

THREE NEW BOOKS

By Artifex

I called my last article "Sound Theology" and gave quite unqualified praise to the two books of which I wrote. To-day my attitude will have to be more critical. I should not notice the books now before me at all unless I felt that they were important and worth reading. But I am far from satisfied with any one of them.

The first shall be "Reformation Old and New: A Tribute to Karl Barth" (Lutterworth Press, 18s. net), edited by the Rev. F. W. Camfield, M.A., D.D., Vicar of Churchstow with Kingsbridge, Devon. The first hundred pages are devoted to an essay on the development and present stage of the theology of Karl Barth. The remaining portion is devoted to seven essays by seven ministers on various theological matters as affected by Karl Barth's teaching; and there is a useful list of his works in German and in English. The editor, Dr. Camfield, is new to me as a theological writer; but there is no doubt that he is a thoroughgoing Barthian, and since a reviewer is nothing if not sincere I must say that his writing possesses all the mistiness which seems to be a mark of Barthianism.

In the essay by the editor, and in most if not all of the other essays, the form of the statements often seems all right but the content somehow is missing. And so I find myself asking, "What exactly is being asserted or denied?" The essay I enjoyed most was on "The Crisis in Philosophy," by H. A. Hodges, M.A., D.Phil., Professor of Philosophy in the University of Reading. I enjoyed it partly because it is clearly written and

partly because it goes far to justify my resolve not to be a Barthian.

It seems that the only sure way to guard one's theology from injury at the hands of philosophers is to recognise that sound theology has no need of or use for philosophy. But I could not buy security on such terms.

When I took up "Theology of Society: More Essays in Christian Polity," by Canon V. A. Demant (Faber, 10s. 6d. net), I hoped that I had at last got what I have long desired—namely, a textbook of Christian Sociology. I want something on sociology on the lines of J. S. Mackenzie's "Manual of Ethics"; a book laying down first principles, deducing from those first principles general laws, and discussing the application of those laws to various problems under varying conditions.

Alas! it is the second part of the title which gives the character of the book, which consists of essays written and published at various dates since 1937. I do not wish to undervalue these essays. Some of them must have been of great value when first written. But things have moved so rapidly and taken such unexpected courses since 1937, or even 1941, that I rather doubt their being worth republishing in book form now.

Another book which has value, but might, I think, have had more, is "The Gift of the Ministry," by the Rev. Daniel T. Jenkins, editor of the "Christian News Letter" (Faber, 6s.). It discusses the position of the Christian minister in what it describes as the post-Christian world. Much that it says is interesting and valuable, but it touches too many subjects to treat any really adequately and so leaves an impression of haste and superficiality.

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