

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Volume III

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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 CREATION

Volume III

CHAPTER IX. THE WORK OF CREATION

III, Part 1

§ 40. FAITH IN GOD THE CREATOR

III.1, 3

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.

§ 41. CREATION AND COVENANT

III.1, 42

Creation comes first in the series of works of the triune God, and is thus the beginning of all the things distinct from God himself. Since it contains in itself the beginning of time, its historical reality eludes all historical observation and account, and can be expressed in the biblical creation narratives only in the form of pure saga. But according to this witness the purpose and therefore the meaning of creation is to make possible the history of God's covenant with man which has its beginning, its centre and its culmination in Jesus Christ. The history of this covenant is as much the goal of creation as creation itself in the beginning of this history.

1. Creation, History and Creation History

III.1, 42

2. Creation as the External Basis of the Covenant

III.1, 94

3. The Covenant as the Internal Basis of Creation

III.1, 228

§ 42. THE YES OF GOD THE CREATOR III.1, 330

The work of God the Creator consists particularly in the benefit that in the limits of its creatureliness what He has created may be as it is actualised by Him, and be good as it is justified by Him.

1. Creation as Benefit III.1, 330

2. Creation as Actualisation III.1, 344

3. Creation as Justification III.1, 366

CHAPTER X. THE CREATURE III, Part 2

§ 43. MAN AS A PROBLEM OF DOGMATICS III.2, 3

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.

1. Man in the Cosmos III.2, 3

2. Man as an Object of Theological Knowledge III.2, 19

§ 44. MAN AS THE CREATURE OF GOD III.2, 55

The being of man is the history which shows how one of God's creatures, elected and called by God is caught up in personal responsibility before Him and proves itself capable of fulfilling it.

1. Jesus, Man for God III.2, 55

2. Phenomena of the Human III.2, 71

3. Real Man III.2, 132

§ 45. MAN IN HIS DETERMINATION AS THE COVENANT-PARTNER OF GOD III.2, 203

That real man is determined by God for life with God has its inviolable correspondence in the fact that his creaturely being is a being in encounter—between I and Thou, man and woman. It is human in this encounter, and in this humanity it is a likeness of the being of its Creator and a being in hope in Him.

1. Jesus, Man for other Men	III.2, 203
2. The Basic Form of Humanity	III.2, 222
3. Humanity as Likeness and Hope	III.2, 285
§ 46. MAN AS SOUL AND BODY	III.2, 325

Through the Spirit of God, man is the subject, form and life of a substantial organism, the soul of his body—wholly and simultaneously both, in ineffaceable difference, inseparable unity, and indestructible order.

1. Jesus, Whole Man	III.2, 335
2. The Spirit as Basis of Soul and Body	III.2, 344
3. Soul and Body in their Interconnexion	III.2, 366
4. Soul and Body in their Particularity	III.2, 394
5. Soul and Body in their Order	III.2, 418
§ 47. MAN IN HIS TIME	III.2, 437

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.

1. Jesus, Lord of Time	III.2, 437
2. Given Time	III.2, 511
3. Allotted Time	III.2, 553
4. Beginning Time	III.2, 572
5. Ending Time	III.2, 587

CHAPTER XI. THE CREATOR AND HIS CREATURE III, Part 3

§ 48. THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE, ITS BASIS AND FORM	III.3, 3
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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.

1. The Concept of Divine Providence

III.3, 3

“By ‘providence’ is meant the superior dealing of the Creator with His creation, the wisdom, omnipotence and goodness with which he maintains and governs in time the distinct reality according to the counsel of His own will.” (III.3, 3, emphasis added)

“As distinct from creation, providence is God’s knowledge, will and action in His relation to the creature already made by Him and not to be made again. Providence guarantees and confirms the work of creation. And no creature could be if it did not please God continually to confirm and guarantee and thus to maintain it. (III.3, 6)

“The history of the covenant which follows creation also needs an external basis. Its external basis is the sway of divine providence. This does not repeat or continue creation.” (III.3, 7)

“Between Creator and creature in the sense of biblical theology there is a connexion which makes it impossible for the Creator to leave His work to itself, and makes immediately necessary the reality and knowledge of a second action of the Creator following the first, i.e., His action in the sense of the concept of providence.” (III.3, 9)

“The simple meaning of the doctrine of providence may thus be summed up in the statement that in the act of creation God the Creator as such has associated himself with His creature as such as the Lord of its history, and is faithful to it as such.” (III.3, 12)

2. The Christian Belief in Providence

III.3, 14

See the *Heidelberg Catechism*, questions 26-28.

1. “The Christian belief in providence is faith in the strict sense of the term, and this means first that it is a hearing and receiving of the Word of God.” (III.3, 15)
2. “The Christian belief in providence is also faith in the strict sense to the extent that, with reference to its object, it is simply and directly faith in God Himself, in God as the Lord of His creation watching, willing and working above and in world-occurrence. The consolation and impulse of this faith is that it points man to God in respect of the whole history of created being including his own. *The man who lives by his faith may know that in everything which may happen to him he has to do with God.*” (III.3, 18, emphasis added; cf. Calvin)
3. “We now come to the third and most important delimitation. In its substance the Christian belief in providence is Christian faith, i.e., faith in Christ.” (III.3, 26)

“We are not in strange hands, nor are we strangers, when He is over us as our Creator and we are under Him as His children.” (III.3, 29)

3. The Christian Doctrine of Providence

III.3, 33

Barth identifies the right hand of the Lord (with which he rules) with Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God. (III.3, 35)

“The faithfulness of God is that He co-ordinates creaturely occurrence under His lordship with the occurrence of the covenant, grace and salvation, that He subordinates the former to the latter and makes it serve it, that He integrates it with the coming of His kingdom in which the whole of the reality distinct from Himself has its meaning and historical substance, that He causes it to co-operate in this happening.” (III.3, 41)

“What man sees is simply the multiplicity and confusion of the lines of creaturely occurrence, which in itself and as such—for creation is not God—cannot be identified with the doing of the will of God, with the work of His freedom, grace and power.... He confronts world reality in all sobriety in the fact that he knows that in all its developments he has to do with God Himself, with His co-ordinating and integrating of creaturely occurrence with the history of His covenant, with the doing of His gracious and saving will, with His providing that all things must work together for good to them that love Him, and in all these things with God Himself, with the work of His right hand.” (III.3, 44)

“The hand of God never rests. And it will never withdraw. Everything is always involved in its power and therefore in that receiving and becoming. For the faithfulness of God never ceases in the kingdom of His grace. There is no moment, place or situation in which His creature escapes Him or becomes indifferent, in which He has no further use of His creature or some part of it, or in which He forgets it.” (III.3, 53)

1. “We began this final discussion with the assertion that there can be no question of an independent co-operation of creation in the establishment, direction and fulfilment of the history of the covenant of grace, of a participation of creation in the procuring, attainment and mediation of the love of God which comes to it in this covenant.” (III.3, 53)
2. “Creaturely occurrence is the external basis of the history of the covenant.... This recognition can thus take place only in the act of hearing the Word of God, in the act of adoring His inconceivable goodness, in the act of gratitude and the corresponding willingness and readiness to do the will of God.... It is always a matter of recognition from within outwards, from the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ to all other occurrence.” (III.3, 54)
3. “This way can be traversed only in this direction.” (III.3, 54)

4. “There can be a contemplation of the divine world-rule, and therefore of world-occurrence under this rule, and therefore a Christian view of things, only in the movement of faith itself from within outwards, and in the concrete realisation of its perception.” (III.3, 55)

§ 49. GOD THE FATHER AS LORD OF HIS CREATURE

III.3, 58

God fulfils His fatherly lordship over His creature by preserving, accompanying and ruling the whole course of its earthly existence. He does this as His mercy is revealed and active in the creaturely sphere in Jesus Christ, and the lordship of His Son is thus manifested to it.

1. The Divine Preserving

III.3, 58

“The power in which he sustains the creature is the mercy with which in His Son Jesus Christ He is revealed and active within creation and in creaturely form. And the purpose in which He sustains creation is the revelation of the lordship of His Son, for who sake He has given to each creature its individual being....The creature has to be preserved, and is in fact preserved, because this particular will of God has to be done, and is in fact done, both in heaven and on earth, because Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God the Father and is our Associate.” (III.3, 58)

1. “If he really sustains it [the creature], this means that He gives it more time, that He confirms it in its being in time. In the same way that He willed and gave it to the creature to become and to be, so He wills and gives it to the creature to be again and again, to continue to be. This is how he preserves it....He keeps faith with the creature.” (III.3, 61)

“For the creature to have its part in that history in which God displays His grace, and finally in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, it must continue to be there, and therefore it must be preserved.” (III.3, 62)

2. “The order of the divine preserving of all things...takes place wholly and utterly as a free act of God, but in such a way that creation itself is the means by which it is preserved in being; the human body by the soul which directs it; the human soul by the body which serves it; the race as a whole and all the species of beasts and plants by natural propagation; the individual by his human and cosmic environment; and every creaturely thing by its environment and according to the particular order of that environment.” (III.3, 63)

“It is God alone who does everything according the His own free good-pleasure. But He does it by maintaining this relationship and therefore by maintaining the creature, by means of the creature.” (III.3, 65)

3. “In God there is no caprice.” (III.3, 68)

“When we are face to face with the work of God there is always room for surprise and wonder and praise and thanksgiving.” (III.3, 68)

4. Creation did not distinguish itself from chaos and cannot guard itself against it. (III.3, 74)

There is a connection between preserving and saving. (III.3, 82)

2. The Divine Accompanying	III.3, 90
3. The Divine Ruling	III.3, 154
4. The Christian under the Universal Lordship of God the Father	III.3, 239
§ 50. GOD AND NOTHINGNESS	III.3, 289

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.

1. The Problem of Nothingness	III.3, 289
2. The Misconception of Nothingness	III.3, 295
3. The Knowledge of Nothingness	III.3, 302
4. The Reality of Nothingness	III.3, 349
§ 51. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, THE AMBASSADORS OF GOD AND THEIR OPPONENTS	III.3, 369

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.

1. The Limits of Angelology	III.3, 369
2. The Kingdom of Heaven	III.3, 418

3. The Ambassadors of God and their Opponents	III.3, 477
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CHAPTER XII. THE COMMAND OF GOD THE CREATOR III, Part 4

§ 52. ETHICS AS A TASK OF THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION	III.4, 3
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The task of special ethics in the content of the doctrine of creation is to show to what extent the one command of the one God who is gracious to man in Jesus Christ is also the command of his Creator and therefore already the sanctification of the creaturely action and abstention of man.

1. The Problem of Special Ethics	III.4, 3
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2. God the Creator as Commander	III.4, 32
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§ 53. FREEDOM BEFORE GOD	III.4, 47
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It is the will of God the Creator that man, as His creature, shall be responsible before Him. In particular, His command says that man is to keep His day holy as a day of worship, freedom and joy, that he is to confess Him in his heart and with this mouth and that he is to come to Him with his requests.

1. The Holy Day	III.4, 47
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2. Confession	III.4, 73
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3. Prayer	III.4, 87
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§ 54. FREEDOM IN FELLOWSHIP	III.4, 116
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As God the Creator calls man to Himself, He also directs him to his fellow-man. The divine command affirms in particular that in the encounter of man and woman, in the relationship between parents and children and outwards from near to distant neighbours, man may affirm, honor and enjoy the other with himself and himself with the other.

1. Man and Woman	III.4, 116
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2. Parents and Children	III.4, 240
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3. Near and Distant Neighbors	III.4, 285
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§ 55. FREEDOM FOR LIFE III.4, 324

As God the Creator calls man to Himself and turns him to his fellow man, He orders him to honor his own life and that of every other man as a loan, and to secure it against all caprice, in order that it may be used in this service and in preparation for this service.

1. Respect for Life III.4, 324

2. The Protection of Life III.4, 397

3. The Active Live III.4, 470

§ 56. FREEDOM IN LIMITATION III.4, 565

God the Creator wills and claims the man who belongs to Him, is united to his fellow-man and under obligation to affirm his own life and that of others, with the special intention indicated by the limit of time, vocation and honor which He has already set him as his Creator and Lord.

1. The Unique Opportunity III.4, 565

2. Vocation III.4, 595

3. Honour III.4, 647

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