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But has our Divine Master given us no glimpses of the soul's work in heaven? He once said that the saints of the Resurrection should be as the angels in heaven. And once, with tenderest hand, He lifted a fold of the veil, and showed us the angels rejoicing over earth's penitent sinners turning back to God, rejoicing as did the sons of God when the world was made.

An intolerable anguish once gripped the heart of Him who came to seek and to save the lost, when He saw the swiftly ripening human harvest, and Himself the solitary reaper clothed in the limitations and frailties of flesh and blood. Can He have forgotten His passion for souls, now that the resources of heaven are at His command, and the spirits are His messengers? The ladder of the dream of Bethel has never been withdrawn.

'Can there be work for all in heaven?' we ask; 'variety of work suited to the capacity of each?' We listen to the astronomer telling us of the sights he sees through his telescope—those nebular masses slowly being moulded into new constellations, new worlds. Perhaps the conception of some modern thinkers is true; these processes are being guided by hosts of heavenly spirits. Who would not long to serve God in those stupendous and unending tasks of His? Our own old world is still travailing in creation-throes; and whenever men have tried to explain how it can be that evolution should always be an upward movement, they have stammered and stumbled into the language of religion. *Must* they be utterly wrong? Why should not God's messengers be the hosts of souls who have emerged into the larger life and liberty of the Hereafter—helpers in the birth-pangs and growth-pains of Creation? So long as earth with its travail, and the human race with its sighing and struggling, exist, so long will there be sorrow and compassion and outgoing influences of helpfulness in heaven. Nay, if the deepest reality of heaven is the spirit of pure, self-forgetting sacrifice, will anguish ever be driven from the courts of heaven so long as anywhere there are souls in agony? How, if the Cross should prove to be the symbol and type of all heaven's activity? And the delight and joy of all the heavenly inmates should be to give themselves for others? And—heavenly mystery!—joy at last be one with sacrifice?

Our life here is our probation for our heavenly service. To long for heaven is not selfish; it is to long to join the company of God's celestial workers. But we fear we may never be worthy to become helpers of God. Jesus has not left us without some insight on that question too. It is not brilliance, not genius or learning, not social or material power and influence on earth that determine our place in the councils and activities of heaven; but only faithfulness. Not that our heavenly task is to be the same task, but something kindred and on the scale of the enlarged freedom of the life hereafter.

It is God who assigns us our places. It is the voice of the Lord of life that will greet us, when death has shut the door of our earthly finitude behind us: 'Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; be thou ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Our assurance as to our heavenly work lies in that clearest word about the after-life that ever fell from the lips of the Heavenly Builder.[1]

[1] J. A. Robertson, *Concerning the Soul*, 167.

Professor Barth's Dogmatics.

By the Reverend Sydney Cave, M.A., D.D., Principal of New College, London.

It is now more than ten years since the publication of the first edition of Barth's *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, which was intended to provide the Prolegomena to what Barth then called *Christian Dogmatics*. In 1932 he issued the first part of the second edition of this book, changing the name of the work he planned into *Ecclesiastical Dogmatics*. That second edition was written on an immensely bigger scale, so that more than five hundred pages were required to deal with material covered in the first two hundred pages of his first edition. In the preface to this second edition Barth spoke of writing the concluding part of this revised edition at about the same length. That second part has just appeared.

But it is not five hundred pages but a thousand, and many of its big pages are printed in minute type.[1]

The first half of this second edition is now open to all English readers in the admirable translation of Professor G. T. Thomson. (How admirable is that translation is realized best by those who have read the difficult original !) It must be long before an English translation is available of this second part, and it may therefore be useful to give a brief account of the impressions received from a preliminary reading of this immense tome.

We were among the many who read the 1927 edition of *The Doctrine of the Word of God* with disappointment. Perverse as was much that Barth wrote in his *Romans*, and violent and truculent as were its paradoxes, we had found that early book of his one of the most deeply moving books that we had ever read. There Barth wrote as prophet and as preacher, denouncing the modern trivialization of Christianity, and summoning us once more to tremble before the awful reality of God. A prophet may combat one extreme by asserting another, but from a theologian more careful expression can justly be demanded. And, although in this first edition Barth quoted at great length from Protestant Schoolmen, his book showed that he had not as yet that knowledge of the whole development of Christian theology without which no theologian, however brilliant and masterful, is equipped for his task. Barth came to realize the need of ' more extensive soundings and broader foundations,' and his second edition of the first part of his *Doctrine of the Word of God* was marked not only by greater technical competency but by more careful statement. No longer, for instance, did he speak as if God's revelation was merely objective. Instead he admitted that ' in faith men have real experience of the Word of God and no *finitum non capax infiniti*, and no *peccator non capax verbi divini* should now hinder us from taking this statement seriously with all its consequences.'

In this second part, now before us, not only does Barth write with a learning it would be impertinent to praise, but he once more abandons some of his less defensible positions. Thus he admits that in his *Romans*, through his eagerness to combat *Historismus* and *Psychologismus*, he failed adequately to recognize the truth of Jn 1^{14}: ' the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory . . . full of grace and truth.' That is a very welcome admission, for in his earlier writings Barth went so far in his reaction from the ' Jesus of history ' school as to seem to evacuate of meaning God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. In the first edition of this book, Barth spoke as if baptism was the one ground for the believer's trust in the reality of his faith. This, as some of us pointed out, was a strange statement for a Protestant theologian. As Heim said, this answer was quite contrary to the Reformed position, and was ' almost Roman in its sacramentalism ' (*Glaube und Denken*, 419). Barth claims that his words were in part misunderstood, but he admits that for this misunderstanding he was responsible. The most conspicuous change in Barth's presentation of theology is the fullness and the freedom with which he now speaks of the love of God to man in Christ and of man's love to God which God's love evokes. Barth's theology is thus now less distinctive because it is more truly Christian.

The volume before us has to be judged not as an independent work but as the completion of the first half of the revised edition of *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. That first half had as its first ' Chapter ' Barth's treatise on ' The Word of God as the Criterion of Dogmatics.' Of the second ' Chapter,' ' The Revelation of God,' it contained only the first section, Barth's elaborate statement of the doctrine of ' The Triune God.' This new volume opens with the second and third sections of this second chapter, ' The Incarnation of the Word ' and ' The Outpouring of the Spirit.' The third ' Chapter ' deals with ' The Holy Scripture ' ; the fourth with ' The Proclamation of the Church.'

The section on ' The Incarnation of the Word ' begins with the exposition of God's Freedom for men. ' The Incarnation of the eternal Word, Jesus Christ, is God's revelation. In the reality of this event, God shows His freedom to be our God.' ' That God is not hindered either through His own Godhead or through our humanity and sinfulness, from being our God and having to do with us as with His own ; that He moreover is free for us and in us—that is the central content of the doctrine of Christ and of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Christology and Pneumatology are at one in this, that they are the knowledge and the praise of the Grace of God.'

In his treatise on Christology, Barth vigorously rejects any attempt to explain how Christ is truly God and truly man. This much alone we can understand : that this ' Inconceivable must be the event by which God's revelation is possible.' ' God's

[1] *Die kirchliche Dogmatik*, I. ii. *Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes. Prolegomena zur kirchlichen Dogmatik* (Verlag von evangelischen Buchhandlung, Zollikon ; Swiss Francs 36 [about £1, 12s.]).

Word a man, a man the Word of God—that is the objective possibility of revelation.' 'If God's revelation be the way from the veiling to the unveiling of the eternal Word, from manger and cross to resurrection and ascension—then how could it be other than this " becoming man," " becoming flesh " of God ? '

Barth proceeds to discuss the Time of Revelation. 'God's revelation in the event of the presence of Jesus Christ is God's time for us. It is the fulfilled time in this event. It is as the Old Testament time of expectation and as the New Testament time of remembering also the time of the witness of this event.'

Barth vigorously defends the ancient Christology of the Church from the charge of intellectualism, and emphasizes once more that Christology has to do with the revelation of God as a mystery. 'It must first know this mystery as such, and secondly recognize it as such.' This mystery the ancient Christology saw and sought to defend ; and that is why fundamentally we must be on its side. Barth proceeds to describe at length—though not to explain—the mystery of the true God and true man. In this connexion he has a long and notable attack on what he calls Mariolatry.

Of special interest is the last part of this section, 'The Mystery of Christmas Eve'—the miracle that Jesus Christ 'was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.' Barth admits that the mere fact that this statement is a dogma does not compel assent. 'In dogma as such we hear only the voice of the Church, it is not revelation itself.' He admits, too, that it is 'unfair and fanatical' to say, as Bartmann has done, that 'the one and only ground for the denial' of this doctrine is 'the rationalistic dogma of the impossibility of miracle.' He admits, too, how precarious is the support in Scripture. It is the dogmatic significance of the Virgin Birth that Barth explores and emphasizes. He claims that the Church knew well what it was doing when it put this dogma as a guard, as it were, before the door of the mystery of Christmas Eve. If any one goes some other way it is at his own risk and peril. He ought to reckon his private way as a private way, and, if the preacher cannot accept the Church's dogma here, he ought at least to keep silent about it. For Barth, the Virgin Birth has great significance as the sign of the *mystery* of revelation. It is a reminder that 'God stands at the beginning where true revelation happens—God and not the arbitrary cleverness, skill, or piety of a man. The fact that God in Jesus Christ comes forth from the deep hiddenness of His Godhead to be our God among us and to act upon us, is not only actual and visible in the sign of the resurrection from the dead, it is also indicated in the Virgin Birth.' Barth fiercely—too fiercely—attacks Brunner for speaking of the Virgin Birth as 'a biological interpretation of the miracle.' Yet Barth concludes this section with the admission that we cannot say that the 'mystery of Christmas Eve stands or falls in itself ontologically with this dogma. The man Jesus of Nazareth is not the true Son of God because He was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin, but because He is the true Son of God, who will be recognized as such, therefore was He conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin.'

The section on 'The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit' begins with the assertion of 'The Freedom of men for God.' This freedom of men to believe in God and to obey Him is always God's work and gift. 'The Holy Spirit is the subjective reality of revelation.' Barth reaffirms the *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, but admits that if by Church we meant the Church which man creates then the saying would be a 'monstrosity.' '*This* Church has nothing to do with the subjective reality of salvation.' The Church which man creates 'is not the Church but the work of sin, of the apostacy of the Church.'

'The subjective reality of revelation stands therefore in this : that we through Christ, that we in the Church, are receivers of the divine witness and, as receivers of it, are children of God. And this our existence as such is the Work of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit is the subjective reality of revelation.' Barth proceeds again to pass from reality to possibility. 'It is through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that it is possible in the freedom of man, for God's revelation to come to him because to him in it God's Word is brought within his hearing.' In a long and characteristic note on this statement, Barth traces the increasing subjectivity of the Church's hymns, in which he sees the apostacy of Protestantism from the Reformation. 'The history of the Church's hymns shows an inner secularization.' He admits that '*outward* heresy is rarely to be found in modern hymnbooks' but 'the *hidden* heresy can be more or less clearly traced.' 'It is the heresy of the third article in which the Holy Spirit is regarded as different from the Spirit of Jesus Christ, professedly still the Spirit of God, a Christian Spirit, but in reality the spirit of man's inner life and earnestness, the spirit of mysticism and morality.' 'All the external secularization of Protestantism in the

special form of modernist Neo-Protestantism is finally only a symptom of this inner secularization to be seen in the development of the Church's hymns.'

The second section of this chapter is entitled 'God's Revelation as the Abolition of Religion.' 'The world of human religion' is 'the sphere in which man seeks to justify and sanctify himself by means of a picture of God derived from his own thought and powers.' 'The Church is the place of true religion in so far as it lives through grace by grace.'

The following section is entitled 'Religion as Unbelief.' Barth will have nothing to do with any suggestion that Christianity is the fulfilment of human religion or that it is the true religion, superior to others. Such a statement 'does not set the truth of Christian religion in clear enough relation to the grace of revelation.' 'Religion is unbelief; it is the work of *godless* man.' This section contains some shrewd comments on paganism. 'Mysticism,' for instance, Barth describes as 'esoteric atheism.' But in no section of his book have we been more conscious of his limitations. We agree with him to the full in his assertion of the uniqueness of Christianity and its sole adequacy, but those of us who have known intimately devout Hindus and devout Jews cannot so characterize non-Christian religions. Barth shows only such knowledge of non-Christian religions as may be gained from reading the obvious German handbooks. We do not honour God by speaking as if only in the Christian sphere has He made any approach to men. All goodness is of God and, where men have sought to serve Him, their faith, even though it be directed to symbols of God unworthy of their devotion, cannot rightly be characterized as unbelief. Our Lord dealt with men in their individual circumstances. Does not God do so too? Where Zoroaster proclaimed a righteous God and Gautama spoke of pity and self-postponement, were they not so far responding to the God who has spoken to us in His Son? We cannot, indeed, speak, as many do, as if all religions taught the same truths so that it matters not whether a man be a Christian or a non-Christian if only he be faithful to the religion of his upbringing, nor may we resolve Christianity into a system of ideas. But we do not honour Christ by denying that truth and goodness are true and good wherever they be found. Faith is not unbelief even where it be faith in a God as yet not fully known.

Much more attractive is the next section on 'The Life of the Children of God.' 'The Christian life begins with love and ends, so far as human life has an end in time, with love.' Barth now writes unreservedly of the love of God and no longer calls that love 'loveless.' 'The self-giving of God in His Son is actually His love to us,' and our love is to be understood as the answer to that love of God. 'The one truly earnest praise that we can offer to God is this: to love our neighbour as ourselves.'

In his third 'Chapter,' 'The Holy Scripture,' Barth does much to make clear the relation in his thought between the Word of God and the Bible. It is as the witness to God's revelation in the Church through the Holy Spirit that the Bible is holy and God's Word. Barth frankly recognizes that the Bible must be studied historically and that its words are human words. 'The worth and authority of the Bible do not lie in the useless miracle of men's words which would be then not really human words, but in this: that we in the Bible become partakers of the real miracle, the miracle of God's grace to sinners.' On the authority of the Bible depend both the Church's authority and its freedom, authority and freedom alike being 'mediate, relative, and formal.'

The last 'Chapter' of the book deals with 'The Proclamation of the Church.' 'God's Word is God Himself in the proclamation of the Church of Jesus Christ. While God gives to the Church the task of speaking to Him, and while the Church fulfils that task, He Himself proclaims His revelation in His witnesses.' It is in this word of the Church's preacher that Barth sees the 'special and direct object of dogmatic work.' The problem of Dogmatics is '*in concreto* the work and endeavour of the Church to reach purity of teaching. Its problem is the problem of Christian teaching.'

But man does 'not merely think; he lives, acts, and suffers as he thinks.' Hence 'the ethical question—the question about right action—is the existence-question of humanity.' It is not enough to say with Althaus that 'Ethics belongs closely to Dogmatics.' Dogmatics is itself Ethics.

Dogmatics is a function both of the 'hearing' and the 'teaching' Church. 'It calls the teaching Church to a new hearing of the Word of God, the revelation to which the Bible witnesses. That it can only do as, for its part, it takes the place of the hearing Church and itself obeys the Word of God as the norm to which the hearing Church knows itself to be subordinate.' At the same time it has to take the place of the teaching Church, for the Word of God is not only the norm but the object of the Church's preaching and so Dogmatics has at once to hear and to teach.

It is impossible in one short article to give any

adequate idea of this rich and suggestive book. We hope ourselves to learn more from it in future readings of it. Barth's plans, announced in the second edition of the first part, still stand. He is to write his *Dogmatik* in four volumes, dealing with The Doctrine of God, The Doctrine of Creation, The Doctrine of Reconciliation, and The Doctrine of Redemption.

We English-speaking Christians have much to learn from Barth, and many of us have tried to do so. But Barth, too, might learn something from British theology. Among Barth's innumerable quotations we have noticed only one in English, a quotation from Edward 'Irvin' [*sic*] taken from H. R. Mackintosh's great book *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ.* Dr. Mackintosh in his *Types of Modern Theology* spoke with characteristic graciousness of Barth and expressed his high appreciation of his teaching. But Barth's own statement of Christology might have gained much from the sympathy and insight of Dr. Mackintosh's treatment. From Dr. Mackintosh's book it is possible for the student to enter into the movement of Christological thought. That a student will not learn from Barth. All tends to be black or white. There are writers of the distant past about whom he will tolerate no complaint. There are writers of the immediate past and of the present of whom he will hear no good. He still does not seem to realize that although the theologies of a Schleiermacher or a Ritschl have less to say to our age than they had to their own, yet even from them something can still be learnt; not all they wrote was wrong. And in the section on 'Religion as Unbelief' Barth might have written more wisely had he been willing to learn from writers like Drs. Farquhar and Macnicol who, holding as firmly as himself to the unique and final significance of the gospel, knew paganism too well to speak of it as if it were only sin and falsehood.

The immense scale of Barth's *Dogmatics* is a welcome sign of the seriousness with which he takes theology, but we find it hard to believe that what is only a part of a preliminary volume could not have been written with equal clarity and force in less than a thousand big and closely printed pages.

Contributions and Comments.

The Lachish Letters.

Professor Harry Torczyner, Bialik Professor of Hebrew in the University of Jerusalem, has at last favoured us with his long-promised volume on these pre-Exilic ostraca—*Lachish I.* (*Tell ed-Duweir*), *The Lachish Letters* (published for the Trustees of the late Sir Henry Wellcome by the Oxford University Press; 25s. net). The title page includes the names also of Lankester Harding, Alkin Lewis, and the late J. L. Starkey, and acknowledgments are made in the Foreword and the Introduction to several other assistants and scholars. The ostraca, eighteen in number, written in iron-carbon ink with a reed or wood pen, were dug up in 1935 in the guard-house at Lachish, and are letters to Ja-ûsh, believed to be the military governor of the city, from a certain Hoshaiah (who was located at an outpost) during the second Babylonian invasion under Nebuchadrezzar, towards the end of Zedekiah's reign (which closed 586 B.C., when Nebuchadrezzar captured and sacked Jerusalem). They are written in the ancient Phœnician script, but the language used is pure Biblical Hebrew. Professor Torczyner deserves the gratitude of all Old Testament scholars for the marvellous pains and ingenuity he has manifested in his decipherment of the writings. The volume contains excellent photographs of all the letters, with transliteration into Hebrew and translation into English, together with a commentary on each one, a Glossary of all the Hebrew words, a comparative table of all the Phœnician scripts, and several Indices.

The learned Professor's theory regarding the letters will not, however, appeal to all scholars who have studied them. The archæological evidence is conclusive that they were found in the soot and ashes connected with the final destruction of the city, and must therefore be dated about 588–587 B.C. But Torczyner's view is that they were concerned with the flight of the prophet Uriah to Egypt (which is stated in Jer 26 to have taken place in the reign of Jehoiakim), and that they were probably documents brought (shortly before Lachish fell) from the city archives to the guard-house for the purpose of trying Hoshaiah on charges of treachery connected with Uriah. Hence most of them were messages written, he believes, sometime before the inquiry, perhaps years before it, and not just before the fall