

June 16, 1964

Prof. Dr. Markus Barth
2122 Beechwood Blvd.
Pittsburgh, 17, Pennsylvania

Dear Professor Barth,

I was very pleased to be able to talk with you over the phone while at Pittsburgh last month, and our conversation encouraged me with the hope that before I complete my study of Karl Barth's ethics, I will perhaps be able to talk with him in Basel about certain problems in his ethical thought which I have been unable to unravel. I still do not know when I will be able to go, but I hope it will be within the next year.

We at Phillips still remember with much gratitude, your Oron E. Scott lectures here last year. In a sense, they marked a turning point in the willingness of our students really to grapple with Barth's theology.

I am sending you a copy of the manuscript on Karl Barth's Ethics, as it now stands (most imperfectly, I'm afraid). I want especially to discover the gaps and inadequacies in the present manuscript, so that in subsequent draftings I can cut, elaborate and intensify the argument. Your suggestion on the phone, that I work at the relation of baptism and obedience (a theme which Bonhoeffer picks up in Nachfolge), is one which I am currently pursuing in my readings.

Most of the MSS is exposition. I hope it is accurate, and want it to be careful, and I would appreciate your critical comment. The last 24 pages, pp. 104-122, involve my own critical response to Barth's ethics, especially his discussion of the divine command and obedience. If and when I see him, these are among some of the issues I would wish respectfully to raise with him. If I have misunderstood him, however, I would like to know it and amend it beforehand, for I do not want any of my critique to be based upon a misunderstanding. Therefore, if you see points where I might review to better understand his position, I would greatly appreciate your pointing them out to me.

I am fully aware of your busy schedule, and send you this MSS knowing it may be some time before you can get to it. Of course, the sooner you can respond with your comments, the more they would impinge on my basic research, but I have no desire to rush you, and would prefer that you take all the time you need with this argument.

Cordially and sincerely,

