

The Resurrection of Christ in Contemporary German Theology

A Thesis for the Degree Master of Theology

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Importance of the Study

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine, the Gibraltar of Christian evidence, and the Waterloo of infidelity and rationalism. It is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine because it is the prominent and cardinal point of the apostolic testimony. It is mentioned more than 104 times in the New Testament. The paramount importance of this doctrine is readily seen: (1) It is evidential. It confirms the truthfulness of Christ (Matt. 12:38-40; 16:21; 17:9-23; 20:19; John 2:19-21, etc.) and guarantees the deity of Christ and the atoning character of his death (Rom. 1:4). (2) It is evangelistic. The resurrection is one of the two fundamental truths of the gospel and assures divine redemption (I Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 4:25). (3) It is experimental. The resurrection is regarded as the source and standard of the believer's holiness. Every aspect of Christian life and experience is associated with it (Rom. 6). (4) It is eschatological. It is the guarantee and model of the believer's resurrection, it furnishes him with an undying hope (I Cor. 15), and it assures final judgment (Acts 17:13).

The resurrection is further the Gibraltar of Christian evidence because it is the best established fact in Bible history. It was announced in prophecy (Ps. 16:10-11; Acts 13:31-37); it was predicted by

Christ (Matt. 16:21; 17:9-23; Mark 8:31); it was reported by the women (Luke 24:11; John 20:13-15); it was evidenced to the disciples (John 21; Acts 10:40-41; Luke 24:34); and Christ appeared to Paul and hundreds of others (I Cor. 15:5-8).

Finally, the resurrection is the Waterloo of infidelity and rationalism. This doctrine is crucial and determinative to any theological system. It is the living center and object of Christian faith. On this account a theological system stands or falls with its view of the resurrection. The believer, who is exhorted to "prove all things" (I Thess. 5:21) and to "try the spirits" (I John 4:1), can and should employ this doctrine as a measuring rod to probe the murkiness of today's theological pools of confusion.

The Intention of the Study

This theological survey attempts to scan the situation of contemporary German theology, to determine what basic views the various theological systems hold relative to the resurrection, and to investigate the presuppositions on which those views are based. This understanding, in turn, will be a key to the theological schools and aid in their evaluation. The German situation is chosen because, without doubt, German theology determines the theology of the rest of the world. In this sense the maxim is true, which is frequently heard, that America is twenty years behind Germany. This therefore being the case, it is only right to examine the theological climate of Germany today and thus to be informed as to the changes and trends which will become evident

before long in America as well.

The Contemporary Situation

The schools

A survey of the theological situation in Germany must of necessity be limited to the faculties of theology at the universities. It is only here that theology gains its impetus and exerts its influence. German theology is integrally connected with the German academic tradition. The universities under consideration are Hamburg, Münster, Göttingen, Marburg, Mainz, Heidelberg, Tübingen, Erlangen, Basel, and Zürich. Although Basel and Zürich are technically in Switzerland, the theological faculties have long been closely linked to Germany because of the common language and the constant exchange of scholars. Since the partitioning of Germany after the Second World War, little is heard of from the still functioning theological faculties of East Germany at Rostock, Leipzig, and Halle-Wittenberg.

Early in this century and before, a theological viewpoint could be determined by a study of the faculty at a given school, so that the brands of theology came to be known, for example, as the conservative Erlangen School, which for many years fought against the rationalism of the liberal Tübingen School. But these designations are no longer true. Theological systems are formed around the scholars instead of a particular university.

The scholars

Actually, there are as many different types of theology in Germany as there are theologians. Decades ago men like Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann nearly eclipsed all other theological directions and made converts to their ideas. But their students, now professors themselves, have long since departed from their masters' methods. Like the medieval scholastic, each theologian has his own system. Nevertheless, certain trends of thought are discernible and it has been advisable, for the purpose of this paper, to gather German theology into four general schools: the Neo-orthodox school, the Mediating school, the Bultmann school, and the Post-Bultmannian school. The designation of these schools, as well as the grouping of the theologians in each, must be somewhat arbitrary, but a wide representation of the various systems has been attempted.

It has been impossible to read all the works of each of the two theologians who are chosen to represent the four schools. But this has not been necessary, even as it is not necessary to drink a whole barrel dry to determine what vintage it contains. The theologians' works have been studied as to their views of the resurrection. In each instance, a sketch of the person himself and his general theological viewpoint will be given, for it is no more possible to separate the theology from the man that holds it than it is to divorce a man from his environment. But again, this had to be limited, because of the nature of the paper and of the fact that many excellent works already exist which analyze the theologians.

CHAPTER II

THE NEO-ORTHODOX SCHOOL

The Rationale of the School

The dilemma in which religious liberalism found itself in the early decades of this century, as a result of its obvious failure and the crisis of Western culture, proved the opportunity for a theological renaissance, commonly called neo-orthodoxy. The leader of this movement in its beginning was the Swiss pastor and theologian, Karl Barth. In his protest Barth was seconded by kindred spirits, especially Friedrich Gogarten, Emil Brunner, and Eduard Tunnysen. The movement emphasized God's transcendence, man's sin and a return to the Word, over against the liberal conception of God's immanence and man's goodness. Rejecting the old liberalism, this movement also repudiated fundamental orthodoxy. Wide variations of viewpoint have appeared in the movement and its influence has been greatly extended. Its leaders' views of the resurrection are representative of the view which the movement as a whole holds relative to this central doctrine.

The Representatives of the School

Karl Barth

The person.--The Reformed theologian was born in 1886 in Basel, Switzerland. After holding a pastorate in Safenwyl from 1911 to 1921, he became professor of Reformed theology in Göttingen. In 1925 he

started to lecture in Münster, was called to the University of Bonn in 1930, but in 1935 he was exiled by the Nazis. From 1935 until his retirement he was professor in Basel.

With his Römerbrief (1919) Barth caused a deep-going revolution in Continental theology. He emphasized the sinfulness of man and the holiness of God, reminding men that God is "wholly other" and that all our statements concerning God are but stammering attempts to give expression to the unspeakable. Barth had been much under the influence of neo-Kantianism and Kierkegaard, and after 1925 his corrective theology has been greatly influenced by Calvinism, becoming a highly elaborate theological system.

Theological divergencies led to breaks with Gogarten and Brunner. Being exiled to Switzerland, Barth continued to exercise influence, although in recent years there has been a decline in his following. Presently, the octogenarian is still working on his massive Church Dogmatics.

His position.--In studying Barth's view of the resurrection--or, for that matter, any other of his positions--one encounters almost insuperable difficulties. The first one is that his theology is a developing one. The time when he said something is as important as what he said. Then too, Barth's way of expressing himself, his dialectic approach, makes him at times very difficult to understand. Seemingly contradictory statements are frequently put side by side to confront one with the whole truth, as Barth sees it. Furthermore,

Barth's acceptance of biblical criticism actually casts doubt on the authority of many passages, though he may appear to be taking them at face value. There is also the difficulty of terminology: the investing of old terms with a new meaning. But perhaps the greatest difficulty in understanding Barth, however, is his concept of the two kinds of history--Historie and Geschichte--and the conception of the nature of revelation. All these factors influence a study of Barth and render an understanding of his view as difficult as putting one's finger on a pellet of mercury. One thinks one has it, but actually it has escaped somewhere else.

Starting with one of Barth's earlier works, The Resurrection of the Dead, one finds ample illustrations of the above difficulties. Barth is basically relativizing the story of the resurrection with his exegesis of I Corinthians 15. Barth raises the question

whether all that Paul meant here might not have the effect, not of disconnecting the historical position of the question as such, but of relativizing it. . . . The verbal forms "he died, was buried, rose again, was seen" . . . are by no means chronologically successive or in juxtaposition.¹

This event of the resurrection happened "in history, to be sure! But in history, the frontier of history."² Thus Barth launches out against every account of the resurrection as "a chronological recital of things."³ Therefore he can say, "This tomb may prove to be a defi-

¹Karl Barth, The Resurrection of the Dead, trans. H. J. Stenning (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1933), pp. 131-2.

²Ibid., p. 134. ³Ibid.

nitely closed or an open tomb; it is really a matter of indifference."¹ He admits, however, that according to the record "the tomb is doubtless empty, under every conceivable circumstance empty! 'He is not here.'"² And yet, Barth relegates the whole event to the boundary of history, or, as he expressed it by dodging an answer to a recent question by one of his students, whether a picture could have been taken of the empty tomb: "The resurrection happened on the rim of history."

In a remarkable little book on the Apostle's Creed according to Calvin's Catechism, The Faith of the Church, comprised of six seminars of Barth, given from 1940 to 1943, some unusually clear statements are found concerning the resurrection:

The New Testament describes Easter by two assertions: the women found the tomb empty. Then they met the risen Christ acting in their midst in a humanly-speaking very strange and new, yet very real manner. The mention of the empty tomb in the Gospels irrefutably marks the bodily resurrection. By this we are instructed concerning man and his life: he is body and spirit. When he is living, he lives as body and soul. Hence also man's resurrection is corporeal.³

A clearer statement of the bodily resurrection of Christ can scarcely be found elsewhere in Barth's writings. With great lucidity Barth proceeds:

The New Testament tells us quite simply: do you want to believe in the living Christ? And it shows us that we may believe in him only if we believe in his corporeal resurrection. For life without a body is not human life. This is the content of the New Testament. We are always free to reject it, but not to modify it

¹Ibid., p. 135. ²Ibid., p. 138.

³Karl Barth, The Faith of the Church, trans. Gabriel Vahanian (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1958), pp. 106-7.

nor to pretend that the New Testament tells us something else. We may accept or refuse the message, but we may not change it.¹

Unaccustomed as one is to such undeniably orthodox and unusually clear statements from Barth, the question arises immediately whether he really means this. Upon examination of the introduction to the book and the context of the passage, one's fears are soon confirmed: Barth primarily presents Calvin's view. Concerning this the translator remarks:

Actually more than once Barth will have to part company with Calvin, for example on the issue of predestination and the resurrection of the flesh His understanding of the virgin birth and the empty tomb is both in strict conformity with orthodoxy and--we must admit--wholly unorthodox.²

These unorthodox differences with Calvin pertain primarily to Barth's view of history. He appends his discussion of the resurrection with a "Remark on the 'Historicity' of the Resurrection":

Unquestionably, the resurrection narratives are contradictory. A coherent history cannot be evolved from them. The appearances to the women and apostles, in Galilee and Jerusalem, which are reported by the Gospels and Paul, cannot be harmonized. It is a chaos. The evangelical theologians of the nineteenth century . . . were wrong in trying to arrange things so as to prove the historicity of the resurrection. . . . The witnesses attended an event that went over their heads, and each told a bit of it. But these scraps are sufficient to bear witness to us of the event and its historicity. Every one of the witnesses declares God's free grace which surpasses all human understanding.³

All that Barth said about the resurrection in this context--if it did come from him--has been vitiated by the above paragraph. The resurrection is not based on a reliable historical record. But although

¹Ibid., p. 107.

²Ibid., p. 11.

³Ibid., p. 108.

the resurrection accounts be marked "by obscurity, by contradiction, by speaking of it in saga or legend, in unhistorical and pre-historical form, they clearly convey to us the fact that there the disciples had a confrontation."¹ Did the event happen? Barth answers, "Yes." Does this mean that it is a simple historical fact open to verification? The answer is "No." Barth agrees with Bultmann that the forty days after the resurrection are not among the historical facts:

We may well accept as history that which good taste prevents us from calling "historical" fact, and which the modern historian calls "saga" or "legend" on the ground that it is beyond the reach of his methods.²

Indeed the Easter story is such a "saga" and it has only a "tiny" 'historical' margin." But it was objective and it happened, though it cannot be verified. Barth does defend the tomb as an "indispensable sign."³ Barth obviously wrestles with the tension between revelation and history. The basic assumption is that there can be no revelation in history. The fact of the limitation of the post-resurrection appearances to the disciples is proffered by Barth as evidence that the real resurrection did not take place in ordinary history but in *Geschichte*. Christ appeared only to the eye of faith.

According to Barth, the resurrection is actually no new event

¹Cornelius Van Til, *Has Karl Barth Become Orthodox?* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1954), p. 173.

²Klaas Runia, "The Resurrection and History," *The Reformed Theological Review*, XXV (May/August 1966), 46.

³Ibid.

which has its own importance, but it is only the "revelation" of Christ's completed story on the cross. Pannenberg sees the change in Barth's position only in the fact

that he now acknowledges the event of revelation, the unhistorical relationship of the whole life of Jesus to its origin in God, nevertheless as a special event in the time sequence of the history of Jesus.¹

The resurrection as such was not purely historical, since it was of a revelatory character, but inasmuch as it was an event in Christ's historical existence, it does have a relationship to history. Barth will go no farther than this. For all his commendable emphasis on the reality and fact of the resurrection over against Bultmann's demythologizing, he nevertheless departs from the orthodox view by definitely excluding all historical verification of the resurrection. It happened on the "rim" of history. It is nothing less than forced exegesis to explain away the eye-witness account in I Corinthians 15 as being a listing of witnesses who are meant to witness, not to the fact of the resurrection, but to the genuineness of the Pauline gospel.²

Emil Brunner

The person.--Brunner may be considered as the clearest and most

¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1964), p. 109. Quotes from untranslated German works are translated by this writer.

²Rudolf Bultmann, "Neues Testament und Mythologie," Kerygma und Mythos, ed. Hans-Werner Bartsch (Hamburg-Bergstedt: Evangelischer Verlag, 1960), p. 45.

systematic thinker of the school of Dialectic theology. He was born in 1889 in Winterthur, Switzerland, and studied in Zürich, Berlin, and at Union Seminary, New York. Like Barth, he has been assistant pastor, pastor, and professor. Since 1924 he has held the chair of systematic theology in Zürich. He is more moderate in his approach and, in distinction to Barth, accepts natural theology in his system, but he "simplifies" orthodoxy by eliminating all topics that in his view have no bearing on spiritual life, such as the virgin birth and most of the New Testament miracles. With his dialectic theology of the Word he wishes to engage man in the existential encounter of personal truth.¹

It may be questioned why Brunner is included in the contemporary theological situation since he passed away in the summer of 1966. The answer is that although he now knows better, his error and influence live on.

His position.--The weakness of Brunner's system, along with Barth's, centers in the dialectical presuppositions that relate revelation only tenuously with history and reason. Brunner observes that "in the Christian church no less than everything depends on the faith in the resurrection. . . . A Jesus who was not resurrected but remained in the tomb, cannot be the Christ."² To Brunner the resurrection was

¹Otto A. Piper, "Emil Brunner," Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Vergilius Ferm (Paterson, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, and Co., 1964), p. 90.

²Emil Brunner, Die Christliche Lehre von Schöpfung und Erlösung, Dogmatik II (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1950), p. 434.

a fact, a life principle, which guided the early church. On what, then, is this fact based? On a credible record? No! In the same vein as Barth he writes:

In strange contrast to this unquestionably basic fact and to the imperative clarity of the New Testament witnesses in relation to this foundational fact stands the other, which no less can be denied, that the accounts of the specific How, Where and When are greatly divergent from each other. The five accounts of the resurrection of the four evangelists and the Apostle Paul can simply not be brought together to form a picture without contradictions, and the traditional method of harmonization stands in danger to let the more credible witnesses come too short at the expense of the less credible. . . . The more accurate Pauline account stands in considerable contradiction to the stories of the evangelists . . . among whom . . . the process of the formation of the legends becomes visible.¹

The fact of the resurrection stands but the records are not reliable.

It is therefore not surprising that Brunner concludes:

All of this the supposed contradictions brings close the conclusion that the original witness of the resurrection knew nothing of an empty tomb, but had as object alone the confrontation with the resurrected one. . . . The question of the How and Where, exclusively the question of the empty tomb and the bodily resurrection, understood in that sense is therefore for us secondary.²

With an empty tomb excluded and the bodily resurrection denied, what does Brunner mean by resurrection? He deplores the medieval concept of the resurrection of the flesh by asserting:

Resurrection of the body, yes; Resurrection of the flesh, no. But resurrection of the body does not mean identity of the resurrection body with the material (though transformed) flesh body; but the resurrection of the body means continuity between the individual creatureliness this side and on the other side of death.³

¹Ibid., pp. 434-35.

²Ibid., p. 437f.

³Ibid., p. 442.

Not on the basis of his own world view but on the basis of the New Testament records themselves, Brunner maintains that the resurrected body of Christ is the church, because it is always called his body. The New Testament, says he, knows nothing of a physically ascended Christ. The bodily resurrection is thus eliminated and the resurrection that Brunner speaks of is equated with the ascension. The complete subjectivism to which Brunner is driven can be seen from his frank admission:

So we must be willing to admit that there is no uniform answer to the question "What, then, did really take place?" and that probably it is not intended that there should be such an answer. . . . Easter, as an event, stands in a category by itself; it is something which we can sum up under no heading, which cannot be fitted into any ideas and images of thought and experience.¹

All we can actually say is that "he who died on the Cross has revealed himself to the faithful as the living one."² But if we do not have a reliable record of the resurrection and have no right to ask what happened at the resurrection, how is this knowledge obtained in the first place? Brunner's answer is clear. Negatively, he asserts:

Our faith is not based upon the record of the apostles' experience of the resurrection. . . . We would believe in him as the risen Lord even if there were no narratives of the resurrection at all.³

Positively, "the recognition of the resurrected one should be and had to be a recognition of faith."⁴ Brunner stresses that Jesus appeared only

¹Emil Brunner, The Mediator, trans. Olive Wyon (London: The Lutterworth Press, 1934), p. 578.

²Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and the Consummation, Dogmatik III, trans. David Cairns (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 410.

³Brunner, Dogmatik II, p. 441. ⁴Ibid., p. 436.

to those who had faith, so that there was nothing tangible in this world that produced their faith in the resurrection. Our faith is therefore not based on the records of the apostles, for this would make it dependent upon a "world fact." And this could not be, for the revelation of Jesus Christ would have taken place in history. To us Jesus reveals himself through the total witness of the apostles, through the picture of his life, and through the apostles' interpretation of this picture. Every Christian believes in the Resurrected One not because his resurrection has been recorded but because we recognize him as the living and present Lord.¹

The Resume of the Position

Both Barth and Brunner, along with all other neo-orthodox theologians, retain the fact of the resurrection though they say the biblical record cannot be believed. These theologians find themselves impaled on the horns of a monstrous dilemma, as Dr. Ryrie rightly observes:

Barthians say that the accounts of the resurrection in the Bible are not the ground of our faith in the resurrection; nevertheless, they are an important element in the witness to revelation of the resurrection, and this revelation is the ground for our faith. Reduced to simple double talk this means that theoretically we would not need the Bible accounts of the resurrection in order to believe it, but admittedly they help, and actually we could not believe without them.²

Barth and Brunner further agree that revelation does not relate

¹Ibid., p. 441.

²Charles C. Ryrie, Neo-Orthodoxy (Chicago: Moody Press, 1956), pp. 58-59.

to our world of time and space but rather to Geschichte. The facts of the resurrection, as recorded in the New Testament, are therefore immaterial to one's faith. By being confronted with the living Christ one believes in the resurrection, not because the gospels testify of it. The result of these presuppositions is an inescapable subjectivism. And this is seen by the divergent views as to the meaning of the event, that are represented within the Neo-orthodox school. Barth, with customary vagueness, seems to favor a bodily resurrection, although the empty tomb is not at all necessary to his system. Brunner denies the existence of the empty tomb as well as a corporeal resurrection. The resurrection appearances were nothing more than "an encounter with the resurrected one as a spiritual-personal reality."¹ One cannot help escape the suspicion that a resurrection which happened on the "rim" of history and cannot be historically verified (Barth) and which did not include the existence of the empty tomb nor a corporeal continuation of the body (Brunner) is no resurrection at all.

¹Brunner, Dogmatik II, p. 436.

CHAPTER III

THE MEDIATING SCHOOL

The Rationale of the School

Although it is difficult to limit a theological system to any one university, Erlangen may be considered as representing the Mediating school. The fact that Erlangen is one of the few Protestant cities in the province of Bavaria has given it the title, a Protestant island in a Catholic sea. In geography, as well as in theology, it stands alone. In the last century the great conservative Theodor Zahn taught New Testament there. It is the home of the old Heilsgeschichte school and even today is probably more conservative than any other German university. The New Testament department with Ethelbert Stauffer and Gerhard Friedrich and the dogmatics department with Paul Althaus and Walter Künneth continue the conservative tradition. Stauffer, although called a radical liberal in conservative garb, has always maintained the verifiable historicity of most events in Christ's life. The other three scholars take a mediating position between crisis theology and the Bultmannian school. These theologians have manifested a constant critique of dialectical as well as existential theology, and yet they have been somewhat influenced by crisis theology and higher criticism.

The Representatives of the School

Althaus and Künneth continue the salvation-history tradition of

Erlangen. These two men will serve as representatives of the school. Despite the fact that Althaus died in the summer of 1966, his influence continues.

Paul Althaus

The person.--Paul Althaus was born in 1888 and died in 1966. He studied widely under all the leading scholars of his day and first taught in Rostock. Until the time of his death he taught in Erlangen. A leader of confessional Lutheranism, he was the leading theologian of the group theologia militans, a group which showed strong resistance to Nazi ideology. In contrast to Barth, Althaus upheld the traditional concept of general revelation. He disagreed with Barth right from the beginning, which is the fashionable thing to do among theologians in Germany. Althaus took the same position as that of his predecessor: what was valuable in Barth could be found in the Bible and what was false should not be commended to theology students. As a mediating theologian, Althaus follows in the footsteps of conservatives like Hofmann and Schlatter, but is greatly indebted to Barth and places much emphasis on the dialectical tension between creation and sin, eternity and history. Among his greatest contributions to German theology are his works on eschatology.

His position.--Althaus sees revelation as coming both mediately through history and immediately through faith: Revelation reaches us in the word and in no other way. The word of preaching is not only a word that addresses us and which we believe, but it is at the same time

a report about a historical event which happened. The word and the reality of the revelation cannot be equated, however. This word of proclamation in which God subjectively reveals himself is not based upon an objective, authoritative Word of God, the Bible. Thus Althaus writes:

The authority of the word of God is not indeed established for us any longer by a metaphysical miraculous character possessed by the Bible, but it is in part established by the historical element of the original tradition of authenticity.¹

But who determines what is the authentic word of God? Althaus believes that historians have a well-developed "intuition" that enables them to know when they are face to face with a real, historical personage and not just an imaginative creation.² This subjective approach is forced upon Althaus by his rejection of the old liberalism while retaining the critical view of Scripture. To him inspiration is "nothing more than that God himself acts on us through the human word of the Scriptures."³ The canon is still open and human errors and modifications--even in the life of Christ--abound: "Then too besides the genuine passages there are unhistorical words and stories and legends; so especially in the birth and resurrection accounts."⁴ In short, the

¹Paul Althaus, The So-Called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus, trans. David Cairns (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 52.

²Ibid.

³Paul Althaus, Die Christliche Wahrheit (Gütersloh: Güterseloher Verlagshaus, 1959), p. 180.

⁴Ibid., p. 118.

early church tampered with the text. Inasmuch as the foundations of the life of Christ are so shaky, the results in the superstructure, with the resurrection as the crowning point, are nothing short of disastrous.

"What happened at Easter?" Althaus asks. His reply is as may be expected:

The answer cannot consist simply in giving back the accounts of the gospels. . . . That Jesus was raised from the dead and appeared as the resurrected one to his own becomes a certainty to us only in faith, and under the impression of the whole witness concerning Jesus, of his life and words and death as well as resurrection.¹

What position does the resurrection take in Althaus' theology? The death of Christ puts in question the validity of the claims of Christ. Therefore it may be said: "Faith lives because of Easter."² Easter is pivotal to the Christian faith. But in what sense does Althaus view the resurrection as the basis for faith? The resurrection is by no means a proof of anything: "The faith must be risked. Therefore it is not up to the dogmatic Christology to prove the presence of God in Jesus Christ."³ The resurrection is not evidential, because it is "not a provable historical fact":

Historically recognizable are the experiences of the disciples, the "appearances" of Jesus after his death and even the fact of the empty tomb. But how these facts are to be understood, what actually happened at Easter, that, history as such, cannot say. That is a matter of religious judgment, of faith, which arises out of the

¹Ibid., p. 485.

²Ibid., p. 432.

³Ibid., p. 425.

total witness about Jesus.¹

The resurrection is interpretive rather than evidential. It interprets the cross and faith interprets and substantiates the resurrection. But although we cannot say anything about the meaning of the resurrection, what can be said about the circumstances of it? Althaus realizes that the early church witnessed that Jesus was raised on the third day. Biblical tradition emphasizes a twofold aspect of the resurrection: Christ's appearances and the empty tomb.

The appearances are to Althaus not subjective visions but "an objective trans-subjective, bodily coming of the resurrected one to his disciples."² Although layers of tradition have formed around the original accounts, the appearances were never described as visions. "To make the origin of the visions historically-psychologically comprehensible is pure fabrication, without and against all witnesses in the sources."³ Faith understands the appearances thus: "Jesus returns from death in an encounter with his own and so gives them the certainty that he is alive and has been exalted as God."⁴ Althaus follows here the conservative Lutheran and Erlangen tradition by vehemently denouncing the visionary hypothesis.

He is equally clear and persuasive on the matter of the empty tomb:

No contemporary could understand the message, that the dead Jesus was alive, in any other way than that he, that is to say,

¹Ibid., p. 246.

²Ibid., p. 486.

³Ibid., p. 487.

⁴Ibid.

his body which was placed in the tomb, returned from the grave; likewise the disciples who saw the Lord had to think this. They could never have appeared in Jerusalem such a short time after the death of Jesus with the message: the one who was laid in the grave has been resurrected by God and is alive, if the tomb had not been empty.¹

However, faith in the resurrection came not because of the empty tomb but because of the appearances. But what of the appearances? What was the resurrected body like? Here Althaus outdoes even Barth in double talk:

We know well: the resurrection from the dead to new corporeal aliveness does not mean that the corpse which was placed in the tomb comes to life--although, of course, at the same time in a changed form. In this matter we have been led beyond earlier naturalistic concepts. . . . There is no continuity between our present life and the new corporeality, but correspondence and personal identity.²

The resurrection of Christ does therefore not demand an empty tomb as an "ontological necessity." But rather, the empty tomb is a sign, a pointer, which has been given to our faith, to confirm the objectivity of the appearances. The resurrection does not necessitate the empty tomb, but it is illuminated by it. "The appearances are therefore neither to be understood spiritually, nor naturalistically-realistically, but eschatologically-realistically."³

The ascension is for Althaus a later legend which expresses the certainty of the disciples that the resurrected Christ has become the exalted God. The resurrection and ascension testify to the exaltation of Christ christologically, in that the man Christ Jesus reenters the

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 488. ³Ibid., p. 489.

eternal life of God, and, soteriologically, that Jesus is a living reconciler and mediator. The "hidden and closed eternity" into which Jesus entered is the future hope of the Christian.¹

Walter Künneth

The person.--Since the death of Althaus, Künneth is the leading light in Erlangen, where he is professor of systematic theology since 1953. Previously he served as a parish pastor in Bavaria and in 1944 he became dean of the Evangelical Lutheran District of Erlangen. He is perhaps the most outstanding conservative scholar in Germany. He belongs to that group in the Lutheran Church which calls itself the Konfessionskirche and adheres closely to the confessional creeds of the Church. His criticism of Bultmann and his students is forthright and devastating. Of the Bultmann-students he says that they have no right to become pastors because they are not believers.

At the recent World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, Künneth was featured as one of the "distinguished evangelical spokesmen" with his position paper on "Hindrances to Evangelism in the Church."² This is ironic, for men like Künneth, for all their continental conservatism, are among the main hindrances to evangelism. Künneth's critical view

¹Ibid., p. 491.

²"The Good, Glad News," and "Hindrances to Evangelism in the Church," Christianity Today, October 28, 1966, pp. 3, 14-18.

of the Scriptures, his denial of the virgin birth, and his Arian tendencies in Christology greatly vitiate his conservative claims. And yet, despite these views K nneth may still be regarded as staunchly conservative, when compared with the other theologians on the continent.

His position.--To K nneth the resurrection becomes the fulcrum of theology and the starting point of Christology. His teachings are set forth in his translated work, Theology of the Resurrection, first published in 1933, and in one untranslated volume, Glauben an Jesus?, published in 1962, which questions the basis of existential Christology. To understand any theological system, and so, to understand K nneth, is to determine the source of authority. Is the Bible in and of itself authoritative or is man to determine which parts of Scripture can be accepted and which are non-essential or doubtful and thus makes himself the authority? K nneth follows the critics. He rejects biblicists because they derive teachings from individual promises instead of the whole kerygma.¹ To him the biblical sources are of primary and secondary importance and since the gospel records are merely witnesses to the resurrection, not historical accounts, the criterion of judging them lies in "measuring the appropriateness of the content of the confession."² Man judges what can be believed. K nneth observes of the resurrection

¹Walter K nneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, trans. James W. Leitch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), pp. 131-32.

²Ibid., p. 104.

narratives:

The fact of considerable discrepancy in detail is indisputable and can hardly be removed by attempts at harmonizing. The possibility of subjective interference at individual points must be admitted. . . . Believing knowledge is the over-riding factor determining the value of all the Gospel traditions. . . . As soon as the traditions are to be evaluated as confessions, differences between them, even to the extent of possible contradictions, require no apology.¹

The decisive thing to K nneth is the complete unanimity in the universal believing knowledge of the resurrection of Jesus itself. This "believing knowledge" is the way by which the fact of the resurrection is known. It is not based on the historical facts. A new historical approach is required, one which does not go behind the resurrection confession to find a historic core, but whose aim is to understand the "substance" which is contained in the believing statement.² Although paying lip-service to the historicity of the resurrection, K nneth over-stresses the transcendent character of the resurrection. He insists that the resurrection "is a primal miracle and as such lies as it were behind and beyond the spatio-temporal plane, though of course not without having important repercussions on it."³ Were the resurrection historical, its uniqueness would be destroyed, therefore it could not be a point on the historical plane to which we could conceivably have an objective relation. "Accordingly, historical research is not at all a competent authority" when it comes to the question of knowledge of the

¹Ibid., p. 106.

²Ibid., p. 107.

³Ibid., p. 80.

resurrection.¹ This knowledge comes through faith in the confession of the witnesses but it is primarily through the existentialistic fellowship of believers with the ever-present Lord--especially in the Eucharist--that one can become certain of the reality of the resurrection:

Because Jesus as the resurrected Lord proves himself active in faith and faith is sure that Jesus the Lord is living, therefore faith knows consecutively about the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth.²

The reality of the resurrection does therefore not depend on what happened in history. For this reason Kunneth can say that it is immaterial what happened at the resurrection, "how many appearances took place, where, when and to whom, and what differences there may have been between them."³ The importance of the appearances lies in the fact that in it the reality of the resurrection of Jesus reveals itself and that it forms a basis for the founding of the apostolate. The appearances are real but "the glorified body of Christ who appeared is not to be identified with any resuscitation of a corpse."⁴ The wounds on the resurrection body, the fact that he ate, drank, walked, are expressions of "downright four-square realism" and show merely the

¹Ibid., pp. 31-32.

²Walter Kunneth, Glauben an Jesus? (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1962), p. 286.

³Kunneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, pp. 79-80.

⁴Ibid., p. 88.

interest in the bodily realness which is "of an inconceivable corporeality."¹

The account of the empty tomb was definitely a part of the apostolic tradition. But "in itself there is no identity between the empty tomb and the primal miracle of the resurrection of Jesus. The idea creatio ex nihilo is valid in principle here too."² Although there seems to be no real relationship between the body laid in the tomb and the resurrected body, the empty tomb is a sign of the concrete, bodily resurrection and it guards against every tendency to spiritualize the central declarations of the resurrection. It is no proof but merely a sign.

Like Althaus, Kunneth does not give separate consideration to the ascension, but equates it with the resurrection appearances.³ Of supreme importance to Kunneth--and here he differs from Althaus and orthodox Christianity--is the fact that "in the resurrection Jesus receives something from God which he did not until then possess, namely his 'lordship.'⁴ This installation of Jesus as Lord "means the conferring of divine majesty. . . . It is first through his being installed as Lord in the resurrection that Christ takes the place of God."⁵ This is the disastrous conclusion of Germany's most conservative scholar. The historical Jesus is merely in a position between God and man. The

¹Ibid., pp. 88-89. ²Ibid., p. 97. ³Ibid., p. 90.

⁴Ibid., p. 132. ⁵Ibid., pp. 133-34.

resurrection elevates him to deity.

The Resume of the Position

Althaus and Kunneth, as the representatives of the Erlangen school, agree in their general approach to the resurrection, especially in areas in which they depart from historic Christianity. First, the Scriptures themselves are unreliable and therefore a literal interpretation of the resurrection accounts is impossible. One must look at the substance of the accounts. Secondly, the historical dimension of the resurrection is reduced and practically excluded. This distinction between facts and their meaning is unwarranted and rests on the philosophy of Kant. If the historian declares it to be impossible to say what happened at Easter, faith could certainly make no sure pronouncements either, because that upon which faith is built is historical and accessible to historians. Thirdly, knowledge of the resurrection is gained through a personal confrontation with the Lord rather than the credible accounts, which are said to be mere confessions of the disciples' faith. Fourthly, despite an insistence on the appearance of the resurrected Christ and the empty tomb, the resurrection body is in no way related to the corpse that was placed in the tomb. And lastly, both men eliminate the ascension, each one giving his own unbiblical meaning of the resurrection.

CHAPTER IV

THE BULTMANN SCHOOL

The Rationale of the School

The Bultmann school is based on existentialism and is firmly rooted in liberalism. Existential philosophy moves man into the center, not the world or metaphysics. Man is to realize to the fullest his being, his existence. For the existentialist understanding of the New Testament revelation it is first of all essential to distinguish between the "historical fact" and "historic encounter," between the historical Jesus of Nazareth who lived in the years A. D. 1-30 and the "Christ of the kerygma." Turning their back on all historical circumstance, existentialists apply themselves solely to the one all-important encounter with the Christ proclaimed in the "kerygma," to the message of the Risen One.

This philosophical starting point leads to that concept of revelation which is not a simple imparting of information but an event which places one in the new state of selfhood and through this man attains his salvation, his authenticity. Revelation is therefore not a thing that once happened, but the decisive point is how I have to interpret the revelation event for myself today. Bultmann, in his work, Der Begriff der Offenbarung im Neuen Testament, puts the matter succinctly:

What, then, has been revealed? Nothing at all, if the question is one . . . about doctrines . . . which no one could ever have

discovered, secrets which once imparted, are known once for all. But everything, if we mean opening of man's eyes to himself in his being able to understand himself.¹

Bultmann, along with his followers, boasts that the existentialist interpretation of the resurrection is able to give the decisive answer to the anthropological problem posed by contemporary existential philosophy and by historical criticism.² Whether the answer of the Bultmann school is valid in the light of the New Testament accounts and whether it proves to be theologically tenable in principle remains to be seen.

If the old liberalism in Germany is dead, it seems to be a rather lively corpse. In the strict existential school of Bultmann we have a new blossom and fruit of the "old liberalism." True, their existential interpretation of the kerygma differs from the reductions of New Testament truth by the liberals, but basically the approach is the same: (1) Man's reason is the yard-stick which is applied to the biblical sources; (2) epistemologically, every report is doubted which asserts things of supernatural character, and (3) the negative result of the "history of life-of-Jesus research" is accepted, although with an indifference to historic facts.³

¹Walter Künneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, trans. James W. Leitch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 42.

²Ibid., p. 43. ³Ibid., p. 147.

The Representatives of the School

The Bultmann camp is split wide open. Several distinct groups compete against each other, which makes it extremely difficult to evaluate the Bultmann School as a whole. There are the conservative scholars, including Günther Bornkamm of Heidelberg, Otto Michel of Tübingen, and Joachim Jeremias of Göttingen. The Heilsgeschichte scholars, a mediating group, consists of men like Oscar Cullmann of Basel and Eduard Schweizer of Zürich. There is also the radical school of Herbert Braun and Manfred Mezger of Main, who are designated by Bultmann as his "genuine" disciples, and should therefore be discussed. However, they are practical atheists, defining God as a mere "inter-personal relationship," and, as has been remarked, the only thing they retain in the Apostolic Creed is Pontius Pilate. Finally, there is a post-Bultmannian school, which will be discussed in a separate chapter and there are the independents whose viewpoint defies group identification and classification. Actually, each theologian within the various groups and schools has his own elaborately worked-out system. Grouping theologians into schools merely indicates some similarity in viewpoint and enables identification. It is admittedly a subjective approach.

For this present study, Bultmann and Fuchs will serve as representatives: Bultmann because he is the unrepentant founder of the school, Fuchs because he is the deviating disciple of Bultmann.

Rudolf Bultmann

The person.--What Picasso is to modern painting, Bultmann is

to modern theology. He is probably the most influential man in the world of New Testament scholarship. Born in 1884 as the eldest son of an Evangelical Lutheran minister, his education was in the finest tradition of European scholarship. As a student of the historical-critical and religious-historical theology, he was greatly influenced by men such as Johannes Weiss, Gunkel, Wilhelm Herrmann, but above all, by the existential philosopher Martin Heidegger (born 1889). This combination of theology and philosophy in Bultmann has led to dire consequences in the field of biblical scholarship. He received a teaching position in Marburg in 1912, taught in Breslau and Giessen and in 1921 became professor of New Testament in Marburg. The retired theologian still lives in this picturesque university town.

Among Bultmann's influential works are the History of the Synoptic Tradition and his tedious Theology of the New Testament.

Bultmann belongs to the circle of theologians who, like Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, Tillich, and Gogarten, are the spiritual heirs of the reaction to liberalism, the ground-work for which was laid by Soren Kierkegaard's existentialism. Barth and the more radical Bultmann parted company between 1927 and 1929 and while Barth openly repudiated existential philosophy in 1932, Bultmann was more consistent in his application of the dialectical principle and has since led the field of New Testament scholarship with his distinctive approach of "form criticism"

and his program of demythologizing.¹

His position.--A glance into Bultmann's theological workshop shows indisputably that he is dependent upon liberalism's critical historical principles. Bultmann observes:

To be sure, I am of the opinion that we can now know next to nothing of the life and personality of Jesus, since the Christian sources were not interested in that and are moreover very fragmentary and overgrown by legend and since other sources do not exist. . . . I am personally of the opinion that Jesus did not consider himself to be the Messiah . . . the sources give us the proclamation of the Church. . . . Critical study shows that the whole tradition of Jesus . . . breaks into a series of layers. . . . That the Gospel of John is a source. . . . is out of question altogether. . . . Within what remains . . . secondary material must again be rejected. . . . By means of critical analysis we can reach an oldest layer, even though we can define it only with relative certainty. Naturally there is even less certainty that the words in this oldest layer were really spoken by Jesus . . . for this layer is also the result of a complicated historical process. . . . To be sure, there is no ground for doubting whether Jesus really existed . . . but such doubts are of no essential significance. . . . Anyone who wishes to set this "Jesus" in quotation marks . . . and regard it as a valid designation of a historic phenomenon . . . is welcome to do so.²

Bultmann is never one to let biblical truth stand in the way of his philosophical notions. And so with blatant dogmatism that Jesus said nothing of his death and resurrection, nor of their soteriological meaning: "It is true that a few words of such content were put into his mouth, but they do not come from the faith of the early church . . ."

¹Robert D. Knudsen, "Rudolf Bultmann," Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology, ed. Philip Edgcumbe Hughes (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1966), pp. 131-33.

²Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1926), pp. 12ff.

but from hellenistic Christianity."¹

Thus it becomes clear that a posteriori every attempt to say something of the resurrection of Christ must utterly fail. Since the presuppositions of this approach are untenable, the end result would also necessarily appear throughly erroneous.

Bultmann, in his undue stress of the "kerygma," asserts that the resurrection is an indispensable part of it. In his famous essay on "New Testament and Mythology" he writes that "indeed: the cross and resurrection form a single, indivisible 'cosmic' event."² He also frankly admits that "the death and resurrection of Christ are therefore cosmic events, not once-for-all happenings, which lie in the past."³ What then does he mean by the word event? Is it equivalent to a historical fact? Did the man Jesus who died on the cross really and literally arise from the tomb? Not for Bultmann. He recognizes that Paul in I Corinthians 15 "wants to establish the resurrection as a historical event by the enumeration of witness," but he calls this a "fatal argumentation."⁴ He admits that the New Testament frequently wishes to es-

¹Ibid., p. 176.

²Rudolf Bultmann, "Neues Testament und Mythologie," Kerygma und Mythos, ed. Hans-Werner Bartsch (Hamburg-Bergsteat: Evangelischer Verlag, 1960), p. 44.

³Rudolf Bultmann, Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961), p. 299.

⁴Bultmann, Kerygma und Mythos, pp. 44-45.

establish the resurrection as a historical event, but he himself wants nothing of it.

What becomes of the resurrection appearances and the empty tomb? Both are later embellishments of the primitive tradition.

The story of the empty tomb is "an apologetic legend. Paul knows nothing of an empty tomb."¹ The appearances of the risen Lord are "unbelievable because no matter how many witnesses there were, the resurrection cannot be ascertained as an objective fact."² Scornfully he rejects every suggestion that the resurrection was the resuscitation of a corpse.

Is there anything historical about the resurrection? Bultmann answers with a resounding Nein! "As a historical event only the Easter-faith of the first disciples is ascertainable. Christian Easter-faith is not interested in the historical question."³ This Easter-faith is nothing more than faith in the cross as a soteriological event. And the cross, incidentally, is "the tragic end of a noble man."⁴ We meet Christ the crucified and resurrected One in the word of proclamation, nowhere else, and faith in this word is in truth resurrection faith. Faith in the resurrection and the faith that Christ speaks to us in the proclaimed word are identical. And since Christ is present in the

¹Rudolf Bultmann, Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), p. 314.

²Bultmann, Kerygma und Mythos, p. 45.

³Ibid., p. 47. ⁴Ibid., p. 46.

kerygma now, so the cross and resurrection happen in the eschatological Now.

It is quite evident that Bultmann does not arrive at his conclusions by applying the historical method to the New Testament. He writes that "the resurrection, of course, simply cannot be a visible fact in the realm of human history."¹ This is not that statement of a historian but of a theologian! On the basis of Bultmann's writings it becomes readily apparent why "of course" the resurrection cannot be a fact of history. Klaas Runia, in his incisive article on "The Resurrection and History," delineates two reasons:²

First, Bultmann accepts the modern world view of closed causality. "Modern science understands the world view and man as a closed inner unit, which does not stand open to the intervention of supernatural powers."³ This, logically, rules out the resurrection. The second reason is more important. Bultmann is imprisoned in the dilemma of Gotthold Lessing, who maintained that accidental proofs of history could never become the proof of necessary truths of reason. For Bultmann this means that his existential truth is not capable of demonstration. He does believe that redemption took place in history: "The agent of God's presence and activity, the mediator of his reconciliation of the

¹Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, p. 295.

²Klaas Runia, "The Resurrection and History," The Reformed Theological Review, XXV (May/August 1966), pp. 41-52.

³Bultmann, Kerygma und Mythos, p. 19.

world unto himself, is a real figure of history."¹ But if this knowledge were demonstrable, then our faith would depend on the objective world and we would fall back into mythology. "It is precisely its immunity from proof which secures the Christian proclamation against the charge of being mythological."² The resurrection has to be a matter of pure faith, which is always a risk, and for this reason "the resurrection, of course, simply cannot be a visible fact in the realm of human history." The only possibility left is to explain it as "the rise of faith in the risen Lord" on the part of the disciples, or, in concurrence with Bultmann's critics he would assert that "Christ rose in the kerygma." The historical Christ is "of no concern whatsoever to me," says Bultmann,³ and as an outward demonstration of his disbelief in a historical resurrection, the Marburger theologian has for many years now avoided church on Easter Sunday and has gone for an extended walk.

Ernst Fuchs

The person.--Ernst Fuchs was born in 1903 in Heilbronn (Württemberg). He was educated at the universities of Tübingen and Marburg and was greatly influenced by Adolf Schlatter and Rudolf Bultmann. Until 1949 he served in the ministry in Württemberg and subsequently became a lecturer and later external professor in Tübingen. In 1955 he became

¹Ibid., p. 48. ²Ibid.

³Gerhard Bergmann, Alarm um die Bibel (Gladbeck: Schriftenmissions-Verlag, 1963), p. 43.

professor for New Testament in the Church Academy of Berlin, and in 1961 professor for New Testament at Marburg. In 1963 he was appointed director of the newly formed Institute of Hermeneutics.¹

Professor Fuchs aims to follow in the footsteps of Bultmann, although he is even more radical than his teacher. In his writings he concentrates on the problem of hermeneutics and on the question of the historical Jesus. His untranslated work on the quest of the historical Jesus places him in a position very close to that of the nineteenth-century liberals.

His position.--Bultmann had said that the resurrection has to do nothing whatsoever with a "historical event" but is the meaningful expression for the fact that the cross is not to be taken as an ordinary death but as "liberating act of God."² Jesus becomes present in the kerygma, which is an eschatological event in itself. Since this is the case, "all speculations concerning the essence of the resurrected One, all narratives of the empty tomb and all Easter legends . . . become indifferent."³

Fuchs is even more consequential and radical in his views. Faith is without any relationship to the resurrection and must be under-

¹Ernst Fuchs, Studies of the Historical Jesus, trans. Karl E. Braaten (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allason, Inc., 1964), cover.

²Walter Kunneth, Glauben an Jesus? (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1962), p. 158.

³Ibid., p. 159.

stood as a strictly formal phenomena. Since faith is not like thought, where content matters, but rather the freedom for faith "matters," Fuchs declares over against his own teacher:

Bultmann too still speaks of "Easter-faith." This concept lies heavily on the discussion. . . . In truth, it must be maintained that Jesus' execution as well as the confession of his exaltation, i. e. resurrection, has nothing at all to do with faith.¹

The fact of the resurrection is completely irrelevant to faith, maintains Fuchs. He singles out an aspect of Jesus' behavior in the gospels as being historical and relevant for faith. This was that Jesus ate and fellowshiped with sinners. The church was not likely to change what Christ did, although it most certainly changed what he said.² The essence of Fuchs' truncated theology therefore is this: nothing what Jesus did in his death and resurrection nor anything he said is relevant for us, but Jesus' emphasis on man's relationship to God, the graciousness towards sinners, is pertinent to faith. For Bultmann there was a continuity between Jesus' message and the kerygma. For Fuchs the behavior of Jesus is the real content of the proclamation. "This conduct is neither that of a prophet nor that of a wisdom teacher, but the conduct of a man who dares to act in God's place."³ In line with his exis-

¹Ibid.

²Ernst Fuchs, Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960), p. 156.

³Kühneth, Glauben an Jesus?, p. 107.

tential presuppositions, Fuchs sees in Christ's behavior Christ's understanding of himself. And this understanding is expressed in the New Testament by the believing church: "Faith in Jesus therefore means essentially to repeat Jesus' decision. . . . Jesus now became the content of faith. . . . To believe in Jesus means to believe like Jesus."¹

This completely excludes a personal relationship to Christ.

And Fuchs admits this unequivocally:

The gospels record only that Jesus loved his own . . . and that this love was not to be returned but to be repeated. . . . If we wanted to understand Jesus as a historical individuality, we would have to love him in return, of course, but this we cannot do and this we should not do.²

We are only to repeat the decision of Jesus, that is, to live for God. How does this relate to a belief in the resurrection, which Fuchs mentions rather frequently? To him there is no such thing as a salvation fact, which he criticizes as a "taboo" and "foolish concept." "It is foreign to living faith. Faith does not reflect concerning facts, but it creates them as well."³ How does faith relate to the resurrection? "Faith relates in this sense to the resurrection of the crucified, because it confesses openly Jesus as Lord." Fuchs explains this by adding that "Christ is resurrected if this confession is a statement

¹Fuchs, Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus, p. 164.

²Ibid., p. 48.

³Otto Rodenberg, Um die Wahrheit der Heiligen Schrift (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1962), p. 46.

of love."¹

As to the narratives of Christ's death and resurrection themselves, Fuchs eliminates their trustworthiness with one clean sweep: They "stem stylistically from the kerygma of the community."²

The resurrection appearances did indeed take place but faith is not founded on them. In fact, Fuchs comes to the startling conclusion that the witnesses believed the message of Jesus "not because of, but despite their having seen him."³ "The Easter experiences had only personal significance for those concerned. They were an aid from God and hence a working of the Holy Spirit."⁴ Fuchs himself asks the important question what these encounters with the resurrected Christ were. They were of an eschatological nature. And an "eschatological encounter is according to the preaching of Jesus, basically the encounter of man with himself, although in the togetherness of Thou and I."⁵ The disciples encountered Jesus because they suddenly saw him for what he was: the bearer of the will of God. And in faith they followed the example of Jesus. This is conversion.⁶

¹Ibid.

²Fuchs, Studies of the Historical Jesus, p. 27.

³Wolfhart Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1964), p. 110.

⁴Fuchs, Studies in the Historical Jesus, p. 28.

⁵Fuchs, Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus, p. 31.

⁶Ibid., p. 32.

The empty tomb? "Easter has nothing to do with a single open tomb . . . but with the faith in the happening of revelation."¹ There can be no resurrection appearances of a bodily resurrected Jesus. He was merely a man. The resurrection merely brings to light what already existed, namely the faith of the disciples. It is nothing more than an existential loudspeaker, the proclamation of the disciples' faith. Since this faith does not depend on a historical fact but on itself, it ever remains a venture (Wagnis) in which one dares to live as Jesus did.

The Resume of the Position

Bultmann and his followers agree that taking the resurrection as a fact of history is more of an offense to faith than a support of it. The Apostle Paul was so certain that the resurrection took place on the stage of world history that he confidently adduced proofs of its historicity (I Cor. 15:3-11). Any impartial examination will bring about a conviction that it actually occurred. However, Bultmann feels that Paul's argument here is fatal. He is alarmed at the prospect of seeing the resurrection rendered uncertain by a critical investigation of the accounts. Therefore, in the interest of faith, he attempts to remove the resurrection as a legitimate object for consideration for the secular historian. He does so by disassociating the event from the space-time line of world history, and by relocating it on the shadowy

¹Ibid., p. 42.

level of "theological history." One need not give himself over to optimistic illusions: the existential interpretation of the Easter message has ultimately dissolved the facticity of the resurrection of Christ into a bundle of existential-theological meanings, into anthropomorphic subjectivism. By banishing the resurrection from real history, the existentialists have robbed it of its saving power. For its value to faith and thus to salvation consists precisely in this, that it occurred in genuine history.

The detrimental consequences of such a position have become obvious: (1) The historical facts of Jesus Christ are confused with a present encounter. (2) Jesus Christ is not a living person with whom a personal relationship is possible. (3) The decisive factor is not the New Testament message, nor even the content of the kerygma, but the formal happening of the proclamation; not the WHAT but the THAT. (4) Christology has become completely dissolved. Man no longer believes on Jesus but as Jesus. (5) A theological confusion of concepts is complete. Words merely become theological concepts for philosophical reflection.

CHAPTER V

THE POST-BULTMANNIAN SCHOOL

The Rationale of the School

In actuality, the title of "post-Bultmannian" might be applied to half of all German scholars, since they at one time or another were close followers of Bultmann. But the inevitable division in the ranks of the Bultmann followers has introduced such a wide variety of theological opinion, that the use of the title of this school becomes well-nigh meaningless. However, in the context of this paper it designates those who at one time followed Bultmann, but whose theological impetus has carried them far beyond Bultmannian viewpoints. It is they who have seized the intellectual initiative and who comprise this new oligarchy of theologian whose one common characteristic is its pointed criticism of Bultmann and its sharp disagreements within its own ranks. The significance of the historical Jesus for Christian faith seems to be the main factor which divides these scholars. They range from the "conservative" Bornkamm, who sees the necessary connection between the historical Jesus and the content of the Christian message, to Pannenberg, who stresses the reality of objective divine revelation in history, and to Braun, to whom divine revelation and "God" consist only in interpersonal relationships.

The Representatives of the School

Günther Bornkamm

The person.---Günther Bornkamm (born 1905) is professor of New Testament exegesis at the ancient University of Heidelberg, whose faculty is one of the most liberal ones in Germany. Gerhard von Rad, for example, the professor for Old Testament, is to the Old Testament what Bultmann is to New Testament interpretation. Bornkamm became known as a conservative post-Bultmannian on the basis of his book, Jesus von Nazareth (Stuttgart, 1956). More recent is a book written in collaboration with two of his students, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew (Westminster, 1963). Bornkamm's brother Heinrich is lecturing at the same school and is a specialist in Reformation history.

His position.---Bornkamm is a major proponent of the new quest of the historical Jesus. For Bultmann the search of the historical Jesus is theologically forbidden; for Bornkamm it is not only permitted but enjoined. Bultmann writes in his book Jesus: "I am of the opinion that we can know practically nothing of the life and personality of Jesus,"¹ but Bornkamm writes:

The nature of the sources does not permit us to paint a biographical picture of the life of Jesus against the background of the history of his people and his age. Nevertheless, what these sources do yield as regards the historical facts concerning the

¹Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1926), p. 12.

personality and career of Jesus is not negligible, and demands careful attention.¹

Bornkamm made thus the historical Jesus relevant for faith-- something which Bultmann could not bring himself to do. But what is the "nature of the sources" to which he makes reference? The scholar must "desist from rash combinations of the biographical data and must use the greatest critical caution,"² for the birth narratives are too much overgrown by legends to be historically reliable and

should we reduce the tradition critically to that which cannot be doubted on historical grounds, we should be left ultimately with a mere torso which bears no resemblance to the story set forth in the Gospels.³

To take the narratives as they stand is for Bornkamm a "senseless and forced" solution. The gospels, though containing a historical kernel, are the mere expression of the confession of the church. And so Bornkamm can write:

We possess no single word of Jesus and no single story of Jesus, no matter how incontestably genuine they may be, which do not contain at the same time the confession of the believing congregation or at least are embedded in that confession.⁴

It is the Easter faith of the church that pervades every part of the gospels. The virgin birth, the nature-miracles, and the use of Messianic titles are projected back into the life of Jesus by the believing church. Their faith was brought about by the appearances of

¹Cunther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, trans. Irene and Fraser McLuskey (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 53.

²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 15. ⁴Ibid., p. 14.

the risen Christ and the word of his witnesses. This raises a twofold question: What was the resurrection and what were the appearances? This must be asked despite the fact that Bornkamm asserts that "the insistent question 'what actually happened' in no wise brings us to the point."¹ To every thoughtful person it seems very much to the point, but then, Bornkamm and his German colleagues are not men who are easily side-tracked by basic facts when they set out to twist the meaning of the Scriptures to their preconceived presuppositions. To them the "that" of the event is more important than the "when" or the "how."

Bornkamm removes from historical scholarship the resurrection which led to this Easter faith: "History cannot ascertain and establish conclusively the facts"² about the resurrection as it can be done with other events of the past. Bornkamm denies that the resurrection was merely the overwhelming impression which Jesus' personality had made on his disciples or that it has simply an analogy in the eternal dying and rebirth of nature. The rekindled faith of the disciples cannot be explained satisfactorily in such terms. But Bornkamm gives no substitute view. He affirms that it happened but he refuses to say what happened: "The last historical fact available . . . is the Easter faith of the first disciples."³ The Easter stories are evidence of faith and not records and chronicles. The resurrection appearances? They

¹Ibid., p. 15.

²Ibid., p. 180.

³Ibid.

are only descriptions of a reality by using "massive means of legends."¹ The accounts stand in hopeless contradiction to each other and this is a sure sign that "the Easter message is at any rate earlier than the Easter stories."² The stories were later fabrications.

And the empty tomb? All accounts of it are obviously legends. Is its existence important? Not at all, says Bornkamm: "The resurrection message and resurrection faith in the early church do not depend on uniform versions of the manner of the Easter event, or the physical nature of the risen Christ."³ These versions are said to be not uniform because they supposedly fail to make a distinction between the resurrection of Christ and his ascension to the right hand of the Father.

So it is the appearances of the risen Christ (whatever they might have been) and the word of the witnesses which gave rise to the resurrection faith of the church. This message of the Easter faith resulted in the Easter stories as we find them in the gospels. History, therefore, has for Bornkamm some relevance for an already existent Easter faith. But he stops short of saying that the historical fact of the resurrection engenders this faith. What became clear and grew to be a certainty as a result of the word of the witnesses was

¹Günther Bornkamm, "Glaube und Geschichte in den Evangelien," Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), p. 284.

²Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 182-83.

³Ibid., p. 183.

that God himself had intervened with his almighty hand in the wicked and rebellious life of the world, and had wrested this Jesus of Nazareth from the power of sin and death which had risen against him, and set him up as Lord of the world.¹

Wolfhart Pannenberg

The person.--Pannenberg was born in 1928 in Stettin. He studied theology in Berlin, Göttingen, Basel, and Heidelberg, receiving his doctorate in 1953. From 1955 to 1958 he was assistant professor for systematic theology in Heidelberg and then, until 1961, professor at the Kirchliche Hochschule of Wuppertal. Since 1961 he is professor for systematic theology in Mainz.

In the early 1950's four students at Heidelberg--Ulrich Wilckens, Dietrich Roessler, Klaus Koch, and Rolf Rendtorff--began meeting once a week to discuss exegetical-historical questions and the relation between faith and history. Soon they asked Pannenberg to join them and in 1961 they published Offenbarung als Geschichte, the thesis of which is that revelation is mediated only through historical events. As the systematic theologian of the group, Pannenberg became the chief spokesman for the new movement, and in his numerous publications sets forth the thesis that God's revelation does not come to men immediately but always mediately via the events of history. This movement is a decided reaction against Barth, who insists that revelation be controlled by what comes immedi-

¹Ibid., pp. 183-84.

ately from Jesus Christ, and against Bultmann, whom they formerly followed, to whom revelation takes place in the kerygma.¹

The movement, under Pannenberg's able leadership, is gaining great momentum and merits close attention. A discussion of Pannenberg's views on the resurrection is warranted for the following reasons:

- (1) Most German theologians and the evangelicals hopefully look to him for leadership and a conservative break-through. In his bold insistence on objective historical revelation, Pannenberg represents the farthest contemporary break from Barth and Bultmann and the dialectical theology.
- (2) He has written very extensively on the resurrection and an examination of his views will aid the evaluation of his entire system.
- (3) His works, especially his recent Grundzüge der Christologie, will appear in English before long and, judging from the practice of certain evangelical scholars in this country, Pannenberg will be highly acclaimed as an evangelical. Using Pannenberg's view of the resurrection as a measuring rod, what can we say of his theology?

His position.--Pannenberg realizes that dialectical theology undermines both historical revelation and the universal validity of Christian truth. He insists that if one really takes history in earnest, he will find that God has revealed himself in history. Maintaining the necessity of knowing something about the historical facts on which Chris-

¹Robert L. Wilken, "Who is Wolfhart Pannenberg?" Dialog, IV (Spring 1965), p. 140.

tianity depends, he strikes at the dialectical theology's disjunction of revelation and reason, and at its consequent refusal to relate Christianity to the realm of objective knowledge. For Pannenberg the history through which revelation is mediated is not a special redemptive history known only through faith, but is regular universal history. History finds its unity in God who works toward a goal by constantly doing new things in history. History thus becomes apocalyptic, and clearly the resurrection of Christ is such an apocalyptic event which challenges the historian, because here God performs something new with a specific goal in mind.¹

Pannenberg is drawn toward the resurrection because its historical question is an imposing task for his theological method. Moreover, since for him the ground for faith and preaching does not rest on Christ's claims but only on their confirmation, and since this confirmation is found in the resurrection, it is to receive close attention.

As a historian, Pannenberg does not regard, a priori, the report of Jesus' resurrection as impossible, nor does he accept it uncritically:

It is the close examination of the reports of the resurrection that determine its historicity, and not the prior judgment that all events must be more or less the same.²

What does Pannenberg say concerning the resurrection? He in-

¹Daniel P. Fuller, Easter Faith and History (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 178-79.

²Ibid., p. 181.

sists that the resurrection happened at a specific time and a specific place. He believes the reports of the empty tomb and of the objective appearances of Christ. Furthermore, the transformed body of Christ appeared to the disciples and because of Christ's resurrection, the believers shall be raised in like manner. As biblical and as orthodox as this view appears, it will be seen that it is unfortunately subject to many modifications.

What grounds does Pannenberg have for declaring the resurrection to be a historical event in the full sense of the term? He holds that there are two independent strands of tradition connected with the resurrection: the appearances of the resurrected Lord and the finding of the empty tomb.

The only account of the appearances which is suitable for historical evidence is I Corinthians 15:11, which Pannenberg connects with Paul's early contact with Jerusalem where he received a first-hand knowledge of the events which the gospels did not have. The appearances reported in the gospels are rejected because they stand in contradiction to Paul and

have in their whole literary form such strongly legendary character that it is hardly possible to find any particular historical root in them. . . . They have been shaped by strong legendary influences, mainly by a tendency to underline the bodily appearances of Jesus.¹

¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?" Dialog, IV (Spring 1965), p. 131.

Pannenberg assumes that Paul presupposes in I Corinthians 15 that the appearances he had were of the same character as the appearances the other apostles had experienced. He then lists five points which were probably true of the appearances: (1) The appearances were of the Lord Jesus Christ, (2) They were of a spiritual, not physical body. (3) The appearances were not an encounter on earth but came from heaven. (4) The appearance near Damascus may have been a phenomenon like a bright light. (5) This appearance entailed a communication.¹

Speaking of the mode of the appearances, Pannenberg claims that "evidently they were not events which could be seen and understood by everybody."² Pannenberg understands the experiences as "objective visions," far more comparable to recent discoveries in parapsychological phenomena (e.g., extrasensory perception) than to the "subjective" visions of pathological psychology. Too, Pannenberg rejects the idea that the appearances were caused by the enthusiastic imagination of the disciples.³ But that this appearance of the resurrected Lord was hardly the person with flesh and bones who ate and talked with the disciples in the Upper Room needs hardly to be pointed out. Pannenberg seems even to weaken his own view of an "objective vision" by writing in a little

¹Ibid., p. 132. ²Ibid., p. 133.

³Wolfhart Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1964), pp. 92-93.

volume on anthropology, hitherto unnoticed by reviewers of Pannenberg's theology, that the resurrection

is therefore that reality of Jesus, which was encountered by his disciples after the catastrophe of his crucifixion and which so overpowered them that they could not find in their language a fitting word except the intimating, parabolic term: resurrection of the dead.¹

The statement seems to refer to a subjective vision, rather than an objective one.

As far as the empty tomb is concerned, it is an inevitable supposition on the basis of general historical consideration. The Christian community in Jerusalem would never have survived without having the reliable testimony of the empty tomb. Because of the independence of the two traditions, however--the finding of the empty tomb and the appearances of the resurrected Lord--Pannenberg thinks it probable that the disciples returned to Galilee before the resurrection, perhaps already before the execution of Jesus.² The gospels are clear that the disciples were present in Jerusalem on the day of the resurrection. Pannenberg rejects this. The women saw the empty tomb in Jerusalem, says he. The disciples saw the resurrected Lord in Galilee. Based upon this completely unscriptural interpretation, that these two traditions arose independently of each other, he establishes the probability of the facticity and historicity of the raising of Jesus--"and

¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, Was ist der Mensch? (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962), p. 39.

²Pannenberg, Dialog, p. 134.

in historical investigation, that always means it is to be presupposed pending further developments."¹

Daring to go farther than most theologians, Pannenberg discusses the nature of the resurrection body. Here he follows Paul in I Corinthians 15 very closely. The believers will have a body like Christ's body. It is the present physical body which will undergo complete transformation. "A historical continuity relates the old to the new."² Man seeks his final destiny beyond death and this can only be in the unity of body and soul. This is the content of the hope for a resurrection from the dead. But where did this hope originate? We are startled to hear that "the expectation of a future resurrection of the dead was taken over by the Jews from the Persians and was bequeathed later to Christianity as well as Islam."³ Is this not then a false hope, because Christianity took over that which originated in a Pagan culture? No, says Pannenberg. "Before Judaism and Christianity the resurrection was a picture of human longing and phantasy, but now it has become the goal of confident hope."⁴ This hope, however, is not based upon God's promise and revelation in the Scriptures but upon the historical fact of the resurrection. For Pannenberg, revelation is objective only in

¹Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie, p. 103.

²Pannenberg, Dialog, p. 130.

³Pannenberg, Was ist der Mensch?, p. 37.

⁴Ibid., p. 39.

the form of historical events but not in concepts and words, neither does he preserve the distinction between general and special revelation. It is therefore not surprising that he does not consider as genuine the predictions of Christ concerning his own death and resurrection and he goes so far as to claim that

the expectation of the earthly Jesus was not focused . . . in all probability on a so-to-speak private resurrection of the dead, but on a near general resurrection of the dead.¹

Once Christ's resurrection had come, however, it could only mean one inter-related complex of things: (1) the end of the world had begun; (2) God had confirmed the earthly activity of Jesus; (3) the church had received the insight that this was indeed the Son of Man; (4) God is finally revealed in Christ; and (5) a motive is provided for the mission to the nations.²

The Resume of the Position

In distinction to Bultmann, Bornkamm in his book Jesus von Nazareth regards the unmatched authority of Jesus as both historically relevant for Christian faith and proclamation. Like Fuchs, he sets out in his quest for the historical Jesus, whose authority manifests itself to Fuchs in his behavior but to Bornkamm, who goes beyond Fuchs, it is equally recognizable in his words and deeds. However, history itself

¹Pannenberg, Grundzüge der Christologie, pp. 60-61.

²Ibid., pp. 60-69.

cannot engender that faith. The resurrection faith is founded on a historical event but that it happened is more important than what happened.

Pannenberg, in opposition to all other men discussed, bases the fact and meaning of the resurrection squarely on a revelatory historical event. History is revelation of God. Lessing's "ugly ditch," that historical events can provide no basis for faith, is a false approach. History carries with itself its own explanation. Pannenberg affirms that the resurrection took place at a datable time and at a definite place. He believes the tomb was empty, the dead body was transformed, and the appearances were real. But is it right to emphasize these positive aspects of Pannenberg exclusively? Have not evangelical Christians believed these things all along? Is it not legitimate to stress the false presuppositions upon which this and the other systems are built? To what avail is a beautifully-constructed building if the foundation upon which it rests is faulty? A needed shift in emphasis can be illustrated by a quote from Fuller's book, Easter Faith and History, concerning Pannenberg, who delivered a lecture at Fuller Theological Seminary entitled, "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?" Fuller reports:

During the course of this lecture Pannenberg affirmed that while there is much in the resurrection reports that is mythical, yet it is impossible to explain them wholly as the work of the apostles' imagination.¹

¹Fuller, pp. 181-82.

Why not invert the statement and make it read thus:

During the course of this lecture Pannenberg affirmed that while it is impossible to explain the resurrection reports wholly as the work of the apostles' imagination, yet there is much in the resurrection reports that is mythical.

It is only fair to list the negative aspects of a system as well. (1) Pannenberg traces the concept of the resurrection to the pagan Persian religion. (2) The gospels are legendary and undependable. (3) The incarnate Christ did not foresee nor predict his death and resurrection. (4) Revelation in concepts and words is rejected. (5) Pannenberg accepts the higher critical views of the New Testament, as expounded by Grass, von Campenhausen, and Bornkamm. (6) Christ did not appear bodily on earth to his disciples. The contribution which Pannenberg makes to the understanding of revelation and the resurrection is immediately vitiated by these factors. His conservative approach differs only slightly in degree, but not in kind, from the other theologians.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to examine representatives of various theological directions in Germany, particularly in their view of the resurrection. The resurrection is the foundation and the criterion of the Christian faith. It is thus decisive for any theological system.

The Failure of German Theology

None of the men and movements studied subscribe completely to the orthodox biblical view of the resurrection. It is only logical to assume that if a system errs in the central fact of Christianity, it errs in other areas as well. Christian doctrines are not isolated from each other but interrelated with each other.

A False Methodology

As divergent as the theological views might be, they have two factors in common:

An errant Bible.--None of these men accepts the Bible as objective, divine revelation. This results in arbitrariness in choosing the genuine portions--reason exalts itself above revelation, and ends in alterations of the text as the higher critical views of the Scriptures are accepted.

An erroneous world view.--Basic to their understanding of the

Bible lies a false world view based on modern science, rationalist and existential philosophies, and Kantian dualism. It is for this reason that Barth and Bultmann dispense with history. Barth asks us to believe the resurrection but then goes on to relegate it to Urgeschichte and insists we can only talk of resurrection in the language of faith. Bultmann, rejecting the resurrection on historical and natural scientific grounds, nevertheless affirms that "Jesus arose in the kerygma."

No matter what positive views some of these theologians may hold, they will not, and on their own admission, cannot, return to the biblical view of revelation and inspiration, which alone gives content, certainty, and correctness to the Christian faith. These men disclaim biblical inerrancy, and disparage and disregard those that hold it. Whatever fits into their preconceived system is accepted, whatever does not fit is eliminated as "mythological," "legendary," or as the product of the "post-Easter church theology." To ask what actually happened is to show complete ignorance of what history is all about. One is reminded of the Greek legend of Procrustes who tried to fit all guests on his single bed. If they were too long, he chopped them off; if they were too short, he stretched them out. Thus deal these theologians with the truths of the Bible. They are laid on the bed of their system and chopped or stretched where necessary.

That great differences between these theologians exist, no one will deny. But because their approach to the Scriptures is identical, these differences are bound to be more academic than actual. Barth's

return to a theology of the Word was not a return to the Word, neither is Pannenberg's return to historical revelation a return to historical revelation.

In dealing with the gospel records, particularly those of the resurrection of Christ, all the theologians discussed are certainly seen to be something less than honest, by permitting their erroneous world view to answer negatively these obvious questions: (1) Is the record to be intended to be historical? (2) Were the witnesses in a position to know the facts? (3) Were the witnesses properly motivated in communicating the facts? (4) Were the witnesses accurate in their report?

A False Message

These German scholars do not even claim to be conservative and orthodox, as Americans understand those terms. They do not claim that they have returned to the position of the Reformers, nor do they think that a theology based on the literal interpretation of the New Testament is any longer possible. Theology is fluid, developing, ever changing. There is nothing static, there are no absolutes.

Hand in hand with a false theological methodology goes a false Christian message.

A false Christ.--Their Christ is not the sinless Christ of the Bible who offered himself as Messiah. At best he was the erring Son of Man without being Lord until his resurrection (Künneth). At worst he was merely a man and prophet (Bultmann, Fuchs) and as such experienced

no resurrection.

A false Christianity.--A Christianity without a historical resurrection is no longer Christianity. As close as some of these men may come to the biblical view, it is based on their own approach.

There is much talk of faith, but it is not the saving faith of Christ. Man believes in Christ, not because an authoritative Word speaks of him, but because man has an encounter with him (Althaus, Künneth, Barth, Brunner). For Bultmann and his followers, faith is not faith in Christ but faith like Christ. Love for Christ and prayer to Christ have become impossible. Looking to German theology for a simple statement of the gospel and assurance of salvation is like heading South when in search of the North Pole. Faith always remains a venture; Brunner calls it "confident despair."

The Future of German Theology

The results of such theology in German churches are all too apparent. As one professor admitted privately: a typical Lutheran church in Germany has three thousand members; three hundred members attend church; thirty come to the midweek service; and there are three persons with whom the pastor can pray.

At the risk of sounding trite: Are not genuine theological teachers a gift of the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church? After all, theology and biblical scholarship are no sand-box maneuvers. Both have to prove themselves in practice. In the seventeenth century when people "naively" believed the Bible, churches were filled to ca-

capacity; now they are empty. What has gone wrong? The elimination of the facts of salvation and obfuscation of the gospel are but symptoms of the sickness into which theology has fallen. The real problem, simply put, is sin in modern theology. It is a twofold sin, as God's Word points out:

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Jer. 2:13

The living well of the Word has been forsaken. With rationalistic methods new wells are hewn. The de-historizing and demythologizing are treason on the Scriptures. The springs have dried up and so the streams have vanished.

The future looks bleak. University theology has universally bowed to the rationalistic approach to the Scriptures. Even the traditional confessionalistic and Pietistic movements are strongly influenced by historical criticism. There is no vigorous evangelical theological thrust in Germany today. Barring a God-send revival and a return to the Scriptures, the eroding influence of the theologians will become even more acute. These men are dispensers of doubt when they should be champions of conviction. One is compelled to cry out with Goethe the imploring words which he directed to a friend: "Give me the benefit of your convictions, if you have any; but keep your doubts to yourself, for I have enough of my own!" And in the words of Zinzendorf one must say with unflinching devotion to the inspired Word:

Herr, dein Wort, die edle Gabe,
diesen Schatz erhalte mir;
denn ich zieh es aller Habe
und dem grössten Reichtum für.
Wenn dein Wort nicht mehr soll gelten,
worauf soll der Glaube ruhn?
Mir ist's nicht um tausend Welten,
aber um dein Wort zu tun.

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