

says, "stands or falls with the assertion that the Word of God is something other than ethics, metaphysics, or religion, something different in its source as well as in its content." Again Brunner declares, "I can know Him only by His self-communication," and "The personal God is known only where He makes Himself known in His Word." "Historism" is his next opponent. Here is the keynote: "Discoveries, progress, helpful institutions or wisdom—these make up history; yet all that history brings is not salvation, is not even a part of salvation, but is human life, needing and seeking it." Psychologism is another foe of genuine religion in the eyes of the Barthians. "The attempt has often been made to describe faith psychologically," says Brunner. "Is it a feeling, is it will or thought? As none of these definitions seems sufficient, theologians have tried to understand it as a complex made up of different psychological functions. But even this view is unsatisfactory. Faith is neither a psychological function nor a combination of such functions; it is the life-utterance of the total self in its unanalyzable unity."

In chapter IV the author faces "Science." "Orthodoxy has become impossible for any one who knows anything of science," he says. "This I would call fortunate." The "destruction" wrought by science in the field of religion does not worry Brunner. "What then has been destroyed?" he asks. "We answer: nothing of importance. Nothing except what had to be destroyed for the sake of faith, namely, the divine authority of what was really human." The concluding chapter of the book bears the title "The Word of the Church and Society." It is important in setting forth the characteristic Barthian view that salvation is based upon the historical Word and "can be found solely in a community."

We recommend "The Word and the World" particularly to those ministers and laymen as yet unacquainted with the "theology of crisis" who would like to know "what it is all about."

Is Barth the Only Way Out?

OUR CONCERN WITH THE THEOLOGY OF CRISIS.

By Walter Lowrie, D.D. Meador Publishing Company: Boston. Price, \$2, postpaid.

This book, the Bohlen Lectures for 1932 delivered in Philadelphia, is a thoroughgoing exposition of the conceptions of the Barthian school. In the opening lecture, after pointing out the debt of Barth to Kierkegaard and Dostoevski, Dr. Lowrie sets up a list of thirty of our "favorite beliefs" and places over against them the Barthian protests. By this method he succeeds at the start in vividly summarizing the "theology of crisis." The second and third lectures deal with the puzzling philosophic subject of time, including discussions of the end and the beginning. Here are featured the eschatological conceptions of the Barthians. Other lectures are entitled "God," "Jesus Christ," "Revelation," and "Salvation." The final one—rather more practical in character than the others—is called "Preachers and Preaching" and shows the implications of the "theology of crisis" for the sermon. An excellent bibliography appears in the opening pages which lists more than fifty volumes in German and in English.

The lectures are significant for their broad sweep and rich background of reading in the field of theology. We know of no other book on Barth that gives so much attention to the Kierkegaard influence not only upon Barth himself but also upon many other European thinkers not included in his school. Something of Dr. Lowrie's close understanding of Barth and of his skill in interpreting this prophet of the Absolute is revealed in two paragraphs of the chapter on "God" in which he says:

When Barth speaks of God as "the Other" we have to understand this, first of all, as a polemic against the views of God we commonly hold. More radically understood, God is "other" than even the highest ideas we as religious men can possibly entertain of Him. However noble our notion of God may be, and however useful or necessary, we must say to ourselves, "This is *not* He; we must check ourselves constantly by the reminder, "How much more!" . . .

This is by no means an unnecessary assertion in our day. Barth properly feels that one of the most serious things we have to do is to "reinstatate the distance" between God and man. It is not that God has come too close to us, in that "nearness" which we rightly apprehend in Jesus Christ, but that we press up insolently too close to God.

The book is "appreciatively presented as our possible theology with the query whether it be not our only positive possibility."

A Conservative's Reactions

A CONSERVATIVE LOOKS TO BARTH AND BRUNNER. By Holmes Rolston. Cokesbury Press: Nashville, Tenn. Price, \$1.50.

The Barthians have stirred not only the liberals but also the conservatives to vigorous protests against their views. Here is the work of a brilliant young conservative who is deeply appreciative of the main features of the "theology of crisis." Indeed, he is so sympathetic with the Barthians that the reader begins to wonder, as he ponders the pages of the book, whether Dr. Rolston is as "conservative" as he thinks he is. In his last chapter, "The Word of God and History," he discusses "Barth's break with fundamentalism," and in the comparison of the Barth and Machen points of view seems to side with Barth as against the great American fundamentalist. The author has read widely in this field, and his book abounds with quotations from other writers who deal with the "theology of crisis." He has rendered excellent service in his exposition of the main points of this new theology and has called the attention of American readers to its growing influence and importance in shaping the religious thought of the day.

The Sweep of the Barthian Movement

KARL BARTH AND CHRISTIAN UNITY. By Professor Adolf Keller, D.D., LL.D., Universities of Zurich and Geneva. Translated in collaboration with Professor Werner Petersmann, Th.D., by Rev. Manfred Manrodt, Th.M., and revised by Dr. A. J. Macdonald of London. The Macmillan Company: New York. Price, \$2.75.

This book goes on sale Nov. 28. Hence it appears that it is one of the very latest discussions of the Barthian movement. The angle of approach is likewise new. The author shows a close familiarity with the "theology of crisis" and understands thoroughly its deeper meanings, but his book is largely devoted to pointing out the popular trend of this theology and its influence upon the church life of the world. To illustrate the purpose of Dr. Keller, we quote his chapter headings. They are: "The Church Today," "Barthianism as a Phenomenon of Our Times," "The Battle Fronts of Barthianism," "Barthianism on Its Way Through the Churches," "The Controversy with Roman Catholicism," "Barthianism and the Greek Orthodox Church," "Foreign Missions and Barthianism," "Significance for the Cultural Life of Today and Summary," and "The Ecumenical Movement and Barthianism."

In the first chapter the author confronts each of the various denominations with a question about its original genius, whether it is realizing

its traditional ideals or not, and whether it is possible for it to do so in our time. He comments: "When such a question is addressed to every individual church the significant fact is revealed that the entire church no longer represents its nature as originally intended or is no longer able to do so. Every kind of religiosity therefore becomes problematical from the viewpoint of its own essential character. There is none in a position to boast, no, not one. In each one the fall from the heights which it once beheld is all too evident. Every such survey of reality confronts the empirical church with its own guilt, with the fact that it has not been fully loyal to that for which it was called into being and which was its own objective." Dr. Keller then follows with this observation: "To have revived this question, which every church must ask itself, is the merit of Barthianism."

No one can read "Karl Barth and Christian Unity" without marveling at the scope of the new theological movement, the rapidity with which it has spread throughout the world, and the power it is exercising over Christian thought. In "Foreign Missions and Barthianism," the author brings the new movement into the presence of the "Laymen's Report" and exercises his critical faculties upon the rather hasty conclusions of the exponents of the "theology of crisis." Of interest to New Englanders is his reference to the "debate between Mackay and Knudson" on the Barthian theology at Delaware, Ohio, during the sessions of the "Delaware Conference" in 1931. The introduction to the book was written by Dean Luther A. Weigle of the Divinity School of Yale University.

Every one who desires to be well informed about Barth should study carefully Dr. Keller's excellent volume.

A Philosophic Study of the Crisis Theology

THE KARL BARTH THEOLOGY OR THE NEW TRANSCENDENTALISM. By Alvin Sylvester Zerbe, Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus, Central Theological Seminary, Dayton, O. Central Publishing House: Cleveland, O. Price, \$2.25, net, postpaid.

Here is the most formidable criticism of Karl Barth from the conservative standpoint that we have yet seen in print. The author approaches his task from the philosophic point of view and quickly convinces the reader that he is thoroughly versed not only in metaphysics but also in theology. He knows at first hand the history of human thinking and the views of all the "schools." He also has read Barth with deep understanding. Barth's battle, he says, is "between the word of God and the word of man." The issue could not be stated better in any other single sentence.

Dr. Zerbe's method is to set forth as clearly as possible the Barthian view on God, the Bible, faith, the church, and other subjects, and then to make careful analysis of each view with a summary at the close of the chapter. He concludes that "the outstanding merit of Barthianism is the emphasis on God as Creator and the Christian religion as a supernatural, transcendental order through the revelation in Christ Jesus." These positions the author declares are "well taken" but are maintained with "questionable unity and consistency." He also thinks that Barth holds an "anti-Christian view of Biblical history," and that the members of the Barthian school "undermine the credibility of Scripture."

Dr. Zerbe's work, whatever one may think of his conclusions, is thorough and scholarly. The book will take an important place in the Barthian library.