

truly Christian social order. Their successors—Father Philip S. Hurley, S.J., for many years Father LaFarge's assistant and now his replacement as chaplain to the New York C.I.C., and Dennis Clark, former supervisor of the Housing Division of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations and new executive secretary of the New York Council—obviously feel the same way. Their faces too are set determinedly toward the future, not the past.

Consequently, among the first projects undertaken by Father Hurley and Dennis Clark is a tribute-dinner for the men whose posts they have assumed, but a tribute-dinner with a difference. It is not to be merely an evening of honorifics and testimonials, however suitable such an affair might be. In addition to the uniquely deserved tribute to the two guests of honor, and according to the wishes of Father LaFarge and George Hunton themselves, it is to be a frankly fund-raising dinner, with the theme of "Tomorrow Is Now" and an emphasis

on the hard work that still remains to be done in the pursuit of social justice.

The tribute-dinner for Father LaFarge and George Hunton will be held on June 4 at the Hotel Commodore in New York. Tickets are \$50 and \$25 per person. Those far from New York who are unable to be present at the dinner are asked by the Council to express their regard for Father LaFarge and George Hunton, and to help carry on the work they began three decades ago, through a gift which will be acknowledged in the dinner program.

We can think of few if any Catholics more richly deserving of honor and gratitude than Father LaFarge and George K. Hunton. We can think of no Catholic cause more deserving of support, and more urgently in need of it, than that of interracial justice.

(Checks should be made payable to Catholic Interracial Council; correspondence should be addressed to 20 Vesey Street, New York, 7, N.Y.)

## Karl Barth in Chicago

"THEOLOGY," Karl Barth said, "is a special science"—"a *very* special science," he added slowly, gazing down from the high pulpit-lectern at the overflow crowd of 2,200 who had come from all over the Midwest and South and from as far away as Canada and the Pacific coast. They assembled Easter Monday in the University of Chicago's vast grey Gothic Rockefeller Chapel to hear this slightly stooped, white-haired man of 75 years—and the greatest modern Protestant theologian—talk on "An Introduction to Evangelical Theology."

Barth's trip to the U.S. marks his first Atlantic crossing. Unlike Paul Tillich, he has hitherto successfully evaded the New World's insistent invitations; and unlike Emil Brunner he travels little. The cultural importance of his visit can be gauged accurately from the fact that the *New York Times* not only covered his arrival in the U.S. but had a Chicago correspondent wire long reviews of each of the lectures. Moreover, Barth was given what seems increasingly to be the American equivalent of the *Légion d'Honneur* (crossed with an intellectual hazing): a *Time* cover story. Barth's decision to come to Chicago was due in large part to the fact that his son, the New Testament scholar Markus Barth, is on the University of Chicago's Divinity Faculty. A subsequent lecture series at Princeton testifies, perhaps, to Neo-Calvinist Barth's approval of the scholarly Presbyterian tradition cultivated there.

In the first of the lectures, Barth, speaking in a quite comprehensible but still triumphantly Teutonic English, defined Evangelical Theology not as any confessional dogmatics but as that theology which "intends

to speak of the God of the Gospel." In fact, Barth said "wherever the God of the Gospel becomes the object of human science there we have Evangelical Theology." To no one's surprise he located this theology in the Prophets, the Apostles and the Reformers of the sixteenth century. However, he *did* surprise his audience somewhat by also detecting its presence in certain strains of Catholic and Eastern Orthodox thought.

In the subsequent four lectures Barth summed up in an impressive—and often delightfully witty—manner the great themes of his theological life's work: the essential independence of Evangelical Theology from all human philosophies; its duty to submit itself faithfully and obediently to the sovereign, free and living Word of God; Evangelical Theology's need to shun all "competition" with natural theologies, religious philosophies; Evangelical Theology's need to liberate itself from apologetics; Evangelical Theology's inferior status as a secondary and remote witness to the Word; its need to cultivate a realistic "modesty" in approaching the primary witnesses, the Prophets and the Apostles; finally, its status as a modest, free and "happy" science savingly subordinated to the Word, and functioning as a critical yet reverent *fides quaerens intellectum* within the community of believers.

One of the high points of the lectures came when Barth warned theologians against viewing themselves—in relation to the Prophets and Apostles—as "high school teachers looking over their shoulders to correct their notebooks and give them good or bad marks." Instead, Barth added serenely, "The Prophets and the Apostles

should look over theology's shoulder and correct its notebooks." This barely veiled allusion to the work of a renowned German New Testament scholar, Rudolf Bultmann, drew a gale of laughter.

Another high point came when Barth stopped speaking, brooded over the nave filled with faces and then rumbled slowly, very slowly: "*Omnis cognitio Dei nascitur ab obedientia.*" Had anyone predicted forty years ago that a world famous theologian would quote Calvin from a pulpit at the University of Chicago, he might have been removed to an asylum. Today, in the wake of Hiroshima, a citation from Calvin seems eminently sensible.

ON TWO successive evenings Barth sat empanelled with six young theologians who put questions to him and debated with him. Dr. Jaroslav Pelikan, who served as moderator, introduced these *juniores theologi* as Dr. Hans Frei of Yale, Dr. Schubert Ogden of Southern Methodist University, Father Bernard Cooke, S.J., of Marquette, Dr. Edward Carnell of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., Rabbi Jacob Petakowski of Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati and Mr. William Stringfellow, lawyer and lay theologian from New York City. Dr. Pelikan's introductions were adroit—especially when he discovered, on the first evening, that, by some mysterious irony, Dr. Ogden, one of the brightest American disciples of Rudolf Bultmann, was sitting at the far right end of the table while Father Cooke was to be found at the extreme left. "And what Father Cooke is doing *there*," Dr. Pelikan observed dryly, "is another question." The second evening, to everyone's amusement, Dr. Ogden and Father Cooke suavely exchanged places.

It was Father Cooke who, at one point, asked Barth if natural theology's knowledge "about" God and revealed theology's knowledge "of" God could not be combined in a single act of faith. Barth was dubious about their combination, but he commended Father Cooke for distinguishing between the "about" and the "of" and—to the audience's delight—he added "And I love you for that, Father!" Yet Barth's renowned rejection of natural theology came inevitably to the fore in this exchange. He told Father Cooke that the God of the Philosophers and the Father of Jesus Christ was not the same according to the Bible and that this was proved by the perennial tension between them. When Rabbi Petakowski challenged this and pointed to Paul's sermon on the Unknown God, Barth confessed himself amazed that a Rabbi could think this. He suggested that Rabbi Petakowski re-read the Bible. Barth restated his position that no passage in the Bible permitted a natural theology; a position which is too extreme even for Barth's Calvinist colleagues.

Dr. Carnell's principal question, natural for a conservative Protestant, concerned the objectivity and

authority of Scripture. He wanted to know if Barth were to write the *Dogmatik* over again whether he would stress the objectivity of the Word and the Atonement more strongly. Barth replied that he thought he *had* stressed their objectivity to the very maximum. Dr. Carnell also wished to know how Barth reconciled his view of a Bible "sullied" with error—even religious error—with his view of the Bible as the norm for us. Barth amiably rejected the adjective "sullied" and replied that Holy Scripture is not only a Divine Word but a human document composed within historical and cultural limits. Yet it is our norm because it points beyond itself to the Word in Jesus Christ.

With Mr. Stringfellow the church's social obligations were canvassed. A very acute young man, he wanted Barth to comment on the situation of the churches and their prophetic duty in the face of a fat, affluent, complacently "Christian" society—he referred amusingly but acidly to the churches' prudent distance from the scandal of the Freedom Rides. While Barth was hesitant to criticize America, he did discuss the demonic powers in general—here and in Switzerland, too. For Barth they are the great idols: reason, sex, sport and the Unconscious, to name only a few which he cited. It is necessary, he said in a ringing voice, for the Christian to fight against them. The Christian in the world does not simply submit himself to its powers passively; instead, the Christian "takes his place in an order" and functions actively within it.

BARTH concluded the discussion by thanking us for coming to hear him and by hoping that we Americans would someday work out a "Theology of Freedom" in which that lady, the statue in New York harbor, would be truly "demythologized." He also very graciously informed America that it need have no cultural "inferiority complex" in relation to "old Europe." And then he sobered the applauding audience by reminding them that, on the other hand, America need have no "superiority complex" in relation to Asia and Africa.

Barth's final public lecture on "The Spirit" was a magnificent ode to the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life to the Church—and to theologians, too, if they will be docile to His promptings. Barth stood there in the pulpit, rather frail-looking in his black gown, the afternoon sunlight filtering into the severely Reformed nave of the Chapel and glinting occasionally on his spectacles. *Geneva rediviva*. One could almost sense the continuity of four centuries.

He then departed for Princeton and Europe, leaving behind him a most extraordinary impression. Dr. Pelikan spoke, I think, for all of us when he suggested that we had actually "met a Father of the Church."

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