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ Whatever else we may understand by the praise of God, we shall always have to understand it as obedience to this commandment.

The inextricability which Barth affirms between theology and ethics is linked through the realization that the God who is revealed as loving and free and who rejoices in communion and reveals and elects in delight, is the same God who summons humanity to joyful obedience, which is to be expressed in worship of God and in love for neighbour. These themes are all held together in the constant movement which Barth

31 CD I.2.400. Thus all human work and works are produced in witness to God’s work, “and are therefore a renunciation of all self-glory and all claims.” CD I.2.401.
33 CD I.2.401-2.
34 CD I.2.442-450 gives an important grounding of this which is basic to much later understanding of the nature of Church and witness. “The work and effectiveness of our witness can never be in our own power and disposal, but if there is to really be a praise of God and love of our neighbour in our activity, there has to take place an activity of God which we with our activity can only serve, and which from the standpoint of our activity can only have the character of a miracle.” CD I.2.450.
35 CD I.2.450-4. It is in this praise of God that the children of God live, who love God, because He first loved them. CD I.2.454.

The practical outcome of this for Barth can be seen, as one example, in his letter to a pastor in the DDR (the former Eastern Germany). Barth encouraged him to know that the Gemeinde Jesu Christ... “die eine Freude teilen, die Allen, die jene Last zu tragen haben, gewiß ist. Die Christen in der DDR sollen es hiemit hören, daß wir ihres Mithmens...
makes between revelation and the nature of God. They are undergirded by Barth’s connection of God and humanity through the *analogia relationis*.

Whilst service and love are basic to relationships between neighbours, in service of God, it is not only or even primarily on this self-giving love that mission and service are to be based. The empowering presence of the Spirit is focused amongst the people of God in their drawing together as a glad assembly. This is explicated in CD III as being because “by nature (man) is determined for his fellow-man, to be with him gladly”. The mutual gladness is based on God’s outflowing generosity and joyful grace. This is manifested and enabled by the Holy Spirit, who enables praise and love which “is an open, willing, spontaneous, joyful, cheerful and gregarious being and action [which fulfills itself in a fresh recognition of] humanity in everything human [as] the good gift of God the Creator”. Thus Israel can be “the living
The glad determination of the people of God to be with their neighbours gladly is the basis of their being God’s instruments of mission and, like Israel, a “living summons” to rejoice in God. To these issues we now turn.

### 2.3 Joy, love, neighbour and mission

Mission is mentioned only in brief and in embryonic form in CD I. The freedom of being made fully human, the rejoicing which is the only possible response to the grace of God and to reconciliation with the God of grace must issue in a Church which lives in confident hope and is a beacon of God’s loving, freeing presence which motivates all its activity, not least its preaching and witness.

It is a message and a church which is to be attractive to others and which carries a message of joy, yet this message, says Barth, brings to the church a particular misery in its responsibility.

For Barth, there is a strong link between the dogmatic task and the preaching task in the church. Each has a role in refining the other, yet each is discrete and has a particular purpose, linked to the ongoing proclamation of the church’s message in its age and culture. The life of the people of God reflects the reconciliation which is found in Jesus Christ, elected and electing man. This is to be expressed in the

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40 CD III.4.319.
41 CD I.2.801-10, and see below in this chapter.
42 See CD III.4.69 and IV 2.306. Barth explores mission and witness with connections to the theme of joy in his discussion of the Spirit and the sending community in CD IV.3.681-901.
43 “The misery of the Church is the glory of the commission with which it is entrusted.” CD I.2.747.
44 “One cannot and should not expect to hear the content of proclamation from dogmatics. This content must be found each time in the middle space between the particular text in the context of the whole Bible and the particular situation of the changing moment. Dogmatics can only be a guide to the right mastery and the right adaptability, to the right boldness and the right caution, for the given moment when this space has to be found.” CD I.1.79.
45 Barth notes that “the ministry (of reconciliation) must be executed without “fainting” (2 Cor 4:1; 4:16) and in joyfulness (2 Cor 3:12).” CD I.2.360. Here the link between the themes of

Footnote continues on following page
It is the dynamic of the Kingdom of God, and the motivation of the Church. The nature of the task of mission is based on Christ’s identification with the world of God’s creation and on the relational nature of humanity seen in Christ. This is rooted in “the true vestigium trinitatis in the form assumed by God in revelation”. The self-giving love of God is the basis of joyful obedience to the mission of the Church in the world and is the basis for love within the community of faith. There is no conflict between obedience, love and joy. Thus in CD II Barth suggests that humankind can be commanded to rejoice and to love, as well as to obey, so that “the command of God sets man free”. This is also a measure of the efficacy of the Christian submission to the law of God, because “[t]he man who stands under the jurisdiction of all those commands of God and is not refreshed (unerquickte) is not the obedient man but the man who disobeys God”. This theme will be explored further in Chapter 6. In CD I this points to the service and love of neighbour issues in a reciprocity which means that “to accept my neighbour necessarily means to

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46 “If God elects a man, it is that he may be a witness to Jesus Christ, and therefore a proclaimer of His glory.” CD II.2.449; “—to be a faithful, joyful and earnest witness to the election and calling of…others.” CD II.2.416.

47 “It is only in the Church or from the Church that there has ever been a free, strong, truly open and confident expectation in regard to the natural man, a quiet and joyful hope that he will be my neighbour, a concept of humanity which is based on ultimate certainty.” CD I.2.423.

48 Which Barth says is distinguished from any Stoic conception, see CD I.2.423.

49 CD I.1.339. For a fuller treatment than is necessary or apposite here, see Alan J. Torrance, Persons, 198-203.

50 This is grounded in God who “gave Himself for us in order that we might live before Him and with Him in peace and joy.” CD II.2.585. The ethical imperative is spelled out in CD II.2.583-732.


52 CD II.2.586. (KD 650).
accept his service”. All of this is founded on Barth’s view of revelation as the act of the Trinity in Jesus Christ, and finding, by the Spirit, a joyful response from humanity.

### 2.4 The role of dogmatics

We have noted that for Barth the dogmatic task should be a joyful one. We now need to consider more closely Barth’s understanding of the purpose and subject matter of dogmatics. Barth underscores the role of dogmatics as central to the life and ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. Fixing his centre in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, Barth explores the revealedness of God in trinitarian form. Whilst the framework might change, this is a task, he says, which has to be done afresh in each generation.

Of great importance for the continuing appropriation of Barth is the recognition that theology is a joyful and worshipful task. In the ideal case, pure doctrine would be “joyful and pleasant sounds…in [teachers’] mouths”. In the worst, it is the false joy of a kind of police detection. Then it becomes self-absorbed and of little or no value in the service of its purpose, and fails to display its “characteristic beauty”, which is the hallmark of the truth of God. Whilst this beauty is to be expected and respected, it can become an idol.

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53 CD I.2.434. Barth engages with the concept of the neighbour as “acquiring for me a sacramental significance”, thus, he says, “I will…willingly and joyfully accept what the neighbour has to show me, because I am actually in need of it.” CD I.2.436. The ecclesial reciprocity of the *vestigium trinitatis* should be noted. It is a point underplayed by Torrance, *Persons in Communion*.

54 This dynamic view of the theological task is outlined in Barth’s Preface to his commentary on Romans. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, transl. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (from the 6th German edition of 1929), Oxford University Press, London, 1953, 1-2. Barth notes his debt to his father for the insight that “The understanding of history is an uninterrupted conversation between the wisdom of yesterday and the wisdom of to-morrow.” Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1. (And thus his commentary is written “with a joyful sense of discovery”, Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, 2.)


55 CD I.2.803.

56 CD I.2.809.

57 CD I.2.808.

58 CD I.2.808. “[T]his very beauty can seduce the Church into treating it as we do other beautiful things, i.e. a dilettante contemplation and enjoyment. But it is beautiful only in
Despite this iconoclastic warning, Barth prizes the beauty of the theological task, and its concomitant joyfulness. As his reflection on Anselm’s reference to the beauty of theology reminds us, “[t]he theologian who has no joy in his work is not a theologian at all”. The abundant and gracious self-revelation of God, and the fact that this revelation is of a loving, free and joyful God of relationality, is the ground for a theological task which is joyful in the midst of a church called to a life of rejoicing service. The joyfulness of the task and the joyfulness of God do not preclude agony and suffering, but do exclude boredom and futility which are more likely to be destroyers of joy. The call to the Church and the world to return to the Lord is a call to return to the joy of the Lord as well.

The theological task has immediate implications for the self-conceptualization of the people of God, for their understanding of the purpose of gathering and going forth, and in maintaining accountability amongst God’s people under God’s Word. Because the Church has the scriptures in its midst, it operates in the “thankful recognition that (it) is not alone”. Through scripture, Christ is the authority of the Church and of the dogmatic task.

It is this which allows theologians to assist in the task in which “the door to the Bible texts can only be opened from within”, and provides a protective guard against the preponderance of tradition, in interpretation or explication, so that the Church does

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59 CD II.1.656 “Man kann nur gerne, mit Freuden Theologe sein oder man ist es im Grund gar nicht”. (KD 740).
60 This is, for Barth, a “final positive meaning of the Evangelical decision” CD I.2.584, and it is grounded in the authority of the Word of God, from which transpires authority under the Word of God. (The progression within §20 Authority in the Church, CD I.2.538-660). Thus we engage with God’s Word, which has “for our sakes stepped forth out of the unapproachable mystery of its self-contained existence into the circle of those things we can know.” CD I.2.699-700. So then, in this understanding of the nature of God’s living Word, “if this whole process achieves its goal and purpose by arousing us to believe and testify, we can only understand it as a mystery which encounters us.” CD I.2.700.
61 CD I.2.584.
62 “God in Jesus Christ is present and gracious to it (sc. the Church) in concrete authority, which means in an authority which is different from and superior to its own....Holy Scripture is the authority of Jesus Christ in His Church.” CD I.2.585.
63 CD I.2.533.
not become an “institute of antiquities—the worst dishonour of which it could be guilty for all its well-meant veneration”. The antidote to fossilization in the life of the Church is the joyful praise of God. It is an engagement with God as Spirit which is vibrant, living and life-giving. The key to this is the overflowing joy found in the shared abundance of the blessings of a gracious God.

The nature of the dogmatic task is to examine “the Church’s speech about God”. Thus, dogmatic theology is to listen to the proclamation of the Church, to invite the hearing Church to “listen again to the Word of God in the revelation to which Scripture testifies”, and to nurture the explanation and application of Holy Scripture. This releases it from being a depositum and allows it continuous currency

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64 CD I.2.619.
65 In a later discussion, Barth sees this possibility even in what is often considered the period of correctly focused theology when he asks: “Was it [because the Church failed to realize that is existed for the world and not for itself] that in the 16th and 17th centuries the Protestant world was characterized by that pronounced lack of joy in mission, and even unreadiness for it, ... Or conversely, were the lack of joy and the unreadiness the basis of this striking deficiency in the self-understanding of the Church in this period?” CD IV.3.767.
66 CD I.1.448; I.2.249. See also CD II.2.93.
67 As Barth wrote anecdotally in one of his earliest articles, it is like the shared eating from the one full plate of God’s blessing. The joy of the Christian life is the recognition that God has both filled our plate to overflowing and called us to share the blessing with others (and to share the blessing of others in both instrumental and possessive forms of understanding “of”) Barth talks of eating from a plate in a pastor’s house when he was young, and of how the plate was full:

“Aber es ist nichts mit dem vollen Teller für dich allein. Es ist nicht gut, daß der Mensch allein sei [Gen. 2,18]. Da sind eine ganze Menge Andrer, die möchten und sollen auch etwas haben, und das ist erste die rechte Freude am Leben und an den guten Gaben Gottes, wenn ihre Freude deine Freude wird, und wenn du dich gar nicht mehr deines Lebens freuen magst und willst als mit den andern zusammen. Aber du weißt schon: Diese Freude mit den andern zusammen hat so ihre Haken.”

68 See CD I.1.3-17.
69 CD I.2.781.
70 CD I.2.797.
71 CD I.2.802.
as a living event.\textsuperscript{72} It issues in thankful prayer\textsuperscript{73} and joyful engagement with the Word of God in all forms, rejoicing in its preaching.\textsuperscript{74} The life of the Church will be enriched if “the church as a whole can learn to welcome and utilize the service that [theologians] render”.\textsuperscript{75}

The “Dogmatic Norm” as it functions in the “Hearing Church” is to be enraptured with its object, God, not with itself. Barth’s fear of idolatry leads him to the stern admonition to avoid æsthetics in theological thought or speech.\textsuperscript{76} H. Martin Rumscheidt draws attention to the rootedness of Barth’s theology in his perception of the first commandment as the defining and limiting axiom of the dogmatic task.\textsuperscript{77} Barth notes that the first commandment is a given for theology, and is easily overlooked, with deleterious effects for the church and the theological task.\textsuperscript{78} Thus a

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\item \textsuperscript{72} CD I.2.688 - see above.
\item \textsuperscript{73} CD I.2.697.
\item \textsuperscript{74} Barth suggests that the preached Word should be rejoiced in as a matter of volition. CD I.2.746.
\item \textsuperscript{75} Bromiley’s final reflection on Barth’s treatment of the Word of God in CD I. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, \textit{An Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth}, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1979, 53. (This must, of course, recognize the danger of over estimating the value of academic theology, since “The Word of God did not found an academy but the Church.” CD II.2.841.)
\item \textsuperscript{76} “The Church attitude (sc. of denying timeless applicability to previous dogmatic formulations) precludes further the possibility of a dogmatics which thinks and speaks æsthetically. It is true, of course, that the object with which it has to do has its characteristic and quite distinctive beauty which it would be unpardonable, because ungrateful, to overlook or to fail to find pleasing. But the moment dogmatics even temporarily surrenders to and loses itself in the contemplation of this beauty as such, instead of letting itself be held by the object, this beauty becomes the beauty of an idol….When it is orderly in this respect (sc. of focusing properly on dogmatics), and only then, it will be continually struck by the beauty of its object, and moved, willy-nilly, to genuine and grateful contemplation.” CD I.2.841-2.
\item \textsuperscript{78} “We are concerned with a specific and small part of this commandment: its meaning for theology. Theology is attempt, undertaken by means of human thought and language, to
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part of the theologians’ task is to recognize the idolatries of their own work and to 
endeavour to maintain a focus on the true and living God. As a theologian, Barth is 
aware of the danger of theology taking the central position which rightly belongs to 
God alone. It is for this reason that Barth will recognize the beauty of theology, of 
creation and of redemption, but will never allow himself (against von Balthasar, 
Congar and others) to espouse the beauty of God or of theology as a separate item of 
theological business.

2.5 Summary

This brief overview of the location and explicit use of the theme of joy in the Church 
Dogmatics has shown something of its recurrent nature and Barth’s use of it in many 
contexts. It has also shown how, in the light of later, explicit statements concerning 
joy, the theme has its foundations laid in Volume I of the Church Dogmatics. Whilst 
this overview has concentrated on the more explicit references, especially those 
relating to the nature of the theological task, it should be noted that the theme, having 
been recognized in its overt usage, can also be identified in other, non-explicit 
locations. With the prior recognition of the theme of the joy of God, other aspects of 
Barth’s theology are then able to be reconceptualized with this undercurrent of 
joyfulness, adding richness and vitality. It would go too far to suggest that the theme is 
hidden, as this might suggest that Barth is wilfully dissembling. It would also be a 
gross overstatement to suggest that it is central or controlling. However, it is fair to 
say that the theme is pervasive. It affects, as we will see, the way in which love and

answer scientifically the question of the basis and law of the church and its preaching. By 
nature theology belongs to the sphere of Holy Scripture and thus to the sphere of the first 
commandment. Where axioms have their place in other sciences, in theology, prior to any 
thought or speech, there stands as its foundation and criterion (as we have seen, a very 
different foundation and criterion than all other axioms) the commandment “You shall have 
no other gods before me!” I think and speak with theological responsibility when I know 
myself to be responsible to that commandment in which I think and speak as a theologian; 
when I perceive that responsibility as a responsibility to an authority above which there is 
no appeal, because it is itself the last and highest, the absolutely decisive authority. ‘You 
shall have no other gods before me!’” Barth, “First Commandment”, 70-1.

79 “Nevertheless, theology is never justified by what it intends to think and say as its work of 
right obedience, as fulfilment of the law, according to its best knowledge and conscience. 
There are no exceptions! Every theology has ‘other gods’ as well, most of all where they 
are least expected and least noticed.” Barth, “First Commandment”, 77.

80 Beauty as a perfection of God will be discussed in the Chapter 4.
freedom, aspects at the centre of Barth’s theology, are conceived. It enriches themes central to human response to God, most notably thankfulness and praise, in ways which point to Barth’s fundamentally relational human and trinitarian conceptualities.

Alongside and sometimes behind the themes of freedom and love lies the motif of joy. When Barth develops his notions of true humanity, of the reaching out of God, of God’s calling out and electing of people, of the Church, of theology and of preaching, the theme of joy is found. Thus when these themes are encountered, we can affirm that the joyful aspect is present, and that our engagement with the theme will be enriched if this is recognized.

Barth’s own use of scripture is such that he recognizes the theme of divine joy and glory in places where others have failed to highlight it.\(^{81}\) He describes the task of exegesis as joyful.\(^{82}\) His engagement with the Word of God is rich and provocative. This is because Barth has heeded his own advice, that he should engage wholeheartedly with the task of dogmatics in recognition and worship of the God who reveals, loves and rejoices.

It is appropriate to conclude this overview with Barth’s final words in Volume I of the *Church Dogmatics*. He was influenced in significant ways by the thought of Anselm of Canterbury. One item of Anselm’s method which he appropriated (though in a different way) was the commencement of theology with prayer and its conclusion with praise. Barth stresses the importance of prayer in the whole theological process, and its outcome in praise.\(^{83}\) His doxological conclusion to CD I is informative:

> The Church dogmatician, like the Church preacher, will always have to say of himself what Ignatius of Antioch once wrote of himself: ‘Εάν γάρ σιωπήσητε ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, ἐγὼ λόγος θεοῦ. Ἐάν δὲ ἔρασθήτε τῆς σαρκὸς μου, πάλιν ἔσομαι φωνή (*Ad Rom.* 2:1). In this modesty, which combines the greatest courage and the greatest humility, the greatest awe and the greatest joy, the relationship of the dogmatician and the preacher to their object may be summed up in the words of the

\(^{81}\) This will be further explored in Chapter 4.

\(^{82}\) CD III.2.ix.

\(^{83}\) Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His life from letters and autobiographical texts*, trans. John Bowden, 2 ed., SCM, London, 1976, 214. Busch notes that from 1931 Barth began his lectures with a reading and a hymn, with the aim of keeping his students from becoming “an all too knowledgeable, ‘undialectical posterity’”. Barth’s writings include admonitions that theology must begin and end in prayer. CD I.1.23, *passim.*
Psalmist (Ps. 103:1): “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me bless his holy name.”

Here we encounter another pointer to Barth’s location of the theological task in the broadest context of human life and witness. He is concerned to explore the cognitive grounding of theology in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, he expects that the outcome will have ethical and (to a much lesser extent) doxological dimensions, and recognizes that the cost to the theologian is the offering of the whole of life to witness to God. Preaching and dogmatics are tasks to be undertaken in the context of lives lived fully for God. This context should include the full engagement of the senses, cognitive and affective, with the task of theology and with God.

Having sketched the use Barth makes of the theme of joy in the early parts of the Church Dogmatics, and seeing how the recognition of the pervasiveness of the theme assists in enriching our reading of other areas of the Church Dogmatics where the theme of joy is not explicit, we can turn to a closer analysis of the development of the explicit theme of the joy of God. Before doing this, however, we will look briefly at the use made (or in more cases, not made) of the theme of joy by Barth’s commentators.

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84 CD I.2.884. Kirsopp Lake, Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1, 227-8, translates Ignatius as saying: “For if you are silent concerning me, I am a word of God; but if you love my flesh, I shall again be only a cry.” (Ignatius is speaking of his desire for martyrdom and that he should not be hindered in pursuing it.)

Barth also began the “Göttingen Dogmatics” with the prayer used by Thomas Aquinas at the beginning of the Summa Theologica:

“Merciful God, I ask that thou wilt grant me, as thou pleasest, to seek earnestly, to investigate carefully, to know truthfully, and to present perfectly, to the glory of thy name, Amen.” GD, §1.1.(p3).
Chapter 3

Barth and his Commentators

How to read the Church Dogmatics

While many (theologians) allow room for the discovery of the perfection of God in praise, most are so much preoccupied by formal and anthropological questions that they fail to go on to find the possibility of joy and freedom arising from the content of what is found. (Hardy and Ford)

For Barth, we have seen, joy figures as a function of the theological task and as part of the groundwork and language of theology itself. It pervades the nature of God and of humanity. Barth goes as far as to say that God “Himself has eternal joy and Himself is eternal joy”.¹ Given this bold statement and the pervasiveness of the theme in Volumes II, III and IV (which will be further displayed in subsequent chapters), it is remarkable that almost all of Barth’s commentators have failed even to note the theme. The few that have noted it have not commented on its pervasiveness or its innovations.

within Reformed theology. The extent of this and the reasons why it may be so are the subject of this chapter.

The best summary of the commentators on Barth is given by Hunsinger. Eschewing the former attempts to find a “single overriding conception that would serve as a key to reading Barth”, or at least to reading the *Church Dogmatics*, Hunsinger proceeds on the basis that such a conception is unlikely to be found. In fact, he considers that attempts to find such a unified conception in Barth have “perhaps obscured as much as they have illuminated”. Hunsinger’s interpretive proposal suggests six “motifs”, or “modes of thought”, which he considers run through the whole of the *Church Dogmatics* and “shape the doctrinal content of Barth’s mature theology as a whole”. Whilst the names of Hunsinger’s modes might in themselves be confusing, the concepts which they represent have found wide (though, it must be stated, not unqualified) acceptance. We will note them here, as we seek to follow Hunsinger in analyzing five major Barth commentators, and will then discuss two which he does not cover. In doing so, we will hope to explore the *prima facie* reasons why Barth scholars have not discussed the theme of joy in the *Church Dogmatics*, and why Hunsinger himself pays no attention to this continuous thread.

### 3.1 Hunsinger’s “motifs”

The first motif is “actualism”, by which Hunsinger indicates Barth’s complex conception of time and being. This, he notes, is characterized by the conception that being always has the characteristic of event for Barth (or act, when a volitional agency is concerned). The second is “particularism”. Hunsinger discerns in Barth a noetic procedure which says: “Let every concept used in dogmatic theology be defined on the basis of a particular event called Jesus Christ.” Jesus Christ thus becomes the ontic fundamental

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3 Hunsinger, 3.
4 Hunsinger, 3.
5 Hunsinger, 3.
6 Hunsinger, 4.
7 Hunsinger, 4; 30-2.
8 Hunsinger, 4.
of dogmatics. Hence Barth’s theology is viewed as an explication of the unique event “Jesus Christ”, in which *particularism* is also observed to be “an ontic state of affairs”.

The third is *objectivism*, meaning that “[r]evelation and salvation are events objectively mediated by the creaturely sphere and grounded in the sovereignty of God”. Thus the “status” of God’s “self-enactment” is “objective—that is, real, valid, and effective—whether it is acknowledged and received by the creature or not”. (Hunsinger notes that an important corollary to this construal of God’s self-revelation is that “God is revealed in God’s unity and entirety”).

The fourth is *personalism*, meaning that God’s self-revelation is directed to the creature as “personal address”, and that in that address the creature is affirmed, condemned and repotentiated for fellowship with God. This is built on the intimacy of the “I–Thou” relationship and is encapsulated by Hunsinger as “personalism”. The basis of this is in the nature of God, not in human nature, fallen or redeemed, and thus founded on grace and the action of God (in Jesus Christ).

The fifth is *realism*. The reference of language which can, by God’s grace, indicate God analogically but nonetheless really, is what Hunsinger describes under this heading. It becomes for him also the basis for Barth’s understanding of the Church’s appropriation of the scriptural modes of “address, certainty, and narration”.

The final motif is *rationalism*. Based on Barth’s means of “construction and assessment of doctrine”, which is “internal” and dependent on faith, this motif is the recognition that the theological task is a process of conceptual elaboration. Barth

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9 Hunsinger, 4. See also Hunsinger, 32-5.
10 Hunsinger, 5.
11 Hunsinger, 5. See also Hunsinger, 35-9. He notes the implications of this motif for Barth’s use of language. This is important in the discussion of Barth’s understanding of the nature of joy.
12 Hunsinger, 37, noting CD II.1.51-3.
13 Hunsinger, 5.
14 Hunsinger, 5; 40-2.
15 Hunsinger, 5. Hunsinger considers this to be worthy of a more extended treatment than the four former concepts; Hunsinger, 43-9.
16 Hunsinger, 5.
17 Hunsinger, 49.
uses reason as a tool only within the limitations of revelation. This, Hunsinger considers, is the essential implication of Barth’s appropriation of Anselm’s phrase “faith seeking understanding”, that is “seeking to understand the content of faith strictly within the limits of faith”. For Hunsinger, Barth’s “rationalism” includes primarily the limiting of “conceptual elaboration” to the content of the faith of the church in the light of scripture, but allows development “beyond the surface content of scripture”. Differently expressed, this motif might be considered to be the cognitive emphasis of Barth’s theology, in which knowledge is to be handled rationally, but not based on reason alone (against philosophical rationalism).

Hunsinger thus hopes to explicate a “repertoire of ‘thought forms’” which will allow “pattern recognition” and thus a more fruitful reading of the Church Dogmatics. He goes on in his study to explore five major Barth commentators, using various of his motifs. There is a certain peremptoriness in this, given that Hunsinger has not yet fully elaborated these motifs (though he notes that the first chapter may be read as the last). That notwithstanding, he makes some acute observations which point to the limited nature of the insights suggested by the commentators with whom he chooses to engage. We will note, too, that these motifs, whilst they assist greatly in reading the Church Dogmatics, do not explicitly allow the theme of joy to surface. We will return to a discussion of Hunsinger’s motifs after first looking at his analyses of five commentators on Barth, and assessing the usefulness of his criteria on a further two.

Hunsinger suggests that the first two commentators on Barth whom he considers, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Thomas F. Torrance, have undertaken a quest for an overarching “formal principle…which governs the Church Dogmatics”. The next two, G. C. Berkouwer and Robert Jenson, have, he considers, also engaged in a quest for a single principle, but have sought it in a more “material” form. The fifth,  

18 Hunsinger, 49.  
19 Hunsinger, 5. This motif receives extended discussion 49-66.  
20 Hunsinger, 6.  
21 Hunsinger, 6.  
22 Hunsinger, 6, though he admits that the formal/material distinction is very rough.
Herbert Hartwell, has adopted a “kind of *loci* approach which does not look for overall coherence”.  

### 3.2 T. F. Torrance

Closer to panegyric that polemic, Thomas F. Torrance treats the difficulties of Barth’s theology with “smooth-as-velvet formulation” – that is how Hunsinger characterizes Torrance’s engagement with Barth. The man who described Barth as “the great Church Father of Evangelical Christendom, the one genuine doctor of the universal Church the modern era has known” is considered by Hunsinger as “adulatory”, and his analysis of Barth’s theology as allowing “objectivism…to mute and soften the actualism and particularism”.

Hunsinger rightly notes that Torrance describes the work which others have described as “revolutionary” or “crisis”, in rather blander terms. This he attributes at least in part to Torrance’s analogy of Barth’s theology as “an exact science, such as physics”. Because he concentrates so heavily on Barth’s theology of the objective Word, “as overall interpretive device, [Torrance] allows more of the content than the spirit of Barth’s theology to come through”. This is due to Torrance’s focus on Barth’s early theology for this book which is written as the tenth volume in a series called “The Preacher’s Library”. It has a strong emphasis on the nature of the word –

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23 Hunsinger, 6. Hartwell will not be treated in the same fashion as the other four commentators. See note after the discussion of Jenson.

24 The work which Hunsinger is considering is Torrance, Thomas F., *Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology, 1920-1931*, SCM, London, 1962. (Hereafter referred to as Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1962).) Whilst Hunsinger discusses von Balthasar before he discusses Torrance, a reversal of this order lets us first deal with the one commentator discussed by Hunsinger who examines joy (albeit to a small extent).


26 T. F. Torrance, editor’s preface to CD IV.4. (CD IV.4.vi.)

27 Hunsinger, 12.

28 Hunsinger, 11.

29 Hunsinger, 11, referring to Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1962), 179 (italics Torrance’s), where the argument is about the objectivity of the revelation of God. Certainly, as Torrance himself intends, he isolates Barth from mere philosophical speculation, but as Hunsinger observes, this may be at the cost of taking Barth adequately seriously on his major concern, Jesus Christ. (This approach is more fully spelled out in Torrance’s *Theological Science*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1996 (First Edition, 1967).)

30 Hunsinger, 12.
written and preached. Even though writing in 1962, Torrance chooses to focus on the earlier writings of Barth, as a means of highlighting aspects of Barth’s theology which he considers particularly relevant for instructing and enlivening Christian preachers.

Hunsinger argues convincingly for Torrance’s weakness in underplaying the actualism and particularism of the Word of God in Jesus Christ, (expressed for the sake of all people).31 The result is that “[t]he energy, dynamism, and sense of collision which enter Barth’s theology by way of the actualistic and particularistic motifs never quite come through in Torrance’s account”.32 What is striking, given this apt description of the less than passionate portrayal of Barth’s theology, is the enthusiastic evocation of Barth’s character and personality. In outlining Barth’s personal characteristics “which have an intimate bearing upon all his life and work”, Torrance mentions Barth’s “searching, questioning mind”, his “uncanny ability to listen…and…learn”, “his sheer creative power”, and “his joy and humour”.33 Thus, Torrance notes, Barth (in Volume 3 of the *Church Dogmatics*) “cannot repress his chuckles at the frightful seriousness with which too many theologians set forth their picture of *homo sapiens*—‘What a pity that none of these apologists considers it worthy of mention that man is apparently the only being accustomed to laugh and to smoke.’”34 Torrance attributes this not only to Barth’s full and rich *Menschlichkeit*, but also to his awareness of the “over-flowing self-communicating joy” of God.35 That is a joy which awakens human response, and in which theology partakes, and in which

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31 As a theology of preaching, the book which takes actualism and particularism most seriously is Ian Pitt-Watson, *A Primer for Preachers*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986. Whilst Pitt-Watson’s aim is not an exposition of Barth, his conceptualisation of the “preaching event” as the confluence of the “Adam story” and the “Christ story” does justice to Barth’s actualistic christological core in a way in which Torrance’s forensic engagement with “the Word of God” does not.

32 Hunsinger, 11.


34 Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1962), 24, quoting CD III.2.83. Torrance also enjoys pointing out other subtle humorous asides – the bad smell of demons, inclusion of Mozart among the Church fathers, and the humour of his (also angry) *Nein!* to Emil Brunner – the latter which, Torrance notes, “Anglo-Saxons seem almost invariably to read with a Teutonic lack of humour.”

Barth is “constantly tuned to Mozart”, and aware of the Augustinian conception of *fruitio Deo*, the enjoyment of God.\(^{36}\)

Whilst this discussion of joy is linked to Torrance’s biographical note on Barth, he does also note the theme of joy elsewhere.\(^{37}\) For instance, he refers to the theonomous activity of thinking the truth, and notes that for Barth this entails an “act of deep humility and courage, of reverence and joy”.\(^{38}\) “Thus the relation of the *Dogmatiker* to his object is to be described in the words of the Psalm: ‘Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name.’”\(^{39}\) Again, Torrance refers to joy in the theological task, deriving his comment from Barth’s doctrine of election. He says:

A true theology will act only in response to election, that is, in the recognition that it does not know God by virtue of its own ideas and concepts or by the inner power of its own dialectic, and therefore in acknowledgment that its own ideas and concepts are unfitted to express and convey knowledge of him. But to act in response to election means to act in joyful recognition of the fact that God has chosen to be served by theology, questionable instrument that it is, for it has pleased him as the One who transcends the contradiction of my existence and my thoughts, to come as Revealer and Reconciler, to take my place, and so to actualise knowledge of him from my side.\(^{40}\)


\(^{37}\) In fact, Torrance is the only Barth commentator of whom I am aware who includes (as Barth does) joy in his index. (It is worth noting that Barth’s index references to joy represent just a tiny fraction of the references to joy in concept or term in Barth, whether in the *Church Dogmatics*, or in other locations).

\(^{38}\) Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1962), 131, referring to Barth’s *Christliche Dogmatik in Entwurf*, 462ff.

\(^{39}\) Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1962), 131. (The reference is to Ps 103:1. It is a theme widely echoed in the Psalms, and is quoted at the end of CD I.)

\(^{40}\) Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1962), 169-70. The other reference in Torrance is also in the context of the theological task, where he notes that, for Barth, there is no place for arrogance, but only for “reverence, joy and gratitude.” Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1962), 213, here referring to Karl Barth, *God, Grace and Gospel*, transl. J. Stratehearn McNab, ed. T. F. Torrance and J. K. S. Reid, *SJT Occasional Papers*, 8, Edinburgh, 1959, p44. Torrance finishes his book with a quotation from von Balthasar, *Karl Barth, Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie*, 35ff (Torrance’s own translation), in which von Balthasar notes that “Barth’s theology is beautiful…[with] unrivalled…generosity which, with Barth, is not seldom charged with humour…not merely because he has the gift of style…but above all [because] he bears testimony, utterly objective testimony to a matter which, since it is about God, has the best style and the finest manuscript.” Quoted in Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1962), 216-7.
Torrance has picked up on the theme of the joy of the theological task in Barth’s writings but, apart from the note in his biographical sketch, Torrance does not explore the theme in the context of Barth’s theology of God. His concern with the objective dimensions of Barth’s theology of the Word of God leads him to occlude the richness of the actuality and particularity of the Christ event. It helps him to ignore the ebullience of Barth’s treatment of joy in God. Yet there is more exuberance in

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41 It is worth noting that in Torrance’s most recent book on Barth, (Thomas F. Torrance, *Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1990 (hereafter referred to as Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1990), to avoid confusion with the earlier work of the same short title)) there is the same objectivist preoccupation with the theology of the Word of God. It is probably not unfair to say that this has been the motif most favoured by Barth’s reformed commentators in Scotland. Although this work of Torrance’s was published only just before Hunsinger’s work, most of the material has been gathered from Torrance’s other published works on Barth – mainly journal articles and items from multi-authored works – dating from 1956 to 1986. In fact, in the first chapter of Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1990), which is largely biographical, Torrance overviews Barth’s theology, grounding it in Barth’s “Scientific Cast of Mind” (Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1990), 14) and developing this in precisely the way Hunsinger predicts, with maximum emphasis on the Word of God (Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1990), 16-19), mention of the importance of the Doctrine of God *per se* (a point too often overlooked in Barth scholarship!) and continuing through the centrality of Christ (Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1990), 20) and the New Creature in Christ (Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1990), 22) to the Command of God (Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1990), 23) and ending with The Doctrine of the Church (Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1990), 25). Torrance’s agenda is focused by his concern with the objectivist perspective noted by Hunsinger, and is channelled by his scientific and ecumenical interests, such that Torrance fails to do justice to the radical christocentrism which is best understood in terms of Hunsinger’s motifs of actualism, particularism and personalism. It is interesting to note the parallels in this regard between Torrance’s work and that of Robert J. Palma, (*Karl Barth’s Theology of Culture: The Freedom of Culture and the Praise of God*, Pittsburgh Theological Monographs, ed., Dikran Y. Hadidian, Pickwick Publications, Allison Park, Pennsylvania, 1983) whose analysis is largely objectivist, in Hunsinger’s terms. Indeed, it could almost be read as an extended commentary on Torrance’s section on “Theology and Culture”, *Karl Barth*, (1990), 27-39. Whilst Palma’s title suggests that the discussion will move into the area of doxology, the text does not move in that direction, since Palma, like Torrance, is too firmly grounded in the objectivist mode. Were he to allow some discussion of the import of the nature of God in full “Godness” to enter the discussion, and to move beyond the limitations of truth as discovered in human categories, then the hoped-for grounds of praise might indeed be discovered. Torrance discusses the “intellectual context” of Barth’s theology under the heads of “Realism” and “Idealism”, then moves to focus both under the rubric of “Critical Idealism” (Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1990), 52-60), which is in many senses the same as Hunsinger’s objectivism. Bruce L. McCormack uses this same concept to assess Barth’s theology over a similar period: *Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995.
Torrance’s exploration of Barth’s theology than Hunsinger suggests. Whilst he may not soar to doxological heights, Torrance can move from the knowability of God to a reminder of the way in which creation is called to rejoice in God. The irony is that Hunsinger, whose stress on Barth’s actualism, particularism and personalism should help him to recognize the theological significance of the joy of God, does even less justice to it than Torrance. His convincing analysis of Torrance’s inadequacy in relation to most of his six motifs fails to indicate dimensions of the liveliness of Barth’s theology which are at least alluded to by Torrance.

In summary, then, Torrance’s objectivist focus dominates his analysis of Barth, with the result that whilst he notes the theme of joy, he does not draw out the importance which it carries for Barth throughout the whole of the *Church Dogmatics*.

### 3.3 Hans Urs von Balthasar

Hunsinger judges that, in his analysis of Barth, von Balthasar “proposes both a formal and material principle,” in his “quest for *Denkform*”. The formal principle, or “thought form” is the *analogia fidei*, and “the material foundation is christology”. Hunsinger notes the formal joining of these assumed by von Balthasar in Catholic theology, where the two natures of Christ, in Chalcedonian relationality, are the epicentre of the being of God and humanity. Barth’s explication of the *analogia fidei* is also profoundly christological having its basis as the grace of God in Christ in analogical relation to the faith of humanity in Christ. The locus of revelation and language about God, as analogy, is thus Jesus Christ. It is the act of God in Jesus Christ that is at the centre of von Balthasar’s analysis of Barth’s theology. Hunsinger categorizes this as a “sustained attention” to actualism, within his own motifs. It is largely under this motif that Hunsinger pursues his analysis of von Balthasar.

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42 Torrance, *Karl Barth*, (1962), 212.
44 Hunsinger, 6.
45 Hunsinger, 6 and 283, n 2.
46 Hunsinger, 6, 20.
It is in the context of actualism rather than realism that Hunsinger analyses the observation which von Balthasar makes of Barth, that there was a move “from dialectics to analogy”\(^47\) in his theological method.\(^48\) Hunsinger interprets von Balthasar as having distorted Barth’s *analogia fidei* to fit into the traditional *analogia entis*.\(^49\) After describing what he sees as Barth’s four reasons for rejecting the *analogia entis*,\(^50\) von Balthasar notes Barth’s conceptualisation of Jesus Christ as the centre of revelation. In the context of this centrality, which allows faith to seek understanding, he notes the possibility of a “rapprochement with the analogy of being, and even the possibility of incorporating the analogy of being into the analogy of faith”.\(^51\) It is Hunsinger’s fear of this move which drives his analysis of von Balthasar’s reading of Barth, leading to his failure to recognize von Balthasar’s wider concerns.

Von Balthasar recognizes Barth’s theology in its widest context as reflection on preaching rather than as method or philosophy. This is demonstrated by his acknowledgment that (until his own discussion of the analytical issues of

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\(^47\) Von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 137. The veracity of both the timing and the substance of von Balthasar’s perceived change have been much contested, most recently by both Bruce McCormack, (Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology) and Matthais Freudenberg (Universität Nürnberg-Erlangen, private communication. Freudenberg also disputes McCormack’s interpretation of the shift from eschatology to christology during Barth’s time in Göttingen.)

\(^48\) This he sees as stemming from Barth’s work on Anselm, which resulted in the publication of Barth’s *Anselm: Fides quarens intellectum*, SCM, London, 1960. (Translation of *Fides quarens intellectum*, Christian Kaiser Verlag, Zurich, 1931.)

\(^49\) Hunsinger, 9. Whilst von Balthasar does assess Barth’s use of analogy in depth, he is more subtle than Hunsinger suggests. In fact, his detailed analysis of Barth’s use of the *analogia fidei* is subtle and detailed.

\(^50\) Von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 162.

\(^51\) Von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 163. This is a subtler assessment than that which Hunsinger suggests as being von Balthasar’s agenda. This is, at least to some extent, due to the abridged translation which Hunsinger was using alongside the German text. Drury translates “Nun hat sich aber für die fides quarens intellectum von dieser Spitze aus mehreres ergeben, das zu einer Hinbewegung auf die analogia entis hin, ja zu einer Art Einbeziehung der analogia entis in die analogia fidei geführt hat.” (Von Balthasar, German original) as “From the vantage point of this center, other things come back into the picture for our *fides quarens intellectum*, and there seems to be room for the analogy of being after all.” (Drury trans., 137). The subtlety is picked up by Oakes, who begins the passage quoted by saying, “But once we admit this centrality, many new implications open up for a faith seeking understanding, including a rapprochement…” Von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 163.
epistemology) he has, perhaps, “not kept sufficiently in mind the hermeneutical rule first proposed by J.-L. Leuba, who suggests that Barth should not be interpreted systematically but ‘prophetically’”. It is this insight which, whilst not allowed by von Balthasar to become a controlling paradigm for the reading of Barth, enriches his reading of Barth. Thus, after von Balthasar completes his discussion of analogy in Barth, he begins his chapter on interpretation under the head “Zeal for His Father’s House”. Hunsinger fails to respond to von Balthasar within this context, with the result that his concern is overly devoted to the “material and formal issues” which he thus sees as central to von Balthasar. This blinds him to an important part of von Balthasar’s analysis of Barth, that is, the centrality of predestination.

After von Balthasar’s appraisal of Barth’s zeal, he considers the “doctrine…[which] promises to give us the key to Barth’s entire theology”. Von Balthasar considers this to be predestination, which he explores in his lead up to an exploration of “The Structure and Form of Barthian Theology”. This is rooted in


54 Von Balthasar writes of “the deepest passion that animates [Barth]” and that: “He is passionately enthusiastic about the subject matter of theology, but he is impartial in the way he approaches so volatile a subject. Impartiality means being plunged into the object...And Barth's object is God, as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, to which revelation Scripture bears witness.” von Balthasar, Theology of Karl Barth, 25-6. However, von Balthasar offers less comment on Barth’s joyful character than do other commentators. In fact his reference to Barth’s sense of humour is tinged with some disapproval. Von Balthasar, Theology of Karl Barth, 26.

55 Von Balthasar, Theology of Karl Barth, 173.
56 Von Balthasar, Theology of Karl Barth, 174-188.
57 Von Balthasar, Theology of Karl Barth, 189-198.
“the binary reciprocity entailed in God’s election in Jesus Christ”, and is argued at length from KD II.2.

Hunsinger considers that “the strengths of von Balthasar’s reading seem to be largely independent of his attempt to account for the unity of the Church Dogmatics as a whole”. Von Balthasar offers an engagement with Barth which is rich and zealous, yet despite his appreciative comments regarding Barth’s engagement of themes with which many Protestant theologians are either unfamiliar or uncomfortable, he does not note Barth’s development of the theme of the joy of God. Hunsinger does not expose this oversight of von Balthasar, as he is preoccupied with the analogia entis, and fails to notice von Balthasar’s recognition of the doctrine of predestination as central in Barth’s theology. This is a doctrine which is not analysed by Hunsinger.

In summary, Hunsinger is right to recognize the commonality of Barth and von Balthasar in terms of actualism. However, by grounding his examination too firmly in the issue of the analogia entis, he fails to notice von Balthasar’s rich analysis of Barth’s doctrine of election. The result of this is that whilst von Balthasar moves closer to appreciating Barth’s centring of actualism in the act of God, Jesus Christ, in election, Hunsinger, in over-emphasizing the act of God in revelation has missed this important point. Whilst he does recognize this centring of actualism in election, von Balthasar’s agenda, driven by his linkage of the concepts of glory and beauty in the fashion of philosophical aesthetics, fails to attend to Barth’s greater emphasis on divine joy. The problem is not actualism, or any of Hunsinger’s “repertoire of ‘thought forms’”, but von Balthasar’s own conception about the nature of divine glory, which is not examined by Hunsinger.

58 Von Balthasar, Theology of Karl Barth, 177.
60 Hunsinger, 20.
61 Von Balthasar notes his debt to Barth’s discussion of the perfections of God (KD II.1) in his development of the theme of the beauty of God (Glory, Vol. 1, 124-7). However, von Balthasar does not note the theme of the joy of God (which is a much greater theme in the Church Dogmatics than beauty), even though both are developed under the head of the Glory of God. For von Balthasar, glory is a close associate of beauty, and he tends to follow the scholastics with their understanding of beauty as an aspect of being. Barth, however, develops his theology of the joy (and beauty) of God under the heading of the freedom of God. Put simply, von Balthasar begins with the analogia entis, Barth with the analogia relationis. Perhaps von Balthasar’s preconception blinds him to the theme of joy which pervades the Dogmatics.
more dependent on the concept of beauty than on joy. This important difference will occupy us in Chapter 4.

### 3.4 G. C. Berkouwer

Berkouwer, whose “knowledge of the Reformed tradition would be difficult to match” reads Barth “much more for content than for method”. This Hunsinger attributes to Berkouwer’s fear that Barth has departed from received Reformed tradition. Thus in his reading of Barth, Berkouwer “bypass[es] the complexity of Barth’s thought forms…[and] ends up by distorting the content and missing the unity of Barth’s theology as well”. The result is that Berkouwer finds in Barth a material rather than a formal principle – the “Triumph of Grace”.

The quest for a “dominant motif” so drives Berkouwer that he finds what he seeks. This drive to find the “countless explicit statements” leads Berkouwer to be sure that he has found this motif.

Unquestionably: the tremendous debate centering around the theology of Barth [viz. Berkouwer’s own debate] touches a central concept of the Scriptures, namely, grace. It is a deeply moving struggle in which the issue is none other than the euangelion, the good, the joyful message of salvation.

There can be no doubt as to the veracity of asserting that grace is a conspicuous and recurrent theme in the whole Barth corpus, and certainly in the *Church Dogmatics*, but this ought to be no surprise given Barth’s strong commitment to explicate the themes of the scriptures. Berkouwer draws the obvious conclusion that this is therefore Barth’s key concern. In this Hunsinger considers he is wrong. Berkouwer engages

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63 Hunsinger, 12.
64 Hunsinger, 21.
65 Hunsinger, 21.
66 Hunsinger, 21.
67 Berkouwer, 19.
68 Hunsinger, 13.
69 Berkouwer, 19.
70 Berkouwer, 22.
thoroughly with Barth, but he does force all of his discussion through this aperture of grace – and often stresses the triumph more than the grace.\textsuperscript{71}

Nevertheless, there could be many less adequate apertures through which to force the theology of Barth. In fact, Berkouwer rises to some theological heights in exploring what he perceives to be Barth’s dominant motif. For instance, in exploring the central issue of the work of Christ, he states:

\[
\text{The absolute revelation in Christ alone forms the full content of the gospel. On the basis of this revelation, which is the revelation of reconciliation, of “God with us,” the good tidings of the gospel must be preached in the world. And on the basis of the revelation the whole of dogmatics, through its reflection on the content of the gospel, must subserve the interests of the Church and of her proclamation.}
\]

\[
\text{It is in connection with the content of the gospel regarded from \textit{this} point of view that Barth’s theology bears a pronounced triumphant character and, in its service to the Church and her proclamation, shares in the joy and gladness of the gospel.}\textsuperscript{72}
\]

That Berkouwer notes the missiological and joyful implications of the objectivist understanding of the revelation of Christ as the reconciling Word of God is significant (and is rather more than Hunsinger achieves, with his focus on formal motifs). Berkouwer is concerned to explore the credentials of Barth’s theology of election, and

\textsuperscript{71} At least partly the explanation for this is in how Berkouwer sees and understands Barth’s historical situation: “…Barth wants to stimulate the preaching of the gospel in the somberness of a catastrophic and depressing period of human history and to infuse new life into the witness to Jesus Christ as Victor. He wishes to do this in sharp antithesis to every kind of triumph that can be found in man or in the world. The “sola gratia” and the “soli Deo gloria” flow together for Barth from the one mighty glad tidings (sic?) of the gospel as the only hope for our time.” Berkouwer, 49.

Barth’s own response to Berkouwer (CD IV.3.173-180) picks up more on the issue of the nature of evil. However, in regard to the “slogan”, “Triumph of Grace”, Barth notes that he sees this as an alternative to his preferred phrase, “Jesus is Victor”, but one which he prefers not to use. Barth considers that he has dealt with Berkouwer’s work with the respect it deserves in IV.2.xii, where he retracts his previous \textit{in globo} attack on Dutch Neo-Calvinists. However, he warns them not to attack Mozart!

In Hunsinger’s terms, the “Triumph of Grace” strikes Barth as insufficiently engaging with his “personalist” motif and as overly “objective”. This is in fact the substance of Hunsinger’s critique of Berkouwer, that his objectivist concern (he quotes Berkouwer referring to Barth’s “wholly objective conception of the triumph of grace”, Berkouwer, 279, quoted in Hunsinger, 13, Berkouwer’s emphasis) brings him to the conclusion that Barth is unable to avoid the danger of “a monistic conception of the works of God”. (Hunsinger 13, referring to Berkouwer, 253).

\textsuperscript{72} Berkouwer, 18, (Berkouwer’s emphases.)
to that end explores this theme in depth. Whilst he is right that the place of election is “decisive”, the focus on this doctrinal expression in terms of Berkouwer’s own expectations of how the doctrine should function (shaped almost entirely by Calvin) means that Berkouwer is unable to place the doctrine in its widest context, the nature of God, as Barth works so hard to do. In his reply to Berkouwer, it is clear that what ultimately disturbs Barth is that Berkouwer is trying to deal with “a Christ-principle”, whereas Barth himself is trying to deal “with Jesus Christ Himself as attested by Holy Scripture”. This, of course, leads Barth directly into the doctrine of the Trinity.

A final engagement with Berkouwer must suffice to show the depth of the insight which Hunsinger brings. “Objectivism” is seen to control Berkouwer’s understanding of election:

Election in Christ: that is the joyful message, the miracle which God has worked among men, among all men. This message does not take its rise from an optimistic view of man, nor from a weakening of the seriousness and the reality of God’s wrath….The optimism and joy of salvation find their source exclusively in electing grace itself, in the unwearied sovereign act of compassion and mercy.

Here Berkouwer makes the joyfulness of the doctrine clear and links this as well as the optimism (presumably a synonym for hope) to the doctrine, not to God or even the event of God in Jesus Christ. Not only could the link to the very nature of God have been made, but the theology could have made explicit its connection with the praise of God. Berkouwer does seem to affirm this in some places but in the context of talking

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73 Similarly, but with different presuppositions, to von Balthasar’s exploration of predestination.
74 Berkouwer, 52. It needs also be noted that Berkouwer follows a traditional ordering of doctrines, starting from creation and working through election and reconciliation to eschatology. This reformed rigidity blinds Berkouwer to the centrality of Christ as actuality and reality in Barth’s theological formulations. He is right when he asserts: “The central theme of Barth’s theology comes to expression in his triumphant and joyful doctrine of election no less than in the doctrine of creation.” (Berkouwer, 89.) However, he is wrong in that his exploration fails to find its bearings in the same way that Barth’s does. He notes the joyfulness of the doctrine on Barth (a rare occurrence in Barth’s commentators) but is bound to a doctrinal formulation which Barth wants to break through in his passion for Christ as the centre of the doctrine of election – as indeed for the whole of theology.
75 CD IV.3.174.
76 Berkouwer, 93-4.
77 For instance, Berkouwer, 111. (This seems to be overlooked or incorrectly denied by Hunsinger, 21)
about a doctrine, never about God. Berkouwer does come close to linking his objective and somewhat forensic engagement with Barth’s theology with the personal centre of theology, Jesus Christ, when he says:

In our analysis of Barth’s theology, it became sufficiently plain that its triumphant and joyful character did not arise from a vague and superficially optimistic attitude to life. The triumph to which he gives expression bears, rather, a concrete Name: Jesus Christ as very God and very man. In Him the sovereign and merciful action of God is revealed. Jesus Christ is the Conqueror and in Him the entirety of the triumph consists and finds its basis.\(^{78}\)

Berkouwer’s analysis is, again, close to engaging with Jesus Christ as Barth would want to, but never continues on this theme, being drawn at every point into an engagement with one side of his chosen motif: triumph. He then proceeds to offer a critique of Barth’s view of grace and its “triumph”, using his own derived understanding of these terms, finding them limited and somewhat unsatisfactory. The bird is ensnared in a trap – but in fact, on close observation, it is seen to be Berkouwer’s bird, not Barth’s! And it is caught in the trap which Berkouwer carefully designed for it.\(^{79}\)

In discussing grace, Berkouwer does give it a fuller place than do any of the other commentators discussed by Hunsinger. For instance,

This grace does not confer a moderate, relatively valuable gift, a temporal, limited, and uncertain joy. It confers salvation, life which is life indeed…the water which is drawn with joy from the wells of salvation,…comfort, eternal comfort, light, joy, and victory in all distress.\(^{80}\)

Berkouwer cannot, however, maintain the focus on this joy or even this grace, but is led by his own concern with the triumph of grace, to continue: “And all this is

\(^{78}\) Berkouwer, 212.

\(^{79}\) Even in conclusion, Berkouwer is consumed by the discussion of “…the theme of Barth’s theology, namely, the triumph of grace.” Berkouwer, 348. Whilst Berkouwer does spend some time discussing the grace of which he speaks and which he finds in Karl Barth, even asking “Is it possible to give too much attention to grace?” and answering: “It is never the full accent but the wrong accent that obscures the gospel of God’s grace.” (Berkouwer, 349. Berkouwer’s emphases.), he does not speak of the incarnation of the grace which triumphs – the person Jesus Christ is obscured by the doctrinal construct. As Barth noted, it is Jesus the Victor who is in danger of being overlooked. Whilst Berkouwer considers that his own focus is on grace, it seems often to be more concerned with the concept of triumph.

\(^{80}\) Berkouwer, 351.
preached to us with *authority* which towers triumphantly above all uncertainty and doubt and thereby lays the foundation for an inviolable certainty.” The triumph is linked to the preaching of the Gospel, and above all to the need for authority and certainty. Here Berkouwer and Barth part company as to their central formal theological concerns. This is the basis for Hunsinger’s charge that Berkouwer has misread Barth. It is a charge which fits the evidence.

In summary, Berkouwer has overlooked the richness of the theme of the joy of God due to his prior concern to show the centre of Barth’s theology located in his preformed notion of the “triumph of grace”. Hunsinger notes that “by bypassing the complexity of Barth’s thought forms, Berkouwer ends up by distorting the content and missing the unity of Barth’s theology as well”. Certainly Berkouwer has found an important theme, but he has elevated it to the role of interpretive key. Hunsinger is convinced that this is because Berkouwer is not attentive to the deeper thought forms of Barth’s theology, as he defines them, and he produces convincing evidence of this, while yet overlooking the place which joy takes in Berkouwer’s analysis of Barth.

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81 Berkouwer, 351 (Berkouwer’s emphasis). Berkouwer refers to the TWNT, II, 71, where *euangelizomai* refers to proclamation which is not “simply speaking and preaching, but…is proclamation with strength and power.” Again, the focus is on the vehicle, the motif, not the content, not the *charis* and *agalliasis* which are part and parcel of the goodness of the good news which is proclaimed.

82 Hunsinger, 15.

83 Hunsinger, 21.
3.5 Robert P. Jenson

A “strong misreading” of Barth, is how Hunsinger describes Jenson’s work, which he considers unjustly neglected — provocative and incisive, but “wrong-headed”. The basis of this critique is Jenson’s recognition that central to Barth’s theology is not a dominating thought form or material concept, but a “basic move”. The basic move, as Jenson determines it, is “the absolute priority of Jesus’ existence,” which is made evident in the historical existence of Jesus Christ. This particularism, within the definition of Hunsinger’s motifs, is drawn from the treatment of Jesus Christ in the Church Dogmatics, but is seen to have its roots in the Römerbrief, and for Jenson it is intimately related to Barth’s conceptualisation of time in relation to eternity.

Footnote continues on following page
tracing two “sides to the word-event” Jenson draws attention back to the centrality of God’s Christ-centred activity in human history.\textsuperscript{89}

On this basis, Jenson outlines implications for his study of Barth, in the following areas: the relation of the believers’ (i.e. the revealed) “God” to the “God” of religion (the question of natural theology); the use of “God” in believing language (the problem of analogical reference); the identity of “God” (the polemical question); and the subsequent question of the nature of “God”’s being (the ontological question).\textsuperscript{90}

Noting the interrelatedness of these questions, Jenson proceeds to ground each in what falls under the heading of Hunsinger’s “objectivism”. With constant reference back to his topic of particular interest, the nature of time and eternity, Jenson seeks to ground his discussions in the themes he finds in Barth: Jesus Christ as “the man who fulfills God’s intentions for man”,\textsuperscript{91} through which revelation we can “interpret God’s being, and not merely illustrate it…because God has already interpreted himself…in our language”.\textsuperscript{92} The christological and trinitarian consistency of Barth provides, in Jenson’s view, “the only possible application of the christological reversal to theological epistemology”.\textsuperscript{93} The doctrine of the Trinity is, for Jenson, “but an interpretation and analysis of th[e] expression…that God is the one ‘who has revealed

\textsuperscript{89} “Such a crisis [the turning of religion and gospel against each other – with “God” the field of struggle] is, moreover, a crisis of Christian faith itself. For we come to use “God” in that we try to explicate the unity of future and past in the proclamation of Jesus as our destiny, in that we try to say how this figure of the past can be our last future. Thus the doctrine of God states the gospel-character of the gospel; it is the conceptualization of the claim that this piece of ancient history is good news for us now. Where we become uncertain what we mean by “God” we become uncertain in our ability to speak the gospel as gospel.” Jenson, \textit{God}, 47, emphasis his.

\textsuperscript{90} More bluntly, “The \textit{Church Dogmatics} is all christology; and as it traces the connections and movements of Christ’s reality, the lineaments of \textit{The Epistle to the Romans} are followed.” Jenson, “Karl Barth”, 34.

\textsuperscript{91} Jenson, \textit{God}, 48.

\textsuperscript{92} Jenson, \textit{God}, 74.

\textsuperscript{93} Jenson, \textit{God}, 84.

\textsuperscript{93} Jenson, \textit{God}, 90.
himself in Jesus Christ”’. Thus, as Hunsinger summarizes Jenson’s description, “Jesus Christ in Barth’s theology is the unity of time and eternity. Eternity is not to be understood in abstraction from Jesus of Nazareth.”

This connectedness between the trinitarian and christological aspects of Barth’s theology, through the conceptualisation of the time/eternity relation, gives strength to Jenson’s proposal and clarity to his conception of the divine-human relationality mediated in and through Jesus Christ. Hunsinger’s criticism, however, is that Jenson does not proceed far enough with this particularism, and is constrained by his idiosyncratic understanding of analogy and dialectic in Barth as equal themes, merely opposite sides of a coin. Possibly based in a Lutheran reading which allows for the *communicatio idiomatum*, Jenson (in Hunsinger’s view) misreads the nature of the identification of Jesus Christ with humanity, and risks identifying time and timelessness. In his own synthesis of themes which he finds focused in Barth’s “move”, Jenson goes beyond Barth to the contention that “communication is being”. This is a position which is based on an identification of time and timelessness, against Barth, so Hunsinger considers that the position which Jenson reaches – “an alternate theological proposal” regarding time – is incompatible with Barth’s particularity, due to the failure to maintain a sufficient tension in the time/timelessness dialectic.

In terms of Hunsinger’s motifs, Jenson does justice to particularism (though with limitations, as Hunsinger notes), objectivism and to a lesser extent personalism.

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95 Hunsinger, 16, noting especially Jenson, *God*, 131.
96 Hunsinger, 17.
97 See Hunsinger 19-21 for his discussion. It is important to note Jenson’s stance against the received wisdom of the 1931 Anselm (von Balthasar) shift from dialectic to analogy or the 1924 (McCormack) shift, a more subtle realignment of dialectics and analogy, as the primary dynamic of Barth’s theology. Hunsinger considers that this is Jenson’s attempt to avoid the ambiguity which he sees as fundamental to any analogy. The result, Hunsinger considers, is that Jenson misreads Barth.
98 Hunsinger, 18, suggests an uncertainty in Jenson’s reading of Barth.
99 Jenson, *God*, 189. He continues, “To be is to be addressed.” 189, and “God is an utterance. He occurs as the utterance of one man to another…” 190.
100 Hunsinger, 21.
101 See the footnote to Hunsinger’s Epilogue, where he discusses the views of eternity posited by Jenson, Moltmann and Richard H. Roberts. Hunsinger, 291-2, n5.
102 Hunsinger, 19.
Jenson is very close to Hunsinger’s motif of realism, in that he is constantly endeavouring to account for the analogical and hence referential nature of Barth’s language about God (though it should be noted that, in the light of Hunsinger’s summary of the motif, he has not fully succeeded\(^{103}\)). In finally reducing his trinitarian conception to “word” language, Jenson fails to meet the requirements of Hunsinger’s motif of rationalism.\(^{104}\) The reconceptualizing of God in terms of time and language (Spirit, Father, Son : Future, Past, Present : Self-understanding, Language, Utterance),\(^{105}\) whilst seeking to maintain connections with historical orthodoxy through Barth, runs the risk of allowing the themes of time and language to take over. They are in danger of fulfilling for Jenson the role that God and Christ do for Barth.\(^{106}\)

Hunsinger shows his own motifs to be subtle yet strong tools in his analysis of Jenson. They help in alerting us to the moves Jenson makes beyond the theological positions of Barth, and the interaction of the motifs enables a perceptive analysis of the movement of Jenson’s argument. It is possible to press Hunsinger’s analysis of Jenson even further, especially in regard to the motif of personalism. In particular, he notes how, on the one hand, Jenson’s near identification of eternity and time historicizes God in the particularity of Jesus Christ; but, on the other hand, Jenson fails to do justice to the otherness of God, to which the attribute of eternity is one avenue of approach. Hunsinger connects the loss of otherness with Jenson’s suspicion of the referential value of analogical language about God. His critique could be developed, especially using his own motif of personalism, to diagnose the lack in Jenson of any theology of joy in God and praise of God. Indeed, it is striking that the only mention of praise (or prayer) in Jenson’s book is with regard to a false God\(^{107}\) who has been “historicized”\(^{108}\)

\(^{103}\) Refer to the summary of the motif, Hunsinger, 5.

\(^{104}\) Hunsinger, 22, places the responsibility for this on Jenson’s failure to note the way in which Barth’s particularism circumscribes his rationalism.

\(^{105}\) Jenson, God, 191.

\(^{106}\) Jenson draws out this conception, “acknowledging the speculative character of the attempt”, in the context of God as “first and last word”, and in the context, focusing on his theme of God after God, considering the proposition: “God is the occurrence of the word in which Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection is our last future, i.e., he is triune.” Jenson, God, 191-3.

\(^{107}\) “The judgement of the gospel is that our response to the address of life is prayer and praise—or perhaps defiance—to the God of religion. The God of religion lives exactly as this conversation between the hidden God and hiding man. Over against this response, and the idols created in it, the communication of life becomes judgement and condemnation:”
into the event of justification and the “polemic of the world of the future”.\textsuperscript{109} This constricts the response of forgiven-ness to a thanksgiving which lacks the full dynamic of praising the eternal God, engaging with all God’s otherness, and including God’s joy.

In summary, in his analysis of Jenson, Hunsinger’s motifs are at their most effective, delineating Barth from non-Barth in Jenson’s analysis. We suggested that a lack of attention to the motif of personalism was part of the reason for Jenson’s failure to detect the positive theme of joy in Barth. It must also be noted that the separation of eternity (Jenson’s key focus) from glory (its partner in Barth’s development of the divine perfections\textsuperscript{110}) draws attention away from the theological context in which Barth’s treatment of joy finds its richest and most original expression. \textsuperscript{111}

\footnotesize{the word that tells us we have no future, or rather that we have the endless past of death as our future. The gospel makes this word its own, and so claims the hidden God as its own speaker. But although the gospel makes this condemnation its own, it is itself the justification of those it thus agrees are ungodly.

“Thus God occurs as the polemic of the world of the future against our prayer and praise to the God we create to defend us against the future’s hiddenness. Following Barth, we can say that God could utter himself otherwise, but that the surprising fact of grace is that he utters himself so. God might have spoken himself without, or past, or against us. But in fact he speaks himself against our self-condemnation: he occurs as the word of forgiveness.” Jenson, \textit{God}, 190-1.

\textsuperscript{108} Hunsinger, 16.

\textsuperscript{109} Jenson, \textit{God}, 191.

\textsuperscript{110} CD II.1, see Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{111} The other study considered by Hunsinger is Herbert Hartwell, \textit{The Theology of Karl Barth: an Introduction}, Duckworth, London, 1964. As noted, this is a discussion of what is, effectively, a summary of key theological themes in Barth’s work. It adds nothing particular to the argument of this section. However, its role in Hunsinger’s study is worth noting. Hunsinger, 19-20, 21-2, treats Hartwell’s summary of Barth only briefly. He notes that the “loci” approach is fundamentally limited, (Hunsinger, 19) but nonetheless provides a good brief introduction to the \textit{Church Dogmatics}, and, whilst dealing with an “imperfectly realized set of categories,” provides the possibility of their “refin[ing] and refashion[ing]” (Hunsinger, 22) — an account of Hunsinger’s understanding of his own work, it would seem. (Hunsinger, 19-20) Whilst Hunsinger praises Hartwell for the insightfulness of his work, it is hard to understand why it is included, apart from allowing Hunsinger to give credit for the inspiration of some of his own motifs. The book is, due to its descriptive rather than analytical agenda, unsuitable for analysis by Hunsinger’s motifs. Hunsinger argues that the book is “still perhaps the best” of its kind in English. In some respects, Hoyle’s work, built on the traditional theological loci, has similarities with Hartwell’s work, though Hartwell’s is later. This simply points to the results of approaching the text with a particular and predetermined framework, as a loci based approach necessarily does.}
3.6 Eberhard Jüngel

Hunsinger does not engage at all with Jüngel, perhaps the greatest of the German commentators on Barth, and the best known outside his homeland. It is not at all clear why he omits him from his list.\(^{112}\)

The discussion which follows is an attempt to apply the motifs of Hunsinger to Jüngel, concentrating particularly on two of his works, one of which is a constructive piece of theology which is dependent on and inspired by Barth, the other a collection of essays about Barth.\(^{113}\)

Thompson notes Jüngel’s debt to Barth and recognizes him as “one of the finest interpreters of the theology of Barth”,\(^ {114}\) whose works “not only faithfully expound Barth, but illumine his works and draw out of them in a profound way what was clearly Barth’s intention, while going beyond his explicit statements”.\(^{115}\)

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\(^{112}\) Hunsinger simply notes that he will engage with “five representative works” in his discussion. The previous footnote recognizes the minimal use made by Hunsinger of Hartwell. The inclusion of Jenson is perhaps due to the interest he holds for Hunsinger as a fellow American Barth scholar, but the omission of Jüngel seems inexplicable.


\(^{115}\) Thompson, 144. Jüngel’s understanding of his own work in its relationship with Barth’s theology reflects this exposition and expansion. He stresses this when he cites CD I.1.345: “Interpretation means saying the same thing in other words.” Jüngel, Trinity, viii. Or, as Jüngel appropriates Barth’s theological process, it is a constant starting over at the beginning:

“Barth meant a concrete, specific, understandable beginning. The general questions of the beginning had little impact on him. “Latet periculum in generalibus!” “Danger lurks in generalities!” Barth’s theology embodies a decisive turn in the direction of the particular, specific, and concrete, in order to make the universal into something specific and concrete as well....In the beginning was the Word. Words must be audible. Barth took the beginning to be concrete, for the beginning has a name: Jesus Christ. Always to begin anew with Jesus Christ—that, for Barth, is certainly how one goes forward and, in going
Webster notes that the main trend of Jüngel’s work is “a concern to develop a theology in the tradition of Barth in which God and man are complementary. God and his creation form two mutually imprescriptible and not mutually exclusive realities.”

In the light of this conception, Webster notes, Jüngel avoids any expression which would suggest that God is the only reality or which tends towards anthropocentrism.

This is linked to Jüngel’s concern with the nature of theological language, which leads to his strong focus on what Hunsinger would describe as “objectivism”.

Webster suggests that this “resolute theological realism – a sense...of the antecedence, graciousness, and sheer weightiness of the realities with which the theologian is concerned, and which are hostile to neat resolution into patterns of human speech, thought or action” is something that Jüngel has taken over from Barth.

At a fundamental level, Jüngel is concerned with the means of expressing truth about God. He is concerned to explore the role and function of analogy, metaphor and anthropomorphism. “I believe, therefore I speak.” This is Jüngel’s appropriation of Barth’s understanding of Anselm’s *Fides quarens intellectum*, developed as faith *finding* understanding and expression. For Jüngel as much if not more so than Barth, the imperative of “the Word” is speech *about* the Word, a truth which must be forward, can encounter the unexpected. To the end, without compromise, he held fast to this concrete beginning.” Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 19. He also refers to Barth’s “temporal rejoicing over the eternal beginning.” Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 18.

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118 Webster uses “realism” as Hunsinger uses “objectivism”.
expressed and which liberates. Thus Jüngel can say: “I believe, therefore I speak,...I listen,...I am astonished,...I think,...I differentiate,...I hope,...I act,...I am (a new creature, called to represent the being of Christ in the communion of saints),...and I suffer”. Theology which is “never delivered from astonishment” grows in astonishment as it seeks to grow in understanding. This understanding is constrained not by the contemporary philosophical traditions, but by its object. Thus, “theology acquires its method by repeating in thought the movement of God’s coming to the world”. It is belief which asserts the new identity of the Christian self which enables both suffering and, amid suffering, the longing for rejoicing. Jüngel describes joy, in this context, as something withheld from believers and thus as a further cause of suffering. It is inextricably linked to the testing of the theologian, and the necessity for Christian theology to be a theology of the cross.

For as a theology of the cross, it connects the tested faith to its origin, back to the God who suffers for us, because through his suffering he helped the love that has overcome death to victory, the only comfort of suffering humanity. He has eternally condemned evil and sin to defeat.

Whilst Jüngel has this “actualism” among his theological concerns, his focus is conspicuously on the cross in a Pauline sense. He is less interested in the narratival

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122 Jüngel, “My Theology”, 5. “For faith must not seek. It finds. Faith lives from a discovered love whose liberating truth it then naturally seeks to understand and continually to understand better...I believe, therefore I speak.”
123 Jüngel, “My Theology”, 4-19.
125 Jüngel, “My Theology”, 11. He continues with a phrase which illustrates the depth of his dependence on Barth:
“[Theology] must distinguish between God and the world as sharply as possible by relating God to the world as closely as possible. For God distinguishes himself from the world by sharing himself with it. His attributes are not incommunicabilia but communicable attributes.” Further on this, see Jüngel’s essay “Metaphorical truth...”, in Theological Essays II, especially 58-63, where the fundamental difference between God and the world is argued to provide the possibility of “a word of address”, 64-7. This provides the foundation for Jüngel’s proposition:
“If the cross, as the world’s turning point, is the foundation and measure of metaphorical language about God, then such language itself has the function of bringing about a turning point, a change of direction.” “Metaphorical truth...”, 65.
perspicacity than in the veracity of the theological motif.\textsuperscript{128} Hence his actualism is less concerned with the event of the death of Christ in history than the recognition of its truth as freeing those in bondage to sin. The focus of the act is in the change in humanity, to which this understanding of the theology of the cross makes a connection. It is the combination of the \textit{enhypostatic} and the \textit{anhypostatic} aspects of Christ’s “being in the Act of the Word of the Kingdom of God”.\textsuperscript{129} This rich Barth- and Bultmann-influenced understanding is the basis of Jüngel’s connecting of the themes of objectivism and actualism, as Hunsinger describes them. The act of God, Jesus Christ, is the centre of theology and its grammar. Jüngel also sheds light on what Hunsinger describes as “one of the most vexed topics in Barth interpretation”,\textsuperscript{130} the relationship between divine and human being, and the concomitant relation between being and time. This is at the root of Hunsinger’s description of his motif of actualism.

Jüngel is also, as we have briefly seen, concerned with what Hunsinger describes as realism. He is concerned to explore theological language, in its richness and in relation to its object, God. As Jüngel describes the transition from dialectic in Barth’s theology, he states:

Therefore, even as Barth abandoned the circular style of the dialectic, his theology increasingly came to exhibit a hermeneutical circle. This circle established the increasingly confessional and narrative character of his dogmatic argumentation. A confessional theology explains the reality of the articles of faith on the ground of reality itself.\textsuperscript{131}

As Jüngel sees it, this hermeneutical circle is not dependent on any analogy of being, but is, through the medium of theological language, mediating the reality of God. In general agreement with von Balthasar, Jüngel continues:

…analogy now becomes the formal foundation and structure of Barth’s dogmatic assertions: the analogy (a) between the triune God who even in all his differentiation and separation (for example, between commanding and obeying!) remains self-consistent, and his relationship


\textsuperscript{130} Hunsinger, 4.

\textsuperscript{131} Jüngel, \textit{Karl Barth}, 42.
to his creation (definitively realized in the person of the God-man Jesus Christ and ontologically true for all human beings in him); (b) between the revelation of God and the biblical language of faith which interprets it; and (c) between the expressive power of the revelation and that of the dogmatic assertions. Analogy brings the formal activity of theological thought in line with the material activity of the theological object, God. That is why Barth waged an extended war against the *analogia entis*,…which presumes to usurp the activity of God himself…He opposed the *analogia entis* by stressing authentic analogy, which he construed ontologically as the analogy of relationship and theologically as the analogy of faith—without, however, a sufficient concern for clarity.\textsuperscript{132}

Much of Jüngel’s work can be considered as an extended quest to clarify this relationship between the ontological and the theological aspects of theological language, in the context of analogy (and, as we have noted, metaphor and anthropomorphism). Thus in his work on the Trinity he spends much effort in exploring Barth’s use of language and in engaging with Barth’s movement from the core theological pillars of christology and Trinity to explore other theological issues.\textsuperscript{133} It is hardly surprising that his work roots itself so deeply in CD I.1 and II.1 – the places where Barth most fully explores the issues of theology and its subject/object, and its means of speaking. A great deal of his *Doctrine of the Trinity* can be understood, in Hunsinger’s terms, as an extended discussion of Barth’s theological realism.

Within Jüngel’s exploration, he links the event language and its time/eternity axis with the exploration of the nature of theological language.\textsuperscript{134} This engagement of (Hunsinger’s) actualism and realism is always in the assumed context of the

\textsuperscript{132} Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 42-3. Jüngel notes at this point the extensive literature on this aspect of Barth’s theology, 147 n239. He also draws attention to CD II.1.260-1, where Barth is at pains to point out that the God of whom he speaks is “not who He is only in His works. Yet in Himself He is not another than He is in His works….At the same time we must be quite clear…that our subject is God and not being, or being only as the being of God.” It is this which allows the (apparent) tautology, “God is God”, to open up, as Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 43, says “God is God in that he corresponds to himself and makes human beings correspond to him. Barth expressed this dogmatically as a ‘christological concentration’ which dominated both the form and content of his theology.” In this light, he notes, the Barmen Declaration can be read as the “basic text of Barth’s theology.” Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 43.

\textsuperscript{133} See Thompson’s section, “With and Beyond Barth”, in John Webster, ed., *Possibilities of Theology*, 168-77, where he suggests the particular theological loci in Jüngel’s work to be Trinity and christology.

\textsuperscript{134} See also Webster, *Jüngel*, (1986), 104-17. These are the only two motifs explored in any depth by Zimany. See especially Zimany, *Vehicle for God*, 142-7.
particularism of the God-Man, Jesus Christ.\footnote{Again, Webster, Jüngel, 130-6, discusses this, as does Thompson, esp. 170-3.} In discussing the claim that “‘God’s being proceeds’, in Barth’s sense”, Jüngel notes that God’s being is to be understood in relation to christology, and especially Barth’s understanding of the event of Jesus Christ and his doctrine of election.\footnote{Jüngel, Doctrine of the Trinity, 1.} The doctrine of the Trinity as answering “the question of the God who reveals himself in revelation”\footnote{Jüngel, Doctrine of the Trinity, 3, referring to CD I.1.311-2.} points to Jüngel’s understanding that Barth’s “positioning…the doctrine of the Trinity…at the introduction of the whole Church Dogmatics, is a hermeneutical decision of the greatest relevance”.\footnote{Jüngel, Doctrine of the Trinity, 4.} This points to Barth’s means of “construction and assessment of doctrine” and its implications for “conceptual elaboration [which] (along with scriptural exegesis)...constitutes the theological task”.\footnote{Hunsinger, 5.} The fundamental inclusion of the doctrine of the Trinity is a decision which affects every aspect of Barth’s theological expression. Jüngel’s concern to engage with this dynamic is evidence of the importance of Hunsinger’s motif of rationalism. The Trinity becomes the means of ordering doctrine, the connection between faith and knowledge in both directions, and the basis for testing, ordering and assimilating the fruits of the theological task. Just as this trinitarian conceptuality holds other doctrines in place through the Church Dogmatics, so it operates through Jüngel’s reflection on Barth.\footnote{The centrality of this theme is implicit throughout Gottes Sein ist im Werden. It becomes explicit in the discussion of the pertinence of the vestigium trinitatis (and, of course, in the title of the English translation). “The doctrine on the Trinity is then consequently the interpretation of revelation and therewith the interpretation of the being of God made possible by revelation as the self-interpretation of God.” (Jüngel, Doctrine of the Trinity, 15). This concept is used further in the next section as regards God’s self-revelation as the Lord (Jüngel, Doctrine of the Trinity, 16-25), and amongst other places, in Jüngel’s conclusions regarding the being of God as “becoming” (Jüngel, Doctrine of the Trinity, 95-108). Here it is used to explicate God’s ability to relate to humanity on the basis of this intra-trinitarian relationality: “God’s self-relatedness must rather be understood as a becoming, peculiar to his own being, a becoming which allows us to comprehend God’s being as a ‘being-in-act’. Only when God’s self-relatedness is understood as a becoming peculiar to his own being is God’s being-for-us also adequately considered.” Jüngel, Doctrine of the Trinity, 99-100, Jüngel’s emphases.}
Of Hunsinger’s other motifs, it should be noted that objectivism is in constant evidence, in the whole of Jüngel’s exploration of revelation, in consideration of the role of the doctrine of election and its corollary, double predestination. The only motif noticeable by its absence, or at least its under-representation in the two main works to which we have referred, is the motif of personalism. Whilst Jüngel is concerned to explore the engagement of God with humanity, he is not, in most of *Doctrine of the Trinity*, considering that engagement or address, but rather its possibility. The motif of personalism finds its expression in Jüngel’s later work, where he juxtaposes “joy in God” with (the human experience of) faith and gratitude. Whilst joy is not in evidence as a theme in *Doctrine of the Trinity*, it becomes a theme in *God as the Mystery of the World*. Ford notes Jüngel’s “christological particularism [and] trinitarian universality”. In relation to the understanding of the self, this brings out Jüngel’s conceptualization of joy.

Jüngel’s appreciation of joy goes deep. It is, of course, linked with his faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but his basic theological analysis of it rings true with Jewish traditions of rejoicing in God. It goes to the root of his conception of the self and of faith: ‘...The self-definition for which man is determined in faith can thus be only the immediacy of divine joy.’

In summary, two things stand out in this brief engagement with Jüngel’s theology. Firstly, he is seen to have woven the motifs which Hunsinger outlines together in a rich and productive theological appropriation of the theology of Karl Barth. His

141 Jüngel, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 1-3, passim.
142 Jüngel, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 76-83.
143 Personalism, along with Hunsinger’s other five motifs, forms a part of the discussion in “The Royal Man: A Christological Reflection on Human Dignity in Barth’s Theology”, in Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 127-38. See also his biographical article, where he notes “Every ecumenical appeal to Karl Barth will have to demonstrate its legitimacy by this touchstone: the uncompromising Yes to Jesus Christ.” Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 20.
144 Jüngel, *God as the Mystery*, 192 and 32. (In the latter he notes the possibilities which arise from joy “of being”.) See also his discussion on joy in Christ as a *vestigium trinitatis*, and as a result of the proclamation (i.e., the I-Thou address) of Christ to those who are lost. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery*, 355. (Jüngel is in this section exploring a favourite theme of Barth’s, the finding of the lost sheep, and the return of the prodigal from the far land; Luke 15.)
“interpretation” is beyond simple restatement. His “other words” are themselves evocative in ways parallel to Barth’s theological enterprise. This is what has most been missing from the commentators with whom Hunsinger engaged. The reason for its presence in Jüngel is complex, but has at least some grounding in his desire to do theology in engagement with Barth, rather than to find particular keys to Barth’s theology. Secondly, Jüngel has noticed the theme of joy in God which is present in the Church Dogmatics, and has (in his later work, especially) linked this to the joy possible in humanity, a possibility developed in consideration of the “christological concentration” he finds in Barth’s theology and exemplified in his own. This awareness of the motif of joy in God is enhanced by Jüngel’s preparedness to recognize joyful relationality as a constituent dimension of the intra-trinitarian life. This becomes especially clear in Jüngel’s later work, where his attention is more particularly in line with Hunsinger’s motif of personalism.

It is inexplicable why Hunsinger did not engage with Jüngel, but we have seen that Hunsinger’s motifs can be a useful set of tools for exploring the engagement of Jüngel with Barth’s theology. Further, because Jüngel takes notice of the motif of particularism, and also gives the “vexed topic” of actualism a clear discussion (in numerous ways and places) he is able to do considerable justice to Barth. In his later work he takes the motif of personalism to considerable lengths, and develops aspects of joy evident in Barth’s theology. What is significant for us is that Jüngel notes the

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147 Jüngel notes (from his own close relationship) this joyfulness as part of Barth’s own persona, for instance, he says that “Karl Barth lived a life of response. He was himself. His entire life and thought as a whole announced that ‘God’ is a cheerful word.” Jüngel, Karl Barth, 21. Jüngel also notes that, with St. Paul, Barth joins “indicative and imperative: God is alive and at work. Rejoice and join in!…The joy with which Barth begins his lecture [‘Religion and Socialism’ of 1915] is thus the joy that God lives and works. One should not misunderstand this joy. Barth rejects the misunderstanding (to which he had himself briefly succumbed) that he wished to confuse theology with politics….” Karl Barth, 91. Jüngel emphasizes the grounding of this joy in the nature of the Kingdom of God.

148 Jüngel’s conclusions in Doctrine of the Trinity, 105-6, read rather like an condensed summary of Hunsinger’s motifs. For example, “1. What may be known and said about God’s being may only be known and stated from God’s being-for-us.” This also picks up central issues to which Hunsinger refers – under the motifs of actualism and particularism. Similar parallels can be found in the other six of Jüngel’s summary points. The similarity, though expressed in quite different language, tends to affirm Hunsinger’s choice of motifs as, without particular reference to Jüngel, he focuses his insights.

149 Hunsinger, 4.
theme of joy, and allows it a role in his understanding of Barth’s theology and a place in the development of his own. This is not simply due to his recognition of particular “motifs”, in the language of Hunsinger, but because he has recognized the theme in Barth and has understood that it is an important aspect of Barth’s theology.

### 3.7 Alan J. Torrance

Published since Hunsinger’s book, A. J. Torrance’s work focuses on CD I.1. It is intended as a study on the nature of the Trinity as a theological theme, using Barth as a “foil”. A. J. Torrance aims to develop a richer understanding of the Trinity as a communion of persons, eschewing the limitations of Barth’s term, Seinsweise, and to construct a methodology which has its semantic conceptions built from a concept of *analogia communionis*. The final goal is a “form of semantic participation which stems from, and takes the form of, ‘doxological participation’”.

In Hunsinger’s terms, we would expect, and in fact find, a strong focus on the motifs of realism and rationalism. A. J. Torrance is wanting to surpass the concepts of the analogy of relation and of faith, and hopes to build this out of a detailed engagement with Barth’s “vehicle of analogical reference”. It is not simply the language which is of concern, but also the “approach to theology…from the perspective of a model of the structure of revelation”, which A. J. Torrance wishes to challenge.

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150 Webster, Jüngel, 4, notes that “Jüngel has urged that theology must find ways to state how ‘the essence of Christian faith is joy in God and so concern for a more human world.” (Citing Jüngel’s essay, ‘Was ist “das unterscheidend Christliche”?’ in Unterwegs zur Sache: Theologische Bemerkungen, Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie, 61, Munich, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1972, 299.)


To avoid confusion with T. F. Torrance, I will refer to Alan J. Torrance always with his initials, except in footnotes, where the association with *Persons in Communion* should ensure clarity.

152 Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 5. (But this not due to disrespect, but rather the opposite, as regards Barth. Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 5-6.)


154 Hunsinger, 5.

Within his first chapter, A. J. Torrance (whose “select bibliography” does not include Hunsinger) has somehow avoided most of Hunsinger’s motifs. This is hardly surprising, as, within his agenda, his only need of Hunsinger’s motifs is a brief discussion which leads him towards a discussion of actualism, centred in his exploration of “The Identity in God of Word and Act”.\(^{156}\) This is subsumed into an instrumental usage in his exploration of theological language. Torrance does note the importance of connecting this actualism, this “identity between Word and Act…to the essentially \textit{personal} nature of God’s self-communication”.\(^{157}\) His discussions, however, are not directed (in Hunsinger’s terms) towards personalism, but rather to a conceptuality which roots itself in the trinitarian persons, and then engages with human persons, within his own delineation of that potentiality.\(^{158}\) His concern is not with the I-Thou address which controls Hunsinger’s motif of personalism, nor with the particularity of the event of Jesus Christ, which for Torrance is a given, but with the exploration of theological language.\(^{159}\)

It is in this context that A. J. Torrance, in exploring Barth’s use of the term \textit{Seinsweisen}, suggests that he has been significantly influenced by philosophical idealism.\(^{160}\) This, in turn, has had a constricting effect on Barth’s understanding “of God’s subjectivity, sovereignty, selfhood and personality”\(^{161}\) and resulted in Barth’s “under-characterization of the doctrine of the Spirit”.\(^{162}\) Whilst Torrance seeks to ameliorate the accusation of idealism,\(^{163}\) he does note that despite Barth’s “continual reminders of the need to interpret \textit{Seinsweisen} in relational terms”,\(^{164}\) he falls short of a

\(^{156}\) Torrance, \textit{Persons in Communion}, 31-6.

\(^{157}\) Torrance, \textit{Persons in Communion}, 33.

\(^{158}\) In many ways, this is reminiscent of Jüngel’s theological direction.

\(^{159}\) Torrance, \textit{Persons in Communion}, 167, as an example.


\(^{161}\) Torrance, \textit{Persons in Communion}, 243, noting the comments of Moltmann, \textit{Trinity}, 139-44.


\(^{163}\) Torrance, \textit{Persons in Communion}, 245-51.

\(^{164}\) Torrance, \textit{Persons in Communion}, 259.
concept of intra-trinitarian koinonia.\textsuperscript{165} The result of this is that Barth, constrained by his “‘revelational model’…inadequately expresses the dynamic relations of mutual love within the Triunity on the one hand and…fails to integrate with an adequate conception of semantic participation (as this is constitutive of human thought and understanding) on the other”.\textsuperscript{166}

A. J. Torrance leads through discussions of various theologians on the issue of triune “persons” to a consideration of the role of the cross. He engages with Jüngel, whose statement of God’s “self-relationship which in freedom goes beyond itself, overflows itself, and gives itself away”\textsuperscript{167} becomes the focus of Torrance’s “redefining of triune personhood”.\textsuperscript{168} Torrance recognizes the implications for sacraments and worship\textsuperscript{169} but does not explore them at this point. His concern for “personhood” is at loggerheads with Hunsinger’s delineation of the motif of personalism in Barth. Torrance constantly retreats from a deep engagement with the issue of the loving invitation which is constitutive of the I-Thou address on which Hunsinger’s motif centres. The result is that Torrance ends his quest for a “doxological participation”\textsuperscript{170} with a model which opens the way to a participation in divine joy, but in fact fails to note the potential. A detailed dissection of Torrance’s conclusions is beyond the scope of this discussion, but the slow integration of the concept of doxological participation as an event of grace\textsuperscript{171} opens the possibility for what Torrance describes as “an event of ‘theopoietic’ koinonia, which is both ‘in Christ’ and ‘through the Spirit’, and one, therefore, in which the Kingdom of God is ‘in a manner’ actually freed and present – and not merely future”.\textsuperscript{172}

In summary, due to his (entirely appropriate) focus on the “realism” (to use Hunsinger’s term) of Barth’s Church Dogmatics, A. J. Torrance has explored the dynamics of CD I.1, but has not referred to the many references there to the joy of God.

\textsuperscript{165} Torrance, Persons in Communion, 261.  
\textsuperscript{166} Torrance, Persons in Communion, 261.  
\textsuperscript{167} Torrance, Persons in Communion, 281, citing Jüngel, God as the Mystery, 369.  
\textsuperscript{168} Torrance, Persons in Communion, 281.  
\textsuperscript{169} Torrance, Persons in Communion, 280.  
\textsuperscript{170} Torrance, Persons in Communion, 307ff.  
\textsuperscript{171} Torrance, Persons in Communion, 313, Torrance’s emphasis.  
\textsuperscript{172} Torrance, Persons in Communion, 313, Torrance’s emphasis, again noting Moltmann, Trinity.
Whilst the joy of God is developed more fully by Barth in CD II.1, it is still a pointer, in CD I.1, to where Barth wishes his theology to proceed. Torrance’s reworking of the central dynamics of Barth’s theology allows him to posit the potential of doxological participation. On that basis he makes moves towards a very different interpretation of the divine-human relationality from that which is explicit in the Church Dogmatics. The outcome, in Torrance, is the opening up of a rich description of the intra-triune community. Without explicit reference to the joy of that communality, however, Torrance’s reading and reinterpretation of Barth prove less rewarding than they might in exploring issues of doxology and community, and offers a less rich understanding of the joy of relationality than Barth himself gives. The reason for this lies in Torrance’s almost total concern with the formal dimensions of Barth’s trinitarian communality. The result of this concern and its clear but selective focus on the cognitive descriptions of the intra-triune relationality means that Torrance has missed the affective dimensions and their connections to the material descriptions of the joy of God.

3.8 Summary of investigation of commentators

In exploring this selection of Barth commentators, we have found that T. F. Torrance and G. C. Berkouwer at least find the theme of joy in general terms in the theological writing of Karl Barth, and that Jüngel and T. F. Torrance also note joy as an aspect of Barth himself and his self-understanding as a theologian.

In Berkouwer’s study the reason for his uncovering the theme of joy in God is his desire to discern in the text material principles of unity (to use Hunsinger’s term). This ensures that whilst he may have sought to absolutize one theme as the key theme, he has been aware of the multiplicity of other, interconnected, theological themes. There is a similarity to this in the approaches of T. F. Torrance and Eberhard Jüngel, in that both take Barth’s explicit statement of themes in the Church Dogmatics into account in seeking for conceptual unity and overarching organizational principles in Barth’s work. That is, they also have, again in Hunsinger’s terms, a desire to elucidate

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173 In this context, the comments regarding “Worship as the Place of Primary Verification (of Theology)” of Dietrich Ritschl, The Logic of Theology: A Brief Account of the Relationship between basic Concepts in Theology, trans. John Bowden, SCM, London, 1986, 98ff, are a reminder of the whole purpose of the theological task, a context implicit in A. J. Torrance, but begging, in my view, to be made explicit. Cf., Daniel W. Hardy and David F. Ford, Jubilate: Theology in Praise, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1984, where the potential for theology to “talk to God as well as about him”, (Ritschl, 98), is allowed.
the formal principles of unity in the *Church Dogmatics*. Given that they have each found a rich and complex set of organizing principles in Barth, they have recognized the importance of the interplay of those principles as being of similar importance to the nature and content of the particular principles themselves. The richness of that interplay is especially clear in the later works of Jüngel, from our perspective culminating most clearly in *God as the Mystery of the World*.

A. J. Torrance, having developed a hermeneutic which seeks to work with a strong trinitarian concept of communion and aims at doxology, stops on the threshold. He fails to extend the invitation to engage personally with God – not because he does not believe it, but because he chooses not to engage fully with the explicit personalism of God’s address to humanity in the particularity of the person of Jesus Christ. In a different way, von Balthasar, for all his enthusiasm to understand Barth, and for all his engagement with Barth’s theological method, fails to note the power and beauty of the theme of God’s joy in Barth’s theology. We have noted that T. F. Torrance and Jüngel both also had a deep concern for formal principles in their exploration of Barth, yet still noted the theme of joy. This was potentially possible for von Balthasar as well, the limitation in his investigation of Barth arising not from the formal nature of his approach but from his presupposition regarding the linkage of glory with beauty (but without making joy a theme).

The *loci* approach, as exemplified by Hartwell, could accommodate joy as a theme, simply by including it alongside other themes, or subsuming it into the doctrine of God, or of humanity, for example. This would fail to do it sufficient justice, however, given its interconnectedness with other themes in Barth’s theology.

Jenson’s “mis-reading” of Barth does not acknowledge the theme of joy, possibly because Jenson was so devoted to the search for formal unity and its development into his own theology of time that he paid insufficient attention to the material links of the theme of eternity in the perfections of God to the theme of glory. The result is, in Jenson, an analysis which moves beyond Barth’s constructs and loses at least this aspect, the sense of the joy of God, in the transition.
3.9 **Hunsinger revisited**

Having outlined Hunsinger’s motifs, seen how he used them in assessing a group of Barth commentators, and applied them to two more Barth studies, we are now in a position briefly to appraise their usefulness.

After examination of some attempts, the search for a “single overriding conception” or key by which to understand (or, more often, dismiss) Barth is recognized to be both unfair to Barth’s rich weave of motifs and unlikely to succeed. This is not to deny the existence of many well-developed themes throughout Barth’s theology, but is to recognize the impossibility of finding any single theme which functions as a key, precisely because of the thematic richness.

The *loci* approach, whilst largely dismissed by Hunsinger, can be affirmed as having some value in the realm of introductory studies. It fails as an analytical tool, however, by trying to engage Barth’s theology with a preformed set of doctrines which, while Barth deals with them all, will, due to the subtlety and “differentness” of the *Church Dogmatics*, never do justice to the inner dynamics of Barth’s thought.

Each of Hunsinger’s motifs has its own value in seeking insight into Barth’s complex theological expression. Potentially, however, the motifs are just as dangerous as the quest for a single theme, if they are not held together as Hunsinger intended. The motifs are recognized as working *together* to facilitate fuller engagement with Barth. This has been borne out both in Hunsinger’s exploration of Barth’s commentators and in our own use of his themes.  

As with any shorthand, there is the risk of creating a forest of concepts which become progressively more dense to those they seek to guide. At times it seems that Hunsinger is trapped in his own methodology.Whilst he describes his motifs as “adjectival”, there are times when Hunsinger seems to use them in ways which limit what another commentator is saying – this seemed to be the case with his interpretation of von Balthasar’s understanding of Barth.

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174 Hunsinger, 3. “Proposals along these lines (to find a key to understanding Barth) have perhaps obscured as much as they have illuminated.” Hunsinger, 3.

175 It is also demonstrated in Hunsinger’s own exploration of Barth’s understanding of “truth”. Hunsinger, 67-224.

176 Hunsinger, 29.
For the present study, the engagement with Hunsinger suggests that Hunsinger’s motifs fail to either discern or prompt jubilation – except the “Eureka!” of theological discovery. Once a theme – here joy – has been discerned, however, they provide a simple and powerful set of tools for analysis. As we have seen in considering both Jüngel and A. J. Torrance, it is through the interplay of the motifs (perhaps especially those of personalism and actualism) that the intra-trinitarian reality of joy is to be discerned, and its corollary, the potential of human joy in God, is to be anticipated.

3.10 Focus of this reading of the Church Dogmatics

Recognizing the groundwork laid in our analysis of CD I.1, we can move to explore more fully the pervasiveness of the joy motif in the whole *Church Dogmatics*. The aim of the study is not to suggest that joy is somehow the controlling theme in Barth’s theology. It is not. Rather it is, in closest parallel to the approach of Berkouwer, to portray joy as a significant theme – as is the theme of grace for Berkouwer. The major difference of this study is its aim, different to Berkouwer’s, in that it hopes simply to portray and develop one theme, making neither claims for its centrality nor suggestions that it controls Barth’s theologizing. The outcome it seeks is the understanding, critique and enrichment of Barth’s theology of joy. It will include a critique of Barth and note some of his limitations, and will incorporate some discussion with other theologians as to how the theme might best be understood, criticized and developed.

The “repertoire of ‘thought forms’” developed by Hunsinger and used as his motifs in our analysis will assist in our analysis of Barth, though they will not be used as the main means of analysis. This will come simply from a careful reading of the whole of the *Church Dogmatics*, taking notice of the explicit references to joy and its contexts and connections (as has already been begun in Chapter 2, in regard to CD I) and then exploring these connections and the influence which they have on other aspects of Barth’s theology.

The basic form of reading will include some concern for “formal” elements, as Hunsinger describes them, but will be more concerned with explicit “material” thematic links. Overall the method might also be described as “affective” – meaning
paying due regard to the aspects of the text which seek to evoke responses which are not merely cognitive, but embrace the whole person and whole communities. 177


The aim of Baker’s approach is to circumvent the “anhedonia” (a symptom of paranoid schizophrenia which denies its sufferer any experience of emotions!) which he detects in much rationalistic bible reading, which he claims inadvertently distorts the text which such scholars seek to explain. (Baker, 34.) The approach he proposes involves noting affective responses as well as references to affective dimensions in the text. For our purposes, this means an awareness of many of Barth’s lighter touches, his passion, bathos and exultation in the theological task, but especially his passion for God, the God of (more than, but at least) joy.

Chapter 4

Joy, beauty and God

The divine perfections in Church Dogmatics II.1

As on a window late I cast mine eye,
I saw a vine drop grapes with J and C
Anneal’d on every bunch. One standing by
Ask’d what it meant. I (who am never loth
To spend my judgement) said: ‘It seem’d to me
To be the bodie and the letters both
Of Joy and Charitie.’ ‘Sir, you have not miss’d,’
The man reply’d; ‘it figures JESUS CHRIST.’

(George Herbert)

Joy as a theme in Barth’s theology has been introduced as one element which, with its foundations laid in Volume One of the Church Dogmatics, finds avenues for flourishing in each of the subsequent volumes. The task of this chapter is to display the richness of this theme as Barth develops it in the context of his Doctrine of God (Church Dogmatics, Volume II). This exposition and discussion of joy amongst the perfections of God will suggest that joy can be understood as a perfection in its own right. Recognizing joy as a perfection allows for further development of the theme of
the joy of God, (a theme which Barth defends as thoroughly biblical but, as we have seen, one which is often overlooked by Barth commentators). It also opens up avenues to appreciating Barth’s theology more fully.

Before Barth’s use of the theme of joy can be described, we will first examine the explicit statements he makes regarding the joy of God. As noted in the previous chapter, the attempt at an “affective” reading of Barth requires first a close analysis of the text. It is only in the light of an examination of the uses to which Barth puts the theme of joy that we can note the interconnections of the themes and build an understanding of the connections between the theme of joy and the wider theological themes in the Church Dogmatics. The danger in this reading is that of submergence – a too-close analysis which loses objective distance and sees all in the light of the chosen theme. The same danger exists, paradoxically, in a reading which tries to hold the “big picture” but which misses the details. By seeing all through one lens from a distance, each doctrine risks being distorted by preconceptions.

In an attempt to maintain both intimate connection with the text and to hold sufficient distance, this reading will examine the relevant texts closely and in their context. It will then, in the light of that examination, conduct a broad analysis of the themes of CD II as seen from the standpoint of joy. In order to prepare for the intensive examination of the particular texts in regard to the joy of God, we must first place these in their broad context: Barth’s examination of the perfections of God, in CD II.1. Thus the first part of this chapter will be largely descriptive, justifying the significance accorded to the theme of joy in this area of doctrine. The second part will move into a discussion of the place of joy in the whole doctrine of God in the Church Dogmatics, prior to considering this in the light of broader theological possibilities. We will also note Barth’s daring in some of his discussions, and draw attention to his own self-limitation in regard to the area of beauty. The importance of grounding joy, as Barth does, in the glory and eternity of God must first be noted. Finally I will suggest that, since Barth does not return to an examination of the glory and eternity of God in the light of his explication of the theme of joy, he has begun a “revolution” in theology.

4.1 Joy as a key theme in Barth’s doctrine of God.

With the basis of his theology of revelation outlined in CD I, Barth moves, in CD II, to explicate the nature of the God who reveals and is revealed. He asks: “If we do not
Chapter 4  Joy, Beauty and God

speak rightly on this Subject (the doctrine of God), how can we speak rightly of His predicates?1 The problem of knowledge is both raised and answered in Jesus Christ.2 It is Jesus Christ as truly God and truly human which provides the possibility of an answer or answers, and these will be found in the relationship offered by the call to “Enter thou into the joy of the Lord.”3 Thus:

The real knowledge of God is concerned with God in His relationship to man, but also in His distinction from him.4 In the light of Christ, the revelation of God is to be received with thanksgiving, joy and awe, because revelation reminds its recipient of the distance between God and humanity, as well as the closeness of the connection, made by grace.5 Knowledge of God is participation in this “veracity of revelation” with its centre in the act of God in Jesus Christ.6

After his discussion of the knowledge of God, Barth turns to explore the nature of the God who imparts this knowledge, or in Barth’s terms, “The Reality of God”.7

1 CD II.1.3.
2 This is the main issue of CD II.1.3-254, Chapter V, The Knowledge of God.
3 CD II.1.11.
4 CD II.1.10.
5 “We say awe [Ehrfurcht], having previously said thanksgiving and having referred finally to the necessary joyfulness of the knowledge that participates in the revelation of God. But as in the case of thanksgiving, and therefore joyfulness, we have to say awe of necessity. Awe refers to the distance between our work and its object. This distance is certainly overcome. But it is still a distance which is overcome only by God’s grace, the distance between here and there, below and above. In awe we gratefully let grace be grace, and always receive it as such. We never let reception become a taking. Our knowledge of God is always compelled to be a prayer of thanksgiving, penitence and intercession. It is only in this way that there is knowledge of God in participation in the veracity of the revelation of God.” CD II.1.223. (KD 251).
6 CD II.1.223. See also CD II.2.276, where Barth describes God’s love as “concerned with a seeking and creation of fellowship for its own sake…. … Loving us, God does not give us something, but Himself; and giving us Himself, giving us His only Son, He gives us everything.” Barth also talks of this loving as independent of the recipient’s aptitude or worthiness, CD II.1.278, as it is “[i]n the fact he determines to love such another, His love overflows.” CD II.1.280. Hence, “God’s act is His loving.” CD II.1.283.
7 The larger of the two portions of CD II.1 being Chapter VI, 257-677.
4.2 The perfections of God

Three of the four sections of Barth’s treatment of the reality of God are concerned with what he denotes “the perfections of God”. Before he turns to the perfections, however, he exegetes the statement “God is.” This leads to the formulation that “God is the One who loves in freedom.” It is this encapsulation which overarches Barth’s discussion of the perfections in general, as he explores the way in which “God lives His perfect life in the abundance of many individual and distinct perfections.”

The perfections of God are to be spoken of on the ground of God’s self-revelation, in the knowledge that they may relate to being in general terms, but apply to God particularly, and as Trinity.

For as the triune God, both in regard to His revelation and to His being in itself, He exists in these perfections, and these perfections again exist in Him and only in Him as the One who, both in His revelation and in eternity, is the same. To grasp and understand this connexion is the special task of the doctrine of God’s attributes.

Barth goes on to note the linguistic benefit present in the German language because God “is not only the Lord (Herr), but the Lord of glory (Herrlichkeit), and conversely…all glory is the glory of God the Lord (die Herrlichkeit Gottes des Herrn”). He notes that the glory of God can be described with the use of a multiplicity of other attributes but that this multiplicity does not deny the divine

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8 CD II.1.332-677.
9 CD II.1.257-321.
10 CD II.1.322. Barth notes that he is dealing with that subject “which the older dogmatics treated under the heading ‘The Doctrine of the Attributes of God’”. He defends the term “perfections” as a good and distinctive option amongst many. CD II.1.322.
11 CD II.1.323.
12 CD II.1.322.
13 CD II.1.323. “Since God is Father, Son and Holy Ghost, i.e., loves in freedom, every perfection exists essentially in Him.”
14 CD II.1.323-4.
15 CD II.1.324. (KD 364). Barth emphasizes the glory of God since it is a dominant biblical theme. CD II.1.324. “To attest and expound this biblical unity of the Lord with His glory (and of all glory with its Lord) is the business of the doctrine of the divine perfections.” CD II.1.325-6.
16 He notes that these attributes describe the being of God, not merely the relationship of God with the world. He quotes J. A. Dorner with approval: “If God refuses to allow us any knowledge of His being in itself, but only of His being in relation to the world, then He reveals to the world, because not Himself, necessarily some other than Himself.”

Footnote continues on following page
asety\textsuperscript{17} nor the divine uniqueness.\textsuperscript{18} Eschewing subdivisions of the perfections which he considers to be based on \textit{a priori} assumptions about being, psychological presuppositions or a “religio-genetic” or “historico-intuitive” principle, and expressing reservations about splits into categories such as negative and positive, quiescent and operative, absolute and relative, immanent and transcendent, metaphysical and moral or communicable and incommunicable, Barth finally opts for a categorical split, into perfections of love and of freedom, as this provides a suitable, biblical framework.\textsuperscript{19} This split recognizes the relational reality that in speaking of God we are speaking of God’s fellowship with another – the world of creation.\textsuperscript{20} The order of discussion is, for Barth, not a matter of indifference. The fact that theologians have nearly always treated of the \textit{attributa absoluta}, \textit{quiescentia}, \textit{incommunicabilia}, etc., i.e., of the perfections of the divine majesty, or, as we would term it, the divine freedom, and only then have they been willing to discuss the \textit{attributa relativa}, \textit{operativa}, \textit{communicabilia}, etc., i.e., the perfections of the divine love\textsuperscript{21} reveals a fundamental error – that of giving priority to some notion of “God” over “God in relation” to the impersonal absolute over the relational.\textsuperscript{22} This, Barth says, is contrary to the order of revelation and the nature of God’s being known in revelation.\textsuperscript{23} It denies the truth that “God’s revelation is first and last a Gospel, glad tidings, the word and deed of divine grace”.\textsuperscript{24}

With this understanding, Barth turns to present a vivid rendering of the perfections of God. What differentiates Barth’s from earlier descriptions of the nature of God under the heading of perfections is not simply the particular attributes of the

\textsuperscript{17} CD II.1.330, citing Dorner’s \textit{System der chr. Glaubenslehre}, 1886, Vol. 1, 191. Barth is steadfast in maintaining that the God who is revealed is truly God, and thus that there is no “God behind God”, no \textit{Deus absconditus}.

\textsuperscript{18} CD II.1.332-3.

\textsuperscript{19} CD II.1.333-4.

\textsuperscript{20} CD II.1.335-44.

\textsuperscript{21} CD II.1.344.

\textsuperscript{22} CD II.1.348.

\textsuperscript{23} Barth describes this as “the most doubtful feature of this conception of God: that God is first and properly the impersonal absolute, and only secondarily, inessentially and in His relationship \textit{ad extra} the personal God of love with the attributes of wisdom, justice, mercy, etc.” CD II.1.349.

\textsuperscript{24} CD II.1.348-9.
divine nature which he chooses to discuss as perfections, but the order in which he treats them. He ensures that the relational dynamic of revelation is maintained and endorsed. Barth insists on dealing with God as the one “who He is in the act of His revelation”.  

This actuality is particularized in the event Jesus Christ, because “[a]cts happen only in the unity of spirit and nature”. God wills to be God, and more, to be for us and with us and “[t]he blessings of His Godhead are so great that they overflow to us, who are not God”. This blessedness is centered in the triune relationality. As Barth notes:

As and before God seeks and creates fellowship with us, He wills and completes this fellowship in Himself….He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and therefore alive in His unique being with and for and in another….He does not exist in solitude but in fellowship….That He is God—the Godhead of God—consists in the fact that He loves, and it is in the expression of his loving that He seeks and creates fellowship with us.

Similarly, as regards the freedom of God, Barth argues that this too is fundamental to God’s revealing act, which is not externally conditioned but leads to the “setting up” of

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25 CD II.1.257.
26 CD II.1.257f, 262f, 263. Colin E. Gunton, Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth, Oxford Theological Monographs, Oxford, 1978, 188, describes this presentation as “carefully structured to bring out both aspects of the divine event-reality.”
27 CD II.1.267.
28 CD II.1.274.
29 CD II.1.274.
30 CD II.1.275. Barth continues in clarification of the essential “actness” of God: “It is correct and important in this connexion to say emphatically His loving, i.e., His act as that of the One who loves.” (This sense of God seeking and creating fellowship for its own sake, without reference to the aptitude or worthiness of the loved, as an end in itself, necessary for the being, essence and nature of God, in time and eternity, is spelled out in CD II.1.276-84.)

The subtle interplay of Barth’s perfection with the fundamental trinitarian conception of the inner life of God is more clearly evident in the original, the central sentence of which is quoted here without elision:

“In sich selber will er ja nicht für sich, nicht einsam sein, ist er vielmehr der Vater, der Sohn und der Heilige Geist und also lebendig in seinem eigensten Miteinander und Füreinander und Ineinander, ist die ungebrochene Einheit seines persönlichen Seins, Wissens und Wollens zugleich ein Ratschlagen, Beschließen und Handeln: nicht in der Einsamkeit, sondern in der Gemeinschaft.” KD II.1.308.
fellowship. It is this freedom which provides the possibility of God’s entering into and maintaining “communion with this reality other than Himself” in an expression of love. God’s revelation as the one who loves in freedom is founded on the reality that this is the inner nature of God, because the God who is revealed is the God who is. It is the nature of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

It is this God to whom we are called to relate and in whom we are called to rejoice. The foundation of that rejoicing is the inner communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is communicated to humanity in the event Jesus Christ, in whom the elect rejoice. Before exploring this potentiation of joy in humankind, however, we must look to Barth’s exposition of joy in its place amongst the perfections of the divine nature.

In overview, Barth’s presentation of the perfections looks like this:
§29, The Perfections of God, followed by
§30, The Perfections of the Divine Loving, comprising the pairs:
  Grace/Holiness;
  Mercy/Righteousness;
  Patience/Wisdom, and
§31, The Perfections of the Divine Freedom, comprising the pairs:
  Unity/Omnipresence;
  Constancy/Omnipotence;
  Eternity/Glory.

This all stands under the introductory section of Chapter VI, The Reality of God, which begins with section §28, where Barth lays the basis for his choice of Love

31 “According to the biblical testimony, God has the prerogative to be free without being limited by His freedom from external conditioning, free also with regard to His freedom, free not to surrender Himself to it, but to use it to give Himself to this communion and to practise this faithfulness in it, in this way being really free, free in Himself. God must not only be unconditioned but, in the absoluteness in which He sets up this fellowship, He can and will also be conditioned. He who can and does do this is the God of Holy Scripture, the triune God known to us in His revelation. This ability, proved and manifested to us in His action, constitutes His freedom.” CD II.1.303. (KD 341).

32 CD II.1.303.
33 See CD I.1.296, passim.
34 CD II.1.11.
and Freedom as the keys to his development of the perfections of the God who is known, and who acts.  

We have observed that in his groundwork for the discussion of the perfections of God, Barth stresses the call to enter into the joy of the Lord, and has grounded this in the act of God in Jesus Christ, the visible expression of the divine glory (die Herrlichkeit des Herrn). The God who reveals is the God who loves in freedom and is the God who is glorious as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. By holding love and freedom together Barth is affirming his aim to be true to God who is in fellowship and creates fellowship with humanity. It is in this context that we must place Barth’s development of the perfections of God, and particularly his development of the “perfection” of joy.

4.3 Glory and eternity

Barth identifies God as glory in the same fashion as he deals with the other divine attributes, namely that each describes the nature of God and contains all other attributes, yet each is complementary to the others.

Barth locates divine glory as part of the freedom of God. The glory of God “is the self-revealing sum of all divine perfections. It is the fullness of God’s deity, the emerging, self-expressing and self-manifesting reality of all that God is. It is God’s being in so far as this is in itself a being which declares itself”. This is itself part of Barth’s definition of God as “the One who Loves in Freedom”.

Freedom and love provide the architectonic framework for Barth’s discussion of the divine perfections. He holds the eternity and glory of God together within his discussion of the freedom of

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36 CD II.1.257-321. (KD 288-361), as discussed above.
37 See CD II.1.330-44 for Barth’s discussion of his adoption of this aspect of theological tradition (and to 350, for Barth’s explanation of his divergence from some points of the received tradition). This is a dynamic which Barth states early in this section, in an even broader context, when he says: “Strictly speaking, in dogmatics and in church preaching every single statement is at once the basis and the content of all the rest.” CD II.1.257. This is not a dynamic of the perfections alone, then. It is of the nature of theology – and that because it is of the nature of God.
38 In the context of the present study, it is unfortunate that glory belongs to the only pair of perfections not treated in Gunton’s selective study. This is because eternity and glory do not provide a suitable platform for Gunton’s comparison of Barth and Hartshorne. (Gunton, Becoming and Being).
39 CD II.1.643.
40 CD II.1.257ff.
God. For Barth, God’s glory is to be understood in juxtaposition to God’s eternity, but it also provides a bridge back to the larger framework which Barth establishes for the perfections. Thus Barth returns to the concept of glory as a divine perfection. It is a perfection which he has mentioned before. His introduction to the perfections used glory as paradigmatic, at least partly because of its linguistic association with “the Lord”, as we noted above.

In the subsequent discussion, Barth makes it clear that glory is a key theme which allows the perfections to be properly ordered. It is, he says, to “attest and expound th[e] biblical unity of the Lord with His glory [which] is the business of the doctrine of the divine perfections”. Likewise, it is the task of the doctrine of God’s

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41 CD II.1.640. “God is glorious in the fact that He is eternal,…[but i]t would be a poor conception of eternity which barred us from a view of God’s glory or did not require us to contemplate it,…[W]e must now interpret and expound this meaning [of God’s eternity] and say that God endures in glory….His being is eternal in glory.”

42 CD II.1.324 (KD 364). Where Barth notes the Herr, Herrlichkeit linkage.


“The first is the frequency with which it [the theme] recurs. That is, it should occur often enough to indicate that ‘purposiveness rather than merely coincidence or necessity is at least occasionally responsible for their presence’. The second key factor in establishing a motif is the avoidability and unlikelihood of the particular uses of the motif. In other words, it should appear in contexts which are unlikely and do not demand references from the field of the motif.” Dwyer, *The Motif of Wonder*, 17.

Whilst the concept is not a particularly strong one, it is useful in recognizing that Barth uses the theme of glory (and joy) in ways which are not forced on him by the tradition or just by the scripture references alone. This is, again, the motif which Hunsinger describes as “rationalism” – the development of a theme within the tradition, based on its resources, but reaching beyond the previous ambit of the tradition or of the scriptural material alone.

My own analysis of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments suggests that joy as a human response to God is a key theme based on the criteria of Freedman (see above in this footnote), but that joy in God (that is, as an attribute of God) is not. Its elevation in Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* to a place which is close to meeting the criteria for a key theme, or, as we shall argue, actually meeting them, is the result of theological refection and development of the biblical ideas – Hunsinger’s rationalism. It should be clear from the discussions below that despite this development, Barth does indeed develop a concept of the joy of God which is consonant with the scriptural material.

perfections to “show the biblical unity of all glory with its Lord”.  

It is to this central theme which Barth returns as he draws his discussion of the perfections to its close. He is clearly prepared to allow the glory of God, die Herrlichkeit des Herrn, which was basic to his classification of the perfections into their two groups, to exercise a special role in shaping the perfections in their final form. This is more than a neat rhetorical or structural flourish. It is an expression of the importance which Barth ascribes to the concept of glory. The theme of the glory of God exercises a material influence on the exposition of the particular perfections. 

It is thus to be expected that at the culmination of his discussion of the perfections Barth again turns to God’s glory, the “supreme predicate” of the divine freedom, this time giving an in-depth analysis.

### 4.4 Glory

For Barth, God’s glory is “God Himself in the truth and capacity and act in which He makes himself known as God”. The link with the wider framework is given immediately:

> This truth and capacity to act are the triumph, the very core, of His freedom. And at its core it is freedom to love. For at the core of His being, and therefore in His glory, God is the One who seeks and finds fellowship, creating and maintaining and controlling it. He is in

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45 CD II.1.326. Die biblische Einheit aller Herrlichkeit mit ihrem Herrn darzustellen: das ist die Aufgabe der Lehre von Gottes Vollkommenheiten von ihrer anderen Seite gesehen. (KD 367). (Here Barth is exploring the need to hold together the concepts of Herr and Herrlichkeit.)

46 See, for instance, CD II.1.348: “The order in which these two series of divine attributes are formulated is not a matter of indifference. It is, of course, true that in both cases, whether we are speaking of the love or the freedom of God, we are concerned with the one God, with the glory of the Lord in its fulness, in which there can be no more or less and therefore no before or after.” (cf. KD 392: “…mit dem einen ganzen Gott mit der Herrlichkeit des Herrn in ihrer Fülle zu tun haben…”).

47 “His being is eternal in glory. For the specific nature of God’s eternity, the distinction and unity in which He is eternal, is also and as such the specific nature of God as the God of glory. Thus a consideration of His freedom has led us again and for the last time to a consideration of His love. For while the glory of God describes especially His freedom, majesty and pre-eminence, and therefore definitely belongs to the second series of divine perfections dealt with in this section, yet this final and supreme predicate of the divine freedom [dieses letzte und höchste Freiheitsprädikat Gottes] can be understood as such only if the divine freedom itself and as such is seen to be God’s freedom to love.” CD II.1.641 (KD 722).

48 CD II.1.641.
Himself, and therefore to everything outside Himself, relationship, the basis and prototype of relationship. In the fact that He is glorious He loves.49

This presentation of what is central to Barth’s theological conception of the nature of God, rooted and understood in terms of glory, stands at odds with much contemporary thinking. It shows a radical difference in emphasis from the power-focused discussion of Welker,50 and the hope-centred early theology of Moltmann,51 for instance.

Further, as Barth affirms, “The older theologians were right. God’s glory is also the fullness, the totality, the sufficiency, the sum of the perfection of God in the irresistibility of its declaration and manifestation.” The linking of glory and eternity in Barth’s exposition of the perfections is a pointing in the direction of divine otherness. It is an emphasis on the splendour and majesty of God as God. It is also part of Barth’s development of the doctrine of God which is evocative of human gratitude and gladness.53

Barth’s elevation of glory to the point of it being the “supreme predicate”54 of God is important. This particular perfection is made to carry more than its expected

49 CD II.1.641.
50 Michael Welker, God the Spirit, transl. John F. Hoffmeyer, Fortress, Minneapolis, 1994. Welker’s aim is to “provide help in coming to a new perception of God and God’s power.” Welker, 3. It is “in the power of the Spirit” that enjoyment is enabled in creatures. Welker, 340. The link to glory is not made by Welker and the link to joy is constantly under the rubric of power – a concept which Barth seeks constantly to contain within the broader sense of “constancy” and glory. See CD II.1.490-607; 608ff.
51 His most conspicuous example is probably: Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of a Christian Eschatology, transl. James W. Leitch, SCM, London, 1967. However, the work which might be expected to point most clearly towards our theme, Jürgen Moltmann, Die ersten Freigelassenen der Schöpfung: Versuche über die Freude and der Freiheit und das Wohlgefallen am Spiel, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, München, 1971 (in Theology and Joy, trans. Reinhard Ulrich, with an extended introduction by David E. Jenkins, SCM, London, 1973, and published in the USA as Theology of Play, trans. Reinhard Ulrich, Harper and Row, New York, 1972, with response articles on the (misunderstood) theme of play) deals very little with any sense of the joy of God, minimally with glory, and mostly on the theme of freedom – and in that context, power. The basis is, as with Welker, a development of one “perfection”, not, as with Barth, a move towards an exposition of the perfections in toto.
52 CD II.1.645.
53 See the later discussions of Barth’s doctrine of joy in creation, in CD III.
54 CD II.1.641, noted above. Whilst Barth uses the term as regards the perfections of divine freedom, I will be suggesting that for Barth glory is the supreme predicate of the whole nature of God and the perfections of God.
share of theological weight. We see this not least in its use as the basis for the
derivation of two “quasi-perfections”: joy and beauty. To this derivation we will now
turn, noting first some aspects of Barth’s understanding of the nature of glory.

In defining God’s glory, Barth makes strong mention of the change in meaning
of the New Testament term δόξα, noting that as it was “impressed into the service of
the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it underwent a decisive and particularly
striking change of meaning”.\textsuperscript{55} The key concept is identified by Barth as “the objective
conception of honour which a man has in himself and is therefore his due, the dignity
which is his and is therefore accepted by others, the magnificence he displays because
he has a right to it, splendour which emanates from him because he is resplendent”.\textsuperscript{56}
This glory is made manifest in Jesus Christ, in whom “we have beheld glory”,\textsuperscript{57} and is

\textsuperscript{55} CD II.1.641. This is supported by such standard references as Gerhard Kittel, δόξα, TDNT,
2:233-53, who describes the New Testament usage as “a totally different picture” to earlier
Greek usage of δόξα, since the “old meaning… ‘opinion’ , has disappeared completely.” Its
new meaning, with “only an isolated example in Philo…denotes ‘divine and heavenly
radiance’, the ‘loftiness and majesty’ of God, and even the ‘being of God’ and His world.”
TDNT, 2:237. Kittel notes that the background to this change in meaning is in the Old
Testament usage of dwbk@. In referring to this Hebrew antecedent, von Rad suggests that
to say that Yahweh will become dwbk for Israel or that Israel is created for Yahweh’s dwbk
amounts to the same thing, so closely is the concept related to Israel’s God. TDNT, 2:242.
This has important parallels to the move in the language of joy. See, for instance,
S. S. Smalley, ‘Joy’. in New Bible Dictionary, ed. J. D. Douglas, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids,
MI, 1962/1975, 665-6. More detailed studies are given in the articles by Bultmann,
ἀγαλλίασμα, ἀγαλλίασις, and Zimmerli, χαίρω, χαρά, συγγαίρω, et. al., in TDNT 1:19-
21 and 9:377-387 respectively. (See also the abridged articles in TDNT (1 vol.), 4-5 and
1301-3.)

\textsuperscript{56} CD II.1.641. Barth continues: “It is in this sense that the New Testament speaks of God’s
glory of the glory of Jesus Christ or even the glory that belongs to us.” CD II.1.641-2.
(KD 723). Barth supports his encapsulation of glory in this way by noting the philological
associations of δόξα and kabod with light – the latter as both source and radiance
(CD II.1.642), and by referring to particular biblical references for support, notably
doxological passages (from the Psalms to the Epistle to the Romans) culminating in the
Johannine references which exemplify “the decisive central strand in which the δόξα is the
δόξα of the Lord Jesus Christ, a glory which is based on the δόξα of God the Father—He is
glorified by the Father and He glorifies the Father (Jn 13:31)—and which itself forms the
basis of the future yet present δόξα of [Christians, as receivers of the ἀποκάλυψις, the ἀφορμοθεὶς
τοῦ πνεύματος]. Jesus Christ appears now with both a retrospective and a prospective
reference, to Israel on the one hand, to the Church on the other. On the one hand He is the
reflection of the divine glory….On the other hand He is the prototype of all participation by
creation in the glory of God. CD II.1.642-3. (KD 724-5).

\textsuperscript{57} Jn 1:14.
a clear likeness of the glory of the Father.\textsuperscript{58} This glory is known to us as the event of the person of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{59}

Barth considers the extent to which God’s glory is the shining out, the self-declaration of His fullness of being.\textsuperscript{60} Using the biblical metaphor of light to discuss God’s glory, he notes that in the context of God’s freedom, “His glory means that His self-declaration does not go out into empty space. On the contrary, He seeks and at once finds those to whom He declares Himself.”\textsuperscript{61} This self-declaration is not a weakened force, even if it is communicated through creaturely powers. What reaches us in God’s glory is God Himself.\textsuperscript{62}

4.5 Glory and joy

Further using the imagery of light, Barth notes that the illumination by God’s glory produces a reaction in that which is illuminated. “It is a presence which opens [blind eyes]”.\textsuperscript{63} It is in this context that Barth first links joy to glory. The doxological expressions in this context are significant, as Barth clearly considers that the appropriate response to God’s self revelation of His glory is praise. His language becomes the language of worship – “The creature has no voice of its own. It does not point to its own picture. It echoes and reflects the glory of God.”\textsuperscript{64} The rootedness of this movement of glorification from humanity towards God in praise and joy is for Barth located in the very nature of God. An extended quotation will serve to show the strength of the linkage which Barth makes between joy and the perfection of God’s glory:

\textsuperscript{58} Jn 13:31. Cf. Heb 1:3a, which Barth notes and discusses in CD II.1.661.
\textsuperscript{59} CD II.1.643.
\textsuperscript{60} CD II.1.646-8. (KD 728-31).
\textsuperscript{61} CD II.1.646.
\textsuperscript{62} CD II.1.647. Using a mixture of metaphors, all linked to show that God’s revelation is of God’s own glory, Barth continues: “God’s face is more than the radiance of light. And God’s glory is the glory of His face, indeed His face itself, God in person, God who bears a name and calls us by name. God is glorious in the fact that He does this, that He reaches us in this way, that He Himself comes to us in this way.” CD II.1.647 (KD 729).
\textsuperscript{63} CD II.1.647. “It is a presence which also looses at once tongues that were bound.”
\textsuperscript{64} CD II.1.648. Or further, “the glorifying of God consists simply in the life-obedience of the creature which knows God. It has no alternative but to thank and praise God.” (CD II.1.674).
God’s glory is the indwelling joy of His divine being which as such shines out from Him, which overflows in its richness, which in its super-abundance is not satisfied with itself but communicates itself. 

[\textit{Gottes Herrlichkeit ist die ihm innerwohnende und eben als solche nun auch von ihm ausstrahlende, die aus seinem Reichtum überströmende, die in der eigenen Überfülle sich nicht genug teuende, sondern sich selbst mitteilende \textit{Freude} seines Gottesseins.}] All God’s works must be understood also and decisively from this point of view. All together and without exception they take part in the movement of God’s self-glorification and the communication of His joy. 

[\textit{Man muß alle Werke Werke Gottes auch und entscheidend von daher verstehen: sie geschehen alle miteinander, sie geschehen ohne Ausnahme im Zuge dieser seiner Selbstverherrlichung und Freudenmittlung.}]...God wills them and loves them because, far from having their existence of themselves and their meaning in themselves, they have their being and existence in the movement of the divine self-glorification, in the transition to them of His immanent joyfulness. 

[\textit{...im Zuge der göttlichen Selbstverherrlichung, im Transeuntwerden seiner immanenten \textit{Freudigkeit}...}] It is their destiny to offer a true if inadequate response in the temporal sphere to the jubilation with which the Godhead is filled from eternity to eternity. 

[\textit{...darin ihre Bestimmung haben, dem Jauchzen, von dem die Gottheit von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit erfüllt ist, in der Zeitlichkeit unangemessene, aber treuliche Antwort zu geben.}]^{65}

Whilst we will leave the aspects of the divine glory and joy which pertain to humanity until the next chapter, it is important to note some key dynamics of Barth’s understanding of joy and glory in God which are focused in this passage, (though they are also exemplified in numerous other places). The movement of God’s glory and God’s joyful self-communication are synonymous for Barth. The abundance of God’s glory is seen in God’s joy. God’s joy is perceived as the outpouring of God’s glory. The intratrinitarian joy evokes human responses of joy. For the moment, however, let us ponder the remarkable location of joy as tantamount to a perfection of God in Barth’s exposition, noting the close parallel drawn with glory. There has been a development in the section quoted above. In it, joy has been elevated. Joy is no mere description of an aspect of divine glory. Joy has been developed as being both the inward and the outward aspect of divine glory. It is the basis of God’s self-communication, and the dynamic of that communication. Intra-triune joy calls to humanity, and the invocation is to jubilation. Joy is at least functioning as a perfection. It describes God and is used to explore other perfections. Perhaps glory is now

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^{65} \text{CD II.1.647-8. (KD 730.)}
functioning as more than a perfection. It becomes the central motif in explaining jubilation— not just as human response to the divine, but the jubilation “with which the Godhead is filled from eternity to eternity.”  

Glory, the theme with which Barth began his exploration of the perfections of God returns as a theme which refines and expands the whole conspectus of the perfections.

It is difficult not to be swept up in the rhapsodic expression which attends this thematic development in this section of the Church Dogmatics. The radiance which attends the manifestation of the glory of God contains the awe with which Barth speaks of the effulgence of divine light. It contains the potential for response in that it evokes awe and wonder, gladness, and obedience. The perfection of glory begins to transcend the constraints, wide though they are, which attend the category.

Through participation in Christ’s saving act, humanity enters into the glory of God, and thus eschatologically leaves the hindrances to joy; the groaning of creation and the burden of sin. This is the renewed human destiny. For Barth it is expressed in terms of glory and eternity. Thus in eternity and in temporal existence, Christians are called to “live in the determination to be the reflection and echo of God and therefore the witnesses to the divine glory that reaches over to him, rejoicing with the

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66 CD II.1.648, quoted above.
67 These aspects of response will be explored in Chapter 6.
68 The destiny of responding to God with joy in eternity is that which “man received and lost, only to receive it again, inconceivably and infinitely increased by the personal participation of God in man’s being accomplished in Jesus Christ.” CD II.1.648.
69 This study has followed the theme of glory as a means of linking the theme of joy to the wider discussion Barth gives to the perfections. This could as well have been undertaken through a close examination of his development of the theme of the eternity of God, since the two are intimately linked in Barth’s analysis. Both themes point to the otherness of God and also to the richness of the fulfilment which is made possible for humanity in Christ. We will note the theme of eternity at strategic places, but it will not be developed in the way in which glory is. The linking of joy and eternity further strengthens the argument for the pervasiveness of the theme of joy. The centrality of the eternity/time link in Barth’s writings is discussed by Richard H. Roberts, “Barth’s Doctrine of Time: Its Nature and Implications”, in Karl Barth: Studies of his Theological Method, ed. S. W. Sykes, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979, 88-146 and Robert W. Jenson, Alpha and Omega: A Study in the Theology of Karl Barth, Thomas Nelson, Edinburgh, 1963 and his God after God: The God of the Past and the God of the Future in the Work of Karl Barth, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1969.
God who Himself has eternal joy and Himself is eternal joy. [...sich mitzufreuen mit dem Gott, der selber ewige Freude hat und die ewige Freude selber ist.]

That God has and is eternal joy is a remarkable statement, sure to surprise those who have only a passing or second-hand knowledge of the *Church Dogmatics*, yet it is essential to a full and rich understanding of the Doctrine of God. Barth has not yet finished his treatment of the joy of God. Already it has begun to assume the status of a perfection. But to understand his exposition, we must follow Barth into a discussion of a related theme, the possibility of speaking of the beauty of God.

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70 CD II.1.648-9. (KD 731). This theme will be considered more fully later as it relates to human joy.

A wide ranging search of biblical commentaries reveals that there is little of this theme recognized or explicated by scholars. The assumption seems always to be that any reference to joy is a reference to a human emotion, and so even explicit statements such as “Rejoice in the Lord!” (a recurrent phrase in Old and New Testaments) are reduced to “Rejoice in the works of the Lord.” This is despite Bultmann explicitly noting that, though it is rare, ἄγαλλιάσθαι is used in Judaism and the LXX of God’s own joy (TDNT, 1 vol., 4). Χαίρε and χαρά relate to God as the giver of joy in Philo (Conzelmann, TDNT, 1 vol., 1299). This is seen clearly in Philo’s intoxication with the laughter of Abraham and Sarah over the birth of Isaac (Philo, LA 3.86.5-8), and his reflections on joy originating in God:

“Joy (χαρά) is of two kinds. One is unmixed and of the utmost purity, admitting nothing whatsoever of the nature opposite to its own. This joy belongs to God and to no other. The other which flows from it is a mixed stream blended with lesser tributaries of sorrow, and if the blend is such that the pleasant ingredients outnumber the unpleasant, the wise man receives it as the greatest of gifts. So much for this matter.” (Philo, Spec II.55).

Conzelmann also notes that Paul’s use of χαρά includes the notion that: “Joy is in God (1 Thess 3:9) or in the Lord (Phil 3:1).” (TDNT, 1 vol., 1300). Barth moves in that direction in his exegesis of these Philippian passages: ‘‘joy’ in Philippians is a defiant ‘Nevertheless!’ which Paul sets like a full stop against the Philippians’ anxiety….It is in fact a keynote that this joy is meant, beyond the joy one ‘has’, feels, can show. *En kyrio* (in the Lord) is its location; at all times it can and must take place.” Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, trans. James W. Leitch, SCM, London, 1962. (Transl of 6th German ed. of 1947. Orig. 1928), 120-1, Barth’s emphases. See also Barth’s comments on Phil 1:4, where he talks of joy experienced despite the depths of human despair, and sees the roots of this possibility in the mercy of God, “reigning like a monarch in the Philippian congregation. For the rest joy from and in – nothing. Else it would not be the jubilant joy which is undoubtedly to be heard here.” Barth, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 15, Barth’s emphasis. He further emphasizes this in commenting on Phil 1:17, when he states, “the joy…which Paul here confesses can be legitimate joy because he is rejoicing *neither* in his opponents *nor* in himself but in the power of the object to which he subordinates himself and them – because he rejoices in the fact that, as he later says, also in this context, ‘Christ will be magnified’.” Barth, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 33, Barth’s emphasis.
Noting his debt to Petrus van Mastricht\(^{71}\) for the system by which he has so far analyzed the dimensions of divine glory, Barth proceeds to consider the role of God’s internal and outward self-revelation in understanding His glory. In this context Barth discusses the difference between glory and power, with the conclusion that the differentiating element is the beauty of God.\(^{72}\) Beauty is the shape and form in which God’s power and revelation are perceived to be glorious.\(^{73}\) God has this beauty not as mere fact or power, but in that He acts as the One who gives pleasure, creates desire and rewards with enjoyment, because He is the One who is pleasant, desirable, full of enjoyment, because first and last He alone is that which is pleasant, desirable and full of enjoyment [*Wohlgefallige, Begehrenswerte und Genussvolle*].\(^{74}\)

In making the bold statement that “God is beautiful”,\(^{75}\) Barth opens a volume of historical theology normally left firmly closed by his fellow reformed theologians. Jürgen Moltmann has said, “Karl Barth was the only theologian in the continental Protestant tradition who has dared to call God ‘beautiful’.”\(^{76}\) Barth was well aware of the dangers –of being misunderstood both in his use of the theme, and in his noting sources of the theme in the piety of the church.\(^{77}\) Nevertheless, the fact is that “God

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\(^{71}\) CD II.1.649, with reference to a work of 1698.

\(^{72}\) CD II.1.649-50. (KD 732-4). (The theme of beauty is also discussed in fuller depth. CD II.1.650-3.) In exploring the possibility of knowing the nature and form of the self-glorification of God, and the means by which others are moved to join God’s self-glorification, Barth notes: “We have seen that when we speak of God’s glory we do emphatically mean God’s “power”. Yet the idea of “glory” contains something which is not covered by that of “power”….The concept which lies ready to our hand here, and which may serve legitimately to describe the element in the idea of glory which we still lack, is that of beauty [*Schönheit*].” CD II.1.650 (KD 733).

\(^{73}\) CD II.1.650.

\(^{74}\) CD II.1.651. (KD 734. Note that in the original the attributes are given both as nouns and their respective adjectives, a possibility not easily reproducible in English.) This subject of the communication of pleasure, desire and enjoyment, for our terms currently grouped under the heading of “joy”, will be further explored, in the light of the current material, and in the light of Barth’s Chapter X “The Creature” (CD III.2) in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

\(^{75}\) CD II.1.651. (*Gott schön ist*. KD 734).

\(^{76}\) Moltmann, *Theology and Joy*, 58.

\(^{77}\) CD II.1.651-2. (KD 734-5). When we say [“God is beautiful”] we reach back to the pre-Reformation tradition of the Church.” Barth then goes on to note Augustine and Pseudo-
loves us as the One who is worthy of love as God. This is what we mean when we say that God is beautiful.” This is a basis for worship and joy in the life of the recipients of the revealed joy, beauty and glory of God. It is also a necessary part of a fully biblical exploration of the divine perfections. Imploring caution with the concept of God’s beauty and mindful of the propensity to idolatry within humanity, Barth defends the concept on two bases; firstly because to omit it leaves a gap in our knowledge, and secondly because it is biblically true.

Barth’s limitations on the use of the theme of beauty must be noted. He is unwilling for it to become a key theme, a “leading concept” or a “primary motif”:

Attention should be given to the fact that we cannot include the concept of beauty with the main concepts of the doctrine of God, with the divine perfections which are the divine essence itself. In view of what the biblical testimony says about God it would be an unjustified risk to try to bring the knowledge of God under the denominator of the idea of the beautiful even in the same way as we have done in our consideration of these leading concepts. It is not a leading concept. Not even in passing can we make it a primary motif in our understanding of the whole being of God as we necessarily did in the case of these other concepts.

A partial explanation of Barth’s reluctance to allow beauty to be used as a means of explicating the other perfections is his concern to maintain sufficient theological distance between creation and its creator. “Certainly we have every reason to be

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Dionysius as well as items from (German) reformed hymnody. Many examples could also be given from English hymnody. The link of the theme with (theologically astute) piety will be seen in the English tradition in such figures as Richard Rolle, Julian of Norwich, Thomas Traherne and George Herbert, as well as in contemporary liturgical and personal spiritual praxis. Something will be said of this when we come to discuss the human aspects of response to divine joy and beauty.

78 CD II.1.651.

79 Or, perhaps more precisely, because it is not biblically prohibited for consideration. CD II.1.651-2. Interestingly, however, Barth marshals no biblical evidence at this point to support his assertion of the veracity of the concept of God’s beauty, but rather, after having limited the use of the concept, he cites Ps 104:1f, “where magnificence and sublimity and especially light are mentioned as God’s garment and apparel. Ps 45:2 could also be mentioned, where the Messiah-king is addressed as ‘fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.’ In addition it is worth asking whether an important contribution could not and would not be made by a new and more penetrating exposition of the Song of Songs….Even then, the fact still remains that the idea of beauty does not have any independent significance in the Bible. Yet this does not mean that it is unimportant for the Bible or alien to it.” CD II.1.653. (KD 736).

80 CD II.1.652.
cautious here” he says, but notes that we should not “hesitate indefinitely”, nor can we avoid this step: “[H]as our whole consideration of the matter not brought us inevitably to the place where what would otherwise remain a gap in our knowledge can only be filled in this way?” After a wide survey of the use of the theme of beauty, Barth’s final argument returns to the content of scripture. “[D]oes biblical truth itself and as such permit us to stop at this point because of the danger, and not [nicht is emphatic] to say that God is beautiful?” So here is a tension for Barth: unable to ignore the concept of beauty, he is unwilling to use it further.

For Barth, the concept of beauty is too closely linked to the attributes of Being to be employed without considerable circumspection, and he will not risk the association with the *analogia entis*. As von Balthasar notes: “Contemporary Protestant theology nowhere deals with the beautiful as a theological category.” Yet having said this, von Balthasar goes on to note his debt to Barth. Whilst Barth did

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81 CD II.1.651.
82 CD II.1.651.
83 CD II.1.651.
84 CD II.1.652.
85 “If we say now that God is beautiful, and make this statement the final explanation of the assertion that God is glorious, do we not jeopardise or even deny the majesty and holiness and righteousness of God’s love? Do we not bring God…into the sphere of man’s oversight and control, into proximity to the ideal of all human striving? Do we not bring the contemplation of God into suspicious proximity to that contemplation of the world which in the last resort is the self-contemplation of an urge for life which does not recognize its limits?” CD II.1.651.
87 Von Balthasar, *Glory* I.124-7. Von Balthasar draws one conclusion which would sit comfortably with Barth, namely that “we can never attain to the living God in any way except through his Son become man”. However, again he would soon part company with Barth as he continues “so too we ought never to speak of God’s beauty without reference to the form and manner of appearing which he exhibits in salvation-history.” (Glory I.124). For Barth, this conclusion is reached by an understanding of Christ as God-in-act; for von Balthasar it is based on Christ-as-form. The significance of this basis is soon seen in the development of von Balthasar’s theology. In fact, the next step is von Balthasar’s statement that “God’s attribute of beauty can certainly also be examined in the context of a doctrine of the divine attributes….Besides examining God’s beauty as manifested by God’s actions in his creation, his beauty would also be deduced from the harmony of his essential attributes, and particularly from the Trinity….But such a doctrine of God and the Trinity really speaks to us only when and as long as the θεολογία does not become detached from the

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not consider beauty as a category, he at least acknowledged it as a characteristic of the nature of God’s glory, and as requiring adequate theological exploration. By contrast, von Balthasar comes close to equating glory and beauty. The key point of commonality for both is the centrality of Jesus Christ, whom von Balthasar describes as “our supreme object: the form of divine revelation in salvation-history, leading to Christ and deriving from him”. For Barth, Jesus Christ is the centre of God’s revelation, and whilst beautiful, is not a manifestation primarily of beauty, but of glory.

Yet despite Barth’s reluctance to explore the theme itself, he notes that it has an important diagnostic function in discerning and expanding the understanding of the glory of God. “But we cannot overlook the fact that God is glorious in such a way

οἴκονομία, but rather lets its every formulation and stage of reflection be accompanied and supported by the latter’s vivid discernibility.” Von Balthasar, Glory I.125.

88 CD II.1.666.

89 Whilst acknowledging the limitations which are incumbent with Barth’s treatment of beauty, von Balthasar commends his bravery: “... neither the fact that more recent Catholic theology again takes the concept of beauty seriously, nor the fact that the liberal Protestant tradition misuses it, keep Barth from re-introducing it in his theology, albeit with evident care and precautions.” Von Balthasar, Glory I.54, von Balthasar’s emphasis. “God’s attribute of beauty can certainly also be examined in the context of a doctrine of the divine attributes.” Von Balthasar, Glory I.125. Von Balthasar notes that Barth quotes Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in this context. However Barth is critical of the Areopagite, to the point of being almost dismissive in this context, accusing him of “hardly veiled Platonism” CD II.1.651 and noting with approval that it was a good thing that the concept of beauty effectively disappeared until revived by nineteenth century Roman Catholicism. “If we say now that God is beautiful, and make this statement the final explanation of the assertion that God is glorious, do we not jeopardize or even deny the majesty and holiness and righteousness of God’s love?”, Barth asks. CD II.1.651. There can be no thought of beauty being a denominator of being, “as if this conception were the key to the being of all things...” CD II.1.652. Rather for Barth, beauty is a biblically defensible theme, theologically controlled by being a derivative and explicatory dimension of the glory of God.

Again von Balthasar quotes Barth with approval in his inclusion of the concept of beauty even in “the Cross and everything else which a worldly aesthetics (even of a realistic kind) discards as no longer bearable.” Von Balthasar, Glory I.124. Yet he seems to misread Barth. For him, the discussion of the “beauty of the cross” is only an example of the unfolding of theological beauty. It is by no means called as a witness to the development of a theological aesthetic, as von Balthasar seems to infer. Von Balthasar uses the same data quite differently from Barth.

90 Von Balthasar, Glory I.29.

91 CD II.1.653. Noting the philological link between “glory” in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and German equivalents, and beauty, Barth states: “At each point where the idea of glory appears we can apply the test and we shall see that in no case can it be interpreted as

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that He radiates joy, so that He is all He is with and not without beauty." The close link of beauty and joy in God and their use in understanding the glory of God must be noted as we explore Barth’s longest discussion under the heading of beauty – the beauty which is a measure of the theological task.

Barth’s three examples of beauty in theology are not given by way of proof. He mentions firstly “God’s being as it unfolds itself in all His attributes, but [which] is one in itself in them all.” “There can be no question,” argues Barth, “of distinguishing between the content (Inhalt) and the form (Form) of the divine being and therefore of seeking the beauty of God abstractly in the form of His being for us and in Himself.” Yet “only the form of the divine being has divine beauty. But as the form of the divine being it has and is itself divine beauty”. But for Barth this is not the end of the argument but a step in strengthening his case for divine joy. As he concludes:

Inevitably when the perfect divine being declares itself, it also radiates joy in the dignity and power of its divinity, and thus releases the pleasure, desire and enjoyment of which we have spoken, and in this way, by means of this form, persuasive (überführend) and convincing (überzeugend). And this persuasive (überführende) and convincing (bewegende) form must necessarily be called the beauty of God.

something neutral or something which excludes the ideas of the pleasant, desirable and enjoyable and therefore that of the beautiful.” CD II.1.653. (KD 736-7).

CD II.1.655. This, whilst praised by von Balthasar as an acknowledgment of the place of beauty in the divine attributes, is a severely limited and marginalised descriptive concept in Barth’s theology.

CD II.1.657-66.

“IT belongs to the nature of the subject that the real proof of our statement that God is beautiful can be proved neither by few nor by many words about this beauty, but only by this beauty itself. God’s being itself speaks for His beauty in His revelation. All that we can do here is to indicate by several examples the fact that this is so, or rather in view of certain features of the Christian knowledge of God to put the question whether what is known in it, quite apart from anything else, is not simply beautiful. And what is known itself gives us a positive answer. That it does this is the one thing which can be said here with unambiguous certainty. But it is the only thing which can give this answer. It is part of the border-line character of this whole subject that whatever we say can only be with this qualification.” CD II.1.657.

CD II.1.657.

CD II.1.658.

CD II.1.659.

CD II.1.659. (KD 743).
This develops into Barth’s second example, the triunity of God. Here he emphasizes his recurrent theme – that the form with which we are dealing is not form *per se*, but “the concrete form of the triune being of God, the being which is God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”.\(^{99}\) After a discussion of the beauty of the doctrine of the Trinity, touching on *perichoresis* and mentioning dimensions of time and space, Barth returns to the Trinity, “God Himself”,\(^ {100}\) as the basis of God’s glory. It is in this glory, being and life that God’s power and dignity are “enlightening, persuasive and convincing”\(^ {101}\) (all emphatic in the original, again stressing the importance of the concept. As Barth says, “this is the particular function of this form.”\(^ {102}\). “It is radiant, and what it radiates is joy.”\(^ {103}\) (*Freude* is emphatic, as is the concept of radiance). Again we see the role of these discussions of beauty in developing the theme of joy within Barth’s umbrella concept of the glory of God. As he says of God’s joy: “It attracts and therefore it conquers. It is therefore beautiful.”\(^ {104}\) Concluding with a return to the necessity of a concept of the beauty of God as a result of the trinity, Barth denies again the possibility of beauty as a separate concept by noting it as derived from the doctrine of the trinity. He persists in linking it inextricably to the joy of God: “the triunity of God is the secret of His beauty. If we deny this, we at once have a God without radiance and without joy (and without humour!); a God without beauty.”\(^ {105}\)

Barth’s third example of beauty in theology is the incarnation. It is in the work of the Son that the beauty of God is revealed “in a special way and in some sense to a supreme degree”.\(^ {106}\) The supreme degree is the sense that the beauty of God arouses joy. This theme is repeated during the discussion, with considerable force. The beauty of Christ is to be found supremely for humanity in the fact that it is to arouse a response to the saving work of Christ. Here is God’s glory in humility. This allows Barth to undergird his observation that (in Christ and His death) “God’s beauty embraces death as well as life, fear as well as joy, what we might call the ugly as well

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\(^{99}\) CD II.1.659.

\(^{100}\) CD II.1.661.

\(^{101}\) CD II.1.661. (KD 745).

\(^{102}\) CD II.1.661.

\(^{103}\) CD II.1.661. (KD 745).

\(^{104}\) CD II.1.661.

\(^{105}\) CD II.1.659-61. (KD 743-6).

\(^{106}\) CD II.1.661.
as what we might call the beautiful." This is because “the beauty of Jesus…is the beauty of God”. He concludes this third example by appealing to Christian artists to give up the “unholy undertaking” of trying to represent Christ in art – “for the sake of Christ’s beauty”. Whilst here the conclusion is not, for a change, directed back to the encompassing theme of joy, joy has been evident as a continuous thread throughout the discussion and it soon returns to prominence in the further consideration of glory.

Barth’s overall conclusion from these three examples is:

Whilst the statement that God is beautiful must not be neglected, since it is instructive in its own place, it cannot claim to have any independent significance. Barth draws this limit because, he believes:

the Bible neither requires nor permits us, because God is beautiful, to expound the beauty of God as the ultimate cause producing and moving all things, in the way in which we can and must do this in regard to God’s grace or holiness or eternity, or His omnipotent knowledge and will.

It is this move which, for Barth, denies the possibility and the legitimacy of using beauty as a perfection. Whilst he notes that the theme of the beauty of God has some, though scant, biblical support, he also observes that the beauty of God is not a basis for theological reflection in the scriptures. Whilst Hunsinger, through his motif of rationalism, might seem to suggest that doctrine can, in Barth’s thinking elsewhere, be constructed from such bases, Barth will not make the constructive move in this case, due to his desire to avoid doctrines which could in any way be considered to be founded on or supportive of general notions of Being.

4.7 Joy in God

After this extended treatment and strict limitation of the role of the theme of beauty in God, Barth returns to his discussion of the theme of joy as part of the nature of the glory of God. One might expect that having so constrained beauty in God, Barth would deal with joy similarly. He does not. Instead, he continues to discuss the joy of

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107 CD II.1.665.  
108 CD II.1.665.  
109 CD II.1.666. (KD 751).  
110 CD II.1.666.  
111 CD II.1.652.
God in a manner similar, if not the same, as the manner in which he deals with glory. We have noted that, due to the sparse biblical material available to support his case for divine beauty as a foundation on which other doctrine can be built, Barth limits its use. With joy, there is not only more material, but it is used in the scriptures, in Barth’s estimation, as a basis for the development of other doctrine – notably in regard to human experience. Barth, in his treatment of joy, seems to elevate joy to at least a comparable level of importance with glory. It is more than a mere descriptive attribute (in contrast to beauty, for instance). Joy functions as a constructive attribute which informs the understanding of the revealed nature of God. Thus Barth can say:

> We have already said that God’s glory is His overflowing self-communicating joy. By its very nature it is that which gives joy.

Then, in a rare move, which begins (apparently) with a description of human experience of God, Barth notes that joy is a response to God’s glory, seen in His beauty. This concept Barth derives from the Psalms in particular. It is because He “radiates this joy [that] it is possible, necessary and permissible to have joy in Him and before Him”. The objective basis as Barth spells it out here is the reality of God’s revelation and the integrity of the concept of joy with the other perfections as he has expounded them.

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112 CD II.1.653. The synonymous use of glory and “joy-in-communication” is remarkable. We will return to consider the response of joy in humanity which for Barth is fundamental. Barth also records the recognition that the same glory which overflows in self-communication causing joy can also unleash fear and terror. CD II.1.653.

113 CD II.1.654.

114 CD II.1.655.

115 Within Hunsinger’s terms, this is “objectivism” – the sovereignty of God in self-enactment – here seen in terms of joy. In that Barth is also engaging here with God’s glory as supratemporal and evinced in the event of God, we see Hunsinger’s motif of “actualism” clearly. Insofar as we could consider all his motifs, the one most conspicuous by its absence, or at least its lesser occurrence than usual, is that of “particularism”. (Though see Barth’s connection with the beauty of God in Jesus Christ, CD II.1.664, and especially 665.) Whilst the christocentricity of Barth’s theology is not denied here, it is not as strongly played as in other parts of the Church Dogmatics. The result is that “rationalism” is more in evidence, as Barth builds his doctrine of the perfections with their internal dependence on faith, and conceptually elaborated within the context of each other. The specific link to the event Jesus Christ is less evident. “Personalism” is evident in the constant shift from the perfection of God to its effect on humanity. This makes it appear, if the reading is too casual, that Barth is in places allowing a place for experience in the realm of revelation. This is not so, but rather he is indicating the immense importance of the perfections for an understanding of human experience, as we shall see later. To conclude Hunsinger’s list, we continue on the following page...
Barth constrains himself not to interpret God’s glory in the light of His beauty. Yet he states:

We cannot overlook the fact that God is glorious in such a way that He radiates joy, so that He is all He is with and not without beauty. Otherwise His glory might well be joyless.\(^{116}\)

The test to which Barth subjects beauty, as an aspect of the divine perfections, could also productively be used for joy. If beauty meets the criteria (as regards theological motifs and also within the divine nature) of containing the other perfections, of characterizing the triune nature of God and of being integral to the incarnation, so does joy, with greater evidence available from Barth’s usage of the theme and with no limitations placed upon it by Barth. In fact, the acknowledgment of joy as stronger in the order of divine attributes seems to proceed from the acknowledgment by Barth that it is the beautiful form of God as revealed in the Trinity which arouses joy.\(^{117}\)

This connection of beauty and joy with divine glory is a key to further consideration. Just as God is beautiful and arouses pleasure, rather than being beautiful because he arouses pleasure, so it is important to affirm that God is joyful and thus arouses joy, rather than considering that God is joyful because He arouses joy. For Barth, God is affirmed as the one who is and gives joy. This parallel between joy and beauty as part of the divine perfection of glory is strong. However, Barth does not raise the same concerns about isolating joy from glory as he does about distinguishing

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should note that “realism” is strongly in evidence, as Barth uses the language of human experience to explore and elucidate the perfections of God. His mode of expression constantly draws the reader to consider the perfections as relating to a realm above the immediacy of experience, by means of repetition, clarification and argument. (CD II.1.655 provides a clear example of the interplay of these motifs, where Hunsinger’s contribution to analysis is seen at its most helpful.)

\(^{116}\) CD II.1.655. (KD 739).

\(^{117}\) CD II.1.663. (KD 748). “For the beautiful in God’s being, that which stirs up joy, is the fact that so inexhaustibly and necessarily (although the necessity is not one of outward compulsion but the inward movement of His own being) He is one and yet another, but One again even as this other, without confusion or alteration, yet also without separation or division. What is reflected in this determination of the relationship between the divine and human nature in Jesus Christ is the form, the beautiful form of the divine being. In this way, in this rest and movement, God is the triune, and He has and is the divine being in the unity and fullness of all its determinations. Because He is this in this way, He is not only the source of all truth and all goodness, but also the source of all beauty. And because we know that he is this in this way in Jesus Christ, we must therefore recognize the beauty of God in Jesus Christ.” CD II.1.664. (KD 748-9).
beauty from glory. Thus, with caution, it seems not inappropriate within the framework which Barth establishes to consider further the dimensions and characteristics of joy as an aspect of the divine nature, linked to glory, but, unlike the dimensions of beauty, not necessarily and irrevocably constrained within it.  

4.8 Joy as more than a perfection

In all of Barth’s exploration of joy, it remains somewhat underdeveloped as a theme. He opens the door to consideration of joy as a perfection in itself, and whilst he does not limit it as he does the theme of beauty, neither does he suggest the place which he will accord it in his later theology.  

Whilst, explicitly, Barth makes only suggestions of the importance of joy as a theological theme, and hints that it might function as a perfection, his use of joy fits all of his criteria for a perfection. It contains the other perfections and it links the major categories of love and freedom in a remarkable way. The remarkable use to which Barth puts his conceptualisation of joy can at least partly be understood because he so

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118 Whilst we have noted the limitation Barth places on beauty and his greater use of the concept of joy, it is only fair to note that whilst von Balthasar places greater stress on beauty that does Barth (it is the foundation of his theology), he does not offer any thematic treatment of the joy or happiness of God. This is surprising, given the ubiquity of the theme in Catholic, and especially Thomist, theology. F. C. Copleston, *Aquinas*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1955, 203, notes the Aristotelian basis for this and explores it in the context of human happiness in the desire for God (Copleston, 107-8) and quest for God (Copleston, 217), in both *beatitude* and *eudaimonia* (Copleston, 180). Copleston, 197, notes that for Aquinas “*Beatitude* can mean…either God Himself or man’s possession of God”. Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas*, Past Masters, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1980, 11, 20, 21, notes only the human dimension of this theme of happiness. It is Matthew Fox, *Sheer Joy: Conversations with Thomas Aquinas on Creation Spirituality*, San Francisco, Harper Collins, 1992, who notes the richness of this theme as part of the nature of God: “Sheer joy is God’s, and this demands companionship”, (Aquinas, 1 Sent 2.1.4) quoted in Fox, Frontispiece. Fox notes the development of the theme of joy in God as a corollary of his theology developed through the *via positiva* (Fox, *Sheer Joy*, 5,31). This theme is not picked up by von Balthasar. It is a theme in Catholic documents, also, such as those of Vatican II (Social Communication, I.6 [322], Church Today, III.37 [235]. (Page numbers refer to *The Documents of Vatican II: All Sixteen Official Texts Promulgated by the Ecumenical Council 1963-1965*, Geoffrey Chapman, New York, 1966.) and the Catholic Catechism, §1718-1729, dealing with “Man’s Desire for Happiness” [386-8], where the connection is made that “grace…disposes man to enter into divine joy” (§1722 [387]), the “joy of the Trinitarian life.” (§1721 [387]). (Paragraph and page numbers refer to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Geoffrey Chapman-Cassell, London, 1994.)

119 This will be noted as regards election in particular in Chapter 5.
closely aligns it with glory. Both glory and joy are perfections (explicitly and de facto respectively) used by Barth in a particular and integrative fashion in his conclusion to his discussion of the perfections. We have noted the development of his exposition of the perfections of God out of his exploration of divine glory. We have also noted that Barth returns full circle by treating the perfection of glory last in his discussions. It is not because the perfections are unimportant in his discussions that he brackets them with his exploration of glory. Far from it, he rather uses glory as a means of opening up the otherness of God, and in positing his view that God is the one who loves in freedom. His return to the theme of glory is closely linked to the “perfection” of joy. There is, through this whole discussion, a move from basing the perfections on glory as a reminder of God’s total otherness towards an encapsulation of the whole doctrine of the perfections in glory, closely linked to joy, and opening the possibilities of human response which the initial treatment of glory might seem to have limited.

Without doubt, glory is a fundamental and critical concept in understanding Barth’s doctrine of God. Its close linking with joy is important and we must explore it further. First, however, we must take note of the limits which Barth does place on the concept of joy, and we will do this by examining the different constraints placed on the concept of beauty.

4.9 Barth’s limitations on joy

Whilst Barth has been eager to stress that the perfections are to be understood in the context of God’s self-revealing relationship with humanity, his discussions of the joy of God have done little more than hint at the “intra-trinitarian” joy, the jubilation which he suggests is in God before the foundation of the world and which is imaged in created beings. Whilst reference to the “intra-trinitarian” joy is present in an occasional and background fashion, it is not developed explicitly by Barth. The perfection of joy in God is not stressed as a product and a constituent of intra-trinitarian relationality.

Alan J. Torrance posits a construct of the Trinity as “Persons in Communion” in his work on CD I.1. However, he does not actually move to a place of achieving his
subtitle: opening the way for human participation.

He circumscribes his discussion of divine joy in keeping with Barth’s limiting of his discussion of intra-trinitarian joy. He does not explore the relational dynamics of the Trinity as joyful persons in communion, or persons in joyful communion. This limitation is present also for Barth in CD II.1, as we have noted. A. J. Torrance suggests that a deeper understanding of the Trinity as “persons in communion” will provide a basis for developing a richly relational and “more doxological” concept of personhood in relationship. His aim fits well with this development of Barth’s theology in CD II.1.

Approaching Barth’s doctrine of God as Trinity in a very different way, Eberhard Jüngel points to possible means of extending Barth’s view of the nature of God. Jüngel notes Barth’s reluctance to pursue the doctrine of appropriation, due to his concern, in his doctrine of the Trinity, to “prevent the opposing of a deus nudus with a deus incarnatus. For the doctrine of the Trinity ‘will not lead us beyond revelation and faith, but into revelation and faith, to their correct understanding’.” Yet Jüngel notes the relational possibilities of Barth’s doctrine of God, which arise

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121 A. J. Torrance’s suggestion for allowing the concept of relationality to soar from Barth’s theology looks to moving beyond Barth’s limiting of the concept of “persons” in the Trinity by his use of the term “Seinsweisen” and by a reworking of the concept of analogia relationis. Whilst Barth does not explicitly do this in his treatment of the perfections in general or of joy in particular, it is part of the move to a more relational and communal conceptualisation of the Trinity as develops in the *Church Dogmatics*. (On this, see Alar Laats, *Doctrines of the Trinity in Eastern and Western Theologies: A Study with Special Reference to K. Barth and V. Lossky*, PhD Dissertation, Cambridge University, 1995.)

122 Eberhard Jüngel, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God’s Being is in Becoming*, Monograph Supplements to SJT, ed. T. F. Torrance and J. K. S. Reid, trans. Horton Harris, Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1976, 36-41, where Jüngel is particularly concerned to underscore the concreteness of each “mode of being” in Barth’s theology, as well as to explore the harmony of these modes, in reference to CD I.1. He emphasizes (against Karl Rahner) the significance of Barth having recognized the need for divine appropriation to be motivated by God’s own revealed self-assignation as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that this “corresponds to himself concretely.” Jüngel, *Trinity*, 39.

through his defining being, in God, in relational terms. In his own constructive theology, Jüngel moves further into this field, building much trinitarian insight on the notion of God’s being as it is revealed in his coming. This also allows the possibility of recognizing joy, in humanity and in God, revealed and offered in Jesus Christ, his life and cross, and in the actuality of his humanness. It allows each human being to encounter God and self as a “rejoicing ego” when joy is recognized.

In this context of gladness, humanity can relate to God, because, as Jüngel notes:

Faith is that human attitude toward God which is called forth by God himself, in which man, completely without coercion and gladly, relates himself to God. The most original attitude of one ego toward another person, an attitude called forth by that other one, completely uncoerced and realized gladly, is joy. For that reason, one can say “joy in God” instead of “faith.”…The self-definition for which man is determined in faith can thus be only the immediacy of a defined joy. Joy in God would then be the origin, the source, of the true thought of God, to the extent that joy is that “existential” in which God is thinkable for the sake of his own self. For joy is always joy in something for its own sake…To think God without joy in God is a self-contradiction which must lead even the most logical proof of God to absurdity.

This same pivotal concept is used by Hardy and Ford to suggest that “the joy of God needs to be celebrated as the central and embracing reality of the universe, and everything else seen in the light of this”. In thinking and in experience (to the extent that they may be separable), joy is perceptible and apprehensible in right reception of and response to revelation, because joy is part of God’s motivation in self-revelation. Without the gift of human joy, revelation (which is joyfully given) cannot be grasped. Proofs of God’s existence miss an essential aspect (or, as Jüngel suggests even more strongly, fail), and creation is reduced to uncomprehendable mystery, and in like fashion the Word collapses into gibberish. The recognition of joy as a part of the

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124 Jüngel, Trinity, 62.
126 Jüngel, Mystery, 355.
127 Jüngel, Mystery, 163.
128 Jüngel, Mystery, 192. (Jüngel’s emphases.)
nature of God opens the way to an understanding of creation, redemption and the eschaton. In all, it offers a foundation for praise.  

4.10 Barth’s limitations on beauty

Barth limits the range of use of the concept of beauty in line with his inherited Reformed tradition, with its iconoclasm which seeks to limit or prevent the representation of God in physical things. Barth is attuned to the possible danger that the beauty of creation becomes a substitute for the beauty of God. He clearly enjoyed certain Christian art, even when it contained representations of Christ. Yet God is not to be found in art; moreover, because humanity mistakes false revelation for true, Barth moves close to suggesting that art, Christian representational art in particular, is to be avoided. This needs to be tempered by his more particular statements on the theme. There is in Barth the basis for a distinctive Protestant (or...

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130 Barth’s discussion of the perfection of glory and his development of joy within it, does not issue in a call to worship, as it would in the hands of, for instance, Anselm of Canterbury. However, see the discussion at the end of Chapter 2 of this thesis, regarding Barth’s grounding of theology in prayer.

131 Geoffrey W. Bromiley, An Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1979, 82 states “Barth has no liking for Christian art.” This is an oversimplification. Barth in fact is enamoured of certain Christian art, but he is, as we have noted, concerned that Christian art should not turn to any form of representation of Christ. See CD II.1.666.

132 From the time of his pastorate in Safenwil (1911-1921) until his death, Barth worked with a copy of Matthias Grünewald’s Crucifixion (from the Altarpiece of the Church in Isenheim) over his desk. In this he found particular meaning in the hand of John the Baptist pointing to the crucified Christ. For a detailed analysis of Barth’s references to the Isenheim Altarpiece, and its influence on his theology, see Reiner Marquard, Karl Barth und der Isenheimer Altar, Arbeiten zur Theologie; Bd. 80, Calwer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1995. On the broader aspects of art, Barth’s love of the music of Mozart is also evidence that he recognized that the role of art in its widest sense was to give glory to God.

133 CD I.1.322. “…the sharpness of the prohibition of images is to be seen as a ban not so much on the enjoyment of the senses as on the pious obtrusiveness and cocksureness of the religion of Canaan.” (Barth is arguing for the revelation of God as wholly God’s action.) In his Dankbrief an Mozart, Basel, 23. Dezember, 1955, (in Karl Barth, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Theologischer Verlag, Zürich, 1956, 9-13 [hereafter WAM]) Barth thanks Mozart as one “who creates joy” (WAM, 11). Similarly, Barth speaks of the universality of Mozart’s music: “Mozart ist universal. Man staunt immer wieder, was alles bei ihm zu Worte kommt: der Himmel und die Erde, die Natur und der Mensch, die Komödie und die Tragödie, die Leidenschaft in allen ihren Formen und der tiefste innere Freide…” (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, in WAM, 23). Barth has no desire to proscribe right feelings, but wants to underline the importance of right feelings based upon right understanding. In
even an ecumenical æsthetics – yet it was not something which he, with his own theological inhibitions, was able to develop.\textsuperscript{134}

### 4.11 Summary

In this chapter we have noted the importance of glory as a “key theme” in understanding Barth’s doctrine of God. It is foundational to the framework which Barth uses to analyze the perfections, the destination to which this exploration leads and also the basis of Barth’s articulation of God’s otherness and, in the context of joy, the possibility of and dynamics affecting human relationship with God. The constraints which we have observed, regarding beauty in particular and the “affections”\textsuperscript{135} in general, limit Barth’s theological exposition but are not necessarily those prescribed by the biblical text. They are rooted in the means by which Barth unfolds his doctrine of the Knowledge of God. To some extent, the constriction on the affective and responsive aspects of the perfections is based in Barth’s concept of the Trinity, which understresses the relational dimensions.\textsuperscript{136}

Notwithstanding this restriction, joy has been seen to function in a remarkable fashion in Barth’s theology. Whilst he will not allow beauty to take a role as a

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\textsuperscript{134} This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

\textsuperscript{135} “The enjoyment of the senses” as Barth describes them. CD I.1.322.

\textsuperscript{136} The work of Laats, however, suggests that the conceptualisation of the Trinity is in a process of development from that found in CD I to that found in CD IV. See Alar Laats, *Doctrines of the Trinity.*
perfection, we have suggested that joy, a fundamentally relational and communal concept in Barth, functions in a way which shifts the conceptualisation of God from an emphasis on God as wholly other to a supplementation with concepts which stress God’s presence as a relational other. Barth places considerable weight on this concept of joy. In his understanding of revelation, he stresses both God’s overflowing self-communication of joy and joy as the means of human reception. This can be seen in the location of joy within his final discussion of glory and eternity under the heading of the perfections and in its general pervasiveness, especially in terms of human response to God. We will note the importance of this in the next chapter when we also explore joy as an aspect of Barth’s doctrine of election.

We have noted also the remarkable treatment of both beauty and joy, rooted as they are in Barth’s exegesis of scripture, and their development in his doctrine of the perfections. That joy takes on the life and characteristics of a perfection, and perhaps more, will be explored in the following chapter.
Chapter 5

Barth, Edwards and God

Joy, Beauty and Election

For the joy of communicating and the joy of receiving maketh perfect happiness.

…the end for which we are redeemed; a communion with Him in all His Glory. (Thomas Traherne)

As described in the last chapter, Barth has shown the nature of joy in God in his doctrine of the perfections. I also noted that there were constraints inherent in Barth’s development of this theme, not least the way in which he circumscribes the role which beauty plays in the perfections.

This chapter pursues Barth’s theology of joy in God further than he allowed. Using the arguments of theologians who have been prepared to move beyond the limits which Barth set for himself, Barth’s theology of joy in God is challenged. Many theologians have made bolder moves in the area of beauty, but there are few who have been so interested in and creative regarding the area of joy. Von Balthasar would be an
obvious choice to use as a foil for Barth. There is much that he could add to an examination of the work of Barth: however there are also significant reasons why such a debate might not be as fruitful as would at first appear.

5.1 Beauty

In discussing the theme of beauty Barth uses the cross as an illustration of the nature of God’s beauty.¹ For von Balthasar, however, it is part of the development of an aesthetic, it carries weight beyond illustration, becoming part of his demonstration of the nature of beauty. In fact, having called Barth to his support in developing his concept of beauty, von Balthasar goes on to say:

This inclusiveness (of ugliness in Christian theological aesthetics) is not only of the type proposed by a Platonic theory of beauty, which knows how to employ the shadows and the contradictions as stylistic elements of art; it embraces the most abysmal ugliness of sin and hell by virtue of the condescension of divine love, which has brought even sin and hell into that divine art for which there is no human analogue.²

This is precisely the type of conclusion that Barth sought to avoid. His limitations on the concept of beauty, whilst they might seem strict and somewhat artificial, are emphatic; Barth will not allow the concept of beauty to take on the life of its own that it does for von Balthasar. Barth levels the criticism at Pseudo-Dionysius (and, tangentially, Augustine) that, by elevating beauty to the level of a primary motif, he commits “an act of philosophical willfulness”.³ Von Balthasar’s calling of Barth to support him on this area is a misreading of Barth’s intention, which was to show the beauty of the doctrine and its rootedness in Christ, not the nature of beauty as such.⁴

¹ See the discussion “Glory and beauty” in the previous chapter.
³ CD II.1.652.
⁴ The passage alluded to by von Balthasar (though not referenced) is CD II.1.665. This seems to support his assertion, but seen in context it points not to the possibilities of a Platonic aesthetic, but to the necessity of recognizing divine beauty only in the context of revelation: “The beauty of Jesus Christ is not just any beauty. It is the beauty of God. Or, more concretely, the beauty of what God is and does in Him. We must not at this point fail to see the substance or model of the unity of God’s majesty and condescendence…Nor must we fail to see the love in which God is free here or the freedom in which He loves. If we do not see this, if we do not believe it, if it has not happened to us, how can we see the form of this...”
The linkage which Barth makes with ugliness is not to suggest some deeper concept of beauty; rather it is to point to the unique revelation of beauty in the face of Jesus Christ, and to stand against any other attempt to portray or to find beauty.\footnote{The passage quoted in the previous footnote in fact leads into Barth’s most vociferous condemnation of what he perceives as the misguided attempts of Christian art to portray the face of Christ. CD II.1.666.}

Thus there is a fundamental difference in the bases and intentions of Barth and von Balthasar in their explorations of glory and of beauty. Barth makes a strong link between glory and joy, whilst von Balthasar tends to equate glory with beauty. Joy itself is a topic not developed at all in von Balthasar. There is therefore a fundamental difficulty in engaging the two in discussion on the topic of joy.

\subsection*{5.1.1 Edwards: the happiness and beauty of God}

Having noted the difficulties in connecting Barth and von Balthasar, I turn to a theologian from Barth’s own theological tradition, the New England Puritan Jonathan Edwards. Like Barth, Edwards was a Calvinist with a high regard for his theological tradition and a desire to see it develop and grow. An examination of his theology suggests how Barth could have developed this theme of the beauty of God, and in event, the likeness of the essence of God in Jesus Christ, and how can we see this that likeness is beautiful? In this respect, too, God cannot be known except by God.

“ Isa. 53:2-3 teaches us how we can go astray even in this respect, even in face of Jesus Christ, and how much we need instruction at this point…Jesus Christ does present this (ugly) aspect of Himself, and He always present this aspect first. It is not self evident that even—and precisely—under this aspect He has form and comeliness, that the beauty of God shines especially under this aspect, that the crucified is revealed and known as the risen Christ. We cannot know this ourselves. It can only be given us….The glory and beauty of God shines out in this unity and differentiation….It is the beauty…that even Athens with all its beautiful humanity did not have…because unlike Jerusalem it thought it had it. Beautiful humanity is the reflection of the essence of God in His kindness towards men as it appeared in Jesus Christ (Tit. 3:4). In this self-declaration, however, God’s beauty embraces death as well as life, fear as well as joy, what we might call the ugly as well as what we might call the beautiful. It reveals itself and wills to be known on the road from the one to the other, in the turning from the self-humiliation of God for the benefit of man to the exaltation of man by God and to God. This turning is the mystery of the name of Jesus Christ and of the glory revealed in this name. Who knows it except the man to whom it gives the power to know it? And how can it be known except in the face of Him who Himself gives power to know it? There is no other face of this kind. No other face is the self-declaration of the divine loving-kindness towards men. No other speaks at the same time of the human suffering of the true God and the divine glory of the true man. This is the function of the face of Jesus Christ alone.” CD II.1.665-6.
connection with it, the joy of God, considerably further. Conversely, a contrast between the theologies of election which each developed will show how Barth’s unique treatment of this doctrine has much to offer.

Jonathan Edwards was a remarkably bold Calvinist theologian, building much of his theology of God on a doctrine of the Trinity which he explored in terms of beauty, goodness and happiness. Further, he developed a theology of humanity in which joyful response to the beauty of God is a central feature. Whilst this was partly the result of his endeavours to explain and reflect upon the New England revivals, this is not the primary source of his theology. Edwards worked within classic assumptions of the oneness of the Idea or Being of God, utilized much traditional theological material (a significant amount of which is not usually associated with Puritanism) and engaged in some bold and imaginative writing. The value of his contribution to this discussion, however, stems from his genius in combining traditional theological and aesthetic insights in his own theological explorations as they relate to beauty and joy.

5.1.2 Edwards: the Trinity and Beauty

Whilst Edwards’ major work on the Trinity was not published until 145 years after his death, the theme is a strong one throughout his writings, both the systematic

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6 For instance, the assumption of God as the One, the True and the Good, and also the Beautiful. Whether the source of this is direct, via Aquinas (and possibly other intermediaries) or via some other sources is not pertinent for our discussion. It is discussed briefly by Roland Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards, New Haven, CT, 1968, 9-10; and more fully by Douglas Elwood, The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards, New York, Columbia University Press, 1960, who notes: “[Edwards’] stress on the primacy of the aesthetic element over the moral and legal in our experience of God places the old Calvinism on a very different footing. His neo-Calvinism appears most prominently in his fundamental conception of God in terms of absolute beauty and not mere absolute power, and in his appeal to immediate experience in our knowledge of God.” Elwood, The Philosophical Theology, 3, Elwood’s emphasis.


8 In fact many of Edwards’ works were published posthumously. Many are currently in the process of editing for publication (some for the first time) in the Yale University Press Edition, to which reference is made where possible.
theological works\textsuperscript{9} and pastoral ones.\textsuperscript{10} It is a theme he regularly developed in his sermons and miscellaneous jottings.\textsuperscript{11}

In Edwards’ sustained theological writing as well as his jottings it is clear that he is enchanted by the role of the concept of beauty (or excellency)\textsuperscript{12} as foundational and instrumental in the study, understanding and worship of the Trinity.\textsuperscript{13} For example, in discussing the nature of God Edwards states that:

\begin{quote}
\textquote{As God is infinitely the greatest being, so he is allowed to be infinitely the most beautiful and excellent: And all the beauty to be found throughout the whole creation, is but the reflection of the diffused beams of that Being who has an infinite fulness of brightness and glory.}\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

Edwards includes not only beauty as a fundamental concept in his development of the Trinity, however. Delattre notes that Edwards sums up ‘the fullness of God as

\textsuperscript{9} Such as the Essay on the Trinity mentioned above.


\textsuperscript{12} The equivalence of these terms in Edwards is noted by Delattre, \textit{Beauty and Sensibility}, 1.

\textsuperscript{13} Whilst Delattre notes the theme of beauty in Edwards’ trinitarian theology, the use of nature images in Edwards’ writing and preaching (in contradistinction to the expected Puritan ethos of using biblical images only) and his affirmation of music and singing, have been posited as a basis for hypothesizing an aesthetics with relates to art specifically. See Terrence Erdt, \textit{Jonathan Edwards: Art and the Sense of the Heart}, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1980, 57-60. Erdt also likens Edwards use of these images to poetic lyricism, (Erdt, \textit{Jonathan Edwards}, 59-61) and recognizes in Edwards’ philosophical reasoning a particular aesthetic dimension. Erdt, \textit{Jonathan Edwards}, 61-2.

\textsuperscript{14} Jonathan Edwards, \textit{The Works of President Edwards in Eight Volumes}, ed. Samuel Austin, Worcester, Isaiah Thomas, Jun., 1808. Vol. 2, Part II, \textit{Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue}, (University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI, 1973), 404. [Note: In this edition and other early editions of Edwards’ works, the capitalization has been as per the author’s originals, which include an idiosyncratic mix of usage and non-usage of capital letters. These have, where quoted, been modified in line with the editorial policy of the Yale edition – that is, modernized – for ease of reading.]
consisting in three things: “light and knowledge”, “holiness, moral excellence, and beauty”, and “joy and happiness”. On this basis he suggests that for Edwards there are three “things”, not three classes, so beauty = holiness, joy = happiness. In this light we can recognize the importance of Edwards’ inclusion of joy (happiness or delight are regularly used synonyms) in his discussions of the nature of the Trinity. Here is a brief representative quotation:

God’s love is primarily to Himself, and His infinite delight is in Himself, in the Father and the Son loving and delighting in each other. We often read of the Father loving the Son, and being well pleased in the Son, and of the Son loving the Father. In the infinite love and delight that is between these two persons consists the infinite happiness of God.

Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 63. He notes this in the context of discussing Edwards’ posthumously published Dissertation on the End For Which God Created the World, referring to EC, 206.

Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 63. This usage is reflected in all the works of Jonathan Edwards I have consulted. Thus joy and happiness, in the context of the divine nature in Edwards, will be treated as synonymous terms.

Jonathan Edwards, Treatise on Grace and Other Posthumously Published Writings, ed. with intr., Paul Helm, James Clarke, Cambridge, 1971, 61. In exploring why Edwards chose beauty in particular, Delattre suggests that “Edwards tried to understand all things in relation to God. In settling upon beauty as the most distinguishing perfection or attribute of God he chose a concept that enabled him to conceive of God in objective, structural, and ontological terms and at the same time to make it philosophically (and not merely dogmatically) clear that (and why) God can be fully known only if He is the direct object of enjoyment - that man’s knowledge of God is in part a function of his enjoyment of Him. With his objective concept of beauty Edwards can insist upon the objectivity of God whilst also affirming that God cannot adequately be known without being enjoyed. For beauty is objective with respect to the self, and yet it is available only in and through the enjoyment of it. It is not discernible to the indifferent eye. Though indifferent men may know many things about it, they do not and cannot know beauty itself.” Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 23-4.

Whilst the point is the primacy of beauty, it is clear from Delattre’s argument that for Edwards it was necessary to understand the nature of beauty to understand the phenomenon of enjoyment, which was invoked by beauty. It is conceivable that Edwards could have reversed the two, but the reality is that they are often related in his discussions and are certainly inseparable in his theology.

Edwards ‘would have agreed with Shaftesbury that “the beautifying, not the beautified, is the really beautiful”’. [Anthony Ashley Cooper{/Third Earl of Shaftesbury}, The Moralist, a Philosophical Rhapsody, Treatise Five of Characteristics, London, 1732, 404] Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 26. Delattre comments that “Edwards would have disagreed…with Shaftesbury’s reasons for coming to such a pregnant conclusion because he was not inclined
Whilst this particular reference is to the mutual love of Father and Son, the role of the Holy Spirit is not ignored. Sometimes it appears that Edwards is reducing the Spirit’s role to mere instrumentalism. However, a fuller exploration reveals that the Holy Spirit is also discussed in terms of equality with the other members of the Trinity, and in that context is seen to be more than mere harbinger of love (or beauty, or joy).

In the quotation above, as in numerous other places, Edwards discusses joy and love in the same context – and equally. Love and delight go hand in hand in his intra-trinitarian discussions. He stresses the engagement of Father and Son in love and joy, and goes on to develop the ancient understanding of the Holy Spirit as the love of God in action. What is interesting is Edwards’ development of the concept of the Spirit as the joy and beauty of God in action. Edwards develops his theology of the Holy Spirit to include the Spirit’s role as the bond of happiness in the inner life of the Trinity. Happiness and beauty are used as integrative concepts in his trinitarian theology. In his development of joy as intrinsic to the Triune God, however, he moves well beyond the traditional understandings expressed by the line of theologians from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, through St. Thomas Aquinas into later trinitarian

to the same Platonic division between form and matter.” Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 26, n10.

18 The passage just quoted in the text continues: “In the infinite love and delight that is between these two persons consists the infinite happiness of God: Prov. viii. 30. – “Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him”; and therefore seeing the Scripture signifies that the Spirit of God is the love of God, therefore it follows that Holy Spirit proceeds from or is breathed forth from, the Father and the Son in some way or other infinitely above all our conceptions, as the Divine essence entirely flows out and is breathed forth in infinitely pure love and sweet delight from the Father and the Son; and this is that pure river of water of life that proceeds out of the throne of the Father and the Son, as we read in the beginning of the twenty second chapter of the Revelation; for Christ himself tells us that by the water of life, or living water, is meant the Holy Ghost, (John vii, 38,39).” Grace, 61.

19 Misc. 97, for instance. It should be noted, however, that most often the development is with regard to God in general terms (terms which could be fairly understood even as unitarian) or, when particularized, most often relating to Father and Son only.

20 Sherry notes that both Edwards and von Balthasar “specifically appeal to the Augustinian positions (of double procession, the sense of a common essence in the godhead and the Holy Spirit as the bond of love) when they discuss the connection between the Holy Spirit and beauty.” Patrick Sherry, Spirit and Beauty: An Introduction To Theological Aesthetics, Clarendon, Oxford, 1992, 103. See also Sherry, Spirit and Beauty, 152, where he discusses Edwards’ view of the Holy Spirit as the means of God’s communication of beauty.

21 This is a major theme in Delattre’s Beauty and Sensibility.
theology. It may even be fair to suggest that Edwards foreshadows Barth’s discussion of the joy of God and von Balthasar’s discussion of the beauty of God as a basis for aesthetics and theology.  

Certainly the implications he draws from the happiness of God and applies to his anthropology are unusual.  It must be recalled that Edwards spent much time seeking to understand the dynamics of revival, and was drawn to an explanation of ecstatic phenomena based on an understanding of “affection” in God.

Edwards develops his concept that the Holy Spirit is the love and happiness/joy/delight in God. Edwards “keys his discussion of aesthetics into a fully developed trinitarian theology, according to which the Spirit’s mission of beautifying is grounded in his role within the Trinity. This theology, moreover, explores Augustine’s idea that the Holy Spirit is the harmony of the Trinity.”

Just as Edwards conceives of the Spirit as the love and beauty in the Trinity, so he describes the Spirit as the expression of the joy of the inner trinitarian life. It is not

22 Barth was almost certainly unaware of the theology of Edwards. (This has been noted by Sherry, Spirit and Beauty, 67-8). It seems that von Balthasar too was unaware of Edwards’ theology.

23 “Beauty is…fundamental to Edwards’ understanding of human being.…He finds in beauty the central clue to the meaning of conversion, of the new life in Christ, and of the holiness and joy given in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.” Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 2.

24 His treatises on the Religious Affections and The Distinguishing Marks being two significant contributions to the field.

25 In this regard, see Gregory S. Clapper, John Wesley on Religious Affections: His Views on Experience and Emotion and their Role in Christian Life and Theology, Pietist and Wesleyan Studies, 1: Metuchen, Scarecrow Press, London, 1989, 85. He “speaks of affections as being more stable than just mood and emotion; he proposes that Christian affections are more like virtues”. Robert O. Baker, “Pentecostal Bible Reading: Toward a Model of Reading for the Formation of Christian Affections”, JPT, 7, 1995, 39. Baker’s model has been used in this study to provide a way to read biblical and theological material with a view to the “affective” dimensions. It is a move beyond reading for cognitive content alone, but encompasses a multi-dimensional engagement, based theologically on the “fulness of being” of humanity, rooted in the fullness of God’s being. It comes close to being a hermeneutical outworking of the analogia relationis. (See Alan J. Torrance, Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation with special reference to Volume One of Karl Barth’s Church Dogmatics, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1996, especially 325-55.)

26 It is worth noting that Edwards (based on my reference to unedited texts) is inconsistent about capitalization and the use of the definite article when referring to the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost. There does not seem to be any particular significance in his capitalization or not of the terms, or his use or not of “Holy”.

27 Sherry, Spirit and Beauty, 13.
so much that Edwards notes this, but it is the use he makes of it which is significant. Sherry notes in the context of the discussion of beauty that, whilst Edwards associates beauty with the Holy Spirit, he is also deeply indebted to “the predominantly Western tradition, found in Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure, which associates beauty especially with the Son”.28

In arguing for the divinity of the Spirit, for instance, Edwards argues for his equality with Father and Son on the basis that “the Holy Spirit is equal for he is infinite happiness and joy itself”.29 Whilst Edwards’ emphasis at this point in his argument is to underscore the divinity of the Spirit, what is remarkable is his dependence on the concept he has derived, that of the Spirit as the bond of love, beauty and joy, to effect this. The Holy Spirit is infinite happiness and beauty.30 Edwards is at pains to remain faithful to the happiness of the Father and the Son as well. This is amply demonstrated in his references to Christ as the joy of God and participation in Christ as participation in this joy.31

Of course, it might be argued that this suggestion is based on an inappropriate injection of temporality into the dimensions of the eternal, but Edwards anticipated that objection, noting God’s joy at the working out of God’s purposes.32 In fact, the relationship between heaven and the temporal creation can be seen in terms of the communication of joy. Not only is this connected with rejoicing over the returned

28 Sherry, Spirit and Beauty, 96.
29 Trin. 118-9.
30 For an extended discussion of this, see Sherry, Spirit and Beauty, 93-8. Delattre notes that joy (happiness) is a central perfection of the nature of God as expressed by Edwards: “The second summary formulation [as Delattre derives it from Edwards] of the divine perfections as reducible to knowledge, holiness, and joy is remarkable for several reasons, not the least of which is its elevation of joy or happiness or delight to such prominence among the perfections of God and the conjunction of joy with holiness as together constituting a summary of the moral perfections of God. It should be emphasized that in this view joy stands together with holiness at the heart of the Divine Being; for Edwards they are together the sum of God’s moral perfections.” Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 145.
31 DM 12, for instance.
32 In this regard, see further Misc. 421 HEAVEN., which speaks of the happiness and joy in heaven at seeing the purposes of God worked out on earth; and Misc. 461. END OF THE CREATION., which again expounds God’s happiness in the good and happiness of creation – especially humanity. See also Misc. 1218 (quoted in Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 151) and Misc. 1151 (quoted in Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 177).
penitent, it is a measure of the overflow of God’s nature into creation and creation’s joy filled response.\textsuperscript{33}

Just as beauty can be seen as a paradigm through which all of Edwards’ theology may be drawn, so also can joy. It provides a pathway of exploration which connects the life of God and the life of the redeemed people of God. It provides a means of understanding the potential for joy in the world and for interpreting its corruption. Above all, it grants a window onto the life God intends for humanity and, in Christ, gives a frame into which the fuller revelation may be fitted.

For Edwards, happiness is the chief end of creation. This is true as much of the life of heaven as the life of earth.\textsuperscript{34} Not only is the concept of the centrality of joy essential for a proper understanding of Edwards’ doctrine of humanity, it is also important to realize that the very nature of God is, for Edwards, self-communicating.

\textsuperscript{33}“The emanation or communication of the divine fulness, consisting in the knowledge of God, love to God, and joy in God, has relation indeed both to God, and the creature; but it has relation to God as its fountain, as it is an emanation from God; and as the communication itself, or thing communicated, is something divine, something of God, something of his internal fulness, as the water in the stream is something of the fountain, and as the beams of the sun, are something of the sun. And again, they have relation to God as they have respect to him as their object; for the knowledge communicated is the knowledge of God; and so God is the object of the knowledge; and the love communicated is the love of God, so God is the object of that love; and the happiness communicated is joy in God, so he is the object of the joy communicated. In the creature’s knowing, esteeming, loving, rejoicing in, and praising God, the glory of God is both exhibited and acknowledged; his fulness is received and returned. Here is both an emanation and remanation. The refulgence shines upon and into the creature, and is reflected back to the luminary. The beams of glory come from God, and are something of God, and are refunded back again to their original. So that the whole is of God, and in God, and to God, and is the beginning, middle and end in this affair.” EC 255 (emphasis in original). “[T]hese things are but the emanation of God’s own knowledge, holiness and joy” EC 206, further, “What is communicated is divine, or something of God.” EC 210 And it is communicated out of “an infinite fulness of all possible good in God, a fulness of every perfection, of all excellency and beauty, and of infinite happiness.” EC 206. See also Delattre, \textit{Beauty and Sensibility}, 142.

\textsuperscript{34}“How then can it be said that God has made all things for himself, if it is certain that the highest end of creation was the communication of happiness? I answer, that which is done for the gratifying of a natural inclination of God, may very properly be said to be done for God…. “For thy pleasure they were created”, Rev 4:11.” Misc. 92. END OF THE CREATION. Further on this see: Misc. 5. HEAVEN. which says, in part: “holiness and happiness are all one in heaven”.
The role of the Spirit is instrumental in this communication of joy, which is the sharing of mutual happiness.  

5.1.3 Joy and Edwards’ Trinity

God is God, and distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above 'em, chiefly by his divine beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other beauty.

Whilst commentators on Edwards have been enamoured of his treatment of beauty in the nature of God, it must also be noticed that Edwards is unique in his encapsulation of the perfections of God in the triad of knowledge, beauty, and joy. This placement of joy is rare before and after Edwards in Protestant theology. Edwards shows himself remarkably free from preconceived constraints in exploring the dimensions of divine

35 “[N]o being could be happy without the exercise of this inclination of communicating his happiness. Now the happiness of society consists in this, in the mutual communications of each other’s happiness; neither does it satisfy in society only to receive the other’s happiness without also communicating his own. Now it is necessary that to those whom we love most, we should have the strongest desire of communicating happiness - to any but one that has infinite, and cannot receive additions of happiness. And although God is the object of the creature’s love (of a creature not depraved), yet God being infinitely happy, he cannot desire to communicate his happiness to Him, which is nothing to the happiness God enjoys. But in the gospel God is come down to us, and the person of God may receive communications of happiness from us. The man Christ Jesus loves us so much, that he is really the happier for our delight and happiness in him.” Misc. 97 HAPPINESS. (Edwards’ note after Misc. 97, deleted after only two lines adds to this: “98. END OF CREATION. ’Tis certain that ’tis utterly impossible, but that God should be always infinitely happy, or happy as he can be, and that all this happiness is in the enjoyment of himself, and it is impossible that his happiness should be added to; yet this does not contradict, but that.” Yale 13, 265n.)

36 RA 298. “This proposition should be placed at the center of our thinking if we want to understand Edwards’ conception of God.” Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 117.

37 “Edwards’ concept of beauty provides the framework for – if not indeed the platform upon which he erects – his doctrine of the Trinity, and that beauty is central to Edwards; view of the relation between transcendence and immanence in God and of the relation of God to the world in His creation, governance and redemption of it. What is essential in all this is that for Edwards the divine beauty is ‘that…wherein the truest idea of divinity does consist.’ [RA 298]” Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 117.

38 “The whole of God’s internal good or glory, is in these three things, viz., his infinite knowledge, his infinite virtue or holiness, and his infinite joy or happiness. Indeed there are a great many attributes in God, according to our way of conceiving or talking of them, but all may be reduced to these, or to the degree, circumstances and relations of these.” EC 253.
beauty and joy. In this process he posits the Spirit as the bond of joy within the Trinity, itself characterized by joy.

5.1.3.1 Joy and love in God

For Jonathan Edwards, the Trinity is an important sign of the excellency of God, which is to say, God’s beauty. Edwards argued for the possibility of excellency as the controlling perfection. However, his aim was not merely to prove an ontology, rather it was to help in understanding and co-operating with the work of God. His trinitarian doctrine is based on the need to provide a framework for understanding God’s beauty in a metaphysical system in which it is assumed that a monistic unity cannot exhibit the richness assumed in the concept of beauty.

Edwards argues that the happiness of God results in the outpouring of God’s goodness (which is the same as his pleasure) and concludes that God’s happiness “consists in communion” — within the Trinity and in relationship with humanity. It is one of his Miscellanies which provides perhaps the most vivid insight into the ontological, trinitarian-relational and ethical dimensions of Edwards’ conceptualization of the “happiness” of the Trinity. This is “because goodness is delight in communicating happiness”. This has significant implications for engaging with Edwards’ understanding of the nature of humanity (to which we shall return). Its importance here is the recognition that God will be less than happy “without society and communion” because he “delights to communicate himself to another”. This is

39 It is important to note, however, that generally Edwards is keen to conserve the traditional dimensions and constraints of philosophy with regard to issues of essence and substance as pertaining to the concept of being.


41 Misc. 95. HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN; Misc. 96. TRINITY; Misc. 97. HAPPINESS; Misc. 98. TRINITY, all explore this theme.

42 Misc. 96. TRINITY. “Indeed, our love to God is the same event as God’s triune love to himself.” Robert W. Jenson, America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988, 73.

43 Misc. 96.
true, Edwards argues, for any creature, and thus he concludes that “Jehovah’s happiness consists in communion, as well as the creature’s”.

5.1.3.2 Joy and beauty in God

Within Edwards’ conceptualization of the Trinity, however, the parallel between love and joy is less significant than the grounding of joy in the essence of beauty. As noted above, Edwards stands in the tradition which ascribes beauty to the nature of the Son, but it is significant that for Edwards, “[T]he divine beauty that *is* the Holy Spirit *appears* especially in the Son”. That is, fundamental to Edwards’ trinitarian theology and his notion of christological pulchritude is the assumption that the Spirit is *primary* as regards beauty. This primacy of the Spirit is the ground for Edwards’ emphasis on the communication of the nature of God to humanity. Revelation, for Edwards, is an essential existential expression of the God who is both beauty and joy.

The link between the Holy Spirit and humanity is made by Edwards through the twin concepts of joy and beauty. The communication of God is expounded by Edwards in these terms, in connection with the personhood of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Central to the development of his theology, Edwards holds relationality in high esteem, and the exposition of beauty and joy in God can be seen to be pointing in that direction. The relational dimension is linked to the self-revealing act of God as

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44 Misc. 96.
45 Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 144, discusses this in relation to EC 210 (where Edwards refers to God “enjoying and rejoicing in himself [and] in his own beauty”), and EC 253-5 (where he argues that creaturely happiness “arises from that which is an image and participation of God’s own beauty”).
46 Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 156, Delattre’s emphases.
49 Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 151 suggests that Jonathan Edwards works by analogy from ‘intelligent perceiving creatures’ to God. The direction implied by this is not necessary. The important issue of us is the stress placed on relationality. As Alan J. Torrance has shown in *Persons in Communion*, the analogy *relationis* does not of necessity need to be based on a particular concept of being. It is an analogical relation which stands on its own, though its relatedness to an understanding of the *vestigia trinitatis* expands the usefulness of the analogy even further. “[A]s Barth suggests but does not

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Footnote continues on following page
Edwards links the inward joy of God as Trinity to the emanation of divine joy in and by the Spirit.50

The Holy Spirit is the act of God between the Father and the Son infinitely loving and delighting in each other. Sure I am, that if the Father and the Son do infinitely delight in each other, there must be an infinitely pure and perfect act between them, an infinitely sweet energy which we call delight.51

The bond of love and joy between the Father and the Son gives the Holy Spirit a dimension beyond the usual depiction as bond of love.52 Edwards uses the concept he had elucidated of the trinitarian relationality with his view of the Holy Spirit as a means of further developing his doctrine of the Trinity. The affection of joy allows the inner rejoicing and delight which Edwards speaks of as central to the Trinity to be perceived and celebrated in the beauty which Edwards sees as the other fundamental dimension of God’s perfection.53

The Holy Spirit may thus be conceived as the “fountain of all delight and comfort”54 not only ad extra but ad intra. This concept of joy as fundamental to the nature of God is a remarkable theological proposition, defended as always with Edwards’ reference to biblical truth.55

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50 This is most fully developed by Edwards in Misc. 448 END OF THE CREATION, (which is part of the basis for EC).
51 Misc. 94, TRINITY.
52 On the Holy Spirit as the (bond of) love between Father and Son. See Mind, 363ff.
53 This stands in stark contrast to Michael Welker, God the Spirit, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer, Fortress, Minneapolis, 1994. Whilst Welker promises new understandings of God’s power (Welker, God the Spirit, ix), he fails to include humility and the fruit of the Spirit adequately and ends with a remarkably joyless critique. Thus even in discussing the “festal perception of God’s face” he moves to images of power rather than affection. (Welker, God the Spirit, 157). Similarly the note that “Fleshly finite life…both attains and effects the joy and peace that are given by the Spirit” has its roots in derived notions of power. (Even Section 6.5: “Intimacy with God, free self-withdrawal, participation in God’s glory, and enjoyment of eternal life”, Welker, God the Spirit, 331-41, with which the book ends, does not deal with any aspect of note except power.)
54 Misc. 94.
55 Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility, 150, suggests, in his discussion of Edwards’ trinitarian theology, the equation of knowledge with Son and love and joy with Holy Spirit. This is a fossilization of Edwards’ dynamic relational understanding of the nature of the trinity.
Whilst Jonathan Edwards had no intention of developing a pneumatic trinitarian theology per se, his theological writings, inspired as they are by reflection on experience and imbued with biblical and philosophical insight, provide a remarkable mine of material to develop such a theology. Such a theology, if it were developed, would be rooted in the notion that “God is God”56 and in the recognition of the ultimate sovereignty of God. The initiative in God’s abundant overflow of joy in the Spirit could be the basis of the response evoked – in worship, obedience and mission. This would maintain the link in which joy is a call to repentance. The pneumatocentricity of the trinitarian theology would not be at the expense of a christocentric view of revelation and redemption. Rather, both would be held together in recognition of the fundamental trinitarian shape of revelation, redemption and ecclesial life.

5.1.4 Barth, Edwards and joy

Whilst Barth allows considerable scope for the use of joy as a perfection by not limiting it as he does beauty, he still constrains the conception of the joy of God. In comparison with Edwards he has a much weaker linkage to the doctrine of the Trinity in his discussion of the perfections. Edwards has a rich and developed notion of the intra-trinitarian relations. Barth’s concern is to express and explore the centrality of the doctrine of the Trinity. Each in his own way develops a rich and complex trinitarian theology. The different conceptions of God that each has are seen, partly, in the different ways in which the place of beauty and joy is conceived.

In CD II.1 Barth’s focus moves to the attributes of God. The trinitarian context is assumed but not often asserted. The trinitarian dynamic becomes more clearly explicit when he turns towards christological actualism in the doctrine of election. Edwards’ actualism is also focused on the Trinity.

The incarnation of the Son and the gift of the Spirit are the two ways, “manifesting” and “communicating,” of God’s “beaming forth of the infinite good” that he himself is. These two ways obtain because they “are agreeable to the two ways of the divine essence flowing out, or proceeding, from eternity within the Godhead, in the persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit: the one in a expression of his glory, in the idea or

knowledge of it, the other the flowing out of the essence of love and joy. It is condecent that correspondent to these proceedings of the divinity ad intra…, God should also flow forth ad extra.\textsuperscript{57}

The concepts could almost be Barth’s, except that Edwards runs close to allowing his classical concept of “the good” to rule his notion of trinitarian expression and communication. Barth remains more circumspect, preferring to concentrate on the act and event of Jesus Christ and the Spirit, and to leave the intra-trinitarian dimensions less fully explored. Nevertheless, one remarkable possibility of his own theology which Barth does develop is his incorporation of the doctrine of election into his doctrine of God. This results, in Barth, in a doctrine of election which is joyful – a very different position to that of Edwards, despite their similarity in exploring the joy and glory of God in ways which are central to their trinitarian doctrines.

5.2 Election

5.2.1 Barth, joy and election

The discussion of joy in the context of the Doctrine of the Word of God (Chapter 2) showed that the roots of the concept of joy in God and as a theme throughout the whole of Barth’s theology can be discerned early in the \textit{Church Dogmatics}, and that the theme had some measure of exposure in his earlier theology. The theme of joy links to other key themes in the \textit{Church Dogmatics}: to God; revelation; relationship (intra-divine, divine-human and intra-human); and the nature of the theological task itself. The divine and human aspects of joy are connected – explicitly and implicitly – through Barth’s use of the concept of the \textit{analogia relationis}, and in the light of this analogy and the biblical witness, we can speak of God as the God of joy. Using Hunsinger’s motifs as an analytical framework, it can be seen that the dynamics of joy are indeed broad in Barth’s \textit{Church Dogmatics}, with connections to the core issues with which Barth concerns himself.

Having explored the central development which Barth gives to joy, as part of the perfections of God, that discussion must be placed within its broader context by noting that this elucidation of the nature of God leads into Barth’s development of his

\textsuperscript{57} Robert W. Jenson, \textit{America’s Theologian}, 94, quoting the otherwise unpublished Misc. 1151. Jenson, \textit{America’s Theologian}, 91-8, gives an outline of the presuppositions in Edwards’ theology as they relate to the Trinity.
innovative (and controversial) doctrine of election. The notion of divine joy functions
at least to clarify the nature of the God who elects, and as a backdrop to the
development of the notion of Jesus Christ as “electing God and elected man”. Joy can
be seen as a culmination of the divine perfections, and performs an important function
as a link to the doctrine of election.

Barth’s analysis of the perfections of God and the place of joy within the
perfections must be noted as being placed in intimate association with his discussion of
the doctrine of election. The whole of Volume 2 of the Church Dogmatics explores,
directly or indirectly, this major theme of God as electing God. Thus, from the
beginning of his discussion of election and the call of humankind to come to God, the
call is to “Enter into the joy of the Lord!” The call is to humanity to enter into the
fullness of createdness. Barth uses the image of a child having all the fullness of adult

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58 Or, as Hartwell puts it, his doctrine of election is placed in the midst of his doctrine of God:
“With this teaching (of the perfections of God) we have not yet reached the end of Barth’s
doctrine of God. To be truly Christian, the latter, in his view, has to include another aspect
of the reality of God. That aspect is manifested in the fact, revealed in Jesus Christ, that
God stands in a definite relationship ad extra to another. (CD II.2.3ff). This relationship is
viewed by Barth as belonging to the Person of God as such, that is, to His reality, and
therefore to the doctrine of God in the narrower sense of this concept, in as much as it rests
upon a distinct attitude of God which, inherent in the very nature of God as the One who
loves in freedom, is expressed in His free and gracious decision before the creation of the
world and of man to unite Himself in the person of His eternal Son with man in the man
Jesus of Nazareth and in Him and through Him with the people represented by Him and,
consequently, to determine Himself, that is, to elect Himself to fellowship with man and
man to fellowship with Himself, and to do so quite concretely in the person of Jesus Christ.”
104-5. Further, Hartwell, Theology of Karl Barth, 105, notes: “…the Christian God is this
God or He is not God at all.” It is no exaggeration to say that the heart of Barth’s theology
beats in this doctrine in which he radically departs from all past and present teaching on
predestination, above all from Calvin’s doctrine of predestination….Barth makes it an
integral part of his doctrine of God, thus giving it precedence over the doctrine of
providence and even over the doctrine of creation, which in their turn are bound to be
decisively influenced by this sequence.”

59 In this regard, see also Colin E. Gunton, Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in
“The triune God happens as both election and command, and if we neglect these two
doctrines, then we neglect to say as much as we might about what God is.” See also
Gunton’s “The Doctrine of God: Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Election as Part of his Doctrine of
God” (originally in JTS, 25, 1974, 381-92), revised edition in Theology Through the

60 CD II.1.11.
joy and sorrow present in playfulness and the pursuits of childhood. The call is issued with certainty and joy, not sotto voce and half-grudgingly. It does not crush joy in the Lord. But it does expose false joy based on humanity’s self interest and fascination with sinfulness. The “Readiness of Man” is seen in the Declaration of Barmen which Barth twice describes as “a cry of need and joy”. The response evoked in God’s revelation is in participation, which is with gratitude, but cannot take place without Joyfulness. The human dimension of this evocative joy is given a fuller discussion in the context of gladness and gratitude in Chapter 6.

Barth is fond of using Lk 15:1-10 (the Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin), as well as his constant references to the parable which crowns the series in Luke 15, that of the so-called prodigal son. Whilst the majority of Barth’s uses are in reference to the human condition (as are the many allusions to the son in the “far country”), Barth makes explicit reference to Lk 15:7,10 in regard to God’s oneness in rejoicing. He also discusses joy in regard to God’s repentance and constancy. Preempting the fuller discussions in CD III, Barth links joy to human gratitude, and notes the connection with prayer in the context of joy and fear.

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61 CD II.1.53.
62 CD II.1.113.
63 CD II.1.114-5.
64 CD II.1.166-7.
65 CD II.1.176.
66 CD II.1.219. (KD 247).
67 This parable provides the main framework for CD IV.1&2, the foundations for Barth’s doctrine of reconciliation.
68 CD II.1.454. See also, as relates to the joy in heaven over the repentance of even one sinner, CD II.2.124.
70 CD II.1.628, passim.
71 CD II.1.548. (Furcht und Freude, KD 616). It should be noted that for Barth, Fear (Furcht) is negative, whereas Awe (Ehrfurcht) has positive connotations. See CD II.1.223 [KD 251] in this regard. It is clear in this reference that participation in the revelation of God is a basis for joy and awe.

The issue of time is also relevant to this connection, but its fuller exploration is unnecessary in the present discussion. It would provide another interesting link between the issues of joy and election. See, for instance, CD II.1.628.
Thus, for Barth, both election and joy belong fundamentally to the doctrine of God. This may well explain why CD II.1 ends, after the soaring exploration of the joy and glory of God, on what appears, by comparison, to be such a sombre note. After the majestic description of God’s joy-filled glory we might have expected a more ebullient and even doxological ending. Perhaps because it is leading into the doctrine of election proper, which finds its doxological conclusion in the Veni Creator Spiritus, Barth chooses to lessen the impact of the ending of the first half-volume.

5.2.1.1 Barth’s doctrine of election

Noting the connection between the theology of the perfections of God and the doctrine of election, it is necessary to outline Barth’s doctrine of election itself, concentrating particularly on its intersection with the theme of joy.

The basis of Barth’s doctrine of election is the notion of Jesus Christ as God’s unequivocal “Yes!” to humanity. It is this positive basis of divine engagement which is constantly to the fore in Barth’s promulgation of his doctrine of election – a doctrine based entirely on his understanding of election as the work of God who is wholly gracious and fundamentally forgiving. In founding the doctrine in the act of God in Jesus Christ, Barth avoids any semblance of pelagianism. In similarly rooting the

72 CD II.1.676-7 ends the volume with a description of the actuality of God’s glory in all the world and the contrary note of its hiddenness from sinful humanity. The tenor is regarding possibilities in the light of the glory of God:

“[W]e really glorify God and therefore share in His self-glorification: no less really in this form than in the future form which…we still await and to which the Church moves. We do it in the simple sense of life-obedience. And we do not do so only partially but totally. Here, however, the whole as such is hidden from us….We may not…seek the whole beyond this part. We may not be sad but glad to be in the Church….We may be glad to pray. The whole energy of the awakening and calling of the creature to its destiny to give glory to God works itself out here and now and wholly and utterly in the fact that the Church may be.” CD II.1.676.

It may be that part of the energy which has been apparent in Barth’s earlier discussion is lost in its final section as a result of the translation of the language of possibility into English, which then repeats the “may” refrain: “It may…”; “He may…”; “The Word of God may…”; “the Church may…”.

73 Yet the treatment of participation in the glory of God is uplifting: CD II.1.676.

74 We must wait for the latter until the end of Barth’s discussion of election.
response of humanity in Jesus Christ, he likewise avoids any possible semi-pelagian understandings. Let us then turn to a closer engagement with the central texts of CD II.2.

In discussing the “orientation” of the doctrine of election, Barth notes that the context is fundamentally the gospel, the evangel, good news, glad tidings - the liberating and uplifting message of Jesus Christ. It is in this form and this form alone (the election of grace in Jesus Christ) [that] the tidings of the divine decision made in Jesus Christ are glad tidings (frohe Botschaft) directed to all men, directed indeed to the whole world.

In parallel with his argument that the message of the evangel is Yes and not No, he states that it is not a mixed message of joy and terror, salvation and damnation. Originally and finally it is not dialectical but non-dialectical. It does not proclaim in the same breath both good and evil, both help and destruction, both life and death.

Similarly, the promised rest which accompanies the election of grace is a mystery for the “joyous revelation” of which creation waits in stillness and silence.

The revelation is received as well as given on the basis of the grace of God. It is only because of the work of the Holy Spirit in the whole created realm that there is the possibility of revelation, of response – and thus of praise and joy. To be without the Spirit of God’s grace is to be indentured in a human world which is a boring

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75 CD II.2.12. “The truth which must now occupy us, the truth of the doctrine or predestination, is first and last and in all circumstances the sum of the Gospel, no matter how it may be understood in detail, no matter what apparently contradictory aspects it may present to us. It is itself evangel: glad tidings; news which uplifts and sustains.” (Sie ist Evangelium: g u t e Nachricht, erfreuliche, aufrichtende, tröstende, hilfreiche Botschaft. KD 11.)

76 CD II.2.26. (KD 27 – frohe is emphatic earlier in the same discussion).

77 The tenor of the argument is more subtle, with Barth arguing that the No is “said for the sake of the Yes and not for its own sake…. [but] it is not Yes and No, but in its substance, in the origin and scope of its utterance, it is altogether Yes.” CD II.2.13. (KD 13).

78 CD II.2.13. (KD 12: …kein Gemisch von Freudens- und Schreckens-, von Heils- und Unheilsbotschaft….).

79 CD II.2.32.
apprenticeship for an irrelevant eternity. Barth will tolerate no such vision of God or of creation. As he states:

…except with grace, and through grace, and to the glory of grace, there can be no rejoicing and praise of creation, (keinen Ruhm und Jubel der Schöpfung) no receiving of the Holy Spirit and of the enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit, no glory of saints and angels in the consummation of His kingdom, no height and no depth. 80

It is the glory of this electing grace in Jesus Christ as elected and electing which allows Barth to make the link between joy and predestination, because Jesus Christ is the basis of confidence, consolation and joy in the elect. Jesus Christ is himself the basis of trust and hope. 81 The elected person will have the “resurrection and prayer (of Jesus) both in the mind and in the heart”. 82 Thus it is that predestination is (when understood within Barth’s conceptualization of election) a source of joy and not terror in the elect. 83 This is the outcome of the affirming “Yes” of God, which is fundamental to Barth’s doctrine of election. Election, like revelation, evokes joy and awe. 84 Election is the result of God’s constancy, 85 love 86 and God’s “determination to

80 CD II.2.93. (KD 100).
81 “The mystery of the elected man Jesus is the divine and human steadfastness which is the end of all God’s ways and works and therefore the object and content of the divine predestination. And the fact that it is actualized in Him and on their behalf is the fact to which those who are elected “in Him” must cling, the fact in which their confidence must repose, the fact from which their joy and consolation must be derived. And this fact is one which is ever new, and one which is their strength and wisdom in all circumstances.” CD II.2.126. (KD 135-6).
82 CD II.2.127: “…And this means to be elected. For it is the man that does this who “in Him” is the object of the divine election of grace.” — (“An Jesus glauben heißt: seine Auferstehung und sein Gebet vor Augen und im Herzen haben. Und eben das heißt Erwählte sein. Eben der Mensch, der das tut, ist «in ihm» der Gegenstand der göttlichen Gnadenwahl.” KD 136).
83 “The facts (regarding that which God has put away from the elect) are true, but it is also true that they are far outweighed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ and that as the result of this resurrection they belong already to the vanished past. The thought of God’s predestination cannot, then, awaken in us the mixture of terror and joy which would be in order if we were confronted partly by promise and partly by threat. It can awaken only joy, pure joy. For this order is found in the divine predestination itself, and it cannot be revoked.” CD II.2.174. As the Barth’s note following this section underscores: “This interpretation of double predestination stands or falls…with the view that the divine predestination is to be understood only within the election of Jesus Christ.” CD II.2.174.
84 See CD II.1.223, mentioned above.
85 See CD II.2.273.
86 CD II.2.412.
blessedness” which flows from God’s glory, which is “the overflowing of the inner perfection and joy of God”.\textsuperscript{87} This overflow of God’s glory necessitates the conferral of God’s very self on those who, “in and through the community, are the object of divine predestination”.\textsuperscript{88} Human blessedness is thus to be understood as participation in not just receipt of God’s blessedness.\textsuperscript{89} This cannot be interpreted without reference to Barth’s understanding of time and eternity, since the act of God in election draws the elect into fellowship with God, who then becomes “the ground of perfect joy in time and eternity”\textsuperscript{90}.

As Barth links election to the nature of God, so he makes a connection between joy and hope, with each experienced in the life of Jesus Christ. Similarly he links obedience to joy in human life, with grateful obedience epitomizing the fullness of human existence. Obedience is also linked with gladness in Barth’s anthropology which is discussed in Chapter 6. For the moment we simply note that Barth grounds the right behaviour of the elect in the good pleasure of God, who is in the midst of a rejoicing heavenly host.\textsuperscript{91} Obedience is also portrayed as a summons to fellowship

\textsuperscript{87} “The determination of the elect to be the object of the love of God is undoubtedly his determination to blessedness. The glory of God, to share in which is the intention and purpose of His love for the creature, is the overflowing of the inner perfection and joy of God. (Eben die Bestimmung des Erwählten zum Gegenstand der Liebe Gottes ist nun zweifellos seine Bestimmung zur Seligkeit. Gottes Herrlichkeit, an der das Geschöpf zu beteiligen der Wille und das Ziel seiner Liebe ist, ist das Überströmen der inneren Vollkommenheit und Freude Gottes.) God chooses the elect from eternity and for eternity, that he may catch up a beam or a drop of His own blessedness and live as its possessor, that he may rejoice in Him and with Him. It is for blessedness that God has determined man, as He determines Himself in His own Son for unity with man, as in Him He offered up no less than Himself.” CD II.2.412. (KD 455).
\textsuperscript{88} CD II.2.313. This communal conceptuality is noted in the next chapter.
\textsuperscript{89} CD II.2.412. (KD 456).
\textsuperscript{90} CD II.2.413. Gunton, Becoming and Being, 208, notes that in Barth “reconciliation is trinitarian and voluntaristic, by reference to the free act of God whose act carries necessity with it.” Limited by his agenda of engagement with Hartshorne, Gunton does not pick up on the many references to the relationality of God as Trinity which are present in the Church Dogmatics, thus missing an even more significant challenge to Hartshorne’s relational process theology: a challenge to the “panentheism” which finds all in God, but does not allow God to overflow in abundance, love and joy to creation.
\textsuperscript{91} “The act of the eternal predestination and election of Jesus Christ, to which God’s command ultimately reaches back, this beginning of all the ways and works of God both generally and therefore in our life, is the act of his ‘good-pleasure’ [«Wohlgefallens»] and therefore His joy, and it is in keeping with this that its fulfilment in time was surrounded by the jubilation of the heavenly hosts. In and with the decision to which we are summoned by God’s
with God, wherein the elect “hear the command…that [they] may belong to Him”.  

In the recognition of the judgement of Christ is “joy at the prospect of coming into God’s judgement”.  

It is in this context of calling that Barth notes that God gives his Holy Spirit “in order that His own relationship to His Father may be repeated in us”.  

Thus we may be “all the more joyfully prepared to live our spiritual life humbly but courageously…in prayer, in thankfulness and worship and intercession”.  

It is on this final note that Barth concludes his doctrine of God, the joyful, electing God, with the recognition that the elect, in prayer, sigh “continually but joyfully, as those who have received the Spirit: Veni Creator Spiritus !”.  

The linking of the joy of God in the election of Jesus Christ to joy allows Barth’s doctrine of election, in the context of his redefinition of predestination, to be a fundamentally joyful doctrine.  It is a doctrine which adds to rather than subtracting from the joy of the elect, and of the whole creation.  

5.2.2 Edwards, happiness and the elect  

There is no one place in Edwards’ vast writings where he discusses his doctrine of predestination at length.  There are numerous statements made in a range of contexts

command there has simply to be an echo of this good-pleasure of God Himself, of this jubilation of the angels.” CD II.2.611-2. (KD 680).

92 CD II.2.738.
93 CD II.2.741.
94 CD II.2.780.
95 CD II.2.780-1.
96 CD II.2.781.
97 It should be noted, however, that Edwards’ work “A Careful Enquiry into the Modern prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will, Which is supposed to be essential to Moral Agency, Vertue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame” of 1754, better know simply as “Freedom of the Will”, and hereafter FW, can be interpreted as an extended discussion of election from a voluntarist perspective.  For instance, in drawing his dissertation to a close, Edwards (who uses the notion of “decree” in many ways akin to the concept of election) says:

“The things which have been said, do likewise answer the chief objections against the doctrine of God’s universal and absolute decree, and afford infallible proof of that doctrine; and of the doctrine of absolute, eternal, personal election in particular.” FW, 434, Edwards’ emphases.

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which allow the dimensions of his doctrine to be discerned. The following discussion uses the Dissertation Concerning the End for which God Created the World \textsuperscript{98} and a number of the Miscellanies, in which Edwards’ views are perhaps most clearly enunciated.

Whilst Edwards departs significantly from some aspects of his inherited Calvinism, such as his doctrine of the beauty and happiness of God, he is polemical against anything but the traditional Calvinist view of predestination. It is out of his tradition, rather than out of his doctrine of God, that he explicates his doctrine of predestination.

In discussing God’s foreknowledge of the elect, Edwards clearly states his view that “in the same sense [as] God is said to foreknow the elect from all eternity…(so) [r]eprobates he did not know; they were strangers to God from all eternity”.\textsuperscript{99} This rigid double-predestinarian view is more fully explored by Edwards in Misc. 63, where he mocks those who hold a view which he caricatures as “conditional election”, describing it as “very nonsense”.\textsuperscript{100} For Edwards, election and rejection, understood in terms of an equal “Yes” and “No”, to borrow Barth’s terms, are one and the same thing, rooted in the will of God.\textsuperscript{101} The basis of this is that God takes pleasure in such as God chooses,\textsuperscript{102} and God’s choice is not linked to some creaturely “goodness or

\textsuperscript{98} EC, 403-536.
\textsuperscript{99} Misc. 19. FOREKNOWLEDGE. This is dependent on Calvin’s view that “We call predestination God’s eternal decree, by which he determined with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others.” Institutes, iii.XXI.5. (LCC edn, 926).
\textsuperscript{100} Misc. 63. ELECTION.
\textsuperscript{101} Thus: “Those that believe in Christ must be saved, according to God’s inviolable constitution of things.” Misc. 63.
\textsuperscript{102} The rational argument used to support this is that “[s]uch a thing as election may very well be allowed; for that there is such a thing as arbitrary sovereign love is certain, i.e. love not for any excellency, but merely God’s good pleasure.” The example used to support this is that God did elect humanity but did not elect the fallen angels. Misc. 63.
excellency, but merely God’s good pleasure”. Edwards notes that election, “God’s loving some and not others”, is based on “his own natural disposition [to] really love his reasonable creatures”, even though the result is to “make some happy and not others”. In standing against the errors he perceived in the “Arminians”, Edwards’ concept of the decree of faith should be noted. Here his arguments for foreknowledge having the same dimensions as predestination are spelled out. Edwards declares his supralapsarianism and assumes it in his arguments regarding human and divine action. This conceptualization of the sovereignty of God issues, for Edwards, in the

103 Misc. 63. A modern expression of this, coming from within the Calvinist tradition and strongly influenced by Jonathan Edwards, is John Piper, The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God’s Delight in Being God, Multnomah, Portland, OR, 1991, 123-58; 161-84, where Piper explores God’s delight in election and “The Pleasure of God in Bruising the Son”.

104 Misc. 273. ELECTION. The counterpoint of this is the discussion in TV (True Virtue) 576, where Edwards notes: “That a man in general, loves and is pleased with happiness, or (which is the same thing) has a capacity of enjoying happiness, cannot be the reason why such and such things become his happiness: as for instance, why the good of his neighbor, or the happiness and glory of God, is grateful and pleasing to him, and so becomes a part of his happiness.” In discussing this, Paul Ramsey (editor of the Volume) notes that what differentiates different humans is “what each of us looks on as that in which our own happiness consists.” Yale, 8. 16-17.

105 For a thorough characterization of Edwards’ perceived enemies, see Jenson, America’s Theologian, 53-57.

106 Misc. 16. FOREKNOWLEDGE. Further on this see Edwards’ FW where his arguments against his “Arminian” opponents are most finely honed. (Misc. 7. WILL OF GOD, is also a concerted attack on those who hold views which Edwards categorizes as “Arminian”.)

107 Implicitly in Misc. 16, and explicitly in Misc. 292. SUPRALAPSARIANS. Edwards (like Barth) draws on the resources of Mastricht (Misc. 292) and links his understanding of “decree” to the supralapsarian position. (See Misc. 62. DECREE. This originally began as a critique of the infralapsarian understanding. [Schafer’s footnote, Yale, 13, 233, n5.]) Despite the clarity of this statement by Edwards, Cherry considers that Edwards’ “doctrine is supralapsarian with respect to election and sublapsarian with respect to reprobation”. Conrad Cherry, The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal, 2nd edn., Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990, 56. Whilst Cherry musters evidence to support his contention, the issue at hand is the foreknowledge and predestining will of God, which is paramount for Edwards.

108 See, for instance, FW Part 2 Sect 11. “The Evidence of God’s Certain Foreknowledge of the Volitions of Moral Agents.” He summarizes his argument by stating: “That the acts of the wills of moral agents are not contingent events, in that sense, appears by God’s certain foreknowledge of such events.” (FW 239). His detailed argument proceeds on the following lines:

1: Based on God’s prediction of events. (FW 239-252); 2: Based on God’s (supralapsarian)

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concept of decree. For Edwards, the separation of (or at least the allowance of the distinctiveness of) the “secret” and “revealed” will of God, or as he would prefer them named, “decree” and “law” (of God) respectively, is an important means of understanding the apparent contradictions between God’s command and any human construct of divine love. Thus he can accommodate the fact that God wills some human hearts to be hardened, and even that Christ be killed. Edwards’ conceptualization of the divine will in this rigid predestinarian fashion drove much of his preaching, issuing in strong challenges to respond to the saving love of God in Christ, accompanied by strong threats of the danger of not so responding. Yet even in his preaching, Edwards rooted his doctrine of election, the expression of the will of God, into the saving act of Jesus Christ. Whilst the language is similar to Barth’s on election, the tenor is remarkable in its difference of focus from the tone of Barth’s dogmatics and his preaching.

misc. 7. WILL OF GOD. See also Misc. 16. FOREKNOWLEDGE, where Edwards also explores this in the context of Judas’ betrayal of Christ, and Misc. 82. DECREE, in which Edwards notes the importance of recognizing the viewpoint of eternity if God is not to be misunderstood in his predestining of humans to life or perdition, and to place “praying and striving” in an appropriate context.

misc. 10. “God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of grace who are not the children of the covenant, who do not believe in any of the promises, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.” This is the tenth of ten points in Edwards’ sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”, 188 (preached at Enfield, July 8th, 1741 “at a time of great awakenings; and attended with remarkable impressions on many of the hearers.” Sinners, 183n.)

111 Consider, for instance, “You will live also” (based on Jn 14:19, “Because I live, you will live also.”) reproduced in Karl Barth, Deliverance to the Captives, transl. Marguerite Wieser, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1961, 28-34:

“He who comprehends the ‘I live’ will right away comprehend the ‘You will live also’. You are a people whose future issues from my life and hence does not lie in your sin and guilt, but in true righteousness and holiness. Not in sadness, but in joy, not in captivity, but in freedom, not in death, but in life. From your present participation in my life, you may anticipate this and no other future.” Barth, Deliverance to the Captives, 32.
For Edwards, the divine son is the centre of the promise of redemption. His understanding of election does not focus as particularly on Christ as Barth’s does,\(^{112}\) remaining tied more to the general notion of the will of the (predestining) God. Despite this link to the will of God, there is no way in which Edwards’ doctrine of election can be mistaken for a part of his doctrine of God. Its linkages are through the concept of the immutable will of God, through God’s predestination, to the election of humanity as part of the purpose of God’s creation. Whilst the link to God’s glory is made by Edwards,\(^{113}\) the connection lacks the explicit linking with the joy of God apparent in Barth. Yet Edwards also saw glory as a key perfection or, in his terms, an expression of excellency, in God.\(^{114}\) Thus, the concept of the Son communicating excellency is of considerable importance for Edwards.\(^{115}\) However, he does not make

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\(^{112}\) The view of Edwards is the classical view which sees election as into Christ, as opposed to Barth’s radical reshaping of the doctrine of election as in Christ.

\(^{113}\) “No notion of God’s last end in the creation of the world is agreeable to reason which would truly imply or infer any indigence, insufficiency of mutability in God; or any dependence of the Creator on the creature, for any part of his perfection or happiness. Because it is evident, by both Scripture and reason, that God is infinitely, eternally, unchangeably, and independently glorious and happy: that he stands in no need of, cannot be profited by, or receive anything from the creature; or be truly hurt, or be the subject of any sufferings or impair of his glory and felicity from any other being. (Ital. in orig.)” EC 420.

\(^{114}\) “’Tis manifest from Scripture that God’s glory is the last end of that great work of providence, the work of redemption by Jesus Christ.” EC 485. See also EC 512ff, where Edwards engages in a long discussion of the glory of God.

\(^{115}\) Misc. 108. EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST. “...the Son of God created the world for this very end, to communicate himself in an image of his own excellency.” See also the extended argument in Misc. 104. END OF THE CREATION. In Misc. 185. EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST. Edwards notes that all beauty and receptivity “result from the efficiency of Christ”.

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It would be difficult to imagine more remarkably different congregations however. Edwards’, used to such hellfire preaching, comfortable New Englanders (yet on the brink of revival); Barth’s, inmates at Basel jail, “avowedly critical and ‘un-Christian’ people.” (Martin Schwartz (Basel Prison Chaplain), in Deliverance to the Captives, 12.) Yet whilst the former is credited with being the igniter of the fire of a phase of the New England revival, the latter is recorded as having seen those who were “strangers within the gate...challenged by the gospel, understood in their guilt and need, comforted and strengthened in their struggle....They not only expressed their gratitude to Karl Barth and loved him; they also joined in the fellowship under the Word and in the joyful celebration of the Lord’s Supper.” (Schwartz, in Deliverance to the Captives, 12). Whilst a comparison based on two such selections is necessarily incomplete, the tenor of each is generally representative of the style of each, a product of the expectations of their hearers, perhaps, but also shaped by their own understanding of the nature of the electing God.
the link between the beauty and happiness of God and God’s decree of election in Christ which Barth makes. This is at the root of their different conceptualizations of the doctrine of election.

The place in Edwards’ writings where a link between the happiness and election of God might be expected would be the remarkable cluster of Miscellanies from 1723-4, Misc. 95, 96, 97 and 98. However, no such explicit link is to be found. The beauty of creation and its heavenly counterpart are extolled by Edwards even as he counterpoints this with the reminder of torment: “as every part of the bodies of the wicked shall be excruciated with intolerable pain, so every part of the saints’ refined bodies shall be as full of pleasure as they can hold”. That the end of creation in Edwards’ view relates to the glory of God has already been noted. In this context it is important to hold the remarkable Misc. 96. Whilst it is an argument for the triune nature of the godhead, based on a notion of God’s goodness needing an arena in which it is to be exercised if God is to be “more than a unity in infinite and eternal essence”, Edwards contends that this issues in the making happy of another. It is also the basis for ethics, in that goodness (in God, in this argument) is “delight in communicating happiness”.

Edwards does not seem to ask how this notion of goodness fits with his argument for the goodness of God in the predestination of sinners to perdition. It does, however, develop into a remarkable notion of the nature of communication and

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116 Misc. 95. HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN; Misc. 96. TRINITY; Misc. 97. HAPPINESS; Misc. 98. TRINITY.
117 Misc. 95. Edwards then goes on to note that the torment of the damned “will not take the mind (of the elect) off from, but prompt and help it in spiritual delights, to which even the delights of their spiritual bodies shall be but a shadow.”
118 Misc. 96.
119 “To be perfectly good is to incline to and delight in making another happy in the same proportion as it is happy itself, that is, to delight as much in communicating happiness to another as in enjoying of it himself, and an inclination to communicate all his happiness; it appears that this is perfect goodness, because goodness is delight in communicating happiness.” Misc. 96.
120 Misc. 96.
121 This is an important issue in FW, however, as well as Misc. 7, WILL OF GOD; 16, FOREKNOWLEDGE; 51, DECREE; 170, WILL OF GOD; and others. The large number of entries in Edwards’ own index to the miscellanies (Yale, 13, 125-50) to “heaven” and “hell” is also instructive. See also Guelzo, Edwards on the Will, especially 2-3.
communion. That God’s goodness overflows in God’s happiness is the basis for Edwards’ suggestion that the epitome of relationality, the divine Trinity, consists in communication of joy. In the following entry, he expands this in a consideration of the nature of (human) society, and as a basis for human happiness as directed to God. In Misc. 1218, however, Edwards’ emphasis is on God’s end in making creation, that he may “exercise his perfections ad extra, [and] to make his creatures happy”. These two, he says, are included in one end, “viz., God’s exhibiting his perfections or causing his essential glory to be exercised, expressed, and communicated ad extra”. This then becomes the basis for understanding God’s purpose in creation. Yet the connection of this abundant overflow as the basis for understanding creation is not explored by Edwards for the insights it might give regarding the adequacy of his conceptualization of the doctrine of election, which in Edwards contains none of the joyful dimensions to be found in Barth. Yet this is despite Edwards’ conception of the Trinity, which is permeated by relational joyfulness.

For Edwards the Holy Spirit is often described as little more than the bond of love, or joy, between the other two members of the Trinity. This should not, however, lead to disregarding Edwards’ pneumatology. In his terms, the language of “bond” is a high and wondrous figure of the divinity of the Spirit. Edwards understands the immanent and economic trinitarian conceptualities in close association with his perception of the beauty of God as the overflowing goodness of God.

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122 This is discussed at length by Jenson, *America’s Theologian*, 141-53, with its implications for the American nation explored in 154-68.
123 Misc. 97. “The man Jesus Christ loves us so much, that he really is the happier for our delight and happiness in him.” (This needs to be held in tension with Edwards’ statement that God is not dependent on our love or joy in him.)
124 Misc. 1218, in Townsend, *Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards*, 149-52, where Edwards says that God’s happiness is already full and is not increased by that of the created order.
126 See Sherry, *Spirit and Beauty*, 13, 152. In these contexts, Sherry is particularly concerned with Edwards’ view of the Holy Spirit as the harmony or beauty of the Trinity. The parallel with joy, however, is inescapable. The strongest statement in this regard is probably Misc. 97, where Edwards says that “the Holy Spirit is nothing but the infinite love and delight in God”. (This is based on his understanding of the dove as the Spirit’s symbol in the scriptures. This naturalistic typology of the dove as a bird of love, leads to Edwards positing the Spirit as the bond of love between Father and Son, especially in the light of the Spirit’s descent at Christ’s baptism.)
127 In referring to Misc. 96, on the Trinity, for instance.
end for which God has created the world is the glorification of God, which is accomplished through the outworking of the divine overflow of love, happiness and excellency. Whilst Christ is the basis for the human apprehension of both beauty and election in Edwards’ theology, he also explores the role of the Spirit in communicating beauty.

This is not so with his doctrine of election, however. This is, I believe, because he links the overflow of the Spirit into the trinitarian act in creation, but fails to link the act of God as relational to his doctrine of election. In treating election he retreats into a more forensic Father-centred notion which is almost completely divorced from the ebullient formulations of divine overflow which he enunciated in the context of beauty and happiness. Though Edwards has the framework to tie up the doctrine of predestination in terms of the role of the Spirit in the Trinity and in the work of redemption, he does not make the link in any fashion, let alone with the creativity with which Barth makes the connection.128

Finally, his linkage of predestination to the will of God in absence of a link to the happiness of God, allows Edwards to consider the happiness of the elect, but does not allow him to consider the happiness of God over what is construed as a fundamentally unhappy doctrine.

5.2.3 Barth and Edwards: joy and election

There are some remarkable similarities between Barth’s doctrine of the joy of God and Edwards’ doctrine of the happiness of God. The differences are also significant. For Barth joy is the stronger of the twins, joy and beauty, both born of the biblical notion of God’s glory and its overflow in creation and redemption. Edwards develops both in a far more equal way. Whilst each asserts the supremacy of the intra-trinitarian love and beauty and joy, and each finds considerable space to elucidate it in the context of the divine Son, Jesus Christ, both also fail to do full justice to the person of the Spirit in the communication of divine joy. Yet, in a surprising way, each liberates the other from different weaknesses in their respective interpretations of Calvinism: Barth by suggesting that election might indeed be recognized and grasped as a joyful doctrine;
Edwards by opening avenues for engaging with beauty and the created order. In combination, their emphases on joy and beauty offer a rich contribution to the development of the doctrine of God, in Calvinist tradition and beyond.

Whilst the interest of this chapter has primarily been the understanding of joy as part of God’s perfection or excellency, it is impossible to extricate this from some consideration of the nature of divine beauty and glory. Both Edwards and Barth, despite (or perhaps because of) the latter’s hesitancy, provide the foundations for a reformed theology of æsthetics, if not the basis for a full æsthetical theology.\textsuperscript{129}

Edwards and Barth share some fundamental concepts in their doctrines of election. For both the will to elect is rooted in God the Father, expressed through the Son (in Barth construed as the act of God in a particular way). In both election is appropriated by the Spirit. Yet this is an aspect of the doctrine of election both explored rather tentatively. Both Edwards’ and Barth’s relational trinitarian conceptualizations falter due to underdeveloped pneumatologies.

In the doctrine of election Barth offers a corrective to Edwards’ doctrine of predestination to damnation. By recognizing that the doctrine of election is connected to the doctrine of God, specifically of God who is joyful, Barth offers a doctrine of election which remains true to the notion of a gloriously joyful God.

We are then brought back to our initial proposition, that joy is a perfection of the nature of God. For Barth joy is, \textit{de facto}, treated as a perfection. It is certainly given a priority denied to beauty. In Edwards, however, beauty and happiness as expressions of divine excellency are given equal weighting in the discussions of God.

\textsuperscript{129} Edwards “formulated an aesthetic that, certainly by implication, made large provision for art, that explicitly provided for the importance of the beauty of nature. Ideas about the importance of perception, and about the signs of spiritual truth, appear in later American literature so similar to his own, that we can reasonably suppose that Edwards may have fathered them—though their precise genealogy remains a mystery.” Erdt, \textit{Jonathan Edwards}, 93. Final non sequitur notwithstanding, Erdt’s view of Edwards’ contribution ought to be echoed with respect to Barth. This not just because of his love of Mozart, or his appreciation of Grünewald’s Isenheim altarpiece, but also on the basis of the sheer beauty of his theology and its presentation, itself a tribute to the beauty of God. This possibility is suggested by Daniel, \textit{Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards}, 177, who says: “The beauty or excellence of a thing consists in its relations to others. Since the very existence of a thing consists in those relations, the ontological and aesthetic dimensions of the thing cannot ultimately be differentiated, without reducing its moral relations to mere accidents.”
5.2.4 Continuing the “unfinished revolution”

In the introduction to Chapter 4, I suggested that Barth had begun a “revolution” in his Doctrine of God. Moving from glory as basic to his doctrine of the perfections of God, he returns to glory in the last pair of the perfections he treats. It is here that he grounds his theology of the joy of God. Barth included this sense of joy in his doctrine of election. The connection which he did not make was to acknowledge the place he had given to joy and reintegrate it into his basic “definition” of God.

The corrective which Jonathan Edwards offers to Barth is to be bold in speaking of the joy of God. Edwards’ incorporation of joy (happiness) in his central concepts of the doctrine of God results in a rich and relational view of the nature of the Trinity ad intra. The combined weight of Barth’s depiction of the joy of God and Edwards’ placement of this in his central concepts, suggests that Barth’s definition of God could be extended to culminate in the view that God is the one who loves and rejoices in freedom. This would complete the revolution which Barth began in his doctrine of the perfections and developed in his doctrine of election. Election may thus be described as the free, joyful and loving act of the triune God, and a key expression of the relational nature of God.130

If the bilateral corrections proposed between Barth and Edwards are valid, then we might move closer to a fully trinitarian concept, not only of joy in God, but also of beauty in God – the God who elects to joy in God. With their different views of the place of beauty in the nature of God, Barth and Edwards nuance differently the nature of the divine relationality. The similarity of their views of the joy or happiness of God, and especially its overflow in the work of Christ and the Spirit, leads each to a rich rendering of the Trinity ad intra and ad extra. It is in the radical step which Barth makes, the inclusion of the doctrine of election in the doctrine of God, that the major difference is revealed. Barth’s doctrine of election takes on a character radically different from Edwards’, which bears all the hallmarks of the struggle to sustain a voluntarism based on the priority of the will of God. The result is a joyless doctrine for Edwards, in contrast to the joyfulness of Barth’s doctrine of election. The outworking of the joyfulness of God as it relates to the human response is the subject of the next chapter.

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130 The challenge which Barth offers to Edwards is as regards his doctrine of election. A fuller analysis of this is not possible in this thesis.
Chapter 6

Barth, creation and humanity

*Joy, gratitude and gladness*

In der Freude offenbart Gott sich selber. (Lothar Steiger)

Joy is the meaning of human life, joy in thanksgiving and thanksgiving in joy. (Jürgen Moltmann)

The exploration of the issues of divine joy in the previous chapters has shown the richness of the theme in both Barth’s and Edwards’ doctrine of God. Both theologians have much to offer to the discipline of theology as a whole and to important issues in each other’s theology in particular. In the light of the explications of the doctrine of God just explored, I turn now to an overview of the resultant theology of creation in Barth. The focus will be narrowed to a central issue in the theology of creation, that is, anthropology, paying particular attention to the dimensions of rejoicing in Barth’s theology.

Both Barth and Edwards develop their central theology of God with close and regular reference to the nature of humanity. This is because they both perceive
revelation as having a view to a particular end – human response to the saving act of God and human participation in the glory of God and the glorification of God. Barth and Edwards both understand humanity within the frame of reference set by revelation, and particularly in the light of the act of God in Jesus Christ.

A specific link between Barth and Edwards is to be found in their use of the concept of *beatitudo*. The understanding that God delights in communication – *ad intra* and *ad extra* – and that God’s self-communication is to the end of God’s own glorification through creation, together connect the theology of Barth and Edwards in close harmony. That the creation of humanity is, in the words of a document of the reformed tradition, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, with the “chief end” that humans might “worship God and enjoy Him forever” suggests that this theme might help in understanding the nature of humanity as well as divinity.

Stark differences are noted, however, when the antonyms each uses for joy are studied. Whilst a concept as rich as joy is for Barth (and happiness is for Edwards) finds no easy circumscription, its usage provides some insights. Damnation is one clear opposite to joy in Edwards. This stems at least partly from his eschatology which is driven by a concern to maintain the traditional descriptions of heaven and hell which recognize the agony of deprivation. In the daily context of the life of faith, however, the corruption of true joy is joy which seeks to find its basis in the things of this world – good though they may be. True joy, which has its source in God, is also attended by

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1 This is developed by Barth in CD II.2.169ff and by Edwards in EC. (Edwards’ use is outlined by Robert W. Jenson, *America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988, 38-42; 98, who suggests the ecumenicity of this theme as Edwards develops it. It must be noted that the concept is broader than traditional notions of beatific vision.)

2 See the many Miscellanies on these and related topics for examples.


3 RA 145-83.
“godly sorrow”. It is this view that joy has an antithesis and can be corrupted that places joy alongside Edwards’ other affections. 

Barth does not make the same links of divine and human joy through the eschatological depictions of heaven and hell. For him, the link is most particularly forged in the act of God in Jesus Christ and his distinctive doctrine of election allows him to transcend the traditional “symmetry” of rejection and election. Barth does not posit das Nichtige as an opposite to any particular view of eternity. “It exists only to the extent that it is denied by God.” He does not want to “go behind” the “Yes” of God in election in his exploration of this fundamental negation. Whilst Barth does oppose joy to sorrow, the opposite of joy is more likely to be found in terms of absence, such as boredom or loneliness.

Barth’s exploration of joy in the context of the perfections of glory and eternity places joy in a position which allows it to contribute to his of full and rich conceptualization of God’s glory. “[God’s] being is eternal in glory.” The denial of this is a denial, for Barth, of the very centre of the perfection of God. With joy located in such close proximity and so intimately linked to these perfections, a denial of the joy of being is a denial of being. Joy, then, needs no antithesis for Barth. Its affirmation is not by means of positing an opposite; rather it happens as the asymmetrical underscoring of the positive – the joyfulness of God’s glory.

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4 RA 339-40.
5 In discussing RA and the background of DM, John E. Smith, Jonathan Edwards: Puritan, Preacher, Philosopher, Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series, ed. Brian Davies, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1992, 31, notes Edwards’ novel approach to judging experience by recognizing the existence of counterfeit piety. This background is the basis for Edwards’ positing of corruptions and opposites of all the affections. Joy, for Edwards to include it with the other affections, has to be shown to fit this pattern.
6 Barth goes so far as to suggest that, because Jesus has “suffered eternal corruption…[h]ell means punishment of a very positive kind”. CD III.2.602, Barth’s emphasis.
7 See CD III.2.625-33.
8 CD III.2.608.
9 See for example, CD III.2.214.
10 See CD III.2.116-7, and CD III.3.335-7 where he discusses boredom in relation to Heidegger.
11 CD II.1.640.
12 It could also be argued, based on Barth’s parallel of incorporating ugliness into beauty (CD II.1.665), that joy in fact incorporates sorrow. Whilst Barth does not state this per se,
Whilst both Barth and Edwards consider human joy, we follow Barth’s exposition, linked as it is to the encompassing power of the Yes of election, and embracing the possibilities of the analogy relationis. Edwards, who is more concerned with issues of being, has less to offer in this continuing discussion, so we turn to the issue of Barth’s anthropology.

6.1 Humanity in creation’s choir

Whilst Barth’s Doctrine of Creation is spelled out in Volume III of the Church Dogmatics, this analysis makes constant reference to Volume II, since most of the main issues as they relate to joy are grounded there. Volume III provides a “viewing platform” from which to see the issues of creation, especially human joy, and in particular to appreciate their rootedness in Barth’s doctrine of God. With the concept of God as joyfully electing in mind, we turn to this closer reading of selected sections of CD II and CD III.

It is in CD III.2 that Barth moves to his fullest expressions of human joy, again pre-empted and underpinned by the ideas developed in CD II. In discussing “Man in the Cosmos”, Barth recognizes the importance of the whole of creation in its relationship with God, but notes that “in practice the doctrine of creation means anthropology—the doctrine of man”. Whilst

[m]an is not therefore the world…[h]e is not even a microcosm. He is both less and more than this [for whilst] we do not know how the lordship and praise of God are exercised in the world around us…[p]erhaps it is eternally for us and all other creatures to worship in

he does note that there is no contradiction in asserting that God’s glory gives joy, and can “unleash fear and terror”. CD II.1.653.

In Chapter 4 I have noted that in describing the joy of God in CD II.1, Barth states that it is in this context that “all God’s works must be understood”, and that “all together and without exception they take part in the movement of God’s self-glorification and the communication of His joy”. CD II.1.647. Thus “it is their destiny to offer a true if inadequate response in the temporal sphere to the jubilation with which the Godhead is filled from eternity to eternity”. CD II.1.648. These ideas form a cluster around which the following discussion takes place.

CD III.2.3-19.

CD III.2.3. This is largely because “the Word of God speaks of God Himself and also of man”. CD III.2.11.
face of the fact that there [in the non-human creation] too He rules and is praised.\(^{16}\)

However, it is “only of man” that we know

the full significance of God’s mercy and goodness;…the seriousness of the interest with which God the Lord has turned to His creature; and the praise and gratitude which He awaits from His creature and which He is ready to receive as His supreme and only honour.\(^{17}\)

Thus it is to humanity that “God’s self-revealing Word” is “a radiant message of joy”.\(^{18}\) Despite human attempts to turn grace into law, God’s grace turns people back into that for which they were created, the receiving of grace\(^{19}\) and restoration of the created joy of humanity, lost in the fall, but received again “inconceivably and infinitely increased (\textit{unbegreiflich, unendlich vermehrt}) by the personal participation of God in man’s being accomplished in Jesus Christ”.\(^{20}\)

Humanity, as a component of creation, which is itself an expression of the joy and glory of God, is created to know and express joy. In and due to the work of God in Jesus Christ, humanity is enabled afresh in this basic dimension of createdness.\(^{21}\) It is

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\(^{16}\) CD III.2.17. (With his tongue firmly planted in his cheek, Barth also notes that humans are “the only [creatures]…to laugh and smoke!” CD III.2.83. This is, in many respects, a comment on human uniqueness within creation – the ability to enjoy cognitively and to do damage to our bodies in the pursuit of pleasure.)

\(^{17}\) CD III.2.17.

\(^{18}\) CD III.2.35. Barth goes on to note that the human response is often the transformation of this into “a gloomy law which now with tears he tries to obey and now he secretly endeavours to evade”. CD III.2.35.

\(^{19}\) CD III.2.38. “The sad truth of our bondage, of our \textit{servum arbitrium}, is far surpassed by the joyful truth that God is free constantly to be the One who created man, the gracious God, i.e., the One who is free to cause man to be unalterably that which he is created, the creature to whom He is gracious”. CD III.2.38.

Barth goes on to define the being of humanity as “a being which rests on the election of God…and as a being which consists in the hearing of the Word of God”. CD III.2.163. (KD 195) Though note that Barth qualifies the last of these statements significantly, to maintain a distance between God and humanity, and also an elevated dignity of humankind, as those who \textit{really} hear – and thus, of course, are fully accountable to God. Thus “The Word and summons of God to each and every man is the existence of the man Jesus”. CD III.2.164.

\(^{20}\) CD II.1.648. (KD 730)

\(^{21}\) T. F. Torrance, in his editor’s introduction to CD III.1, notes that:

“Creation is the outer and inner side of the one free decision and action of God.…On God’s side, this means that the work of creation is not just the causing of creaturely existence but the creating and seeking of a distinct reality with which to share His life and glory. In this

Footnote continues on following page
in its reflection of the glory of God that creation’s freedom can be understood. The creation is free to praise the creator, yet can only do so because it is the will of the creator that creation was made this way. The implications for creation in general and humanity in particular are stated by Barth to be parallel to this, since

this [the undisturbed expression of gladness] is what is to be expected of all creation because this is the source from which they come. This is their secret which will one day come out and be revealed.

Whilst Barth clearly notes the context of human praise as grounded in the nature of God and shared in general with the whole of creation, the particular role of humanity becomes his primary concern. As humanity should, all other creatures do praise God “because they cannot help doing it”:

Humanity has, by this reckoning, a peculiar role in creation. Comprising fallen creatures, humanity fails to reach fulfilment, but finds true fulfilment only in reflecting the glory of God. When “man accepts again his destiny in Jesus Christ…he is only like a late-comer slipping shamefacedly into creation’s choir in heaven and earth”.

This choir has

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22 See CD III.2.192.

23 CD II.1.648. This is fundamental in the whole of the doctrine on creation as Barth unfolds in it CD III. Thus:

“[God] under no other inward constraint than that of the freedom of His love, has, in an act of the overflowing of His inward glory, posited as such a reality which is distinct from Himself”. CD III.1.15.

24 “The creature has no voice of its own….It echoes and reflects the glory of the Lord. It does this in its heights and its depths, its happiness and its misery. The angels do it…even the smallest creatures do it.” CD II.1.648.

As T. F. Torrance states in the preface to CD III.1: “On man’s side, it [the free decision and act of God] means that even creaturehood is an existence in grace, having its glory in the overflowing glory of God. The proper response is therefore gratitude, in which alone man lives a genuinely human life as a child of the heavenly Father.” CD III.1.vii.

25 CD II.1.648. Humanity has a unique role in “voicing creation’s praise”, but before exploring this, Barth ensures that he does not overstate the role God has given to human creatures. Creation is not voiceless without human praise, but creation’s praise is deficient without the human aspect of praise. Further on this point, though dependent more on Paul Tillich than on Karl Barth, see Jeremy Begbie, Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1991.

26 CD II.1.648.
never ceased its praise, but merely suffered and sighed, as it still does, that in inconceivable folly and ingratitude (unbegreiflicher Torheit und Undankbarkeit) its living centre man does not hear its voice, its response, its echoing of the divine glory, or rather hears it in a completely perverted way, and refuses to co-operate in the jubilation which surrounds him.\footnote{CD II.1.648. (KD 731)}

In this image Barth sums up the whole human predicament – the isolation from creation, human inability to hear creation’s praise and thus the profound failure to take the reserved place in the divine order (or, in Barth’s metaphor, to sing with the choir of creation). It is in contrast to this position of isolation from the glory of God that Barth views the splendour of eternal glory, in which, in Christ, all previous human experience, activity and failure will cease to “exist at all even as the past”.\footnote{CD II.1.648.} This freedom to be that for which humanity was created will render the possibility for humankind to

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\text{live in his determination to be the reflection and echo of God and therefore the witness to the divine glory that reaches over to him, rejoicing with the God who Himself has eternal joy and Himself is eternal joy.}\footnote{CD II.1.648-9.}
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Within Barth’s understanding of creation as a locus for and means of glorifying God, the place he accords to humanity is central. In the light of the connection Barth makes of joy and beauty with glory in the discussion of the divine perfections, he might be expected to lead into a development which links joy and beauty in his anthropology. However, his anthropology is conspicuously short of any explicit statements about the beauty of the human body or human relationships, or about art and the beauty of human creativity. His doctrine of humanity is, therefore, constrained by his limits on beauty. This lack is explicable in the context of Barth’s reluctance to allow beauty any independent importance as a theological theme. The considerable role he gives to human joy, however, which is in parallel to his allowing joy in God to take on a strong role, is remarkable. Barth’s description of human joy takes many forms, ranging from gladness for God’s work in Jesus Christ, to the joy of sabbath; it incorporates praise, and the pleasure of relationships. It is grounded in the reflecting of the divine glory and beatitudo. Human joy will now be considered by exploring Barth’s use of the concepts of gratitude and gladness.
6.2 Barth and human gladness

For Barth, true gladness\(^{30}\) (and thus human joy) is based in gratitude — or, more precisely, is founded in God, but finds its expression through human gratitude for God’s act in Jesus Christ. Human gratitude is not merely in response to God’s gift of eternal life, nor in appreciation of God’s acts of deliverance, important though these gifts and acts are for Barth (and for the scripture writers). Gratitude encompasses a recognition that a new mode of existence, a life of joy, is possible. It is not mere emotive response, but has conspicuous cognitive as well as affective (and, as shown below, volitional) dimensions. Thus Barth can say:

True gratitude enquires—and it does not enquire in a soliloquy, but it enquires after Him to whom it wants to show gratitude.\(^{31}\)

This gratitude or thankfulness is of the essential nature of creation, for it is that which most clearly distinguishes creation from its creator.\(^{32}\) Barth’s aversion to the analogia entis moves him to posit this relationship of gratitude, which is fundamental to his understanding of the nature of the creature, as an alternative means of exploring the nature of being. The analogia relationis does not deny the radical discontinuity between God and humanity, however.\(^{33}\)

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\(^{30}\) The terminology which Barth uses most often is simply “gern”. This is often translated “gladly” in the Church Dogmatics, but in some cases an adverbial translation would be awkward so the noun “gladness” is used. It is the emphatic and regular use (in CD III.2, as we shall see in particular) that draws this theme to recognition.


\(^{32}\) This is seen in early in Barth’s development of his doctrine of Creation:

“God confronts the creature as Creator. Here this other reality can only exist before God as it is thankful to Him. Here thankfulness is shown to be the essence of the creature, of the reality distinct from God. In the face of the person of Jesus Christ we certainly cannot assign to either the creature or to God any other place.” CD III.1.26-7.

\(^{33}\) As Barth has noted earlier in this volume:

“…this Creator-creature relationship — established, determined and limited by this act [of creation] — corresponds externally to the inner life of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is the execution of the contingent decision of God in his predestination.” CD III.1.16. This is evidence for what Alan J. Torrance recognizes in the analogia relationis, seen in the shadow of the vestigium trinitatis in Barth. See Alan J. Torrance, Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation with special reference to Volume One of Karl Barth’s Church Dogmatics, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1996, esp. 207, where Torrance finds at least “subliminal” use of the concept, but notes Barth’s openness in recognizing this. He is eager to argue against the ‘focal’ use of the illustration. Torrance, Persons in Communion, 208-9.
Barth emphasizes God’s joy in “elevating man above himself…in…exuberance”, 34 and thus evoking a human response of gratitude, gladness, joy and praise. 35 Hence “we must glorify Him in joy and gratitude if we are not to sin wantonly against Him, if we are to let God be God”. 36 The recognition of the otherness of God and the rightness of the humble response of gratitude provides a basis for exploring human obedience.

6.2.1 Gratitude and obedience

Humanity, according to Barth, is not to be obedient to God simply as response to God’s saving work in Jesus Christ, but rather out of gladness for God’s act. He is concerned to ground human action in freedom, not in obligation. The free actions which produce gladness are, for Barth, of the nature of right and true human acts. Thus “the glorifying of God consists simply in the life-obedience of the creature which knows God. It has no alternative but to thank and praise God.” 37 The linking of “life-obedience” with thanksgiving and praise is important. The obedience which lacks joy is grounded other than in the revealed nature of God. True godliness is gratefully obedient, and this is tantamount to joyful obedience. 38

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34 CD II.1.219.
35 CD II.1.219 and 223 (KD 251). See also CD II.1.374-81, where Barth makes a case that “faith is joy and gratitude”. CD II.1.374. (“darum ist der Glaube Freudigkeit und Dankbarkeit” KD 421.)
36 CD II.1.375. Here Barth is exploring the perfections of mercy and righteousness. It is the substitution of Christ for us which is “the very essence of God’s own being” which is to inspire this response of joy and gladness. Thus it is that the entry of Jesus Christ into human existence can be a “great joy which shall be to all people.” CD II.1.374, alluding to Lk 2:10. (See also CD III.2.60, where Barth discusses the joy which is for all in the birth of Christ.)

The same dynamic, of human response grounded in the nature of God, is repeated under the rubric of love in CD II.1.276-284, and of freedom in CD II.1.321, for example.

37 CD II.1.674.
38 “…the call that we should seek joy is not merely a concession or a permission but a command which cannot be lightly regarded by one who has appreciated the divine justification of creation. We need not be ashamed before the holiness of God if we can still laugh and must laugh again, but only if we allow laughter to wither away, and above all if we have relapsed into a sadly ironic smile.” CD III.1.371. Here Barth is discussing creation as justification and is linking gratitude to the praise which is God’s by right, and to which belong “gratitude for an order, beauty and purposefulness which speak for themselves, and a world-affirming attitude directly and genuinely grounded, not in illusions, but in actual phenomena and relationships”. CD III.1.371.

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For Barth then, true and godly – and thus, informed – joy is the best defence against “religion”, where religion is the self-absorbed focus on behaviour and externals. Whilst the divine self-revelation may give us reason to rejoice in creaturely being, “this does not spring from the fact that the latter in itself and as such gives cause for rejoicing”. Whilst this fear of idolizing creation may be the reason Barth has not seen value in development of an æsthetics, per se, he does explore the theme of joy in a more thorough way than he will contemplate for beauty.

True joy is grounded in God’s glory, received as gift in gratitude and results in gladness. It issues in obedience, which responds in turn to the call to divine fellowship and its related expectations. This is mooted in CD II, and drawn out further in CD III. Basic to the understanding of human joy is the recognition of God’s joyful election. Thus Barth, who we have seen depicts God as gladly and graciously electing humanity in Christ, recognizes the glad and grateful response of the elect to God. It is “those who, in and through the community, are the object of divine predestination” who are called to rejoice.

6.2.2 Humanity: elected in and for joy

Those who are elected by God are elected, according to Barth, to share in the divine blessedness. As God is “determined to blessedness”, so those who are called by God are called to a rejoicing in just that blessedness. Because God’s election is associated

39 CD III.1.371. Thus the created order, which may demand gratitude, is not the end of our gratitude, but rather “it bids us primarily and above all to be always perceptive and mindful of itself, directing our attention primarily to the transcendent reason of all reasons for being grateful”. CD III.1.371.

40 Implications may be drawn from the parallels in CD II.1 regarding beauty and joy as to the shape of a “Barth inspired” æsthetics, but this is not the primary concern of this discussion. Though noted by Hans Urs von Balthasar and Jürgen Moltmann, the potential of this aspect of Barth’s dogmatics has yet to be widely recognized, let alone explored and developed.

41 CD II.2.313.

42 CD II.2.412. (KD 455). This is discussed in more detail later in this section.
with God’s joy, the destiny of the elect can be conceived as election to joy. The mystery of creation is thus not so much the existence of evil, but the possibility of joy. Thus (in the context of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) Barth says:

…the joy and the misery of life have their foundation in the will of God…It is really the command of God that we should rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Those who rejoice are justified and so too are those who mourn and protest.43

The resolution of human destiny is pre-empted in the impartation of joy in election, in the act of God in Christ. It is in this conceptuality that Barth finds the possibility, perhaps even the necessity, of joy.

The determination of the elect to be the object of the love of God is undoubtedly his determination to blessedness. The glory of God, to share in which is the intention and purpose of His love for the creature, is the overflowing of the inner perfection and joy of God. God chooses the elect from eternity and for eternity, that he may catch up a beam or a drop of His own blessedness and live as its possessor, that he may rejoice in Him and with Him. It is for blessedness that God has

43 CD III.1.376. Barth develops this christocentric concept when he comments thus on the Christian faith:

“Christian faith lives by the Yes which God Himself has spoken. This is the certitude, joy and peace of the positive decision which it makes, and which it must dare to make because if it does not do so it is not the Christian faith.” CD III.1.385.

This reaches its climax when Barth leads into his discussion of “Leibnizian optimism” by stating that: “…the grounds for joy and happiness in our creaturely condition are more numerous and powerful than those for unhappiness and pain” (CD III.1.390-1) and hence, in strong contradistinction to his own willingness to allow the reality of joy and pain in his own theology (centred in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ), Barth sees a dual failing in “Leibnizian optimism” which “passes too lightly over the problem of evil, sin and death. [T]he same is true of its treatment of the positive aspect of the world. Incapable of weeping with them that weep, it is also incapable at bottom of rejoicing with them that rejoice, i.e., profoundly, calmly and definitively.” CD III.1.407.

This dimension of Barth’s thinking seems rarely to be discussed. He is impassioned in his plea for humankind to display these characteristics, because he sees them displayed in Jesus Christ, and grounded in the trinitarian reality. Here we also have a hint as to the way in which Barth expects the joy which is God’s gift to humanity to be expressed: with profundity, calmness and definitiveness. We are by no means dealing with a call to uncontrolled emotional outburst. Rather, Barth points to the depths of joy, the basic conceptual elements, grounded in the work of Christ, which are the basis for humanity’s quest for the heights – a quest realized in Christ, because achieved by Christ in his death and resurrection. This will be explored in Chapter 7.
determined man, as He determines Himself in His own Son for unity with man, as in Him He offered up no less than Himself.\textsuperscript{44} The expressed christology here contains a nascent pneumatological suggestion in the trinitarian form of Barth’s expression of the basis and process of joy. The possibility of joy, like the possibility of election, has its foundation in the will of God, its expression in the act of God in Jesus Christ, and its continuity in the life of the believer and the church through the work of the divine Spirit. The ongoing overflow of the joy of God, seen once in splendour in Jesus Christ, is continued in the Spirit’s work. Barth does not express this in its fullness, however. Just as the Spirit was conceptualized, for many Christian theologians from Augustine onwards, as the bond of love within the Trinity, so the Spirit may be conceptualized as the bond of joy – and as the bond of love was understood to overflow in the incarnation, so too should the bond of joy be conceived. This finds expression in the writings of Jonathan Edwards.\textsuperscript{45} In Barth it remains only a suggestion. Yet the implications for humanity are, in many cases, drawn out on the basis of the nature of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Whilst not specifically grounded in the work of the Spirit, Barth’s exploration of “gladness” is an important link in his analogy of relationality.

6.2.3 Grace, gratitude and gladness

I have so far used the terms “gratitude” and “gladness” almost synonymously. In many contexts this is the way in which Barth uses them. The strong link which Barth makes between divine grace and human gratitude will now form a basis for an exploration of human gladness, or joy.

Barth notes that the knowledge of God, communicated by the Word of God, is “the knowledge of creation in its indissoluble connexion with the covenant”.\textsuperscript{46} With

\textsuperscript{44} CD II.2.412. “Eben die Bestimmung des Erwählten zum Gegenstand der Liebe Gottes ist nun zweifellos seine Bestimmung zur Seligkeit. Gottes Herrlichkeit, an der das Geschöpf zu beteiligen der Wille und das Ziel seiner Liebe ist, ist das Überströmen der inneren Vollkommenheit und Freude Gottes.” KD 455.

Compare CD III.1.384: “God gave Himself up to the lowliness and misery of creaturely existence because otherwise the latter could not share His divine glory.” This comes amid a long discussion of Jesus Christ’s life on our behalf.

\textsuperscript{45} See EC 255 and Misc. 97.

\textsuperscript{46} CD III.2.11. It is concomitant on this assertion that Barth states that “[a]lthough dogmatics has no business to broaden out into cosmology, it has a duty to expound a specific doctrine of man.” CD III.2.13. This, he considers, is the delimitation of the Word of God, and as such we “know the cosmos only through its relation to man”. CD III.2.14-5. The

Footnote continues on following page
the covenant comes the call to return to the Lord, the gracious call of God, which is “the meaning of the existence of the man Jesus”, in whom alone is life and the invitation to life. Hence Barth can say that “[g]ratitude is the precise creaturely counterpart to the grace of God”. More importantly, however, Barth is willing to define humanity in these terms, in terms of gratitude.

From this linking of grace with gratitude as the character of response, Barth moves to a description of human response in terms of the joy which is the mode of expression of gratitude, which Barth describes as “gladness”. He first stresses that it is in being in gratitude and humility that “real man” takes a “step into freedom” which does not lack “definiteness, assurance and joyfulness”. This step into freedom leads towards self-realization in relationship with God. In all this, the recitative “Er dankt Gott” is heard. After an extended discussion of the human freedom which is related

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implication is that it is on this basis that Barth denies the possibility of any theology of nature and thus of any aesthetics. These, he says, “attempt to ascribe to anthropology as such the function and dignity of cosmology. The attempt is too ambitious to be successful.” CD III.1.15.

47 CD III.2.164. 
48 CD III.2.166. 
49 “If the Word of God in which man is, and is therefore historical, is a Word of divine grace, if he is thus summoned to hear and obey this Word, i.e., to be, and to continue to be, in the hearing of this Word, then the being of man can and must be more precisely defined as a being in gratitude.” CD III.2.166. (“…es ist ein Sein im Danken.” KD 198.) Barth goes on to define gratitude in the light of God’s grace: “Gratitude is the precise creaturely counterpart to the grace of God. What is by the Word of the grace of God, must be in gratitude; and man’s casting of his trust upon God is nothing other or less, but also nothing more, than the being of man as his act in gratitude.” CD III.2.166. (KD 198). “To be grateful is to recognise a benefit….Where a genuine benefit calls for thanks, and where genuine thanks respond to a benefit, there arises a relationship which, created by one party, can only be accepted by the other, and not cancelled but continually renewed.” CD III.2.167. (Danken heißt erkenntlich sein für eine Wohltat….KD 199). The priority of the parties to the relationality of gladness is further blurred when Barth further refines this definition in exploring “being in encounter”. This is discussed later in this chapter.

50 “Bestimmtheit, Gewißheit und Freudigkeit” KD III.2.228. (CD 191). (cf. CD 188 (KD 224) where they are translated as “definiteness, certainty and joyfulness”). In all this Barth is developing a sense of human freedom for gratitude, obedience and gladness.

51 CD III.2.191. 
52 KD III.2.224-5. (CD 188-9).
to this thankfulness, Barth posits the status of humanity as “partner of God”, based on the covenant. It is in the context of human definition as “covenant partner of God” that Barth draws out the implications of the act of God in Jesus Christ for humanity.

Having recognized the importance of the link between grace and human thankfulness (based in part on his discussions of the relationship between the terms χάρις and εὐχαριστεῖν/εὐχαριστία, which he views as complementary), Barth proceeds to discuss the character of humanity in terms of responsible knowledge, obedience, invocation and freedom, each grounded in thankfulness. Of all creation, this species is the one called to be the covenant partner of God in a growing relationship which is based on thankfulness and issues in creative and free obedience. The paradigm for this is Jesus Christ, who “for the joy set before him” endured the cross. Thus, participation in the Lord’s Supper is not mere “recollection as such, but present participation in the fruit of this sacrifice”.

The life-changing and enriching participation of humans in the eucharist (as well as thanksgiving in general) is rooted in the concept of human being as giving gratitude. Whilst any form of thanks may be expressed out of obligation or obedience, its fundamental connection with humanity is in the context of gratitude. God has

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54 This he explores in depth in CD III.2.203-324.
55 CD III.2.166-7. (KD 199). Barth does not make an etymological link to χαρά, however.
56 CD III.2.176-95.
57 CD III.2.170.
58 Heb. 12:2, briefly discussed by Barth in CD III.2.209.
59 As a “public person”, Barth notes, he became poor, to make many rich. (2 Cor. 8:9).
60 CD III.2.214. So Barth may proceed, speaking Christ’s blessing: “The offering of my body and blood has for you the effect that as you eat this bread my life is given to you as yours, and that as you drink of this cup you may live with joy and not with sorrow, as innocent and not condemned. As I have given my life for you, it belongs to you. You may live and not die. You may rejoice and not mourn.” CD III.2.214.
61 It is in gratitude that we are enabled to discover God as deliverer, the deliverer who “has only one goal: to maintain the cause of [the disciples] in death and the conquest of death; to offer up his life for them that they might live and be happy. (…damit er leben, und zwar fröhlich leben dürfe.)” CD III.2.215. (KD 257).
taken responsibility for humanity in Christ, a responsibility which includes the provision of joy. It can be found fully in him alone.

### 6.2.4 Gratitude and election

Election, in which God loves freely and joyfully in Jesus Christ, evokes the response of glad gratitude, which is critical to Barth’s understanding of the nature of humanity. It is based on Barth’s development of the concept of the *analogia relationis*, in which God posits himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit to humanity. The corollary of this

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62 “God interposes Himself for him (i.e. humankind), sharing his plight and making Himself responsible for his life and joy and glory. God Himself is his deliverer.” CD III.2.217.

63 “Life and blessedness may be had by man wholly in God and only in fellowship with Him, in whom they are to be sought and found.” CD III.2.219. It is this fundamental christocentrism which, says Barth, distinguishes Christianity from the ambiguity which Nietzsche recognizes in human sinfulness, which finds joy and pain in the same thing. CD III.2.235. Further on this connection of joy and pain at the human level, see Clément Rosset, *Joyful Cruelty: Toward a Philosophy of the Real*, ed. and transl. David F. Bell, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993. In his introduction to Rosset’s book, Bell suggests that Rosset’s contribution, in his “properly idiotic” work, is that he redefines “joy” as “a moral reaction of approbation produced by the recognition that occurs when one lays aside all mediation between oneself and the real…(which becomes) an instrument of knowledge of the world”. (Rosset, *Joyful Cruelty*, vii; xi). This view, whilst close to Barth’s sense of immediacy between God and humanity, rests on a deconstructionist notion of the “real” and the assumption of humanity’s ability to engage with it. The result is expected to be “idiotic” ambiguity. For Barth it is expected to be consistent with the revealed and revealing nature of God – and is thus consistent public truth.

64 “There is an *analogia relationis*. The correspondence and similarity of the two relationships consists in the fact that the freedom in which God posits Himself as the Father, is posited by Himself as the Son and confirms Himself as the Holy Ghost, is the same freedom as that in which He is the Creator of man, in which man may be His creature, and in which the Creator-creature relationship is established by the Creator….The Father and the Son are reflected in the man Jesus. There could be no plainer reference to the *analogia relationis* and therefore the *imago Dei* in the most central, i.e., the christological sense of the term.” CD III.2.220-1.

This concept is foundational to Barth’s next section, on the “Basic Form of Humanity”, CD III.2.222-85, to which we will shortly turn. See also CD III.2.323-4. Alan J. Torrance does not deal with this aspect of the *analogia relationis* adequately in his *Persons in Communion*, to the subsequent impoverishment of his trinitarian theology. This is because he pays attention to CD I.1 without adequate reference to the wider dynamics of the *Church Dogmatics*, especially the way in which Barth develops his doctrine of the Trinity more relationally in CD III. Whilst Torrance’s focus on the prolegomena of the *Church Dogmatics* is essential, it is in the development of his anthropology that many of the implications of Barth’s trinitarian conceptuality and thus his ontology and epistemological bases are revealed. The implicit suggestion in Torrance’s work is that the centre of Barth’s theology is in the Doctrine of the Word of God. This is a less than adequate perception.
in the sphere of human relationships is the balance between inappropriate surrender – the confusion of being bound to another with belonging to another – and intentional subjection – the seeking of identity in another rather than in God. The “way of humanity”, Barth argues, is found not between these aberrations, but above them, in “a togetherness which is accepted gladly and in freedom”, for then “man is neither a slave nor a tyrant, and the fellow-man is neither a slave nor a tyrant, but both are companions, associates, comrades, fellows and helpmates…. [T]hey are indispensable to one another.”

The “way” of humanity indicates “the secret of humanity”, a concept which “cannot be described… grounded or deduced from elsewhere, but can only be affirmed as the living centre of the whole”. This centre is found in the “decisive point” in which persons meet “gladly and in freedom”. This is in electing and election, [which] leads to mutual joy…. For in these circumstances [of co-existence in election] even the co-existence is joy.

And this joy is found especially in co-relationality, where one is most fully oneself in relation to another; in the being fully free in love. In a remarkable fashion, then, as Hardy and Ford have noted:

the joy of God needs to be celebrated as the central and embracing reality of the universe, and everything else seen in the light of this.

Whilst the Word of God is of great significance for Barth, his theology is concerned with the God who elects, creates and redeems – more than just the God who reveals.

65 CD III.2.269-71.
66 CD III.2.271.
67 CD III.2.271.
68 CD III.2.271.
69 CD III.2.271.
70 CD III.2.271.
71 CD III.2.272. (“Denn eben dieses Miteinander wird dann zur Freude”. KD 326.)
72 Barth goes on to describe this joy as a gift, which the recipient “necessarily desires to reciprocate to the best of his ability…. It is in this being given and giving that there consists the electing and the election, the mutual acceptance, the common joy (die gemeinsame Freude), and therefore the freedom of this encounter…. Humanity lives and moves and has its being in this freedom to be oneself with the other, and oneself to be with the other. (In dieser Freiheit mit dem Anderen zusammen sich selber und selber mit dem Anderen zusammen zu sein, besteht, in ihr lebt und webt die Humanität.)” CD III.2.272. (KD 327-8).
The joy of the intra-triune relations as the basis for humanity in relationship underscores the human need for love and worship, for blessing and praise, for receptivity and expression—because joyful freedom “is not merely the crown of humanity, but its root”.  

Barth develops election as an intimate connection between God and humanity in Jesus Christ. He affirms the centrality of joyful relationality. In the sphere of human relations, this means that “man is what he is freely and from the heart…in the secret of the encounter with his fellow-man in which the latter is welcome and he is with him gladly”. In the context of human relations with God, these are predicated on the *imago Dei* and the *analogia relationis* which suggest that the destiny of humans is “to offer a true if inadequate response in the temporal sphere to the jubilation with which the Godhead is filled from eternity to eternity”. The connection between the two is fundamentally christological, in that Jesus Christ, the electing God and elected Man, also “represents the gratitude of man”, makes our “present joyful”, and assures us of our future joy.

### 6.2.5 The secret of “being in encounter”

Using christology as a base, but noting that “christology is not anthropology”, Barth further develops his understanding of the nature of humanity as covenant partner of

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74 CD II.1.647-8.
75 CD III.2.273. “...in der Wuste dieser Einsamkeit”. KD 329. A fine image, perhaps equally well rendered more poetically as “the desert of solitude”.
76 CD III.2.274.
77 CD II.1.648. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, this is part of the “central cluster of ideas” around which the whole chapter moves.
78 CD III.2.439-40.
79 CD III.2.532.
80 CD III.2.500. Cf., “all our present joy is…a foretaste of the new and true joy which is still to come”. CD III.2.541. Because of the “song of praise in our hearts” knowing that Jesus is “Lord of time”, we also find “comfort and joy in relation to the future”. CD III.2.550. Barth also uses an argument related to the boundedness of time to indicate that gratitude and joy are the only proper ways to welcome time in its allotedness. CD III.2.555.
81 CD III.2.222.
God. He explores the dimensions of this as four theses, with each, in its own way, stressing the fundamental importance of relationality in “being in encounter”. The first three bear mention, because they lead to and undergird the fourth with which this study is particularly concerned.

Being in encounter: “is (1) a being in which one...looks the other in the eye” and they “discover one another”; “consists (2) in the fact that there is mutual speech and hearing” in which “the expression and address between I and Thou are reciprocal”; “consists (3) in the fact that we render mutual assistance in the act of being.” In this context, Barth says, “We now climb a step higher” into a healthy “altruism.”

Having set these three parameters for being in encounter, Barth adds a fourth which “is the secret of the whole, and therefore of the three preceding stages”. This fourth aspect is that “the basic form of humanity stands under the sign that it is done on both sides with gladness”.

I think that this unpretentious word “gladly,” while it does not penetrate the secret before which we stand, does at least indicate it correctly as the conditio sine qua non of humanity.

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82 Barth moves to this elevation of human gladness through discussing “The Basic Form of Humanity”. CD III.2.222-85.
83 CD III.2.231-42, having first noted the radical difference of his thinking from that of Nietzsche.
84 CD III.2.250-85.
85 CD III.2.250.
86 CD III.2.251-2.
87 CD III.2.252.
88 CD III.2.259.
89 CD III.2.260.
90 CD III.2.260.
91 CD III.2.261. Barth uses the image of a fish needing water as an illustration of this mutual concern, which he opposes to “unhealthy altruism”. CD III.2.261.
92 CD III.2.265.
94 CD III.2.266. (“Ich denke, daß dieses anspruchlose Wort gerne das Geheimnis, vor dem wir nun stehen, zwar nicht auflöst, aber als die conditio sine qua non der Humanität wenigstens richtig bezeichnet.” KD III.2.319).
Barth goes on to describe this “secret of humanity,…the necessity of this ‘gladly’, this freedom [as…] not merely the crown of humanity, but its root”.\textsuperscript{95} Despite being only able to talk around this subject, its depth being such that it cannot be fully described or uncovered,\textsuperscript{96} Barth stresses the importance of gladness, this secret of humanity, with freedom as the root from which it derives the nourishment to flourish. Gladness is a concomitant of loving in freedom which has its parallel in the glory of God. This whole dissertation argues that joy performs a particular function in Barth’s analysis of the divine perfections; not only does it add a richness and relationality to the perfection of glory, it serves to enrich the doctrine of divine election as well. Human joy functions in Barth as an outcome of being fully oneself, of freely loving, as reflecting divine glory. In adding this fourth dimension to his discussion of the basic form of humanity, Barth is adding a richness to what would otherwise still be a very adequate description of the nature of humanity. In both his theology and his anthropology, Barth seems intent on enriching his concepts beyond the merely cognitive. He is adding, to use the language of Jonathan Edwards, a dimension of affection to his understanding of personhood – divine and human.

To put this in another way, in both his development of the divine perfections and his development of the basic form of humanity, Barth has done a satisfactory job of setting his theology soundly in the current of scripture and tradition before he deals with joy (or gladness). Yet in both cases he chooses to add something further, something which he argues is scriptural, but which is overlooked in much Protestant dogmatic theology. Barth is unwilling to allow his doctrine of God to be confined in merely cognitive terms. In God’s revelation, God is accommodating human response by enabling and evoking human joy. It is as if Barth wants to build surprise, a smile, into his description of the perfections of God so that if it should come to be treated too seriously – by critics or admirers – it will challenge their seriousness. It will be like a portrait whose eye twinkles at those who view it. Barth wants his description of God’s perfections to remain a living pointer to the nature of a living God – the living and joyful God. It must point to the God who is enthroned on the praises of creation, not just on the concepts of theologians. In his portrait of humanity Barth similarly includes the smile of gladness. It is in the context of humanity that Barth steps beyond his

\textsuperscript{95} CD III.2.273. (KD 328).
\textsuperscript{96} CD III.2.272-3.
reluctance in CD II.1, where the surprise is hidden in the wrapping of glory. In CD III.2 he is bolder, allowing this “superfluous” dimension, this secret, to stand unconcealed. It is the pointer to the glory of God, which is the characteristic of the one who loves in freedom. The overflow of this glory is signified by divine joy. In parallel, the apprehension of divine glory elicits human gladness.

6.2.6 Human joy in Barth

Gladness, then, takes Barth’s anthropology beyond voluntaristic or cognitive terms, and beyond the merely responsive dimensions of gratitude. It opens the richness of an affective dimension of response to God and to the “fellow-man”. It mirrors the perfection of joy in God. Through election, this depth of divine-human co-existence finds expression in “mutual joy”. The fullness of human joy is found in “co-humanity”, the being fully oneself when freely with another. Human joy, found in relationality, issues from God’s “willing of…fellowship… which derives…from the fact that each [person] has received a gift which he necessarily desires to reciprocate to the best of his ability”.

As Barth stresses:

It is in this being given and giving that there consists the electing and election, the mutual acceptance, the common joy, and therefore the freedom of this encounter.

The grounding of joy in the glory of God and its impact on human freedom and gladness in election is the nub of Barth’s genius in his theology of joy.

6.3 Joy and gladness

This chapter began with a note that the rich concept of blessedness, or beatitudo, could possibly form a useful link between the theological developments of Barth and

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97 CD III.2.272.
98 CD III.2.272.
99 “Humanity lives and moves and has its being in this freedom to be oneself with the other”. CD III.2.272.
100 CD III.2.272.
101 CD III.2.272. Herbert Hartwell, The Theology of Karl Barth: an Introduction, Duckworth, London, 1964, 123-31, notes the importance of Barth’s view of Jesus Christ as the elected man for his developed anthropology. “Barth expounds the true meaning of man’s co-humanity ultimately in terms of the freedom and gladness in which the encounter between man and his fellow-men must take place if it is to reflect man’s true humanity.” Hartwell, Theology of Karl Barth, 130. Hartwell does not note the importance of the divine aspect of the relationship through the election of Jesus Christ in this context, however.
Edwards. Each takes the human calling to be transformed from “glory to glory” as having joyful and present dimensions. Seeing the “glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus” as something given as well as something yet to come, and especially in the act of God in Jesus Christ, Barth finds cause for rejoicing in the blessedness which is already given. For Barth, God is to be enjoyed, rejoiced in and, in the midst of that, joyfully obeyed, proclaimed and awaited in the light of the revealed glory of God in Jesus Christ.

The God who is joy and who elects in joy, calls humanity into the glory of the divine relationality. It has been seen “in the face of Christ Jesus”, in the light of which humanity has the knowledge of God, shining in darkness. Both Karl Barth and Jonathan Edwards have done remarkable justice to the intra-triune relationality by recognizing and exploring the dimensions of divine joyfulness within it, and in that light demonstrating the rightness and the necessity of human gladness. It is Barth alone, however, who has grounded gladness in gratitude to God who elects in joy, to joy and for joy.

In the light of this general description of the place of gladness in humanity, we turn to a discussion of the way in which joy is expressed and found in the central event in the life and work of Jesus Christ: the resurrection, as the revelation of the glory of God. This will occupy the next chapter.

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102 2 Cor 3:18.
103 2 Cor 4:6.
104 2 Cor 4:6.
Chapter 7

Resurrection and joy

*Potential and limitation in Church Dogmatics IV*

...in and under the No of the cross a powerful Yes is also spoken: “Christ is risen”, and...this powerful Yes may also be received and repeated. This being the case, faith and confession are characterised more by joy and thankfulness than by fearfulness and boldness. (Karl Barth)

This chapter examines Barth’s development of joy in CD IV in the light of his theology of glory, concentrating specifically on his use of the resurrection in christology and eschatology. It suggests that in the resurrection, the glory of the free loving act of God in reconciliation is revealed in joy and is to be received with joy.

We have already seen how joy bursts the constraints of the perfections of God\(^1\) and gladness adds an enrichment to Barth’s anthropology.\(^2\) In Volume IV, this

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\(^1\) CD II.1, discussed in Chapter 4.
\(^2\) CD III.2, discussed in Chapter 6.
dynamic of abundance, the overflow of joy, is focused in Barth’s theology of the resurrection. The theology of joy developed in CD IV is integrated into the whole Easter event and the “forty days”, and manifests a pervasive theology of hope, built from Barth’s resurrection-grounded eschatology.

Whilst illuminating the formal aspects of Barth’s theology, and assisting in an analysis of Barth’s concepts, the motifs of Hunsinger are seen to be inadequate in describing the theme of joy as Barth develops it.3 We will also see that the possibilities for joy in the theology of the resurrection are under-realized by Barth.

7.1 Joy in Volume IV of the Church Dogmatics

Having established his theology of revelation in CD I and on the basis of this his description of the two partners to the covenant, God in CD II and humankind in CD III, Barth moves in CD IV to explore the dynamics of their reconciliation in the face of human sin. Barth describes his progress in the first three volumes as having described aspects of the circumference of the church’s dogmatics, but “the covenant fulfilled in the atonement is its centre”.4

7.1.1 Glory and resurrection in CD IV

In an early exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 15, Barth argues for the centrality of resurrection in Paul’s eschatology in particular and in his theology as a whole.5 The theology of the resurrection, as expressed in 1 Cor 15, “contains the doctrine of the last things”6 and stands in a privileged position in relation to the whole of Christian theology. The “Resurrection Gospel” is “the Foundation of the Church”.7

The earlier analysis Barth makes of 1 Cor 15, with its emphasis on the centrality of the resurrection for the whole of the theology of the epistle, has clear parallels in the Church Dogmatics. Without suggesting that the resurrection is “the”


4 CD IV.1.3.

5 Barth, Karl, The Resurrection of the Dead, trans. H. J. Stenning, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1933. See especially 107-31. Whilst this is an early work, its theme is one which can be traced through into Barth’s later writings.

6 Barth, Resurrection, 107, emphasis Barth’s.

7 Barth’s heading for his detailed exegesis of 1 Cor 15:1-11. Resurrection, 132.
centre of theology for Barth, it can be asserted that the resurrection plays a key formal and material role in integrating many important themes.  

Barth constantly seeks to weave the various doctrines together with regard to the interconnectedness of the whole under the Word of God. His view of resurrection, however, is important for our study as it links the themes of glory and joy, at the “centre” of reconciliation, to important points on the “circumference”. The resurrection is the theological ‘lens’ through which the theology of glory passes and in connection with which joy is most clearly understood.

The subject-matter, origin and content of the message received and proclaimed by the Christian community is at its heart the free act of the faithfulness of God in which He takes the lost cause of man, who has denied Him as Creator and in so doing ruined himself as creature, and makes it His own in Jesus Christ, carrying it through to its goal and in that way maintaining and manifesting His own glory in the world.

Hence, the cross and resurrection “maintain” and “manifest” God’s glory, and joy as the counterpart of glory will be found there. In the Easter event, for example, is played out the “No!” and the “Yes!” of election, which we have noted is a distinctive feature of Barth’s theology. Its story is the story of God, living with and for humanity and dying and rising for humanity’s reconciliation. In the act of God’s free and faithful love in Jesus Christ, the glory of God is to be found, and with it joy.

8 In this regard, see John Thompson, *Christ in Perspective: Christological Perspectives in the Theology of Karl Barth*, St Andrew’s Press, Edinburgh, 1978, especially 87-97.

Whilst he over-stresses the centrality of christology in the *Church Dogmatics*, Koch rightly asserts that “…Barth tritt in seiner Dogmatik die Auferstehung Jesu nicht als bloßer Anhang auf”. Gerhard Koch, *Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi*, Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie 27, ed. Gerhard Ebeling, J.C.B.Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1959, 125. (His concentration on christology is seen when he says: “Barth will kein Kuriosum beschreiben. Die Christologie erweist sich als Zentrum seiner ganzen Dogmatik. Von ihr als der Mitte her wird gedacht.” Koch, Auferstehung, 121.)


10 CD IV.1.3. (The summary of §57–The Work of the Reconciler.)

11 In the context of his doctrine of election, Barth describes the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the act of divine proof [which] alone is decisive for the truth that, as sinners before God, we are pronounced righteous.” CD II.2.758.
7.1.2 Resurrection and joy in post-Easter history

The resurrection plays an important part in Barth’s development of his doctrine of reconciliation. It is the knowledge of this event on which the faith of the church rests, and as such it contributes to Barth’s description of the nature of sin, salvation, time and the work of the Holy Spirit in the community and the individual. A full exploration of that aspect of the role of the resurrection in Barth’s theology is beyond the scope of this discussion. What can be stated, however, is that the implications of Barth’s realist view of the resurrection impinge on the full sweep of doctrines as Barth develops them. One way in which this can be seen is in Barth’s theology of time, notably his use of the “forty days”, as he constantly refers to the period between the resurrection and the ascension. In examining Man in his Time, Barth’s developing of doctrine “beyond the surface content of scripture as a way of understanding scripture’s deeper conceptual implications and underlying unity” is seen at its most evident. Barth makes some explicit references to joy in this context.

Jesus, “Lord of Time”, “represents the grace of God…[and] the gratitude of man”, thus echoing Barth’s theology of election and prefiguring his theology of reconciliation. The Easter event is central in understanding his complex theology of time, since Jesus had a “second history…the Easter history…of the forty days between His resurrection and ascension”. This centrality is underscored when Barth says that “while we could imagine a New Testament containing only the history of Easter and its message, we could not possibly imagine a New Testament without it.” The Easter

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12 For an explanation of the importance of the priority of and interconnection with the motif of realism, see Hunsinger, 63-4.
13 §47, CD III.2.437-640.
14 Hunsinger, 5.
15 CD III.2.437-511.
16 CD III.2.439-40.
17 CD III.2.441. In fact, for Barth, “when the New Testament speaks of the events of Easter it really means the Easter history and Easter time….The event of Easter is as it were their prism through which the apostles and their communities saw the man Jesus in every aspect of His relation to them–as the One who ‘was, and is, and is to come’ (Rev 4:8)” CD III.2.442.
18 CD III.2.443.
history and its message “is the key to the whole” New Testament message.\(^{19}\) It is in the forty days that doubts are dispelled\(^{20}\) and that Jesus is seen to be the “Revealer of His hidden glory as God’s eternal word incarnate”.\(^{21}\) The presence of God (prefigured in the Old Testament Sabbath) and now present as a “worldly, human, temporal God in relation to this work of His…is now free to act as that kind of God, and as such He now celebrates and rejoices.”\(^{22}\) In God’s time, “Man now has time as well, the time of life”.\(^{23}\) In this consists the possibility of human rest, freedom, festivity and joy – the manifold dimensions of Sabbath rejoicing.\(^{24}\) In the resurrection consists the fulfilment and the hope of time’s consummation, and thus the basis for joy, grounded in the actualism of the Easter event.\(^{25}\) Thus the Easter event grounds the shared expectation and joy of corporate and individual Christian life, located in God’s act in Jesus Christ, but for Barth explicated in the context of the forty days.

Barth’s treatment of the “forty days”, suggests that when he comes to his development of the resurrection, which is fundamental to it, he will develop his theology of joy further. Barth establishes a dialectic which allows the possibility of rejoicing, based on reconciliation, in which the “new man” may move forward in confidence and obedience. In the victory of Jesus

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\text{man is free supremely to rejoice.\ldots In clear and sharp distinction from the past which now passes, the future of the new man now breaking into his present is a time of rejoicing. (\text{\ldots Vergangenheit eine Freudenzeit.}) [The Word of grace] does not merely raise a universal hymn to joy (\text{\ldots Lied an die Freude\ldots}). What it does is rather to speak of the reason why in all circumstances man can go forward, not sadly or indifferently, but merrily (fröhlich). If on the\ldots ground [of]\ldots the proclamation of the reconciliation and lordship of God\ldots the only positive option is joy, not as an empty abstract cheerfulness, (\text{\ldots eine leere, gewissermaßen abstrakte Heiterkeit}) but as thanksgiving and obedience, and therefore as}
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\(^{19}\) CD III.2.443. Thus “we can finally agree that the acceptance or rejection of the Gospel of the New Testament, at any rate as understood by the New Testament itself, depends on our acceptance or rejection of the \textit{evangelium quadraginta dierum.” CD III.2.443.\(^{20}\) CD III.2.449.\(^{21}\) CD III.2.451.\(^{22}\) CD III.2.457.\(^{23}\) CD III.2.457.\(^{24}\) CD III.2.457. See also CD III.2.463.\(^{25}\) CD III.2.492-5. In more evocative terms, “the passover meal becomes an Easter meal: not kept in sorrow but in joy”. CD III.2.502.
thinking, speech and action, as faith, love and hope, as responsibility and service, which corresponds to the concreteness of this reason for joy and which on this basis are to be undertaken and executed with gaiety. 

(…als ein für öhlich zu unternehmendes und durchzuführendes Werk.)

Their deep seriousness will consist and be demonstrated in the fact that they are done in this way. And the test or standard by which we may know that man’s joy as that of the new man really rests on this basis will be whether or not this joy radiates itself with the same self-evident necessity as it is his joy, whether or not it extends to others as to himself, whether or not in their case, too, it demonstrates itself at once in cheerful thoughts and words and actions. (in fröhlichen Gedanken, Worten und Werken erweisen wird.)

This exposition of joy is beyond thankfulness for the saving act of God; Barth’s use of joy points to it functioning as a sign of the glory of God operative in the ethical fulfillment of humanity. Joy therefore appears in the historical dialectic of human life in redeemed freedom, in obedience as well as thankfulness. In this, joy is portrayed as ethical and eschatological. It is joy which, grounded in the act of God in Jesus Christ, enables people to live, not in despair but in hope, not in disobedience but in glad obedience. Joy is found where people move forward on the basis of the resurrection and the lordship of God. Joy is encountered where one is truly oneself with another — though this and the wider dimension of joy in communality are under-developed in Barth.

7.1.3 God and humanity in the Easter event

A familiarity with Barth’s work up to CD IV makes his description of the resurrection in many respects seem unremarkable at first, but this volume represents a major transposition into the mode of historical salvation. This is easily missed if the volume is thematized in a-historical motifs.

The reader is well used to Barth’s references to Christ as “event” and his constant use of the concept of God’s “act” in Jesus Christ. The resurrection can, within Barth’s description, be seen as an expression of the divine relationality as event: the act of the Father in the life of the Son appropriated by the Holy Spirit in this particular and unique act.

27 CD III.2.272.
Following an a-historical view, Hunsinger speaks of Barth’s theology as a “theology of active relations…which stresses the sovereignty of grace”. 28 He speaks also of the “ongoing activity of grace” in which “[o]ur relationship with God is therefore an event”. 29 In fact, both God and humanity, Hunsinger argues, are to be understood in terms of event. With the Easter event as the pinnacle of the act of God, in the man Jesus Christ, for all humanity, it is to be expected that the resurrection, as central to that act, will be described in actualistic terms. However, Barth’s description exceeds Hunsinger’s categories in two respects.

First, Barth incorporates joy into the event of Easter in a specific way. He describes the joy and strength which Christians may have “in the light of this event”, even whilst waiting with patience and hope. 30 The Easter event is the “removal of a veil” which allows the glory of God to be “visibly, audibly and tangibly present in the man Jesus risen from the dead” as a fully developed event which has yet further future implications. 31 The redemptive loving act of God in the cross of Jesus Christ, undertaken in freedom, is the basis for all acts of love undertaken by Christians. 32 It is in that one act that love “necessarily means exaltation, gain and joy for the one who may perform this action”. 33 The act of love is the basis of God’s glory being seen, and joy is the outward sign of that glory in God. 34 Human joy likewise is the sign of human love, as genuine human love reflects the divine love. 35 The grounding of true human love in the love of Christ, the true act of love in Easter, points to Barth’s

28 Hunsinger, 31.
29 Hunsinger, 31.
30 CD IV.3.319. Whilst Barth goes on to describe the movement to freedom and joy for all creation, the locus of most of his discussion is the believing community – or more precisely, the believing community incorporated in the act of God in Jesus Christ.
31 CD IV.3.318.
32 CD IV.2.788.
33 CD IV.2.788.
34 This is seen in CD II.1.647, for instance.
35 “[T]he true and positive and genuinely indescribable joy of the one who loves consists simply in the fact that he may love as the one who is loved by God, as the child of God; that as he imitates the divine action he may exist in fellowship with Him… The man who genuinely loves is also a cheerful man….And the genuinely cheerful man is also one who loves.” CD IV.2.789.
particularism, as Hunsinger describes it: that “every concept used...be defined on the basis of a particular event called Jesus Christ”. 36

Second, Barth presents joy as motivating and enriching the patience and hope in which Christians are called to advance; 37 in which they live for their neighbour, sharing the hope which is in Christ for all. 38 The Christian’s witness is to the “Word of joy”, preparing others for the “joy and peace of earth which awaits them”. 39 Joy points to and anticipates the eschatological fullness of the glory of God. It is the joy of the Christian which confirms the Gospel as Euangelion. 40 Without cheerful proclamation, the news is but Dysangelion, and its messenger is shown to be no disciple of the living Lord Jesus Christ. 41 The Christian is called to a joyful pilgrimage which “look[s] back with gratitude and forward with a hope which overcomes fear. Journeying between the times, he may humbly rejoice in his present.” 42

7.1.4 Glory and joy in Jesus Christ

This twofold pattern of event and eschatological consummation is perpetuated in God’s address: God addresses humanity in personal, “I–Thou”, terms. The personal address is not elicited by human request, but is given in God’s revelation of Jesus Christ as Lord, and in Jesus Christ the glory of God is manifested. As Hunsinger states it:

Through Jesus Christ, through his mediatorial person and work, we are drawn (individually and communally) into the mysterious dynamics of God’s own inner life. We come to be partakers of the eternal love and freedom which constitute God’s innermost trinitarian being. We are

36 Hunsinger, 4.
37 CD IV.3.360.
38 CD IV.3.365.
39 CD IV.3.661.
40 CD IV.3.662.
41 CD IV.3.662. Barth notes: “It is not his personal joyousness which makes him a witness. For this is not what makes his witness true. But he can be enabled to give the true witness entrusted to him only when its content, which makes it true witness, gives him personal joy, making him a bright and merry Christian (ein hellen und frohen Christen), i.e. only when he can give it as the one who has received the Yes of divine grace said also to him, who can therefore live personally by the power of this Yes in spite of the old man which still rumbles with in him and the old world which still startles him…” CD IV.3.662. (KD 759).
42 CD IV.3.340. (“…seiner Gegenwart als Wanderer zwischen den Zeiten in aller Demut froh sein darf.” KD 392.)
made capable in Jesus Christ of what for us (as mere creatures and especially as sinners) would otherwise be impossible—an I–Thou relationship (or pattern of relationships) in the eternal life of the triune God. The transitory and sinful creature is lifted up in Jesus Christ to an eternal life of love and freedom in and with the Trinity.  

One pole of this personal encounter is complete in the resurrection, while the other is eschatological. In the resurrection, God makes a specific and personal challenge to all humanity to engage with this unique act and participate in the life which it signifies, and in the forward movement which it inaugurates and motivates.

The resurrection is, in Barth’s theology of reconciliation, the embracing “Yes” of God to sinful humanity, the repotentiation of fullness—the possibility of truly being oneself, and the offer of life, joy and hope which are thereafter lived in hope and joy. Nevertheless, thanks to Barth’s strongly Calvinist conception of the truth of the church as invisible, the basis of this life in God’s “Yes” is invisible. The freedom and love (and thus joy) of God is so located in the one historic act that its outworking in human life, even despite the personal address which Barth stresses, is essentially invisible.

It is important to recognize that the event of the resurrection is one of historical importance. Hunsinger notes that “Barth’s theology makes a concerted attempt always to move from the particular to the general”. Barth’s use of the resurrection in this regard can be clearly seen in his development of his anthropology in CD III.2. Here Barth is at constant pains to ground his general view of humanity in his exposition of Jesus Christ. His anthropology is more than an exposition of the life, even the resurrected life, of Jesus Christ, because “everything else in the New Testament contains and presupposes the resurrection”. The witness to the Easter event is also

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43 This encounter, as initiated here and now, and culminated in the life to come, is the core of the personalistic motif. Hunsinger, 41-2.

44 Hunsinger notes that as “[o]bjectivism is the external basis of personalism, [so] personalism is the internal basis of objectivism”. (Hunsinger, 41.) Barth’s presentation of the “I–Thou” address in the resurrection finds only limited expression in the language of encounter in CD IV, being more often subsumed in Barth’s objectivism. Perhaps the most “personalist” expressions of the role of the resurrection is found not in CD IV.3, but in Barth’s discussion of election: “To believe in Jesus means to have his resurrection and prayer both in the mind and in the heart.” CD II.2.127. (Barth continues: “And this means to be elected. For it is the man that does this who ‘in Him’ is the object of the divine election of grace.”)

45 Hunsinger, 32.

46 CD III.2.443. (Here Barth is discussing “Jesus, Lord of Time”. The concept applies equally to all other aspects of his exposition.)
more than historical human response to the testimony about Jesus Christ; it is response to the particular act which was Jesus Christ. The view of the Easter event, proposed by Bultmann, that it is “the rise of faith in the risen Lord, since it was this faith which led to the apostolic preaching”\(^{47}\) simply “will not do” since the rise of “faith in the risen Lord springs from his historical manifestation, and from this as such, not from the rise of faith in Him”.\(^ {48}\) This historical actualism and particularism is assumed (and reinforced) throughout CD III and IV. Barth is careful to link the resurrection to the whole Christ event – and he reinforces the importance of this in the context of the doctrine of reconciliation, where he notes that the “point about His resurrection is that in it He reveals Himself as the One who was and is and will be this [viz. the reconciliation of the world with God and therefore the new man] in His life and death”.\(^ {49}\) Both resurrection and eschaton are therefore particular.

The particularity of the events does not deny the dimension of mystery,\(^ {50}\) rather, the resurrection and ascension, says Barth, form “an inwardly coherent event”\(^ {51}\) and it is in the light of this event that the subsequent “concrete encounters” of his followers with the “self-manifestations of Jesus” are to be understood.\(^ {52}\) Barth’s engagement with these reflections on the event of the resurrection displays his own procedure of “conforming our ideas to the subject matter”\(^ {53}\) – a subject matter which by its very nature suggests openness of engagement and a prohibition on “premature

\(^{47}\) CD III.2.443. Barth is citing Bultmann’s *Kerygma and Myth*, ET, 42.

\(^{48}\) CD III.2.443.

\(^{49}\) CD IV.2.145.


\(^{51}\) CD IV.2.142. The unity of the resurrection and ascension will be discussed below in connection with the use to which Barth puts his theology of the “forty days”.

\(^{52}\) CD IV.2.143. The importance of this for subsequent understanding of the resurrection event is spelled out in relation to time in CD IV.2.146-7.

\(^{53}\) Hunsinger, 34.
The depth of wonder and mystery in the resurrection precludes any rapid jumps from the event of Jesus Christ to conceptual absolutism. The task of theological reflection requires its own idiom and structure.\(^{55}\)

### 7.1.5 Joy and hope in Jesus Christ

As we have seen, the particularity of the act of God in the resurrection of Jesus Christ has eschatological implications. It is the engagement of the act of God with humans today which allows Barth to say that

> even though...we may be joyous (*freuen dürfen*) and strong in the light of this [Easter] event, we have still to wait also with patience and hope....For on the basis of what we are in the light of Easter Day we may and should look and move towards that which we are not yet but shall be in the still awaited presence of the future of salvation. From the one we have the freedom—and why not also the joy? (*und wie solten wir von dorther nicht auch die Freudigkeit haben?*)—to be on the way to the other with all men and all creation.\(^{56}\)

The ongoing effect of Easter is therefore a dialectic of glory and joy: the act is complete in itself, yet awaiting a “final form to complete it”.\(^{57}\) In the light of the ascension, the cross and resurrection herald the bringing of freedom and joy to those who are in Christ.\(^{58}\) It is in this context that the “Church itself [is] the eschatological fact *par excellence*”, and that every administration of the sacraments, every confession of faith and every act done and suffering accepted faithfully in Christ’s name is an expression of what is already present in the resurrection.\(^{59}\) Here Barth locates the work of the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of reconciliation, in the outworking of the Easter

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\(^{54}\) Hunsinger, 34, suggests that Barth was “more concerned to avoid premature closure, when the biblical witness did not warrant closure, than to achieve orderly conceptual outcomes.” Hunsinger goes on to suggest that it is in this respect that “the motif of particularism entailed a deep respect for mystery”. Hunsinger, 34.

\(^{55}\) This is the implication of Hunsinger’s combined motifs of realism and rationalism.

\(^{56}\) CD IV.3.319. (KD 368).

\(^{57}\) CD IV.3.319.


\(^{59}\) CD IV.3.321.
event in particular historical events. Yet despite this positive expression, Barth notes that there continues in all such “actualizations...some measure of haziness and doubt”.  

In the ongoing expression of the resurrection, we might suggest that an expressive aspect is to be observed. The witness of God’s people, and thus life of the church, is a testimony to the joy and peace of the Easter event in itself. All witness is to the Easter event and the act of God in Jesus Christ. All freedom to love is grounded in God’s free act of love in Jesus Christ, which shows forth God’s glory and elicits joy – both in God and in the realization of the love of God by elect humanity.

It is in this context, of recognition of the once–for–all character of the one Easter event that Barth links joy to hope. The act of God in Jesus Christ is the basis of faith. The joy which the Easter event arouses is expressed in the ongoing faith of the church. For Barth this is located in the witness of the church, but he allows that the corporate sacramental life and individual prayer life of the members of the church participate in this expression. The life of the church as ongoing expression of the act which is Jesus Christ, is rooted in the unique historical actuality of the event, not in the life of its witnesses (contra Bultmann).

Barth is therefore cautious about assigning value to the life of the church apart from the witness of its members to the reconciling act of God in Jesus Christ. Barth’s theology of the Easter event ties joy to that event and limits the possibility of finding joy in the ongoing life of the church.

7.1.6 The Easter event and the theologia gloriae

Barth speaks powerfully of the fullness of the act of God in Jesus Christ. The electing God and elected man, the judge judged in the one person of the incarnate Word – these dialectical conceptualizations are held in unity in the one act, in which the cross is not overcome by the empty tomb, but rather the theology of the two combines into a theology of glory: it is the theologia gloriae in which the theologia

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60 The Holy Spirit at work in the context of the community is reinforced by the sections at the end of each part of CD IV, where the role of the Spirit in the church is discussed.

61 CD IV.3.322.


63 That in Jesus Christ the Yes of election does not deny the No of rejection has been noted in Chapter 5.
crucis attains its goal.\textsuperscript{64} The resurrection as liberating act which “has given rise to liberty”\textsuperscript{65} is possible only because

in the humiliation of the Son of God there is actualised and revealed the exaltation of the Son of Man, and our own exaltation in Him as our Brother and Head.\textsuperscript{66}

It is in this combination that the theologia gloriae is found not only to be legitimate but indispensable in allowing the theologia crucis to attain its goal.\textsuperscript{67} With its grounding in the Ostergeschichte, the theologia gloriae provides a centre from which Barth explores the work of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and which integrates the human and divine aspects of redemption. The dialectical development of the theologia gloriae provides a basis for an exploration of eschatology, as for Barth the Easter event incorporates past and present, as well as future. The theologia gloriae points to and is founded on the prime point of self-understanding and self-definition for the Christian community: the Easter event.\textsuperscript{68} It functions similarly in the life of individual Christians.\textsuperscript{69} In the light of this overview of joy in Barth’s doctrine of reconciliation, we can now consider Barth’s theology of resurrection with particular reference to Hunsinger’s motifs to see how Barth’s theology of joy is developed, and by what it is constrained.

### 7.2 Limitations of Barth’s conceptualization of joy

Barth’s theology of the “Easter event” represents the cross and resurrection as one event, one divine act. The traditional division between the theologia crucis and theologia gloriae is surmounted by Barth; he redefines the theologia gloriae as the

\textsuperscript{64} CD IV.2.356.
\textsuperscript{65} CD IV.2.355.
\textsuperscript{66} CD IV.2.355.
\textsuperscript{67} CD IV.2.356.
\textsuperscript{68} Koch, Auferstehung, 128. See CD II.2.318: “It is the community founded by His death and resurrection.”
\textsuperscript{69} See CD II.2.559, where Barth comments on Gal 2:19f (I live, but not I. Christ lives in me.) and CD II.2.563, for a discussion of individual response to the command of God in the cross and resurrection. Barth also discusses predestination, grounded in God’s act in Christ, as the basis of the individual Christian’s confidence and joy. CD II.2.126. Thus, “to believe in Jesus means to have His resurrection and prayer both in the mind and in the heart. And this means to be elected. For it is the man that does this who ‘in Him’ is the object of the divine election of grace.” CD II.2.127.
sum of the *theologia crucis* and the *theologia resurrectionis*. The “Easter event” is the term Barth uses to describe the necessary connection between cross and resurrection which is the basis of the theology of glory. The dynamics of each pair of Hunsinger’s motifs will now be extended to explore and critique Barth’s view. Since the first pair, actualism and particularism, have been mentioned already, they will be reviewed in the light of and in the context of the discussion of the other pairs.

### 7.2.1 Barth’s objectivism and personalism: some problems for the saints

The “objectivity” of the resurrection event has been the subject of considerable theological discussion in the past two centuries. In Hunsinger’s terms, “objectivism” relates to the “real, valid and effective” self-enactment of God, as manifested in the resurrection. The nub of Hunsinger’s understanding of Barth’s objectivism is encapsulated in his statement that “revelation and salvation are events objectively mediated by the creaturely sphere and grounded in the sovereignty of God”.

The importance of this might well be underestimated unless it is remembered that Barth, in his foreword to CD IV, describes himself as being in “an intensive, if for the most part quiet, debate with Rudolf Bultmann”. The language of objectivism, in Hunsinger’s description, is everywhere and functions as polemic against any description which is less than historically centred in Christ. Whilst Barth avoids a literalistic historical understanding of the events of revelation, he stresses the (linguistic) realism of the testimonies to the event. The resurrection, understood in non-Bultmannian terms, seems to fit this description squarely. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ complete the content of revelation.

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70 See CD IV.2.355. See also CD IV.2.9; 29.

71 In CD IV.1 Barth unites and distinguishes the cross and resurrection and their connection with what he terms the “Easter event”. His careful and sophisticated use of the terms must be noted, but a full description or analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter. The key dimensions which must be noted as background to this discussion are the centrality of the Ostergeschichte as revelation; its decisiveness as event in Jesus Christ; the resurrected Jesus Christ as the dominant living focus in Barth’s doctrine of reconciliation; and the background of the will of God, in the Yes and No of election, played out in the elected and rejected God-Man, Jesus Christ. The resurrection becomes, in Barth’s parlance, very closely identified with the Easter event.

72 Hunsinger, 5.

73 Hunsinger, 5.

74 CD IV.1.ix.
In his discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in the enlivening of faith in the resurrected Jesus, Barth notes that he is not rebutting the position of Bultmann alone, but also sacrificial dimensions of Roman Catholicism, which distract attention from the centre, Christ “the author and finisher of our faith”. In Catholicism Barth sees the danger in the place given to the example, if not the intercession, of the saints.

Barth considers that Hans Urs von Balthasar, in his biographical writings (on Theresa of Lisieux, Elisabeth of Dijon and Reinhold Schneider), “sees from that centre which he has grasped so clearly and finely a whole field of possible and actual representations of the history of Jesus Christ, the repetitions or re-enactments of His being and activity by the saints or by those who achieve some measure of sanctity”. Within Barth’s own understanding of the act of God in Jesus Christ, such “repetitions” are impossible. The danger, as Barth sees it, of even speaking of such possibilities is that the attention will be taken from its rightful place, Jesus Christ, with the outcome that “the doctrine of justification is absorbed into that of sanctification—understood as the pious work of self-sanctification which man can undertake and accomplish in his own strength”. Whilst this possible danger cannot be discounted absolutely, the question must be asked of Barth: Must it be impossible to find visible evidence of Christ’s justifying and sanctifying work in human beings?

Barth’s stress on the objectivity of the Easter event and the personal address in the mediatorial person and work of Jesus Christ serves to emphasize the initiation of a joyful encounter which is to be culminated in the life to come. The saints have, in the historic understanding of the church, been considered to show the impact of the Easter event as visible embodiments in their own time and culture while not supposing its completeness in them. But such exemplifications are impossible for Barth, given his actualism which locates the whole of revelation in Jesus Christ. Ironically, the result is a more remote and less personal view of Christ.

The one motif which diminishes as it progresses in the Church Dogmatics is that of personalism. In his doctrine of election, Barth makes the personalist link explicit in discussing the “I–Thou” address. In his doctrine of reconciliation it is

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75 CD IV.1.768, noting Heb. 12:2.
76 CD IV.1.768.
77 CD IV.1.768. Barth construes this as the sacrifice of the mass in another form, seen also in certain (Protestant) doctrines of baptism. CD IV.1.768-9.
subsumed in the motif of objectivism, perhaps as a result of Barth’s ongoing polemic against Bultmann. The result is that the sense of “personal address” is weakened, and Christ, fully incarnate “true Man” as Barth describes him, becomes more remote, since Barth focuses on the event of Jesus Christ rather than on the response of his disciples. The lack of emphasis on the disciples’ response makes Barth’s description of the response of humanity to the “True Man” more difficult. So while Barth’s purpose is to link all humanity with the true humanity of Christ, the result of his objectivism, especially when linked with his actualism, is that the humanity of Christ becomes less approachable. This is exacerbated by the fact that the active role of the Holy Spirit is also less than it might be, so that whilst the Trinity is assumed as the basis of the doctrine of reconciliation, it is rarely made explicit.

So, in Barth’s theology of the Easter event, although strong in its actualist and objectivist christological aspects, there is little recurrent explicit trinitarian focus. This is not to say that the doctrine of the Trinity has nothing to contribute to Barth’s theology of the Easter event. Rather, it is somewhat constrained by the objectivist actualism so that the full affective dimensions, as characterized in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-3), are weak.78 The dimension which is underdeveloped in Barth and under-recognized in Hunsinger, might be termed “relationalism”. This can be seen as the counterpoint in God to the objective active relation between God and humanity, in the active relations within the whole church, in its mission and witness, through which God’s activity is displayed as the relational foundation of the church’s acts. For example, a more fully developed view of the intimacy of God’s relationship active in intimate human relationships would require a different view of the church than Barth’s actualism and objectivism allows. His ecclesiology, grounded in the will of God as enacted in Christ, provides a very limited place for close relationships — or for relational joy. The Spirit appears to be removed from the real-life relational contexts of daily Christian living; and is of such a kind as to be able to intervene in the visible

78 This might have been developed further in Barth’s ethics of reconciliation (the incomplete CD IV.4) and does receive a brief mention in the posthumous publication The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics IV.4, Lecture Fragments, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1981, 31, where the consideration of the fruits of the Spirit is under the control of the statement that: “The purpose of fellowship between God and man, and therefore of the relationship of command and obedience that characterizes it, is determined in the covenant of grace by the fact that God’s glory and man’s salvation, while they are so different, are not two things but one.” Barth, Christian Life, 30.
church only in “relational events”. Barth does not, for instance, explore the ongoing 
expectation of the Spirit’s work in the liturgical life of a worshipping congregation.

Whilst Hunsinger sees an incorporation of humanity into the life of the Trinity, it must be admitted that this is a comparatively underdeveloped dimension of Barth’s explication of the Easter event. The few explicit references to the joy of the Easter event lack immediacy in human life, as they describe the event and its motivating power, but nothing more directly experienced. The problem is compounded by Barth’s pneumatological limitations. It is this lack of intimacy, in human relationships and their basis in the Trinity and with the Spirit, which cries out to be compensated for by a strong doctrine of saints. Yet his actualism and objectivism conspire to ensure that there is no encouragement in Barth’s theology to develop the notion of church as visible communion of saints, despite the doctrine of human incorporation into the divine life, since the ongoing human enactment of the life of Christ is not theologically significant in his ecclesiology. A stronger pneumatology could provide a context in which hagiology could flourish – whilst still observing the limits which Barth has set, which preclude idolatry or any sense of self-sanctification.

7.2.2 Realism and rationalism: the challenge of art and performance

The veracity of the resurrection is understood as issuing in faith based on fact. This points to the motif of realism. That salvation is “hid in Christ” permits its actualisation in the event of Jesus Christ. For Barth, however, the resurrection fulfills salvation and thus completes revelation. Thus the resurrection is revelation of salvation, since the only ground for human self-understanding is to be found in God’s self-disclosure. Knowledge of God not only leads to the appropriation of salvation in the life of humanity, it is salvation. Faith may (and must, for Barth) lead to

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79 Hunsinger, 41-2.

80 Though see CD IV.3.312, for example.

81 See CD IV.3.319, which was quoted and discussed in connection with actualism. Also in connection with Barth’s discussion of “The Promise of the Spirit” (§69–The Glory of the Mediator, 4., CD IV.3.274-367.) he states that God’s “self-declaration has taken place once for all and irrevocably in His resurrection” (CD IV.3.296) and that he has “publicly bound and committed Himself to man” (CD IV.3.297) in the historical act in Jerusalem, and thus “in our sphere”. (CD IV.3.298). The actualism and objectivism unite to overshadow the joy of incorporation in Christ through the Easter event.

82 Gal 3:3. See Barth’s important exposition of this, CD II.1.149, which summarizes the objective actualism which Hunsinger finds in Barth. See also Hunsinger, 37-9.
understanding, and understanding may (and, likewise, must) lead to deepening faith.\textsuperscript{83} The living out of faith is the life of loving obedience, which begins in the resurrection and culminates in the eschaton, always through the glory of God and its joy.\textsuperscript{84}

Whilst he suggests that the language which reflects Barth’s realism ought to be that of personal address, Hunsinger underplays the role of mystery in Barth’s theology, using formal cognitive categories which undervalue such affective dimensions as that of joy.\textsuperscript{85} This results in a lack of awareness of personal rhetorical address which expects an affective response, addressed, as Jonathan Edwards would note, to the “heart”, the seat of understanding, feeling and volition. For Barth, God’s primary means of engagement with humanity is self-accommodation in words understood by human obedient cognition. Such a view is limited by its expression in primarily verbal cognitive terms, and may even allow less place for the emotive than Hunsinger suggests, with theology incorporating apologetics and ethics. The imbalance is parallel to the greater emphasis on objectivism than personalism in Barth, and is rooted immovably in his actualism.

Whilst Barth’s theology is expressed in these predominantly cognitive terms, Volume 4 of the \textit{Church Dogmatics} presents the doctrine of reconciliation as an historical dynamic whose fundamental reference point is the Easter event. This has implications for the whole of theology, requiring that it be viewed in the light of the resurrection. Thus he can say that all of Christian theology will have the colours of the

\textsuperscript{83} See also Timothy J. Dakin, “Faith Seeking Understanding for Faith: A Transformational Model of Training”, Paper Presented at Church Army World Leaders’ Conference, Sheffield, 1992, for an explication of this objectivism in explicitly transformational terms.

\textsuperscript{84} If objective knowledge of God is possible only in the self-revealing act of God in Jesus Christ, so human beings can know their identity in Christ as “an objective, eschatological reality”. Hunsinger, 39. Barth’s complex view of time, based in its eschatological aspects in the resurrection event, is the background to this concept which allows disparate and remote generations to “find” themselves hid in Christ. The objective dimension of the resurrection permits and elicits this self-understanding. Hunsinger, 38, quotes CD IV.3.317-8 in this regard.

\textsuperscript{85} Hunsinger, 49, concludes his fuller analysis of the motif of realism by suggesting that “Barth differed from literalist and expressivist understandings of theological language by regarding the subject matter strictly as the presence of the living divine subject—the God who engages in personal address by acting mysteriously in history, and who acts mysteriously in history by engaging in personal address”.

The nature of the related language, however, which Hunsinger says stands between cognitive and emotive, tends to the former.
Easter event and will point the creature to “fellowship with its Creator”, in humble joy. This joy is to be expressed in Christian gratitude, and grounded in the eschatological hope, represented for Barth in the forty days. Thus:

one might say that [Jesus Christ] is the event in which the grace (χάρις) of God which justifies man before Him and sanctifies him for Him finds its counterpart in the gratitude (εὐχαριστία) (Dankbarkeit) of man.

In Christ the grace is given and gratitude enabled for movement to the eschaton.

Of course, the Christian life which Barth envisages is construed as witness and ethical action. Should it not also take other forms? One possibility is in art. Yet Barth seems compelled to distance himself from the “preoccupation of so much Christian art with…the symbol of the cross”. For Barth, the Word is properly received in auditory rather than visual forms. This profound reservation regarding visual categories and representation, reflecting his Reformed inheritance, limits Barth’s ability to move to wider forms of expression. Such aesthetic possibilities as are present in Barth’s exploration of the perfections of God are tightly constrained. Whilst Barth was able to consider that God’s beauty “embraces death as well as life”, beauty itself remains undeveloped as a theme in the Easter event. Again, the possibility of representation of the Easter event beyond cognitive verbal categories is limited by his own objectivism and actualism, which limit the representation to points in space and time and its re-presentation to verbal constructs. Furthermore, Barth’s doctrine of the Holy

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86 CD IV.3.294.
87 CD IV.3.305.
88 CD IV.3.320.
89 CD IV.3.482. (KD 554).
90 CD IV.3.415. Barth is acutely aware of the dangers of domesticating or beautifying the cross by such means as “pictures of the crucifixion which move us perhaps but may still be admired at a safe distance from their theme” CD IV.3.443, or as jewellery for “ecclesiastical dignitaries and Christian ladies”. CD IV.3.443.
91 Thus, “man must listen…as he can listen only to God, and answer as he can answer only God. Only one thing can come in question on God’s side in relation to man, namely, His grace and its command; and only one thing on the side of man in relation to God, namely, his gratitude and therefore his obedience.” CD IV.3.444.
92 This was discussed in Chapter 4.
93 CD II.1.665.
94 This is despite his special admiration of Matthais Grünewald’s Isenheim Altarpiece and its depiction of the crucifixion. For a fuller discussion of this see Reiner Marquard, Karl Barth und der Isenheimer Altar, Arbeiten zur Theologie; Bd. 80, Calwer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1995.
Spirit underplays the possibility of affective or aesthetic engagement with the Easter event.

There are other limits to Barth’s expression. He does not explore liturgical representations of the glory of the resurrection and its incorporation of doxology. Just as it is not encouraged by Barth’s conceptualization of the act of God in Jesus Christ to accommodate a role for saints as pointers to divine grace, so there is no emphasis on liturgical re-enactment of the Easter event, or on the history of grace amongst the whole people of God. Similarly, Barth does not give any positive role to aesthetic pleasure. Human joy and pleasure can only consist in God’s act, through Christ in the life of humankind. It cannot be expected as a matter of course, and should not be an aim of liturgy, though it may be found where one is truly oneself or in free loving encounter with another.  

Whilst we have noted that the link between the unique act of God in Jesus Christ and the ongoing sanctification of Christians is limited by Barth largely to verbal cognitive categories, we must note his love of Mozart. This is reflected in various aspects of Barth’s theology. Hunsinger notes the constructive “thematic interplay”, which he considers derives from Barth’s love of Mozart. For Barth, something of the glory of God is found in the humble innocence and freedom of Mozart’s music. Certainly Barth found joy in Mozart. This seems to be one area in which Barth moves beyond the historically-grounded actualism as the locus for joy and allowed himself, albeit tentatively, to find freedom within human expression. The formal aspects of Mozart’s music may be reflected in Barth’s theology; any impact on material themes in his theology of reconciliation, however, is severely limited, and the role Barth allows music to play in the life of the church and its theology is closely circumscribed.

Barth’s theology presents the revelation of God in Jesus Christ in erudite twentieth century verbal prose, which has its own beauty – and also its own limitations. Hunsinger suggests that Barth’s realism allows him to move beyond the barren “univocality” of realism, but keeps him from the “equivocality” of “expressivism”.

95 CD III.2.272.
98 These terms are drawn from Hunsinger’s discussion of analogy. Hunsinger, 43-4.
Whilst this may be the case in Barth’s rhetorical expression, it is not a freedom he allows to other media. Barth suggests, by his undertaking in the *Church Dogmatics*, that a verbal representation of the Easter event and its implications is a valid project, though he notes regularly that it has its limitations. He does not allow the same freedom to non-verbal representations.

### 7.2.3 Hunsinger’s motifs reviewed

Whilst Hunsinger builds his motifs based on what he finds expressed in the *Church Dogmatics*, he proves to be more limited than is Barth, since his own frame of reference is so cognitively based that he largely loses the historical dynamic of Volume 4. Furthermore, he subsumes the overcoming of sin in cross and resurrection, and the glory and joy of God’s victory, in themes which do not allow for them. This is not to deny the usefulness of Hunsinger’s motifs, since they can describe major aspects of Barth’s theology very adequately. Nonetheless, the sense of abundance which characterizes Barth’s theology of glory and joy in the earlier volumes eludes Hunsinger’s motifs, and Barth’s understanding of the resurrection is impoverished by Hunsinger’s formal description of what for Barth reverberates with vitality.99 Hunsinger finds no basis for exploring the role of music and art. Overall, whilst the theology of joy is, in CD IV, underdeveloped in Barth, it is virtually ignored by Hunsinger. The result is that as already discussed above, Chapter 3, his analysis of Barth lacks some of the richness which is found in Barth himself.

### 7.3 Joy in resurrection as act and performance

Whilst the richness of Barth’s theology of the Easter event has been apparent in the foregoing discussion, the corporate, aesthetic and doxological dimensions have been noted as limited. I have suggested that Barth moves beyond Hunsinger’s descriptions in some areas, but is still constrained by his “actualism” which tends to constrict the development of his theology of joy.

Barth also underplays the dynamics of God’s involvement with human life. The *Church Dogmatics* may inspire preachers, but it is less likely to motivate poets or musicians. The emphasis on Jesus Christ as act limits Barth’s theology of the living

99 This is also seen in Hunsinger’s analysis of truth, although his analysis of the freedom of God is limited by the categories he discerns. Hunsinger, 67-184.
word to inspiring words of life; it cannot do full justice to incarnate messengers. Ultimately, his compressed christological actualism circumscribes the fundamental dynamics of life and relations, despite the *analogia relationis*. In this compression, the role which he had earlier given to the Trinity is diminished.

It is worthwhile considering how *performance* might add to Barth’s theology and engage the concept of abundance, which we have noted there. Performance, if it transcends mere repetition, provides a medium for flourishing and embellishment. In music as in drama, the dramatic use of time allows performance to be more than just the mechanical translation of notation or symbols to sound, movement and expression. Similarly, to recognize a dimension of ongoing performance in the personal and objective engagement of God with humanity is to cherish the diversity of God’s engagement with creation and to acknowledge God’s freedom in love. To allow this ongoing engagement is to allow space for joyful reception and projection of God’s loving freedom by expanding the act into a dramatic series of events capable of focusing the dramatic performance of human life. But Barth’s actualism resists this. At the last, the promise which his theology of joy offered in the earlier volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* is constricted by his actualism and other limitations already noted. In the light of this unfulfilled promise, this unfinished revolution, a series of questions may be posed for Barth, recapitulating some of the points made in this and earlier chapters.

### 7.3.1 Questions to Karl Barth

1. **Basic concepts**

   This study has shown that Karl Barth’s concepts exceed Hunsinger’s descriptions. It has also shown how the resurrection exceeds even Barth’s rich theological conceptuality. One question to Barth that has emerged at several points in the previous chapters is:

   *How might Barth’s basic concepts be developed to do even more adequate justice to the affective, as well as the cognitive and volitional dimensions of joy?*

2. **Beauty**

   In considering the theology of Jonathan Edwards, the central place afforded to beauty was a considerable contrast to Barth’s circumscription of the theme. Given the
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richness of this in Edwards, as well as the pervasiveness of beauty as a theological and expressive theme in catholicism and orthodoxy, a further question might be:

If theology may be beautiful and if God is indeed beautiful, how may the beauty of the earth and the creativity of humanity be utilized to point to the beauty of God in representation? Why may other media not be allowed the freedom to testify which is allowed to theological language (and to Mozart)?

3  Ecumenical range

That Barth’s theology challenges and reshapes the reformed tradition has been noted. The main dialogue partner in this dissertation has been from within that same tradition, but even more radical questions to Barth might have arisen had the partners included those from other Christian traditions.

In the light of the rich diversity of Christian testimony to joy, how might a theology of joy be challenged and enhanced by engagement with other Christian traditions – for example, those which are more liturgical, pentecostal or contemplative?

4  Trinitarian communion

In comparing Barth with Edwards, and in taking notice of A. J. Torrance’s critique of Barth, issues emerged concerning the fullness of communion in God and the limitations of Barth’s conceptualization of the triunity of God. These suggest a further question to Barth:

How might Barth’s own theology of joy be a catalyst for an enrichment of the conceptualization of the divine persons and for a further development of the perfection of God as the one who loves and rejoices in freedom?

5  Personhood

Following on from the last question:

What concept of human personhood, relationality and ecclesiality might be in line with that enriched conceptualization of God? In particular, how might Barth’s theology engage more fully with the Christian traditions which allow greater scope for the theological significance of the joyful and obedient lives of saints?
6 Consummation

The final question is one which Barth would presumably have attempted to answer in “CD V”. It concerns the ultimate Christian joy, classically expressed in terms of the vision of God. Given his later support for the idea of the humanity of God:

Is it imaginable that Barth might even have been led in his eschatology to reconsider a communion of joy between God and redeemed humanity such that the long Christian tradition of deificatio might be rehabilitated?
Sources of Epigrams


(Busch describes his last meeting with Karl Barth on 7th December, 1968 (Barth died on 10th December)...they read, listened to the music of Mozart and sang: “Er sang already one of the Sunday school hymns, which he had learned as a child…"

Ich warf einen fragenden Blick auf die Fenster, die zur dunklen Straße hin offenstanden: ob es Beschwerden gäbe wegen nächtlicher Ruhestörung? Aber er wehrte dem, daß die Fenster geschlossen werden. Und dann schlug er zum gemeinsamen Gesang das Adventsleid vor, in dem es zuletzt heißt:

«Er wird nun bald erscheinen
in seiner Herrlichkeit,
der all eur Klag und Weinen
verwandeln wird in Freud.
Er ist’s, der helfen kann.
Macht eure Lampen fertig
und seid stets Sein gewärtig…»

So sangen wir, und das war unser Abschied.”

See also Eberhard Busch, Karl Barths Lebenslauf: Nach seinen Briefen und autobiographischen Texten, 2 ed, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, München, 1976, 515, where the quotation is repeated. ET: Karl Barth: His life from letters and autobiographical texts, transl. John Bowden, 2 ed, SCM, London, 1976, 497, which translates:

“Now I gladly go to sleep
I’ve enjoyed the day,
God has truly cared for me…”


Chapter 7  Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV.2.355.
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**Ancient Texts:**

* Indicates used also on IBYCUS, with thanks to Tyndale House and TBL.


