

# TWO PAGES OF BARTHIAN BOOKS

## Previously Reviewed in "Herald"

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE WORD OF MAN. By Karl Barth, D.D. Translated by Douglas Horton. The Pilgrim Press: Boston. Price, \$2.25. (Page 1647, issue of Dec. 26, 1928.)

KARL BARTH: Prophet of a New Christianity? By Wilhelm Pauck. Harper & Brothers: New York. Price, \$2. (Page 38, issue of Jan. 13, 1932.)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KARL BARTH. By Rev. John McConnachie, M.A. Richard R. Smith, Inc.: New York. Price, \$2. (Page 38, issue of Jan. 13, 1932.)

THE BARTHIAN THEOLOGY AND THE MAN OF TODAY. By Rev. John McConnachie, M.A., D.D. Harper & Brothers: New York. Price, \$2. (Page 870, issue of Sept. 13, 1933.)

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. By Karl Barth. Translated by H. J. Stenning. Fleming H. Revell Company: New York. Price, \$1.50. (Page 870, issue of Sept. 13, 1933.)

## The Book That Started It All

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. By Karl Barth. Translated from the Sixth Edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns, Bart., M.A., Fellow of Corpus Christi College in the University of Cambridge. Oxford University Press: London. Price, \$7.50.

Driven to desperation over the seeming futility of his preaching and earnestly seeking to find a way out, Karl Barth, an obscure Swiss pastor in his early thirties, began to make "marginal notes" on Paul's Epistle to the Romans. This famous letter has started many a reformation within the Christian movement, and its careful reading has revolutionized the soul life of many an individual. Luther was awakened by its great idea "justification by faith, Calvin was stirred into tireless activity by its deep insights, and John Wesley was converted in Aldersgate Street, London, as he heard a man reading Luther's introduction to the Epistle. This letter to the Romans has been characterized as "the profoundest book ever written."

The "marginal notes" were read by some close friends of Barth, and presently came a demand for their publication. The commentary was published and has now reached its sixth edition in German. Barth has succeeded in making the Epistle to the Romans contemporaneous. Indeed this is his thesis: he thinks that we today face exactly the same situations that Paul faced in his day, however changed may be the outward forms of history. Man is the same; God is the same; sin is the same; salvation is the same. In his Romans this existential thinker has once more revived the whole Protestant issue. No leader in the field of modern religion can consider himself intellectually respectable who has not taken cognizance of this epoch-making book. Its English publishers rightly pronounce it a "modern classic of theological controversy."

The exegesis proceeds by chapters, each section receiving comprehensive treatment. Under the heading "The Righteousness of God" (chapter 3 of the Epistle), the section of Barth's

commentary entitled "By Faith Only" gives in brief compass the whole existential point of view. "The Voice of History" (chapter 4 of the Epistle) is very illuminating as it sets forth the meaninglessness of all history "unless, quite apart from the study of documentary sources, there exists a living perception of the one constant significance of all human occurrence."

In the exposition of the famous eighth chapter of Romans we come to the very storm center of the Barthian theology. Barth discusses the chapter under the general head of "The Spirit," with subcaptions as follows: "The Decision," "The Truth," and "Love." The section on love should be read with great care by those who see in Barth only a revival of the determinism of Calvin. He sets forth his view on this matter very clearly in handling the historic passage beginning "whom he foreknew" with its reference to predestination.

Other chapters of the book are likewise fascinating and illuminating. This new commentary should be on the desk of every preacher of the gospel.

## Preaching the Theology of Crisis

COME HOLY SPIRIT. By Karl Barth, with Edward Thurneysen. Translated by George W. Richards, Elmer G. Homrighausen, and Karl J. Ernst. Round Table Press: New York. Price, \$2.

Is the Barthian theology valuable only for intellectual exercise, or can it meet the pragmatic test in the field of homiletics? In other words, will it "preach"? This new book, "Come Holy Spirit," just now in process of publication by the Round Table Press, shows as no other book related to this new movement the tremendous power of practical appeal latent in Barthianism. These sermons bring the reader straight into the presence of the transcendent God. The style is arresting, dramatic. The words even in the English translation are "vascular." The very titles of these sermons challenge attention and invite a careful reading. Here are some of them: "Open Wide the Gate!" "The Great 'But,'" "The New Time," "The Small Moment," "Make Me Pure of Heart," "Fire upon the Earth," "A Narrow Way," "The Freedom of the Word of God," "The Inward Man," and "Confident Despair."

One of the most famous of all this series of sermons is "Jesus and Judas." It cries "halt" to careless, indifferent man and points him straight to God. No one can read it without going hot and cold by turns as he senses the terrible application to himself of the description of the man-centered individual. "Jesus and Judas" has in the field of the spiritual all the power that dynamite has in the physical realm. The sermon is revolutionary, devastating to the man who reads it with penetration. To preachers we simply say of this book, "Here is a mine." They will understand the meaning of that statement. To laymen we would say, "If the Barthian theology seems to you deep and intricate, buy this book of sermons and read it with care; for if they should grip you, as they surely will, they will mark for you a new era in life. You will see God as you never have seen Him before."

"Come Holy Spirit" should find a place in

every Christian home even if to purchase it should mean the sacrifice of a meal a day for a week. KSA 2784.9

## Two Books by Brunner

THE THEOLOGY OF CRISIS. By H. Emil Brunner, Professor of Theology, University of Zurich. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York. Price, \$1.75.

THE WORD AND THE WORLD. By Emil Brunner. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York. Price, \$1.50.

These two books by Brunner, who is rather more liberal in his point of view than Barth but is nevertheless at one with his confrère on the main contentions of this new theology, are easier to read than the works of Barth himself. In fact, one layman not closely acquainted with theological terms has expressed himself as "tremendously impressed" by Brunner.

"The Theology of Crisis" comprises lectures delivered in seven important theological seminaries in the United States in the fall of 1928. These lectures bear the following titles: "The Crisis of Theology and the Theology of Crisis," "The Quest of Truth: Revelation," "The Quest of Life: Salvation," "The Problem of Ethics," and "Progress and the Kingdom of God." Brunner halts the reader in his tracks with many trenchant, thought-provoking sentences like these: "Modern theology, like all modern thinking, is controlled by a non-critical faith in reason," "The source of antagonism against faith is pride of reason," and "God cannot be known by theoretical reason but must be comprehended by an act of decision." The first chapter of the book is exceedingly valuable for its outline of the present situation in theology and by implication in the churches. The discussion of "truth and revelation" and "life and salvation" constitutes the heart of the book and should be read with great care. In Brunner's characteristic Barthian emphasis upon "decision," some critics have seen a relationship between the theology of crisis and the Oxford Group Movement. Brunner is sympathetic to that movement as an effort in the field of practical religion, but noting the lack on the part of the majority of the followers of Frank Buchman of theological background or even interest, he warns them not to remain "theological gipsies."

More clear-cut and confident even than Brunner's "The Theology of Crisis" is his "The Word and the World." In this volume he throws the challenge of the Barthian theology straight into the teeth of modern liberalism. In just a word, this new book of Brunner's is an "unequivocal espousal of Biblical theology." Here is a paragraph in the preface that explains the expression "theology of crisis":

What the Word of God does is to expose the contradiction of human existence, then in grace to cover it. Man is placed in the critical position of having to decide; and such a situation, just because it is critical, cannot be apprehended by means of any single theoretical idea. Theoretical thought seeks the unity of system; the Theology of Faith insists on the reality of existential decision.

Brunner wages his battle for Pauline Christianity on five "fronts" in this stirring little volume. His contest is first with the pride of the human intellect. "Christian belief," he