

Serene Message from An Eminent Theologian

By Carolyn Anspacher

Dr. Karl Barth, giant of modern theology and considered by many to be the most powerful force in Twentieth Century Protestant thought, brought a rare and simple message to San Francisco yesterday.

The 76-year-old Swiss theologian said this:

"The God of the Gospel is the God who mercifully dedicates and delivers himself to the life of all men—helping, healing, uplifting, bringing peace and joy."

Dr. Barth's concept of man as a "loved one" has been already enunciated in 200 ecclesiastical books and is being expanded further in a monumental 17-volume work entitled "Church Dogmatics" of which 12 have been completed.

GUEST

Here as the guest of Dr. Theodore A. Gill, president of the San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, Dr. Barth made it clear at a Press and Union League Club conference that he considers man's problems in the modern world much the same as they have been since the beginning of time.

Peering benignly over the bowl of a pipe, he told reporters that the function of the church today is to announce simply and clearly the doctrine of God's love of man, not man's love of God.

The message, he said is that man is not left alone; that God is not without him or against him, but forever with him.

PROFESSOR

Dr. Barth, who has been professor of dogmatics on the theological faculty of the University of Basel in Switzerland since 1935, does not believe that external conditions—either fear or imminent peril—bring man closer to the word of God.

There have been disasters since the beginning of the world," he said gently. "Did your earthquake here in San Francisco change the population? Did two world wars in Europe change the people?"

To this monumental patriarch, true evangelism begins with joy rather than fear, and it is for this reason that he takes issue with Billy Graham's evangelistic techniques.



KARL BARTH AT PRESS CONFERENCE
The doctrine of God's love of man

DIFFERENCE

"I think Billy Graham," he said. "I like him. He is a good man. But the word 'evangelical' doesn't mean to me what it means to him."

Dr. Barth said he does not believe that the Christian gospel should be announced as a "command call," with a "pistol at a man's breast."

The beginning, said Dr. Barth, is not the pistol. It is kindness, and out of kindness comes the kind of spiritual and intellectual unity in which men, together, seek and find truth.

UNITY

Dr. Barth, one of whose sons, Dr. Markus Barth, is professor of New Testament at the University of Chicago, and the other, Dr. Christoph Barth, is professor of Old Testament at the theological seminary in Jakarta, Indonesia, believes all men can be united regardless of ideologies.

Similarly, he cannot bring himself to condemn communism but pleads only for "comprehension."

"If we in the West are stronger," he said, "we should not react in fear or condemn. We must simply stay where we are, with Western culture and civilization, being sure we are right. If we are sure, very sure, we do not need to fight."

"If we are truly living as a community—a religious and political community in which every man has dignity and receives his right

of coexistence—then no one is alone.

IMPRESSION

"The Communists give the impression—perhaps the false impression—of building such a society. We should do better than they in every way..."

As a visitor to the United States, Dr. Barth said it was not for him to discuss this country's resumption of nuclear testing, nor its rearming of Germany and Japan.

"I asked why in Washington," he said a little wryly, "but I got no satisfying answer. But I asked only. I made no statement."

"But if I were in Switzerland I would say in a loud voice what I think. Here, I am an old man and cautious."

Similarly, he carefully ducked questions about his impressions of the United States.

Dr. Barth, who was twice ousted from Germany for anti-Nazi activities, addressed the theological community last night at Calvary Presbyterian Church, taking issue with popular humanistic Protestantism.

He lectured them, as he lectured theologians at the University of Chicago and Princeton, on the renewal of the Christian church through the basic and eternal theme of God for man, God with man and always in this sequence, with God first.