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November 28th, 1933.

Professor Karl Barth,
Siebengebirge Strasse 27,
Bonn, Germany.

My dear Professor Barth:

Some weeks ago I returned from a long absence in South America where I spent six months visiting mission work in Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. I feel ashamed to think how long it is since you heard from me. I find that it is now more than a year since I received your letter. The last eighteen months, however, have been a very exceptional time with me. In June of last year I finally accepted a long standing invitation of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church to become one of their secretaries. I arrived in the States at the beginning of July 1932; then followed months of new adjustments and new activities in an environment so different from that to which I had grown accustomed in Latin America, followed finally by a long absence from the country. Now, however, things have become more normal with me again, and I have not to look forward in the immediate future to any long absence from home.

It was a great joy to receive your letter. Since then I have heard of you through a number of friends who called on you in the course of the past year, chiefly Visser 't Hooft and Dr. Keller. I spent an evening with the latter last week in Princeton. He was there giving the Stone Lectures on Contemporary Religious Movements in Europe. He told me he had just received a letter from you conveying greetings to "all good people in America."

Everybody here has been following the course of recent events in Germany with great interest and concern. Some months ago the feeling was that the government had been able to dominate entirely the Protestant Churches. Then appeared an article by Homrighausen of Indianapolis, who had been in Germany during the summer, announcing your bold statement. It then became clear from other sources that you had taken a firm stand. Later copies of your brochure arrived, "Theological Life Today." Now comes news of the revolt of 3,000 young German pastors who refuse to bow the knee to Baal. I am safe in saying that nothing has made such an impression in informed circles among the American churches in recent years as the news of your valiant attitude. Immediately and in unexpected circles there arose a new interest in Barth and "Barthianism", and now there has come to my desk a copy of a liberal Methodist church paper which is devoted practically entirely to you and the subject of dialectical theology. This is all the more interesting because at a Methodist Evangelical Conference which I had been invited to attend as a speaker two years ago, an impromptu debate took place between Dr. Knudson, the Dean of the Boston Faculty of Theology, and myself on the subject of "God and Divine Transcendence." Knudson is the chief representative in the country of the personalism of the American theologian Bowne, who was greatly influenced by Lotze. The editor of "Zion's Herald", the magazine in question, strongly supported Dean Knudson

and they thought that they had won their case by being able to show that I was what they called a "Barthian". Since those days, less than two and a half years ago, there has been a growing change in this country and it would not surprise me if in the particular situation in which the religious life of the United States finds itself today, the things you have stood for and stand for may not produce a great harvest. I hasten to say this to you because I know how difficult and how lonely must be your position at this moment now that Dr. Karl Ludwig Schmidt has been dismissed. I have never yet met Mr. Homrighausen but I hope to see him in Indianapolis next week and I certainly look forward to meeting him. We shall have a great deal to talk about.

My Merrick Lectures, which I gave last November at Ohio Wesleyan University, were quite successful. The University authorities told me that the series made a greater impression on the student body and the faculty than any course which had been given in many years. The title of the course was "Wilderness Voices", and I dealt with Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Unamuno and Barth. On account of my trip to South America, the lectures have not yet been got ready for publication, but I hope to have them ready within a few months. I am now taking my mornings at home for writing and the afternoon and a good part of the evening I spend in the office, save when I am fulfilling engagements outside New York.

You may probably have heard of the publication of the so called "Laymen's Report" in this country, and of the controversy to which it gave rise. Last April an article of mine on the theology of the report was published in the International Review of Missions. On the first of next year a book is being published entitled "The Christian Message for the World Today", to which ten writers are contributing. I have written the chapter entitled "The Gospel and Our Generation."

It gave me great pleasure to hear a few weeks ago that you were likely to come to the States for some lecture courses next year. I hope this is true and also that we shall have the pleasure of entertaining you for at least a few days. Your presence would mean a great deal to evangelical thinking in this country at the present time. How is your English coming along? I have been hearing glowing reports of the way in which you master it now. Certainly Anglo-Saxondom never needed to hear your voice so much as at the present moment.

I wonder if the copy I sent you of "The Other Spanish Christ" reached you all right? An American edition has now been published by the Macmillan Company.

I trust all the members of your family are well in these anxious days. I should greatly appreciate a few lines, although I do not deserve them because of my record as a correspondent, but I trust that changed circumstances may mean a changed record in the future.

My wife and children are all well. We often talk of the days spent in Bonn.

With warmest greetings to Mrs. Barth and you, I remain,

Yours ever cordially,

John A. Mackay

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