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KARL BARTH

At a recent theological conference in Scotland a paper based on Barth's analogical arguments produced from its opponents emphatic protests that this way of thinking did not take serious enough account of the fall of man. It seems that Barth's theology has developed so much that those who accused him years ago of being too negative will now accuse him of being too positive. Yet Professor T. F. Torrance shows clearly in this book—*Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology 1910-1931* (S.C.M. ; 25s. net)—that there is no point at which we can speak of a 'new Barth'. Always emphasizing the grace by which God turns to man, Barth gradually laid aside the critical task of 'shattering the axiom of immanent continuity'

to take up that of working out dogmatically the positive relation between man and God implied in his thought from the start. His concern has been to attain a truly scientific theological method in which the activity of the reason is determined by the nature of the object confronting it, and not by cultural or philosophical presuppositions.

Professor Torrance's book is carefully documented, ranges over everything Barth wrote in these earlier days, and is bound to become a standard work of reference. Where writings of Barth are not available in English (for example, *Die Christliche Dogmatik*) he is careful to give a full account of them.

Many will find this work most valuable for the masterly guidance it gives through the general history of Western European theology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with startling reassessments of some points. Professor Torrance believes that theology, subservient for generations to general scientific and philosophical ideas, is now facing a crisis parallel to that which also confronts modern philosophy. Within this crisis he shows how Barth, avoiding the anachronistic reactionary movements of existentialist retreat, works out a theology which takes the Incarnation seriously, 'makes use of all that ancient and modern thought can offer by way of tools and instruments of thought and speech', and manages to combine the positive doctrines of the Catholic faith with the Biblical orientation of the Reformation.

The book is full also of Professor Torrance's own brilliant insights, especially into the problems of Biblical interpretation at their profoundest level. The clear and orderly sequence of the thought enables the reader to overcome the occasional difficult sentence. Few books will more richly repay patient study.

RONALD S. WALLACE