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not the specialty of biblical scholars but the very stuff out of which preaching is made.

Furthermore, because every minister has to handle contemporary problems in the pulpit—war, racial discrimination, economic injustice—the chapter entitled *Ideas that Have Used Me* is certain to be rich in suggestion and direction. How does a pacifist preach to a world armed to the teeth? How does a wholehearted believer in racial integration present the Christian case for it? How does the minister of a church which it cost millions of dollars to build, a church cheek by jowl with Harlem and all that Harlem represents in sociological problems, justify to himself the cost of the building and the role he fills in relation to it? Questions like these Dr. Fosdick faces frankly and comes up with constructive answers that ministers everywhere, facing not dissimilar dilemmas, can weigh and ponder. To take one instance, where many clamor for quotation: "I thoroughly disapprove that type of pacifist who, concerned only with keeping his own skirts lily-white, retreats from the world's problems in wartime to a kind of monastic and irresponsible seclusion. From that sort of merely negative pacifism may the good Lord deliver us! But I did try (the reference is to his preaching during World War II) to keep the gospel of Jesus Christ from being degraded to the service of Mars, and I labored to foresee the kind of strategy, personal and governmental, that would make another war impossible." *Multum in parvo!* And the quotation is typical of what may be encountered on page after page of the twenty-seventh volume to come from the pen of the Minister Emeritus of The Riverside Church.

R. J. McCracken

**CHURCH DOGMATICS, VOL. I THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORD OF GOD (PROLEGOMENA TO CHURCH DOGMATICS) PART 2, BY KARL BARTH, TR. G. T. THOMSON AND HAROLD KNIGHT. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956. 905 pp., \$12.50.**

[Ed. Note: This review is one of a series which will deal with both this book and Barth's place in contemporary thought more generally. The subsequent reviews will be printed in the March and May issues.]

There are at least three Barths. There is, first, the early Barth of the Commentary on Romans and of the essays published in this country under the title *The Word of God and the Word of Man*. Barth in that early stage did not plan to offer more than a "marginal note" to theology. He was a prophetic thinker who shook the theological world and caused most of Protestantism to change its course without often becoming Barthian. The second Barth is the one whom we find in this volume which has recently been translated into English. It is the Barth who has developed and refined a theological methodology based exclusively on the revelation of God in Christ. Although this volume is primarily a positive proclamation of the gospel, it provides the basis for Barth's polemical negative teaching about natural theology and related issues which caused the conflict with Brunner and which has created for most people in the English speaking world their only image of Barth. This theological methodology based exclusively on revelation remains Barth's way of working, but the results to which he has come are so surprising and so interesting that they overshadow these negative doctrines and should receive attention. They are what I call the third Barth. Barth still bases his theology upon Biblical exegesis but exegesis actually is the springboard for free and daring theological thought which leads Barth to very unconventional, perhaps "heretical," conclusions. Also they are

conclusions which provide an image of Barth which is in many ways the exact opposite of that which "Barthianism" represents to most Americans.

So far Barth has completed in German ten volumes. He calls each of them a part-volume. (This one is the second half of the first volume) The first half of the first volume was published in English in 1936. Each of these part-volumes is many hundred pages long—usually eight or nine hundred. In each volume there are scores of pages in fine print and these are often the most interesting because in them Barth develops his thought more concretely. In this volume there is in fine print, for example, a twenty eight page study of the Catholic conception of authority which is of absorbing interest. (pp 544-572). There is a team of Scotch scholars which is engaged in the translating of the other volumes.\* It is their plan to publish two a year until *Church Dogmatics* is fully translated. Meanwhile we have two helpful books: Otto Weber's summary of the first eight volumes entitled *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* and G. C. Berkouwer's exposition of Barth's constructive theology under the title *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*. I believe that the translation of these volumes means that the influence of Barth's thought upon American theology has just begun and that the result of this influence will have very little to do with what we have come to call "Barthianism." Instead we shall receive from him stimulation and illumination on most problems of theology and ethics and these will not depend upon the acceptance of the negative aspects of Barth's theological methodology.

In this second part of the first volume Barth develops fully his doctrine of revelation the main outlines of which are already familiar. He constantly em-

phasizes the sovereign freedom of God to reveal himself to men through Jesus Christ, and the uniqueness and finality of this revelation. He always criticizes the tendencies to distort and obscure this revelation in Catholicism, which subordinates it to the continuing voice of the Church, and in the "modernistic" tendencies in Protestant theology, which subordinate the revelation to religious experience or to general ideas of the philosophy of religion. The revelation in Christ validates itself or is validated by the witness of the Holy Spirit. It needs no support from rational arguments or from a broader religious witness. The Christological doctrines which are the foundation for this view of revelation are developed in this book. All Christological interpretations which undercut the full identification of God with the human figure of Jesus of Nazareth are rejected. Barth says: "Every question concerning the Word which is directed away from Jesus of Nazareth, the human being of Christ, is necessarily directed away from Himself, the Word, and therefore from God Himself, because the Word, and therefore God Himself, does not exist for us apart from the human being of Christ." (p. 166) The Virgin Birth and the bodily resurrection are strongly affirmed and yet Barth has such a sophisticated view of the historical problems related to what he calls "saga" in the Bible that one is left wondering what he means by these affirmations. He rejects Bultmann's program of "demythologization" but he seems to have something of an equivalent that leaves his views uncertain.

Readers who cannot fully accept Barth's doctrine of revelation and the absolute exclusiveness of the claims which surround it can learn a great deal from his teaching about the authority of scripture and the relation of that authority to the Church and to the individual believer. He presents a full length Protestant doctrine of authority which is extraordinarily impressive. He

\*This team includes Professor Torrance whose illuminating article on Barth was published in the November issue of this journal.

is, of course, no Fundamentalist. He does not identify the Word of God with the words of the Bible. The prophets and apostles are witnesses to the revelation. The critical study of the Bible is necessary though its results are not greatly emphasized. The fact that we have the written record of the witness of the prophets and apostles enables us to be related to the original revelation. If the Church were not always under the guidance of the scriptures it would be able to make the revelation over in its own image but the perpetual dialogue between the Church and the Bible provides the necessary corrective.

Barth's view of the revealing act of God in Christ, mediated to us through the Scriptures in the Church, is remarkably dynamic. God speaks a fresh word to us by this means. The believer today has surprising freedom. He should listen to the Word in company with the Church. He should take the earlier interpretations of the Church seriously but they are not final for him. He should listen to the Fathers, especially the Fathers of the Reformation, but he must still respond freely today under the guidance of the Spirit. Barth insists that the Canon is not closed and this seems to mean that in the future some Biblical books might be eliminated from the Canon, as the Apochrypha was eliminated by the Reformation, and that some new discovery, perhaps "in the sands of Egypt" as he says, might add a new apostolic book. No Confession of the Church, and no system of theology, is final.

I believe that some of the negative aspects of Barth's doctrine of revelation, especially his rejection of "general revelation," are mistaken. What I have called the "second Barth" of the absolute methodology is unlikely to excite or persuade many readers among American Protestants. But the third Barth, the Barth who uses the theological freedom for which he provides in this book, and who has become domi-

nant in most of the remaining volumes of his great *Dogmatic* will often excite and sometimes persuade because he brings great learning and extraordinary interpretative genius to bear on every theological and ethical problem. Barth himself would doubtless reject such a distinction between the second and third Barth but he will have to allow us to think about Barth as freely as he thinks about everything else.

As for the Barth of this volume, I see in him, in spite of all criticisms of his negative doctrines, a powerful witness to essential Christian truth.

JOHN C. BENNETT

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