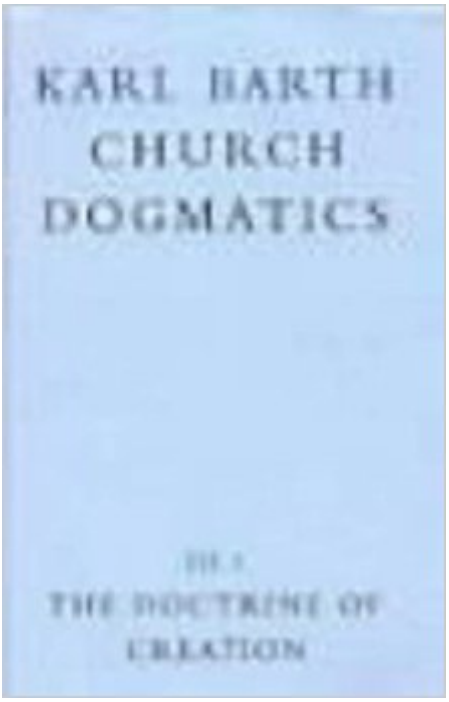
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The Doctrine Of Creation (Church Dogmatics, Vol. 3, Pt. 1)



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Synopsis

In this third part of The Doctrine of Creation, Karl Barth discusses the providence of God. He presents a doctrine of providence, discusses God as Father and the problem of nothingness, and the Kingdom of Heaven.

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Customer Reviews

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Karl Barth (1886-1968) was a Swiss Reformed theologian, who was (arguably) the greatest Protestant theologian of the twentieth century. His many books includeÃ Â The Epistle to the Romans,Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century,The Word of God and the Word of Man,Evangelical Theology: An Introduction,The Humanity Of God,Final Testimonies, and many more.The other volumes in this 14-volume series (the last one is an Index) are:Ã Â Church Dogmatics I, 1: The Doctrine of the Word of God,Church Dogmatics I, 2: The Doctrine of the Word of God,Church Dogmatics II, 1: The Doctrine of God,Church Dogmatics II, 2: The Doctrine of God,Church Dogmatics III, 2: The Doctrine of Creation,Church Dogmatics, III, 3: The Doctrine of Creation,Church Dogmatics III, 4: The Doctrine of Creation,Church Dogmatics IV, 1: The Doctrine of

Reconciliation,Church Dogmatics IV.2: The Doctrine of Reconciliation,Church Dogmatics IV, 3.1: The Doctrine of Reconciliation,Church Dogmatics IV, 3.2: The Doctrine of Reconciliation,Church Dogmatics IV, 4: The Doctrine of Reconciliation,Church Dogmatics V, 1: Index, with Aids to the Preacher. If you want a shorter view, you might tryÃ Â Dogmatics in OutlineÃ Â andÃ Â Church Dogmatics: A Selection. [NOTE: page numbers below refer to the 428-page hardcover edition.]He wrote in the Preface of this 1945 book, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“In taking up the doctrine of creation I have entered a sphere in which I feel much less confident and sure. If I were not obliged to do so in the course of my general exposition of Church dogmatics, I should probably not have given myself so soon to a detailed treatment of this particular materialÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| The theological principle which I accept without a rival has made it almost compulsory that I should first present the doctrine of the work of the Creator as such in the old-fashioned form of a radical exposition of the contents of the first two chapters of the BibleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| I will perhaps be asked in criticism why I have not tackled the obvious scientific question posed in this context. It was my original belief that this would be necessary, but I later saw that there can be no scientific problems, objections or aids in relation to what Holy Scripture and the Christian Church understand by the divine work of creation. Hence in the central portion of the book a great deal will be said about
ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœnaÃƒÆ'Ã Â veÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ Hebrew
ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœsaga,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ but nothing at all about apologetics and polemics, as might have been expectedÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| I have found this task far finer and fare more rewarding than all the dilettante entanglements in which I might otherwise have found myself.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•He observes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Heaven and earth ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| are one in the fact that they are not God, but are distinct from God, and yet willed and posited by GodÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| The statement that God created the heaven and the earth tells us, therefore, that God created the whole, i.e., everything that is not God Himself, from the very highest within the sphere to the very lowest. It also tells us that there is nothing in this sphere which did not require His creation in order to be; and also nothing which He did not consider worthy for His creation; nothing ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| which is not absolutely dependent on the Creator and absolutely upheld by Him.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 18)He explains, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“In relation to the first pages of the Old Testament two views have to be taken into account. On the one hand they may be regarded as meaningless. On the other they may be supposed to embody a revealed cosmosophy of a metaphysical or scientific character which is merely followed by the account of the commencement of the intercourse and covenant between God and man. The first of these views means that to answer the obvious and by no means indifferent question concerning the ground and being of man

and his world, we are referred to our own metaphysical or scientific genius, or to our own powers in the construction of myth or sagaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| The other view means that in these pages we do have actual instruction about the ground and being of man and his world, and that because it is revealed we have good cause to appropriate it and a duty to do so.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 1; pg. 61)He notes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The two forms of the creation story in Gen. 1 and 2 ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| are an integral element in the pre-history of the people of IsraelÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| The technical term for the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœhistory of creation,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ according to a saying in the Priestly CodeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| [is] the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœgenealogy ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ of the universe revealed in the sequence of the divine works of creationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| It is also to be noted that in the Yahwistic account [Gen 2:4-3:24] the story of creation and the subsequent story of the fall almost merge into one another without transition, so that the comprehensive title ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœthe story of ParadiseÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| is at least worth consideringÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| The connection between creation and history as it emerges in the fact that the history of creation and the rest of the Pentateuch and therefore the rest of the Old Testament belong together, illuminates on the one hand the meaning and purpose of creation, and therefore of the existence of man and the universe.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 1; pg. 63)He states, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The history of creation is ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœnon-historical ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ or, to be more precise, pre-historical history. We must be careful not to fall back into the equally impossible exegetical and dogmatic proposition that it is not history but the disguise of an unhistorical and timeless reality. But again we have to insist on dogmatic and exegetical grounds that it is not a ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœhistorical ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ history. Not all history is ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœhistorical.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| in its immediacy to God every history is in fact ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœnon-historical.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ i.e., it cannot be deduced and compared and therefore perceived and comprehended. But this does not mean that it ceases to be genuine history. In its decisive elements or dimensions, in the direction in which alone it is ultimately important and interesting, all history---as genuine history---isÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœnon-historical.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ And this the more so, and more palpably , the more this element predominates, the more this dimension---the immediacy of history to God---emergesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| In this supreme sense it is genuine historyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| And for this very reason it can be the object of a ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœnon-historical,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ pre-historical depiction and narration.: (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 1; pg. 80)He argues, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“it against rests on a misunderstanding if we apply the concept of myth to the creation saga of the Israelites and the Bible. Since myth can never be creation myth, the genuine creation saga with

which we have to do in Gen. 1 and 2 is not as such a myth. If it points beyond itself, it is to the historical saga and ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœhistoryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ which follow it and in union with which it forms a whole, but not to an non-historical meaning. What is fundamental to myth, namely, the contemplation of man and his cosmos as self-moved and self-resting, the contemplation of his emergence as one of his own functions, is not only not essential to it but is declared by it to be groundless in every respect. And what is unessential to myth, namely, God and His activity, the distinction and confrontation between the Creator and the creature, the liberty of another divine reality which encounters man and his world and sovereignly decrees without reference to them, is not only fundamental to the biblical creation saga but the one and only thing that it seeks to exhibit.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 1; pg. 86) He adds, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The biblical history of creation is pure saga, and as such it is distinguished from ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœhistoryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ on the one side and myth on the other. Precisely in this form it is a constituent part of the biblical witness and therefore itself a witness to GodÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s self-revelation.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 1; pg. 80)He points out, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“in the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœLet us make manÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ we have to do with a concert of mind and act and action in the divine being itself and not merely between God and non-divine beingsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ if we wish to speak of a plurality of Elohim in this connection, we cannot dispute the fact that in ascribing to them an active part in creation, and calling their image the image of God, we give to the term its most proper sense, and thus endow them with the attribute of a true deityÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ The saga undoubtedly speaks of a genuine plurality in the divine being, but it does not actually say that it is a Trinity. On the other hand, it may be stated that an approximation to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity---the picture of a God who is the one and only God, yet who is not for that reason solitary, but includes in Himself the differentiation and relationship of I and ThouÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •is both nearer to the text and does it more justice than the alternative suggested by modern exegesisÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ We can take seriously not only plurality in the being of God, but also the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœLet usÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ as a summons to a real divine act of creationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ Those who are not prepared to think of GodÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s triunity must ask themselves whether they can really do the same.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 2; pg. 192)He states, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“In contrast to the Greek conception of man, the creation of man as it is described here does not signify that a divine of God-like being had found a prison in an inadequate physical organism, or a spiritual power a material veil, or a holy internal reality a less holy or unholy externalÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ If the soul given to man by GodÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s inbreathing is the life of the body, the body formed by

GodÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s fingers cannot be a disgrace or a prison or a threat to the soul. Man is what he is as this divinely willed and posited totalityÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| it cannot in any sense be a humiliation for him to be what he is. Creatureliness can be thought of as humiliating only where the creature is thought to be in partial or total opposition to God.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 3; pg. 243)He notes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“there are two other questions which cannot be evaded. The first question concerns the threat which is so ineluctable that God Himself cannot arrest its fulfillment if man eats of the fruit of this tree. Why must he die the moment he eats of it? The answer is that he must do so because ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| In this knowledge he will necessarily die, i.e., the process of this life will be changed into a process of death, and his return to dust, the removal of the soul and life given to him, will be irrevocably introducedÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| It isÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| on the basis of this judicial knowledge and sentence, that He confronts man as the LordÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| The second question is more difficult to answerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| Why was not this divinely given prohibition more effective?... Why is there opened a door in the direction which is closed to man? Would it not have been better to close this door than to write this prohibition upon it?.. This freedom assigned to man---not the freedom to choose between obedience and disobedience, which is excluded by the prohibition to eat of the tree of knowledge, but the freedom to obey---is obviouslyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| the sign of the fellowship already established between God and man at his creationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| It is simply the freedom to be humbleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| It is the freedom of the creatureÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| to hold fellowship with the Creator---ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| in unassuming by conscious, spontaneous and active assent to His divine decision.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 3; pg. 259-266)He suggests, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“It is significant that the witness introduced the account of the creation of woman in this way. In so doing he did not put woman on the same level as the animals. He ascribed to her in advance the highest humanity. He did not merely describe her creation as the climax of creation which had not yet taken place with the formation of solitary man or that of the whole animal kingdom, but from the very outset denied to solitary man every other possibility of an appropriate helpmeet even in the exercise of his genuine freedom. He said of God Himself that with the creation of woman He expected man to confirm and maintain his true humanity by the exclusion of every other possibility. The way could not have been more gloriously cleared for the creation of woman.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 3; pg. 294) Later, he adds, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“As there is not abstract manhood, there is no abstract womanhood. The only real humanity is that which for the woman consists in being the wife of a male and therefore the wife of man.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Ãƒâ Ã Â§41, 3; pg. 309)For anyone seriously studying Christian theology, this seriesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •while requiring a substantial investment of

timeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •is virtually ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“must reading.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•

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