

DR. KARL BARTH DISMISSED

DIFFICULTIES OVER THE OATH

REFUSAL TO GIVE THE "HITLER SALUTE"

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

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Professor Karl Barth, who was suspended in November from his office of Professor of Evangelical Theology at Bonn University for refusing to take the State officials' oath to Herr Hitler, has now been dismissed by the disciplinary court at Cologne, to which the matter was taken by the Minister for Education, Dr. Rust. The court decided that Professor Barth, a man of world-wide influence, should be granted "relief" (*Unterstützung*) to the amount of half the normal retired pay for a year. He may, if he wishes, appeal to the Prussian administrative high court in Berlin.

Professor Barth has stated that he did not flatly refuse to take the personal oath to Herr Hitler now demanded of all State officials. He asked, as a personal matter of conscience, if he might add the words "in so far as I can take responsibility as an evangelical Christian" to the prescribed form: "I swear to be loyal and obedient to the Leader of the German Reich and people, to observe the laws, and to fulfil the duties of my office conscientiously, so help me God." Dr. Rust refused the request, and the next that Professor Barth heard of the matter was the announcement of his suspension.

The question of the oath appears to have played little part in the judgment of the disciplinary court, as Professor Barth offered on Tuesday to take the oath without his amendment on the ground that he was a member of the Confessional Church, and that a manifesto of that Church containing the safeguarding clause about responsibility as an Evangelical Christian had been allowed to pass unchallenged by the authorities. The Ministry of Education and Cults contended that this would mean a tacit amendment to the officials' oath. Dr. Barth was also charged with observations hostile to the State in talks a year ago, and with not giving the "Hitler salute" in his lecture rooms, after being ordered to do so last autumn. Dr. Barth's reply was, that as a Professor of Theology he could not do so, because it would be tantamount to the recognition of a "totalitarian State" in theological classes.

Professor Barth, who was born in Switzerland, is the leading theologian in Germany, where he has spent the last 13 years as occupant of chairs of theology at Göttingen, Münster, and Bonn successively. He has had a deep influence on the Evangelical Church conflict, in which he has opposed the aims and methods of the German Christians, and has associated himself with the Opposition movement of the resistant Pastors, and with the Confessional Community which developed out of it.

Professor Barth has enjoyed unforeseen support among his students and his colleagues. When, after his suspension, Dr. Schmidt Japing, a private professor of practical theology and a "German Christian," was entrusted with the continuation of his lectures at the Bonn theological seminary, the 300 students and members of the seminary issued a statement refusing to recognize the change.

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