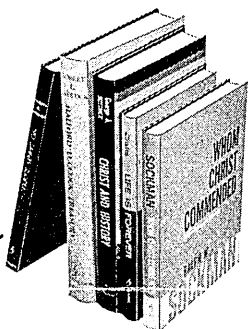


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Books

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Evangelical Theology: An Introduction, by Karl Barth. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 206 pp., \$4.

Reviewer: AUBREY ALSOBROOK is pastor, Asbury Memorial Methodist Church, Savannah, Ga.

This volume contains the five lectures which Barth gave to receptive and enthusiastic audiences at the University of Chicago and at Princeton Theological Seminary last year. It was an unforgettable experience to hear Barth give the lectures. The wisdom of his mind, the humility of his heart, the solemnity of his personality, and the witness of God's grace in his life deepened our understanding and quickened our Christian zeal. Three other series of lectures are included in the book.

The first series which was given in the U.S. deal with the special place of theology "whose task is to apprehend, understand, and speak of God. Evangelical theology is concerned with the God of the Gospel. It is modest theology because it has no authority within itself. The God of the Gospel is known in the history of his deeds. Evangelical theology is concerned with Immanuel, God with us. Having this God for its object, it can be nothing else but the most thankful and happy science." Barth's theology is evangelical because the God of the Gospel encounters us in his theology.

The second series is focused upon the theologian and the character of his existence. Wonder, concern, commitment, and faith are discussed. For Barth the theologian cannot detach himself from his own confrontations with the God of the Gospel. One does not properly theologize about the Christian faith without speaking from within the faith.

The third series delineates the dangers that threaten both theology and the theologian, such as solitude, doubt, and temptation. Theology must never seek the ivory tower but must always know its existential bearings. Evangelical theology is never isolated from the burden of the world's need of reconciliation. It moves "in vigorous motion" to and not from the world.

The theme of the fourth series of lectures is theological work. Barth links prayer and study in the theological task: "Theological work can be done only in the indissoluble unity of prayer and study. Prayer without study would be empty. Study without prayer would be blind." This no doubt explains why there

is a lot of empty and blind theology.

It is interesting to observe the movement of Barth's theology. In the beginning of his writing of *Dogmatics* he used the term "Christian dogmatics." He shifted later to the term "church dogmatics," and now he writes of "evangelical theology." Barth says about this: "I ask you to see this movement as one towards a less formal, more material, less abstract, more concrete kind of thinking."

Movement and not the static is evident in Barth's thought.

Pastors and reading laymen will be provoked in thought and strengthened in their Christian witness by study of this work of the master theologian.

(Barth's lectures are also available on record. Word Record Distributing Co., Waco, Texas, has produced *Evangelical Theology* [\$24.95], an album of seven long-playing records, taped at both Chicago and Princeton. Included is a discussion guide for each lecture written by Dr. Markus Barth, Karl's son, who is professor of New Testament, University of Chicago Divinity School.—Eds.)

The Place of Bonhoeffer, edited by Martin E. Marty. Association, 224 pp., \$4.50.

Beyond Religion, by Daniel Jenkins. Westminster, 128 pp., \$2.75.

Reviewer: THOMAS C. ODEN is associate professor of theology and pastoral care and counselor to Methodist students, Phillips University, Enid, Okla.

Both those who have had long acquaintance with Bonhoeffer's theology and those who would like a good introduction to it will benefit from these books. The collection of essays, *The Place of Bonhoeffer: Problems and Possibilities in His Thought*, focuses on the attempt critically to assess the contribution of Bonhoeffer's work as a whole to contemporary theology. Jenkins' discussion selects one crucial theme of the Bonhoeffer corpus, that of "religionless Christianity," and gives it an incisive, thorough, and well-balanced critique.

Martin Marty introduces *The Place of Bonhoeffer* with an essay on the essential catholicity of his thought, noting his capacity to speak to individuals of widely varied traditions. The introduction is splendid, although it tends to overemphasize the image of Bonhoeffer as "the theologian of displacement," a