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Christian figure in the pre-Christian pagan world," discovered the depths of the human soul, and though his "existential inwardness" approached most nearly to the mystery of being which only revelation can properly make known. In Plato Socratic religious awe and moral seriousness combined with the speculative ontology of Parmenides to produce the transcendent world of Ideas (Kroner will not call them "forms") and the nearly theistic conception of a divine creator. Aristotle, more typically Greek than Plato in subordinating the moral to the aesthetic, discovered a more personal deity than Plato's. But Plato was still Greek enough to think of reality as a single, orderly, beautiful whole, and Aristotle's cosmic mind was a part of the universe and not yet a self or person.

A perspective may indeed give meaning; inevitably it must produce some distortion. What, for example, is one to make of a history in which less than two pages are devoted to the Atomists ("from the perspective of the history of philosophy they are the least outstanding and remarkable") and the Epicureans are not accorded a single word? What should one think of an interpretation of Plato that dismisses in three sentences the influence of the Pythagoreans? Or of a perspective that lays emphasis on Aristotle's theology, after Jaeger's view is apparently accepted that *Metaphysics* XII is a comparatively youthful effort about which Aristotle had later misgivings? Could it be that, while philosophy is assuredly not identical with science, still it has an affinity with science no less intimate though no less puzzling than it has with religion? Still, Professor Kroner's interpretation should go far in introducing a most valuable corrective to the currently fashionable treatment of Greek thought as the progressive approximation to modern science. Both the reflective religious man and the philosopher must be grateful for this.

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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. XIV. 905 pp., \$12.50.
[ED. NOTE: This review is one of a series which deal with both this book and Barth's place in contemporary thought more generally. A review by Professor John C. Bennett appeared in the January issue of the Quarterly Review. A subsequent discussion will be printed in the May issue.]

It is now some forty years since Karl Barth, a young Swiss minister, found himself facing his congregation with nothing more to say than what he had been taught by his teachers. He soon realized that he had exhausted his resources and that the hungry sheep looked up but were not fed. In desperation he cried out, like many before and after him, "What shall I preach?", and finally was driven to confess, "Thou God, art God alone." Perhaps few of us today recall the electric shock which went through the theological world when his first books, *The Word of God and the Word of Man* and the *Commentary to the Romans*, appeared. They came like a blast of cold northern air into the tepid and miasmic climate of the twenties. I recall vividly the day I picked up a small volume by Thurneysen and Barth, *Come, Creator Spirit*, during my student days at Marburg and the profound effect it exerted on me. For Barth was witnessing in a new way to the majesty and sovereignty of an Absolute Lord, to the Word of God addressed to the Church, and to the apostasy of modern Christendom. Many of the things he had to say about experience and history were a grievous offence to a generation which had long been nourished by historicism and a theology of personal experience. While Barth himself later tempered the vehemence of his polemic, his attacks have produced a salutary effect upon contemporary theological thought, even,

indeed, when it does not recognize the source of this influence.

Barth's *Christian Dogmatics* is an impressive work: vast in its range, imposing in its architectonics, and superbly wrought in its composition. It is clear that the whole work has been carefully conceived: the major sections are finely ordered, and the sub-sections are beautifully articulated into the larger units. Paragraphs and sentences and, indeed, the structure and form of the sentences, have been fashioned with care and consistency. Barth always writes with a profound sense of responsibility to the theological enterprise; he is subservient to the Word of God which he seeks to understand and to interpret for the Church. His learning is prodigious. The Apostolic and Church Fathers, the Reformers, philosophers and theologians, many of them obscure, are quoted from their original sources and frequently in their own tongue. Entirely aside from his own elaborate discussions, his work is a mine of innumerable quotations drawn from the history of Christian thought and doctrine and from the great philosophers. It is his *Auseinandersetzung* with scores of thinkers in the Church that gives special force to his own theology.

One section of this second volume in the doctrine of the Word of God is appropriately devoted to "the time of revelation": God's time and our time, the time of expectation in the Old Testament, and the time of recollection in the New. "God has time for us," he says in his characteristic epigrammatic way, and this time is real in his revelation. God created time, but this must not be identified with the order of creation. The time we think we possess and know must not be equated with God's time, for 'our time' is fallen time, "lost, fallen, and condemned time." (p. 49) Not least of all when one is most inclined to challenge him, Barth argues persuasively and always on the basis of exegesis of the relevant texts. He might have made an even

better case if he had appealed to the Deuteronomic historians, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel for the persistence of 'fallen' time. Instead he appeals to *Genesis* 3:23f. and 6:5f. To speak of the whole Old Testament as 'fallen' time, however, is to speak too abstractly, too 'dogmatically', and, indeed, too unbiblically. Not only does the Old Testament make nothing of the fall after *Genesis* 3, as Barth must be well aware, but there are not a few passages which would contradict the dogma. The Old Testament is the time of expectation. It is surely true that expectation is frequently a major reality of biblical faith, but Barth, as not infrequently elsewhere, understands it too unilinearly, and he relates it altogether too simply to the fulfilment in the unique 'time' of revelation in Jesus Christ. There may be a sense in which one could say that the Old Testament 'witnesses' to Christ, but such a statement requires a different kind of defence and understanding from that which Barth gives to us. Again, it is too 'dogmatically' affirmed. Barth is right in saying that the God of the Old Testament is not timeless; he is the covenant God of Israel revealing himself in time. (p. 66) [The exegesis of *Psalm* 90:4 is excellent, including Luther's words on the text.]

The long chapter on "Holy Scripture" is divided into three sections: "The Word of God for the Church," "Authority in the Church," and "Freedom in the Church." Whatever may be said of some of Barth's followers, the Word of God for him is never an abstraction or a stereotype. Holy Scripture is *witness* of God's revelation. In the Bible we hear human words spoken in human speech, yet they are the vehicle of divine revelation. This human character of biblical speech, indeed all human speaking and hearing, is profoundly grasped and of the first importance for dealing with the hermeneutical problem. Barth resists every attempt to shift from the role of hearer to the role of observer, especially dis-

passionate observer. This is not to do justice to the speaker, whether in the Bible or in everyday human relationships. "Understanding of a human word presupposes that the attempt to speak and to hear has succeeded. . . . It is only in the light of what is said to me and heard by me, and not for myself, that I try to inquire of the word and the speaking subject." (p. 465) Elsewhere he presses the point even more vigorously: "It is rather a question of our being gripped by the subject-matter—not gripped physically, not making an experience of it and the like, although (ironically) that can happen—but really gripped, so that it is only as those who are mastered by the subject matter, who are subdued by it, that we can investigate the humanity of the word by which it is told us." We now can understand what Barth means when he says that the Bible is the Word of God to the Church and for the Church.

There is another remarkable section on the necessity of understanding the Bible historically, a demand which carries weight since Barth has a knowledge of historical criticism and form criticism. He recognizes the presence of saga and legend in the Old Testament, he sees very clearly the precariousness of many historical elements in the Old Testament, and not least of all the fallibility of the biblical writers, in matters of fact and world view as well as in theology. The "vulnerability of the Bible, i.e., its capacity for error, also extends to its religious or theological interest." (p. 509) Barth's recognition of the historical task could scarcely be better stated than his description of the contents of the Bible as "the human speech uttered by specific men at specific times in a specific situation, in a specific language, and with a specific intention." (p. 464) If this is true, then they must be subjected to historical understanding. But historical understanding involves something much deeper than that of the critic alone, for after all this is the task of the ob-

server. To be really 'historical' is to be involved in the revelation to which the writers witness. The revelation cannot be subjected to principles or norms, to philosophies or to systematic formulations. We must not abstract from the Bible "some concealed historical or conceptual system, an economy of salvation or a Christian view of things. There can be no biblical theology in this sense, either of the Old Testament or of the New Testament, or of the Bible as a whole." (p. 483)

Professor Bennett has commented upon Barth's attitude toward the Canon. Barth is anxious to make it clear that the Church does not determine what is canonical and what is not. The Church has separated and singled out this collection of documents "because they have proved themselves to be singled out and set apart." It only confirms and establishes what has already been formed and given to it. Its decision concerning the limits of the Canon is human, "but we do not obey its judgment" when we accept it. The revelation of the Word of God is antecedent to the Church. The discussion in this section does not seem to me to be entirely satisfactory; we perhaps do better with C. H. Dodd to recognize a reciprocal relation between Church and Word of God, for this better explains the actual historical state of affairs. Yet Barth's stress on the freedom of the individual and of the Church today in relation to the Canon is one of the most liberating parts of his work, especially because it is not a matter of caprice or predilection. He is far from being an authoritarian or legalist. In many ways he is very radical. He is not concerned with establishing a new orthodoxy; on the contrary he is eager that there be constant conversation and polemic on the central issues of the Church's proclamation. He has a genius for examining every facet of a problem, for doing full justice to the position of those with whom he differs, and of extraordinary precision in stating his own views. He

seems prolix at times, but one cannot afford to skip over a page now and then, and least of all the fine print, because here his discussion is often most interesting. His work is theology in the great tradition; he belongs, with Augustine and Luther and Calvin, to the main stream of Christian thinkers; if he does not always seem to speak to our age in the language we should like, he does address himself to the Church and confronts it with the Word of God and the proclamation which it is called to hear.

JAMES MULLENBURG

**CHRISTOLOGY AND MYTH IN
THE NEW TESTAMENT,** by
G. V. JONES. New York, Harper &
Brothers, 1956. 295 pp., \$4.50.

This book presents a contribution to the demythologizing issue, a subject of lively debate ever since the publication of Bultmann's essay, "*Neues Testament und Mythologie*." The purpose of the author is similar to that of Bultmann: The mythological material in the New Testament must be reinterpreted for contemporary man. "How is the mythological thought-world of the New Testament to be understood? How much of it should be allowed to remain? What is to be the extent of the demything and what principle is to guide it? What is the essential meaning of the New Testament language? What lies behind myth? . . . These are questions which clamour for answers." (p. 21)

The author focuses his attention on the area of Christology, the language of which is mythological. In Part One (Prolegomena) we are taken through a discussion of Bultmann's work on the subject of myth and of the permanent value of mythical thinking for modern man. The author then criticises Bultmann's evaluation of history and eschatology and makes an appeal for a 'Christology of Jesus.'

Part Two (The Problem of the Mythological) introduces the mythological form of the Christology of the Epistles. A possible interpretation as a method of demythologizing is presented in the thought of L. Thornton and K. Heim.

Part Three (*Kurios Christos*) forms the main part of the book. The methodology of the author becomes clear: Analogical thought provides a non-mythological interpretation of *Kurios*. The notions of emergent evolution represented in the philosophy of Alexander and of historical-religious culmination as outlined by A. T. Cadoux are found wanting. Lordship must be seen as perfect Sonship. Chapters on the Lordship of Christ over creation and his position within the created series follow, illuminated by analogical "illustrations" from the scientific and aesthetic disciplines.

Part Four (The Myth as Logos) discusses finally the permanent value of myth in the light of observations made by K. Mannheim, Cassirer, Jung, Urban, and A. J. Toynbee.

As one may gather from the content, the book is difficult to review. For its intent is important, whereas the execution of this intent raises numerous questions, especially since the author deals with just about all possible fields of learning, ranging from aestheticism to modern physics—and this often in an involved, obscure style. The title of the book and Dr. Wilder's introductory statement on the cover are both misleading. The title should have omitted "in the New Testament" since it uses the New Testament more as a springboard for general apologetic-philosophical purposes, rather than dealing specifically with the problem of Christology in the New Testament. For this reason this reviewer cannot agree with Dr. Wilder that it "clarifies the whole problem of New Testament 'mythology'." The execution of Mr. Jones' program is not easy to follow. Throughout the opening chapters of the book one is wondering where Mr. Jones is going