

# MONOGRAPH SUPPLEMENTS TO THE SCOTTISH JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

This is a series of supplements to the *Scottish Journal of Theology* jointly edited by Professors T. F. Torrance and J. K. S. Reid

## REVELATION AND THEOLOGY

An analysis of the Barth-Harnack correspondence of 1923

H. MARTIN RUMSCHEIDT

In 1923 Adolf von Harnack, the Professor of Church History at Berlin, and his former pupil Karl Barth published in the Journal *Christliche Welt* an exchange of five open letters. This correspondence represents a classic statement of the two sides in a continuing theological debate about the nature of the theologian's expertise and his understanding of God. Harnack defended the established academic ideal of a 'scientific theology'—an objective study consisting primarily of historical investigation and critical reflection. Barth emphasized instead the role of revelation, grace and personal commitment in our understanding of God, arguing that to rely on the external proofs and authorities of natural theology was to empty religion of its significance and reality for the individual.

Dr Rumscheidt presents the correspondence, in translation, with a full critical analysis and evaluation. He estimates the importance of this debate for the new theology and the new Reformation which Barth can be said to have inaugurated.

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