

ASOCIACION CRISTIANA DE JOVENES

S. C. LTDA. DE LA CIUDAD DE MEXICO.

(Railroad and City Young Men's Christian Association of Mexico City)

WALTER O. TAYLOR SRIO. GENERAL.

EDIFICIO 6A. CALLE DE BALDERAS, 79

APARTADO POSTAL (P. O. BOX) 136 BIS.

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Professor Karl Barth
Siebengebiereg Str.
Bonn, Am Rhein
Germany

My dear Professor Barth,

When I bade you goodbye towards the end of last summer term it was my intention to go to the United States after a short visit to Scotland and to remain there until the end of the year. However, soon after leaving Bonn I decided to come straight into Mexico. We arrived here about two months ago. A considerable part of the intervening time has been taken up with the task of getting settled down. Only last week my books arrived from Montevideo, and as these begin to line the walls of my new study I seem to be myself once more. I earnestly hope that not for many years will it be necessary for us to change country again. Time and again my thoughts go back to Bonn and not least to your classroom in the early morning and to our afternoon talks in your study or on the balcony. Those months by the Rhine and especially my contact with you have meant more for me than I myself am yet able to estimate. This at least I know that one epoch of my life came to an end and another began during my walks to and from your house. The coming years I hope will show, and in a tangible way, how much I have owed to you in the realm of thought.

I am particularly delighted with the relative facility with which I can now read German. Before leaving Germany I acquired about one hundred volumes of books in German literature, philosophy and theology. I think I have practically all the works of the "Dialectical Theologians." I have already since my arrival prepared an article in Spanish on the significance of the new movement in theological thought.

A few days ago I returned from my first lecture campaign. I had been invited by the Municipality of Puebla, one of the leading towns in Mexico, to give a course of lectures in that City. I gave a series of five

in the State Chamber of Deputies. I dealt chiefly with ethical and social subjects, but was able also, particularly in my lecture on Unamuno, and in the last one, Reverence for Life, Erfurcht vor dem Leben, to introduce the religious background of my thinking. The lectures were attended by an audience representative of the whole community and which on the last night reached 600. Several priests were regular attenders.

Between now and the end of January I propose devoting myself to finishing a book in English on the religious situation in South America. When that is finished I hope to begin my real work. The basis of my work will be a lecture each Sunday morning on the Fourth Gospel, designed especially for people who attend no church, and a weekly lecture during some twenty weeks on the general subject of Creators of the new Era. I propose dealing especially with Kierkegaard, Dostoyevski, Unamuno and Karl Barth. In that course I hope to be able to deal in a fundamental way with some of the deepest questions in religious thought.

A few weeks ago I received an invitation from the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions of the United States to accept the Joseph Cook lectureship to the Orient for the year 1931-32. It would involve a series of lectures on the fundamentals of Christianity in the leading cities of Japan, China and India, but as fulfillment of the terms of the lectureship would involve an absence of at least six months from Latin America I did not feel that I could spare the time away from my own field so soon after returning to it. However, in the course of the next four or five years I hope to have the opportunity of going East on a similar mission.

The other day I had a letter from Privatdocent Hermann Schlingensiepen in which he tells me that he has been appointed to a professorship for the winter in Kiel. I had been relying on him to keep me informed of the course of events in theological circles in Bonn, but now unfortunately he will be away.

I shall be most interested in hearing from you at any time and shall promise to keep you informed of my own work and thinking. My wife joins me in sending our best regards to Mrs. Barth, the children and your secretary. As for me, I send you along with my greetings the deepest expression of my gratitude and affection.

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

John A. Mackay

(over)

P.S. I was almost forgetting to thank you for the four volumes of Luther's works. They now have a place in my library as one of my choicest gifts. I hope as the years go by to make more and more use of them. Thanks, many thanks for your kindness.

*I hope your English still continues
to make progress.*

AMG.