

23 Windsor Street

Dundee

4th Jan 1930 (1930)

Dear Professor Barth,

Allow me in the first place to wish you and your wife and children and your sister in law whom I remember also with pleasure, a very Happy New Year.

I was very comforted that you had no serious objection with the article on "Karl Barth at Home" even though I took the liberty of say a word about your home. As you say, the people of this country like these homely touches which show that Professors of Theology are human after all.

The article led to some correspondence and criticism of your views which I answered in a long article which gave satisfaction. I have had since communications from Canada about it. The British Weekly has a wide circulation in U.S.A and Canada.

The publishers of the British Weekly who are important publishers of theological books have asked me to submit for consideration material for a small book of 30,000 words which they would like to publish in spring on "Karl Barth and the Preacher". They want the material immediately, as the spring will soon be here. It is not meant to be a scientific treatment of your Theology but rather your message to the Preacher. We are a practical people, and what people want to know is "Is this a preachable theology?" So much of our preaching is of the subjective psychological type and there is a sense of dissatisfaction and a desire for something objective and authoritative.

I am at the present moment trying to put together the material required, as I believe that you have a great message to give to the Preacher here and our preachers ought to know it. My treatment will be entirely sympathetic to your point of view. I shall not go into any questions of criticism. If I mention any points along which development may yet take place in your views it will simply be to show that I have not swallowed your message in a wholesale uncritical fashion.

Now I come to a request which I am to venture to make. You were good enough to speak kindly of some of my writing about your work and especially you said that you had used it in London to explain to some English friends your attitude to the Word of God.

It would help enormously first to get the book accepted by Hodder and Stoughton, and secondly to secure a circulation for it if you would consent to write a short note for insertion as a Preface.

If you were to say that you know me, that I have been with you in Bonn, in your class room, that

you have read some things which I have written and that you believe I am helping to interpret your views to the English speaking world, if further you would say in the note what you said to me that you had made some use of my writing to explain in English your views it would be a very great favour indeed.

The question people will ask is, "Is this a correct presentation of Karl Barth's teaching?". "Would Barth agree with it?".

I am not able to send you my M.S. as it is still in the making, but I could later let you see it in proof if accepted by the publisher.

One purpose in my writing now is that I am undertaking to deliver my M.S. to the publisher within a fortnight, and if I could at the same time send a letter from you it would help tremendously.

The scheme which I am following is as follows:

Karl Barth

and

The Preacher.

I. Chapter. Karl Barth's Spiritual Pilgrimage.

Describing the state of theology in the days preceding the war, the effect of the war, your training under Herrmann in Marburg, and how your ways came to differ... Your reading of Kierkegaard, Dostojewski etc Also the Reformation Writers - Calvin and Luther.

II "A bomb on the playground of the Theologians" (Karl Adam)
The publication of the book on Romans and the sequel, Göttingen, Marburg, Bonn.

III Barth as a Witness to the Word of God.
Your views of the Word of God as in Dogmatik I. The Jesus of History etc. Your views.

IV. Barth's Challenge to his Teachers.

Challenge of Schleiermacher and modern Theology. Religion. The Church.

V. Barth's Call to the Preacher. Ad Fontes

1. to the lost wonder of the Bible
2. to the lost sense of sin.
3. to the lost objective salvation.
4. to the lost Ethics of Grace.
5. to the lost Eschatology of the N.T.

VI "A Pinch of Spice" (Ein Bisschen Zimt).
gathering up the general message and closing with "Barth himself as a Preacher" as illustrated

in your own sermons, answering the question of the preacher "What difference would this make upon my preaching?"

You see it needs to be popular for the English speaking world which is not so "wissenschaftlich angelegt" as the Germans.

If you have anything to say against the general scheme I should be pleased to know it.

My one object in wishing to do this is the conviction that you have a real and great message to give us if it can be "got across" as the Americans say.

I should like to ask you a question.

In Hoyle's book on "The Teaching of Karl Barth" a good deal is made of your life and work as a journalist and the influence it has had upon your mind and style?

I do not know where Hoyle got this but I have not seen it referred to elsewhere and I think it must be exaggerated. You cannot have been very long in religious journalism.

Also is one permitted to know when the second vol. Dogmatik II is likely to appear?

I apologise for this long letter but I understand that you are pursuing your studies in English.

If you are kind enough to write a short note for me you can do it in German, and I can translate it, unless you specially wish to do it in English.

With kindest regards and greetings

I am
yours sincerely,

John Mc Connachie