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## By Artifex

The substance of the book to which I must devote all my space to-day, Karl Barth's "Dogmatics in Outline," translated by Dr. G. T. Thomson, Professor of Christian Dogmatics in the University of Edinburgh (S.C.M. Press, 12s. 6d.), was delivered as lectures to students of Bonn in 1946. Professor Barth tells us that for the first time in his life he lectured without a manuscript. It will be fair to remember this, for, though there is much for which one may be thankful, there are not a few startling passages. I could not accept the definition of dogmatics implied in the words "the subject of this science is the Church." Surely its subject is the Church's doctrine. If this objection seems trifling—though in any science the definitions with which you start are never unimportant,—my next objection is serious enough.

Barth in writing of the Trinity offers the definition "the One in three ways of being." What are we to understand by "three ways of being"? I would not suggest for a moment that Barth is a Sabellian, though it is difficult to see what exactly is his thought about Christ or about the Holy Ghost, but the sentence quoted is susceptible of a distinctly Sabellian interpretation. The best statement of Trinitarian doctrine I know occurs—though the writer himself would have been horrified at the suggestion—in the late Ellis McTaggart's "Studies in Hegelian Cosmology." He writes:

"We are forced back to the conclusion that it is necessary that in some way or another the whole of the unity shall be in each individual, and that in no other way can the individuals have the requisite

reality. Yet, as we saw above, to suppose that the unity exists in the individuals as isolated is to destroy the unity. The unity must be complete in each individual. Yet it must also be the bond which unites them. How can this be? How is it possible that the whole can be in each of its parts and yet be the whole of which they are the parts?"

In this if we write "the divine nature" instead of "the unity" and "person" for "individual" we have a perfect statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, though not, of course, an explanation of the mystery. Wholly satisfactory is Barth's word when he says (page 97) "Christ's Incarnation is an analogue of creation. . . . God enters the field and creates within creation a new beginning." The doctrine of the Second Adam must surely be central in all sound dogmatics. He is much sounder on the subject of Chalcedon than most moderns. He declares the matter of its formulæ as quite fundamental. And so it is. There are a score of points I should like to discuss, such as "theology as characteristically found in Schleiermacher . . . a one-sided theology of the third article" (we suffered from this in England c. 1900) and his quite admirable treatment of the exaltation of humanity at the Ascension. But the book would be worth buying if only for the chapter on "The Coming of Christ as Judge." I shall be surprised if any preacher reads it without preaching a sermon on it.

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