

## Commission I

Paper by Prof. Dr. Karl Barth (second draft) on THE CHURCH → THE LIVING  
COMMUNITY OF THE LIVING LORD JESUS CHRIST

Comments by C. W. Quin, Killinagh Rectory, Blacklion, co. Cavan, Eire.

I had thought parts I and II of the first draft could hardly be improved upon. The writer, however, has shown, in a way no one else could, of what enormous improvement they were capable! I objected to part III of the first draft, since it seemed a little to suggest that the Congregationalist scheme was not, like the rest, subject to God's judgment. This is now stated in a much more sober and watertight way, in this 2nd draft.

I(1-12) is well stated. 11 is if possible, better still. In 14 I take it a moribund orthodoxy (Catholic, but also Protestant) is described. In 15 we see the dangers of the Continental hyphen, or British 'Christianity and...' Is this Neo-Protestantism, Modernism or Liberalism? Does 16 describe Pietism? Or are these terms eschewed, and are manifestations of static Orthodoxy, Liberalism and pietism to be found under all 3 headings? Maybe it is my mind that is confused, not the statement.

19. The Scheinkirche, the seeming Church. Is not this a Calvinist distinction as e.g. Scripture is not, but becomes the Word of God to us by Faith, the Sacraments also become what they signify by conferring on Faith their benefits. But no one says Christ becomes the Messiah when we believe. And Prof. Barth has shown in impressive terms (DCG 1132 II/2,35 especially p.558f that Judas is a minister of God (yet to his own damnation) and takes part - against his will - in the work of Atonement in a way that was impossible to Paul and Peter. Judas is not then merely a seeming apostle, reprobate as he is, he has his place in God's plan and serves His Will. The same is true of Israel-Samaria as against Judah (p.434 on I Kings 13) and again p.315 of the unbelieving Jews. 'The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.' Therefore the unbelieving Israel, the unfaithful Church, the Lord, the Sacraments do not dissolve into appearances, but remain a place of judgment, the sins against them are like those against known commandments, unnatural and in some way self-condemned. This is indeed suggested in the concluding sentences of 19 but perhaps - in view of what is said in the DCG - suggested a little weakly.)

20 gives with admirable brevity and comprehensiveness the reasons for our disunity, upon which only its writer (but perhaps he) could improve.

III.23. We welcome this - again Calvinistic - refusal to flee from the visible Church if it really is a refusal so to flee. Belonging as I do to an Episcopal Church (Eine episcopale Kirche ist als solche zu bedauern; sie ist aber deshalb keine falsche Kirche. Gotteserkenntnis & G-dienst p. 182!!) I am perhaps a bit prejudiced in favour of Episcopacy, which I believe to be a sign of Universality and Apostolicity. My own Church has since her disestablishment made certain steps in a Congregationalist direction (lay representation on Synods etc.) We could and should go a good deal further. I would like to see arrangements by which those who lead in one sphere should obey orders in another. In this sense I can assent to 31 and 32. But if it means the removal of ancient landmarks, tinkering with the ministerial hierarchy, or if it means that ordination does :

imprint a permanent 'Character' I must say No.! I very much welcome the restatement in the 2nd draft. I agree that all forms of Church-Government are under God's judgment - most of all those most agreeable with His Word. Dante put plenty of Popes and Bishops in his Inferno, although he accepted the value of the offices. I do not believe the abolition of Episcopacy (or of consistorial or presbyterian-synodical Church-Governments) would bring the kingdom of God any nearer. But I am strongly inclined to believe that the KIRCHLICHE DOGMATIK will do a lot more to revive the Church of God than any introduction of Congregationalist Church-order.

Prof. Karl Barth.

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