

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*

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The chapter divisions of the original do not appear in the contents or text of the study edition. Their names, however, do appear on the back of each fascicle as a part of the synopsis comparing the first edition and the study edition, where they identify the latter's groupings of numbered "paragraphs" (§) into fascicles. Page numbers from the first edition are given in the margins of the study edition, and a note in I.1 encourages continuing to use them for references to this work.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORD OF GOD

Volume I

INTRODUCTION

I, Part 1

§ 1. THE TASK OF DOGMATICS

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As a theological discipline dogmatics is the scientific self-examination of the Christian Church with respect to the content of its distinctive talk about God.

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Talk about God in the Church seeks to be proclamation to the extent that in the form of preaching and sacrament it is directed to man with the claim and expectation that in accordance with its commission it has to speak to him the Word of God to be heard in faith. Inasmuch as it is a human word in spite of this claim

and expectation, it is the material of dogmatics, i.e., of the investigation of its responsibility as measured by the Word of God which it seeks to proclaim.

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proclamation done and to be done by man with the revelation attested in Holy Scripture. Prolegomena to dogmatics as an understanding of its epistemological path must therefore consist in an exposition of the three forms of the Word of God as revealed, written, and preached.

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THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Volume II

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The man who is isolated over against God is as such rejected by God. But to be this man can only be by the godless man's own choice. The witness of the community of God to every individual man consists in this: that this choice of the godless man is void; that he belongs eternally to Jesus Christ and therefore is not rejected, but elected by God in Jesus Christ; that the rejection which he deserves on account of his perverse choice is borne and canceled by Jesus Christ; and that he is appointed to eternal life with God on the basis of the righteous divine decision. The promise of his election determines that as a member of the community himself shall be a bearer of its witness to the whole world. And the revelation to his rejection can only determine him to believe in Jesus Christ as the One by whom it has been borne and canceled.

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As the doctrine of God's command, ethics interprets the Law as the form of the Gospel, i.e., as the sanctification which comes to man through the electing God. Because Jesus Christ is the holy God and sanctified man in One, it has its basis in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Because the God who claims man for Himself makes Himself originally responsible for him, it forms part of the doctrine of God. Its function is to bear primary witness to the grace of God in so far as this is the saying engagement and commitment of man.

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As God is gracious to us in Jesus Christ, He judges us. He judges us because it is His will to treat us as His own for the sake of His own Son. He judges us as in His Son's death. He condemns all our action as transgression, and by His Son's resurrection

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THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

Volume III

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III, Part 1

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The insight that man owes his existence and form, together with all the reality distinct from God, to God's creation, is achieved only in the reception and answer of the divine self-witness, that is, only in faith in Jesus Christ, i.e., in the knowledge of the unity of Creator and creature actualised in Him, and in the life in the present mediated by Him, under the right and in the experience of the goodness of the Creator towards His creature.

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Because man, living under heaven and on earth, is the creature whose relation to God is revealed to us in the Word of God, he is the central object of the theological doctrine of creation. As the man Jesus is Himself the revealing Word of God, He is the source of our knowledge of the nature of man as created by God.

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Man lives in the allotted span of his present, past and future life. He who was before him and will be after him, and who therefore fixes the boundaries of his being, is the eternal God, his Creator and Covenant-partner. He is the hope in which man may live in his time.

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The doctrine of providence deals with the history of created being as such, in the sense that in every respect and in its whole span this proceeds under the fatherly care of God the Creator, whose will is done and is to be seen in His election of grace, and therefore in the history of the covenant between Himself and man, and therefore in Jesus Christ.

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Under the control of God world-occurrence is threatened and actually corrupted by the nothingness which is inimical to the will of the Creator and therefore to the nature of His good creature. God has judged nothingness by His mercy as revealed and effective in Jesus Christ. Pending the final revelation that it is already refuted and abolished, God determines the sphere, the manner, the measure and the subordinate relationship to His Word and work in which it may still operate.

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God's action in Jesus Christ, and therefore His lordship over His creature, is called the "kingdom of heaven" because first and supremely it claims for itself the upper world. From this God selects and sends His messengers, the angels, who precede the revelation and doing of His will on earth as objective and authentic witnesses, who accompany it as faithful servants of God and man, and who victoriously ward off the opposing forms and forces of chaos.

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THE DOCTRINE OF RECONCILIATION

Volume IV

**CHAPTER XIII. THE SUBJECT-MATTER AND PROBLEMS
OF THE DOCTRINE OF RECONCILIATION**

IV, Part 1

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The subject-matter, origin and content of the message received and proclaimed by the Christian community is at its heart the free act of the faithfulness of God in which He takes the lost cause of man, who has denied Him as Creator and in so doing ruined himself as creature, and makes it His own in Jesus Christ, carrying it through to its goal and in that way maintaining and manifesting His own glory in the world.

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The threefold knowledge of Jesus Christ includes the knowledge of the sin of man: (1) in his pride, (2) his sloth and (3) his falsehood—the knowledge of the event in which reconciliation is made: (1) his justification, (2) his satisfaction and (3) his calling—and the knowledge of the work of the Holy Spirit in (1) the gathering, (2) the upbuilding and (3) the sending of the community, and of the being of Christians in Jesus Christ (1) in faith, (2) in love and (3) in hope.

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him by judging Himself and dying in his place. But God the Father raised Him from the dead, and in so doing recognised and gave effect to His death and passion as a satisfaction made for us, as our conversion to God, and therefore as our redemption from death to life.

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The right of God established in the death of Jesus Christ, and proclaimed in His resurrection in defiance of the wrong of man, is as such the basis of the new and corresponding right of man. Promised to man in Jesus Christ, hidden in Him and only to be revealed in Him, it cannot be attained by any thought or effort or achievement on the part of man. But the reality of it calls for faith in every man as a suitable acknowledgment and appropriation and application.

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The exaltation of man, which in defiance of his reluctance has been achieved in the death and declared in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is as such the creation of his new form of existence as the faithful covenant-partner of God. It rests wholly and utterly on his justification before God, and like this it is achieved only in the one Jesus Christ, but effectively and authoritatively for all in Him. It is self-attested, by its operation among them as His direction, in the life of a people of men who in virtue of the call to discipleship which has come to them, of their awakening to conversion, of the praise of their works, of the mark of the cross which is laid upon them, have the freedom even as sinners to render obedience and to establish themselves as the saints of God in a provisional offering of the thankfulness for which the whole world is ordained by the act of the love of God.

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As the effective promise of God encounters man in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, man proves himself to be a liar in whose thinking, speech and conduct his liberation by and for the free God transforms itself into an attempt to claim God by and for himself as the man who is bound in his self-assertion—a perversion in which he can only destroy himself and finally perish.

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The Word of the living Jesus Christ is the creative call by which He awakens man to an active knowledge of the truth and thus receives him into the new standing of the Christian, namely, into a particular fellowship with Himself, thrusting him as His afflicted but well-equipped witness into the service of His prophetic work.

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§ 72. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SENDING OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY	IV.3, 681
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The Holy Spirit is the enlightening power of the living Lord Jesus Christ in which He confesses the community called by Him as His body, i.e., as His own earthly-

historical form of existence, by entrusting to it the ministry of His prophetic Word and therefore the provisional representation of the calling of all humanity and indeed of all creatures as it has taken place in Him. He does this by sending it among the peoples as His own people, ordained for its part to confess Him before all men, to call them to Him and thus to make known to the whole world that the covenant between God and man concluded in Him is the first and final meaning of its history, and that His future manifestation is already here and now its great, effective and living hope.

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BAPTISM AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IV, Part 4

A man's turning to faithfulness to God, and consequently to calling upon Him, is the work of this faithful God which, perfectly accomplished in the history of Jesus Christ, in virtue of the awakening, quickening and illuminating power of this history, becomes a new beginning of life as his baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The first step of this life of faithfulness to God, the Christian life, is a man's baptism with water, which by his own decision is requested of the community and which is administered by the community, as the binding confession of his obedience, conversion and hope, made in prayer for God's grace, wherein he honours the freedom of this grace.

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