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FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING

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KARL BARTH, THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD
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KARL BARTH's book is a brief commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Chapter 15, as the climax of the Epistle, is discussed in detail. The primary characteristic of Barth's interpretation is his insistence on understanding the whole letter as a unity, in contrast to the usual view which sees in it a chance conglomeration of passages, the themes of which were determined by the needs and demands of the moment.

Barth does not dispute either 'the largely fortuitous character of the specific topics treated in I Cor. 1-14' nor 'the absence of an explicit connective relating I Cor. 15 and its new theme to the preceding sequence' (pp. 1ff.; ET p. 6). Rather, the unity which he finds emerges out of the question, 'first, whether Paul's decisions on the topics treated in I Cor. 1-14 are as unrelated as the topics themselves, or whether there is not discernible a single train of thought which binds them intrinsically together. And second, is I Cor. 15 to be understood as only one topic among others? Does not rather a central thought which ran through chs. 1-14 now emerge in full clarity, so that the theme of ch. 15, even though it may appear as one theme among others, is really to be accepted as the theme of the whole letter?' (p. 2; ET p. 6). The unity to be looked for is therefore a material unity, i.e. one grounded in the subject-matter, not some sort of 'spiritual' unity which would depend on the unity and individuality of the one author's personality.

No one will want to deny that this method of inquiry is both appropriate to the content of the Epistle and fruitful for de-

tailed exegesis. The inner unity so defined could even be present if the composition of the Epistle were not only the result of the accidental circumstances attending its writing, but also if the Epistle as a whole were the composition of a redactor who combined sections out of various letters of Paul, as B. J. Weiss believed. If such a material unity is really present, then it will certainly have left its mark in all exegesis which is at all true to the content of the Epistle. But there is great gain in every way when the question of such unity is consciously raised and is accepted as the guiding line for exegesis.

Barth, however, does not present this idea merely in the general form in which it is, in my opinion, indisputable. He gives the particular interpretation that the basic theme, the real purpose of the letter, finds explicit expression in the words of ch. 15. Therefore the whole commentary can be given the title *The Resurrection of the Dead*. This title, too, seems to me to be fully appropriate to the content. In it is expressed the fact that Paul's preaching is eschatological proclamation. That of which he is continually speaking is the end of this earthly man and his world. In other words, Paul defines the life of the believer as life characterized by faith in Christ's resurrection and hope for his own resurrection.

If this faith and hope are sincerely held, they are not something that a man can also have along with other ideas as an adornment or a comfort of life. They determine the whole of the Christian's existence and bring him into a particular relation to the world. Consequently every question which arises in the area of his existence in the world can be rightly dealt with only from the point of view of eschatology. If Paul can really hold this faith and this hope steadfastly, then everything he says about man must belong under the title, *The Resurrection of the Dead*.

Of course this concept can be used for exegesis only as a question, not as a recipe. As a question it provides a critical standard gained from Paul himself for use in interpreting separate statements. Exegesis would thus have gained the possibility of being in a real sense material criticism. How far Barth himself uses the leading theme as a guide for his interpretation must therefore be the object of investigation. And at the same time another question must be considered. Is this specific
judgment that the theme of I Corinthians find its most authent-
expression in ch. 15 exegetically justified?
This is all that I have to say by way of introduction. The
question of the relation between historical and theological
exegesis, so much discussed in connection with Barth’s Com-
mentary on Romans, need not be interjected here. Barth’s own
statement in the Preface makes it unnecessary. If the aim in
both kinds of interpretation is the understanding of the con-
tent, they belong together in a unity. And ‘when exegesis with
a preponderantly historical interest and one with a prepon-
derantly theological interest are kept separate, the result is
certainly defective’ (p. 1; ET p. 4). Barth’s commentary on
I Corinthians does not stand in opposition to historical-philolog-
cal interpretation, but uses it or supplements it. Consequently
a discussion of the book has value only if it follows the course of
Barth’s interpretation, emphasizing what is important and
deating what is questionable.
The first part of the book (pp. 2–56; ET pp. 5–100) presents
a masterly exegetical survey of chs. 1–14. The treatment of
chs. 1–4 (the rival parties in the Corinthian community) is
most illuminating. The ‘from God’ (4.5) ‘is obviously the
hidden nerve of this whole section (and perhaps not of this
section alone’) (p. 4; ET p. 16). The contending parties in
Corinth rob God of what is his, of his right of judgment, his
majesty, his freedom, in order to deify instead religious personal-
alties or party programmes. Paul does not support one party
(his own), and he makes no effort to settle the dispute by a
consideration of the question of which party is relatively more
in the right. He will not permit the Gospel to be made into a
debatable programme, into an idea, into an occasion for the
development of spiritual power. The first lie (πρόφασις πείσματος)
of the Corinthians is their substitution of a belief in their own
faith either in God or in particular leaders for faith in God.
They confuse faith with human knowledge and convictions.
Against this, Paul preaches the power of God and the wisdom
of God (cf. 1.24, 31; 3.21).
Here one of Paul’s main ideas is, I think, rightly given. In
my judgment, however, a false colouring is added when Barth,
misled by a side glance at the contemporary world, interprets
the party divisions of the Corinthians as parallel to modern

‘personality cults’. Actually the Corinthians seem to have
regarded the party heads as mystagogues (cf. 1.14–17) and as
gnostics. They evidently expected to attain salvation (σωτηρία)
by means of the sacraments and knowledge (gnosis).
In meeting this situation, Paul does not merely deal with
the question of parties in itself. With equal force he opposes
the delusion that knowledge is a way to God. God’s saving
act of the cross (σταυρός) cannot in any way be comprehended
as a possibility of salvation; if it could be, it would not be an act
of God. For men the Christian proclamation is ‘folly’ (μωρία),
and it cannot be legitimized to men’s reason as ‘wisdom’
(σοφία). As a comprehensible possibility, it would necessarily be
no more than a possibility within the scope of man. Therefore
no relation to God is given in knowledge, in gnosis, as a human
quality. Or as Barth says, God can be only subject, never the
object in man’s relation to God.
But it seems to me that the dialectic inherent in the situation
now needs to be recognized. The Corinthian parties think that
by their party slogans they are representing the ‘from God’ (4.5).
That they have instead bound themselves to men is Paul’s
judgment, not their intention. The dialectic of the situation
lies in the fact that the ‘from God’ can in any particular case of
human reality only be expressed by taking a specific stand; that
is, such a party slogan can in certain circumstances be duty.
Of course, the ‘from God’ can be rightly pronounced only as
a corrective, as a warning. ‘God always remains subject in
the relation created by that testimony. God is never trans-
formed into the object, into the possession of man, giving man
a right to speak, to speak a final word’ (p. 4; ET p. 16). That
is true – but when we speak, when we are obliged to try to
speak, therefore even when we are speaking in order to validate
the ‘from God’, God is the object.
Not that Barth is unaware of that! But it seems to me here,
as on other occasions, that the presentation of his exegetical
insights lacks a certain clarity and intellectual precision. So I
believe that I am in fundamental agreement with Barth if I
carry his explanation a little further. The solution of the prob-
lem here lies in recognizing that the freedom of leader and
programme does not mean the proclamation of subjectivity
(whether that is understood rationally as autonomy or romanti-
cally as immediacy) and individualism. Such freedom means freedom from one's self and at the same time from an individualism of motives and opinions based in the self. But this surrender of self is not a mere waiting, nor is it a silence (however holy) nor mysticism. It is laying hold of the Word of God.

Now this laying hold of the Word of God must not be mere dogmatism or speculation; it must be an act in which lies the reality of my existence. By this act declaration is made that at this very moment I must speak, must act, must affirm, because my 'now', being claimed by God, is made the moment of decision. (Paul so acts, disregarding the consideration that what he is saying could become another party slogan.) But in understanding the character of my 'now' as demanding decision, I am also freed from taking my speaking and action as a system or programme. I confront it in freedom, so far as it is something to hand, done and said. But again, this is not the freedom of relativism, as if here was something needing improvement when measured against an aim or a goal (though this will, of course, happen). I am free in the knowledge that my speaking or acting has meaning (reality) (even if it is 'correct'), only if it springs from decision; beyond that it has no objective validity.

If what has been said is true (that is, if Paul's conception of the matter is correctly interpreted), as Barth also believes, then it is clear that Barth is right in calling Paul's 'standpoint' eschatological. If at the end of all that we can comprehend stands death, then it follows that every human standpoint, held as a position beyond the decision, is only a situation and is therefore temporary, is already past, is death. Consequently we know nothing of a life 'which we can comprehend as the life of God'—since the most we have is an empty concept of it—apart from the fullness given by God along and his revelation in the resurrection (p. 7; ET p. 20).

But, on the other hand, it is in my judgment also clear that Barth's interpretation of 2.6–3.2 is not acceptable. For here Paul speaks of the 'cross' (σταυρός) as 'wisdom' (σοφία), not in a paradoxical sense (cf. 1.24, 30), but as an announcement which is intelligible to the human understanding as 'wisdom'. Granted, this is true only for the 'perfect' (τέλειοι), the spiritual (πνευματικοί). But what does the concept spirit (πνεύμα) mean here? It seems to me certain that these terms, and natural (ψυχικός) in 2.24, indicate that Paul is here thinking along the lines of the mystery cults. In fact, ch. 2.7 describes wisdom (σοφία) as 'secret and hidden'. Here, therefore, wisdom is not 'the word of the cross' (λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ) in the sense of 1.18ff., for that word is from henceforth revealed. That is true, even if one should apply the hidden (τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον) of 2.7 to the past and should say, according to v. 10, that for Christians it is hidden no longer; yet it remains hidden for others who do not belong to us. But 'the word of the cross' is being preached to all. An element in this λόγος is now stressed, by virtue of which it is 'wisdom'—and not only paradoxically as in 1.24, 30! There is therefore a way of regarding this word and a way of speaking it which proclaims it as wisdom. That such a view of the saving act is intended, is also shown in v. 8: if the rulers had been wiser, they would have perceived the plan of salvation.

Now Paul (according to 3.1) has not yet been able to impart this wisdom in Corinth. The ethical immaturity of the Corinthians is asserted, not as a judgment against them, but as a reason for this inability. It is impossible to interpret 3.1–3 with Barth as a lament 'that he had clearly not succeeded in being understood by them as "from the Spirit"', that they 'were not yet in the position to hear his word as the Word of God' (p. 10; ET p. 25). The text says very plainly that Paul has not imparted to them the 'wisdom' defined in 2.6–3.2.

Actually in 2.6–3.2 specifically Pauline ideas are amalgamated with ideas peculiar to the mysteries. Chapter 2.10–12 emphasizes strongly that only God himself can be the subject of the knowledge of God. In the light of this, the important question is not that of the categories (which are, in fact, animistic) used in formulating the statement, but what is meant here as the content of the knowledge of God. The answer is truly Pauline, 'His free gifts to us' (τὰ χαρισματα τῆς ἤμια). (Here Paul is no longer thinking of the 'perfect' but of Christians in general.) But Paul does not hold to this idea consistently. For according to 2.6–9, the content of the 'wisdom' is myth, speculation about the 'word of the cross', about God; and therefore also about man (viewed as an entity of the cosmos).

But in the recounting of the myth, nothing at all is said
about my existence, about the reality within which alone I can hear God. For from what source do I get the knowledge of all that the myth tells (the rulers, the veiling of the nature of God, the deception of the demons, etc.)? Since Paul departs from his fundamental idea here, he falls into a contradiction which has often been commented upon. Particular chosen Christians, the ‘perfect’, are here described as the possessors of the Spirit, whereas in Paul’s usual way of thinking, all Christians have the Spirit.

But the contradiction is not (as Lietzmann, for example, thinks) the one which is also (apparently) to be found in Gal. 5. 16f., 25; Rom. 8.12f. There the Spirit is not a possession given to us and under our control, to which an appeal can be made; the Spirit is present only where there is an appropriate way of life. In this passage, however, the Spirit is a possession which we can utilize, which justifies our claim to ‘wisdom’. But the real contradiction is not that a Christian ‘has’ the Spirit, yet does not have it (as a possession). It is that all Christians as baptized persons have the Spirit yet only special individuals count as ‘spiritual’. Thus it is not contradictory for the Corinthians in 3.1–3 to be called ‘carnal’ (σαρκικος) although they are baptized — on the ground of Gal. 5.16f., 25; Rom. 8.12f. that could be possible — but for the ‘spiritual’ as such, those who have control over the Spirit, to be set over against the others in the community.

Therefore is is clear that material criticism rightly objects to the use of the concept of ‘wisdom’ in 1.18–26 as a basis for the interpretation of the concept of ‘wisdom’ in 2.6ff. In 2.5–3.2, it is Paul’s pride which declares that Christians, too, have a ‘gnosis’ which can compete with the gnosis of the heathen.

Therefore we are, I think, much indebted to Barth for bringing the interpretation of I Cor. 1–4 out of the area of explanation in terms of its historical context into the sphere of material discussion of its content. I also think that he has rightly seen the decisive point. But by a more exact exegesis which starts out from the determination of the meaning of the text in its own period, it is in my judgment possible to attain a still sharper conceptual comprehension of the result. Thus I myself cannot forgo the use of material criticism, which stems from the text itself.

The formulation which Barth offers for the contents of chs. 5–6 and their relation to chs. 1–4 seems to me outstanding. The Christian community by its (word and) ethos represents the crisis for natural man. Here, the guiding thought is the observation that Paul does not direct his moralizing to individuals but towards the community as such. The flaming sword of the ‘from God’, which was there suddenly lifted as Christian truth over the religious vagaries of the Corinthians, here is raised in accusation and threat over their natural way of life, which they feel to be assured or even required by Paul’s words “all things are lawful for me”. Christianity brings not rest but unrest into the natural life’ (pp. 14f.; ET p. 33).

There is, of course, need of a clearer explanation of the statement: ‘chs. 1–4 are also to be understood ethically and what is denounced in chs. 5–6 is also a lack of knowledge’ (p. 11; ET p. 33). The ‘all things are lawful for me’ of 6.12ff. also deserves a more exact interpretation. In Stoicism, the criterion for the limit of ‘all things are lawful’ is the ideal man; that is, the correct understanding of our nature as being human. The self, for which the ‘all things are lawful’ holds, is defined by the inter-related concepts of reason (λογος) and nature (φυσις). What is Paul’s criterion? He accepts the ‘all things are lawful’ and qualifies it in his own way. The limit is set by the fact that the self belongs to the ‘body of Christ’. But what is meant by that?

The body is the spiritual body, but Paul does not explain this concept (6.17). On the contrary, a new argument begins at v. 18, which emphasizes the importance of the ‘body’ in such a way that the concept body is given a physical character. Paul is not concerned, as e.g. Bousset thought, with the contrast between sensual and intellectual. In v. 19, the ‘spirit’ is emphasized and its nature is indicated at least so far as to declare it to be something outside the control of men, ‘you are not your own’.

This much may be inferred in principle: there are no actions which are indifferent (though the point is not, of course, developed consistently, cf. 13a with 18), and the criterion by which actions are differentiated is neither the ideal man nor the spiritual man, but God. Man appears therefore as claimed and claimed radically, so that all the claims of the world must fall
silent. It is this – the negation of the claims of the world – that is for Paul the real meaning of ‘all things are lawful for me’.

Therefore Barth is in fact right when he closes his summary of chs. 5–6: ‘Again from a new angle there has become visible in outline something of what he [Paul] in ch. 15 will proclaim as “the resurrection of the dead”’ (p. 15; ET p. 33). For Barth, the meaning of ch. 7 reveals itself as: ‘Above his own well-grounded judgment on this point and against the enthusiasm of those who would make out of it a principle, stands again for Paul the “from God” of v. 7. Furthermore, from the rejection of the pleasures of life, from asceticism, no principle can be established separate from the glory of God; nothing true in itself can be established’ (cf. v. 19). Therefore he can conclude: ch. 7 ‘makes it clear that the force of the “from God” affects not only the wicked man, but also the good man, even the over-good; that the meaning of the goal towards which the whole letter aims will be the glory of God – in truth only the glory of God’ (p. 17; ET pp. 36f.).

This approach is vindicated as it becomes clear that Paul is treating every theme from the standpoint of eschatology. According to Paul, the Christian stands in a peculiarly broken relation to the world. The existence of the Christian is in the world but does not belong to the world. It belongs to the future which is God’s (7.29–31). The Christian’s manner of existence is to be developed again, in clearer concepts, in what Paul says about ‘calling’ in the section 7.17–24 – a section which Barth barely touches. If according to v. 19 neither uncircumcision nor circumcision means anything (before God), it follows that no concrete situation in which a man may happen to be means anything. In that case, of course, ‘remaining’ in a situation can be required only in a dialectical sense. For obviously, under specific circumstances, even uncircumcision or circumcision can be an object of command (ἐντολή) – for example, uncircumcision for the Galatians – though not as in itself a qualification but only as an act which has its meaning in the doing.

So the Christian way of life is never a definite situation, given or established, and anyone who becomes a Christian does not need to alter anything in the external situation of his life as such; he must remain in his ‘calling’. The calling as such is a matter of indifference, as is a person’s married status. This is not a demand for quietism; it is merely the emphatic denial that there are external signs by which being a Christian can be identified as quality to hand. What is required is ‘keeping the commands of God’ (v. 19). The Christian is claimed by God. Therefore the Christian can continually adopt different appearances, for he stands under the future, he belongs to the future; and any specific situation would be already disintegrating, would belong to the past.

However, for Paul in this passage, the ‘calling’ is clearly not the instant claim of God here and now, but (improperly) the circumstances of the individual when God’s call comes to him; it is therefore a continuing situation. Now since being a Christian is not a situation, the ‘calling’, too, seems not to be a removal into a new situation but a claim upon the man called within his concrete historical existence. And this claim puts the man beyond the demands of his specific situation. The mark which characterizes a Christian is simply the mark of being called.

Here I am interpreting in agreement with Barth’s understanding, as is proved by a statement which he makes on chs. 8–10. ‘It is as if Paul took a sponge and would wipe out the counsel he has just given, when he writes (10.31): “whether you eat or drink or whatever you do – do all to the glory of God”. That is the sole intent of this section’ (p. 18; ET p. 38).

Freedom (ἐλευθερία) is the theme of chs. 8–10. The Corinthians believe that their ‘freedom’ is given with their ‘gnosis’. The statement is true, but their understanding of both gnosis and freedom is false. Knowledge (gnosis) in itself does not exist; or, to state it differently, there is no knowledge which gives results on which man can clearly rely. The principle of monotheism cannot be utilized as a basis from which conclusions can be drawn. For in the first place, God is not an object which exists in the same way as earthly things and which can be observed like them. And secondly, the Christian knowledge of God is present only as a determination of life (as obedience to the claim of God) which expresses itself as love (ἀγάπη). In other words, it is clear that God is not object but subject of the Christian’s knowledge.

This truth Paul expresses by the use of a formula of Hellenistic gnosis (8.3). Therefore there is no contradiction between
Barth’s comments on 11.2–16 are also excellent. The actual subject-matter here is not important; that is, the particular custom of wearing a veil is of no significance. The essential point is that there is in Corinth (as Paul sees the situation) a tendency to deny the authority of the husband over the wife. This tendency involves a view of life which Paul attacks, defending his own conservative position. The question how far his view can be disputed is not raised. But in his view a third consideration is important. In the order of nature we run against impassable barriers which direct us upwards, towards that which remains wholly different, wholly incomprehensible—towards God. Repudiation of this natural order is the folly of the Corinthian tendency. The reference to the differences of the sexes as given in the natural order implies no difference in their relation to God. (Christianity does not hallow earthly ordinances!) But the order must be respected as a sign pointing towards the order of God of which it is indicative.

Therefore—so I think the interpretation should continue—natural relations are not reasoned away (still less human existence within them). It cannot be said: natural relations mean nothing before God, therefore we will ignore them. (That would assign a very dubious meaning to them.) The actual man is still circumscribed by nature. It is not a self-evident fact that natural differences mean nothing in the sight of God; nor is it something to be demonstrated by man himself. It is valid only ‘in the Lord’ (by xρισθή, v. 11).

Chapter 11.17–34, like 11.2–16, sets forth ‘the disparagement of the natural man who was flourishing mightily in the Corinthian community, with his drive for self-willed, self-seeking self-assertion and self-vindicitation’ (p. 33; ET p. 63). This characterization of the section by Barth is, of course, somewhat too general; his commentary does not do justice to all the twists of the text. But the meaning of the instruction in v. 26 is rightly interpreted: ‘Paul’s interest is focused on the act as such, not as in later periods on the relation between the elements and the significance of the sacrament. Those who partake announce by their participation . . . that they know their Lord and know that He is outwardly invisible but yet is as immediately present with them as that which they eat and drink . . . . In this ceremony, verily, the shadow which Christ

8.1, ‘we know that we all have knowledge’, and 8.7, ‘but this knowledge is not in all’. The gnosis in v. 1 is to be understood as the possession of a universal truth, a dogma; but in v. 7 it is an existential knowing. The possession of the former does not guarantee that a man is now living in this existential knowing. The Corinthians do not understand that, and therefore they also do not understand what Christian ‘freedom’ is.

Chapter 9.15–18 may also be explained somewhat more pointedly than Barth has done. The point of the section lies in the ‘I am entrusted with a commission’ (οἰκονομία). Paul finds it unthinkable that he should use the ‘freedom’, which he has as an apostle, for its own sake (or for himself!); and therefore he renounces it altogether. For him the renunciation is a demonstration that he is an apostle and that the ‘freedom’ only exists because the ‘necessity’ (ἀνάγκη) is laid upon him. It depends on that wholly and only. It is not like being a government official who has a railroad pass and then uses his freedom for pleasure trips. ‘The exercise of that freedom has no positive value in itself’ (p. 27; ET p. 54). ‘Reward’ (μισθός) and ‘boasting’ (αἰσχόμαι) are primitive ideas to express the fact that Paul acts, looking only towards God.

Then the unity with vv. 19–23 is also clear. The ‘freedom’ is not something that we have for our personal use; it is ‘God’s freedom’ (p. 24; ET p. 49). Accordingly, the end of the section can follow (10.31–33): ‘Whether you eat or drink, etc.’ ‘This naturally has no relation to the modern cliché that the whole of life, even eating and drinking, can be service to God. Paul is not discussing eating and drinking nor any other human activities; he is dealing with the use or misuse of the freedom founded on the knowledge of God. Whatever is done in the freedom which is dependent, really dependent on God, and that means done in the knowledge which is in no way a self-exaltation of men but rather a being known by God (8.3), is done to the glory of God’ (p. 28; ET p. 56).

It is therefore evident throughout that the life of the Christian stands under the ‘end’ (ἐγκράτεια), under the future of God. ‘Paul is concerned equally for the Corinthians who are on the better way and for those on the worse. The former, as well as the latter, must experience the encounter with God as the end of their own way’ (p. 29; ET p. 57).
casts over the whole of this earthly life cannot be forgotten. Is it possible to perform this act without trembling before the great precariousness with which this world of ours was forever branded in the night when our Lord was betrayed?" (p. 35; ET pp. 66ff).

A climax is reached in the interpretation of chs. 12–14 as containing "in the picture that they reveal, something of the end of history or, more accurately, something on the boundary of the end of history" (p. 37; ET p. 70). In the central section, ch. 13, "the actions and the struggles of men are viewed in the same way as in the chapters already discussed — only here the judgement is expressed without ambiguity. Even the acts of the gifted, the inspired, the "spiritual" man terminate at the point where an end is made of man as man, where the best gifts must be judged as fragmentary (ἐκ μέρους, in part) and where "they shall pass away"" (p. 38; ET p. 72).

Though in ch. 13, "a human possibility is shown to be the ultimate possibility of all, beyond the last", it is clear that "this human possibility is God's possibility for men" (p. 39; ET p. 72). Love (ἀγάπη) is not an ethical ideal but an eschatological event. Nor, however, is the enthusiasm present in the spiritually gifted something that can be classed with primitive manifestations or psychic excitement or understood through analogies from the history of religion and the analyses of the psychology of religion. Such manifestations are of course divorced from any clear ethical connotation. On the contrary (however much truth there may be in such comparisons), love is to be understood only as the ultimate human possibility, absolutely beyond the area of healthy, bourgeois religious mediocrity.

These enthusiastic manifestations are to be taken seriously — but they are in fact ambiguous. All such phenomena can, as the parallels in the history of religions prove, arise outside the Christian community. But within the community they all stand under an affirmative sign. 'The significance lies actually not in the manifestations themselves but in their source and goal, in that to which they point, of which they bear witness' (p. 40; ET p. 75). But as soon as they are accepted 'for themselves' within the community (for example, when their relative values are compared), they have lost all relation to their source.

But then it follows that 'within the community' does not provide a decisive criterion for historical judgment. The identification of these manifestations as spiritual gifts cannot be made by observation. Whatever is 'divine' in them is not something objective to which man can point. Their 'divine character' depends on their origin. The gift is unidentifiable apart from its origin; nor can the origin be recognized apart from the gift. The divine origin is therefore not a structural element but is present only as a vivifying force. In other words, one does not possess spirit, one is spirit or one is not.

How does this affect the criterion that these gifts are gifts of the Spirit when they are present in the Christian community? The community is not just a bunch of enthusiasts: it is constituted not by its members but by Christ. It is the 'body of Christ' (12.12f). The relationship with what we are not, with the act of God consummated in the sacrament (12.13), is our only legitimation. But this relationship to the act of God is naturally nothing other than faith. Paul is speaking to Christians, to those who have faith. The real question to which ch. 12 leads is this: how can those who believe, experience the reality of the Spirit in their lives, how can they be certain that in their action and refraining from action the Spirit is made manifest? To that question the answer reads: there is one possibility only, and it lies beyond the 'gifts' (γὰρ πάντας ταύτα); it is love. The puzzling sequence of thought (ch. 13 between 12 and 14) now becomes clear. Chapter 12 concludes: a usable criterion for the divine character of the gifts does not exist. The gifts are present in the community and their divine character depends on the act of God (the sacrament) on which man relies. But what is the way of life of the man who is a member of the community by which he may know himself to be a believer? Love!

Certainly, one cannot say to the unbeliever, 'You must pursue love' (14.1, Goodspeed's translation). But Paul is writing to a Christian community. In that community the indescribable eschatological event becomes real, so far as love is really present in it. And in the description of love (13.4–8) in which the predicates of love there heaped up simply negate man as subject' (p. 47; ET p. 86), it becomes clear that the preaching of 'love' is preaching the resurrection of the dead.

I said earlier that Barth's interpretation of chs. 12–14 is the climax of his book. That emphasis is no accident, but corre-
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sponds to the fact that chs. 12–14 constitute the climax of the letter if the unity of its contents is accepted. If the theme of I Corinthians is the ‘last things’—not as an object of speculation but as a reality in the life of Christians—then the climax of the letter is actually ch. 13 with the interpretation just given. Barth, however, takes ch. 15 to be the climax, for there the resurrection of the dead is the explicit theme. What then should be said of Barth’s treatment of ch. 15 (pp. 56–125; ET pp. 101–213)?

‘The doctrine of the last things is the content of I Cor. 15’ (p. 56; ET p. 101). ‘Last things, however great and significant they might be, are as such not last things. He who would speak of last things can only be he who speaks of the end of all things, speaks of their end understood so radically and so fundamentally, speaks of a reality so absolutely above all things that the existence of all is wholly grounded in that reality alone. Therefore he would be speaking of an end of all things which in truth would be nothing other than their beginning. And of final history and ultimate time only he would speak who would speak of the end of history, of the end of time. And he would speak of their end understood so fundamentally, so absolutely, he would speak of a reality so radically above all happening and all temporality, that while he speaks of the ending of history, of the ending of time, he would at the same time be speaking of that which is the foundation of all time and of all that happens in time’ (pp. 57f.; ET p. 144).

Is Paul in I Cor. 15 speaking in this sense of last things, of the end of history? Actually he does speak of that, but at the same time he is speaking of last things, of the ‘closing scene of history’ which Barth very rightly distinguishes from the real end of history in the sense just defined. The closing scene of history is, namely, ‘history which comes at the close of history, at the close of the life history of individuals as well as of world history or church history or even of natural history. It is outside the possibilities known to us, but yet is always, although it is new and unknown, wider, still a possibility which follows the known in an unbroken sequence, even if perhaps accompanied by unprecedented catastrophes. It takes over the known and continues it on a higher level’ (p. 56; ET p. 102).

Now it seems to me certain that Paul in I Cor. 15 is speaking of such a closing scene of history, although such speaking is really outside his legitimate concern and his intention. In other words, full, exact understanding of I Cor. 15 is not to be attained without a thorough critical study of the content. (This Barth gives only intermittently, as for example on v. 29). However little Paul proclaims any kind of ‘world-view’, like every one else he is unable to avoid having one; and he has to say whatever he says using terms intelligible within the context of his world-view. It is not allowable to explain away the components of this world-view (in Paul’s case mythological components) as simply figurative; or to by-pass them by a re-interpretation. The charge made by Barth against later Christian eschatologists, that they constructed out of the biblical material a closing scene for history which was not the real end of history, holds also against Paul. For Paul takes his material from Jewish or Jewish-gnostic apocalyptic; Paul also ‘stopped halfway’ (p. 59; ET p. 105). That we as critics, perhaps, come no farther than Paul, does not release us from the duty of criticism.

But it must be emphasized still more strongly that criticism is analysis and that the exegesis of I Cor. 15 must not remain stuck fast in the reconstruction of an interesting phenomenon of a past period, but must understand the chapter as the attempt to say the impossible’ (p. 61; ET p. 106). Barth says rightly: ‘Of the real end of history it is possible at every time to say: the end is near!’ (p. 59; ET p. 106). It is therefore true that Paul is actually speaking of the end of history, for he sees men actually standing before God, as chs. 1–14 showed. And it is also true that when Paul speaks of the resurrection of the dead, he is not speaking of the ‘non-existent, the unknown, the unattainable, nor of a second existence, of something further to be learned, of a higher future possession. He is speaking of the source and the truth of all that is existent, all that is known to us and possessed by us’ (p. 60; ET p. 108). For when Paul speaks of the resurrection of the dead, it is clear that he means to speak of us, of our reality, of our existence, of a reality in which we stand. He is not discussing something about which we can speculate and to which access could be gained by knowledge or by some kind of human behaviour—either by moral action or sacrament, asceticism or mysticism.
Our resurrection is, with the resurrection of Christ, a reality (15.20–22). But it is not unimportant that Paul in expressing this truth uses the oriental salvation myth of the Original Man, since knowledge of the myth helps us to explain his separate statements more accurately. On the other hand, it is false to imagine that he liquidates our own existence in myth; for chs. 1–14 showed how he understood our existence.

Now Barth is entirely right when he emphasizes that for Paul the ‘body’ is inherent in the reality of man and that Paul therefore can speak only of a resurrection of the body. Any such concept as immortality of the soul is not only alien to him as an historically limited Jewish Christian but would also be wholly inadmissible for him. By using it he would abandon all that he says about the reality of man. If the resurrection of the body is denied, the whole of Paul is denied and one cannot then salvage Rom. 8.28 or I Cor. 13 as true and edifying (p. 69; ET pp. 122f).

It also follows that Paul knows nothing of a ‘Christian monism’. ‘The idea of a soul surviving after death fits so neatly into a monistic view of the world – although perhaps it does not prove the possession of such a view. The resurrection of the body, however, of the same body which we see die before our eyes and which then ceases to exist, does not affirm a duality of this world and the beyond, but an identity between the two. That identity is not something already given; it cannot be established directly. It can only be hoped for, can only be believed in. Such an affirmation is the pitiless disruption of monism, is the “stumbling-block” and unreason and religious materialism’ (p. 66; ET p. 117). Now, however, we are confronted with the necessity to investigate carefully what Paul understands by ‘body’ (σῶμα). (Barth failed to do this and his exegesis pays the penalty.)

Chapter 15.12–19 is rightly explained. Faith (πίστις) is vain if the uniqueness of Christ is denied. The kerygma rests on revelation and where this revelation is denied, the proclamation is vain. The miracle of Christ’s rising from the dead means for Paul the establishing of the unique category, Christ. For if Christ stands only as a perfect manifestation of personal life (that was certainly not the idea of the Corinthians; for them Christ is a kind of mystery-cult deity), then he remains within the framework of humanity. Then there can be ‘dogmatics’ but not a kerygma. Christian monism, since it cancels the revelation, is trying ‘to pull itself out of the bog by its own hair’. Naturally, the argument of vv. 12–19 is not trying to prove or postulate the truth of the revelation or of the resurrection of Christ. It confronts the reader with the Either-Or.

But it is evidently not correct (in this context) to interpret vv. 1–11 as Barth does: Paul is here defending himself against the accusation of the Corinthians that he had preached to them not the original gospel but his ‘Paulinism’. According to Barth, Paul means to say: ‘It was not and is not my own preference to impart to you the gospel with this strictly defined content . . . but I transmitted it as I myself received it. In other words, the gospel of the original community is in no way different from my gospel. You will gain nothing by trying to go behind Paul in order to find for yourselves a supposedly simpler and more acceptable gospel. For if you go behind Paul, then with your first steps you will come up against the same enigma which you think only Paul and Paulinism sets before you’ (pp. 74f.; ET p. 139).

With this interpretation, Barth has supported his contention that vv. 3f. are not intended to be an historical account. In an historical account, ‘in accordance with the Scriptures’ would have no meaning! (But in the mind of Paul and of the whole Christian community, just the contrary was true!) For what kind of historical datum could there be, the truth of which depended on the resurrection of the dead? (But it is plain that for Paul the resurrection of the dead was accepted also as an historical fact!) The witnesses are said to be witnesses for the gospel and not for the historical fact; the place and time of the ‘was seen’ (ὁδηγηθάναι) are irrelevant; Christ’s appearance is possible always and everywhere. (But how does that accord, in spite of Barth (pp. 81f.; ET p. 132ff.), with the ‘most of whom are still alive’ [v. 6] and the ‘last of all’ [v. 7]?) Neither vision nor objective fact can be deduced from the ‘was seen’.

All of that interpretation seems to me (for better or worse) unacceptable. I can understand the text only as an attempt to make the resurrection of Christ credible as an objective historical fact. And I see only that Paul is betrayed by his apologetic into contradicting himself. For what Paul says in vv. 20–22
of the death and resurrection of Christ cannot be said of an objective historical fact.

I will not now discuss the point that Barth, in my judgment, has given a false image of the Corinthians for whom obviously Christianity was a mystery religion, so that his view of the historical situation leads him to some false interpretations of details. He is right, however, that vv. 20–22 definitively characterize the real situation of Christians. Consequently he can say: 'The coming of the Risen Christ (the Parousia) is not a different, second happening apart from His resurrection, but is only the final, visible, overt stage of the same hidden movement which in the revelation first became known within time. It is the fulfillment of all that which in time can only be grasped as promise' (p. 97; ET p. 167). Precisely when the gnostic salvation myth on the basis of which vv. 20–22 are formulated is known, it becomes clear that Barth's exegesis is correct here. For the fundamental idea in that myth is the inner unity of the cosmic events. The one is only so far as the other also is. But correct as Barth's interpretation is, it still cannot be denied that for Paul the parousia is a different, second event apart from the resurrection, since for him the resurrection and the coming are two temporal occurrences, are objective, 'historical' events.

Paul's view comes to clear expression in vv. 23–28. These verses are intended to support the future 'they shall be made alive' (v. 22) against the belief of the Corinthian gnostics who cancel the future and claim (cf. II Tim. 2.18) to have 'life' as a present possession as a result of the resurrection of Christ. Paul develops the futurity of the resurrection life (not the future situation!) in vv. 23–28. But he does it in a way which includes several statements from traditional Jewish-Christian speculation or from dogmatics (cf. the δι in v. 25). And these statements, which are a part of the world-view that he takes for granted, describe the different dramatic events of the closing scene of history. A typical scriptural citation is meant to demonstrate this fact (that the conquest of death is the last event), which is most important for interpreting the passage.

Barth evades this by an impossible translation and interpretation. (He follows Hofmann of Erlangen.) The 'then' (ἐξην) of v. 24 is to be referred to the 'at his coming' (v. 23). 'At that time, at the end, is death, the last enemy, destroyed.' But apart from the impossibility of taking the intervening sentences [between 24a and 26] as a parenthesis, the text reads εκατάνοια (='after this'), not τάτοι ('at that time'; cf. vv. 28, 54). The εκατάνοια (v. 24) therefore adds the third member to the first two ('first fruits' and 'afterwards'). And (for better or worse) Paul is speaking about different, temporally successive events. In Barth's translation of v. 24, 'for he has destroyed all separate origin', a most important idea has been arbitrarily injected and the meaning of ἄρτοις has been misunderstood. Co-ordinated as it is in the sentence with 'authority' (ἐξηνοικοδομεῖ) and 'power' (διακονεῖς), it can only mean the ruling power of this world. In v. 27 it is impossible to make 'Christ' the subject of δικαιοσύνη δε ἐκτός. We have here a typical exegetical formula, like δικαιοσύνη δε in the following clause, so that it cannot be an independent parenthesis. In that case, a δε or a γαρ would be required. Finally, the ἐκκλησία clause (v. 28), cannot depend on the τῶν ὄρων ἡμείαν but only on the ἐκτάσεως ματιν, for that is the point of the sentence.

Why obscure the fundamental idea of the passage by so many artificial and tortuous experiments? For Barth has correctly recognized Paul's main point. Against all Christian monism, against mysticism and a spiritualistic belief in immortality, Paul is emphasizing that 'the present world situation and even our present relation to God — even the Christian's relation to God — is wholly provisional, an episode, is in fact an episode in the transition and the struggle' (p. 97; ET p. 168). Death is not overcome by us by means of a pious frame of mind or in any spiritual-religious-ethical kingdom of God on earth. Death is not overthrown by us by our means of a pious frame of mind or in any spiritual-religious-ethical kingdom of God on earth. Death is in the world as the pinnacle of all rebellion against God; and death will be overcome some day. The meaning of the kingdom of Christ and therefore also the meaning of Christian faith is never in any way encompassed in what is present and given. Rather, it is in its essence a hope and a waiting for that which in every time is only what is to come, only what is promised' (p. 99; ET p. 171).

It is in fact certain that for Paul 'life is not a given objective entity', but is future; and he does not speak of 'life after death' as an existing situation. 'The kingdom of God, however, is not, as it is often so easily supposed to be, an exalted continuation of this life — it is just the resurrection of the dead.' To believe,
to stand in the kingdom of God, means to be waiting for the resurrection... A Christianity which does not accept this meaning of the kingdom of Christ, which is the kingdom of God, which is the end of death, – such a Christianity is nonsense' (pp. 99f.; ET p. 172).

It is also important to understand the relativity of the Christian religion. ‘Relativity means dependance. The dependence is on God, who speaks His decisive Word in the resurrection of the dead. The presence or absence of this dependence decides the question of whether Christianity has a full true meaning or is complete unreason’ (p. 105; ET p. 181). Hence we can understand that the words ‘resurrection of the dead’ are for Paul nothing but ‘a paraphrase for the word, God’ (p. 112; ET p. 192).

I accept all that as correctly interpreting Paul. But I regret Barth’s failure to recognize that this meaning can be ascribed to Paul only on the basis of a critical study of the content. Barth himself involuntarily employs such criticism in his own ingenious paraphrases. But I do not think this kind of criticism, this analysis, is so easy to practise. However much I admire Barth’s sure grasp of the central ideas of the text, I cannot proceed by his method. We are not dealing here with a mere juxtaposition of genuine Pauline concepts and ideas which belong to the area of the thought of his time. The two interlace and interpenetrate. In my judgment there is need of much more rigorous exegetical work and of closer analysis of the text if assured results are to be attained.

But even then the hazard of such exegesis must be much more strongly emphasized (and such critical considerations do indeed lie behind Barth’s printed comments). It is no small matter when the ideas of Paul which are particularly plain and which were certainly important to Paul (the whole ‘closing scene of history’, for example) are so to speak explained away – whether it be by re-interpretation or by critical analysis.

The conclusions from the exegesis of 15.1–34 may be summarized as follows:

1. Paul knows nothing of an immortality of the soul. For him, ‘life’ is not the endless continuation of man’s given present life (or even of the life conferred in a mystery). Therefore it is not something present, something ‘natural’.

2. For Paul, earthly life is characterized by death. If he were speaking of the immortality of the soul that would not be true; death would then become just one event within life, something like a sleep from which man wakes again or like a journey which takes him to another place. This would be the case equally if the immortality is not ours from the beginning but is created by some medicine of immortality (φάρμακον ἀθανασίας).

3. Accordingly ‘life’ for Paul can only be a future miracle which remains future so long as man is man, that is to say so long as man exists as a temporal being.

4. Nevertheless, ‘life’ for Paul does in a certain sense exist in the present, so far as through revelation the future has become reality in the present, or so far as man is himself future. There is therefore a peculiar identity between the present man and the future man; and Paul definitely names the ‘body’ as the bearer of this identity.

5. Therefore the being of man as such is characterized by the ‘body’ and by ‘death’; the being of the Christian man by the ‘body’ and by the future of ‘life’.

Now all of the above depends on the exact determination of the concept body (σῶμα) – perhaps it might be translated ‘corporeality’ – and vv. 35–44a can be, in a way, used for that purpose. What these verses intend to provide is an elucidation of Paul’s purpose; actually they obscure his thought by their apologetic. Here Barth is again able to evade the necessary critical analysis by a very ingenious, but to my mind untenable, exegesis. According to him, the general sense of vv. 35–44a must be: ‘Between life and life of the same entity there stands, if not the resurrection, at least something analogous. It could even be said: the enigma of the resurrection, between the seed and the plant, is death’ (p. 108; ET p. 185). ‘Take this (v. 36) to be the general answer and the examples may be found in vv. 37–41. In nature the same entity is met, (a) vv. 37f. in sequence, (b) vv. 39–41 simultaneously, in a totally different form without losing its identity. Then follows in vv. 42–44a the application of the double analogy: as in nature this change of predicates occurs without loss of identity, so also in the resurrection’ (p. 108; ET p. 186).

The general characterization is correct. These analogies are
not offered as proof; they are only intended to show that the resurrection is conceivable (p. 107; ET p. 186). In vv. 35-44 Paul really ‘begs the question’ (petitio principii) (p. 108; ET p. 186). It is also true that the analogy of the grain of wheat is not intended to present the resurrection as a natural process (p. 106; ET p. 183). Certainly the resurrection was not that for Paul – but neither was the germination of the grain of wheat. Paul has no conception of a ‘natural process’, as v. 38 shows, ‘God gives it a body as he has chosen’. But that here one’s thought is directed to the Source of nature, to its creation and redemption, cannot in my judgment be accepted. The problem of nature as such is not under consideration at all; only by inference is it clear that for Paul nature does not exist as an independent entity alongside God.

Further, it is not true that v. 36 can be taken as a general answer which is exemplified by the two analogies given in vv. 37f. and vv. 42-44a. For vv. 37f. and vv. 42-44a do not stand on the same level and v. 36 and vv. 37f. belong immediately together.

The general sense of vv. 36-38 is perhaps correctly reproduced by Barth. The sprouting of the plant gives the image of a pure synthesis; that is, the natural event becomes intelligible when in our thinking we substitute the same subject for the wholly different forms of seed and plant. In the difference of the successive forms the same subject remains. (‘The subject persists, the predicates have become different’ seems to me an inadmissible formulation; the ‘seed’ is not a predicate of ‘plant’). Actually the synthesis is a synthesis of plus and minus aspects which meet together at zero, the critical point which for the seed means death, for the plant sprouting. ‘In the middle, in the wholly hidden critical point between before and after lies a creation, more exactly “a new creation”’. With the affirmation of the unity of the subject, death as the middle point between the two forms is affirmed and with it the incomprehensible creative life. The ‘one entity in the midst of death is changed into the new form in order in the change to prove itself for the first time as really one’ (p. 109; ET p. 188). Of course here we ‘do not yet have an understanding of God and the resurrection, but we have the possibility of understanding if they are given us to understand’ (p. 111; ET p. 190). The resurrection, too,

is a change, the subject of which is man. We know only one predicate, the old body; not the other, the new body. But so far as we see death here as we saw it in the seed, the assertion that for men, too, death is the point of transition is an understandable assertion. The critical point is conceivable as a turning point which leads from minus to plus.

But in reality nothing is understood, for the analogy fails precisely at the decisive point. The transition of the seed into the plant is in no sense a dying. When it is so called, then the sprouting process of the plant is being interpreted from human experience; the plant is in truth personified. We have really only a substitution, a quid pro quo. One cannot talk seriously of the death of a grain of wheat. The seed is already the plant (in direct, not indirect, identity). And the formulation of two different predicates for the one continuing subject is untrue, for in the case of the plant we have two forms of appearance which are indeed impossible simultaneously but do not in any way contradict each other. With man, on the contrary, it is not a matter of different forms of appearance of a subject which can be interchanged, but of the being of man which is defined in two mutually exclusive ways, since that being is first dead and then alive.

Paul, of course, can see an analogy here, because he names as subject the ‘body’, which can have two different forms of appearance, transient and eternal. But that leads to a wrong road, for now transitoriness and eternity appear as inherent qualities, as ‘flesh’ (σάρξ) and ‘glory’ (φατνία). (N.B. It is especially misleading if one proceeds from this apologetic passage, I Cor. 15:35ff., to the interpretation of Paul’s concept of ‘body’ and of his anthropological concepts in general).

Barth’s interpretation of vv. 39-41 is therefore also wrong. In his view, here too, Paul is describing a synthesis in which the same subject, ‘flesh’ or ‘body’ or ‘glory’ can appear simultaneously and separately in different forms. Here also, in the change of predicates (bird, fish, etc.), a passing away and a becoming new takes place, in that different things are included in one concept. But apart from the fact that it is extremely artificial to label the ‘change’ of the concept ‘a passing away and becoming new’ (the concept itself does not change at all!), there is a further misunderstanding. Paul does not co-ordinate
`body' with the entities, `flesh' and `glory'. What Paul means to say is rather that besides the `terrestrial bodies' whose different kinds of `flesh' (σάρξ) are described in v. 39, there are also the `celestial bodies' which differ among themselves in glory (δόξα). `Flesh' and `glory' are therefore the materials, the natural qualities, which can acquire form in the `body' (σώμα).

The point of the passage is then that the resurrection of the `body' is conceivable because there are bodies of different materials. But if the `body' can equally well be mortal or immortal (in the meaning just given), then death is not taken seriously. Death is then only something appended to man, which could be different; it does not characterize men as men. Mortality is a natural quality produced by the accidental character of matter. And so, too, `life' is only an accidental, natural quality of the `body'.

Such an interpretation misses entirely Paul's real concern; for the resurrection is then not a miracle, the future of God. Man is not transformed in the resurrection, he remains the same; he merely acquires a different kind of material. Nor is the `life' the life of this actual man now existing (that is, it is not resurrection from the dead!), but it is a kind of general divine nature. With this view, the genuine Pauline concept of the `body' is abandoned. For if the `body' can equally well be mortal or immortal, if as body it belongs equally to all earthly and heavenly beings, then the `body' is no longer that which determines human existence as such. Into the place of the `body' (σώμα) has moved the Greek concept of `form' (εἶδος), gained from the observation of nature. Many modern scholars have allowed themselves to be led astray by this passage and interpret `body' in Paul as form, structure.

In 15:44b–49, Barth's understanding of Paul stands out most clearly. `Resurrection of the dead', a paraphrase of the word `God'! `God is Lord.' This assertion could not be made on the basis of the rule of God over the world (that is not within the scope of our knowledge, not even after the best religious observation of nature and history), but only on the ground of God's rule over me who am neither world nor nature nor history. 3 If I know only this God [God who rules the world], then I know only so much as I could know of fate. Before this God I could only stand, observing, uninvolved, a spectator" (p. 112; ET p. 193).

That God is Lord, not of the world which can be objectively observed, but the Lord over me, means that he is the Lord of life. But that does not mean that he is Lord of an eternal life known to us, the determination of which by God we also know. `The determining of eternity, of the universality of things, by God is certainly a pious idea. But equally certainly it is not an idea which puts me actually and really under the claim of God' (p. 112; ET p. 193).

If God is spirit, we certainly are not spirit. God would, of course, be our Lord so far as we share in the `spirit'. But how inadequate that would be, even if it were really true! And it is not true. For the concept of spirit in human idealism or dualism cannot possibly be applied to the Spirit of God. It cannot be true, for the Spirit of God is not anything that a man can possess along with other things.

But apart from that untruth, `what about the rest of myself, which is certainly not spirit, but is earth, body? God is Lord of the body! With those words, the question of God confronts me sharply and inescapably. The body is the man; the body is what I am. And this man, this I, belongs to God. Now finally I have no refuge concealing me from God; I can no longer raise as a shield any sort of dualism nor retreat into any reality protected against God. I can offer no earthly weakness as an excuse. If God shall be my Lord, He is Lord of exactly this earthly weakness. For this earthly weakness is just what I am as I am bound to God, bound to live in God, to be glorious before God. The `Spirit', not our fragment of spirit and spirituality, but the Spirit of God conquers. And the Spirit conquers not in a purely spiritual being but there “is raised a spiritual body”. The end of God's way is a corporeality" (pp. 112f; ET pp. 193f). (Compare p. 115; ET p. 197: `to desire to belong to God without the body is rebellion against the will of God'; p. 123; ET p. 206: for the interpretation of `this' [τούτο], see also p. 68; ET p. 121.)

Here Paul's true meaning finds brilliant expression. And the real meaning of both `body' and `spirit', even if not made conceptually clear, is given valid cogency. But Barth did not

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3 Here Barth means by history the complex of events in space-time which can be `objectively' observed, not the history in which I really stand.
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really derive this meaning from I Cor. 15 44b-49. He took it partly from the first half of the chapter and partly from other statements of Paul such as Rom. 6. To find the concept of the 'spiritual body', as Barth has developed it, in I Cor. 15:44 is not possible. Nowhere in vv. 35-44 is it stated that the spirit is the Spirit of God. And it is significant that Barth does not preserve the inferential sense of 44b but translates the οὐ by 'so far as'. Then he explains the meaning of 'natural' (ψυχικός), not from Paul's terminological use, but from the ordinary language of today when he infers from the elimination of the 'natural body' by the 'spiritual body' that Paul is combating the immortality of the soul (and quite rightly!) (pp. 114f.; ET pp. 195f.).

For the rest, Barth's interpretation of vv. 45-49 and vv. 50-58 can be covered briefly. In general the exegesis here suffers because of the attempt to exclude the expectation of catastrophic developments from Paul's eschatology. So, for example, 'then' (τότε) in v. 54 is explained as 'from this standpoint'; the shawl of the last trumpet is to be put in quotation marks; the 'mystery' of v. 51 is the simultaneity of being alive and being dead in the resurrection and so on. I can see all that only as an arbitrary forcing of the meaning.

But I consider entirely right Barth's characterization of the Christian way according to Paul. We who in our own concrete existence actualize the idea of man with 'living being' (ψυχη ζωσικα) also actualize the idea of man with 'life-giving spirit' (πνευμα ζωουνατ). In the coming of Christ 'we can and we ought to lay claim to the original, the redeemed creation. But that claim is not to something existent, something objectively given; it is rather to ordinances which are to be understood only as coming from above.' Paul sets man 'between Adam and Christ and says to him 'you are both'; or rather 'you belong to both'. And as both together mark the way of God from the old creature to the new, so your life is also the arena across which this road leads. And you must also cross from here to there' (pp. 117f.; ET p. 202).

But what, then, does it mean that Barth has set the eternal future (futurum aeternum) in place of the future expected by Paul as an impending cosmic event (pp. 122, 124f.; ET pp. 209, 211)? It means interpreting Paul really critically; it means understanding him better than he understood himself! And I can only repeat that the hazard of this kind of exegesis must always be explicitly recognized, and the exegesis must be developed on a basis of the most exact knowledge of the contemporary background and by means of careful and penetrating analysis of the content. If previous research has fulfilled the first of these two exegetical tasks with great devotion and astonishingly valuable results, it should be said that the second - since F. C. Baur - has been pushed into the background. Precisely at this point, Barth has shown a new direction. The work is not finished, but we stand at a new beginning.

In conclusion, I should like to point out one peculiarity of Barth's work. Almost always he refuses to make use of the other letters of Paul as an aid to interpretation. I do not see why this help should not be used, and I venture to indicate briefly how the other letters might be fruitful for the understanding of I Corinthians.

While it is true that the eschatological hope of Paul is directed towards a future objective event in time, it is equally true that this event is a definitive event in which time stands still and the past is over (I Cor. 15:20). Therefore it can certainly be said that Paul cannot really mean an objective temporal event, for fundamentally there is nothing 'afterwards'. The parousia does not mark a division between two different times occurring in a temporal sequence one after the other. Therefore Paul gives no picture (this is especially noteworthy in vv. 23-28) of the conditions of life after the resurrection, except in the misleading, polemical section vv. 35-44. Basically, 'to be with Christ' is the only thing he can say of life after the resurrection, cf. I Thess. 4:17; Phil. 1:23.

The meaning of 'to be with Christ' must be determined from what Christ meant to Paul. For that meaning, Rom. 5:1ff., must be mentioned in addition to I Cor. 1:30: 'whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and consecration and redemption'. There we have the statement of what Christ means for men, these actual men who we ourselves are in our temporal situation. Christ is not the cosmic ground of a future condition of existence, but the historical foundation of our present life. In a certain sense, i.e. in so far as we belong to Christ, we are the resurrected, are the 'first fruits' (αρχηγη),
are a 'new creation' (και νω) κτισμος), cf. II Cor. 5.14-17.

But this resurrection life is never something objective. It is between time and eternity. In the judgment of God we are the justified, and the 'final possibility' that this may become a reality in our temporal life is 'love'.

Since in the First Letter to the Corinthians the dominant theme is not justification by faith but the temporal life of the believer within time, ch. 13 is the true climax of the letter.

HISTORICAL AND SUPRA-HISTORICAL RELIGION IN CHRISTIANITY?1, 2

[1926]

The book by the Professor of New Testament at Heidelberg, Martin Dibelius, which is discussed in the following pages, is one of the most significant volumes to appear this year (1926). The book is important not only because of the author's great learning, his acuteness and the variety of gifts which have distinguished him as a scholar in his own field; but also because with these he combines a most modern spirit. Furthermore, he has devoted his learning to the service of practical religion and to the interest of the church.

It is instructive to compare his book (as has already been done elsewhere)3 with Harnack's What Is Christianity? Both books are typical of specific periods of theological thought. The change in the situation today in comparison with the winter semester of 1899/1900 when Harnack's lectures on the nature of Christianity were delivered, finds expression immediately in the title of Dibelius' book, with its antithesis between historical and supra-historical.

With the distinction between history and supra-history, the author by-passes more than a hundred years of development and relates himself in a specific way to the tradition of Rationalism. Rationalism - within theology - had sought to justify its pious relation to the original Christian tradition by means of this distinction, the roots of which lie much deeper in the intellectual history of the West.

Hegel's philosophy of history and the application of that

1 ΖΖ, IV (1926), pp. 385-403.
3 Rade, CW (1925), col. 859.