

Strathaven,
Hepburn gardens,
St. Andrews,
Scotland.

29th Sept., 1933.

Dear Professor Barth,

It is a very long time since I wrote to you but the reason of my silence has not been that you have not often been in my thoughts. But, knowing how busy you must be, I have been unwilling to encroach upon your time unduly. And even now I shall not take it ill if you do not find time to reply in the near future.

The immediate cause of this letter is that I wish to send you a type-script copy of a review of Dr. Evelyn Torkyn's translation of your Römerbrief which I have just completed for the "Criterion", an Anglo-Catholic (?) Quarterly.

I was asked to undertake the review by Professor Kemp Smith of Edinburgh and I did so very willingly. Within the last week or so I have read the translation through from cover to cover, so that I think I can claim that my review is based on an honest attempt to understand your book as a whole. Considerations of space prevented me from saying many things I should have liked to say but I hope you will not be too displeased with what I have managed to say. Once or twice I felt a little unhappy about your exegesis but on the whole I think you have got to the heart of Paul's meaning. I hope I am nearly right in my interpretation of your new "Double Predestination". Perhaps I should have emphasized a little more than I have done the freedom of God. It is a little difficult to state your position without giving the impression

that the truth of God's "yes" is a matter of knowledge. I am just a little perplexed about the question of "the new man" in Christ. If I remember rightly you speak somewhere about our future identity with Christ. Granting that the entire empirical self is presently under judgment, would one not be right in believing that in the order of redemption there will be room for redeemed individuality, a new creation certainly and not related causally to "the old man" in the sense that the one develops out of the other, but nevertheless so related that we can say with Paul "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption"? Surely there is more here than complete discontinuity. I quite see that to the eye of faith "Christ in me" is nothing but Christ: the essential. I must not be confused with the empirical. But how are you going to protect your view of redemption from being

understood as a kind of
absolutist philosophy. It is the
old problem of the one and the
many and your position seems
to me likely to suggest to people
that you do not believe in
personal immortality. Of course
I know that this inference is
incorrect but at the same time
I feel that there is a difficulty
which is not entirely cleared up.
Are we just to say that faith
nevertheless sees only Christ
and that for the rest "eye hath
not seen nor ear heard - - -"?

I have always been much
interested in your view of
Biblical Interpretation and am
trying to find out how to apply
it to the Old Testament. Virchow's
article in Zw. d. Z. on "Der Noachitische
Bund" is an interesting model.
I think you will admit that it
is difficult to know what to do
with large sections of the historical
books, the utter "Welthaftigkeit" of
which is much more obvious
than the reference to God. It is

a great temptation in such cases to become purely archaeological.

It has occurred to me recently that your interpretative method would clear up many of the exegetical difficulties of the Psalms and that it should be possible to produce a commentary on the Psalter which would, unlike most commentaries on that book, not be an arid waste. I suppose many of the imprecatory Psalms could be understood as human witness to the divine rejection of all sin and in "Samuel" your old Scottish friends the Amalekites! could be regarded as parables of the human nature which we all share and which is utterly under God's judgment. There is no doubt a place for cursing (fluchen) but there is also Paul's (and Christ's) injunction to "bless them that curse you" and I am not quite clear how you relate these two. One can help feeling that the last two verses of Psalm 137 a less cases of cursing the enemies of God than cases of failing to bless are 'own

enemies. How is one to fit into
one's general view of Scripture this
possibility that the witness to
God's rejection of human sin has
been made sometimes in ways
which are more a witness to
human sin than to God's judgment
of it. And, if this possibility is to
be allowed how far is one to
be permitted to carry it? When
Paul says "Be not conformed to
this world", I think you understand
him as meaning that we are
called upon to presume somewhat
on our Election and bear wit-
ness by our deeds to God's
love rather than to His judgment,
to His Election of men rather than
to His rejection of them. How are
we to account for the fact that in
the Old Testament God is represented
so often as giving commands
which certainly look like "enjoining
to this world", and seem to have
much more of God's curse (not
to speak of man's) than of His
blessing in them? I hope I have
made my difficulty quite clear.

I attended the Pan-Protestant Conference at Belfast this summer and met an acquaintance of yours Herr Pastor Langenohl. I was glad to have news of you from him and wish to send you a message of encouragement and good cheer. I am sorry that you have been caused annoyance by unintelligent comments which have appeared in the British Press.

I trust that you, your wife and family are all keeping well and that you have enjoyed a good holiday. You will be interested to learn, I think, that our family has increased. We have now a small daughter Isabel born on Jan. 5. I enclose a photograph of the family. Things have gone exceedingly well with us.

No successor to Principal Galloway in St. Mary's College has so far been appointed. The work which he used to do is to ~~be~~ be undertaken this winter with the help of Professor Mackintosh.

and Principal Cairns. Last
~~year~~ ^{season} I had to help with some of
the theology. But by another
year we hope not only to have
Principal Gallaway's successor ap-
pointed but to have two new
professors bringing numbers up to
six.

Well, I think I have taken
up quite enough of your time.
My wife joins me in warmest
greetings to you and Frau Professor
Berth. Has your Eldest son
commenced his theological studies
yet?

Yours very sincerely,
Norman W. Porteous.
