

Karl Barth, *Die Protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert. Ihre Vorgeschichte und ihre Geschichte*. Zollikon—Zürich, Evangelischer Verlag, 1947. viii-611 pp., in-8° (178 × 231), 24 Tafeln.

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Here is a finely produced work, which many of us have been eagerly looking forward to, since it was first announced. It contains the matter of lectures delivered by Dr. Barth at Bonn just before the outbreak of Hitlerism. The latter calamity cut short his work, and Dr. Barth has never since found time to revise or complete it. The original plan was to have included Goethe in the first part, and for the second part to have been carried forward to the period of Troeltsch. Dr. Barth was prevailed upon to publish the lectures in their present unrevised and incomplete form, in answer to a widespread demand, and to correct a false impression which might be gained from his more recent works as to his attitude towards the classics of German Protestant theology. The publishers are to be congratulated on the work, and on the series of 24 fine plates, helping our imagination with living portraits of the characters described.

The book is unusually long, containing the equivalent of about 900 pages of normal English octavo. The proportions are unexpected. More than half the volume is concerned with the 'Fore-history'. No less than 100 pages are devoted to the characteristics of eighteenth century man and the peculiar problem of the theology of his age. This preparatory part deals also at great length with the impact on theology of Rousseau, Lessing, Kant, Herder, Novalis and Hegel. The 'history' section, concerned with the nineteenth century, has only one long individual treatment, that of Schleiermacher. After this there is a relatively brief treatment of eighteen theologians, all with one exception born before the end of the first decade of the century. The exception is Ritschl, who surprisingly only receives eight pages.

The interest of most of us on approaching this book lies in the fact that it is written by one of the most original thinkers of our generation, and by one moreover who has, in the name of Luther, adopted a highly critical view of most modern Protestant theology. We are not disappointed. There is hardly a dull page in the book. One cannot help noticing how scrupulously which Dr. Barth continually tries to show his own impartiality and his ability to appreciate all that is valuable in his subject-matter. He begins with an essay on the manner and importance of studying theologians of the past. He finds that many historians of theology write too patently with the object of showing the superiority of their own position to all previous ones, on the principle, *Post tenebras*

lux. We should never forget that Christians of all ages had to solve the same problems and with the same sense of responsibility, and it is not for us to judge between them and ourselves.

One must admit that Dr. Barth does succeed in showing such understanding of the theologians, whose life and works he depicts, that even a Catholic can sympathize with their struggles, and realize that for the most part they were genuine lovers of Christ, wanting to defend Christianity and to bring the world to accept it. Likewise Dr. Barth's account is always admirably objective, and no one could fairly complain of the treatment they receive from him.

None the less, he is unable to disguise his conviction that these theologians, with few exceptions, failed to represent what he regards as sound Reformation-theology. The reviewer's impression as a Catholic is that there is comparatively little in the work of these theologians which a Catholic would call theology in the strict sense. This is not to depreciate the depth of their learning and the acuteness of their thought. But for us, most of it would amount either to Apologetics, or to pure philosophy, or to religious psychology, or to Bible-exegesis, or history. So far we would seem to be in agreement with Dr. Barth, but presumably for entirely different reasons!

Most important, in Dr. Barth's view, for the course which theology was to take was the rise of 'Modern Man' in the eighteenth century. That century was the age of absolutism and individualism in every sphere. Man was discovering more of the world, and more of the universe, and beginning to regard himself its master. This absolutism showed itself in science, philosophy, politics and art. Inevitably it was reflected in the theology of the century. The Bible was still read, devotion still remained, it was not possible to sacrifice entirely to modern self-sufficiency the Christian doctrines of God and Christ or the plainly supernatural Christian eschatology. But, in theory at least, the theologians tried with pathetic lack of success to keep up with the times. They lost both ways, because they never quite succeeded. When pietism took hold of the common people, theologians were still upholders of the old Lutheran orthodoxy. By the time the theologians were defending pietism, the world of thought had become the disciple of Wolff. By the time theology had adapted itself to Wolff, the Modern Man had become purely rationalistic. When at last theology succumbed to pure rationalism, the world had been converted to romanticism.

In the spirit of the time, the Church became more and more secularized, dogma was identified with ethics, doctrine with philosophy, and religion with the individual. These features were common to pietism and rationalism. Theology was useless except to lead men either to piety or to good

morals. Christianity was divested of miracles and mysteries and everything supernatural. Most of traditional Christianity was found to be an encroachment on the absolute authority of the individual, and so the Incarnation, authority, the Church, the commandments, and the sacraments had to be whittled down or explained away!

The importance of Rousseau, Lessing, Herder, Kant, Novalis and Hegel is that, while they represent the full flowering of the eighteenth century culture, they showed clearly its insufficiency and implicitly or explicitly pointed to a new era. Thus Rousseau was the individualist and absolutist in the supreme degree; yet he saw clearly the utter insufficiency of the age he reflected. He remained within the bounds of the century's humanism, yet was dissatisfied with everything that humanism had wrought. Its politics were despicable, so were its education, its view of love and marriage, its religion. Yet, according to Dr. Barth, his own age had no right to condemn him, since it was on its own principles that he judged it. Take another example, Kant. None showed more clearly than Kant the limitations of man's sufficiency. The age had tried to reduce all to the measure of man's reason. But Kant showed clearly, according to Dr. Barth, the limits of that reason. He went further. As the child of his time, he declared that theology could contribute nothing to the proving of truths whether of the natural or supernatural order. This was the province of philosophy. A theologian could teach the catechism, provided he did not claim historical or philosophical truth for its statements! Kant closed the way of the eighteenth century. Henceforth, according to Dr. Barth, on the basis of Kant there were only three possibilities for theology as then understood. One way was the virtual denial of ontological value to dogma, the line taken, among others, by the Neo-Kantians with Ritschl. Another way was to free theology of all dependence on reason, the way of Schleiermacher. The third was the way of intuition and dialectical idealism, that of Hegel.

Dr. Barth himself of course regards all these ways as impossible. He thinks that the vast attempt of Hegel is both an example and a symbol of that impossibility. If it had been possible, in spite of Kant, for Reformation-theology to have been built up on a philosophical basis, then Hegel surely would have succeeded. Hegel might have been the St. Thomas Aquinas of Protestantism! Hegel thought he had reconciled philosophy and theology for ever by identifying them. Both theologians and philosophers know that he failed. And Dr. Barth holds that, where Hegel failed, none other will ever succeed!

This whole preliminary section, dealing with the eighteenth century *Vorgeschichte* teems with interesting suggestions and stimulating suggestions,

and the book would be well worth while as an eighteenth century historical survey.

In passing to the nineteenth century, naturally everyone will be anxious to read Dr. Barth's account of Schleiermacher. He rightly stresses Schleiermacher's importance, claiming that he is really the Father of the whole age for Protestantism. He even wonders whether Protestants of today are not still his children; and whether perhaps he himself, Karl Barth, may not still have been unable to shed his influence. This suggestion is all the more interesting, since one has heard it stated that, in spite of Dr. Barth's conscious rejection of Schleiermacher, he remains really his disciple. Much depends, obviously, on how one interprets the former. If Dr. Barth understands Schleiermacher correctly, then one must admit that he is not his follower. For Dr. Barth is unable to interpret him, especially in his later writings, otherwise than as making our devout feeling of utter dependence on God the ultimate object of theology and religion. If this is so, then it is impossible to regard Schleiermacher, as so many do, as simply an advocate of the doctrine of a direct intuitive experience of God revealing Himself. Dr. Barth readily allows that Schleiermacher never denies an objective God, who is the true object of our religious feeling; but, he says, logically such a God can only be deduced, and, since nineteenth century theology admits the Kantian critique of all natural theodicy, such a deduction must be devoid of philosophical or theological validity. The whole controversy is interesting, as showing — what has often been shown before — the paralysing subjectivism which is continually cropping up in all post-Cartesian philosophy.

Among the theologians contemporary with Schleiermacher, Dr. Barth finds rationalists and Hegelians, who have obviously denaturalized the traditional Christian message; Compromise-theologians, who try to please both sides, and succeed in neither; Theosophists or Gnostics, with deep piety and devotion but little real objectivity; and lastly he finds one or two little-recognized prophets, who have managed to preserve and present to their listeners remnants of genuine Reformation-theology. Notable among the latter are Kohlbrugge and Blumhardt, both men rarely noticed in even comprehensive histories of Protestant theology.

Catholics on the whole are as little interested in these German theologians as Protestants are in the great modern Catholic thinkers. The tendency today is for us to learn to understand one another. We find the study of Protestant theologians harder because of the extraordinary variety of conflicting opinions. This is not really any more extraordinary than is the same chaotic multiplicity in the views of modern philosophers. But, though we may understand such division

where there is no uniformity of faith, it is hard to accept — even from a Protestant point of view — the suggestion that practically no Protestant theologian since the Reformation — until Dr. Karl Barth — represents the true Reformation-theology. If this is true, it must surely be that the Reformation-theology is incapable of being represented, since its anti-intellectualism prevents it from being a true theology. Dr. Emil Brunner has effectively shown that Dr. Barth is at least not true to the letter of Calvin. And, if Dr. Barth replies that he at least represents its spirit, might not all the theologians so ably put before us in this book claim with equal truth to represent in one way or other some aspect of the spirit of Luther, with its rejection not only of philosophy, but also of authority and tradition?

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Philosophy

Philosophie

Plotino, *Enneadi*. Prima versione integra e commentario critico di Vincenzo Cilento. Volume primo. Bari, Giuz. Laterza & figli, 1947. 461 pp., in-8°.

[87 (Plotin)]

C'est en Italie qu'a paru la première version des Ennéades, celle de Marsile Ficin; mais il n'y en avait pas de traduction italienne complète: la belle publication que M.V. Cilento fait dans la collection "Filosofi antichi e medievali", vient très heureusement combler cette lacune; il nous donne, dans ce premier volume, les deux premières Ennéades, et il faut espérer que les quatre autres suivront bientôt. Philosophes et philologues ne s'occuperont jamais assez d'une oeuvre aussi importante, non seulement par sa place éminente dans l'histoire des idées, mais par tout ce qu'elle contient de pensée toujours vivante. Au point de vue philologique, les Études Plotiniennes sont en bonne voie, grâce surtout aux travaux minutieux du R. P. Paul Henry, qui ont immédiatement précédé la guerre (Plotin et l'Occident, 1934; Les États du texte de Plotin, 1938; Les Manuscrits de Plotin, 1940) et qui doivent aboutir à une édition critique. M. Cilento, qui partage l'admiration de tous les plotinisants pour les travaux du R. P. Henry, a déjà pu les utiliser très copieusement. Dans le commentario critico qui suit la traduction et qui occupe presque la moitié du volume (plus de 200 pages), il s'en est beaucoup inspiré; ce commentaire est d'ailleurs presque uniquement philologique, il concerne surtout l'établissement du texte, et il suppose que l'on a sous la main non pas la traduction que donne M. Cilento, mais le

texte grec; il n'ajoute rien à ce qui était connu sur le sens philosophique des Ennéades (considérant par exemple comme une évidence allant de soi que la première phrase des Ennéades est une phrase d'Aristote, il ne paraît pas se douter que cette "évidence", a échappé jusqu'en 1924 à tous les éditeurs et à tous les critiques); mais telle n'était pas son intention, et il faut se réjouir qu'il ait rassemblé dans son travail les principaux résultats de la critique textuelle jusqu'aux plus récents, ceux de Harder et d'Henry. Celui-ci qui, avec une méthode si sûre et si personnelle, a fait ressortir les divers états du texte de Plotin et a étudié notamment le texte dans la tradition indirecte (il a même cru trouver dans cette tradition des traces de l'enseignement oral de Plotin), donne, dans presque tous les cas, la préférence à des leçons des manuscrits que la plupart des éditeurs avaient jusqu'ici considéré comme fautives et qu'ils avaient remplacées par des conjectures. M. Cilento lui donne en général raison; mais, comme il convient à un familier de Plotin, le texte le laisse quelquefois embarrassé et nous aimons qu'il le soit. Pourtant I, i, 2, l. 3, la leçon des manuscrits $\eta\delta\eta$ $\delta\epsilon\chi\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ est difficilement acceptable; en ce passage, Plotin se réfère toujours au texte du *De Anima* d'Aristote (III, 4) qu'il a cité au début; Aristote y dit: "Il faut que l'âme soit impassible mais qu'elle reçoive la forme ($\delta\epsilon\kappa\tau\iota\kappa\delta\upsilon\kappa\iota\kappa\delta\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\lambda\delta\upsilon\varsigma$)," deux assertions qu'il trouve difficilement conciliables; c'est à quoi Plotin répond: "si l'âme est composée, il n'est pas étrange qu'elle reçoive des formes, ($\epsilon\lambda\delta\eta\delta\epsilon\chi\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$, selon la correction que j'ai acceptée). Dans le même traité (ch. 2, l. 27), l' $\alpha\pi\alpha\theta\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ des manuscrits donne à $\sigma\acute{o}\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ une épithète incompréhensible. M. Cilento traduit tout le passage (p. 41): "Sensazione non è altro che accoglimento di forma, persino allora che il corpo non resti modificato,, alors que le texte dit brutalement: "La sensation est la réception d'une forme ou d'un corps impassible,,; on ne voit pas ce que peut signifier chez Plotin corps impassible, et d'ailleurs, il faut que $\sigma\acute{o}\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ soit le complément d' $\epsilon\lambda\delta\upsilon\varsigma$ pour que la phrase ait un sens. Toujours au même traité (ch 9, l. 12—13) dans le texte si difficile à ponctuer, et que M. Cilento traduit ainsi: "Ma lo Spirito, ci abbia o non ci abbia toccato, esso è sempre impeccabile,, la difficulté du texte qu'il accepte est que $\acute{\omega}\sigma\tau\epsilon$ devant $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$ n'a aucun sens, et d'ailleurs n'est pas traduit. Parmi les leçons qui semblent bien difficiles à accepter se trouve le $\pi\rho\omicron\tau\upsilon\pi\omicron\iota\varsigma$ dans le deuxième traité sur les vertus, ch. 5, l. 20. $\Pi\rho\omicron\pi\epsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ qu'on lui a substitué d'après la tradition de Porphyre et de Marinos est traduit par Ficin, *praefigurata* (?), par Harder, *flüchtig*, par Cilento, *fugace*. $\Pi\rho\omicron\pi\epsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ est un mot de la langue stoïcienne qui se réfère à la précipitation dans le jugement, (il est employé une fois en ce sens par Plotin II ix, 9, 25); mais chez les stoïciens, il ne