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1932

752ND ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM D, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH, 1932,

AT 4.30 P.M.

DR. JAMES W. THIRTLE, M.R.A.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the following elections. As Associates: The Rev. George E. White, D.D.; and Mrs. Ada de B. Bridgford.

The CHAIRMAN then called on the Rev. Charles Gardner, M.A., to read his paper on "Karl Barth's Theology and the New Theological Outlook in Germany."

*KARL BARTH'S THEOLOGY AND THE NEW
THEOLOGICAL OUTLOOK IN GERMANY.*

By THE REV. CHARLES GARDNER, M.A.

GERMAN Theology, since the days of Martin Luther, has passed through many phases of thought. Luther's immediate successors were rigid in their literalism. In the seventeenth century Calixtus, strengthened by philosophical and scientific studies, introduced a larger element of reason into his theological studies. Spener, suspicious of the reason, enlarged the pietistic and mystical strain that had been a part of Luther's make-up; but his followers soon lost their master's freshness, and the vital stream was renewed by Arnold and Thomasius, who brought with them much philosophy borrowed from Leibnitz and Wolf. Henceforth, philosophy becomes the key to the German theologian's position, with the result that German theology corresponds with the inevitable rapid changes of philosophy through the passing generations.

The eighteenth century brought a foreign contribution to the Lutheran tradition. England produced a crop of Deists of

whom the best known are Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Toland, Hobbes, Tindal, and Collins. German theological students were wide awake to English Deism, and took from it the critical spirit which has produced the higher criticism of to-day. Voltaire, in France, also alert to what the English Deists were saying, borrowed without acknowledgment of his debts. When he went to the Court of Frederick the Great he opened the way for a stream of French rationalism to flow into Germany.

German thoroughness has worked on the double contribution for 150 years till the Lutheran tradition has become almost unrecognizable. In the nineteenth century English students either feared or imitated German theology. Professorial imitators became apologetic if they had not kept abreast with the latest German higher critical theory.

Certainly modern theology has had a very difficult and important task to perform—nothing less than a synthesis between the new knowledge and the old faith. The man who set himself this mighty task in the early nineteenth century was Schleiermacher (1768–1834). It is still to him that many evangelicals turn when they become aware of the urgent pressure of modern thought, and are anxious to enlarge the evangelical inheritance that has become too narrow for them.

Schleiermacher aimed at a synthesis between the varying doctrines of his day. He studied deeply Plato among the ancients, and Spinoza among the moderns. He did not become a pantheist like Spinoza ; but from his bent towards idealism he veered towards a one-sided immanentism, and looked within man for a remedy for all his ills. The religious consciousness became the pivot on which all his teaching turned, and any Christian doctrine that was not a part of this consciousness was regarded as of no great importance. Thus Schleiermacher was essentially a subjectivist ; and while it is true that a subjective immanentism has again and again shown itself able to provide an inclusive religion, yet it has done so at the price of sacrificing some of the priceless things that have come to us from Christ.

Schleiermacher did not entirely lose his hold on the transcendence of God. But a master's weakness is exaggerated by his pupils. Immanence has been pushed to the front and has had an innings for at least two generations.

It is easy to see how immanence alone strikes at the root of the Christian faith. The name of any of the old doctrines remains, but it is given a new meaning. Thus, the Incarnation

which carries, among other meanings, that Christ bridged the gulf between the holy Creator and the sinful creature, ceases to be a bridge, and Christ ceases to be the Mediator. If man is essentially a part of God, the Incarnation can mean only that the Word that became completely incarnate in Christ will also become completely incarnate in us when we have realized our essential divinity. Christ Himself loses His Deity and is God only in the sense that we all may become gods. At the most He has only the value of God for us. Next the Trinity is resolved into an indistinctive Unity; and since man is a part of God, the line between the Creator and the creature is obliterated, and man is finally merged in God. A monistic philosophy takes the place of the richer catholic philosophy; and ethics, losing all absolute value, becomes the individual taste of those choice spirits who have all but become gods.

It seemed to the immanent dreamers that the kingdom of God must very soon be realized, till they were rudely awakened by the crisis of the Great War. The War tested the faith of men. Many lost what they had. Others clung to any cult that seemed to give them help. Protestantism had lost its prophetic fire. Religion had become a part of culture. Those who threw over the last tags of their religious training found themselves face to face with their primitive passions, and since the War they have been driven hither and thither like stubble before fierce opposing winds.

Amidst the crashing of the theological world a loud voice crying from Switzerland has pierced our ears—a voice issuing from lips touched by fire, convicting the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, and awakening the immanent dreamers with a stern theology of Crisis.

Karl Barth was born at Bâle in 1886. He was educated at Berne, and passed on to the Universities at Berlin, Tübingen, and Marburg. He was called to the Chair at Göttingen in 1921, then to Münster in Westphalia in 1925; and in 1929 to Bonn. His removal to the German universities brought him into the thick of German theology. For a while he sat at the feet of Wilhelm Herrmann, till, like Saul at the feet of Gamaliel, he reached an inner crisis to which his master could not minister, but which led to the revelation of Jesus Christ to his soul and the deepening of his apprehension of the transcendent God.

There are many examples in modern days of the gradual loss of faith after the practical surrender of transcendence. Loisy

thus lost one doctrine after another till his Christian faith was but the shadow of a shadow. In following the steps of Barth's spiritual history we see exactly the opposite process at work. For the sake of clearness I will take the steps in order. The first step is the doctrine of Creation. Immanence substituted evolution for creation, and regarded the universe as an emanation from God. Science was the first to question this conclusion in the present century. Eddington and Jeans both affirm that the universe is finite. But if finite it must have had a beginning. The faith affirms that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And this creation is not out of Himself, for then the universe would in some sense be infinite, but out of nothing. That is the most offensive doctrine to immanent ears. Karl Barth has re-affirmed it without compromise and without wrapping up his meaning in a haze of verbiage.

Barth next recovers the Fall. He believes in an actual fall, and that its results have left man so deeply immersed in original sin that he is beyond self-help. This last point is of extreme importance in Barthian theology. Calvin affirmed man's total depravity. Article IX in *The Book of Common Prayer* less stringently says that "man is very far gone from original righteousness." Barth appears to lean to the Calvinist view. The point is that even if faint traces still remain of the original image of God, yet the ruin has gone so far that man cannot by any means save himself. Barth's indictment of modern immanentism is that it is Pelagian. Man's sin throughout the ages is pride. Pride is not simply a mistake; it is rebellion against the will of God. The evil one has whispered throughout the ages into the ear of man: Ye shall be as gods. The modern attempt to scale the heavens and snatch from God His peculiar prerogatives is one of the most daring and most futile that has ever been made. The Word of God is a call and challenge to man. Man's crisis is when he stands before God, acknowledges his helplessness, believes in the Atonement made by Jesus Christ, and, making his grand decision, is justified by faith in Christ Jesus. Man despairs of himself, and his despair is the realization of the truth of God's judgment on man. The relief of his despair is in the consciousness that in receiving Christ he receives the eternal life of his soul. Many would say that here, at the Cross, man may begin to live the Christian life. Barth says, No. Strictly, no Christian can live the Christian life. The only Christian life is that which God lives in Christ. The

Christian is called to holiness. But what is the nature of holiness? Barth makes short work of the many modern cults of perfectionism. At no time in a Christian's life can he stand before God and say "I am holy." The lesson of sanctification has to be learnt in the valley of humiliation. The road goes down, down, till the bruised and battered man, clutching the last remnant of his pride, has at long last to let go even that, and the emptied creature stands in the Presence of the Creator only under the cover that Christ has provided. "Strange love-knot!" exclaimed St. Theresa contemplating the knot that ties the creature who is nothing to the Creator who is all.

It is evident to one who understands that Barth has experienced, with all the accompanying storm and stress, the volcanic upheaval of conversion. And his conversion has been not only a turning of the soul to God, but a complete remaking of his mind according to another pattern. That pattern, he affirms, is found in God's Revelation. The Bible is the Word of God. The Word of God is another thing than the word of man. Here we would all ask Barth a host of questions. As far as I understand him I think he would say that the prophets prophesied the Word of God, that Jesus Christ *is* the Word of God, that the Evangelists and other writers of the New Testament speak and write about the Word of God. The preacher is called to proclaim the Word of God. How can he do that when inevitably his own word mingles with the Word of God? He can but pray and trust and humble himself, hoping that the Word of God will find utterance, if only brokenly, through his lips. God's Word is still sharper than any two-edged sword, and God's Spirit blesses God's Word. A Christian is to be filled with the Spirit of God, but in no sense is the Spirit his own possession. If the preacher preaches not from himself but from God, and if he seeks the Glory of God, the Word of God may sound forth from him, and the Spirit of God will make the Word quick, powerful, cutting, convincing, till the hearer of the Word stands stripped of his defences, naked before God. He is then pointed by the preacher to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

It will help us to understand Barth's attitude to the Bible if we remember that he makes a sharp distinction between Revelation and History. The immanentists have tried to see in history the growing revelation of God. Such unity as they have professed to discover in the Old Testament has been from a supposed evolution in the revelation of history. Barth repudiates

the notion. History is from below : Revelation is from above. Seen from below Old Testament history has little meaning and no unity. Seen from above it narrates a series of free divine acts, and it culminates in the supreme divine act when God broke into history and the Word became Flesh. The Bible from Genesis to Revelation is the history of these divine acts succeeding one another, and therefore the Bible is the Revelation of God and the Word of God.

My space is far too small to allow me to elucidate Barth's teaching about history. But I have said enough to give a clue to his eschatology. The immanentists have tried to trace a grand evolution and advance of history until it becomes the kingdom of God on earth. Teachers of a dozen different kinds, from the Victorian with his ineradicable belief in progress, to Bernard Shaw with his equally indestructible belief in the life-force, have maintained that man has only to will and choose the better future of the world in order that the millennium may come. The modern cry "Back to Methuselah!" is an odd cry to come from the evolutionists! Now Barth repeats with fiery conviction that the kingdom of God is not of this world. History is of time : the Kingdom is of eternity. Indeed, it is set against time, it continually breaks into it—grandly when Christ rose from the dead—with great power on the Day of Pentecost, and with glory at the final breaking-in. This will be not by history and time becoming eternal ; but the rolling up as a scroll of history and time, and their passing away when the Day of the Lord shall come. The Eternal Kingdom shall be God's last act.

It will be seen that Barth has passed clean over from the glory of man to the glory of God. Man is undone. But God of His infinite grace apprehends him and uses him for His ends. Modern man is absorbed in biographies, and he must have them complete, seasoned with vinegar and oil. The theologians ransack heaven and earth to write complete "lives" of Jesus Christ. The Bible gives no full biography, and even when setting forth the story of its central Figure, with the exception of the one scene of the Son about His Father's business, hides Him from all prying eyes for over thirty years. Of Jesus Christ Himself and Who He is, I need hardly add that Barth's sharp sword cuts through all modern woolly statements about Christ having the value of God. For him Christ is unique, the eternal Son of God, the Word become Flesh, and he bows the knee to his Lord and his God.

Barth has made his voice heard not only in Germany but throughout the world, and already there is a Barthian school of theology. It will be sufficient here to mention Emil Brunner, who is Professor of Theology at the University of Zurich.

Brunner differs from Barth only on certain questions of criticism. It is obvious that the immanentist must trim the whole Bible to make it a perfect fit with his philosophy. It should be equally clear that the Bible is mainly concerned with the revelations of the transcendent God. The question of the higher criticism shrinks to far smaller dimensions when the critic reads in the light of transcendence. There will still be room for minor differences of opinion, but these will easily fall into their right perspective towards the questions of fundamental importance. Brunner's little book—*The Theology of Crisis*—states the issues for to-day with great forcefulness and clarity.

It remains for me to make a few criticisms of Barth himself. I would remind you that he is only 46, and so there is plenty of time for so live a man to modify some of his opinions. I feel that his *Theology of Crisis* is a theology of crisis in more senses than he himself probably intends. The catastrophe of the Great War was the appalling sequel to the nineteenth century. It was an awful commentary on European civilization and European religion. The immanentists had proclaimed that history would evolve till it brought the kingdom of God: the scientists thought that with their knowledge of natural law they could soon bring a universal state of peace and prosperity. Instead of peace came war, for prosperity we have the multitudes of unemployed; for the crowning achievement of evolution we had a break-up and a lifting of the veil that revealed man's malady and deformity. The moment of reaction had come; Barth, caught by the moment, swung far back to the transcendence out of which Christianity had its birth. The theology of reaction is never balanced. To go back is to miss something in the living present. But to go back is also to renew and go forward. And therefore, if Barth does not reach a full synthesis, there is every probability that his disciples will. He has been exasperated with the futile teaching of so many idealists and mystics till he can only gird at both. He has not time to remember how much fruitful idealism there is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, how much Christened Platonism is a part of our Christian inheritance. It is true that many mystics are pantheists; but it is also true that the best Christian mystics have well understood the transcendence

of God, and their mysticism is one of the loveliest flowers in the Christian garden. Barth's *bête noir* is Schleiermacher whom he regards as the father of modern theology. I agree that Schleiermacher built on a wrong foundation. Much of his error was a failure to relate his immanence to transcendence. Barth's weakness is all the other way. He professes deep kinship with Kierkegaard. The confession is significant. Kierkegaard was the prototype of Ibsen's *Brand*, from which we gather that the dramatist, with his instinct for all that is human, perceived a lack of the human genial element in his hero. Looking farther back we can trace his true spiritual ancestry through the Port-Royalists to Calvin rather than to Luther. Wherever Calvinism lingers Barth will appeal, and it is probable that a great many Scotch Presbyterians will be kindled by his fire. But his ancestry goes much farther back than to Calvin. St. Augustine is his grand ancestor. The father remains greater than his son of the twentieth century. St. Augustine well knew from his own experience the meaning of man's helplessness, and God's grace, of man's pride and God's majestic transcendence. He came into Christianity through Neo-platonism; and while he grasped to his soul's salvation God's grand provision for man in Jesus Christ, he did not overlook the vestiges of truth that descended from Plato and other old world teachers. He believed that they had been partially illuminated by the immanence of the Divine Logos, and he found their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. Thus he was able to build a theology not only for a time of crisis, but, as time has shown, a theology whose main features seem likely to last as long as the ages.

Looking backwards, many men and women who have reached middle age may feel a melancholy regret because they can remember a time when they testified to Christ with fiery zeal, and wielded a sharp double-edged sword. Barth himself speaks with the fire of one of the old prophets, and I fancy that those who go to him may yet rekindle their waning fires and go forth to a ministry of purity and power.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Dr. Thirtle) said: I believe I use words which many would gladly second, when I say that we have listened with profound appreciation to the paper read in our hearing this afternoon. The subject is one which, during recent years, has engaged a

deepening interest in the minds of many, and from time to time observers have gone so far as to say that the teaching of Karl Barth has "saved" a moribund Protestantism, in particular in Germany. The Barthian message has been brought before the Christian community from various points of view; and in many quarters, as we very well know, it has been recognized as placing a new emphasis on doctrines associated with the name of the redoubtable John Calvin.

We have to thank our lecturer for indicating with clearness the conditions in which Barth launched his message upon the world; for bringing before us an outline sketch of the man and his career; and for adding to these considerations some critical thoughts as to directions in which, in the coming days, danger may be encountered by the Barthian theology. It is encouraging to know that already outlines of the teaching of Barth have been made available in England and America, as translated from the German, also that the writings of Emil Brunner, a well-known exponent of Barthian doctrine, in Switzerland, have attained a considerable vogue. In all, the books by these men, and those who have expounded their forms of thought, have run into a goodly number; and if in some cases they have been difficult to understand—partly by reason of German idiom resting as a cloud over the general content of the books—yet works of introduction, by Birch Hoyle, McConnachie, Chapman, and others, to say nothing of Continental interpreters, have enabled one to recognize with what vigour of method and strength of purpose Barth has combated the modern spirit, with its tendency to a sterile monism, and involving the forth-right acceptance of Evolution and a qualification of the doctrine of righteousness, with light views of sin, and much beside.

The sense of a transcendent God, with purposes of grace toward His fallen creature, regarding sin as a reality and eternity as a fact—these mighty considerations have been passed by with the growing acceptance of the general point of view of Schleiermacher, the father of modern theology. As we have seen, this great religious leader placed experience where the Reformers sought to establish the facts of Divine Revelation, and this he did with disastrous results. Hence it comes about that Barth has placed himself in active conflict with Schleiermacher, while opposing the teaching of those who

have followed that leader in the development of a theology that begins with *man* rather than with *God*. It follows that, all along, Barth has been impatient of the modern psychological approach to religion, and has called men back to the Word of God, as found in the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments alike. Here it is that he claims to have recovered outstanding implicates of what has passed as Calvinistic doctrine, as noble men have sought to maintain that doctrine during a succession of generations. In a word, he says, only through revelation can man come to know God and His will. Of themselves, men are without resource, without hope : God must come to them in grace, and the way and means of salvation must be of His provision.

The subject brought before us is wide and manifold. Barth has called it the Theology of Crisis ; and so it is in more senses than one. Moreover, in the light of Schleiermacher's influence, so commonly recognized and accepted, Barth's teaching has been described as the Theology of Correction. For one thing, it is a theology which reaffirms the majesty of Christ, and revives for our day the Apostolic witness regarding " Jesus and the Resurrection." Could any slogan be more influential than that which calls the Church of God to devote itself to a world-wide witness to the fact that God raised up His Son from the dead to bring blessing to His people ? It is more than interesting to know that the Epistle to the Romans, which in the providence of God served so great a purpose in the spiritual equipment of Martin Luther, pointed the way of life to Karl Barth ; and in the measure that we follow the guidance of the bold German leader, we may be blessed to recover Reformation truth in its true Evangelical substance.

May we not, however, be sure that, as in the sixteenth century John Calvin was misunderstood and has been misrepresented ever since, so also in this twentieth century Karl Barth may not be wholly appreciated ? The doctrines which he has formulated may, indeed, revive Protestantism, and give new life to its more noble ideals, but the natural man will not desire such doctrines. Whatever may be the issue of the present message, therefore, it will be for Christian people to seek guidance apart from passing merely superficial observations. All the time there is a place for religious experience, which Barth brings under grave suspicion. But this

must not usurp the place of God and His grace, as the same is associated with the thought of Divine Righteousness, as an exponent of which Karl Barth has come before the world.

I conclude with moving that a vote of thanks be given to the lecturer for the paper to which we have listened. The vote was accorded with acclamation.

Rev. Dr. H. C. MORTON said: Mr. Gardner has brought forward a very interesting movement of the present day, and to me it seems that he has given us a fine paper and a true picture of Prof. Barth—a preacher who somewhat over-emphasizes the stern and hopeless elements, and lacks a due proportion of the “human genial element.” The hopelessness of the post-war outlook, and the beating up against insoluble problems, has too much coloured his preaching.

In reality, it seems to me, both Prof. Barth and Prof. Brunner are not theologians but *preachers*. That is their appeal and power. As theologians I have sought in vain for anything new to explain their vogue. As preachers, who have clearly realized that modern critical theology has succeeded beyond all the Devil’s hopes in making, as Barth says, “God a questionable figment of our own thoughts” (“The Word,” etc., p. 23), and who passionately proclaim *Revelation* as the *sine quâ non* of all man’s hope of finding God: who have re-discovered for themselves God, and find that to all man’s pretensions and hopes that discovery gives an emphatic “No”; who find that the sinless Christ means to them a divine “No,” an affrighted halt before God (“Romans,” quoted by Chapman): and who then have found that “The Resurrection is the Revelation,” and that the “No” becomes “Yes” when Christ’s Resurrection says “God stoops down to grasp human life”—as *preachers* who feel passionately that they must needs give this new discovery of God to the Christian world, their vogue is explained. The Modernist evolutionary school, which is realizing more and more that it has shut itself in to itself, God becoming more and more a shadowy supposition, is in God’s good providence listening to this passionate preaching and may find deliverance there.

It is greatly to be hoped that the professors will not try to build up a system and found a school. Prof. Barth is reported to deprecate both. Personally I have sought in vain for anything new or

systematic. It is just a vivid setting of the old theology. And that is just what the world needs—not new “schools” but old Truth; though I share what I understand Mr. Gardner to desire, viz., that he should modify his too strict Augustinianism with some of that “genial human element” which is so abundant in the Bible. May they continue as preachers, not systematic theologians! That Brunner, more careful and systematic than Barth, is none the less a preacher, such a passage as this may show:—

There is a third way of seeking Truth: when one no longer seeks with philistine concern for practical values; when it is not sought with cool scientific objectivity, or with a serene æsthetic outlook upon the world; but with the passion of a drowning man, who desperately cries for help. It is the quest of a man who passionately feels the import of the question “What is Truth? I must know or I shall die” (*The Theology of Crisis*, p. 25).

On p. 26 he adds, “If you do not *so* seek, viz., personally and passionately, you do not seek at all.”

Instead of propounding a new system, Prof. Barth says that he is correcting current theology. His is “a theology of correction.” What he specially corrects seems to be the doctrine that the only certitude is found in personal experience—a subjectivity which satisfies itself with an experience of its very own. He wants to correct current ideas of the Church and Religion. The Church has become an end in itself, offering “experience” as its currency; whereas the Church ought to be just a passage-way to God. Otherwise Religion as an organization, a process of worship, may be a veritable barrier, keeping the soul from God and satisfying it with something less. Even Jesus Christ is always saying, “I am the Way to the Father,” and “Religion has only the right to exist when she continually does away with herself” (Barth, “The Word,” etc., p. 67). Moreover, this experience which the Church preaches is a poor way of discovering God. We want a bridge from earth to heaven, Barth says: and this experience can only make God “become to us dubious, for in his place there stands the questionable figment of our own thoughts.”

Lastly, as I understand him, Barth objects to this doctrine of experience specially because it magnifies man. It gives man the

idea that God is like himself, whereas God is not like man, but vastly other than man; and Barth speaks of "Titanism," and "man's over-weening presumption" ("The Word," etc., p. 126), while Brunner speaks scathingly of those who presume to regard God as man's "ideal companion," and says that they give the modern interpretation of the serpent's word in Eden "Thou shalt be as God" (p. 44).

This preaching is splendid. May it long prevail! But a doubt is in my mind. Barth finds God and the supreme moral facts of a transcendent world revealed in the Bible, and preaches that from these there is no escape. It seems to me that he must needs have therefore a Bible which is from God and the transcendent world without the ignorant meddling of man. But so far as I am aware Barth does not say so. Mr. Gardner truly says that "the immanentist must trim the whole Bible to make it a perfect fit with his philosophy," and Brunner ("The Theology," etc., p. 41) admits that he clings still to "higher critical" theories. Now this movement is a preacher's revival of Biblical Christianity, and the doubt is in my mind whether it can possibly be revived with a critic's Bible.

Mr. PERCY O. RUOFF said: It is just thirteen years since Karl Barth issued his book on the Letter to Romans. It has been said that he spoke at the top of his voice to make men listen; and it has been claimed that Barth has influenced all Protestant Churches by his theology. It is no disparagement of Barth to say that unsophisticated Evangelicals have at all times held his main thesis which he has proclaimed with such great vigour. There is a sentence of Barth's which states in a cogent way his main position. He says: "The meaning and the possibility and the subject-matter of theology is not Christian faith but the Word of God. When this relation is reversed there is falsification, and falsification along the whole line and at every point."

Mr. Gardner refers to Barth's voice "issuing from lips touched by fire, convicting the world of sin and righteousness and judgment." It seems a mistake to attribute to a man conviction of this kind, which in the New Testament is attributed to the Spirit of God. Dr. Sydney Cave has made interesting references to the fact that at Cheshunt College, in recent years, several German-Swiss students,

followers of Barth, went there to complete their preparation for missionary work. Their sombre estimate of the world's need and the Church's guilt had not lessened their missionary zeal. Perhaps Mr. Gardner may be able to say what effect Barth's teaching has on missionary propaganda generally.

REV. DR. HART-DAVIES said : " The darkness is always deepest before the dawn." In recent years many have been depressed by reason of widespread destructive criticism of the Bible and of consequent falling away ; but God has not left Himself without witness. This movement in Germany, we pray and hope, will prove to be the dawn of a new Reformation and Revival, the blessed effects of which will extend to our own shores. The principle underlying Barth's teaching, as I apprehend it, might be expressed in the sentence : Let the Word of God sound in the soul of man and give its own message. He emphasizes the transcendence of God, and the need of revelation if man is ever to become spiritually illuminated. I agree with Dr. Morton that there is nothing really new in Barth's teaching. Much of it must be very familiar to anyone steeped in the theology of the Thirty-nine Articles. Evidently a big transformation has taken place in Germany in the general attitude toward the Bible. Some of us have been familiar since our Ordination with two characteristic attitudes. The Sacerdotalist used to say, " The Church to teach, the Bible to prove." The Modernist seems to say, " The Church to criticize, the Bible to apologize." Many of us will welcome the Revelationist attitude now being associated with the name of Barth, which might be thus expressed : " The Bible to teach, the Church to learn."

MR. GEORGE BREWER said : The advent of Karl Barth amid the welter of semi-pagan philosophy which permeates so many of the theological colleges in Germany is indeed a cause for thankfulness to God, and it is difficult to realize what revolutionary effect his teaching may have upon the theological outlook in that country. The sound scriptural character of his teaching is a formidable protest against the ephemeral vapourings of modern speculative theology, and the increasing tendency to accommodate Christian doctrine to Pagan ideas and the unproved theories of scientists.

Karl Barth has been described as a simple, sober, unpretentious Swiss, born in Basle 46 years ago, and before going to Bonn, was for twelve years a minister of the Word. He has a quick dialectic mind, a reverent up-look, and a winning smile; his one ambition being to bring men back and the Church back to the Word of God. In the summer he is in his classroom at 7 o'clock in the morning, with usually 200 students to meet him, including about 40 women. He is not a fluent speaker and often hesitates for the right word, but all the time keeps the minds of his students working at high pressure.

It has been suggested that in Barth's theology there is no place for ethics. On the contrary, his mind is deeply concerned with conduct, and he is foremost in presenting a true Christian ethic based on grace, in place of the Pagan ethics frequently mixed up with Christian doctrine. The ethical problem for Barth is not academic, but a real concern witnessing to man's natural depravity and rebellion against God and His laws, the only remedy for which is justification by grace alone, and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. He teaches that the first step of good conduct is a sincere confession that we are sinners; the second is the acceptance of God's free and unmerited gift of forgiveness through the person and atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Creator of the new man. In this moment of acceptance, which Barth calls the existential moment, when we come into contact with the Saviour, we encounter also our neighbour and his claim upon us. The ethical note which Barth strikes is always first "Obedience to God" by true repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then to such conduct as will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

LECTURER'S REPLY.

I greatly appreciate the kind words of the Chairman and other speakers. Where there has been so little criticism, there remains very little for me to say.

Dr. Morton finds nothing new in Karl Barth, and calls him a preacher rather than a theologian. Yet while he proclaims the old truth, he does so in a new way. It is evident that he has worked through many phases of Modernism, and the one who makes that expedition and reaches the Evangel of Jesus Christ is always able

to preach the Gospel with power and freshness. At present Barth is a preacher. But remembering his youthfulness—he is only 46—it would not surprise me if he became a profound theologian.

Mr. Percy O. Ruoff remarks that it is not the lips of man, but the Holy Spirit of God that convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. That, of course, is true. But it is also true that the Holy Spirit uses the lips that are touched by fire and proclaim the Word of God in order to convict the hearers of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Barth's main significance is that he has proclaimed transcendence to a pantheistic world. His weakness, I think, is to run too near to Calvin. It is true that Calvin's commentaries of the Bible are among the best ever written, and even Jesuits have been glad to make use of his treasury. It is also true that Calvin's mind was one of the most rigidly logical minds of the sixteenth century. But there is a region above logic. Life is greater than logic. In the eternal life we must find place for God's almighty sovereignty and man's free will. A contradiction in logic, but true in life and experience.