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KARL BARTH'S VIEW  
OF THE  
RESURRECTION

by

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A THESIS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE INTRODUCTION

"The Resurrection of Christ is the rock on which rests the central column that sustains the structure of historic Christianity. Remove this foundation, and the great fabric would fall into ruin." - James H. Snowden

## CHAPTER I

### THE INTRODUCTION

#### A. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### B. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

1. The Barthian Theology
2. Emphasis on the Resurrection
3. The Value of the Study

#### C. THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE

1. The Plan of Study
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KARL BARTH'S VIEW  
OF THE  
RESURRECTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary concern of this work is to discover what conception Barth holds of the Resurrection of Christ and its relation to the general theme of the resurrection of the dead. The problem will be to ascertain what Barth means by his doctrine of the resurrection and how it fits in with his whole scheme of theology. It seems evident that Barth relates nearly every phase of his thinking to this central fact of the Resurrection so that it will be difficult to limit the discussion to the actual Resurrection of Christ.

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Since the World War there has been a rapid rise of the Barthian school of theology presenting to our generation a "challenge such as we have not listened to in this generation." 1 Rolston says, in speaking of Barth,

"The figure of Karl Barth looms on the horizon of our religious life today like the figure of an Old Testament prophet. He is at the same time the most interesting, the most arresting, and the most disturbing figure in the world of theology." 2

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1. Hoyle: The Teaching of Karl Barth, p. 10
2. Rolston: A Conservative Looks To Barth and Brunner, p.25

He is disturbing because he seems to cut so squarely across all existing lines of theology. He aims to place the Word of God once more at the center of Christian theology and in the center of the life of the Church. He laments the fact that there is such a "vacuum" in the churches today, not in the attendance only, but also in the content of the preaching.<sup>1</sup> Because of this, Barth's message is predominantly a message of hope, not in the ability of man, but in the Word of God as it is revealed to man. McConnachie, commenting on this theology and its value for the man of today, says:

"This note of hope is the outspoken character of his theology which makes it peculiarly a theology for to-day. . . Only a theology which strikes the note of Hope, of Morning, of Resurrection, of Easter, can provide the Church with a marching message to-day."<sup>2</sup>

Since Barth does place so much importance on the preaching of the Resurrection, it is necessary that we examine his views in an attempt to discover why the message of the Resurrection should be the solution to those empty churches of today. From the times of the Early Apostles, the great theme of the Christian faith has been the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. If then, we of this generation, have been guilty of permitting such an important theme to be relegated wholly to the season of the year known as Easter, or totally neglected, it will be well for us to learn what Barth says concerning the resurrection in his "Theology of

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1. Hoyle: The Teaching of Karl Barth, p. 85
2. McConnachie: The Barthian Theology And The Man of to-day, p. 57



Crisis". The rapid spread of the Barthian influence is sufficient to lead one to believe that there must be some great value in his preaching. This belief is strengthened by the fact that the Roman Church has been watching so intently this new spark of life in Protestantism, as it has been kindled by this modern Luther.<sup>1</sup> Closely connected, in Barth's thinking, with the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, is the belief in the general resurrection of the dead. This Pauline doctrine of resurrection is more than a vague belief in immortality. Barth regards it as the resurrection of the body, "the most important, the central element of the hope of Paul, to which he clings with all the ardour of his soul."<sup>2</sup> This gives an additional reason for the study of the Barthian conception of the Resurrection.

#### C. THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE

In the first place, an understanding of the general system of Barth's theology will be necessary. At first, Barth claimed to have no definite system of theology.<sup>3</sup> He intended only to make certain marginal notes to the Epistle to the Romans, to add "a pinch of cinnamon" as a corrective to the present-day theology.<sup>4</sup> But, at present, Barth is engaged in the production of a system of Christian Dogmatics,

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1. Rolston: A Conservative Looks to Barth and Brunner, p. 18  
Lowrie: Theology of Crisis, p. 13
2. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 117
3. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 244
4. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p.98

which will present his own "Theology of Crisis".<sup>1</sup> But, Barth does have definite, characteristic beliefs, and the relation of the Resurrection to his leading beliefs will first be observed. With this knowledge of the Barthian theology as a background, Barth's interpretation of the Resurrection itself will then be studied. This will be done by an examination of the meaning and importance of Christ's Resurrection, the effect upon the "resurrected life" of the believer, and finally, the eschatological hope of the resurrection of the dead. In summary, a presentation of the distinctive views of Barth concerning the Resurrection will be given.

#### D. THE SOURCES

Although many of Barth's writings have not been translated into English, the more important ones have been made available to the English reader. These give an adequate presentation of Barth's ideas, both in his doctrinal teachings and in his sermons. In addition to these are numerous critical books which discuss the Barthian theology and give to the English world an interpretation of Barth. Many of these works are based on a knowledge of all of Barth's published works, both in English and in German.

The primary sources will consist of the available English translations of Barth and Brunner, and the secondary sources will be those of such critics as : McConnachie, Hoyle, Pauck, Lowrie, Zerbe, and Rolston.

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1. Barth: Dogmatics (Vol. I, Prolegomena to Christian Dogmatics)

## CHAPTER II

### BARTH'S SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY

Where are the prophets of the soul?  
Where dwells the sacred clan?  
Ah, they live in fields and cities, yea,  
wherever man is found;  
Whether he prays in cloistered cell  
or delves the hillside clod,  
Wherever beats the heart of man,  
there dwells a priest of God.

- Sam Walter Foss

## CHAPTER II

### BARTH'S SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY

#### A. INTRODUCTION

#### B. THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF BARTH'S THEOLOGY

1. The World of Time and the World of Eternity
2. The Divine Initiative
3. The Human Reception of Revelation

#### C. THE IMPORTANT PHASES OF BARTH'S THEOLOGY

1. The Transcendence of God
2. The "Moment" or Man's Need
3. Revelation-History
4. Eternal Life
5. Barthian Eschatology
6. Redemption and Atonement
7. Christian Behaviour and Conduct

#### D. SUMMARY - THE PLACE OF THE RESURRECTION

1. Survey of foregoing discussion
2. The Doctrine of the Resurrection

## CHAPTER II

## BARTH'S SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY

## A. INTRODUCTION

In order that those who are not thoroughly acquainted with the main ideas of the "Barthian Theology" may have a better understanding of this work, it will be necessary in this chapter to give a brief survey of the leading beliefs of Barth. Inasmuch as this will not be an interpretation of the Resurrection itself, and thus part of the main discussion, the underlying principles of Barth's theology will be largely drawn from Rolston's interpretation.<sup>1</sup> However, in thinking of Barth's theology, it is well to bear in mind that this is not a complete system of fully developed and organized theology. Barth thinks of it as progressive and constantly changing. "The critics have learned that it is no more easy to criticise a 'bird in its flight' than it is easy to describe it (his movement), and they have discovered that while they have been busy priming their guns, the bird has flown on."<sup>2</sup> But, there is a sense in which the Barthian Theology is determined by definite principles or outlines of thought. It is to these leading principles that we must now turn our thought.

## B. THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

In attempting to grasp the thought of another, it is first

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1. Rolston: A Conservative Looks To Barth And Brunner, p.29ff.
2. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 281

necessary to gain some understanding of the underlying principles which form the bulwark of his thought. The nature of these fundamental assumptions from which a writer begins will largely determine the results of his thinking. "This is particularly true in the study of Barth. His thought is difficult at the best. It can never be understood until it is related to the assumptions from which it starts."<sup>1</sup>

### 1. The World of Time and the World of Eternity

The fundamental assumption upon which Barth bases all of his theology is the belief that there is another world which is different in quality from this world of time which we know. Barth says of his system:

"If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kirkegaard called the 'infinite qualitative distinction' between time and eternity, and to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance: 'God is in heaven, and thou art on earth.' The relation between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy."<sup>2</sup>

Concerning this statement, Zerbe says:

"In the hands of Barth and the Barthians, this conception becomes at one tremendous sweep a teleology, ontology, cosmology, theodicy, and theology."<sup>3</sup>

From the beginning of this theology as a "marginal note", as his contribution to theology in general, the Barthian theology of crisis has become a whole system of theology, based on the belief that there are two worlds which are ut-

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1. Rolston: A Conservative Looks To Barth And Brunner, p.29
2. Barth: Commentary on the Romans, p. 10
3. Zerbe: The Karl Barth Theology, p. vii

terly contradictory to each other. The world of man can only be understood by first beginning with a belief in the existence of the world of God. Rolston quotes Barth as saying:

"The relation of God to man, or man to God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the sum of philosophy. Philosophers regard human wisdom. The Bible regards Jesus Christ as the fons et origo." 1

In the Bible we see revealed this strange new world, the world of God. Barth, in describing this says:

"The paramount question is whether we have understanding for this different, new world, or good will enough to meditate and enter upon it inwardly . . . A new world projects itself into our old ordinary world. We may reject it. We may say, It is nothing; this is imagination, madness, this 'God'. But we may not deny nor prevent our being led by Bible 'history' far out beyond what is elsewhere called history - into a new world, into the world of God." 2

This new world in the Bible is a different type of existence from that of this world. One is a "yon-side" and the other is a "this-side". Of these two, the "yon-side" is the real life. The two are of such nature that they can not be compared. The tendency today has been to make God and eternal life of the same quality as man and earthly life. The only difference is that of quantity. But, Barth would satisfactorily assert that because "God is God" and "man is man", you cannot speak of God simply by speaking of man in a loud voice. 3 There is a deep chasm between the two kinds

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1. Rolston: A Conservative Looks To Barth and Brunner, p.31
2. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 37
3. Rolston: op. cit. , p. 32

of world. This makes it impossible for the world of man ever to attain to the world of God.

Man is unable to receive a complete disclosure of the other world because of the difference between the two. Rolston compares man in this world to a man born blind. He would not be able to appreciate a lecture on the blending of various shades of color. Nor, in terms of another figure, could the man who has no ear for music appreciate or understand the world of grand opera. He might be perfectly conscious of the existence of such a world, but wholly incapable of understanding what it was all about. 1

So incapable is man of describing this other world that he must even attempt to describe God in terms of what He is not. All of the attributes given to God are but negations of what man's attributes are thought to be. Man is finite, but God is Infinite; man is mortal, but God is Immortal; the world of man is changeable, but God is always the same - unchanging. All of these attributes only tell us what God is not. 2 This "other world" is something beyond our grasp, something which we cannot sense in its fullness. Because it is of different quality, we of this world of time are only vaguely aware of its existence. The relation of the man in this world to the other world is comparable to the relation

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1. Rolston: op. cit., p. 32

2. Ibid, p. 33



of the man who is tone-deaf to the world of harmony about him. He may even have a hope of some day appreciating these harmonies, but at present he is in an entirely different realm.<sup>1</sup> Such is the idea of Barth's fundamental assumption in dealing with theology. There are two worlds which stand directly contrasted to each other, being of an infinitely different quality.

## 2. The Divine Initiative

We have said that the underlying assumption of the Barthian Theology is the idea of another world which has a qualitative difference from this world. There are other definite principles which are natural deductions from this main assumption. The first of these is the position taken by Barth that all theology must have its beginning with God, not with man.<sup>2</sup> This is in direct contrast to the modern tendency which places the emphasis on the ability of man to find God. This idea of Barth is a natural conclusion to be drawn from the fact that man is unable to attain knowledge of the "other world" in his own powers. If there is to be any attainment of the life on the "yon-side" of death, it must be the result of the Divine Initiative. God must reveal Himself to man.

Man is unable to attain knowledge of the realm of God

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1. op. cit., p. 32,33

2. Rolston: op. cit., p. 47

and eternity except this knowledge be given to him by God.

Barth himself says:

"The knowlege of God is not a possibility which we may, or at the worst may not, apply in our search for a meaning of the world; it is rather the presupposition on the basis of which consciously, half consciously, or unconsciously all our searchings for meaning are made." 1

This is in direct contrast to the view too often taken that the starting point for all knowledge of God should be man. It is common to make man the certainty and God the great problem. This modern attitude of theology is wrong. Barth, in the Prolegomena to his Christian Dogmatics, states the emphasis in his theology in this way:

"We set this demand: Theology must turn in a primitive way from fear to courage and acknowledge its true meaning by its act; to understand the self-certainty of man from the certainty of God and not vice versa, the logos in us from the logos of God and not the reverse."2

This approach which Barth makes to theology gains its importance from the fact that it challenges the whole modern method of theological procedure. From the days of Schleiermacher, the method has been to proceed from man, as the known, to God, the unknown.3 This attitude enables the theologian to form his knowledge of what God is in terms of that which is highest and best in man. To Barth, this is an impossible attitude to take. Such an approach would, at best, make God to be merely the creation of man's mind, and

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1. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 52
2. Rolston: op. cit., p. 47 (quoting Barth)
3. Ibid, p. 48

would not give what God actually is. In order to really know about God, man must wait quietly and patiently for God to reveal Himself.<sup>1</sup>

This principle of God's revelation is frequently stressed in the thought of Barth, and will be more fully treated in another section. The Barthian approach to theology by beginning with God rather than with man influences the thinking of this school concerning the transcendence of God, the nature of revelation, the idea of Scripture, and the view of the Person of Christ. The entire movement is from God down, not from man upward to God. This attitude affects nearly every doctrine of the Christian faith.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Human Reception of Revelation

A third principle for understanding the Barthian Theology, or a second derived corollary from the main assumption, is the thought that man is able to receive the revelation made by God.<sup>3</sup> If there is a difference between the two worlds, and if man's knowledge of spiritual things must come from God, then the next question is the ability of man to receive this revelation.

Barth has little use for the people who would claim to gain a knowledge of God from His works in Nature. It is possible for the man who has received knowledge of God from

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1. op. cit., p. 49

2. Ibid, p. 49

3. Ibid, p. 49

other sources to observe the Creator in His creation. But, first there must be a more satisfying and sufficient revelation of God than this. Barth would say that this full knowledge of God must come through His Word.<sup>1</sup> This is to be found within the Bible, but even here it is hidden and cannot be appreciated by every man.<sup>2</sup> The question then arises as to how man can understand this Word of God which is found within the Bible. Barth does not claim that all of the words therein are to be called the Word of God.<sup>3</sup>

a. Man hears God's Word through faith.

From the human point of view, man hears God's Word by faith. Faith is thus the instrument by which we apprehend God's Word in the Scriptures. The one who goes to the Bible to find the knowledge of God revealed there must go with an attitude of faith. Barth states:

"The Holy Scriptures will interpret themselves in spite of all our human limitations. We need only dare to follow this drive, this spirit, this river, to grow out beyond ourselves toward the highest answer. This daring is faith; and we read the Bible rightly, not when we do so with false modesty, restraint, and attempted sobriety, for these are passive qualities, but when we read it in faith. And the invitation to dare and to reach toward the highest, even though we do not deserve it, is the expression of grace in the Bible: the Bible unfolds to us as we are met, guided, drawn on, and made to grow by the grace of God."<sup>4</sup>

This would exclude all who attempt to interpret the Bible

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1. Brunner: The Word and the World, p. 26
2. Rolston: op. cit., pp. 52, 73
3. Ibid, p. 76
4. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 34

and prove the Word of God as one would demonstrate a scientific fact. If faith were dependent upon proof, or made possible by proof, then it would be no longer faith. Barth discards any form of critical reason used as an instrument to discover the Word of God. Only through true Christian faith can man be certain of God's Word. Barth regards the ability of man to understand and comprehend the Word of God entirely as a gift of God's grace.<sup>1</sup> Even faith itself must be God's work. It is by accepting the witness of the Biblical witnesses that God's revelation comes to man. Barth, in speaking of this truth says:

"It (the Bible) expresses obedience to the testimonium spiritus sancti interum, to the spirit of God in which the human spirit of the writer and the reader become one in common adoration; and the truth of the statement stands or falls with the reality of this sovereign act proceeding from God and authenticated by Him."<sup>2</sup>

So, Barth would say that we are able to hear and receive the revelation of God to man by an act of faith, which is in itself a work of God. Knowledge is not given to the man who is merely a spectator, a casual observer. It comes only by surrender to Christ through an act of faith. The New Testament thought of spiritual perception of the truth is that of abiding in His Word. This perception of God's revelation by faith is a central teaching of the Barthian school. One must be dead in earnest when seeking to know about God.

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1. op. cit., p. 244  
2. Ibid, p. 244

In speaking of this way of seeking truth, Brunner says:

"There is a third way of seeking truth; when one no longer speaks with philistine concern for practical values; when it is not sought with cool scientific objectivity or with a serene aesthetic outlook upon the world, but with the passion of a drowning man who passionately cries for help. It is the quest of the man who passionately feels the import of the question, 'What is truth? I must know or I shall die.' That is the real search for truth."<sup>1</sup>

Brunner also remarks that the "majority of the most difficult questions with which theology must deal arise from an attempt to comprehend and appreciate its message from the standpoint of the spectator."<sup>2</sup>

God speaks to man and man hears, not as a spectator, but as one who has surrendered to the truth. In summary of this entire section dealing with the fundamental principles of the Barthian Theology, Rolston says:

"Barth and Brunner have called men from the mockery of trying to enter into the truth of God from the standpoint of the spectator. God opens the truth to those who surrender to him.

The world of eternity exists in infinite qualitative distinction from the world of time. The truth of God is given through God's revelation of himself. It is heard by those who receive it in the act of faith in which they surrender to it. These are the three principles that underlie the whole of the Barthian thought."<sup>3</sup>

### C. THE IMPORTANT PHASES OF BARTH'S THEOLOGY

With an understanding of these three underlying principles of Barth's system of theology, it will readily be

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1. Brunner: The Theology of Crisis, p. 25
2. Ibid, p. 26
3. Rolston: op. cit., p. 54

seen how these ideas are reflected in the more important doctrines of his thinking. These will be treated only in a brief manner to show the relation of the Resurrection to the rest of Barth's Theology.

### 1. The Transcendence of God

In much of today's theological thinking, the underlying presupposition would appear to be, not the distinction between man and God, but a "gladly recognized affinity between God and man." The belief then would be that "all that is best in us is God in us."<sup>1</sup> In contrast to this line of thought is that of Barth dealing with the transcendence of God, which is to him a very important issue. He says:

"God, the pure limit and the pure beginning of all that we are, have, and do, standing over in infinite qualitative difference to man and all that is human, nowhere and never identical with that which we call God, experience, surmise, and pray to as God, the unconditional Halt as opposed to all human rest, the Yes in our No and the No in our Yes, the First and the Last, and as such Unknown, but nowhere and never a magnitude amongst others in the medium known to us, God the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer. . . That is the Living God."<sup>2</sup>

In this passage quoted from Barth's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, the emphasis on the transcendence of God and the qualitative difference between Him and man is very pronounced. The Barthians, in their emphasis on God's transcendence, assert that the God of Nature is hidden. His presence in nature is not denied, but it is regarded as be-

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1. Fosdick: The Modern Use of the Bible, p. 266
2. Chapman: Theology of Karl Barth, p. 24 (quoting Barth)

ing so hidden that God as He really is cannot be revealed apart from the revelation in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> This does not say that Barth would attempt to shut God off from all relations with the world. In truth, he says, "We live in the world, and this world is God's world, created, sustained, and ruled by Him."<sup>2</sup> But, he also adds,

"We live in a world that is modified by the apostasy of man from God, having set himself in opposition to God, having become His enemy."<sup>3</sup>

McConnachie gives the real heart of the Barthian contention in these words:

"In a world which has fallen out of its original unity with its Creator, we can still see His tracks, but they are the tracks of a Great Unknown. Not in Nature any more than in History, nor Religion, apart from Revelation, says Barth, is God to be found. Nature is not capable of revealing what is beyond the relativity of concrete existence. . . We can only come to know God the Creator through God the Reconciler, as He gives himself to be known in the Word of the Cross."<sup>4</sup>

Barth himself gives us a good summary of the relation of man to the transcendent God when he says, "There is no way from us to God — not even via negativa — not even a via dialectica nor paradoxa. The god who stood at the end of some human way — even of this way — would not be God."<sup>5</sup>

If Barth were to stop here, he could be accused in all fairness of being an agnostic, because he would be saying

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1. Brunner: The Theology of Crisis, p. 28 (foot-note)
2. Barth: The Christian Life, p. 47
3. Ibid, p. 48
4. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 280
5. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 177



that there is no way from man to God. But, Barth is far from holding such a view. He persistently asserts that the only way from man to God is by that way which leads from God to man. This way he finds in Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Pauck ably defends Barth from the charge of agnosticism when he writes:

"Because he has been awed by eternity, because he has heard its thunders and seen its lightnings, he has become ' a voice in the wilderness ' speaking of judgment over time, calling to repentance. He shouts his 'No' to the 'realities' of this world, because he knows of the 'Yes' which is not of this world. Frantically he points to this firm pole. Nothing must be in the way of those who want to see it. He therefore knocks down everything that obstructs the view. The King of Glory shall come in. There cannot, shall not be any other glory but his."<sup>2</sup>

Barth's emphasis on the transcendence of God leads him in opposition to those who would try to prove the existence of God by the traditional methods. To Barth, these methods produce thoughts about God, but they do not reveal to man the God found in the Bible.<sup>3</sup> Barth would not try to prove the existence of God. To him, the existence of God becomes a reality to man when God speaks to him. This may seem to be no proof at all, but it puts man where he needs no proof. Moses does not reason to the existence of God. God speaks to him and in His Word, God is known, and Moses goes forth with an assurance he could never have obtained by a process

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1. Rolston: op. cit., p. 65
2. Pauck: Karl Barth, p. 134
3. Rolston: op. cit., p. 66

of argument.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of the immanence of God is not rejected by Barth, but he feels that much of the emphasis on the Fatherhood of God in our day has become an attitude of too easy familiarity with God. There has been a tendency to break down the distinction between God and man. Another emphasis closely related to this is that of the love of God. This too, Barth feels, has been made out to be too much of a sentimental passion in our modern thought. He believes in the love of God, but insists that the Father's love sent His Son to Calvary. Other qualities of God must not be neglected in the presentation of God as love.<sup>2</sup> His justice and wrath also need to be emphasized.

Since God is transcendent and of a different quality from man, Barth insists that God must reveal Himself, not in Nature, nor in the highest attributes of man, but in His Word, and here alone. <sup>3</sup>

## 2. The "Moment" or Man's Need

Over against the transcendence of God, Barth places the extreme need of man. In this respect, he opposes the whole philosophy of Schleiermacher. In contrast to this philosophy, Barth maintains that "man as man is not only in need but beyond all hope of saving himself; that the whole of so-called religion, and not least the Christian

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1. op. cit., p. 66

2. Op cit., p. 67

3. op. cit., p. 68

religion, shares in this need."1 Simply because man is man, he is in desperate need of something beyond himself.

Barth says:

"Man is a riddle and nothing else, and his universe, be it ever so vividly seen and felt, is a question. God stands in contrast to man as the impossible in contrast to the possible, as death in contrast to life, as eternity in contrast to time. The solution of the riddle, the answer to the question, the satisfaction of our need is the absolutely new event whereby the impossible becomes of itself possible, death becomes life, eternity time, and God man. There is no way which leads to this event; there is no faculty in man for apprehending it; for the way and the faculty are themselves new, being the revelation and faith, the knowing and being known enjoyed by the new man."2

The fact that sooner or later, there comes a time when man is confronted with impossible barriers presents a crisis.

"There is none so fortunate as to master life completely.

There are iron facts which we simply cannot evade: sickness, fateful occurrences, sin, death - who will ever be done with these!"3

Life is so constituted that man must at some time stand before these facts. There is nothing in life which is more certain than death. It is the one thing toward which every man must face. There is " a fact that includes everything else - we must die - (it) is a fact in which we are all united from pole to pole."4 Such are the crises which man must face, realizing that he has no resources of his own

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1. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 195 ff.
2. Ibid, p. 197
3. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 166
4. Ibid, p. 176

on which to stand, or in which to gain strength.

But, not every crisis in a man's life, be it ever so great, is the great "Crisis" or "Moment" of the Barthian theology. This, to Barth, is the "existential moment" in which man is faced with the great alternative of God or the world, eternity or time, life or death. "Such a Moment calls for a decision which is sharp and instant and complete." It is the crisis of the Word of God created in man's heart when God the Lord is the speaker, and man is the hearer.<sup>1</sup> Since, from Barth's view, the Word of God is always contemporaneous, as true to the reader or hearer as to the ones to whom originally given, man is always faced with this possibility of "the Moment."<sup>2</sup> Barth brings man's needs down to the present when he says:

"The shadows of night are settling ever deeper on the hearts of peoples and nations. Must we not give all that we are and have to keep at least flickering a few candles of conscience and duty toward higher things, and if possible relight a few that have been extinguished? . . . Now, if ever, we see how fearfully godless the world is and how necessary it is for her to break away from it."<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Revelation-History

If the position with Barth is taken that there can be no method of obtaining knowledge of God on the part of men, and at the same time, consider their great need, then it is

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1. Lowrie: Theology of Crisis, p. 101
2. McConnachie: Barthian Theology and the Man of Today, p. 203
3. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 231, 237

evident that something additional is needed. Barth claims that knowledge of God can come only from the Divine Initiative.<sup>1</sup> It might well be asked at this point How does God meet man's need and reveal Himself to man?

Barth's idea of God's revelation to man is that of another world or sphere touching our world of time as a tangent touches a circle. Jesus in history as the final revelation of God to man is the meaning of the Gospel, and the meaning of history. In Him "two worlds" come together.

In his Romans, Barth describes it thus: (In Him)

"two worlds meet and go apart, two planes intersect, the one known and the other unknown. The known plane is God's creation, fallen out of its union with Him, and therefore, the world of the 'flesh' needing redemption, the world of men, and of time, and of things-our world. This known plane is intersected by another plane that is unknown - the world of the Father, of the Primal Creation, and of Final Redemption. . . The point on the line of intersection at which the relation becomes observable and observed is Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, the historical Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

The Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ are to be regarded, not merely as events in history, but as phenomena in the "category of Revelation, as acts of God. . . the breaking through of the new world out of the unknown dimension - into the known world."<sup>3</sup>

The whole idea of revelation to Barth is connected with his doctrine of the Word of God revealed to man through the Scriptures, through the testimony of those to whom God has

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1. c.f. above, p 13ff

2. Barth: Commentary on the Romans, p. 29

3. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 156

spoken, and through the sermon. Even in the Bible, in the Holy Scriptures, Barth says that we have a revelation, but it is one that is veiled. It is accessible to faith, but only to faith.<sup>1</sup>

The Resurrection of Christ is the outstanding point of the Barthian view of Revelation-History. "In the risen Christ" is manifested a new form of life. Rolston says:

"In the risen Christ a form of life touched this world which was quite different from anything that the world had ever seen. . . In the resurrection of Christ a new form of life appears. In Him God begins the disclosure of a new form of life that is utterly different from anything that men have seen before. The existence of that form of life that shall ultimately be given to the children of God is declared to men by the power of the resurrection."<sup>2</sup>

Man's need is separated from God by a great chasm — the "qualitative difference between the world of time and the world of eternity." But, this gap has been bridged by the revelation of the Word of God. It is this revelation that gives hope to man and a solution to his great need.

McConnachie well expresses it when he says:

"Across the judgment of to-day springs the rainbow promise of to-morrow. . . for the hope of the future transmutes itself into patience in the present which is 'hope in the shade', the brave 'nevertheless' that bears up under all burdens because the 'Lord is at hand'.<sup>3</sup>

This is the meaning of Barth's idea of Revelation-History.

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1. Rolston: op. cit., p. 73
2. Ibid, p. 34
3. McConnachie: Barthian Theology, p. 58

#### 4. Eternal Life

Before discussing Barth's view of eternal life, it is important that his meaning of eternity be made clear. The thought of eternity and eternal life has always been emphasized by Christianity, and in this respect, Barth is a close follower. His strong eschatological emphasis is closely connected with the thought of eternal life. He often brings forth the idea that "a Christianity which is not altogether and utterly eschatological has altogether and utterly nothing to do with Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

Eternity, to Barth, has nothing to do with time, except as time is contained within eternity. In this respect:

"Time as such is finite, being limited by eternity. Beyond is God Who is both Beginning and End, at once the Source and Goal of time and history. . . . We live in the moment, the interval between Eternity and Eternity, and in this eschatological Now, the decision falls for us, between life and death."<sup>2</sup>

This statement shows the connection in Barth's thinking between eternity and the "Moment". It is while man is living in this period between Eternity and Eternity that he is called on to decide between life and death, faith and disbelief. It is through the death and resurrection of Christ that the life in this world, which is subject to death, is able to take on the quality of eternal life. The new man who is born by the redemption offered in the Cross has been

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1. McConnachie: op. cit., p. 87

2. Ibid, p. 87

"completely severed from the old man and his whole kind. Between them stands the cross of Christ as an irreducible barrier."1 In this new man, eternal life, in a sense, is already existing. As man comes to the place where Jesus Christ is standing, he is brought in contact with salvation and redemption. It is at this point, says Barth, that we

"realize God's end; his impetuous message which will meet us, strike us, that we also shall have a part in its fulfilment and that we also shall discover it and become aware and alive in resurrection. We are being led to the point where time and eternity meet. We are being asked if we will acknowledge eternity's advantage and preponderance over time. We are offered this insight that there is hidden behind all decay and death a greater advent and a larger life. We are given a perspective of the victory and perfection toward which our whole existence tends."2

In this sense, then, man can obtain eternity within himself as he is yet living in this world of time. In the final sense, however, eternal life is to be the life in the world which is on the "yon-side" of death. It is in this connection that Barth emphasizes the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. This is not the same as a belief in immortality, or a mere "continued existence after death."3 But, to Barth, eternal life in the fullest sense means:

"the resurrection of the body, this same body that we plainly see dying and perishing, the assertion, therefore, not of a duality of life here and life to come, but of an identity of the two, not given now, not to be directly ascertained, but only to be hoped for, only

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1. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 224
2. Ibid, p. 223
3. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 117



to be believed in. ."1

As with Paul, Barth's hope of eternal life is the hope of the mortal putting on immortality, and the corruptible putting on incorruption.

#### 5. Barthian Eschatology

Closely related to the thought of eternal life is the Barthian emphasis on eschatology. Pauck says that "Barth's rediscovery of the transcendence of God and of the eschatological nature of the religious life are expressions of a truly profound and genuine view of life."<sup>2</sup>

Barth says that it would be possible to conceive of "last things" in the sense of finality of all natural history. Even as the extinguishing of a star in the heavens reminds us of the perishing of some world, so it could easily come to pass that our world should perish in the same way. Barth does not consider the meaning of "last things" in the New Testament as being so final. He says that it is not eschatology as "the succession of millions of years", but the more definite idea of the "eternity of God, that is, the rule, the Kingdom of God, His absolute transcendence as Creator, Redeemer, and King of things, of history. ."3

The Kingdom of Christ is what we really mean when we speak of the present Kingdom of God. The final Kingdom of God

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1. op. cit., p. 117

2. Pauck: Karl Barth, p. 220

3. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 105

comes in the final fulfilment of all things, when all is in subjection to Christ, when the last enemy has been conquered. Then Christ will turn over all power of the Messianic Kingdom to the Father, and the Kingdom of God will be ushered in, the Kingdom where "God is all in all."<sup>1</sup> Christ's Parusia, to Barth, is not something distinct from other aspects of his reign, but "only the definite coming-to-the-surface of the same subterranean stream which in revelation for the first time became perceptible in time, the fulfilment of that which in time can only be grasped as a promise."<sup>2</sup>

#### 6. Redemption and Atonement

In accord with Barth's view of the transcendence of God, Redemption is not a work that man can do for himself. It comes altogether from a different side, from God Himself. It comes from where man is waiting at his extremity, at the place where he is totally lost.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, to Barth, man can only obtain redemption as God provides a means of Atonement and Reconciliation.

McConnachie summarizes the Barthian idea of Christian living as contained in three orders - the Order of Creation, the Order of Grace, and the Order of Glory.<sup>4</sup> The first order is the life in which the Christian lives as one in the

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1. op. cit., p. 168ff.

2. Ibid, p. 167

3. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 120

4. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 219-239

created world. The Word of God comes through the Holy Spirit as the Word of the Creator. In the order of Grace, the Word of God comes to man through the Spirit as the Word of God the Reconciler, who reveals Himself as Authority, demanding humility and bestowing the gift of love. In the Order of Glory, the Christian lives also in the Holy Spirit, but it is a new world of hope begotten by the Holy Spirit, in which the Word of God comes as the Word of the Redeemer, demanding gratitude and bestowing the gift of hope.<sup>1</sup>

Barth makes a distinction between the words for Reconciliation and Redemption. The former("katallage") is a present gift by which the believer is reconciled in the order of grace. The latter("apolytrosis"), meaning "redemption", is a gift which belongs in its completion to a future life.<sup>2</sup>

It is in this third Order of Glory that Barth places the final redemption of man. It is in a realm beyond the transiency of creaturehood, and even beyond death and resurrection. It lies beyond this world, in the new, created world of the future. There is the final eternal revelation of the glory of God.<sup>3</sup> Redemption, then, is more than the Creation, and the returning of the lost world of creation to God. It is the "resurrection of the dead", the attain-

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1. op. cit., p. 233

2. Ibid, p. 233

3. Ibid, p. 234(reference to Barth: Zur Lehre vom Heiligen Geist, 1930, p. 39)

ment of the position as "sons of God." It is eternal life, not in any sense of development or intensifying of the present life, but the putting on of immortality. McConnachie ably presents Barth's thought of Redemption by saying:

"The hope of Redemption - as the goal and completion of what God purposed in Creation and much more - a Redemption that 'draweth nigh,' but which does not belong to this present age, is the crowning truth of Barth's doctrine of the Word of God. We know nothing of the goal of God, he holds, if we do not understand the beginning, that is Creation; but we understand creation imperfectly if we do not understand the goal, that is Redemption. As Redeemer, God is the End and the Goal, the Whither as well as the Whence of all, and inside that boundary of Whence and Whither, in the Now between past and future, our destiny is fulfilled. Here we live 'between the ages', in which God's Kingdom and the devil's kingdom are engaged in conflict until the last Judgment. But the Word of God, which is the memory of the Word made flesh, is the hope of the Christ who comes in glory."<sup>1</sup>

Final redemption, then, in Barth's thinking, is connected with eschatology and the Coming of the Lord.

#### 7. Christian Behaviour and Conduct

The Bible lays great stress on the thought of the proper conduct of the believer. Such are the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, the exhortations of Paul to his converts to walk in a manner pleasing to God, and Peter's emphasis on proper conduct before evil-doers.<sup>2</sup>

It has been suggested by some that there is no place in Barth's theology for ethics since he lays so much stress

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1. McConnachie: *Barthian Theology*, p. 85

2. Matthew 5:1-7:27; I Thessalonians 4:1; I Peter 2:11,12

on the glory of God.<sup>1</sup> Such an accusation against Barth is unfair to his belief. What better phase of his theology could be discussed at the close of this chapter than Barth's treatment of the ethical problem of Christian life and conduct? Barth's system of theology began with the practical thoughts of the preacher-pastor, and as such it has continued. As any pastor should be concerned, so Barth is deeply concerned with the question of Christian conduct. To him, however, the problem is not merely an academic question for theologians to ponder over, but it is a witness to the sickness of man - even unto death.<sup>2</sup> As such, it becomes a judgment or crisis for man, who is constantly faced with the question "What shall I do?". The answer to this question, either by word or by deed forms an ethical decision. Barth does not attempt to separate the Word of God and Ethics. Ethics is only applied religion.<sup>3</sup>

In the past, the emphasis on Ethics has been the belief that man is capable of bridging the chasm between himself and God by his own activity. Accordingly, the standard of ethics has been set by man rather than by God.<sup>4</sup> Barth is of the opinion that the old idea of ethics is "gone forever."<sup>5</sup> He is very insistent that ethics needs to be regarded as a

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1. McCnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 208
2. Ibid, p. 210
3. McCnachie: Barthian Theology, p. 254
4. Ibid, p. 255, 256
5. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 149

time of crisis or judgment upon man.<sup>1</sup> Because of man's very nature, he can only admit that he is not good, and is worthy of death. Here is where the element of justification by faith enters. Barth is the "first Reformed theologian since the Reformation to envisage a true Christian Ethic, that is, an Ethic based on justification by faith."<sup>2</sup>

The acceptance of God's gifts of forgiveness through faith is the creation of the new man. After such a start, man must seek, not an ethics beginning with man, but one which continues his relationship to God. The Word of God, to Barth, is the great principle of Christian Ethics, and the Resurrection of Jesus is the great and final revelation of the Word of God. So the problem of conduct is related to the doctrine of the resurrection.

The problem of ethics is largely an eschatological problem. Christian Ethics "is the Ethics of the coming Kingdom and the coming King. . . It is the living 'between the times', or rather between time and eternity, which accounts for the tension of faith, and for the intense moral activity of the true Christian life."<sup>3</sup>

McConnachie characterizes the Ethics of Barth as :  
an Ethics which starts from God, not man, and which can be understood only in the light of Divine Revelation; it is

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1. op. cit., p. 152
2. McConnachie: Barthian Theology, p. 260
3. Ibid, p. 283

marked by sobriety, emphasizing obedience to the will of God; it is through and through eschatological; and "in conclusion, we see that the Barthian Ethics (like the Barthian Theology) is concerned with man as the lost son, calling the 'old' man to judgment and repentance, and the 'new' man to obedience, in the service of the neighbor, to the glory of God."<sup>1</sup>

#### D. SUMMARY - THE PLACE OF THE RESURRECTION

It is difficult to attempt to give a survey of a man's theology in a few pages. But this glimpse of the fundamental principles of the Barthian view, together with some of the leading emphases of this theology, should give a better understanding of the doctrine of the Resurrection.

In this chapter it has been observed that the chief distinction between Barth's theology and other theologies is his belief in "a qualitative difference between time and eternity." Two other related principles were found to be an emphasis on the Divine Initiative in Revelation, and Human perception. A number of the principal doctrines of Barth were briefly discussed. It was impossible in this chapter to do justice to all of Barth's beliefs, but there has been enough presented to enable one to study the Resurrection in its relation to Barth's system of theology.

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1. op. cit., p. 285

### The Doctrine of the Resurrection

In this section, the doctrine of the Resurrection will only be set forth briefly to show how important it is in all of Barth's thinking. In a review of the fundamental ideas of Barth's theology, it was seen that the revelation of God to man must be supremely important because it is the only possible way for man to know God. Accordingly, Barth stresses the Resurrection as being the theme of the Bible, which is one of the means of Revelation.<sup>1</sup> Barth says:

" 'Resurrection' is the word that, of all words in the Bible, wants to tell us in the strongest and most unambiguous way: God is not a thought, God is not a word, God is not a feeling. God is the Great One, the True One, the Real and Living One, who waits to meet us precisely at the point where our thoughts about Him end. The Resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the goal in the New Testament, which throws a stumbling-block in our path. ."<sup>2</sup>

Nor is the Resurrection only to be regarded as the supreme revelation of God, the transcendent God. It is also considered to be the very essence of Christianity. Again Barth writes:

"The resurrection has become the Biblical word which expresses in the strongest and most unambiguous way who Jesus is and what throughout His life, in word and deed, He really sought to express. Strike out this word with all that it means, and we are striking from Jesus what He really was. From this viewpoint we can understand why this word occupies the central point in the New Testament, why it is the word that contains in itself what the whole of Christianity really is."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 86
2. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 162
3. Ibid, pp. 164-5



These quotations from Barth will serve to show the importance which he places on the doctrine of the Resurrection. In the following chapters, the importance of the Resurrection will be shown in its relation to Barth's eschatological views, his doctrine of Redemption and Atonement, and its connection with the standard of Christian ethical conduct and life.

In the crisis in man's life, the Resurrection is seen to be the great factor involved. Barth proclaims:

"Jesus lives! That means that our thoughts have come to an end; they break off and through the crevice something awfully new, different wants to break into our lives as a flood of water through a breach in a dam so as to fundamentally alter it. . . His Resurrection is the turning point of our destiny."<sup>1</sup>

Barth places the doctrine of the Resurrection in the center of his system of theology. It is, from God's view-point, His Revelation to man; from man's view-point, the great turning-point or crisis in his life, the beginning of the change from life to death and to life again.

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1. op. cit., p. 166

### CHAPTER III

#### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

"The Lord indeed is risen  
From out His earthly prison,  
And, now, all kings above,  
He reigns for evermore —  
The Lord of Life, the King of Love,  
Life's loving Conqueror."

- John Oxenham

## CHAPTER III

### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

- A. THE INTRODUCTION
- B. THE RESURRECTION AS REVELATION-HISTORY
  - 1. The Problem of the Historical Jesus
  - 2. The Resurrection As History
  - 3. The Resurrection as an Event Beyond History
- C. THE REALITY AND TRUTH OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION
  - 1. The Resurrection as a Fact
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- D. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION
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- E. SUMMARY

## CHAPTER III

## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

## A. THE INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead will be considered, not in its relation to other aspects of the problem, but in itself. It is difficult to think of the Resurrection of Christ apart from its effect on the believer, and on other matters of the Christian faith. However, this discussion will be concerned primarily with Barth's view of Christ's Resurrection, its place in history, and its significance as the revelation of the "world of eternity" breaking into this "world of time".

## B. REVELATION-HISTORY

## 1. The Problem of the Historical Jesus

Barth's view of the Resurrection is related to the whole problem of the historical Jesus. In the last few decades, or in the present generation, there have been many books written about the Jesus of History. There has been intensive research into the ancient life and manners of the East during the time of our Lord. Archaeologists and historians have labored to bring Jesus nearer to us and to make Him better understood. McConnachie says:

"But to our surprise the more our historians and archaeologists have laboured to bring Jesus near, by these means, the more they have seemed to push him back into a past that is no more. This has been the bitter disappointment of our generation."<sup>1</sup>

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1. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 159

This statement is a good summary of the emphasis being placed on the discovery of the historical Jesus. Barth in his early studies came to see that this liberal Jesus of history was a "creation of our age, and not the Christ of the New Testament. The so-called Jesus of History who moves on the surface of history and psychology, is, like all that is historical, liable to decay, and shares in the uncertainty of all historical things."<sup>1</sup>

Barth has often been questioned as to his belief on the historical facts and actualities of the events in the life of Jesus. McConnachie says:

"He does believe in the Jesus of History, but for him the Jesus of History is — the Jesus of History. He does believe in the Virgin Birth. He does believe in the fact of the Resurrection. But in so far as they are historical events, they can only be perceived as historical events. They can never be made matter for faith."<sup>2</sup>

Herein is the great defect in the "Lives of Jesus" which have been so numerous recently. They fail to give central place to the event on which the New Testament witness lays its greatest stress, the Resurrection as the crowning Revelation of God to man.<sup>3</sup> Barth himself takes this position:

"However it may be with the historical Jesus, it is certain that Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God, belongs neither to history nor to psychology; for what is historical and psychological is as such corruptible. The Resurrection of Christ, or his second com-

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1. op. cit., p. 159

2. Ibid, p. 112

3. McConnachie: Barthian Theology, p. 78

ing, which is the same thing, is not a historical event; the historians may reassure themselves — unless, of course, they prefer to let it destroy their assurance — that our concern here is with an event which, though it is the only real happening in is not a real happening of history."<sup>1</sup>

Barth does regard Jesus as being a historical figure in the fact that he was manifest in history at a certain time. But He cannot be regarded wholly as a historical figure. There must be something more than the Jesus of History to make the Christ of God. Otherwise, he would be only another historical person, another of the great religious geniuses. This concept of Barth affects his whole idea of the Resurrection as belonging to what he terms "Urgeschichte", or "Revelation-History", and as such it falls under the category of Revelation rather than history.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The Resurrection As History

When Barth says that the Resurrection, and the entire life of Jesus, is not historical, he does not mean that such things never occurred. He uses historical in the sense of distinguishing between that which is of the world of time and that which is of the world of eternity. The Resurrection belongs not to the world of history and time, but to the world of God and eternity. The Resurrection is an event in history but it is not of history.<sup>3</sup> It is this

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1. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 90
2. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 112
3. Rolston: A Conservative Looks To Barth and Brunner, p. 196

entrance of the world of eternity into history which causes so much trouble to the historian. He can explain the details of an occurrence, but he cannot always answer the 'why' of it. The historian can tell that there was in the field of history such a thing as the Resurrection. But, he cannot, as a historian, discern the meaning behind it. It is "the entrance into history of that which is not historical which has given to history its meaning."<sup>1</sup>

The Resurrection is historical in that it is a movement from God to man which entered the field of history at a certain time. Its effects were visible to all, but only those who saw it through the eye of faith were able to comprehend its meaning. In speaking of the Resurrection in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Barth says:

"The Resurrection is therefore an occurrence in history, which took place outside the gates of Jerusalem in the year A.D.30, inasmuch as it there 'came to pass', was discovered and recognized. But inasmuch as the occurrence was conditioned by the Resurrection, in so far, that is, as it was not the 'coming to pass', or the discovery, or the recognition, which conditioned its necessity and appearance and revelation, the Resurrection is not an event in history at all."<sup>2</sup>

According to this statement, Barth regards the Resurrection as something beyond history. Yet, at the same time, it is revealed as an occurrence in history.

The complaint has been made that Barth depreciates the

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1. op. cit., p. 203

2. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 30

Jesus of History, and robs his human life of all its rich content. This may appear to be a just criticism in view of his emphasis on the Divine Christ. But, Barth's conviction is that the Word of God could not be understood by man except it be clothed in the garb of humanity. The Jesus of History is necessary as a basis of the witness of the early Church to the Death and Resurrection of Christ. McConnachie gives a good interpretation of Barth's view:

"Any attempt to separate the Jesus of History from the Christ of faith and describe the one apart from the other is untrue to the New Testament witness. The two are inseparable. There is no meaning, and there is no value in the Jesus of History unless He is confessed as the Christ of Faith. But this Christ of Faith is but cloud and mist, without actuality, apart from the fact of the Jesus of History, Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate."<sup>1</sup>

As greatly as the Resurrection in History is needed, still, it must not be conceived only as History. Barth says:

The Resurrection of Jesus from the dead cannot be regarded as "an event in history elongated so as still to remain an event in the midst of other events. The Resurrection is the non-historical relating of the whole historical life of Jesus to its origin in God."<sup>2</sup>

If the death of Christ, significant as it is, be considered only as a happening in history, it becomes only one more story of a devoted life, a heroic deed, and another martyr to a good cause. But, when the Cross is viewed in the light of the Resurrection, as a manifestation of the new world of

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1. McConnachie: Barthian Theology, p. 80-81
2. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 195



God breaking through into this world of time, then we see the final revelation of God Himself. It is not the fact of history that gives Revelation, not the empty tomb, but the great miracle of Resurrection as a super-temporal movement from above.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The Resurrection as an Event Beyond History

In the discussion of the Resurrection as history, it was seen that Barth places the greater emphasis on the Resurrection as Revelation, though still recognizing the need for the historical fact. The Resurrection must not, can not be understood merely as history. Barth comments thus:

"The conception of Resurrection, however, wholly forbids this method of procedure: Why seek ye the living among the dead? Why do ye set the truth of God on the plane and in the space where historical factors, such as 'Christendom', rise and fall, ebb and flow, are great and little? The conception of resurrection emerges with the conception of death, with the conception of the end of all historical things as such. The bodily resurrection of Christ stands over against His bodily crucifixion — and nowhere else can it be encountered. He is the Risen-Crucified One. He is the invisible new man in God. He is the end of the old man as such, for He has put behind Him death and the whole relativity of time-enveloped things. Raised from the dead he dieth no more — because His Resurrection is the non-historical event. Death no more hath dominion over Him."<sup>2</sup>

It might be argued that Barth refuses to accept the value of the historical Resurrection as viewed by Paul. In the Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul especially mentions

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1. McConnachie: op. cit., p. 82
2. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 205

the witnesses to Christ's Resurrection. He writes:

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James; then of all the apostles."<sup>1</sup>

Here it would seem that Paul were stressing the importance of the witnesses to the appearance of the Risen Christ.

Barth, however, argues that it was not Paul's purpose here to give a so-called "resurrection narrative" of the "historical proof of the resurrection." He is only telling here what had been reported to him, "for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received (verse 3)." A consideration of the contents of verses 3-7 brings out the verbal forms: "he died", "was buried", "rose again", "was seen". "In the series of facts thus described, it is easy to establish the actual substance of that which Paul himself received and delivered, and in doing so we should, at any rate, be in the presence of the so-called resurrection report, a narration of events."<sup>2</sup> Barth, on the contrary, goes on to explain that a closer consideration of the text reveals that these four facts named by Paul are not in any chronological succession, nor in juxtaposition. The thought that He died "for our sins" brings in an element which is

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1. I Corinthians 15:3-7

2. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 132

certainly not historical. The addition of the statement "according to the scriptures" to the phrases "he died" and "he rose again" is devoid of all meaning as historical proof if that be the intention. Then, the last phrase, "he was seen", branches out into a whole series of witnesses including Paul himself (verse 8). Barth interprets this as being, not an attempt to explain the words "he rose again", but the expression of Paul's own four-fold viewpoint at the end of the whole tradition which he has received, and in turn, has passed on to his readers.<sup>1</sup>

Barth considers the greatest objection to the historical argument in this section as the connection between the phrase "he rose again" and verse 13: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." He says:

"The whole meaning of verses 12-28 is, indeed this — that this historical fact, the resurrection of Jesus, stands and falls with the resurrection of the dead, generally. What kind of historical fact is that reality of which, or at any rate the perception of which, is bound up in the most express manner with the perception of a general truth, which by its nature cannot emerge in history, or, to speak more exactly, can only emerge on the confines of all history, on the confines of death? As little, at any rate, as this general truth is itself fact, for the reality of which the same man who wrote verses 12-19 will adduce historical proof in verses 3-7."<sup>2</sup>

Barth then proceeds to give what he thinks to be the proper interpretation of this portion of Paul's Epistle. He says in speaking of these four facts which stand out in verses

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1. op. cit., p. 132-3

2. Ibid, p. 133

3-7 that they are not a "monotonous chronological recital of things of the same kind." But, the first thing he observes is that they are:

"like two massive pillars: Christ died for our sins; and, Christ rose again on the third day; both being asserted, 'according to the scriptures', as historical facts, to be sure, but, pray, what kind of historical facts? This end, the end of our sins, which yet can only end when history ends, and this beginning, the beginning of a new life, which yet can only begin when and where a new world begins."<sup>1</sup>

The second thing which Barth observes is that "he was buried" is only an "unambiguous historical fact", which "makes the case of Christ equally doubtful with all human earthly things in general."<sup>2</sup> The tomb proves nothing at all, one way or another, when we consider that "Jesus died" and "he rose again." Even the empty tomb, which has been regarded as the last word on the basis of historical observation, cannot prove the fact of Christ's beginning and end. Barth says:

"The Gospels themselves do not make the least secret of the fact that the sight of the empty tomb and the sight of the risen Lord was something toto coelo different, and it is no glory for Christian theology that the idea should even have occurred to it of engaging in heated controversies. . . about this tomb, when it is as clear as noonday that upon this subject, whatever may be thought from the historical standpoint, the last word was said by . . . the concluding words of the gospel of Mark xvi. 8: 'for they were afraid', or if a more positive utterance is preferred, Luke xxiv. 5: 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?' . . . With more wisdom than was subsequently shown, the Gospels themselves drew no positive conclusions whatever from that which was thus

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1. op. cit., p. 134
2. Ibid, p. 134

to be seen there."1

Barth continues with the thought that Paul in his account of the Resurrection refrains altogether from relating what is to be seen at the tomb. Sufficient for him are the words "he was buried" and, finally, "he appeared."2 A third thing that Paul had to say was "he appeared", with no further need to mention the tomb. "He who died for our sins and rose again on the third day, He, the crucified and risen Lord, appeared, the boundary of history and of mankind, the end and the beginning in one."3

As a result of this study of the portion of Paul's letter to the Corinthians, it appears that Barth does not consider this to be an argument favorable to the Resurrection as history. Indeed, the central thing to Paul is the fact that Christ lives, and this is to be understood "only as the witness of God's revelation, as the really genuine Easter gospel, within the very Church of Christ."4

At some length, we have attempted to show that Barth, while believing in the Resurrection as a historical event, still holds the true significance to be in the category of Revelation. Consequently, we have his term "Urgeschichte" or "Revelation-History" to describe the Resurrection as the

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1. op. cit., p. 136
2. Ibid, p. 137
3. Ibid., p. 139
4. Ibid., p. 140

act of God "which no eye hath seen nor ear heard." It is to be considered, not on the historical side, but in its relation to the transcendent, unknown God.<sup>1</sup>

In summary of the whole problem of the Resurrection as Revelation-History, McConnachie writes:

"Apart from them (the Death and Resurrection of Jesus), the historical Jesus is a problem, a paradox, a scandalon, a great Incognito. The Synoptic accounts of Him are completely unintelligible without Bengel's interpretation - spirant resurrectionem. Not a line of the Synoptics is to be understood without the Cross. Even the Cross, looked at from a human and historical standpoint, appears as one of those offerings of life, as of a mother at the birth of a child, or of a doctor or missionary, or a soldier in his calling, which interest us as much or as little as any other historical event. But bring the event into relation with the unknown God, and it becomes a communication of God to men concerning Himself, and His relation to us - a Word of God - the last word on man. So with the Resurrection. Look at it as an historical fact - as something which took place before the gates of Jerusalem - and it is open to all sorts of hypotheses, subjective and objective. But place it in the category of Revelation, as an act of God, and the Resurrection becomes a great wonder, the miracle 'direct from above', the breaking through of the new world out of the unknown dimension - into the known world." (Die Auferstehung der Toten, p.34 and 86, published, 1924) 2

This is a long quotation, but it very thoroughly sums up the discussion on the Resurrection as an occurrence beyond the historical event, and in the field of Revelation.

### C. THE REALITY AND TRUTH OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

It has been made plain that Barth views the Resurrection as existing in the category of Revelation. But this

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1. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 155
2. Ibid., pp. 155-6

makes it necessary that man be able to receive the Revelation. Barth thinks of man's perception of Revelation as coming entirely by faith.

### 1. The Resurrection as a Fact

In the previous section, we observed that Barth does believe in the Resurrection as an occurrence in history.<sup>1</sup>

In an Easter sermon, "Jesus Is Victor", Barth closes thus:

"God will have done with . . . the enigma of our unbelief. He has already done with it. For the resurrection is not simply one word, one idea, a program. Resurrection is fact. Resurrection has happened. The contradiction (of life and death) is broken. The life of man has already become the stage of the divine triumphant mercy. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead."<sup>2</sup>

Again in another sermon, "He Himself", Barth makes some very choice statements about this risen Christ:

"They killed Him on the Cross, but just there that broke forth in great freedom and power which always was breaking forth in every word and deed of Jesus. There the truth was really manifested which cannot be called a new human thought about God, which was extinguished when the messenger died. There was Easter. There He, God Himself, stood before the eyes of those timorous disciples - He in all reality, the Living One, who broke forth out of death, the resurrected One."<sup>3</sup>

Barth stresses the importance Paul places on the fact of the Resurrection in these words:

"Jesus lives! He is raised, He is truly risen, not only does His spirit continue to live somewhere beyond death; 'He Himself', the whole Jesus has come forth from the dead as the new man of God."<sup>4</sup>

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1. c.f. Above, pp. 39-40
2. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 157
3. Ibid., p. 164
4. Ibid., p. 165-6

To Barth, the reality of the Resurrection is something beyond human thinking. It is entirely related to the transcendence of God. This fact is well expressed thus:

"As far as the resurrection is concerned it is not a matter of who you are, what you think or are able to do, but it is a matter of God, He Himself, and what He is, what He can think and is able to do. . . Jesus never made any distinction between the great and the small. When He laid His hand upon a child and as He died on the cross, both times, it meant the same thing! God must step into the centrum, God must become great in the life of man - God, God Himself, God alone."<sup>1</sup>

Such statements from Barth will suffice to show that he believes in the Resurrection as a fact in history and in Revelation, and this the most important fact in his theology.

## 2. The Necessity for Faith

Barth believes in the Resurrection, but he also believes that it is absolutely necessary that this fact be perceived through the eyes of faith. It was not everyone who saw the Risen Christ, but only those who were believers. The same was true before the Resurrection. All could see Jesus "after the flesh", but it was only a few of His contemporaries who were able to see in Him the Son of God.<sup>2</sup> Christ will always be the Jesus of History, and nothing more, to those who do not believe. "Men who have never surrendered to Christ and have never seen Him as the Son of God are puzzled to explain Christ."<sup>3</sup> Faith and obedience are necessary.

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1. op. cit., p. 169-70
2. Rolston: op. cit., p. 112
3. Ibid., p. 113



Brunner is of the same opinion as Barth when he says:

"Thus the historical appearance of the human personality of Jesus is not, as such, revelation; it is revelation only in so far as in this historical, human personality the eternal Son of God is recognized. The incognito of his historical appearance can be pierced only by the eye of faith. The Christ according to the spirit who must be discerned in the Christ according to the flesh, the eternal Son of God who must be seen by faith as the mystery of the man Jesus, is the Incarnate Word of God."<sup>1</sup>

In the Resurrection life of Christ, the World of God was made manifest to the world of men, but this manifestation could only be seen by believers through faith. The scribes and Pharisees were able to see the outward signs, the manifestation of power, and even the empty tomb, but they could not see the Risen Lord.<sup>2</sup>

Brunner regards all attempts to answer difficult questions in theology today, apart from faith and obedience, as the result of taking too much the position as a mere spectator. He says that the question "How can you prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the incarnate Word?" is the question of the spectator par excellence.<sup>3</sup> Such questions cannot be decided by history, they are questions of faith.<sup>4</sup>

Brunner says:

"the historian can see only what St. Paul calls 'Christ according to the flesh,' the human incognito of the Christ. The real Christ is not visible to the historian's eye. To see the revelation of God in Christ is

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1. Brunner: The Theology of Crisis, p. 35
2. Rolston: op. cit., p. 113
3. Brunner: op. cit., p. 38
4. Ibid., p. 41

a gracious privilege of faith, of the believer and not of the historian; or metaphysically speaking, the organ with which Christ is apprehended is not the historian's scientific eye but the spiritual eye of the believer."<sup>1</sup>

This means that it is only the believer who can hear the message which results from the world of eternity breaking through into the world of time. The unbeliever can witness the manifestation, but is unable to understand the inner meaning. This principle is applied very well to the stories of the appearance of the Resurrected Christ. Rolston says that there is no evidence given in the New Testament to show that the Risen Christ manifested Himself to those who were not believers. To illustrate this principle he gives the incident of Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus, or a similar occurrence in the stoning of Stephen. In each case, those standing by did not see the Risen Christ, but only Paul and Stephen. Barth regards revelation as having two aspects - a certain outward form, visible to all, and an "inner meaning" which is visible only to the eye of faith.<sup>2</sup>

This discussion of the necessity for the element of faith in revelation and in respect to the Resurrection is closely connected with Barth's view of Revelation-History. It is only as the believer looks to the Christ who was before history and beyond history that he will apprehend God's revelation of Himself. Lowrie says:

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1. op. cit., p. 42

2. Rolston: op. cit., pp. 186-188

"In the Dogmatics . . . too, the historical Jesus is the point where eternity touches time tangentially; but the significance of that point can be apprehended only by discerning whence that tangential line came and whither it goes. For this reason Barth dwells predominantly upon the Source, which is beyond the birth; and upon the End, the Resurrection, which is beyond the death - both of them then entirely beyond history. Barth would be the last to deny that this miracle defies the impossibility of bridging the distance which divides time and eternity. He would say that only God can defy it, God alone. There is a way from God to man."<sup>1</sup>

This way is to be found, not in the historical Jesus, but in the Resurrected Christ; not by outward sight, but by an inward seeing of faith. "Beyond the death of the Man Christ Jesus, as Barth says, lies the place, from which the light falls on Him which makes Him to be the Revelation of God the Father."<sup>2</sup> To Barth, then, we conclude, the Resurrection was a reality, the inner meaning of which was visible only in the realm of revelation, in which Paul too was able to say that "last of all, he was seen of me also."<sup>3</sup> Barth says that "His appearance was comprehensible only as revelation, and without this was not comprehensible at all."<sup>4</sup>

### 3. The Founding of the Church

It might well be said that Barth regards the foundation of the Christian Church to be the result of the fact of the Resurrection together with the interpretation of this fact through the faith of the believer. There is a

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1. Lowrie: Theology of Crisis, p. 143
2. McConnachie: Barthian Theology, p. 78 (Dogmatics, p. 407)
3. I Corinthians 15:8
4. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 139

most intimate relationship existing between the Resurrection and the beginning of the Early Church. Barth interprets Paul's narration of the appearances of the Risen Lord in I Corinthians 15:5-7 as an argument for the existence of the Church. It has been previously shown that Barth does not interpret this section as a proof of the Resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

Rather than this, he says that Paul:

"conjures up this cloud of witnesses, not to confirm the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, not for that purpose at all, but to confirm that the foundation of the Church, so far as the eye can see, can be traced back to nothing else than appearances of the risen Christ."<sup>2</sup>

Barth argues that the Corinthians needed no proof of the Resurrection of Christ because they did not doubt that. Paul was here emphasizing the necessity for their belief in the Resurrection of the dead because it is inseparably connected with the belief in Christ's Resurrection.<sup>3</sup> Doubt of the whole resurrection belief was to make void the very basis of faith on which the Christian Church had been built. If Christ is not risen, then vain is all the faith of the Church and vain is all preaching.<sup>4</sup> Take away the Resurrection and the distinctive note of the Christian Church is removed. It then becomes as other religions, a pretty system

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1. c.f. Above, p. 45 ff.

2. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 143

3. Ibid., p. 116

4. Ibid., p. 123

of thought, another way of talking about God.<sup>1</sup>

In his book on the Resurrection of the Dead, Barth devotes a section to the Resurrection Gospel as the Foundation of the Church.<sup>2</sup> The essence of this discussion is contained in the thought that the belief in the Resurrection Gospel as preached to the Corinthians was the basis for the whole beginning of the Church. Barth says, "Of Christianity nothing too critical can be said. . . of the power of the resurrection which stands behind Christianity, nothing too positive."<sup>3</sup> Paul plainly and boldly proclaims the necessity of belief in the Resurrection within the Church. Perhaps its importance can be made most evident by a statement of what the Church or Christianity would be without the Resurrection. Barth says that "Christianity without resurrection . . . is a lie and a deceit, not because it is still without this article of faith, but because it is in itself an illusion, a fiction."<sup>4</sup>

The existence of the Christian Church must be explained in some way. The scribes and Pharisees were well aware of the remarkable transformation that had come over the followers of Christ. They could accept the explanation given of the Risen Christ, or they could seek another. To accept the Resurrection would mean accepting the faith, and this they

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1. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 165
2. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, pp. 125-148
3. Ibid., p. 127
4. Ibid., p. 153

would not do. In vain they sought for some other adequate explanation of the power of the new movement, and the growth of the Christian following. Because they were unable to see the Risen Christ back of the Church, they were unable to understand the source of its power.<sup>1</sup>

#### D. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

Much of the significance of the Resurrection has been discussed as God's revelation to man. Its importance in relation to the Christian life and the life after death will be discussed in subsequent chapters. In this section, the Resurrection will be dealt with in its significance as revealing the Father's Glory, its place in the "Theology of Crisis", and its relation to the Crucifixion as a solution of God for man's need.

##### 1. A Manifestation of God's Glory and Power

Barth says that "Resurrection - the Easter message - means the sovereignty of God. Resurrection, the sovereignty of God, is the purport of the life of Jesus from the first day of his coming."<sup>2</sup> Jesus came as the bearer of divine power and must reign until all things are in subjection to Him. Until then the Kingdom of God, or "God all in all" is not fully come.<sup>3</sup> In the present we are looking forward to the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. This is connected

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1. Rolston: op. cit., p. 114

2. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 88

3. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 170

with the Resurrection and the Parusia, which are, in Barth's thinking, both revelations of that which shall be fulfilled but can now only be grasped as a promise. Barth says:

" Christ's Parusia is nothing different, second next to His Resurrection, only the definite coming-to-the-surface of the same subterranean stream which in revelation for the first time became perceptible in time, the fulfilment of that which in time can only be grasped as a promise."<sup>1</sup>

Barth considers the Resurrection as the revelation of the glory of another world which is revealed in the Resurrection alone. It is a world that will meet us at the coming of the Kingdom of God, when all things have been made subject to Him, and the Kingdom of Christ returned to the Father.<sup>2</sup>

Closely connected with the sovereignty of God is the thought of eternity. To Barth, the Resurrection means eternity. It is not just one temporal occurrence among others.<sup>3</sup> It has been discussed as an event in history but not to be interpreted as history. It is the revelation of a new world, the world of eternity breaking into the world of time. It is a world of a new quality and kind.<sup>4</sup> It reveals a world where death does not maintain. Death is overcome by the power and glory of God, the power of the Resurrection. In the Commentary to the Romans, Barth says: "Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father; impossibility

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1. op. cit., p. 167

2. Ibid., p. 165

3. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 89

4. Ibid., p. 90

becomes possibility."1 The Resurrection of Christ enables man to see the glory of God which lies beyond death. It is a glimpse into another world which is far different from this world of time where death is the one certainty. "The power of the Resurrection," says Barth, "is the knowledge of the new man, by which we know God, or rather, are known of Him. Grace is the power of the Resurrection."2 It is God's grace revealed to man. It is God's glory revealed to man, giving him a glimpse of a world where he may see God face to face. "In Christ God has stepped forth from behind the veil of His glory and assumed humanity."3 This is the meaning of Easter, of the Resurrection.

## 2. Meeting Man's Need

The Resurrection as an act in itself, even to reveal the glory of God, would not be enough. It must be connected with man whom Christ came to save. The Resurrection is God's answer to man's need. In this section, the discussion will center more on the aspect of God's solution of man's need from the Divine standpoint. In a later section, the solution will be discussed from man's point of view.

### a. God's recognition of man's need and condition.

Barth says that people today are expecting the Christian minister to point them to " what is on the farther

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1. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 195
2. Ibid, p. 206
3. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 187-8



edge of living - God."1 They do not need help so much as to how to live, but how to die. Life seems to make sense, but death makes it all a mystery. "Man is a riddle and nothing else, and his universe, be it ever so vividly seen and felt, is a question,"(2) but from God's point of view, man is in need not because he cannot understand life, but because he is in sin and revolting against God. Barth regards pride as the greatest sin, the sin of man putting himself in the place of God. Barth says, concerning this sin:

"Sin is a theft from God. This theft becomes perceptible by us as that daring stepping-across the death-line put before us, as that forgetting of God's invisibility, as that deifying of man and humanizing of God in the shape of erecting of the romantic immediacy - the Not-God, the God of this world, by which we do not think that we must die."3

True to the Barthian principle of a qualitative difference between man and God, Barth thinks of sin as the act of man whereby he relates "himself(to God) in monstrous ignoring of the distance to which it is impossible for him to relate himself, because God is God, and would be no longer God if such a self-relation of man to Him could take place. Man makes God a thing among other things in His world."4 This pride blinds him even to his own sin and need of God. Much could be said of Barth's attitude toward man's need, but this will suffice to show the need for a solution by God.

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1. Barth: Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 189
2. Ibid., p. 197
3. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 146( quoted from Hoyle:
4. Ibid., p. 226 (Teaching of Karl Barth, pp. 134-5)

b. The solution to man's need or condition.

Barth has two ideas in his term "crisis". It means:

"The supreme law of this world, the hint of the law-giver, who as such is above His law; it is also the turning-point to the better, . . . the landmark of Divine wrath and the landmark of approaching Divine deliverance."<sup>1</sup>

So, in man's crisis, God has offered a solution through the Revelation of Himself to man.

To Barth, Redemption, Salvation, and the Atonement are all closely connected with Revelation. In his Dogmatics, Barth is quoted by Lowrie as saying:

"In its essential significance Revelation is identical with Atonement. In the fact that the Word of God is uttered to man, it accomplishes in time the abolition of the antithesis between God and man, of the opposition in which man finds himself with respect to God and himself. To say that God reveals himself, means that he reveals himself as the Redeemer who atones. He makes a man a question to himself, and he answers the question. . . The Atonement . . . is not a matter of course, it is the miracle which the Church contemplates as the fact upon which it is grounded."<sup>2</sup>

This miracle is the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Lowrie says that "it is characteristic of the Barthian Theology that it thinks predominantly of the Mediator as Revealer."<sup>3</sup> Barth says:

"Redemption is not a work that you can do, not a way that you can travel, not a power that you can use. Redemption comes, and comes from an altogether different side, it comes really and in truth from God Himself. It comes from thence where you are at your ex-

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1. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 147
2. Lowrie: Theology of Crisis, p. 139 (Barth: Dogmatics, p. 257)
3. Ibid., p. 152

tremity, where you are and have nothing any more, and from thence where you are lost. There God will glorify himself through you. There resurrection and life are waiting."<sup>1</sup>

Redemption, of which Barth speaks, is the result of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. Barth does not try to distinguish between these two great events. Each without the other loses its significance. He says:

"Over against the crucified Jesus stands the Risen Lord. The visible significance of His life cannot be understood apart from the disclosure and revelation of the invisible glorification of the Father. This is the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead."<sup>2</sup>

Barth does not claim to thoroughly understand the problem of the Atonement. That would be contrary to his idea of the limitation of human knowledge. Even in Revelation, God is thought of as veiling Himself even while revealing Himself.<sup>3</sup> Sufficient for us is the knowledge that Christ is the propitiation made once for all, and that we are sacrificed with Him.<sup>4</sup> The Cross is the destruction of man and stands between the old man and the new.<sup>5</sup> Even as Jesus had to face Calvary before Easter dawned, so man, to receive the new life offered in Christ, must also face the Cross.<sup>6</sup> This means the complete destruction of all that is human, it is man's annihilation as man. Then comes Resurrection.

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1. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p.120
2. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p.203
3. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 157
4. Barth: The Word of God, p. 83
5. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 123
6. Ibid., p. 252

## E. THE SUMMARY

Barth regards the Resurrection as an actual occurrence in history. As such, it was visible to all. But, there is a sense in which the Resurrection is not an event in history. Its inner meaning and significance can only be seen by faith. It is an event in history, but its great significance lies in the fact that it is also in the realm of revelation. So Barth regards it as Revelation-History.

The fact of the Resurrection was witnessed by numerous contemporaries of Jesus. But the true reality of the Resurrection can be witnessed by faith alone. Then Jesus becomes the Risen Christ, the Son of God. The Resurrection in history can be explained away. But the Resurrected Christ as the power of the Christian Church cannot be so easily discarded.

The significance of the Resurrection is seen in the manifestation of the Glory of God, and the insight into the new world. It is the breaking through of eternity into the world of time. Life is revealed as overcoming death. Hope of the Coming Kingdom of God is created. The great significance of the Resurrection is its solution to the problem of sin. It is the revelation of a Redeemer, of Atonement and Salvation.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESURRECTION IN THE LIFE OF MAN

He Rose!

And with Him hope arose, and life and light.  
Men said, "Not Christ but death died yesternight."  
And joy and truth and all things virtuous  
Rose when He rose.

- Author Unknown

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RESURRECTION IN THE LIFE OF MAN

#### A. INTRODUCTION

#### B. THE RESURRECTION GIVES LIFE

1. Man is Dead in Sin
2. Man is unable to help himself
3. From Death to Life in Christ's Resurrection
4. God's Way of Grace
5. Summary and Conclusion

#### C. THE RESURRECTION GIVES A BASIS OF CONDUCT IN LIFE

1. The Nature of the Christian Life
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#### D. THE RESURRECTION GIVES HOPE AND MEANING TO LIFE

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#### E. SUMMARY

## CHAPTER IV

## THE RESURRECTION IN THE LIFE OF MAN

## A. INTRODUCTION

Barth says that his system of theology arose from what he felt to be a "need and promise of Christian preaching."<sup>1</sup> As a minister, he wanted to be able to speak to his people in such a way as to solve the riddles with which they were constantly faced. He admits that he has not been altogether successful in this, but the quest has resulted in his system of theology. Always his theological thinking is related to his desire to be a better minister to his people. It is not surprising then, that in his doctrine of the Resurrection, Barth stresses the need for us to be risen with Christ. The Resurrection is not to be merely an interesting doctrine for theological disputes, but a thing of vital concern for all. Because of this emphasis on the resurrected life of the believer, this chapter will deal with the Resurrection of Christ as it is related to the Christian life.

## B. THE RESURRECTION GIVES LIFE

The death and resurrection of Christ is often used as an analogy of the Christian life. Man is dead in sin, but by crucifying himself and dying to sin with Christ, he is also raised with Christ. Barth concludes one of his sermons,

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1. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 100

"The Great 'But'", with the appeal: "Do not let anyone say, 'I can not hear.' Jesus has spoken, even to our life: I am the resurrection and the life!"<sup>1</sup>

1. Man is dead in sin.

Barth firmly believes in the total sinfulness and depravity of man in his own nature. Without the resurrected life, he is lost and dead in sin. The proclamation of the love of God may cause him to rejoice in its message, but it is not enough. In a sermon, "Jesus is Victor", Barth says:

"We will gladly let anyone tell us about the love of God; we rejoice when it is ardently proclaimed to us. But do we not see that all this is meaningless patter if we are not at the same time shocked as by a crash of lightning with a sense of the depth of our lost condition to which the love of God had to stoop? We do not like to see that we are deeply imprisoned, . . . a people who live in the shadow and darkness of death; that this is true and proclaimed to us in, with and under the word 'resurrection' . . . That is the darkness in the clear word 'resurrection'."<sup>2</sup>

Man without the resurrection is entirely unrighteous in his relation to God. He thinks to relate himself to God and thus makes the God in whom he believes to be only a type of self-adoration and praise.<sup>3</sup> The God whom he then worships is un-Godly and man's relationship entirely unrighteous.

Not only is man dead in sin and unrighteousness, but he also faces death as the final reality in life. Wherever the word "resurrection" is to be heard and understood, the

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1. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 23
2. Ibid., p. 150
3. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 44



word "death" must first be heard and perceived.<sup>1</sup> Barth says:

"It (death) must be seen and understood that in the midst of life, even in blooming and healthy life, there is a yawning chasm, a deep pit that can not be filled by any art or power of man. Only one word is sufficient to cover this chasm, to fill this pit, and that is the word: 'Jesus is victor!' - the word 'resurrection.' First of all, one must see and realize that all the paths of life upon which we walk are the same, now or at any later time, in that they all lead to the same edge of the precipice, over which there is no bridge man can build in any case, but which in incomprehensible fashion has been made manifest in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Who would partake in this resurrection, must first have seen this chasm, have discovered this pit."<sup>2</sup>

From man's viewpoint, death is the last thing that he can see and understand. Life may be on the other side, but it can not be comprehended apart from the life in God as manifested in the Resurrection.<sup>3</sup> So, to Barth, death is the extremity of man, and the final thing that can be said of him.

## 2. Man is unable to help himself.

If man were only capable of doing something for himself to improve his situation, it would be much less humiliating. But, Barth takes the stand that man is altogether helpless in the face of sin and death. The victory can in no way issue from man. It must rest entirely with God.<sup>4</sup> This position taken by Barth is the cause for his break with

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1. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 151
2. Ibid., p. 151
3. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 20
4. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 151

the philosophy of Schleiermacher.\* To Barth there is not the least possibility of man's saving himself. He is beyond all hope.<sup>1</sup> Barth says that man's whole life here is stamped with the indelible mark of death, and a recognition of this fact is the point where man accepts either the "No" of death or the "Yes" of God and of life.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. From Death To Life in Christ's Resurrection.

Barth is pessimistic concerning the ability of man to deliver himself from his hopeless condition. But, he is as much an optimist when it comes to portraying God as the all-sufficient answer to man's need. When man realizes his own inability, then God can begin to speak and act. Where man finds only doom and failure, God's life breaks through the gloom of death and provides the answer to sin and human depravity. Paul says: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above."<sup>3</sup> Barth says this

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\*c.f. Barth: Word of God and the Word of Man, pp. 195-197

Barth claims that his ancestral line in theology "runs back through Kirkegaard to Luther and Calvin, and so to Paul and Jeremiah." He continues, "And to leave nothing unsaid, I might explicitly point out that this ancestral line - which I commend to you - does not include Schleiermacher. With all due respect to the genius shown in his work, I can not consider Schleiermacher a good teacher in the realm of theology because so far as I can see, he is disastrously dim-sighted in regard to the fact that man is not only in need but beyond all hope of saving himself. ."

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1. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 195
2. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 250-51
3. Colossians 3:1

means, not looking for things which you do not possess, but a search which begins with finding. It is finding that Christ lives, that sins are forgiven, that God is victorious. To be raised with Christ means "to be simply human here below; but to be a human being to whom the word has been said—the word which eye has not seen, nor ear heard. . .the word of things that are above which God has prepared for them who love Him. ."<sup>1</sup>

Barth regards the Resurrection as being not progress or evolution, nor even enlightenment. It is a call from heaven, the miracle of God which leads from death to life. It is His word which says to man "Rise up! You are dead, but I will give you life."<sup>2</sup> Man destined to his fate can do nothing. All he can do is admit the fact of sin, and trust to God's saving intervention and mercy. Resurrection is God's creation-word, His life-word. It means redemption and forgiveness of sins, yea more, it means the end of the old man of sin. In his Commentary on Romans, Barth says:

"In the Resurrection, the full seriousness and energy of the veritable negation, of our being buried, are displayed and ratified. By the creation of the new man, the truth of the redemption which Christ effected is made known by our existence in Him; our existence in Adam is manifestly dissolved. The void brought in-to being by the death of Christ is filled with the new life which is the power of the Resurrection."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 189
2. Ibid., p. 149
3. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 195

Again he says:

"We believe that Christ died in our place and that therefore we died with him. We believe in that eternal existence of ours which is grounded upon the knowledge of death, upon the resurrection, upon God. We believe that we shall also live with him, that we are the invisible subject of the futurum resurrectionis."<sup>1</sup>

Barth does not limit the term 'future' entirely to the future as an event in time. It is rather thought of as embracing all life - past, present, and future, so that it is not to be a waiting for something, but the life in which sin has no dominion over the individual.<sup>2</sup> Christ, by his resurrection from the dead, has been manifested as the new man in God. "He is the end of the old man as such, for He has put behind Him death and the whole relativity of historical and time-enveloped things."<sup>3</sup> Barth says that the new life which we enjoy through Christ's Resurrection cannot be "extinguished or revoked. By faith we dare to make God's knowledge of man our own, and to know this life, the risen life of Jesus, to be our life - in which we shall live with Him."<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. God's Way of Grace

We have observed that the Crucifixion, to Barth, is the act whereby Christ proclaims redemption and forgiveness of sin. His death signifies the end of the life which can and must die, and the final victory over sin. Since the order

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1. op. cit., p. 202
2. Ibid., p. 223
3. Ibid., p. 205
4. Ibid., p. 205

of death-resurrection, sin-grace cannot be reversed, and since Christ dieth no more, then the man who lives unto God in Christ is dead to sin. In Christ's Resurrection, there is revealed the life of the new man. It is in this life that we live under grace and in the will of God.<sup>1</sup> Barth writes in his Commentary on Romans:

"Grace is the power of the Resurrection because it is the power of death, the power, that is, of the man who has passed from death to life, who has once again found himself because he has lost himself in God and in God alone."<sup>2</sup>

God's grace is not dependent upon man's worthiness. It comes to the man who can only claim that he is weary and under a heavy burden. Barth says that God

"comes into our lives when the only thing that remains to be said about us is that which can be said by God: 'forgiven!'. . . Only when we labor and are heavy laden do we know Him, Who is . . . the redeemer of the world."<sup>3</sup>

Barth even goes so far as to say that man is not only unworthy of God's grace, but his salvation must come through his complete ruin. This he meets at the Cross. But, beyond the Cross is the new man of the Resurrection, saved by grace. He is wholly different, more than just the "old man" made better and changed. The old has disappeared.<sup>4</sup>

#### 5. Summary and Conclusion

The Resurrection gives life to the man who is dead in

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1. op. cit., p. 206
2. Ibid., p. 213
3. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 77
4. Ibid., p. 123-4

sin and unrighteousness. It is the expression of God's grace to man. It means that man is helpless and that his help must come from God. The Resurrection is the manifestation of:

"the strange new world of grace breaking in from another dimension upon the world of the flesh. The Cross is the No of God on human sin. The Resurrection is God's Yes, which can only be heard and understood by the soul which has accepted the No. But in accepting the No we are sure of the redeeming Yes. In being ready to die we are given the new life of the Resurrection. In the word 'Resurrection' lies for Barth the whole of Christianity. The Resurrection is the supreme Revelation, the coming through of God to us from the other side, the new world of which we can only say that it is totaliter aliter."<sup>1</sup>

Barth says that grace, as seen in the teaching of the forgiveness of sins, is outside of all history, beyond proof, understood as a promise, as a movement toward the Perfectly Other - this is the meaning of Resurrection and Easter.<sup>2</sup>

### C. THE RESURRECTION GIVES A BASIS OF CONDUCT IN LIFE

Barth, like the Apostle Paul, has much to say on the question of Christian living. There are many questions to be answered on this problem. What is to be the standard of ethics and social life in a world where standards are constantly changing? Barth devotes much attention to the discussion of the ethical problem alone. Our interest here lies in the life and conduct of the Christian, particularly as it is affected by the Resurrection .

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1. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 110
2. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 92

## 1. The Nature of the Christian Life

When Barth speaks of the Christian in society, he is not thinking of a certain group of people known as Christians. To him, the Christian (singular) is the Christ. He writes:

"The Christian is that within us which is not ourself but Christ in us. . . not a psychic condition, an affection of the mind, a mental lapse, or anything of the sort, but a presupposition of life.(1). . . There is in us, over us, behind us, and beyond us a consciousness of the meaning of life, a memory of our origin, a turning to the Lord of the universe, a critical No and a creative Yes in regard to all the content of our thought, a facing away from the old and toward the new age - whose sign and fulfilment is the cross."2

We remember that Barth regards the Cross as being meaningless apart from the Resurrection. The Christian, then, is one whose life is in God, and in whose life Christ dwells through the power of the Resurrection.

The Christian life is predominantly a life of hope, of living with the thought of the future in mind. It is living in this world, but looking forward to the coming world. "There is an expectation of the creature waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. . ."3 Barth has much to say of the Christian life as a life of Hope in the future redemption. It enables man to endure sufferings and tribulation in this life. "Paul knows well what he is doing

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1. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 273
2. Ibid., p. 274
3. Ibid., p. 317

when he says that, in proclaiming the Gospel, he brings men hope, a great hope, full of joy, the hope beyond all other hope, the hope of the glory of God."<sup>1</sup> The Christian lives in the hope that one day he will share in the divine nature as a child of God.

The life of the Christian is also a life lived through faith. The fact that he is a new man and justified before God is nothing less than a confession that his new relationship is dependent upon the fear of the Lord and the power of the Resurrection.<sup>2</sup> Barth says that man must perceive that the old world in which he lives is a completely closed circle from which there is no means of escape. When this has been perceived, he is able to recognize also, in the light of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the power and meaning of the Coming Day: the Day of the New World and of the New Man.<sup>3</sup>

The important thing to observe concerning the conduct and life of the Christian is this: it is a life in which Christ dwells, it is a life lived in the hope of another world, and it is a life lived by faith in the Resurrection.

## 2. The Christian life is obedience

The life of the Christian is to be a life of grace.

Barth gives this definition of grace:

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1. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 153
2. Ibid., p. 164
3. Ibid., p. 187



"Grace is the knowledge of the will of God and as such it is the willing of the will of God. It is the power of the Resurrection: the knowledge that men are known of God, the consciousness that their existence is begotten of God, that it moves and rests in Him, and that it is beyond all concrete things, beyond the being and course of the world."<sup>1</sup>

Grace, then, is to be the existence of the new man in God. As this is brought about by the Resurrection, it is most important that the believer, having passed from death into life, should will to do the will of God.

This life of grace is connected, in Barth's thinking, to the resurrection of the dead. In this body, man cannot be entirely free from sin. But, being crucified with Christ, sin is no longer the dominant factor, nor even the characteristic factor in the life of the body.<sup>2</sup> Barth comments:

"Only in so far as grace is the power of the Resurrection is it power unto obedience. Grace is the power of knowledge by which we recognize that we are the subject of the *futurum resurrectionis*, the power of that hazard whereby we dare to reckon our existence as the existence of the new man, the power of the transformation whereby we pass from 'life' to death and from 'death' to life. Under grace we are at God's disposal to do what He wills with our members."<sup>3</sup>

Recognizing the fact that he is henceforth to be considered as God's possession, man lives a life of obedience to Him. All of life is to be lived so as to glorify God, as though man were already equipped with incorruption. This seems to be an impossibility, but Barth reminds us that:

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1. op. cit., p. 207
2. Ibid., p. 209
3. Ibid., p. 211

"Only because of the power of obedience in which we stand are we able to comprehend and lay hold of the possibility of the impossibility. And this power is the power of the Resurrection."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The 'Man in Christ' is Released from the Law

Through the death of the body, in Christ's death, man is freed from the bondage of the law. But he lives in the new man under grace. The Jesus of History died on Golgotha that the Son of God, the Christ might be made alive.<sup>2</sup> Having been raised with Christ, the "new man" obeys the "categorical imperative", not as the religious man, but the imperative of God as a man under grace, as a man who has passed from death into life. The power of obedience comes from the power of Christ's Resurrection.<sup>3</sup> The man who thus lives in obedience bears fruit unto sanctification. Apart from the Resurrection, man produces only fruit unto death.<sup>4</sup>

But, if through the Resurrection, man is released from the Law, what value is the Law? Barth does not say that we can get along without the Law today. It is still needed for the man who has not been "raised with Christ." Barth places the Law alongside the Gospel, as "equally commanding and necessary." Life under the Law is still necessary for those who are not living in Christ under the law of grace.

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1. op. cit., p. 228
2. Ibid., p. 233
3. Ibid., p. 234
4. Ibid., p. 235

The Law must remain as the tutor to lead the outsider, the man of the street, to Christ.<sup>1</sup> The man who has died to the Law serves in newness of spirit rather than in the oldness of the letter. This newness of the spirit goes beyond all of the known possibilities of the Law and thus is no longer in bondage to the Law.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. The Basis of Christian Ethics

In the light of the previous discussion, it is plain to see why Barth says that the basis of all Christian ethics must lie in the forgiveness of sins and justification by faith. Barth says that Paul and Luther and Calvin meant Jesus Christ when they spoke of solving the ethical problem. This certainty was not to be man's certainty, but God's. And the solution was certain because salvation is certain. Salvation is certain because it comes from above, from the "New Man", bringing "the new heaven and the new earth, the Kingdom of God."<sup>3</sup> Because Jesus was crucified, dead, buried, and has risen from the dead, Paul, and others, "dared to speak of a solution to the ethical problem."<sup>4</sup>

Barth looks at the ethical problem as being a crisis of man, a "sickness of man unto death."<sup>5</sup> It is a cardinal question in man's life, and Barth is much interested in its

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1. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 216
2. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 239-40
3. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 180
4. Ibid., p. 181
5. Ibid., p. 151

solution. Christian ethics can not be based on any kind of standard of man. Man condemns himself to death by his very question about the good, because the only answer that he can give is that he, man, is not good. From the viewpoint of the good, he is powerless.<sup>1</sup> But as man meets this certainty of doom from his own standpoint, there comes to his aid, the love of God. Barth expresses it thus:

"Through our doom, we see therefore what is beyond our doom, God's love; through our awareness of sin, forgiveness; through death and the end of all things, the beginning of a new and primary life."<sup>2</sup>

To Barth, then, the answer to the ethical problem, and more especially of the Christian ethics, must come from God. In the crisis of man there opens a door of hope in Jesus, Who alone makes the good life possible for man. "Forgiveness of sin is therefore, for Barth, the great answer of God to the ethical problem which can only lead man to judgment and to death."<sup>3</sup> The ethical problem leads Barth to the Cross and to the new man of the Resurrection through justification by faith. He argues that:

"Since there is such a thing as forgiveness (which is always forgiveness of sin!), there is such a thing as human conduct which is justified. There is an obedience unto salvation which begins when we come down from our high places, from our High Place - as the moralists would apparently conceive it - and declare a thoroughgoing religious and moral disarmament. There is an effective brotherly love which provides a 'service'

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1. op. cit., p. 167

2. Ibid., p. 169

3. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 261

different from the Christian charity with which we are familiar; it begins with our forgiving our debtors - with empty hands! - as we also are forgiven."1

Man cannot solve the problem of ethics and conduct by thought, not even by the correct thought. "The ethical problem undeniably brings us to the reality of God, . . . the judgment of God."2 It is the way from God to man, and never otherwise. The final revelation of God's way to man has been seen in the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is this position which distinguishes Barth's idea of Christian ethics from the ethics of conscience. "Its true beginning is not in obedience to the law, but in the Word of God in Jesus Christ, which is at once a gift and a command."3

#### 5. Summary

The very nature of the Christian life is one of faith and obedience to God. It is trust not in man but in the righteousness of God through forgiveness of sins. The new man is one in whom Christ dwells. Henceforth his will is to do the will of God. True Christian living and ethics will be based on man's obedience to the law of grace and not to the law of conscience or moral demands. Barth considers the answer to the ethical problem to lie in God and His solution through the Resurrection and the new life.

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1. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 172
2. Ibid, p. 178
3. McConnachie: Barthian Theology, p. 261

#### D. THE RESURRECTION GIVES HOPE AND MEANING TO LIFE

Barth, in a sermon "He Himself", clearly states that men at some time in their lives run up against obstacles which completely halt them. But over against all crises is the witness that Jesus lives. It is this witness that "lifts the world off its hinges." The fact of the Resurrection is the turning point in man's destiny. It means that man's thoughts have come to an end, that what he does is not everything, but that "Jesus lives" is finality.. "It reveals God to us; it places us before God; it declares God to us. . "1 The Resurrection gives hope to man's life and gives it a meaning. Life is seen in the light of the Source and of the End. Death is revealed as the beginning of life rather than the end of all things.

##### 1. The Resurrection means deliverance from the fear of death.

Death is something which comes to everyone. Nothing can be more certain. The moment comes when farewell must be said to this world and all of its realities. Human thinking can tell us no more than that this is the end. Death is the last word. Barth describes it in these words:

"A grave-mound, a few frail flowers, that is all that is left. O enigma of life, which faces us at the exit of life. And yet, again Easter comes and speaks the unheard word about the conquest of death, the empty grave; and this word is for us the hardest to believe. Who can understand it; where all ends, there all really begins."2

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1. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, pp. 166-8
2. Ibid., p. 148

But it is just at this point that one must believe. Here he can only believe, believe that Jesus is the victor. It is hard to believe. Barth says, "Faith is not for every man. Much has been gained when we recognize this. Faith begins with the insight that we have little faith."<sup>1</sup> He says that there is:

"an evolutionary rhythm - from life into death, from death into life - which seems to meet us at the central point of the Bible, where the New Testament, in fulfillment of the Old, speaks of the sufferings and glory of the Messiah - is this rhythm credible, rational, real?"<sup>2</sup>

People stand facing this wall of death, unaware of the new life beyond. But in the Resurrection of Christ is revealed God's end and purpose which is victory over death.

"Here is God's end; his impetuous message which will meet us, strike us, that we also shall discover it and become aware and alive in resurrection. We are being led to the point where time and eternity meet. We are being asked if we will acknowledge eternity's advantage and preponderance over time. We are being offered this insight that there is hidden behind all decay and death a greater advent and a larger life. We are given a perspective of the victory and perfection toward which our whole existence tends."<sup>3</sup>

It is this revelation in the Resurrection which delivers from the fear of death. Man is given a glimpse of the coming world where death does not rule. Pentecost, says Barth, tells us the same story:

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1. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 79
2. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 85
3. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 223

"It means nothing less than that behind the central point of death, a new, other, central point arises. Behind death, the Prince of Life; behind the transient, the Eternal; behind death, the resurrection."<sup>1</sup>

In the Resurrection of Christ is seen the life that conquers death and delivers man from fear. The Resurrection then becomes, not a question, but the answer. It tells man that he too may share in the resurrection movement, and live by the power of the Resurrection of Christ.

## 2. The Resurrection Gives Meaning to Life

Not only is man released from fear of death; he is also given an understanding of the meaning of life, even in this world of time. One of the difficulties of faith in the resurrection is the apparent contradiction between life and death.<sup>2</sup> Existence here would hold some meaning if life and death could only be correlated. But, as men, we cannot answer this apparent contradiction. The answer must come from beyond man himself.

In the Gospel of the Resurrection, the power of God is proclaimed. It discloses His superiority and preeminence over other so-called gods. It is the supreme miracle by which the unknown God is made known to man as the Holy One, Redeemer, and Creator.<sup>3</sup> The Gospel tells of the Creator who is Redeemer, and the Redeemer who is also Creator. It

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1. op. cit., p. 177

2. Pauck: Karl Barth, p. 83

3. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 37-8



proclaims victory of life over death, forgiveness of sins, and signals the approach of the coming world. But this is all difficult to understand and the Gospel must be taken by faith even while we are living under the burden of sin and the curse of death.<sup>1</sup> Our present existence still continues. But Barth regards the Resurrection as a revelation of God as both a closed door and an exit at the same time. He says:

"The Resurrection, which is the place of exit, also bars us in, for it is both barrier and exit. Nevertheless, the 'No' which we encounter is the 'No' . . . of God. And therefore our veritable deprivation is our veritable comfort in distress. The barrier marks the frontier of a new country, and what dissolves the whole wisdom of the world also establishes it. Precisely because the 'No' of God is all-embracing, it is also His 'Yes'. We have therefore, in the power of God, a look-out, a door, a hope; and even in this world we have the possibility of following the narrow path and of taking each simple little step with a 'despair which has its own consolation' (Luther)."<sup>2</sup>

Life to Barth, then, has a meaning because in the Resurrection, we can see that God is both Creator and Redeemer, the Lord of Life and Death. The Resurrection gives a doorway through which to catch a glimpse of life beyond death. The life of Christ is seen to break through the darkness of the death of this world, bringing meaning to life here.

McConnachie says that Barth himself lives eschatologically, in view of the promises, in view of the end, which is the new beginning. He lives 'on the brink', not of

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1. op. cit., pp. 37-38  
2. Ibid., p. 38

death, but of life, and it pervades his preaching. To him:

"Life is the last and deepest truth and it is found ever in contest with death. Nowhere tolerance, nowhere balance, but battle, battle, and always again the victory of life. Life is stronger than death. Death is the empty room where life is not. Let the life in and death will withdraw. Put yourself on the side of life, and you will escape from the realm of death."<sup>1</sup>

Life and death, for Barth, apply to moral as well as physical terms, which gives meaning to the whole of human life by revealing the possibility of life in the spirit as well as in the body. In this age of transition, Barth has given a solid foundation for multitudes by his proclamation of the Word of God which has been revealed in Christ. It is the proclamation of a "life that conquers death in Christ."<sup>2</sup>

### 3. The Resurrection Gives Hope - A Summary

As a result of freedom from the fear of death, and the acquisition of an understanding of the meaning of life, man receives new hope. Barth's Theology might well be called "The Theology of Hope". It is predominantly a theology of looking forward to the final victory of God and the beginning of the reign of the Kingdom of God in a new world. Barth understands the contradictions that man must face in this life. He knows what it is to face death as an impossible barrier, he knows that any amount of discussion does not remove man from his present environment. But Barth has

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1. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, pp. 178-9
2. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 295

found the answer to life and death. "For him", says one,

"eternity is above, time underneath. Wanderers we are between two worlds, but we wait for the Victory of God. 'God opens to man the door of Paradise, in the midst of his world.' Here is the secret of the power of Barth - his eschatological hope, the Promise which his message contains for the homesick heart of man."<sup>1</sup>

Both life and death have a meaning if the Resurrection be accepted. There is hope in both of them. Every man who understands that his life is linked with the life and death of Jesus knows that he too will someday participate in the death-destroying resurrection which is given through the power of Christ's Resurrection. Without this hope of Resurrection, dying is only dying, pitilessly and tragically dying, without any hope. Then Christianity becomes nonsense and its followers believing something which is empty and deceitful.<sup>2</sup> But, the man who knows his life to be in relation to the Resurrection of Christ, knows also the reason and destiny of his life, and rejoices that he has been begotten "again to a living hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."<sup>3</sup>

#### E. SUMMARY

In this chapter we have seen that the Resurrection is very closely related to the life of the believer. It means life to the one who is dead in sin, through the revelation

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1. McConnachie: The Significance of Karl Barth, p. 187
2. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p.158ff.
3. I Peter 1:3

of the forgiveness of God. It reveals the grace of God which leads from death unto life. Without this way of grace, man is without hope. He is unable to work out his own salvation, much as he would like to do so. The way to life is the way which first leads to death, the death of man that he might live anew with Christ.

The Resurrection, as a revelation of God's grace to man, provides the basis for all Christian life and the standard for Christian ethics. It is a life with Christ at the center. The new man of God's grace is to be the solution to the problem of ethics. Christian ethics is the ethics of the Coming King and Kingdom, eschatological in outlook. The only hope for a solution to the ethical problem is the hope offered in the forgiveness of sin. God must be the answer.

Finally, the Resurrection gives meaning to life. It releases man from the fear of death, by providing an outlook from this world of death. Here man catches a glimpse of eternity beyond, and a hope of sharing in Christ's Resurrection. In the Bible is found the answer to our quest for meaning in life. The Resurrection brings man face to face with God's grace, His forgiveness, with life, the loving Father, and the resurrection of the dead.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 120

CHAPTER V

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

"I know not how that Joseph's tomb  
Could solve death's mystery;  
I only know a living Christ,  
Our immortality."

- Harry Webb Farrington

## CHAPTER V

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

#### A. INTRODUCTION

#### B. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

1. The Culmination of the Plan of Redemption
2. Gives an Understanding of Life
3. It is the Meaning of the Christian Faith

#### C. IMMORTALITY AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

1. Plato's View of Immortality
2. Barth's Objection to the Doctrine
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4. Paul's Argument for the Resurrection
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#### D. SUMMARY

## CHAPTER V

## THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

## A. INTRODUCTION

A study of any phase of Barthian thought would not be complete without dealing with his emphasis on the future life. Christ's Resurrection is, to Barth, of supreme importance, but it would have no object without the accompanying significance of the resurrection of the dead. In the treatment of Barth's doctrine of the resurrection, it has seemed most natural to take up, first, the Resurrection of Christ, then, the resurrection in the life of the believer, and last, the resurrected life of the believer after death. Though last in order of discussion, it certainly is not the least important belief in Barth's thinking.

## B. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

1. The Resurrection of the Dead is the Culmination of the plan of Redemption.

Barth feels that a belief in the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, as a singular event in history, is not sufficient for the Christian faith. The Corinthians were convinced that Christ had risen from the dead, or at least, they did not dispute this point. But they could not see that it was necessary to regard "resurrection" as more than just an isolated historical event. They did not understand that the Resurrection of Christ was so related to man as to

be the basis for the general resurrection of the dead.<sup>1</sup> This was the danger in their thinking which Paul was so anxious to correct. It was necessary that they believe in the resurrection of the dead or Christ could not have been raised, and then, their faith would be vain and all preaching likewise void of meaning.<sup>2</sup> Barth ardently proclaims the hope of the resurrection of the dead as the crowning work of the whole plan of redemption. The error of the Corinthians lay in the fact that they considered Christ's Resurrection as something satisfying and complete in itself. Barth regards this as only the beginning of the entire movement of God in the affairs of man. The Corinthians thought of the Kingdom of God as already established, but the final Kingdom is only in the course of coming. Meanwhile Christ is in conflict with the powers of the world.<sup>3</sup> Barth says:

"The aim of the movement, which is the meaning of the Kingdom of Christ, is the abolition of death(verse26). Death is the peak of all that is contrary to God in the world, the last enemy, thus not the natural lot of man, not an unalterable divine dispensation(cf. verse 6 and xi.30). Peace cannot and must not be concluded just here in such a way as to establish a spiritual-religious-moral Kingdom of God on earth, the while forgetting the enemy. There is peace only in prospect of the overcoming of the enemy."<sup>4</sup>

The Resurrection of Jesus, then, is not to be regarded, in itself, as the last victory. Barth says that Paul "sees

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1. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 116
2. I Corinthians 15:14
3. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 168-9
4. Ibid., p. 169



the Lord striding from struggle to struggle and finally approaching the inconceivable supreme victory."1 The Kingdom of Christ cannot come to an end until all things have been put in submission to God. The last enemy is death. Therefore, Barth looks to the Resurrection of the Dead as the final achievement of the redemptive plan of God. It is to this that he looks with such great hope and expectation.

2. The Resurrection of the Dead Gives an Understanding of Life.

Barth considers the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians as revealing to us Paul's key position. He says:

"The Resurrection of the Dead is the point from which Paul is speaking and to which he points. From this standpoint, not only the death of those now living, but above all, their life this side of the threshold of death, is in the apostolic sermon, veritably seen, understood, judged, and placed in the light of the last severity, the last hope."2

Barth then proceeds to interpret Paul as he looks at the life and sins of the Corinthian Church as seen from this vantage point on the threshold of death.

It is at this point where Paul is standing that all of man's differences are dropped. It is a common meeting ground. It is the world's central point - death.<sup>3</sup> This is a dark point and seems to <sup>be</sup> nought but tragedy to have death as the center of all life. But this life which seems to

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1. op. cit., p. 169

2. Ibid., p. 101

3. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, pp. 176-7

promise only death is given a different hope in the light of the Resurrection. Barth says that Pentecost gives a revelation of life rising behind the central point of death. "Behind death, the Prince of Life; behind the transient, the Eternal; behind death, the resurrection."<sup>1</sup> From the viewpoint, with Paul, of the resurrection of the dead, we see:

"sin shall be forgiveness; . . . fate shall be called mercy; . . . transiency and the grave shall be called eternal life; . . . chance is called God's will and guidance; . . . man's wit and wisdom is called God's Word by which we live!"<sup>2</sup>

At the point of view of the resurrection of the dead, we find meaning and emphasis given to the thought that every thing stands facing death. Even eternity, if it be only eternity, means nothing to man. If he be oblivious to it all, it has no meaning for him. But Barth says that right here in this empty place, where death seems to be the last word, we hear the word "resurrection" proclaimed. He says:

\* "With the word 'resurrection', however, the apostolic preaching puts in this empty place against all that exists for us, all that is known to us, all that can be possessed by us, all things of all time — what? not the non-being, the unknown, the not-to-be-possessed, nor yet a second being, a further thing to become known, a higher future possession, but the source and the truth of all that exists, that is known, that can belong to us, the reality of all res, of all things, the eternity of time, the resurrection of the dead."<sup>3</sup>

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1. op. cit., p. 177

2. Ibid., p. 177

3. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p.108

\* Inasmuch as this quotation is difficult to digest at first glance, it will be more readily understood if it be read first without the accompanying phrases, some-

All of this is to be taken in hope now. As man recollects that he must die, then this hope is given that back of death, with its emptiness, is a new life full of meaning. It is the resurrection of the dead already brought about in God through Christ's Resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The Resurrection of the Dead as the Meaning of Faith.

Much of the importance of the Resurrection of the Dead will be brought out in subsequent treatment. Here, as a concluding thought to this section, showing the importance of this doctrine and providing a stimulus for a better understanding of what follows, let us remember that Barth regards the resurrection of the dead as the great truth of the Christian faith.

The Corinthians had evidently accepted the Gospel as preached by Paul, but with a few reservations. They thought that Paul was giving some of his own gospel along with the plain gospel.<sup>2</sup> Why should it be necessary for everyone to believe in the resurrection of the dead? Paul's answer to their doubts was not hesitant nor half-hearted. Barth, in his comments on this section of Corinthians, says:

"That he (Paul) is not of the opinion that the resur-

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what as follows: In the word "resurrection", the apostolic preaching puts in this emptiness, against all that exists for us in this present life, not ... (his list of things), but the source and truth of all that we now know, the resurrection of the dead.

1. op. cit., p. 109

2. Ibid., p. 115

rection of the dead should be announced as a partial and special truth, but as the truth, is shown, apart from the weighty severity which pervades this chapter (I Cor. 15) more even than the preceding chapters, by the description of what he means as the gospel plainly (versel). What is involved is the substance, the whole of the Christian revelation."<sup>1</sup>

To Paul, and to Barth, the resurrection of the dead is the very essence of the Christian faith. "Christianity without resurrection (of the dead) . . . is a lie and a deceit, . . . because it is in itself an illusion, a fiction."<sup>2</sup> Barth has a very fine section dealing with Christianity without this belief. It is too long to quote entirely, but a few sentences follow:

"If it be that we men are simply drops of water in the infinite, horizonless sea of life, if there are no Last Things, no crisis, which puts this whole in question and at the same time supplies the answer, rises up like a minus in front of the bracket and at the same time places under a new positive sign — if life and death are to be conceived as natural events within this great general life that we know, . . . Christ, too, is not risen."<sup>3</sup>

and again:

"If no dead are to arise except the One, then the resurrection of even this One is an offence dispensable, unimportant, a foreign dualistic element in a philosophy otherwise uniform, and regarding which it is only a question of religious tactics whether we amiably lend it a poetic interpretation or bluntly deny it . . . (And) if Christ be not risen (verse 14) then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."<sup>4</sup>

With such belief, or disbelief, life here has no meaning.

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1. op. cit., p. 112
2. Ibid., p. 153
3. Ibid., p. 153
4. Ibid., p. 154

Neither is there any hope in a life after death. Perhaps the importance of the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead is best expressed in this negative manner. Barth asks the question: "Whence do we lay claim to the arrogance that dying means redemption?" He answers this by saying:

"Dying is pitilessly nothing but dying, only the expression of the corruptibility of all finite things, if there be no end of the finite, no perishing of the corruptible, no death of death."<sup>1</sup>

Without belief in the resurrection of the dead, then, there is no meaning to this life, no basis for claiming redemption in the final sense, and no hope for life beyond death.

### C. IMMORTALITY AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

There have been many different views on eternal life, immortality, and life beyond the grave. But not all of the views expressed mean the same thing. Barth does not agree with those who would make the popular belief in immortality correspond with the Christian belief in the future resurrection of the dead. The two are not the same.

#### 1. Plato's View of Immortality

McConnachie makes a distinction between the doctrine of immortality and the Resurrection of the Dead. He says:

"The favourite doctrine of the immortality of the soul as a continuity between here and hereafter, is derived from Plato, and not from the New Testament. The Christian doctrine is the Resurrection of the dead."<sup>2</sup>

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1. op. cit., p. 159

2. McConnachie: Barthian Theology, p. 90

Lowrie also refers to the immortality derived from Plato as being far different from the Christian hope of the resurrection of the dead. He comments thus:

"The immortality of the soul we have thought of sometimes as an endless prolongation of life in time - and when that became too difficult we have been accustomed to switch over to Plato's eternity, without noticing in the least how radical was the change of categories. We understood Plato's eternity to be equivalent to the Christian notion of heaven. . . . For a long while it occupied a place side by side with the characteristic Christian hope, the resurrection of the dead - which really was a totally different thought, because it was eschatological, referring not to a there but to a then, not to a heaven above but to the kingdom which is to come. In our day the Platonic immortality has almost entirely usurped the place of the Christian thought."<sup>1</sup>

Lowrie goes on to state that Plato could no more have admitted that there is a passage from time to eternity than does Barth today. It is impossible for the soul which ceases to exist in time to pass into eternity. It may take comfort in the thought that its "idea" still continues without an end in eternity, or again Lowrie suggests that it might all be taken as a "beautiful risk". But these beliefs are poor substitutes for the certain hope of the Christian belief in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Barth's Objection to the Doctrine of Immortality

It is not the fact of immortality to which Barth objects so strenuously. Immortality is the thing which the Christian is promised, even while he is yet encompassed by

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1. Lowrie: Our Concern With the Theology of Crisis, p. 60
2. Ibid., p. 61

mortality and corruption.<sup>1</sup> But Barth insists that there must be more to the belief in immortality than a vague, indefinite thought of a future existence. He is pained by a good portion of the modern preaching on the subject of Resurrection, when it happens to be preached. In one of his sermons preached at Easter, "Christ is Victor", Barth states:

"And then, in our preaching on Easter day, we say something about the rejuvenation of nature. . . We interpret the message that Jesus is victor, not in its literal sense, but . . . as a symbol or a human idea. . . One must not lose his courage! Only hope! And should it be that we stand beside graves and we talk about the resurrection, we should not think of it as a literal resurrection, but rather as a continuation of life in a spiritual sense, in a limbo-like, mystic beyond, or perhaps in the memory of those loved ones who survive, or in those acts and deeds which the deceased one left behind."<sup>2</sup>

This type of thinking about immortality and resurrection is nonsense to Barth. We try to minimize the word "resurrection" and change it into something human.<sup>3</sup> He says that the remarkable thing about this great word is that the real truth of the resurrection is too powerful to be concealed or limited. It cannot be thought that Jesus came to earth, suffered, died, and rose again merely to be a symbol for truth. Even life itself demands the resurrection truth as the answer to its problem.<sup>4</sup>

The Corinthians evidently considered the life beyond

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1. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 143
2. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 152
3. Ibid., p. 152
4. Ibid., p. 153

merely as a prolongation of this life. They thought of the Kingdom of God as existing within the realm of flesh and blood, something to be obtained in this life. They could not see that forgiveness of sins was inseparably connected with the destruction of death as the last enemy. Eternal life became to them only the possibility of being eternal in every moment of life.<sup>1</sup> Barth suggests that they probably first began to console themselves with the "hope of dying blessed in the name of Jesus, and the rest - as they might say - to leave confidently to God."<sup>2</sup>

Paul realized the danger of such an attitude and belief on the part of his church followers. He saw that here, at the most vital point, his whole teaching and work of the Gospel was in danger of being undermined. Barth, commenting on this, says:

"The nerve of Christianity is, in Paul's view, severed if the Corinthians think that flesh and blood can inherit the Kingdom of God, corruption inherit incorruption. Cannot inherit! says Paul."<sup>3</sup>

This is a good statement of Barth's conception of the weakness and danger of the familiar belief in immortality. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, the eschatological hope of the Christian faith, is what is needed, not a vague belief in the immortality of the soul.

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1. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 116
2. Ibid., p. 120
3. Ibid., p. 123



### 3. Barth's Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead

Barth writes, concerning Paul's expectation for the future life, "the most important, the central element of the hope of Paul, to which he clung with all of the ardour of his soul, was the expectation of a new 'pneumatic' body."<sup>1</sup> When Paul speaks of the resurrection in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (chapter 15), he means nothing else than bodily resurrection.<sup>2</sup> This was what made the gospel of Paul's preaching a stumbling block and a scandal. These Corinthians could understand a philosophy of continued existence after death, but the resurrection of the body was quite another thing. Barth reminds us that such emphasis today, also, is unusual. It is of great importance that we have a hope of personal existence continuing after death, but the question of a new body is something doubtful and not so important.<sup>3</sup> Certainly most people are not greatly concerned with the thought of the great final consummation of the whole plan of Creation and Redemption in which will occur the resurrection of the dead. But, this was what was so urgent in Paul's preaching, the hope of a new corporeality, a change from a corruptible to an incorruptible body.

What does Paul mean by this "resurrection of the body?" Barth says that the gospel of the resurrection of the dead,

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1. op. cit., p. 117
2. Ibid., p. 116
3. Ibid., pp. 117-8

as it was preached to the Corinthians, meant nothing less than that all of their human life, of which they were quite proud, must pass completely away. The subject of this human life:

"is now just positively and precisely man, with his corruptible living and doing, the creation of God, who must be redeemed by the same God. It is the great 'transformation' and 'putting on' of incorruption and immortality of I Cor. xv. 51."<sup>1</sup>

This transformation is not to occur in the present life, but after death. Barth says that Paul does not mean the same thing by eternal life and the life beyond.<sup>2</sup> The resurrection of the body is not to be confused with the hope in Christ in this life. Barth well knows that we are still living in the world of time, separated from the resurrection, but we are living in the hope of the resurrection. This hope is ours as a result of the revelation of the resurrection of the dead manifested in His Resurrection.<sup>3</sup> Christ is the first-fruits of them that sleep, the beginning of the resurrection of the dead. Barth says:

"..perfection is the resurrection also of his own, and therefore the very fundamental thing that was denied at Corinth. This perfection is, as the abolition of death generally, His highest and at the same time His last act of sovereignty."<sup>4</sup>

The relation of the resurrection of the dead to the Parusia and the Kingdom of God will be discussed in a later section.

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1. op. cit., p. 87
2. Ibid., p. 159
3. Ibid., p. 151
4. Ibid., p. 164

Barth considers the meaning of Christ's Resurrection to be that the whole belongs to God, "God in all". He is the end, and also the beginning. So Christ's resurrection is "the divine horizon also of our existence. . . Now there is a meaning when we speak of the dead as 'fallen asleep'!"<sup>1</sup> What exists of death since Christ's resurrection is to be thought of as "nothing but a deep sleep and the future resurrection of our body is to occur no differently than from being suddenly awakened from such sleep."<sup>2</sup>

As to just how the resurrection of the dead or the transformation of the body will take place, Barth is rather difficult to understand. He would probably confess that he does not understand it himself. He does, however, say that we must beware of any attempt to make out of the resurrected body any kind of "an observable and real Spirit-Body."<sup>3</sup> The body is the totality of man's existence as "I". This is the mortal man which must be entirely destroyed in death. All that is corruptible and mortal must become incorruptible and immortal. All that will then remain is the "Not-I" or the Spirit of God which dwells in man.<sup>4</sup> This is to come about by man's relatedness to God. Barth says:

"With the dissolution of their 'Hereness', and with the removal of their relatedness to all that belongs

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1. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 165
2. Ibid., p. 166 (Luther: Commentary on I Cor., Erlanger ed.)
3. Barth: Commentary on Romans, p. 289
4. Ibid., p. 290

to this world, they participate in a new definition and qualification. This new definition and qualification, of which we know nothing because it does not concern 'us', is the resurrection of the body."<sup>1</sup>

Barth places much emphasis upon this "inward man" in his thought of the change from corruption to incorruption. He says, "The inward man is the other in us which is no longer world; it is the depth of God."<sup>2</sup> This inward man has his beginning where all else ends. It is at the place, where only death and darkness can be seen as the portion of our life, that God makes himself known to man. Here something is occurring even while the outward man is being subjected to death. Here is death, but there is life in the yonder. Barth says that this Yonder is hidden behind the Here; it is only the reverse side of our own life. The inward man is being renewed in the Yonder side of life, and we are this inward man. A new life is coming into our old life. Our death is to be swallowed up in life. Sown in corruption, we are putting on the garments of immortality until we be raised in incorruption.<sup>3</sup> Barth says that "a change of predicates takes place between the sowing in corruption and the raising in incorruption," but the "subject remains the same."<sup>4</sup>

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1. op. cit., p. 290

2. Barth: Come Holy Spirit, p. 260

3. Ibid., p. 261

4. Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 93

Paul's hope, then, of a new body which shall be incorruptible and immortal is shared by Barth. More than shared, it is proclaimed as the great truth of the Christian faith. "The last word concerning the world of men is not Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return! but, Because I live, ye shall live also."<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Paul's Argument for the Resurrection of the Dead

Barth, in his treatment of I Corinthians 15, discusses Paul's argument for the resurrection of the dead under two main ideas: the Resurrection as Truth, and the Resurrection as Reality.<sup>2</sup> His treatment of this section (I Cor. 15:35-58) will be briefly summarized.

##### a. The Resurrection as Truth (vv. 35-49)

In this section, Paul is arguing from the analogy of nature for the conceivability of the resurrection body. Barth says that Paul is making room here for the resurrection and designating the place to which it belongs.<sup>3</sup> Paul is not giving a lecture in apologetics, but he is making an attack on the Corinthian Christianity. Paul must answer the question of the unbelievers as to how there can be an existence separated from this life by death, and yet at the same time, be identical with this existence. How can the

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1. op. cit., p. 297

2. Barth: The Resurrection of the Dead, pp. 182-213

3. Ibid., p. 184

truth of this life be affirmed?1 Paul answers this question by showing that there is an analogy everywhere in nature, in which the same being appears in totally different phenomena without losing its identity. This is not a description of the resurrection, but an analogy only.2 Even as in nature, the same subject persists with changing predicates, so it is in the resurrection of the dead. This is not a proof that there must be a resurrection, but only a statement that if there be a resurrection it would be of this nature. As the seed, at some time, must die that the plant may be produced, so must it be in the resurrection. Death means perishing, but it also means growth. All the predicates of the seed have been removed, all the predicates of the plant have been put on, but the subject remains the same whether seed or plant.3

Paul then passes on to another phase of the argument. There are different orders of glory as the celestial and terrestrial. Barth says here the analogy is not completed but only inferred. Even as here, the old life passes away and a new life begins, so with the resurrection of the dead.4 Death then becomes the critical point, "the turning point, as the zero which leads from minus to plus."5 It is at

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1. op. cit., p. 185
2. Ibid., p. 185
3. Ibid., p. 187
4. Ibid., p. 190
5. Ibid., p. 191

this place that the body puts on the new predicates of incorruption, glory, and power. Barth says that this is not a transition from a bodily to a non-bodily existence, but a change from the "natural" body on this side of resurrection to a "spiritual" body on the other side.<sup>1</sup> This is what Paul and Barth understand as the resurrection of the body or the resurrection of the dead, that God is the Lord of Life. Barth says that this teaching of Paul places the doctrine of immortality in dispute. In the resurrection, it is the Spirit of God which appears, not the human soul. That which remains after death is not the soul, but the body, and this a spiritual body.<sup>2</sup> This is the Resurrection of the Dead, "The truth of God requires and establishes the Resurrection of the Dead, the Resurrection of the Body."<sup>3</sup>

b. The Resurrection as Reality (v.v. 50-58)

In this section, Paul no longer disputes concerning the resurrection, but answers the why of it. What else could Paul say than: "because God is and because He has revealed Himself?"<sup>4</sup> Barth says that this last section is simply a halt in the presence of the goal which has been attained.

As touching the Kingdom of God, there can be no hope of entering the Kingdom within this life of the body. It

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1. op. cit., p. 192

2. Ibid., p. 196

3. Ibid., p. 197

4. Ibid., p. 204

is only the resurrected body that has the possibility of fulfilling this hope. Between the mortal body and the immortal and incorruptible is the miracle of God.<sup>1</sup> Dying does not bring immortality, but the miracle of God brings life out of death. This miracle does not take place in the life of this world. "The resurrection is not yet here, the Kingdom of God is not yet finished, not even in what the Christian Church has and is in its faith. The meaning of the Kingdom of Christ, and therefore also the meaning of the Christian faith, is never exhausted in that which is present and given."<sup>2</sup> It is in the expectation of the Coming Kingdom of God where death is abolished that we find the true meaning of the Christian faith.

But, now Paul shows us a mystery, "the synchronism of the living and the dead in the resurrection."<sup>3</sup> It is the crisis for all men of all ages in which God speaks these words: "In Him shall they all live. . . That He calls is what decides the reality of the resurrection, not that we live and not that we die."<sup>4</sup> This resurrection of the dead is to take place not in gradual or catastrophical developments, but "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Then both the dead and the living must put on incorruption and immortality. It is then that the power of God is revealed

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1. op. cit., p. 206
2. Ibid., p. 171
3. Ibid., p. 207
4. Ibid., p. 208



and "Death is swallowed up in victory(verse 54)". It is God's gift and His victory through the death and Resurrection of Christ from the dead.

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." - I Corinthians 15:57

#### D. SUMMARY

In Barth's thinking, the Resurrection of the Dead is inseparably connected with Christ's Resurrection. If there be no resurrection, generally speaking, Christ could not have been raised. And if Christ were raised from the dead, and he alone, then even this one event is an offense against a well-ordered universe.

A belief in the resurrection of the dead is absolutely essential to the Christian faith. It is the one great doctrine of Christianity and the hope of final redemption. Without the belief in the resurrection, Christianity has no meaning, it is a deceit, another empty religion. Life also has no meaning, and especially the Christian life. Paul, and Barth, do not hesitate to proclaim this fact fearlessly and plainly, that the belief in the resurrection is all-important. Without it there is left only a deep abyss of scepticism toward everything divine.

Barth distinguishes between a belief in immortality, in the general usage, and the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, the resurrection of the body. The two are in no wise identical. Paul's great hope was for a

new body which should be incorruptible and spiritual. The change from the natural body to the spiritual body is the great crisis of mankind, the crisis of death. But it is also the gift of God; it is His miracle to man. The resurrection of the dead is shown to be conceivable as truth and reality by the analogy of nature. But it cannot be proved. It is possible only as the power of God through the victory of Christ over the power of death. This victory being won in His Resurrection makes possible our victory over death in like manner.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

"The fact of the Resurrection  
as a part of a living faith  
needs to be recaptured today."  
- Reid

CHAPTER VI

THE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

THE SUMMARY

- A. THE RESURRECTION IN BARTH'S THEOLOGY
- B. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST FROM THE DEAD
- C. THE RESURRECTION AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
- D. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

THE CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER VI

## THE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## THE SUMMARY

The foregoing discussion has been directed to a study of Barth's ideas concerning the Resurrection of Christ. This subject has been treated under the following main divisions: (1) the Resurrection doctrine in Barth's system of theology, (2) the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, (3) the Resurrection and the Christian life, and (4) the Resurrection of the dead. A summary of the findings will be presented under these main divisions.

## A. THE RESURRECTION IN BARTH'S THEOLOGY

For a better understanding of Barth's views of the Resurrection, a brief review of his theology was made. The underlying principles upon which the Barthian Theology is based were found to be: (1) the belief in a qualitative difference between the world of time and the world of eternity, (2) the necessity for all knowledge of God to come to man from God himself, and (3) the ability of man to receive the revelation when it is given.

With these underlying principles in mind, the way in which they are related to the major doctrines of Barth's theology was made evident:

1. Barth emphasizes the transcendence of God. There is no way from man to God. All knowledge of God must be revealed by Him to man.

2. In contrast with God, we see man in his great need and hopeless condition. He faces a "Crisis" when he is confronted with the alternative of God or the world.
3. The gap between man and God is bridged by God's revelation. The Resurrection is the final revelation of God to man, the breaking through of eternity into the world of time. This is Revelation-History, in history, but not of history.
4. In the true sense, eternal life is the life beyond death. Man has eternal life in this world through the resurrected life of Christ, but in the final sense, it comes only when corruption puts on incorruption.
5. Barth is noted for his eschatological outlook. The great hope toward which we look is the final fulfilment of the Kingdom of God, not here, but beyond this life.
6. Redemption is a work of God. Man can do nothing to work out his redemption. Final redemption is the completion of all that was planned in Creation, the sovereign reign of the Kingdom of God.
7. The basis of all Christian living and the standard of all Christian ethics is found in God's forgiveness and the creation of the new man.
8. The Resurrection is at the center of Barth's thinking.

It is the final revelation of God, the very essence of Christianity, and the turning point of man's destiny.

#### B. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST FROM THE DEAD

Barth regards the Resurrection as Revelation-History. It must be interpreted as something beyond the ability of the historian to understand. The Resurrection in history is similar to the Jesus of history. Both must have a basis in history, but beyond this is their interpretation as Divine Revelation. The Jesus of History must be seen as the Divine Christ; the Resurrection as an actual occurrence in history must be seen as the Revelation of God, which is beyond all history. Even the accounts in the New Testament are not concerned with giving historical proof of the Resurrection. Rather, the central thing is that Christ lives, and this is to be understood only as the witness of God's revelation. The significance of the Resurrection lies in the fact that it is a manifestation of the Glory of God, and an insight into the new world. It is a glimpse into eternity, which is more than just unending time. It is the world of a new creation because of the revelation in the Resurrection of a Redeemer, Atonement, and salvation from sin.

#### C. THE RESURRECTION AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The resurrection of Christ is the source of power for the resurrected life of man while living in this world of time. It is God's way of Grace, from sin to righteousness.

It must be God's way since man is utterly helpless.

Because the Resurrection is the hope of man's redemption, it means God's work in man, and his being risen with Christ to a new life. It means obedience to God through love. This provides the basis of all Christian conduct and ethical living. It is to be living with the thought of the coming King and Kingdom.

The Resurrection gives hope to life because it reveals the true nature of life and death. Death is an enemy which is to be overcome. It is only a curtain which separates man from the life beyond, which has been revealed in the resurrection life of Christ. Since death is revealed as not the last thing to be said, life takes on meaning. In the Resurrection, man is brought face to face with God's grace, His forgiveness, with life, a loving Father, and resurrection from the dead.

#### D. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Christ's resurrection was not an end in itself. It reveals the victorious Christ who is to continue from victory to victory until all things are in subjection to Him. It means the resurrection of the dead, the final act in the whole plan of Creation and Redemption. This hope and belief is the great essential tenet of the Christian faith. Without it, Christianity is a lie and a deceit. Life has no meaning apart from the resurrection of the dead.

The resurrection of the dead is more than a vague, un-



certain doctrine of the immortality of the soul. It means bodily resurrection from the dead. It is God's miracle worked on man at the time of death. The resurrection is conceivable, but it cannot be proved. It is possible only by the power of God through the victory of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

#### THE UNBELIEVABLE

Impossible, you say, that man survives  
 The grave - that there are other lives?  
 More strange, O friend, that we should ever rise  
 Out of the dark to walk below these skies  
 Once having risen into life and light,  
 We need not wonder at our deathless flight.

Life is the unbelievable; but now  
 That this incredible has taught us how,  
 We can believe the all-imagining Power  
 That breathed the Cosmos forth as a golden flower,  
 Had potency in his breath  
 To plan us new surprises beyond death -  
 New spaces and new goals  
 For the adventure of ascending souls.

Be brave, O heart, be brave:  
 It is not strange that man survives the grave:  
 'Twould be a stranger thing were he destroyed  
 Than that he be ever vaulted from the void.

- Edwin Markham

## CONCLUSION

Having completed our study of Barth's View of the Resurrection and summarized the findings, we are prepared to offer what appear to be Barth's distinct views concerning the Resurrection.

Seemingly, the most distinctive note in Barth's thinking on the Resurrection is the idea of Revelation-History. At the center of all of his thinking is the Word of God and this may be summed up in the one New Testament word "Jesus." The final and climactic act in Jesus' revelation of the Father was His resurrection from the dead. This is an event in history, but if it be regarded only as history, it loses its great significance. Place it in the field of revelation and the Resurrection becomes the great miracle of God, the breaking through of the world of eternity into the world of time. It is God's answer to man's need. There is no way for man to learn of God except it be given him by God. The Resurrection reveals God as Father, as Redeemer, as Creator, and as the final King in His Kingdom.

But, the Resurrection is also God's miracle to man. Christ alone risen from the dead would not help man. In His Resurrection is revealed the possibility and hope of the resurrection of the dead, the final triumph of the plan of God in Creation and Redemption. Barth's interpretation of the resurrection of the dead is directly opposed to the popular view of the immortality of the soul. He proclaims

the certain and positive truth of the Christian hope of bodily resurrection from the dead. It is not to be the resurrection of the physical body, but the resurrection of a spiritual body which is given through a miracle of God at the time of death. Here the corruptible becomes incorruptible, and the mortal puts on immortality. The resurrection of the dead represents the last victory of Christ before the Kingdom of Christ is made subject to the sovereign rule of the Kingdom of God.

Another distinct note in Barth's thinking on the Resurrection is its relation to Christian ethics. All conduct and life of the Christian is to be based on the forgiveness of sins as revealed in the Resurrection. Herein is revealed to man another world which is the real world. Life then becomes a life lived in hope and one lived with the thought of the coming King and His Kingdom. It is a life of obedience to the will of God, a life in which, not man, but Christ is the dominant factor.

Many criticisms have been made against Barth because he has gone back to the doctrine of the transcendent God and left but little room for man's importance. But Barth's argument is that any God who is found at the end, even of the most admirable human way, is not God at all. Such is the nature of God that He veils himself from man and is to be revealed only by His own revelation. Christ's resurrection is the great and final revelation of God.

Barth believes in the difference between the world of man and the world of God, between the world of time and the world of eternity. He believes that there is a qualitative difference between God and man, a difference which cannot be set aside by even the best that man can do. The gap between God and man must be bridged by God, not man. The Resurrection is the bridge across this gap, a bridge which was constructed by the grace of God, and in no way by the ability and evolutionary attainment of man.

Soli Deo Gloria

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"Some are to be tasted,  
Some are to be swallowed,  
And a few are to be  
Chewed and digested."

- Bacon

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