

Time to Think

EDITOR THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY

★ SIR: The President of the United States made an announcement a few weeks ago which is staggering in its implications, more important than a dozen Geophysical Years. It was nothing less than that he proposes to take steps to give cabinet members and other high officials *time to think*.

Imagine that! Talk about revolutionary days! We are certainly in them. Usually the situation of high officials is much like that of the senator who was asked by a reporter what he thought about a certain issue. He replied gruffly, "I haven't time to think. I have to make a speech." The secretaries in the cabinet might well respond to the President's revolutionary proposal by saying that they would have more time to think if they did not have to spend half their time before Congressional Investigating Committees.

Just roll around in your mind the possibility that the Secretaries of Defense, of the Army and of the Navy might have time assigned to think, not about waging war but about ways of avoiding it. Or suppose the fashion of thinking about such things, with time allotted, should spread to the Pentagon. But let's not get fantastic!

Suppose, again, that this Operation Time-to-Think should spread to education. That would make a lot of commotion in roll-top desks. Already we can see signs of a real revolt among college and university presidents, who have been resigning in regular platoons this last year—able and distinguished men who have a yen to do some thinking before they shuffle off the earth. So they have shuffled out of the president's office. They have had all they can take of administration and money-raising, including the annual winter pilgrimage to play golf with vacationing tycoons in Florida. In many places it has been cleverly and skillfully arranged that in order to keep the educational system going, education has to be given up.

Now take another leap. Suppose the Time-to-Think movement should spread to the churches. Then there would, we hope, no longer be any real cutting slash to the old cliché that a bishop never gets time to think (except on how to keep the wheels within wheels turning). When Mandel Creighton, the historian, was elected Bishop of London he sighed sadly, "Now I shall never read another book." (I'll bet he did though, as an addiction to a vice, like solitary drinking. [A good book is a heady brew.—AdvT.]) Suppose the movement should carry over to the pastor. Then he would not have to say, "I have no time to think. I have to go to a meeting"; or even, "I have no time to think. I have to write a sermon." Then there would not be so many snappy books written on "How to Make the Church Go," and more concern about *where* to make it go or *why* to make it go or, better yet, how to let it go by itself without anyone's making it go—just leaving it to the impulse of the Spirit.

Of course someone would have to tell the Church Boards about the Time-to-Think movement. It might disturb some of them. For with only 24 hours a day, if three or four of them are wasted in the pastor's *thinking*, what would happen to the quotas and programs? You never can tell. It would be a case of "Mischief, thou art afoot, Take thou what course thou wilt!"

At least you could think about it.

Yours,

SIMEON STYLITES.



Barth on Schleiermacher

BY KARL BARTH

"If we ask ourselves how it was that Schleiermacher became so much our—and perhaps really still our—man of destiny, we are once again faced by the mystery of the great man, which possibly consists in the indissoluble unity of his timeless individual power on the one hand, and on the other of the temporal, historical conditions into which he was placed. One is more strongly impressed every time one does consider him—by the wealth and magnitude of the tasks he set himself, by the moral and intellectual equipment with which he approached them, by the manly steadfastness with which he trod the path he had once embarked upon right to the end as he had entered upon it, unfeeling of the favour or disfavour of each passing decade—and by the artistry which he displayed, playfully, and endowing it by this very playfulness with the ultimate gravity of all true art—an artistry he showed in all he did, almost down to his last Sunday sermon. We have to do with a hero, the like of which is but seldom bestowed upon theology.



...

"[Yet] Jesus obviously gives Schleiermacher, the professor and preacher, a great deal of trouble! But nevertheless he is in fact there. And the professor and preacher goes to this trouble, swims ceaselessly against his own current, and wishes under all circumstances, and he it at the cost of certain artifices and sophistries, to be a Christocentric theologian. Whether he really is, who can say? Perhaps in fleeing from one kind of philosophic speculation he became all the more deeply embroiled in another. Perhaps after all he avoided the offence of a real Christology."

Note: The above quotations are taken from Karl Barth's *PROTESTANT THOUGHT*, which is available at your bookseller at \$7.00. HARPER & BROTHERS, Publishers.