Concordia Theological Monthly

Volume 7 Article 46

6-1-1936

The Principles and Teachings of the Dialectical Theology

Th. Engelder
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Concordia
Theological Monthly

Vol. VII JUNE, 1936 No. 6

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(Concluded.)

Dialecticalism, a branch of Calvinism, vitiates the chief article of the Christian religion, the doctrine of justification by faith. It does injury to the *cor ecclesiae*. The article of the grace of God in Christ, of justification by faith, gives the Church its life; in terms of dogmatics, it forms the material principle of Christian theology. Calvinism, however, makes "the dogma of God's eternal election the *cor ecclesiae*, the heart of the Church." Furthermore, by taking the heart out of the means of grace in denying that they confer the forgiveness of sins, it renders justification by faith chimerical. And, finally, Reformed theology impugns the article of justification by faith directly.

1) Reformed theology has a pronounced *legalistic* cast, extending even to the all-important doctrine of justification. The Reformed theologian, to whom obedience to the Law of the sovereign Lord is the chief consideration, stresses sanctification to the detriment of justification by faith, without works. Living in a legalistic atmosphere, he is unable to keep legal concepts out of the sphere of justification, salvation through faith alone. "The works of the Law," which have absolutely nothing to do with the sinner's justification and cannot form the basis of the assurance of salvation, are continually intruding. Where the Gospel alone should be heard, the Law is permitted to say something. And sanctification, which has its place *after* justification, is placed *beside*, is mingled with, justification, thus warping and distorting the chief article. Reformed theology is unable to pronounce the words "salvation without works" as strongly, sharply, and distinctly as Scripture does and the need of the sinner requires. The Lutherans have always noticed this defect. Luther pointed it out: "Just so Satan at the present time, through the enthusiasts, mixes

up Law and promise, faith and works, tortures the poor consciences, keeps them from sharply dividing the Law and the Gospel, drives and chases them into the Law and spreads out a net, which is: This do; this do not. If I here do not well distinguish between Moses and Christ, I am and remain captive, cannot get free, but must despair" (IX, 805). The *Lutheran* of March 1, 1928, said the same thing: "The Congregationalists, Disciples, and others, including Methodists and Presbyterians, while acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, nevertheless present Him rather as an advance on Moses than as One who fulfils Moses for us and does for us that which Moses could never do. Christianity with them tends more and more to become legalistic, and the Gospel a new Law rather than a proclamation of grace, of forgiveness of sins." Nor do the Reformed resent this charge. They are conscious of their legalistic cast; only they do not view it as a defect, but as the normal mold. In his *Vergleichende Darstellung des lutherischen und reformierten Lehrbegriffs* the Reformed theologian M. Schneckenburger is most outspoken on this point: "As definitely as the Reformed exclude works from the *negotium iustificationis*, as an affair between God and the sinner, just as definitely they condition the sinner's assurance of his justification on this, that he practise good works, exercise himself in the new obedience. . . . This entire view is intolerable to the Lutheran. This, that a person becomes certain of his own faith through the exercise of his will, through his good works, would mean to him the loss of all the confidence of faith, would condemn him to new unrest, which is always the result of work-service, and doubt concerning his justification. . . . With the Lutherans the *salus* as eternal salvation is the immediate result of *iustificatio* and *filiatio* and contained therein potentially; with the Reformed the *possessio salutis* is something not yet given by the *ius* which justification grants, but is to be realized through works. . . . As with the Reformed salvation is obtained through faith in that it actually performs good works, so justification as the assurance of the state of grace is effected through faith in that it produces the fruits of repentance. The *mortificatio* and *vivificatio*, the actual conversion, is the activity directed on man's inward being, just as the *bona opera* constitute his outward activity, by which alone one can become sure of his faith" (I, p. 40 f. 268; II, 131). That is a true presentation of the Reformed doctrine. *The Shorter Catechism* (Presbyterian) says: "To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means, etc. What is faith in Jesus Christ? Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive, and rest upon, Him alone for salvation. . . . What is repentance unto life? Repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy

of God in Christ doth with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience" (Qus. 85—87). *The Shorter Catechism* cannot say distinctly and plainly "salvation without works." It halts and stammers: Faith is a saving grace together with repentance and the new obedience. Calvin can say at times very distinctly that man is justified without the deeds of the Law. He says distinctly: "Not that repentance is properly the cause of salvation" (*Inst.*, III, 3, § 21). But when enlarging on the matter, he permits legal concepts to intrude, and he speaks in this wise: "When once the thought that God will one day ascend His tribunal to take account of all words and actions has taken possession of his mind, it will not allow him to rest or have one moment's peace, but will perpetually urge him to adopt a different plan of life that he may be able to stand securely at the judgment-seat" (§ 7). "Christ came to call sinners, but to call them to repentance. He was sent to bless the unworthy, but by 'turning away every one' 'from his iniquities.' . . . Here, however, it is to be observed that repentance is not made a condition in such a sense as to be a foundation for meriting pardon; nay, it rather indicates the end at which they must aim if they would obtain favor, God having resolved to take pity on men for the express purpose of leading them to repent" (§ 20). What is Calvin saying? Man is saved without the deeds of the Law. Absolutely? Well, no; *if he would obtain favor,* he must turn away from his iniquities. Calvinism cannot keep the good works out of the matter of justification. It has not kept the article of justification by faith alone intact. (Cp. Conc. Theol. Mthly., 1934, p. 497 ff.)

And in this matter Neo-Calvinism is in full accord with the parent system. "The ethical question is the supreme question of all life," declares Brunner (*Theology of Crisis,* p. 68), and therefore the supreme question in justification. "How hopelessly men must have misunderstood the Reformation if they have not seen that the doctrine of justification through faith alone does not mean merely comfort and reassurance for the burdened conscience, but above all the creation of a new moral individual, of the 'workman' who not only ought to do good works, but wills to do them." (*The Mediator,* p. 600.) Surely, surely, *fides nunquam est sola;* justification by faith "means" a life of holiness and willing obedience, but it takes a legalistic mind to say that justification by faith means *above all* the creation of a new moral dividual. The evangelical theologian declares that justification means *above all* comfort and reassurance for the burdened conscience — and means *only that.* That is to say, when you deal with the burdened conscience, say not one word about works. Wait till the sinner has been comforted by the sweet Gospel of free forgiveness; then he is ready for the article of sanctification. But

the legalist cannot wait that long. He must speak of works. For the ethical question is the chief consideration. And so he can speak of justification only with a halting, stammering tongue. So completely is he dominated by the legalistic spirit that he is able to write these words: "The whole Gospel of Jesus Christ is the exposition of the First Commandment: 'I am the Lord, thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but Me. . . . All is not well with the Church . . . when she says that this commandment is only Law, and what matters most is that the Gospel shall be preached.' There is no other Gospel than this 'Law' itself" (p. 591). The ethical question is the supreme question. Therefore: "Repentance" (in the Reformed sense: *mortificatio, vivificatio*) "and faith are the same thing. Both mean the cessation of the false independence of man and his return to the original attitude of dependence. This return is the only thing which has an independent moral value. . . . Faith *is* obedience, — nothing else, — literally nothing else at all" (pp. 609. 592). Surely, surely, faith has an ethical quality. But that does not constitute its supreme importance. Faith saves because it accepts the promise. But Brunner cannot see this as the chief thing. Legalism has distorted his sight. Works continually obtrude — *into* the article of justification. "God marks us as His own possession and gives us His holiness. He does it by His word alone, and we are in the new life because He says we are and we believe His assurance. If you *believe*, you *are* and you *have* what God says. The acceptance of God's gift through faith *is* the creation of the new man, the second birth. This miracle Paul calls justification by faith." (*The Theology of Crisis*, p. 75.) Surely God gives us His holiness. But Paul *does not* call this miracle justification by faith.

Barth differs from Brunner on various matters, but not on this point. He engages in the same kind of work mongering. He finds fault with the Lutherans for assigning to the good works a subordinate position. The Augsburg Confession wasted too much time on the question whether and in what respect faith includes good works. "The Reformed assign to faith the same central position as Luther. However, the core of the Reformed faith is not this, that faith is *fiducia*, though the Reformed say this, too, with Luther, but this, that it is *God's gift;* consequently the *obedience* to the *demands of this same God* occupies an independent and equally important position.[1]) The laborious perquisitions of the Augsburg Confession as to whether and in what relation faith and good works do not exclude, but include each other mean nothing here." Sanctification must be pushed more into the foreground! On this same page (*Das Wort Gottes*, etc., p. 207)

1) Faith occupies the central position — and obedience to the Law of God an equally important position? Barth wants to say the right thing; but interrupted by his legalistic mind, he begins to stammer.

occurs the statement that the Reformed are concerned with more than "the specific monkish quest after the gracious God." Barth's concern for magnifying the importance of sanctification also prompted the statement on page 209: *"Die allzu resignierte Interpretation der communio sanctorum in der Augustana, die von heiligen* MENSCHEN GAR NICHTS *wissen will, hat Calvin mit Bewusstsein* NICHT *mitgemacht."* And as a result of this same concern he is forever mingling sanctification and justification, Law and Gospel. In his "Declaration" of Jan. 3 and 4, 1934, adopted by a confessional synod in Germany, treating in Article IV of the Message of the Church, Thesis 2 declares: "The free grace by which God comes to our help is the promise of the presence (realized through the power of the Holy Ghost) of Jesus Christ as the Lord, who became for us a servant, for the purpose of putting our old life to death and bringing to light our new life"; and Thesis 3: "The gift of grace is this, that we become Christ's own. In Him we are justified through the miracle of faith, which ever accepts the forgiveness of our sins wrought by Him. And in Him we are sanctified through the miracle of obedience, which ever submits to judgment and to the Law and command given by Him." The annotation to Thesis 2 states: "Following Calvin, we here declare: Grace means justification *and* sanctification. Gospel and Law are not to be viewed as two things originating from different sources. Since grace is forgiveness, it claims us. . . . We hear the Law of God together with the Gospel; you must not separate the two. On this point I am much disturbed by the Lutheran attitude.[2])

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2) Barth cannot be referring to such Lutheran statements as these: "When we are out of the matter of justification, we cannot sufficiently praise and magnify those works which are commanded of God. For who can sufficiently command and set forth the profit and fruit of only one work which a Christian doeth through faith and in faith? Indeed, it is more precious than heaven or earth." (Luther on Gal. 3, 22; IX, 442 f.) "I would not give one of my sermons, one of my lectures, one of my writings, one of my Lord's Prayers, nay, whatever small work I ever have done or am doing, for all the riches of the world, yea, I prize it higher than my life." (XIV, 311. Luther's Psalm of Good Works.) Barth must be referring to statements such as these: "The true knowledge of Christ, faith, disputeth not whether thou hast done good works to righteousness or evil works to condemnation, but simply concludeth after this sort: If thou have done good works, thou art not therefore justified; or if thou have done evil works, thou art not therefore condemned." (On Gal. 5, 4—9; IX, 619.) "The Holy Spirit follows this method: He brings first of all the grace of Christ to me and does not point to the works. . . . He does not urge first of all the works, but takes you first of all to God by means of His sweet words and grace, *does not direct you so soon to good works;* but afterwards you will find plenty of good works to do for your neighbor. Christ first takes care of the conscience; when the conscience has been healed through faith in God, then He also shows what works are to be done for the neighbor; He begins by magnifying faith and *pushes the works back.* This they [the enthusiasts] cannot grasp." (XI, 1713 f.)

Pastor Vogel, too, slights sanctification too much: He that says faith must also say obedience; he that says Gospel must also say Law." Yes, surely, obedience inevitably follows upon faith. When you say faith, you say obedience. But when you speak of *fides iustificans*, do not *say one word* about obedience. Paul did not. He said that "God justifieth the *ungodly*," Rom. 4, 5. If you cannot wait so long and must speak of sanctification at once, if you think you must give sanctification its due by dragging it into the article of justification, you are falsifying the chief article. — This matter is fully treated in an article that appeared in the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, November, 1935, dealing with the "confessional synods" and "the Barthian Declaration." What is wrong with Barthianism and Calvinism is thus stated: "Of what use is it to try, with Barth and Calvin, to safeguard the article of justification" (by declaring unreservedly for the *sola fide*) "if in the next moment one cancels such declarations through wrong emphasis?" (p. 843).[3]

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3) The legalistic attitude of the Reformed, which stresses the holy life overmuch, is due to the dominating principle of Calvinism, which places the sovereignty of God, not the grace of God in Christ, in the foreground. The first concern of the Lutheran, burdened by the sense of God's wrath and crushed by the Law of the sovereign Lord, is the Gospel of the grace of God in Christ. The first concern of the Calvinist is: I must keep the Law of God. Under the influence of the Gospel he cannot help saying that faith in Christ is the one chief thing; but swayed by the central dogma of his theology, he ends by saying that the ethical question is the supreme question of life. The theology which places the sovereignty of God in the center inevitably produces a legalistic mind. Here is a typical Reformed pronouncement, which clearly shows how the Reformed mind works in this matter. In a recent book, *The Sermon on the Mount*, W. Hendriksen states: "The man who builds his house upon the rock is a picture of the individual who not only hears the Gospel of the Kingdom, the proclamation of the will of the Father, but who also acts upon it, realizing that his life will have abiding value only then when it is built upon the solid foundation of the **doing of God's will, the joyful recognition of God's sovereignty.** . . . Either the fundamental principle of your life is the cheerful recognition of **God's sovereignty, the doing of God's will through the grace of God and out of gratitude,** so that you are building on the Rock Christ, or your house (*i. e.*, your life) has no foundation at all." *The Sermon on the Mount* emphasizes "the one fundamental principle of Christianity, the very essence and the root-idea of the 'kingdom of God,' namely, *obedience to the will of God, joyful recognition of God's* **sovereignty**" (pp. 244—248. Italics and boldface as in the original). W. Walther is simply summarizing the foregoing when he says: "The Reformed can see God only as the sovereign Lord, with whom obedience to His commands is the one important matter" (*Lehrbuch der Symbolik*, p. 248). And F. Pieper has correctly diagnosed the case thus: "Since the Calvinists teach the particular grace and the immediate operation of grace" (features of the dogma of the sovereignty of God and of the absolute will), "they are driven to direct the consciences smitten by the Law to base the assurance of God's gracious will not on the means of grace, but on the *gratia infusa*, on the inner transformation, that is, on sanctification and good works" (*Christliche Dogmatik*, III, 291).

2) The dialecticalists teach justification by faith. But, finally, *what is this faith?* Is it faith or works? We have not the time now to ask what Barth means exactly when he describes faith as "the leap into the void" (*"der Sprung ins Leere," Roemerbrief,* p. 74), what Brunner means when he says: "It should be a venture, an act in which the soul really steps out into the unknown" (p. 335). Nor will we ask Brunner to define his statement that "faith depends on the Word of God alone" (p. 301). He has already told us what "Word" means in his theology. It is a rather indefinite quantity of a rather nebulous quality. When the dialecticalist says that faith depends on, and deals with, God's Word, he does not speak in terms of Lutheran theology, does not mean that faith grasps the forgiveness of sins offered and given in the Gospel and the Sacraments. But what we are now asking is: Do the Reformed conceive of faith as "faith" or as "works"? At bottom and in line with their legalistic predisposition they see the value and virtue of faith in its moral quality. The Calvinists of the old school teach: "Being a proclamation of the terms on which God is willing to save sinners and an exhibition of the duty of fallen man in relation to that plan, the Gospel of necessity binds all those who are in the condition which the plan contemplates. It is in this respect analogous to the Moral Law." "The terms of admission into this spiritual kingdom are faith and repentance" (Ch. Hodge, *Syst. Theol.,* II, 642. 601). The Neo-Calvinists speak the same language. Brunner says: "Faith *is* obedience, — nothing else, — literally nothing else at all" (p. 592). Paul, too, calls faith obedience, meaning, however, that faith joyfully accepts what the Gospel freely promises and unconditionally offers, while Brunner means that faith obeys the Gospel as a proclamation laying down certain terms and prescribing a certain line of conduct. Note, too, that, while Hodge describes the Gospel only as "analogous to the Moral Law," Brunner says that "there is no other Gospel than this 'Law' (the First Commandment) itself" (p. 591). And Barth does not hesitate to say that "Moses preached also the Gospel as *Law*" (*Das Wort Gottes,* etc., p. 208). What is faith? Brunner answers: "It is man's return to the original attitude of dependence" (p. 609). And Barth answers: *"Der Glaube — das ist die Bedingung. Keine andere, als die schon Mose stellte. Nichts anderes als die von uns immer als gefordert gewusste, immer wieder abgelehnte Unterwerfung unter die Gerechtigkeit Gottes* (10, 3)." (*Roemerbrief,* on 10, 9—11.) Does the dialectical theology leave the article of justification by faith intact? Does it teach justification "by *faith*"?

The dialectical theology, then, contains, yes, and stresses, important elements of Christian theology. It teaches the total corruption of man and aims to teach salvation by grace alone, as Calvinism has always done. Besides, it combats valiantly the error of Modern-

ism, Immanentalism, the self-sufficiency of man, and insists that the saving knowledge must come from above, that nothing can save man but the Word of God. This accounts for the favorable reception it has been enjoying. We can understand why a generation which has been sickened by the arrogance of Modernism is pleased to see the proud impostor laid low. For this the dialectical theology is held in high regard. "Providentially a great uprising against the intellectual pride, the cock-sureness, and the spiritual decadence of the rationalistic poverty which Immanentalism and Naturalism have produced, has appeared in an important school of divine transcendence. Barthianism has created a new situation, full of promise. It is more than a protest. It is an insistence that man's knowledge of spiritual things must come from a downward movement in which God reveals Himself and them. . . . Here Barthianism takes its impregnable stand. . . . Surely Barthianism has the cure for such toploftiness that takes itself so seriously." (*Personality and the Trinity,* by John B. Champion [Baptist], pp. 23. 81. 193.) And to those who have experienced, or see men experiencing, the futility of the theologies that spring from man's own ego the Barthian emphasis on the majesty and authoritativeness of God's Word is most heartening.

On the other hand, the dialectical theology is fraught with great dangers. It wields an evil influence. Is it "bringing back German theology from speculative labyrinths to *the Bible itself*"? The dialecticalists frequently appeal to the Bible as God's Word, and that appeal tends to set men on the right path; but then comes the fatal assertion that the Bible itself is not absolutely God's Word. And such a theology cannot but lead away from God's Word, the Bible. It is on this account that large groups of Reformed Christians — they have been labeled here in America and also by the Barthians in Europe as Fundamentalists — warn against the dialectical theology. "Brunner has definitely rejected the authority of the 'Thus saith the Lord' of Scripture." (*Bibliotheca Sacra,* 1935, p. 360.) And *The Presbyterian* points out that Barthianism cannot radically cure men of Modernism. "Readers of Barthian books who have in places been impressed with the outspoken evangelicalism of much of the thought have at the same time been puzzled by asides which are quite inconsistent with the main theses. While describing an organum of Christian thought which is radically supernatural in many respects and which, to mean anything, must rest upon the solid verities of a revelation which is articulate and definite with respect to the nature of the Bible, the validity of the great facts concerning Christ, the reality of sin, and the satisfaction which Christ wrought in His death, we sometimes find these writers edging away from definite declarations just where they are most in order. It is very confusing. But we believe the confusion is also in the writers themselves. They

have been compelled to take hold of premises which are leading them straight back to orthodox Christianity, and they do not altogether like it. Thus the Barthian shows some traces of that Humanism which he attacks so strenuously." (December 19, 1935.) The dialecticalists have, in short, abandoned the formal principle of Protestantism. The old-school Calvinists see that. Lutheran theologians should not be praising Brunner as "a staunch proponent of the theology of the Reformation." They should not say: "What, then, shall we say of Karl Barth? Surely we must admit that he speaks truth when he calls this theology a *theology of the Word.* And any teaching based so completely on the living Word and holding itself always open to correction by that Word may be in error at some points, but offers the constant possibility of having its own error corrected by further study of the Word." Barth's theology is not a theology of the *Word of the Bible.* And he is not open to correction by the Word of the Bible; the Bible must submit to be corrected by him. The formal principle fares badly with the dialecticalists. And we have seen how badly the material principle of the Christian religion fares with them. Men have no right to introduce Barth and Brunner as the restorers of the theology of the Reformation. Why, the dialecticalists themselves repudiate that title. The dialecticalist A. Keller will say at times that the dialectical theology is calling the Lutherans back to Luther and the Reformed Church back to Calvin (*Karl Barth and Christian Unity,* p. 81); but when he uses precise language, he says: "If we describe the movement as Neo-Calvinism or Neo-Lutheranism, we must keep in mind the fact that something has come alive in Continental theology which is not simply a repetition of the old Calvinistic or Lutheran thought forms" (*Religion and Revolution,* p. 53). The implication is that the dialectical theology has cast the old thoughts into better forms, that it is an improvement of the theology of the Reformation.

The truth of the matter is that the dialectical theology has cast overboard much of the old Calvinistic theology which is good and never had what is the best in the Lutheran theology.[4]

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4) A recent publication, *Das Eschatologische Denken der Gegenwart* (von Dr. Folke Holmstroem, Dozent der systematischen Theologie an der Universitaet in Lund. 1936), came to our desk since the above was written. The following excerpts from chapters V and VI touch on some of the matters we have been discussing. Quoting Barth: *"Wer sagen kann, da, wo die Bibel uns hinfuehre, sei schliesslich nur ein grosses Nein zu hoeren, ein grosses Loch zu sehen, der beweist damit nur, dass er* DAHIN *noch nicht gefuehrt worden ist.* DIESES *Nein ist eben Ja.* DIESES *Gericht ist Gnade.* DIESE *Verurteilung ist Vergebung.* DIESER *Tod ist Leben.* DIESE *Hoelle ist Himmel. . . . Weil* GOTT *ja zu uns sagt, darum muessen wir so radikal, so unentrinnbar im Nein stehen. . . . Wir wuerden nicht verneinen, wenn uns nicht die Realitaet des Ja so stark beunruhigte"* (*Gesammelte Vortraege,* I, 114 f. 147. 72), the author states: *"Warum hat denn Barth*

eine philosophische Paradoxmacherei der Begriffe zum Ausdrucksmittel seiner christlichen Verkuendigung gewaehlt, die darin glaenzt, Gegensaetze widereinander auszuspielen, die sich dann gegenseitig wieder aufheben? Gerade dieses nie abschliessende Spiel mit logischen Widerspruechen soll die Theologie hindern, ALLZU SICHEREN BESCHEID ZU GEBEN. *Die dialektische Methode, in der die Position in Negation und die Negation in Position umschlaegt, ist allein geeignet, die Spannung des persoenlichen Glaubens, die existenzielle Entscheidung widerzuspiegeln. Die Dialektik, dieses an sich aeusserst vieldeutige Wort, wird bei Barth zum vieldeutig variierten Mittel, das religioese Denken an der Erstarrung in eindeutig fixierte Begriffe zu hindern, welche die Illusion vortaeuschen koennten,* EINE RELIGIOESE WAHRHEIT ALS SICHEREN BESITZ *zu haben. . . . Bei einer solchen Denkweise kann man aber* NIEMALS EINEN DEFINITIVEN *Bescheid erhalten, weil er sofort auch durch gerade entgegengesetzte, der Form nach gleich kategorische Aussagen aufgehoben werden kann. (Vgl. G. Heinzelmann: 'Man muss sich nicht wundern, dass er* [Barth] *nie da steht, wo man ihn sucht'.) Eine Dogmatik, die im Prinzip als ihr Ideal die 'Aufhebung aller Dogmatik' proklamiert (Ges. Vortr., I, 84), spricht sich durch eine solche intellektuelle Selbstaufgabe wissenschaftliche Berechtigung ab. . . . Aber die Methode fuehrt auch religioese Gefahren mit sich. Die Anwendung der Dialektik als Methode der Theologie dient im Grunde demselben Zweck wie die Bestimmung des Glaubens als einer ausschliesslich eschatologischen Groesse: Karl Barth* WILL DEN MENSCHEN DER MOEGLICHKEIT BERAUBEN, DEN HEILSBESITZ SCHON IN DIESEM LEBEN ZU BEHAUPTEN. . . . *Wie oft auch Luther von ihm zitiert wird, es ist leicht zu merken, dass er von der calvinischen Atmosphaere bestimmt ist. Seine Abgrenzung gegen Luthers volles Evangelium tritt mit besonders praegnanter Anschaulichkeit zutage, da er in seiner Dogmatik von 1927 zum ersten Male sein ganzes theologisches System umreisst. Wie Gottes Majestaet Gottes Liebe uebergeordnet wird, so erhaelt der Glaube gemaess der Tradition der reformierten Dogmatik den Gehorsam nebengeordnet. . . . Vgl. P. Althaus (Zeitschr. f. sys. Theol., I, 1924, S. 770): 'Bei Barth ist das "Wort Gottes" ja keine inhaltliche Bekundung, auf die es gewagt werden darf, sondern nur ein anderer Ausdruck fuer das Ende aller Menschenmoeglichkeiten. Dieses Nein als Ja verstanden — das ist bei Barth das "Wort Gottes."' Besonders S. 773—776 betont Althaus den Abstand zwischen Barth und Luther. . . . Wie ergreifend aber auch K. Barth den unbedingten Ernst des Gerichts verkuenden kann, im Grunde hat er ihm seine Spitze abgebrochen. Denn er wird durch seine ungeschichtliche Zeitlosigkeitsspekulation gezwungen, das Gericht Gottes* ALS GESCHICHTLICHES ENDGERICHT *wegzuerklaeren. Wie nahe auch Gottes Reich sein mag — es kann ja in die Zeit nicht hereinbrechen, ohne gleichzeitig dialektisch aufgehoben zu werden! Darum werden letztlich Gottes Wirksamkeit und der Ernst seines Gerichtes fuer den Menschen ungefaehrlich. Auch kann ja die eschatologische Erwartung auf die Dauer nicht in krampfhafter Spannung festgehalten werden. Barth duerfte ueberschen haben, dass man nur etwas erwarten kann, das wirklich in der Zeit bevorsteht. Die erwartungsvolle Spannung muss geradezu verfluechtigt und aufgeloest werden, wenn die Parusie Realitaet nur als zeitloses Symbol fuer den unendlichen Ewigkeitsernst in jeder existentiellen Situation besitzt und nicht die Gewissheit bedeutet, dass Gottes Ratschluss in einer unausweichlichen Zukunft einmal endgueltig werden wird, dass* DIE GNADENZEIT EINE ZEITLICH FIXIERTE GRENZE HAT. . . . *Die konkrete Zeitbestimmtheit und die inhaltlich bestimmte Gerichtstat sind durch dialektische Kunststuecke wegerklaert worden. . . . Weil Brunner also unter dem Einfluss der Werttheorie der neukantischen Marburger Schule den Gottesglauben der Bibel mit der zeitlosen Gueltigkeit des Wahrheitswertes gleichstellt, muss er zu einem fuer den christlichen Offenbarungsglauben recht fatalen Schluss kommen:* 'DARUM KANN MAN NICHT BEIDES ERNST NEHMEN, GOTT UND DIE GESCHICHTE (*Erl. Erk. Glaube, S. 112*).' . . . *Der Ausgangspunkt seines* [Barths] *systematischen Denkens ist das Wort Gottes in der aktuellen Bedeutung des unmittelbaren Anspruchs an den Menschen in dem wagnisvollen Jetzt. 'Das Wort Gottes ist der Bund*

Gottes mit dem Menschen in seinem aktuellen Vollzug' (*Ges. Vortr., II,* 204). *Als existentielles Geschehen* DARF DIE OFFENBARUNG NICHT ZU EINEM GEGEBENEN DATUM OBJEKTIVIERT WERDEN. . . . *Eine 'Theologie des Wortes,' die zum Ausgangspunkt ein Ausserhalb der historisch bekannten Offenbarung hat, verraet damit, dass das tragende Prinzip der Theologie nicht die geschichtlich gegebene Offenbarung, sondern* EINE ZEITLOSE, SPEKULATIVE METAPHYSIK IST." It will do no harm to add the following, taken from the address on the condition of the Church in Norway, by Dr. Olaf Moe, at the Lutheran World Convention in Paris, as published in the *A. B. L. K.*, January 10, 1936: *"Ein junger Pfarrer hat im vorigen Jahre einen fulminanten Angriff auf die Theologie K. Barths veroeffentlicht. . . . Er bezichtigt Barth fuer nicht weniger als heidnischen Pantheismus und fuer Leugnung aller Artikel des christlichen Glaubens. Und der Dogmatiker der Gemeindefakultaet, Professor Hallesby, der frueher eine mehr vermittelnde Haltung zu Barth eingenommen hat, hat ihm nun in einer Rezension zugestimmt und den Barthianismus als einen neuen Typus der liberalen Theologie gebrandmarkt."*

TH. ENGELDER.

Die Gewißheit des chriſtlichen Theologen.

In einem längeren Artikel, der kürzlich in der Zeitſchrift *Bibliotheca Sacra* erſchien unter dem Titel "The Lost Chord in Current Protestantism", findet ſich gleich zu Anfang ein Abſchnitt, der betitelt iſt "Loss of Certainty". Da leſen wir die ernſten Worte: "Nineteen hundred years ago the ancient world, which had learned from the Socratic dialog the uncertainty of human opinions, was reverberating with a new note of unshakable certainty. First Thessalonians, one of the earliest documents of the Christian movement, presents the ground of this assurance. The Thessalonians had received the Gospel 'not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God.' The Gospel came unto them as God's Word in power and in demonstration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it came 'in much assurance,' 1 Thess. 1, 5; 2, 13. When the gathering gloom of national death settled over the Jews, the Christians among them drew near to the living God 'in full assurance of faith,' Heb. 10, 22. Clement of Rome declares that the Christian apostles 'went forth with a full conviction, which was of the Holy Spirit.' (*I, Clement,* 42:3.4). Dr. A. D. Heffern declares that the essential characteristic of the first century is faith, a certitude 'which postulates a divine power and factor for its production. . . . The apostolic *apologia* is to lead to the direct certitude of faith.' When Justin Martyr was told that Plato taught that God could be comprehended only by the mind, he replied: 'Is there, then, in our minds a power such as this and so great? Will the human intellect ever see God until it is furnished with the Holy Spirit?' Similarly Irenaeus insists that it is by the Spirit that we know Christ and ascend to God. 'Without God, God is not known.' Indeed, as late as the fourth century Basil the Great acknowledges that the revelation of the Only-begotten and the enlightening power of the Spirit of knowledge lead on to a certain knowledge of God."