

THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION
IN THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH

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SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE

The scope of the work in preparation of the present dissertation has been prescribed by the purpose to discover and interpret critically Karl Barth's view of the Christian doctrine of sanctification. The study has centered primarily in his thought. The writer sought first to familiarize himself with the Barthian view as a whole, reading his published works and following his lectures through two summer terms. Then a more detailed study was made of his treatment of sanctification. In Chapter I reference is made to the chief sources of the material available bearing directly upon his view of this doctrine. The works of Emil Brunner were consulted, particularly with reference to points of difference between him and Barth in respect of sanctification. General theological works, and the creeds and confessions of evangelical Christendom, as well as treatises bearing especially upon this subject, were investigated for the purpose of establishing a background of the development of this doctrine in the history of Christian thought against which Barth's view might be interpreted. But throughout the study the writer's objective has been a critical interpretation of Barth's view in particular rather than a general survey of the doctrine in Christian theology.

The development of thought follows the writer's understanding of Barth's view of the doctrine. The task of

interpretation and criticism would have been much simpler if we had a complete statement from him of his interpretation of sanctification, but since that is lacking at present a major part of the task in hand has been to present in brief scope the substance of his view. This fact has given direction to the arrangement of the chapters. In Chapter I an introductory statement is given of the basal conceptions of his entire view, not for the purpose of interpreting his theological position but to set forth the foundation on which his conception of sanctification is to be understood. On the basis of this introductory survey the writer attempted to face the question, To what extent is sanctification in this view a divine, rather than a human, work? The answer took the form of Barth's conception of the objective work of Christ (Chapter II) and the subjective work of the Holy Spirit (Chapter III) in effecting the sanctification of the believer. The next question was, What solution of the problem of sin does this view offer? And the answer was found in Barth's conception of the relation of sanctification to justification, which is presented in Chapter IV. The doctrine also embraces the problem of sin from the standpoint of the Christian life, after sanctification has occurred. Is the sanctified life one of perfection? What is Christian perfection, and when and where is it to be realized? What are the motives and the objectives of the Christian life

that sanctification presents? These questions led to the development of Chapter V. In Chapter VI the question faced is, What is the believer to do in serving God in the present order? The answer is conceived in terms of the Church in God's redemptive purpose.

The last chapter presents a summary and conclusion. Is Barth's basal conception of the meaning of sanctification in accordance with the teaching of Scriptures? The conclusion is put in three definitive statements. Is his view sound in relation to Christian ethics? What is his contribution to Christian theology in the statement of this doctrine? The writer has sought the answer to these questions in Barth's doctrine of sanctification rather than in his view as a whole; and he has come to the conclusion that there is something more than a corrective note in the contribution that this view presents. It sets forth a sound basis for a constructive view.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: BASAL CONCEPTIONS

A study of the Christian doctrine of sanctification as it is interpreted by Karl Barth may well begin with a general statement concerning the basal conceptions upon which his theological view as a whole rests. At least three good reasons may be advanced for using this approach. One is that we are not dealing with a finished and complete doctrinal view, but with one that is in process of construction. It is a vital, growing theology that must be apprehended in its entirety as one studies a living organism; it cannot be analyzed and studied objectively as one would dissect a lifeless body. Again, the doctrine of sanctification forms an integral part of his entire view. This will become increasingly evident as the present study advances.

Yet a third reason for beginning with a general statement is the fact that Barth has not yet published a complete theological treatise upon sanctification. He has lectured on Ethics, and he has conducted a seminar on Sanctification, and the writer has sought to take advantage of full notes that were made of his statements in those two courses,

but inasmuch as they have not been published formally⁽¹⁾ they will not be used directly as source material for the present study. In 1927 he published an article on "Rechtfertigung und Heiligung"⁽²⁾, which is the most complete statement that he has published. He has also dealt with certain aspects of sanctification in his treatise on "Der Heilige Geist und das Christliche Leben"⁽³⁾. These two articles will be used throughout this study, but additional material will be drawn from the second edition of his Dogmatik, his volume on Die Theologie und die Kirche, and other books, as well as from additional articles appearing in Zwischen den Zeiten and Theologische Existenz Heute. The writer will seek to gather out of all Barth's published utterances his statements concerning this particular doctrine and interpret them in a discussion that follows his points of emphasis. The first task, then, is to set forth briefly the conceptions that are basal and determinative in his whole view.

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- (1) His lecture notes on Ethik have been mimeographed in two bound volumes by the World's Student Christian Federation in Geneva, but they are for very limited and guarded distribution and are not to be taken as a part of his published works. In some rather important respects he is revising the statement of his position as he goes forward with his Dogmatik.
- (2) Zwischen den Zeiten, 1927, heft 4, pages 281-309.
- (3) Published in 1930 in the book that bears the title Zur Lehre vom Heiligen Geist, von Karl Barth und Heinrich Barth.

1. THE INTER-RELATEDNESS OF THE DOCTRINES.

No one doctrine, says Barth, can be treated adequately without reference to all the others. Each is a point, and when all have been put together the result is not a series of independent points but a complete circle. When one views the whole he cannot tell where one doctrine ends and another begins, he simply sees the circle. Nor can he say that one has priority over the others. We may study one doctrine specifically, but we must not take it out of the circle. To do so would be to treat it abstractly, which would take the discussion out of the realm of theology and revelation into the realm of philosophy and speculation. He insists that each doctrine must be studied in its relation to all the others.⁽¹⁾ We cannot understand the doctrine of God without studying it as the doctrine of the Trinity. The person and work of Christ must be considered in relation to the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and both Christology and Pneumatology must be related directly to every other phase of dogmatics. Justification must be studied along with sanctification, for both are involved in reconciliation, which in turn is inextricably related to creation and redemption.

Barth has indicated that he proposes to treat theological ethics, which is the doctrine of God's command to man and involves sanctification, in relation to the

(1) Cf. Zwischen den Zeiten (hereafter listed in footnotes as Z.d.Z.) 1927, p. 281 f.

doctrine of God, then in relation to creation, again in connection with reconciliation, and finally in relation to redemption.⁽¹⁾ Thus sanctification will run through the five volumes, as he follows his method of studying theology in a threefold perspective.⁽²⁾ This is quite different from the usual method of considering one doctrine rather thoroughly and then dismissing it as another is taken under consideration. It adds to the difficulty of grasping his view, for distinctions and relations are rather finely drawn at times, but if we do not recognize this method of treatment at the beginning we shall be in confusion throughout the study.

2. IN CHRIST IN FAITH.

Barth's theological view is built around Paul's Phrase $\epsilon\nu\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omega$ as the true perspective of Christian doctrine. We grasp the significance of that description of the Christian life if we keep in mind Luther's slogan sola fide, and Calvin's phrase soli Deo gloria. When we speak in faith, our thoughts are directed to Christ and the life that we have in Him. When our thoughts are not directed to Him, but to ourselves or to the world, we are not speaking in faith. And it is only by the grace of God working upon us through the Holy Spirit that

(1) Die Kirchliche Dogmatik, Vorwort, p. XII.

(2) The threefold perspective will be summarized below on p. 11.

we are able to exercise faith. Again the figure of a circle comes into use, but this time it describes the sphere in which a Christian thinks in Christ. Man is either within the circle or outside, there is no third possibility; and it is a closed circle from without. He regards it from within as a believer, not from without as an observer. He is put inside by the grace of God, or he is not inside at all. Once within, he can see his way out into the world - that is, he can see his relation to the world when he looks out upon it from faith in Christ. The man who does not regard the Christian life from the viewpoint of the work of grace in faith, says Barth, but knows only the things of self and the world, cannot know the true meaning of the doctrines. This point of view is not one in which the believer exercises his own faculties more properly, and therefore achieves a clearer understanding, but an act in which God speaks to him, enabling him to see life on the basis of God's wisdom in revelation. The two spheres, 'in faith' and 'in the world', are distinct. There is a gulf between them that only God can span. He bridges it for us in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Faith acknowledges that it is altogether the work of grace.

From this viewpoint, which the Spirit mediates to us in faith, we regard all the doctrines that interpret God and his relation to man and creation. We know of creation and the final redemption only through Christ the

Reconciler. We are not to try to think of the world related to God before Christ came upon the scene, as if Christ began His activity in the world with His incarnation. We are not to think of revelation as progressive to a certain level before Christ became the center of it. We are not to think of redemption as Christ's answer to the spiritual longings of man. In fact, we see in faith through the Holy Spirit that Christ is the beginning and the end, the center and the circumference of all that we know about God and His world. But let it not be implied that faith is a quality that is imparted to man, which is to remain in him, or in which he is to abide apart from the world. It is an act that can be repeated only by divine grace, it is not a relationship that is made static. This is the viewpoint of one who is 'on the way' of God's revelation. He remains in the world thinking according to the ways of the world save in so far as God speaks to him in Christ and he hears in faith through the Holy Spirit.

This viewpoint always embraces the Church. The believer cannot speak in faith of God's work without speaking
 (1)
 as from within the Church. The Holy Spirit places him there in the act of grace that enables him to believe. It is not for him to decide whether he is to relate himself to the Church, for that is decided by God in his election and calling. If one speaks independently of this relation, he is not

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 7.

speaking in faith. Here again is manifest the distinction between the observer and the believer. The former is on the outside, looking into the Church, and seeing only that which his human faculties can grasp; while the latter is on the inside, looking unto Christ with the Spirit-enlightened eyes of the heart. In faith we become members of Christ's body. Dogmatics can only be Church Dogmatics, for it must always think from this viewpoint.

Apart from the Word of God, we would not know that we have this new life in Christ, but that Word acts as a mirror in reflecting it to us. We see the whole reality in the light of the truth. We see dimly now, because of our sinful creatureliness, but the Holy Spirit enables us to see through the Word that which we shall be in God's perfect act of redemption. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." We are in Christ, and our redemption will be fully revealed to us in a new act in the resurrection. But that which is in God's future for us is made present and real to us now through the Holy Spirit of promise, speaking through the Word. This is the viewpoint of faith. We see in ourselves only sin, but we turn away

(1) Eph. 1: 18.

(2) Eph. 5: 30f. Cf. Credo, p. 124f.

(3) Die Theologie und die Kirche, pp. 366 and 370, (hereafter referred to in footnotes as Theol. d. Kir.).

(4) 1 Jn. 3: 2.

from that to the life that we have in Christ.

The chief application of this emphasis to the task of theology is that the object studied must determine⁽¹⁾ the approach and method to be used, which is the reverse of the use of a philosophical system. One who has a 'system' of theology adopts some idea or premise that provides a frame within which, or a skeleton around which, the doctrines are to be arranged in logical order. It involves the danger of sacrificing content for form, for the system must be consistently held. Barth's view is that revelation is itself the background and basis upon which its message is to be set forth in theological statements. It provides its own frame and perspective. If we keep this fact in mind, and at the same time recall his view of the inter-relatedness of the doctrines, we shall be in a good position to understand his present use of dialectic and paradox. He is not concerned to employ a method that is derived from philosophy or philosophers. We miss his point of approach if we test his treatment of doctrines by that which is recognized in philosophy as a method of dialectic. He does not set forth a thesis matched by an antithesis in order to provide a synthesis. In fact, he is not interested in using the first two steps as a method. His dialectic is the

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 6.

attempt to see two sides of a proposition at the same time without seeking a synthesis, for it is in the quest for a synthesis that speculative philosophy supplants theology. His dialectic is that which sees that man in the flesh cannot find God, but that God reveals Himself to man through faith in an act, a discontinuous event. That event emphasizes the limitations under which man lives, so that he perceives that even while he knows God in faith, he cannot know God through his natural capacity. The truth is in the revelation which is made known to him in faith, but it is never given into his possession. He can only view it in faith, he cannot subject it to his disposal, arrange it in his system of thought. When the truth comes in the form of a paradox, or in a riddle or hard saying, faith does not seek a synthesis or logical solution, which is the way of philosophy, it seeks only to accept and obey the truth as God gives it. When we accept this point of view we can speak as from revelation, which is the true method of theology. Not what we think of God, but what He declares to us concerning Himself, is the material of doctrine. And not our manner of thinking, but His manner of revelation is to be the form of the doctrine. To be sure, we as human beings are interpreting the revelation, and we must have some method, some mental apparatus. That is just the point of Barth's dialectic. We use the faculties that we have, but we acknowledge that they are utterly incapable

of grasping the truth apart from the grace that God provides in the act of revelation. Homo peccator non capax verbi Divini.

3. CONTINGENT CONTEMPORANEOUSNESS.

Barth's view of the relationship between time and eternity is basal in his treatment of every doctrine. He abhors the slightest suggestion of a continuity between man and God. He has seen the fruits of such a premise in the barren forms of mysticism that have no place for God as personal Lord, in the liberalism that sees in Jesus Christ only a human example, in the rooting of religion in man's consciousness of his dependence upon God as Schleiermacher taught, and in the doctrine of justification and sanctification that exalts the Christian to the position of partner with God in the work of salvation. The error in all such cases, he feels, is an elementary one that must be corrected at its root. It is the assumption that the relationship between man the sinful creature and God the Holy Creator is continuous, or can be made continuous, which means that man in some measure can cease to be man and become as God.

He opposes this assumption with the doctrine of revelation as an act. That, in turn, involves his conception of contingent contemporaneousness, which is the relationship between time and eternity in which God reveals Himself to

sinful man. The revelation of God as triune indicates the three orders over which He reigns. The first is the *regnum naturae*, which is the realm of the activity of God the Father as Creator. This is the sphere of Adam before the fall, the universe apart from sin, all of which belongs to God because of His act of creation. The second is the *regnum gratiae*, which is the realm of the work of God the Son, who is the Reconciler. In this order, man is sinful, dead in sin, but God raises him up to a new life through grace. He is forgiven, justified, sanctified through Christ while yet remaining a sinner in the flesh. The third is the *regnum gloriae*, which is the realm of the work of God the Holy Spirit, who is the Redeemer. In this sphere man is actually made a new creature, actually partakes of the holy nature of God, is made a child of God. These are three orders, and it would make for an easy analysis if we could say that the first extended from creation to Adam's sin, the second from the *protevangelium* to the general resurrection, and the third from the resurrection on through eternity. But the principle of contingent contemporaneousness prevents such a linear interpretation. There is some truth in such a view, but if we leave the matter there we overlook the greater truth. The three orders are centered in the moment of revelation, for in every word that God speaks He is inseparably present as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer. We may understand this

principle more fully if we consider carefully his use of the term 'time'.

He uses it in two respects: general and particular. The general use is not abstract, but it builds upon Kierkegaard's principle of the 'infinite qualitative distinction between time and eternity.'⁽¹⁾ When Barth uses it in this sense he is thinking of time as the life-realm of sinful man in the flesh. It is, therefore, not a question of years in which life is computed, nor a question of whether eternity is an endless continuation of such years. On the contrary, eternity is the realm in which the Holy God has His being, and time is the realm in which man lives under sin. There can be no common ground between the two. There is a chasm between them that can be bridged only by God's act in revealing Himself to man. Such an act is historical in that it is an occurrence in time, but it does not establish a continuous relationship between man and God. It can be repeated at the discretion of God, but not by the work of man. The contact between the two realms is always the vertical line of eternity touching the horizontal

(1) Cf. Preface to the second edition of Der Römerbrief. Barth does not wish to be quoted from this book, and it is not used as a basis of this treatise. But he has not forsaken this principle. The use is apparent in the Dogmatik (second edition) and Credo, as well as in other books.

line of time. There is no way from time to eternity, but there is a way from eternity to time.

His use of 'time' in a particular sense points to definite periods in which God's revelation has occurred in history or will occur. This explains his phrase *Zwischen den Zeiten*, between the times. There are two great times, or periods, of revelation - or two revelation-events of the coming of the eternal God into the temporal order - which are the foci of the present relationship between God and man. One is the period of revelation in Jesus Christ, particularly the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension. When He ascended this 'time' closed. The other is the parousia, when Christ shall come again into the world of time. Between these two times extends the present, die *Zwischenzeit*, in which the church bears testimony to God's revelation by witnessing to that which God has manifested in the risen Christ, and that which He will manifest in the return of Christ to earth.

There is another grouping of three times which he uses in his Dogmatik. The first is the revelation in Jesus Christ, the original, direct speech of God. The second is the time of testimony to this spoken revelation, the time of the witness of the Apostles and the formation of the canon. The third is the time of the Church, the time of proclamation of that which the prophets and apostles have written in testimony of that which they heard.⁽¹⁾ This grouping is to be related

(1) Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes, Prolegomena zur Kirchlichen Dogmatik (hereafter referred to in footnotes as Dog.), p. 150.

subordinately to the one given above, and both are to be understood in relation to the trinitarian order of divine action: The order of nature in which God rules as Creator, the order of grace in which God rules as Reconciler, and the order of glory in which God rules as Redeemer. The order of grace is the realm of revelation as well as of reconciliation. Whenever Barth speaks of revelation (Offenbarung) he is thinking of the work of God the Son. Within this general order of revelation he thinks of the Word of God as proclaimed, written and revealed, in terms of the three groupings of 'times' stated above. Consequently when he speaks of the *Zwischenzeit* he is considering the present order in the light of the whole revelation in Christ, including His incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, present intercession, and parousia.

The principle of contingent contemporaneousness means that although we are in the *Zwischenzeit* under the order of grace over which Christ reigns as Reconciler, God is also present as Creator and Redeemer. The orders of nature, grace and glory are contemporaneous in revelation. While it is true that we are now in the *Zwischenzeit* between the ascension and the parousia, it is also true that the revelation of the forty days becomes a present reality when God speaks, and that the presence of the Holy Spirit enables the believer to enter by faith and hope into the meaning of the order of glory. This principle does not ignore the temporal aspects

of the events of revelation that have occurred. For example, Barth takes the first commandment as a theological axiom,⁽¹⁾ which must be seen as the record of an event in history. It is God's Word spoken to definite men in a concrete situation. But when God speaks to us through this written statement of the commandment, an event of revelation occurs which is contemporaneous with that other event in which God spoke to Moses and Israel. He is as near to us now as He was to Israel then, and His Word is as fresh and new to us now as it was to them then. According to this view we are actually no farther from Christ than were the Christians of the second century. When God spoke to them in that period, He was as really present to them as Jesus was to the disciples, and He is equally near and present to us to-day in His Word through the Holy Spirit. On the same principle, Christ was contemporaneous with Abraham, wherefore He could say, "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."⁽²⁾

If it is true that Christ is contemporaneous with us, it is also true that we are in a crisis of judgment. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil."⁽³⁾ His presence judges in bringing to light the distinction between righteousness and unrighteousness.

(1) Z. d. Z. 1933, p. 300.

(2) Jn. 8: 56. Referred to by Barth in a footnote, Dog. p. 150.

(3) Jn. 3: 19. Cf. also Jn. 9: 39.

We cannot know that we are in His presence without knowing that we are thereby judged hopelessly sinful. It is also true that He is present with us as the Lord of Life and death. He stands before us as really as He stood before the tomb of Lazarus, as really as He hung on the cross, as really as He stood before Mary in the garden and said, "Touch me not ... but go ... and say ..."⁽¹⁾ His presence means our judgment, our reconciliation, and our sanctification.

4. ESCHATOLOGY.

Very much along the same line Barth's view of eschatology is to be understood. The usual method is to reserve the doctrine of last things for the interpretation of that which is to occur after death, but he employs the principle of eschatology throughout all the doctrines. He does it because of the distinction between time and eternity that is basal in his thinking, and also because of his view of the inter-relatedness of the doctrines. We cannot understand any doctrine without seeing it in an eschatological perspective. The beginning is conceived in terms of the end, the center in terms of the circumference, life in terms of death. Christian witnessing, Church proclamation, must remind itself of the revelation of the forty days, and at the same time expect the revelation of the return of Christ.

(1) Jn. 20: 17.

We live under the constant threat of death. Barth stresses the fact that death, which is "the wages of sin", is the end of this life. Really the end! There will be no transfer of quantities or qualities that we possess now into the existence that will be given to us beyond death and the resurrection. If that is true he thinks that it must also be true that the work of grace in or upon man must not be thought of as a deposit in the life that must die, for in that case the work of grace would be temporary and subject to defeat by death. Man the sinner will die, but man the reconciled and redeemed cannot die, for as such he is in the power of eternal grace.

We may say then that this view of eschatology has a twofold reference. It points to the end of this realm of time, just as surely as sinful man must die, and Christ must come again; just as surely as there is to be a resurrection and a final judgment. It also points to the present work of grace through the Holy Spirit, who is God the Redeemer. It is an eschatological work in that it brings the eternal realm of God into the temporal realm of man. Just as Jesus could say to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again," and, "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die,"⁽¹⁾ so also does the Holy Spirit say to the believer that even now he

(1) Jn. 11: 23 and 25f.

is redeemed, and that his redemption will be fully revealed in his resurrection. The distinction for us to keep in mind is between the accomplished fact of redemption, and the believer's realization and knowledge of the fact. The believer's redemption is not yet his possession, he can speak of it only as a promise in faith; but because the Spirit who will redeem man in the final resurrection is present to man here and now, that promise is a reality, a reality in faith and in grace. He can and does live by faith in that promise.

5. REVELATION.

The revelation of God comes only in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, never through nature, or reason, apart from Him. That does not mean that God has nothing to do with nature, or that He has abandoned His creation. The entire universe is His work, created and sustained through and unto
(1)
God the Son. But revelation is the unique act of God in which He makes Himself known to man as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer. Nothing apart from this event deserves to be called revelation. Only God can give it, and He gives it in only one way. Its standard, or criterion is in itself. We are not to pass judgment upon it in the light of some other truth, but it
(2)
passes judgment upon all that man calls truth. We can know

(1) Col. 1: 15-17. Cf. also Jn. 1: 3, 10; Heb. 1: 2.

(2) "Offenbarung, Kirche und Theologie", Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 9, p. 20.

it only through the Scriptures as the Holy Spirit interprets them to us. Three phases of Barth's doctrine of revelation should be noted.

(1) AS INCARNATION

When the Word became flesh the veil that concealed God from man's view was penetrated. It was the only manner in which the gulf could be bridged. The way of revelation had to be the way of incarnation. But in His incarnation the deity of Christ was not compromised. He did not in any sense cease to be God. His revelation therefore embraced the triune God, and so God remained concealed even as He was revealed in the Son. It is in holding these two conceptions in relation to the incarnation of Christ that Barth uses the two phrases *Deus absconditus* and *Deus revelatus*. In that He is hidden from us because of our sin, He is *Deus absconditus*. In that He makes Himself known to us in spite of our sin He is *Deus revelatus*. These two lines, he suggests, might be followed in comparing the significance of the earthly life of Jesus, until and through His death, with the meaning of the forty days following His resurrection. In His earthly life He revealed God as hidden, under the veil of human nature. The climaxing phase of it is in His cry of agony from the cross: (1) "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Here is no light, only the greatest darkness. Apparently God is not

(1) Mark 15: 34.

present, and yet it is God the Son in His reconciling death who utters the cry. God the Father is veiled, and the greatest deed of the Son only accentuates that fact. Then in the forty days following His resurrection Deus revelatus spoke to the disciples in revealed glory. This was the period of the supreme revelation of the Son. It was then that He removed the scales from their eyes and enabled them to see Him in His glory. It was then that He manifested Himself to them at will and departed at will. It was then that He made their hearts burn with His interpretation of the Scriptures. In those forty days He led them to know Him as He had not been able to reveal Himself to them before His death and resurrection. The ascension closed this period of revelation, and it is not to be opened again until the parousia takes place. This is the reason Barth puts such heavy stress upon the *Zwischenzeit* in which the Church is at work; it is the 'mean-time' between the two great revelations of God the Son. The revelation that we have now is through the Holy Spirit, who interprets the Scriptures to us concerning Christ and enables us to live in the hope of the revelation that is to come. In Him Christ is contemporaneous with us, speaking to us as He did to the disciples. During all His incarnation God was present both as *absconditus* and as *revelatus*, as the transfiguration witnesses; and during the forty days He was *absconditus* as well as *revelatus*, as is shown in the experience of the two men on the way to Emmaus. He is both in every act

of revelation to-day. When he unveils Himself to us we perceive that our sinfulness in the flesh hides Him from our view, and therefore His revelation can only be an act of wonder that God does upon man, and never a deposit that He makes in man. In that He unveils Himself, His revelation remains
(1)
hidden. Nevertheless He makes Himself known to man in His Word through the Holy Spirit.

(2) AS GOD'S WORD

What is the Word of God? Ordinarily the answer to that question has been, "It is the Bible." Or, we have said that the Bible is the written Word of God, while Jesus Christ is the spoken Word. Barth gives us a different answer, which is in line with the other basal conceptions in his view. He sees that the Word of God is to be understood in three forms. We may do well to set them forth briefly, and in the order in
(2)
which he treats them.

(a) The Proclaimed Word of God. This points to the relation of witness to the Word. The prophets and apostles declared to the people that which God had spoken to them, and now the Church must proclaim that which they declared. The message of the Church must always be the expounding of the Scriptures, bearing testimony to that which has been witnessed

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 22.

(2) The first half-volume of his proposed five-volume work in Dogmatics is under the title Die Lehre Vom Wort Gottes. The threefold form of the Word is treated in pages 89-128.

to it. When God speaks through this witness of the Church, it becomes in that event the Word of God. "Real proclamation, therefore, means the proclaimed Word of God, and the proclaimed Word of God means, in this first and outermost circle, human speech about God on the basis of God's own order, which fundamentally transcends all human causation and therefore is not to be grounded in man, but merely occurs as a fact and is only to be acknowledged.⁽¹⁾"

(b) The Written Word of God. Barth puts great stress upon the Bible as God's Word. All the changes in his position have driven him in this direction. One may say that the chief difference between the Römerbrief and the second edition of the Dogmatik is the closer affinity between the latter and the Bible, a more frank reliance upon the Bible and its expressions. He is saying that the Bible is the Word, and that it is both human and divine. It is human in that it is expressed in the language of man, and therefore it is subject to the study of textual criticism. Just as it was necessary for the Son of God to clothe Himself in the form of man, so it was necessary for God's speech to be clothed in human language. But just as one does not see God in His incarnate revelation when he sees only a human Jesus, so one does not hear the Word of God when he finds in the Scriptures only human language. It is the Word of God through which the

(1) Dog. p. 92.

Holy Spirit reveals God to man.

(c) The revealed Word. The Word proclaimed and written must be founded upon the fact that God reveals Himself. The chief word of the prophets was, "Thus saith the Lord." The chief word of the New Testament is that God hath "spoken unto us in His Son." The relation between testimony and revelation may be stated as follows: The testimony of the prophets and apostles pointed to the Word that God had spoken to them, and the witness of the Church becomes revelation as God makes use of it in speaking to men; or revelation becomes witness, and witness becomes revelation. But we must be careful not to identify the word of the witness, even of the Bible, with the authority of revelation itself.⁽¹⁾ That is the work of the Holy Spirit, and not of man.

These three forms of the Word of God are to be considered as one. The proclaimed message of the Church cannot be God's revelation aside from the Written Word. The whole Bible is the Word of God as the Holy Spirit speaks through it in the witness of the Church.

(3) AS GOD'S ACT

A recent translation of some articles by Barth⁽²⁾ appeared in a volume carrying the title God In Action. This

(1) Cf. Dog. p. 115.

(2) God In Action - By Karl Barth. Translated by E. G. Homrighausen and Karl Ernst. Round Table Press, 1936.

is a very suggestive way of putting Barth's view that the
 speech of God must be considered as the deed or act of God.⁽¹⁾
 The point that is at stake is that revelation is not to be
 thought of as a thing apart from God. It is not man's dis-
 covery of God, progressive or otherwise;⁽²⁾ it is not a seed
 of truth that God has planted in man to be developed into a
 larger revelation; and it is not merely the history of God's
 revelation which man cherishes and interprets and which has
 a certain divine value. Yet the historicity of revelation
 is not ignored. On the contrary, it is strongly emphasized.
 The emphasis that Barth puts upon its historicity is to point
 out that it is always event, God speaking to certain men on *an*⁽³⁾
 definite occasions. By revelation the Bible means "a concrete
 relation to concrete men."

Taking such a positive stand on revelation as an
 event, he goes on to treat it as both subjective and objective.⁽⁴⁾
 It is subjective in that God reveals Himself in speaking to man;
 in that God is present, acting upon man. It is objective in
 that the revelation is an occurrence to which man can bear wit-
 ness, in which man can and must acknowledge God. Thus it is
 not an elusive phantom that is neither here nor there. It is
 an event fixed in the eternal realm of God's action. It is

(1) Dog. p. 148ff.

(2) Ibid. p. 347.

(3) Ibid. p. 343.

(4) Cf. Credo, p. 25.

objective to the extent that the Church must bear witness in referring to it. But it is subjective in that God speaks through the witness of the Church.

When we say that God is present in His revelation, we mean Jesus Christ made known to us through the Holy Spirit. He brings God near. In Him we hear and see God. In Him revelation is both subjective and objective. In Him we have both the Gospel and the Law. Revelation ever declares the lordship of God in Christ, ever proclaims the reign of His Kingdom. (1) Therefore God's Word comes to us as command, asserting its authority over us, requiring of us faith, obedience, sanctification.

6. GOD.

The point from which Barth views every sector of the circle of Christian doctrines is the self-revelation of God. He says that to fix the centre of the circle is no human task, (2) but it has been fixed by God in His act of revelation. Dörries was right when he said, "The strength of the Barthian theology (3) is its conception of God," but we are to remember that it is not a doctrine of God in abstracto. It is dynamic rather than static, it is moving and not fixed, it is the glimpse that we get of God in the act in which He reveals Himself to man. It

(1) Dog. p. 323.

(2) Z.d.Z. - 1927. p. 281.

(3) B. Dörries, Der Ferne und der Nahe Gott, p. 7.

is for that reason all the more important, for it is a doctrine of God that attempts to declare what God says to man about Himself, instead of being content with setting forth what man thinks about God. "The biggest thing which Barth has done," says McConnachie, "is that he has once more given to the thought of God its greatness, its tremendous power, its overwhelming earnestness, that he has set the sentence 'God is God' once again in the middle point of theology and of religious life."⁽¹⁾ He is concerned not so much with man's deed as with God's act, not so much with man's thought as with God's Word, not so much with man's need as with God's command, not so much with man's time as with God's eternity.

Barth's view of God is conceived in terms of the Trinity. We cannot know God save as He reveals Himself to us, and He does not reveal Himself otherwise than as triune. All the other phases of the Biblical view of God are rooted in this fundamental premise. He is the Revealer, the Revelation, and the Revealedness (der Offenbarer, die Offenbarung und das Offenbarsein). Or, He is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He is one, and yet He is distinguished as three. How to reconcile these two positions is the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity. Any view that is suggestive of an economic Trinity is no solution at

(1) John McConnachie, The Significance of Karl Barth p. 138f.

all, but only a failure to grasp the real problem. Barth is not primarily interested in metaphysical or abstract efforts to find the solution. His chief concern is to approach it as the doctrine of God's act of addressing Himself to man. Not what the doctrine of the Trinity means for us abstractly, but what God the Triune means to us concretely in the Word that He speaks to us, this is the concern of theology.

He sees the root of this doctrine in the fact that
 (1)
 God confronts man as his Lord. If we understand that situation we shall begin to grasp the meaning of the doctrine of God and revelation, and at the same time we shall be led into the meaning of sanctification. Barth's emphasis upon the lordship of God stresses His freedom toward His own revelation. He is free to reveal Himself or to remain veiled. He elects and calls those who are to hear His Word. It is always an act within His freedom, and never at man's disposal. He can and does overcome the conflict, bridge the chasm, between Himself and man, and enable man to know Him without compromising any of His attributes.
 (2)
 If we know Christ in His revelation we shall know that He is absolute Lord in all that He does. If we know the Holy Spirit as God revealed, we shall know Him as Lord with infinite power over our very existence. There can be no compromise here. If we do not know the triune God as Lord,

(1) Dog. p. 324.

(2) Ibid. p. 337f.

we do not know Him at all. This is the true meaning of
 (1)
 omnipotence. As eternal Father He is Lord over life and death, which means that our total existence is in His hands, at the disposal of His will. We are His servants, His slaves, but we are also His children. This latter phase is coming to the fore in Barth's thinking and writing more now than formerly. In the period of the writing of the Römerbrief his emphasis was upon the altogether otherness, the transcendence, the majesty of God; and upon man as slave, hopelessly lost in despair because of sin. He is now putting more emphasis upon the mercy and loving kindness of God who reveals Himself to man in Christ through the Spirit, and thus makes man His child. He has not forsaken the earlier emphasis, but he is trying to see everything in the light of the Gospel of reconciling grace.

Along with the statement that Barth approaches the doctrine of God from the viewpoint of His freedom in revelation, we should also point out that he is thinking at the same time of the fact of sin which prevents man from seeing God. It is because of sin that God is hidden from man. Therefore we think of the freedom of God in His revelation as indicated not merely in His choice to remain transcendent, though that is always to be acknowledged, but also in His choice to penetrate the veil of man's sin and reveal Himself to man. The concept of the hiddenness of God, then, points in two direc-

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 21 ff.

tions: The freedom of God to reveal Himself or to remain concealed from man's view; and the sinfulness of man that makes it forever impossible for him to discover God.

In view of this approach we should not be surprised to hear Barth speaking of God as wholly removed from man, as transcendent, as incomprehensible. In the act of revelation God is both near and remote; He is to be heard and known and yet He cannot be heard and known. This is to be taken neither as a dialectical paradox, nor as a mere indication of a theophany. It is quite simply to be accepted as the truth of the fact that the triune God who is hidden from man by sin, is nevertheless able and free to reveal Himself. When He spoke to Nicodemus in the person of the Son incarnate, He was even then God the Father whose face man cannot see. When God the Spirit spoke to the Church at Antioch, He was at the same time the Creator whose dwelling transcends all creation. The doctrine of the Trinity reminds us that the God who makes Himself known to man in an event is at the same time infinitely beyond man's reach. Barth's approach is not by way of philosophy to the transcendent as the Absolute, with the suggestion that He is not in touch with that which is not Himself; nor yet is it by way of the theology of experience, that finds God in the world, that discovers man longing for God and seeking Him and finding Him in a human experience of fellowship with Christ. It is rather by way of the theology that allows the fact of revelation, God's free and independent self-revelation, to determine its

entire view. "The uniqueness of God is no religious postulate and no philosophic idea, but that which corresponds exactly to the uniqueness of God's revelation."⁽¹⁾

He begins his theology where the Bible begins its record, with the fact of God. "In the beginning God." "In the beginning was the Word." But it is this fact made known through revelation and apprehended in faith. Barth insists that the concept 'God' is not to be taken as a given idea that the believer has already apprehended before becoming a believer, the improvement and enrichment of which he now experiences as a believer. It is a concept that inheres in revelation itself, and does not arise in man.⁽²⁾ Revelation then is the ground on which true theology must rest.

God is utterly apart from and other than all that we know as arising in time. He transcends all our ways of measuring Him, all our standards, for He is in Himself the ultimate standard. That which man constructs as his conception of God, in which he then believes, can only be an idol, an empty image. The very fact that it is merely the object of his trust and thought unmasks it as an idol.⁽³⁾ In our conceit we think that we can define God, grant Him a place in His universe, do something for Him that will make Him happy, and then tell Him in our prayers what we want Him to do. All of which indicates that we do not know God. When we know Him

(1) Credo, p. 17.

(2) Ibid. p. 14.

(3) Ibid. p. 17.

in His revelation, we know Him as humanly inapprehensible, as the Lord of our being and of our knowing. He is infinite, man is finite; He is eternal, man is temporal; He is Creator, man is creature; He is Reconciler and Redeemer, man is sinful. In Jesus Christ the Word became flesh, and in Him through the Holy Spirit God makes Himself known to man.

The point here is not that God is unknowable, but that man is incapable of acquiring knowledge of Him with His natural faculties that are limited and dominated by sin. God is knowable, but all knowledge of Him must be God-given and received by man through faith. Even when we believe His Word and thus come to know Him, we are not to think of ourselves as accumulating knowledge of Him, but as responsive to His command which He has spoken and will speak again. We are not to use the term 'God' to designate an essence which we think we have discovered, and to which we then ascribe certain attributes and relations. But we must recognize that we do not know through our own natural faculties what we mean when we use the term 'God'. Our natural reason leads us to think that we can know God, only God's revelation convinces us of His inapprehensibility.⁽¹⁾

It is in the development of this emphasis that Barth distinguishes between God as subject and God as object. Much of Christian thinking has taught, implicitly if not always explicitly, that He is primarily the object of our faith

(1) Credo, p. 15. Cf. also Come Holy Spirit, pp. 20 and 68.

and worship, even of our thought. He is what we conceive Him to be, and what we conceive Him to be determines our religious experience and service. On the contrary, says Barth, He is always the speaking Subject, creating through His Word, commanding our obedience. Instead of being the mere object of our worship He is the One who enables us by His grace to live and worship. Rather than the object of our faith He is the Subject who commands our faith, who creates faith in us when He speaks to us. We are not to think of Him as the God whom we know, but as the God who knows us. "It is therefore not because we have previously sought Him that we find Him in faith, but it is because He has already found us that we seek Him - now really Him - in faith."⁽¹⁾

We should not make the mistake of assuming, as some have done, that this strong emphasis upon the transcendence of God tends to preclude the balancing conception of His immanence. This theologian is no sort of a deist. He is a theist of the first rank. But he is not concerned with deism or theism, but rather with the revelation in which the infinite God speaks to finite man in a concrete situation. To be sure God is active here in His universe, but He is not to be known as a phase of the temporal order. The distinction between Him and the natural order is an infinitely qualitative

(1) Credo, p. 16.

one. He is in the world but not of the world, hence the world cannot encompass Him.

Barth points out that he does not mean to suggest that man is to have no conceptions and convictions of his own concerning God. That would be to think of man as less than God's creature. What he does insist upon is that when man says "I believe in God," his former conceptions of God are subordinated completely to the expression of revelation. His former conceptions receive a new form and content. They are not merely improved and enriched, but they are placed in the service of the Christian confession, which is essentially the confession that we cannot know God apart from His revelation.⁽¹⁾

God reveals Himself to man as holy and righteous. The sinfulness and creatureliness of man constitutes a vast gulf between him and God. Revelation convinces man of the fact and the meaning of that gulf, by showing God to be the holy Creator, infinitely distinguished from man. "Knowledge of revelation can and must mean, then, knowledge of the remote,⁽²⁾ strange, and holy God." It means that God who is both near and remote, both unveiled and hidden, is holy, merciful, and good. This again is the doctrine of the Trinity. The Scripture "shows God to us in His activity as Revealer, as Revelation

(1) Credo, p. 15f.

(2) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 9 - p. 19. Cf. also Credo, p. 22.

as Revealedness; or as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer;
 or as Holiness, Mercy and Loving-Kindness.⁽¹⁾ Here lies the
 hope of man the sinner. If the gulf of sinfulness and crea-
 tureliness is to be bridged, it must be done by the holy
 Creator, the merciful Reconciler, the good and kind Redeemer,
 who is the triune God. Everything that man does is sinful;
 everything that God does is righteous. God can and does
 cause man's sinful deed to become righteous. That is the
 wonder of grace which is at the basis of the doctrine of
 sanctification.

(1) Dog. p. 392.

CHAPTER II

THE OBJECTIVE ASPECT OF SANCTIFICATION

1. A PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

Barth's interpretation of sanctification is essentially different from the views that have generally been held throughout Christian history. He draws freely from Luther and Calvin - is in closer agreement with Calvin and Kohlbrügge than with any others - but differs with modern Calvinism and Lutheranism. He defines it in terms of the lordship of Christ over the life of the believer, rather than as an inner renewal of the moral and spiritual nature of man. He does not sidestep the problem of sin and the need of forgiveness and regeneration, as will be shown, on the contrary he emphasizes the sinfulness and moral inability of man to the extent of insisting that the relationship between sinful man and righteous God is based altogether upon the grace of God and not at all upon the merit or work of man. It may be well to set forth a preliminary and summary statement of the doctrine in his view, and then proceed with the more detailed study in the light of his general theological position.

Sanctification is the sovereign act of God's grace in which He claims the entire life of man as His own possession, and in which man acknowledges the claim in faith in Christ, and in obedience to the Holy Spirit.

It is God's claim upon man. The word that Barth employs here is Anspruch, which in its general use is a legal term that points to a person's established right of ownership of a piece of property. Such a claim means a clear title to full rights of possession and control. Occasionally he uses the stronger term Rechtsanspruch, which emphasizes the fact that the claim is thoroughly grounded and indisputably valid. He also speaks of sanctification as God's act in taking man captive. He makes man His Gefangene, His δούλος, His bondsman. Sanctification is primarily God's act in placing man under this claim.

The doctrine therefore means that God exercises His right of complete ownership of the entire life of man. Nothing that man is or has may be exempt. God wants no less than all, and He will have no less than all. Barth sees that the words of the Heidelberg Catechism are to be taken literally, "that I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ." The Christian is one who has heard God's Word and therefore

(1) Cf. Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 285.

finds himself in the realm of the divine claim, requisition-
 ed, conscripted by God.⁽¹⁾ He recognizes God as absolute Lord
 of his very existence with unlimited power and unquestioned
 right to control his life.

God controls the Christian by binding him to Him-
 self with a tie of obligation that is both absolute and con-
 crete. "It is absolute in that it binds us to God, and it is
 concrete in that it binds us to the neighbor."⁽²⁾ As absolute
 claim upon man it is not to be broken by him. "Neither to
 please himself, nor to please others, can he step completely
 out of this obligation."⁽³⁾ He is constantly judged by it, but
 he is also held fast by it. God is not bound to man, for He
 is free, but man is bound to Him.

God's claim upon man involves his response in faith
 and obedience. Man's action is genuinely his own, and yet it
 is the work of grace in sanctifying him. Or, to put it differ-
 ently, sanctification is objective in that it is God's decree
 based upon Christ's work for man, and subjective in that it
 is the work of the Holy Spirit upon man in his response of
 faith and obedience. The Word of God is the means through
 which the Holy Spirit sanctifies the Christian. Sinful man
 must be reconciled to God in Christ if he is to be used in

(1) Cf. Dog. p. 158.

(2) Zur Lehre vom Heiligen Geist, p. 83.

(3) Credo, p. 19.

holy service, therefore sanctification cannot be separated from justification. The claimed man is possessed by God for the task of witnessing for Him in the world, therefore sanctification identifies the believer with the Church and assigns him a task in society. In the remainder of this chapter we shall consider the objective phase of this work of grace.

2. GROUNDING IN GOD

A thorough treatment of the doctrine of sanctification must trace it back to its ultimate origin in God, and Barth's view does this in three respects. (1) In the first place he sees that it is grounded in God's holiness. As Karl Hartenstein points out, Barth never tires of placing us before the holiness of God, which finds expression in His invisibility and in His wrath, and against which we are sinners to the last hour.⁽¹⁾ The doctrine of sanctification must show how man comes into a holy relation with God without compromising the fact of divine righteousness on the one hand, or of human sinfulness on the other. In the measure that either of these facts is overlooked, or covered up, the doctrine is misinterpreted. He does not start with man's desire for a righteous life before God, for sin is the contravention of the desire

(1) Karl Hartenstein, "Was Hat die Theologie Karl Barths der Mission zu Sagen?" Z. d. Z. 1928, pp. 59-83.

itself. There is in sin no desire for God, and man is dead in sin. But he begins with God's act, for it is the holy nature of God to overcome sin, and His action is always free and unconditioned save by His own nature.

The conception of divine holiness embraces both the righteousness and the love of God. Divine righteousness requires that man shall be perfect before he can have fellowship with God, for nothing impure or unclean can come into His presence. And man is sinful throughout his being; even his best action apart from grace is sinful.⁽¹⁾ But divine love provides the way whereby sinful man may be made righteous. There we must begin. We cannot go behind that fact, but we must go that far if we are to understand how sinful man can be made holy before God. "The basis on which God forgives our sin is pure, free mercy."⁽²⁾ Human action must receive its holy character from God. "Christiana sanctitas non est activa,⁽³⁾ sed passiva - aliena." Grace, because it is the grace of the holy God, takes that which is sinful and unholy and makes it holy unto God. Because Jesus could refer to Himself as the one "whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world,"⁽⁴⁾ He could also say to the disciples, "Already ye are

(1) Cf. Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 283f.

(2) Ibid. p. 306.

(3) Ibid. The quotation is from Luther zu Gal. 1: 2 - 1535.

(4) Jn. 10: 36.

clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you."⁽¹⁾
 Sanctification is the work of God who says to His chosen,
 "Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."⁽²⁾ In his "Erklärung
des Philipperbriefes" Barth says, "'Holy' men are unholy men
 who, indeed as such, are set apart by God, taken in claim and
 apprehended for His control, for His use, for Himself who is
 holy. Their holiness is and remains in Christ Jesus
 The holiness of Christians has its existence and truth in Him
 who gives it, and truly in that He gives it to them, not in
 that they have it."⁽³⁾ Later he says, "Paul believes (with ref-
 erence to himself as well as to others) in the sanctification
 with which God sanctifies the unholy."⁽⁴⁾

(2) Sanctification is also grounded in God's elect-
 ing grace. Because He is God it is within His sovereign free-
 dom to claim individual men for His own holy possession. "God
 affirms His right in us and God has mercy upon us. In assert-
 ing His right He has mercy, and in showing mercy He asserts
 His right. Both together, one explaining and grounding the
 other, this is grace as it meets us. Grace is the Law and
 grace is the Gospel. Through both together God calls us if
 and after He has elected us to be His own, to be His Church."⁽⁵⁾

(1) Jn. 15: 3. Cf. Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 306.

(2) Lev. 11: 45. Cf. Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 306.

(3) Erklärung des Philipperbriefes, p. 2f.

(4) Ibid. p. 9.

(5) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 284f.

It is His electing grace that is the ground of both the Gospel and the Law, both justification and sanctification. Man can account for his reconciliation in no other way than by acknowledging that it is altogether of God's free grace in
 (1)
 electing him. Predestination plays a large part in Barth's theology, but it is the positive statement of it with which he is concerned. He holds to Calvin's 'two-edged' doctrine of predestination, but he deals cautiously with the negative side lest it lead into speculation. We know that we have been elected, for it is the only way we can account for the grace that comes to us. But we do not know that others have not been elected. It is always to be kept on a positive basis, and never to be generalized into rules by which we may judge concerning others.

It is always God's decision, not man's, that de-
 (2)
 termines our sanctification. And it is rooted in God's infinite power to carry to perfect completion that which He purposes. "It is the omnipotence of the divine decision that has been legitimately made over us, and as such has been acknowledged by us. This divine decision has infinite potentiality, because it is unlimited and unconditioned reality; because all possibilities, known and hidden, have in it their criterion, their basis, their limit, and their definition; because we are really surrounded by it on all sides, support-

(1) Eph. 1: 4f.

(2) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 9, p. 19f.

ed by it in every respect; because along with our existence it also controls our world, indeed unceasingly controls it.⁽¹⁾"

(3) In the third place, sanctification is grounded in God's work of creation. Inasmuch as He created the whole universe, including man, and established it under His government, He has unquestionable right to take man as His own. When God claims man He is sanctifying that which already belongs to Him, restoring the order of creation. "It is therefore no arbitrary act if the same sacrament of baptism, which proclaims the forgiveness of sins to us, also proclaims to us what Calvin has pointed out as the *Summa vitae Christianae*, which is *Nostri non sumus sed Domini!* (We are not our own, but our Lord's!) We are indeed rebels, and whether we know it or not, we stand at the disposal of Him who created us out of nothing.⁽²⁾" In sovereign grace God claims as His own that which is already actually His own through creation. The man to whom grace comes acknowledges gladly that God is the Lord of all His creation, and that his life belongs entirely to God. That is the meaning of sanctification.

3. A SOVEREIGN ACT OF GRACE

In opposition to the Roman Catholic view that sanctification is accomplished through divine-human co-operation, and against the Arminian view that although the initiative in

(1) Credo, p. 24.

(2) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 307.

sanctification is with God nevertheless the work of grace is limited by and conditioned upon man's faith, indeed against all views that credit man with moral or spiritual ability to limit God in His work of grace, or to help God to accomplish His work of grace, Barth contends that sinful man is utterly incapable of a righteous deed that will have merit before God. He has neither the desire nor the ability to become holy before God. Therefore sanctification, if it is to occur at all, must be God's own sovereign act. Indeed, it is exclusively God's act, not a work in which God and man co-operate.⁽¹⁾ It is as much the exclusive work of grace upon the whole man as the resurrection of the dead. Man can do nothing but believe and obey, and even that belief and obedience are given him by the grace of God. It is man's decision because it is God's decision. "Grace demands it, grace creates it, grace accepts it. That is the wonder of the reconciled sinner, the wonder of our sanctification."⁽²⁾ The Christian will agree with Luther, says Barth, in regarding any righteousness and holiness that is his through faith and obedience as "justitia und sanctitas extrinseca, nicht intrinseca, aliena, nicht propria, passiva, nicht activa, extra nos habitans, nicht domestica."⁽³⁾ Sanctification is embraced in the event of revelation in which God's Word is spoken to man, but we do not regard it as genuinely

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 283.

(2) Ibid. p. 300.

(3) Ibid. p. 284.

His Word if we look upon it as arising out of our capacity or ability. God's speech to man - whether it is justification or sanctification, whether it is the Gospel providing forgiveness or the Law requiring obedience - is always and only an act of grace.⁽¹⁾

Instead of helping God, man actually struggles against the work of grace. After saying that sanctification is the full execution, or accomplishment, of the grace promised in baptism, Barth uses the picture of the baptism of a child to illustrate the part that sinful man takes in the act of sanctification. Just as crying, struggling, little children hinder rather than help in the service, so do we struggle against God throughout life, in spite of which He performs the work of grace upon us.⁽²⁾

Therefore sanctification is primarily God's judicial decree that is connected with revelation as an act. In the event in which God speaks to man, He lays His claim upon him, takes him as His own. Such an event is always a matter of God's free choice. It is God's decree in which He apprehends those whom He elects to be His own. In eternity there is no distinction to be made between the decree and its execution. They are one and the same act of God. Man knows of it through revelation, and it is sufficient and final in the occurrence of revelation. It is only speculation that attempts

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 4.

(2) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 285.

to say what preceded that event in God's activity. The man who knows that God has spoken to him, sanctifying him, knows only the fact that such an event has occurred. He is overwhelmed with the thought that he now belongs completely to God. There is no room in true faith for a rationale of how it came about. He is concerned only with what that event of grace provides for him and requires of him. It provides for him the righteousness that is required of the one who stands in the presence of God. Man can neither provide it nor acquire it for himself.

Hence sanctification must be an act of grace in which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to man. In so far as it involves righteousness it is never achieved, or even appropriated, by man; it remains imputed in Christ. It does not result in a state of inherent goodness within man; there is no meritorious advancement in Christian experience. It remains an act of grace, an event, that can occur only as God's sovereign work. It is dangerous, Barth warns us, to conceive it as rooted in experience. "It was an exceedingly evil moment in the history of the newer Protestantism, more evil than all else that might subsequently occur in this tragedy, when the having of grace came to be understood as an experience of the heart and conscience of the pious man."⁽¹⁾ Such a type of interpretation he accuses of being derived

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 285.

(1)
 from mysticism and idealism. Against all such tendencies
 (2)
 we must hold to the fact that grace is always a pure gift.

4. ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRIST

This view of sanctification as a sovereign act of grace, in which God takes full possession of man as His own property, leads us to face the question concerning its actual accomplishment. Imputed righteousness cannot be a mere matter of divine accounting. It must be genuine and real, presented to God by man; and it must be true, in perfect accord with God's own righteousness. From the human viewpoint such an achievement is impossible. But from the divine viewpoint it not only is possible, but it has been accomplished in Christ.

To understand clearly the meaning of this fact we must follow Barth in his handling of the relationship that obtains between the Gospel and the Law in respect of sanctification. The traditional approach has been to state them in the sequence of Law and Gospel, indicating that the former was an earlier and preparatory stage which was completed and fulfilled in the latter. He insists, however, that we do not properly grasp them unless we conceive them in the reverse order. "He who wishes to speak rightly of

(1) Ibid. p. 292.

(2) Ibid. p. 306f.

our theme must first speak of the Gospel. Here we think at once of that interval of 430 years, in which the Law, according to Galatians 3: 17, followed the promise.⁽¹⁾ It had to follow it, he says, for there could be no Gospel without the Law; and it had to come after it rather than before it, for the Law is contained in the Gospel.⁽²⁾ If we conceive it as coming before the Gospel, we imply that the commands of God are given to man before his promise, and that they are conceived by man on the basis of his natural affinity for God, rather than on the basis of God's revelation to him. Such a procedure, Barth thinks, goes contrary to the Scriptures and robs the conceptions of Gospel and Law of their true meaning. The promise to Abraham antedated the giving of the Law through Moses. The Law was given within the covenant, which was a covenant of grace. It is posited upon the promise that must have its fulfilment in God's action, which is in and from eternity, and not an advanced stage in a temporal succession. From the Protevangelium to Bethlehem, to Golgotha, to Olivet, and on to the Parousia, God speaks His Word, and it is ever the Gospel of promise and fulfilment. God's revelation to man makes His Gospel and Law real and valid. "A gospel or a law which we had spoken to ourselves by virtue of our own capacity and in

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 3.

(2) Ibid.

confidence in our own authority and trustworthiness, as such would not be God's Word; it would not be His Gospel, and it also would not be His Law.⁽¹⁾ Neither would it be God's Law if it were not embraced in the covenant of grace ("locked up in the ark of the covenant" is his phrase)⁽²⁾. "The Gospel is not the Law, as the Law is not the Gospel; but because the Law is in the Gospel, coming from the Gospel, and pointing to the Gospel, therefore if we are to know what the Law is we must know first of all what the Gospel is, and not the reverse."⁽³⁾

(1) The Content of the Gospel - Grace

The Gospel has content and form, which must be distinguished but not separated. The content is grace; the form is law. When we speak of the content we think of God's act of grace in reconciling man to Himself in Christ through the Holy Spirit.⁽⁴⁾ Barth's summary of this grace as the content of the Gospel may be set forth in four statements.

(a) Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. In developing the doctrine of the Trinity in his Dogmatik he says that Christ is the Son of God in His revelation because He is

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 4.

(2) Ibid. p. 3.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid. Section I.

(1)

just that previously in Himself (zuvor in sich selber). He did not become the Son of God in time, he was not born divine, but He is the infinite Son of God begotten in eternity. Therefore, He has not assumed a divine value or place, nor attained to deity; nor does He merely have for us the value of God when we believe in Him. He is God, revealing Himself to us in His Word and reconciling us unto Himself. Christian faith is fatally compromised if it fails to put this fact in the centre of its view. If it omits this doctrine, but at the same time tries to hold to a 'faith' in Jesus Christ, it believes only in a sort of middle essence (Mittelwesen), it pursues meta-
 physics, and has already fallen from the true faith. (2)

(b) The Son of God became the Son of man. "For this is God's grace, that the eternal Word of God became flesh." (3) He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He emptied His divine glory and power into the form of sinful man, taking upon Himself sinful flesh, yet without committing sin. He was made to be sin on our behalf, and yet he was ever sinless. His flesh was the same as ours, subject to the same temptations and weaknesses, but He was all the while as truly God as He was before His incarnation. He became man without ceasing to be God. The Holy Creator, whose burning wrath we

(1) Cf. Dog. pp. 419-470. Cf. also Credo, p. 49.

(2) Cf. Credo, p. 46.

(3) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 5.

invoked upon ourselves, became man in order to satisfy that
 (1)
 wrath for us. As the companion of man in sinful flesh,
 Jesus bore man's burden because "the justice of God requires
 that the same human nature which has sinned should make satis-
 (2)
 faction for sin." He bore that burden primarily in His vica-
 rious obedience. The content of the Gospel is the grace of
 God in Christ that satisfied the requirements of the righteous-
 ness of God on behalf of man. Our obedience, which is always
 sinful, is superimposed upon His obedience in the flesh, which
 was altogether righteous and perfect, and we are accepted as
 righteous on the basis of what Christ has done for us.

(c) Jesus Christ died and arose from the dead for
 sinful man. All the meaning of His incarnation, all the sig-
 nificance of His earthly life, points to His suffering and
 death at the end. He had to die because He was man, because
 He had taken upon Himself the enmity of God against the whole
 sinful race. In His earthly life and death He revealed the
 judgment of God against sin (Deus absconditus). His death
 did not come as a surprise, or as a catastrophe. It had to
 be, as He Himself knew, and as He told the disciples. Pontius
 Pilate became the mouth of the world in finding Him guiltless,
 (3)
 but nevertheless condemning Him to death.

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 42f.

(2) Ibid. p. 71. Quoted from The Heidelberg Catechism,
 Question 16.

(3) Ibid. p. 69.

His death and burial indicates His self-surrender
 to the being and fate of man.⁽¹⁾ "It signifies not an over-
 coming of the world, not its liberation from sin, evil, death
 and the devil. It signifies rather the humiliation and sur-
 render of the Son of God to all these powers of impossibility,
 of godlessness. It signifies not His but their victory."⁽²⁾ In
 His death He was defeated because he bore "the wrath of God
 against the whole human race."⁽³⁾

His death means, further, that He endured the
 divine curse against sin,⁽⁴⁾ paid the penalty of sin,⁽⁵⁾ and suf-
 fered the consequences of the separation between God and man
 that sin invokes.⁽⁶⁾ All of which is a part of the being and
 fate of sinful man that Christ voluntarily took upon Himself
 in order to reconcile man to God. He experienced no sin,
 committed no sin, but He allowed Himself to be made sin "on
 our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in
 Him."⁽⁷⁾ In His identification with sinful man He became the
 "enemy of God", and was "crushed by the wrath of God."⁽⁸⁾

(1) Ibid. p. 78f.

(2) Ibid. p. 70.

(3) Ibid. p. 70.

(4) Ibid. p. 70. Cf. Gal. 3: 13.

(5) Rom. 6: 23.

(6) Mark 15: 34.

(7) II Cor. 5: 21.

(8) Credo, p. 81.



But in His resurrection He turned defeat into
 (1) victory. Because He was man He had to die; because He was God He had to arise from the dead. In His death He was made to be the sin of man before God; in His resurrection He was the righteousness of God to man. In His death Deus absconditus speaks from afar; in his resurrection Deus revelatus is near at hand, manifesting His presence, making Himself known.

(2)
 (d) He intercedes for us at the right hand of God. His exaltation to His present position of glory was as essential to His reconciling work as His condescension into the lowly state of man. It was impossible for Him to cease to be God, even in His incarnation. What he did as man and for man He did as God and by grace. Having completed the earthly part of His mission He returned to His seat of power in glory to carry His work of reconciliation to completion in redemption, as the heavenly head of His earthly body, the Church.

This, then, is the content of the Gospel: that grace provides in Christ a sufficient and effectual reconciliation of sinful man to God. That which man could not do for himself Christ has done for him. The grace that confronts us with our sinfulness at the same time reveals God to us as our Reconciler. This is the mystery of the Gospel. We do not take sin seriously if we think of it as something that can be over-

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 6. Cf. also Credo, p. 94ff.

(2) Ibid. p. 7. Also Credo, p. 94ff.

(1)
 come through the inspiration of a good will. In such manner one may think of healing a wound, Barth says, but not of raising the dead. The only way to help a dead person is to raise him to life, and the only way to help a sinner is to forgive his sin. And this removal of sin cannot be demonstrated with a mere change of human attitude. "We must believe it as the action of God on us, without seeing it. What we can demonstrate to ourselves is always our own work."⁽²⁾ Our forgiveness, our reconciliation, our sanctification, is the work of the free grace of God in Christ.

(2) The Form of the Gospel - Law

The content of the Gospel has a definite form. We cannot understand one without the other, and both are to be seen in Christ. He is the grace that is the content, and He is the Law that is the form. For our purpose here, in tracing Barth's doctrine of sanctification, we may follow this theme in three relations.

(a) The Law is revealed in Christ. Barth does not see a progressive revelation leading up to a culmination in Him, but a revelation that is always and only in Christ. He views creation in the perspective of reconciliation, and the Law in the perspective of the Gospel. Man does not know God's Law at all save as it is revealed to him in Christ. The reve-

(1) Cf. Zur Lehre vom Heiligen Geist, p. 62.

(2) Ibid. p. 64.

lation in Christ, Barth insists, gives both the indicative declaration and the imperative command of the First Commandment. "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," is the Gospel. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," is the Law. They are two sides of the one Word of God.

But what is the Law? Someone answers, "It is the revealed will of God." To which Barth replies with another question, "But where is the will of God manifest?"⁽¹⁾ Not in our perception of the things and events that are discernible in nature, and not in history, but only in Jesus Christ. In His life, death and resurrection grace is revealed as the content of the Gospel, and with that also the Law is revealed. "Out of that which God does for us here we read what God wishes with us and of us."⁽²⁾

(b) The Law has also been fulfilled in Him. He satisfied all its demands, obeyed all its commands. This fact has a twofold reference. It suggests, first, that in Christ we are to find the standard and norm by which Law is to be interpreted, whether we study the Old Testament or the New. He stands above the Law, having gathered up in Himself all that is essential in it; or, to put it otherwise, the Law is the formal expression of the Gospel that is revealed in

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 9.

(2) Ibid.

Him. It also suggests that man's greatest need before the Law is supplied by Christ. Man is utterly unable to satisfy its demand and obey its commands, and now it is revealed to him in Christ that that which he cannot do, has already been done for him. Only Christ can fulfil and keep the law. And that fulfilment is not to be conceived in terms of filling up that which is lacking, as a cup is filled to the brim. It rather points to validating, vitalizing, establishing and confirming the Law in human life as the perfect work of God. He fulfilled it in believing and obeying for us.

(c) The Law is also laid upon the Christian.

This leads us to the point that concerns sanctification most directly. It is true that in fulfilling and obeying the Law Christ does for us that which we cannot do for ourselves, but it is also true that "His action revolves not in itself, but aims at our action, at a conformity of our action with his."⁽¹⁾ Real faith must see that this is true. The faith of man that is based upon and evoked by the faith of Christ does not evade it. "Therefore this faith of Jesus Christ, which is the center and circumference of the Gospel when it is manifest, becomes that form which seeks for conformity, and therewith the command in all commands, the principle of our cleansing, sanctification and renewal, the supreme thing that the church has to say to itself and to the world."⁽²⁾

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 9f.

(2) Ibid. p. 13.

What is this conformity at which the fulfilment of the Law by Christ aims? What are we to do? The answer is clear and pointed. We are to believe and obey. In the midst of sin, in spite of manifold transgressions of the commandments, in struggle against sin, even the so-called little sins, we are to fear, love, and obey God. The Law, then, is the claim of the Gospel upon the believer that requires of him a life of faithful obedience to Christ. "When grace is revealed, witnessed and proclaimed, it places a demand and a claim upon man.⁽¹⁾"

Sanctification means that the believer is put under the Law that is fulfilled in Christ. Therefore we are not to think of the Gospel as setting aside the Law; we are not to say that we live under grace rather than under the Law. In that God gives us grace He also lays His inexorable Law upon us. We must obey, for it is the Law of God. And yet, as Barth warns us, we should not say that we must obey, but that we may obey. The Law in the Gospel says not Thou shalt, but Thou wilt. It is not a command that must be obeyed out of our ability, for that could lead only to despair in the face of an impossibility. But it is a command within a promise. That which the Law requires of us grace enables us to do, and both are the Gospel in Christ.

The Gospel always comes in the form of the command

(1) Ibid. p. 11..

to follow Christ. We cannot preach the lordship of Christ without proclaiming it as a demand for obedience; we cannot preach the incarnation without declaring that it is a command to self-denial; we cannot proclaim the cross of Christ without pointing to the command to take up the cross and follow Him; we cannot teach the resurrection of Christ without declaring that it requires of man a cleansing of his life. If faith in Christ does not mean that the Gospel takes this form, it is not true faith.⁽¹⁾

Now we may understand why Paul calls the Law holy and spiritual. It is holy because it lays upon man the claim of God, with the authority of God. He not only calls it holy, and its commands holy, right and good,⁽³⁾ but he denies that it is against the promises of God.⁽⁴⁾ He is in full accord with the statement of Jesus that He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it.⁽⁵⁾ Through the Law man is brought into a holy relationship with God.

It is spiritual because it points to a new life with God in Christ,⁽⁶⁾ to a raising up of the life of the believer out of the body of death to serve God.⁽⁷⁾ It speaks concerning

(1) Ibid. p. 10f.

(2) Ibid. p. 12.

(3) Rom. 7: 12.

(4) Gal. 3: 21.

(5) Matt. 5: 17f. Cf. Gal. 3: 21. Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 12.

(6) Rom. 7: 14. Cf. Col. 3: 1. Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 14.

(7) Rom. 7: 24, 25.

sin, and arouses the conscience of man to see that his sin is against God. The natural mind does not understand this, but conceives the Law in terms of the righteousness that man acquires through obedience. This was the fatal mistake of Israel that Paul was concerned with in Romans 10: 2f.⁽¹⁾ The Law points not to what man can and must do for Christ, but to what Christ has done, does and wishes to do for man and in man; not to the righteousness of man, but to the righteousness of Christ that grace brings to man, to the conformity of man's life with God's will that Christ makes possible for man and real in man. Therein is the Law spiritual.

It is from this viewpoint that Barth insists that the Law must be interpreted as subsequent to and involved in the Gospel. It is essentially the "Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and therefore it cannot be known apart from the Gospel that reveals the life in Christ and makes it a reality for the believer. When we think of the Mosaic or the ceremonial law, we have in mind only that which has been committed to sinful man, not the true Law of God as it is in Christ Jesus. It must be interpreted, Barth says, only from this viewpoint. It did not merely lead up to Christ, but it is in Him. The true Law can never be known apart from God's revelation in Him. Perfect conformity to the will of God as it is revealed in Christ is required of the believer - this

(1) Cf. Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 17f.

is the Law under which he is sanctified. But because sinful man is unable to render perfect obedience, Christ fulfills all the requirements for him and freely bestows grace upon him - this is the Gospel under which he is sanctified. Both are accomplished in Christ and brought to the believer in one act of revelation.

(3) The Lordship of Christ

The Gospel of grace and law embraces the sanctification of the believer by Christ. All that He has done for us He does upon us. In His incarnation He bridged the gulf between God and man, in His death He removed the curse from
(1) us, which means that He brings us into a new and righteous relation with God. "His claim, our sanctification through Him, must logically mean this: that we are set apart and taken under claim through Him for God, that we therefore stand before God just so righteous, just so useful, just so obedient, as He Himself was in the days of His flesh."⁽²⁾ Sanctification always means "that we are placed in faith under
(3) the Law of Christ." But our faith will not let us forget the fact of our sinfulness, "the whole condemnation of our
(4) being, and of all our thoughts, words, and works." The very

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 83.

(2) Ibid. p. 136.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid. p. 92.

best that we can do fails miserably to satisfy the demands of that Law. If it were not for His deed for us we would know only despair, but in faith we know that we are born "again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."⁽¹⁾ He takes our deed of obedience, sinful as it is, and makes it righteous before God. Our sanctification is not our deed of self-dedication to Him, but His deed of appropriating us unto Himself in a relation in which He uses us for His own glory.

Therefore all that He does for us and upon us points to His lordship over us. Sanctification is Christ's act of claiming us as His own, setting us apart unto Himself as His own possession, and our acknowledgment of that claim in faith and obedience. This means that we are so completely owned and controlled by Him that we may not act in our own rights. "That Jesus Christ is our Lord means first of all that He has authority and power over us as a master over his slaves.... He has a claim on us, He commands us, He exercises rule and control over us."⁽²⁾

Barth sees His lordship over our lives grounded in His deity. His lordship means His deity and His deity means His lordship.⁽³⁾ The New Testament use of the term

(1) I Pet. 1: 3.

(2) Credo, p. 50.

(3) Ibid. p. 49.

'Lord' applied to Christ is a recognition of His absolute
 (1)
 deity. It is also grounded in the fact that He is Creator.
 "To be Lord, in the sense in which Paul has spoken of Jesus
 (2)
 Christ, means, according to the same passage, to be the One
 through whom all things have come to be. It means to be
 Creator in the same manner in which it is ascribed to the
 (3)
 Father." It is also grounded in the fact that He is our
 Reconciler. He has purchased us unto Himself with His death
 and resurrection, and sealed us as His own with His Spirit.
 Through grace in faith we now belong to Him. "If God Himself
 in Jesus Christ suffers the punishment which should be the
 lot of our existence, then that means that He, this Other,
 has offered His existence as a sacrifice for us. Then we
 can know ourselves only as those whom He has therewith ac-
 quired, who have therewith been forfeited to Him as His own
 property. If God does not wish to punish us because the
 punishment has been brought to an end, that means that we
 may now live as those who have been set free by Him, and
 (4)
 therefore as His own." We have been set free by Him to be-
 come His slaves, but at the same time to become the children
 of God.

(1) Ibid. p. 50.

(2) I Cor. 8: 6.

(3) Credo, p. 49.

(4) Ibid. p. 83.

The lordship of Christ in sanctification means, further, that Christ sets us apart unto Himself on the Way of the Cross. He was on His way to Calvary when He prayed, "As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth."⁽¹⁾ We are not to die for the sin of the world, for only Christ Himself could do that. We are not to try to imitate Him in that which He alone can do. Nevertheless it is true that through the mystery of His grace we are made partakers with Him in His sufferings. We have been crucified with Him, we have died and have been buried with Him. He takes us with Him on His way of suffering and death. And we have been raised with Him.⁽²⁾ The sanctification of the believer means that he will spend his life "in a daily dying of the old man, in a daily resurrection of the new."⁽³⁾ The way of discipleship is always the way of suffering and self-denial, of taking up the cross, of bearing others' burdens, even of enduring persecution for His name's sake. If we find the Christian life altogether easy, that is evidence that we have not learned what sanctification by Christ means. Yet it must always be added, Barth would remind us, that there is joy in the suffering, rest in the struggle, for His "burden is light."

(1) Jn. 17: 18f.

(2) Credo, p. 134f.

(3) Ibid. p. 135.

CHAPTER III

THE SUBJECTIVE ASPECT OF SANCTIFICATION

1. THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

That which God does in Christ objectively for the sanctification of the believer He does also through the Holy Spirit subjectively. We may follow Barth's distinction here in setting forth three general statements.

(1) The Holy Spirit is God present in His relations with man. As God the Father is Creator, and God the Son is Reconciler, so God the Spirit is Redeemer. Yet it is also true that the Spirit is Creator and Reconciler, as well as Redeemer. No creative work of God could be accomplished without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and all the work of the Spirit must be understood as a work of creation. He is the Spirit of Christ, for He was sent by the Son as well as by the Father, and as such He focuses the reconciling work of Christ upon man. He overcomes in man his enmity against grace, man does not overcome that enmity in himself. It is altogether the work of the Spirit upon him and in him. As the Redeemer He is God eschatologically present here and now. In Him we have our redemption that

(1) Barth has given a forceful presentation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Trinity in his Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes, which is the first half-volume of his Die Kirchliche Dogmatik, pp. 470-514.

(2) Zur Lehre v H. G., p. 39f and p. 94f.

will not be fully revealed until the resurrection of believers, which is to be another act of grace and not merely the passing out of one sphere of life into another, but He mediates that reality to us now through faith and hope. It is only in His presence, setting aside the continuity and limits of time, that we have redemption. But we have it, through faith and hope. Hence we are thinking of the Spirit as Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer, but primarily as Redeemer, when we consider His work in sanctification. Barth does not approach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the viewpoint of man's desire for spiritual discernment and power, but from the viewpoint of the Spirit's demands upon man.⁽¹⁾

(2) The Holy Spirit performs the subjective phase of God's work upon man. God is infinite and eternal, beyond the reach of man, but He reveals Himself and then enables man to grasp that revelation. It would not be revelation if it were merely an objective offering to man. There is also a subjective side, a participation in the event. "With the reservations made necessary by the philosophical import of this conception, we can say that the doctrine of Christ is the reference to the objective, while the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the reference to the subjective side of this reality."⁽²⁾ If grace means God reconciling the world unto Himself in Christ, it also means "God's presence through the

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 113.

(2) Credo, p. 114.

Word in the Holy Spirit.⁽¹⁾" Barth adds the warning that the two aspects are to be distinguished but in no sense separated. Revelation is an event in which we participate, but not by any capacity or quality that we may possess. Our participation in it is conceived as a part of the event itself, which is the significance of the Holy Spirit for the Christian life.⁽²⁾ That which God the Father has revealed in the Son is made known to man through the Holy Spirit. He takes of the things of Christ and makes them known to us.⁽³⁾

In our sinful nature we are utterly incapable of receiving God's Word. We are dull and insensible to all such matters. It helps us not at all if we are told what is required of us when we are not willing to heed that which is said. But it is the office of the Spirit to make us attentive, to make us want to hear, even to give us the capacity to hear God's Word.⁽⁴⁾ The gulf between God and man is bridged objectively in Christ, and subjectively in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit accomplishes this subjective work, in part at least, in chastising man. Not in peace and quiet, but in struggle and temptation, do we hear the Word of God. It is the power of sin that throws about us an atmosphere of pleasing calm, satisfaction with the ways of the world, indif-

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 286.

(2) Zur Lehre v. H. G. p. 48.

(3) Jn. 16: 14.

(4) Cf. Credo, p. 115.

ference to the ways of God. In such an indulgence of the things that gratify self we are sorely in need of divine deliverance. That deliverance must come first of all as a disturbing, chastising power that precipitates us into suffering and anguish because of our sin. It is only so that the Spirit can make us hear and obey His Word. We do not naturally know ourselves to be sinners. We can know that only through the Word that the Spirit brings to us. He leads us to see that we are rebels against God in order to make us see our great need of reconciliation. "Therefore He cannot comfort the hard head and insolent heart, because (1) they have tasted no convulsion or despondency." "But one must add that just this 'convulsion' and disconsolateness is (2) itself the work of this Comforter." He comforts only in making us restless; He gives us peace only in leading us into a new and more terrible conflict. He leads us to see that the peace of the world is no peace, that "the peace of God that passeth all understanding" is peace in the midst of conflict, and is the only true peace. He gives it to us anew in every event in which He speaks to us.

He also accomplishes this subjective work in making the faith of the believer real and valid. Barth's approach to faith is not in consideration of it as a human

(1) Quoted by Barth, Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 69, from Luther, Pred. Üb John 14: 23f.

(2) Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 69.

act, but as the work of God, as a phase of the subjective side of God's work in accomplishing the reconciliation of man. "Faith, with its experience of judgment and justification, is God's work, completely hidden and pure wonder."⁽¹⁾ *miracle*

When we believe, we know that just this act of faith is God's work in us.⁽²⁾ However, the reality of our faith depends not upon our knowing that it is the work of the Spirit, but only upon the Spirit Himself. He enables us to believe, and to know that our faith is His work in us. "To be sure the work, the deed, the existence, the inner and outer life of the believer is sanctified, but always through faith; not, however, faith through self but in the Holy Spirit."⁽³⁾ It is accomplished in definite experiences, in which the believer attains sundry definite insights and makes definite decisions, and even executes them. However, he regards that faith not as arising from within himself, but as a deed of wonder that comes from the Holy Spirit to him, even as he regards the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as God's deeds of wonder.⁽⁴⁾

(3) The Holy Spirit makes the sanctifying grace of God effectual in man. Barth is drawn to the picturesque expression found among some of the Church fathers, with which

(1) Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 80f.

(2) Cf. Credo, p. 117.

(3) Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 90f.

(4) Cf. Credo, p. 115.

the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification is described.
 He is the *digitus Dei*, per quem sanctificamur.⁽¹⁾ He places
 the claim of God upon us, and He does it in such manner as
 to persuade and enable us to acknowledge it.⁽²⁾ This is the
 Christian life, if we are willing to define it theologically
 and eschatologically. The Christian is taken over by the
 Spirit to live in Him and to do His will. The Spirit speaks
 the Word of God to him, pronounces to him the forgiveness of
 his sins, bestows the love of God upon him, enables him to
 have fellowship with God, and leads him to do the work that
 God lays upon him. This is the Christian life, but it is
 always and only an event in which God speaks to man, lays
 His finger upon him.

May we know when man's response in sanctification
 is real and valid before God? Barth replies that this also
 is the work of the Holy Spirit. We are not to presume to
 take His place in judging such matters. "Therefore our sanc-
 tification is a reality, but our obedience is a problem which
 we cannot solve, into the darkness of which we can only go
 again and again, altogether and alone thrown on God. We can
 indeed present a sacrificial offering with our deed, and
 thereto are we called, but it is not in our power to deter-
 mine that in so doing we are Abel and not Cain."⁽³⁾

(1) Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 48. He gives Augustin, *De spir
 et. lit.* 16, 28 as an example of this use.

(2) Ibid. p. 48.

(3) Ibid. p. 91 f.

2. BY MEANS OF THE WORD

The subjective aspect of sanctification may also be seen in the work of the Holy Spirit upon man through the Word of God. This is the answer to Jesus' prayer: "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth."⁽¹⁾ The life of the believer is taken captive by God through it, rooted and grounded in it. It conditions and defines his life, tells him what he may and must do. Through it the Spirit reveals to him what Christ has done for him, does upon him, and requires of him.

(1) The Spirit speaks to the believer through the Word. It is the Word of God in its threefold form; as proclaimed by the Church, as written in the Bible, and as revealed in Christ. God speaks through the message of the Church, declaring to men the Gospel of forgiveness of sins and of command to obedience. One does not hear the Word of God in the message of the Church unless it places him definitely under God's command. He may know by his reaction whether he has actually heard God. If he is pleased and satisfied, and goes away with the sense of having had a delightful experience of worship, or if he goes away with the feeling that he has discharged his duty, he has not heard God's Word. But if the message has brought him to face the reality of God's presence, to recognize the degradation into which he has fallen in sin, to acknowledge

(1) Jn. 17: 17.

that the grace of God in Christ is his only hope, and to submit his entire life to Christ in abject surrender that he may be possessed and used by the Lord according to His will, then he may know that the message of the Church was God's Word to him.

In the same manner God speaks through the written Word, sanctifying the reader. The Christian who is content to live in comparative independence of the Bible does not know the meaning of sanctification. To be taken captive by God means to be controlled and nourished by God through His written Word. The Christian who acknowledges that he belongs completely to God will go often to the Scriptures for fresh instructions and commands, even as Moses went up Sinai to receive God's Law for the people. The obedient Christian will have something of the same sense of need and responsibility under God's command to go back to the place where God has spoken, trusting that He may speak there again. He will study the Scriptures in fear and in joy; in fear because through them he is made to see his sins, weaknesses, and failures in the light of God's perfect Law; in joy because through them God has revealed Christ to him and pronounced his sins forgiven.

Then through both the proclaimed and written Word he hears Jesus Christ, the true, living Word of God. In the act in which Christ speaks to him through the witness of the

Church, or through the Bible, he is sanctified, claimed, apprehended by God as His own peculiar possession, and commanded to obey and serve God with his whole existence.⁽¹⁾

(2) The Spirit speaks through the believer in witness to the Word. Sanctification through the Word places the Christian and the Church under God's command to witness for Him before the world. The Church is not called to tell men what to do, but to tell them what has been done for them, that God has spoken and promises to speak again, and that He will make known to them what they are to do. Its message is not primarily a command to obey, but it is the Gospel that is first grace and then law. It tells them that God has spoken His Word of grace and command in Christ, and that they may and must hear Him when he speaks to them. It tells them that when God speaks to men He makes them completely His own, and therefore His Word requires their decision of faith and obedience.

In like manner sanctification means that the individual Christian is apprehended by God for the purpose of witnessing for Him. We are not to think of man as hearing God's Word without the necessity of witnessing to that which he has heard. That is no more possible than to think of the Gospel without the Law, or the crucifixion without the resurrection of Christ. If one does not witness to the Word, then he does not hear it, for the hearing and the witnessing are the two

(1) Cf. Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 48f.

sides of the one act of God upon man. Nevertheless the testimony of the Christian is human speech. "Testimony is a human word to which God has given the power to remind other men of God's reign, grace and judgment." Barth points out that the term 'witness' suggests a law suit between God and man, in which God calls His witnesses against those who rebel against Him. God's cause is at stake. To vindicate Himself He uses the testimony of the men who have heard His Word. But in the final analysis "It is God who witnesses concerning God." This is the truth of sanctification, that God has spoken to man in Christ through the Holy Spirit, and enabled him so to speak that his word witnesses to the Word and grace of God. That can only be true as God lays hold upon man through His Word as an instrument of His will. We can account for it only as an act of sovereign grace. It is because men belong to God that He uses them as witnesses, commits His Word to them. "A real witness knows that he has been made a witness, that he has been called to be a witness; he knows that God's witness has already been given to him and to the world." The Christian speaks for God because God has spoken to him. Gratitude for God's grace in addressing Him constrains him to tell others

(1) "Der Christ als Zeuge", Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 12, p.5.

(2) Ibid. p. 6.

(3) Ibid. p. 7.

(4) Ibid. p. 9f.

of what has occurred to him.

We go a step further in noting that sanctification in the Word means that the Christian subordinates his testimony to the Word of God. "A man is God's witness in the reverence in which he subordinates his word to the witness of God himself."⁽¹⁾ This means that his attitude is that of a servant to his master, of one who does not seek to carry out his plan but who recognizes that he must wait for a command.⁽²⁾ Barth cites John the Baptist as a good example of this attitude. He said, "He must increase, but I must decrease."⁽³⁾ Applied to Christians and the Church today, this means that true Christian testimony points to God's Word, concretely to the Bible. Our task is supremely that of proclaiming His Word, expounding the Scriptures. When we substitute our thoughts and ideals for that task, we cannot say with John, "He must increase but I must decrease." Everything depends upon our subordination to Christ as Lord.

Put in other words, this means that God has committed His Word to sinful hands. Man, without ceasing to be a sinner, becomes the recipient of God's Word. But it remains God's gift, rather than our possession. This calls to mind the wonderful fact that we have the Holy Scriptures because

(1) Ibid. p. 11.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid. p. 12; Jn. 3: 30.

(4) Barth develops this view in Sections III and IV of his "Evangelium und Gesetz", Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32.

God was willing to commit His Word to the minds and hands of sinful men. We do not seek to prove that the writers of the Bible were sinless and perfect in order to prove that in it we hear the Word of God. They were human and sinful, yet God spoke to them and commanded them to speak and write as He had spoken to them. In this act they were sanctified in the Word.

3. MAN'S RESPONSE IN FAITH

In Barth's view Christian faith is unique. There is no other act in the category of human experience that is its parallel or equivalent. This is a distinct departure from the way that many travel to-day in describing the human side of Christian experience as the expression of a natural capacity for belief and trust. We are commonly told that all human relations are founded on faith. Homes are established on the faith of husband and wife each in the other, schools are conducted on the faith of parents and children in the teachers and of teachers in the pupils, business is conducted on it, government is built upon it. All of which is true, but that is not faith in God. If it is, then religion is natural, revelation is discovery, and sanctification is a sort of religious evolution. Barth breaks with all such tendencies at their very beginning. Faith is unique, he says, for it is an act that points only to God, and that can occur

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only as God inspires it, and not as man chooses. It is therefore an event, the 'moment' in which God speaks and man hears. The meaning of this conception, as it relates to sanctification may be made clear in five statements.

(1) Faith is hearing God's word. Throughout his writing when Barth speaks of hearing the Word of God he has in mind the act of faith. Man does not hear unless he believes, and he believes because through the Holy Spirit God performs a work on him whereby he is able to believe. The Christian's confession of faith carries with it the acknowledgment that he could not have believed without the grace that accompanied the Word that came to him. "We have to think of man in the event of real faith as, so to speak, opened up from above. From above, not from beneath! Anything that can be seen, grasped, and analyzed from beneath as human experience and action, as consciousness of faith, is not a fulfilment of this postulate, is in itself an 'empty space' which also might be filled in quite another way than actually by the Word of God." Faith takes its meaning not so much from the subject as from the object. It is man's act in hearing God, but its deeper meaning lies

(1) Dog. p. 17.

(2) Dog., Thomson's Trans. p. 278.

in the fact that it is related to God. "To believe in God means to believe in God's holiness. But God's holiness is no truth which one could establish by observing it as such."⁽¹⁾ One knows it only by hearing the Holy One speak. Faith in God is not a part of a world-view which man erects; it is the event in which man hears the spoken revelation of God. The Christian sees that it takes its meaning and power not from himself but from God. He does not produce his faith, the Word of God creates it in him. He does not lay hold upon faith, faith lays hold upon him through the Word and the Holy Spirit.⁽²⁾ The free grace of God is "the object and meaning of this human action."⁽³⁾ Barth sees a parable of this truth in the fact that after His resurrection Jesus Christ passed through closed doors.⁽⁴⁾ When God speaks in Christ to man He breaks through the closed doors of man's dull hearing and gives him faith. If we believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son, we must also believe that our faith is God's work.⁽⁵⁾

(2) Man's faith is grounded in the faith of Jesus Christ. Faith is related to the Word, to Christ who gives Himself to man as the object of his belief. It is

(1) Credo, p. 19.

(2) Cf. Dog. p. 258.

(3) Ibid. p. 18.

(4) Ibid. p. 261.

(5) Cf. Credo, p. 117.

(1)

this fact that gives meaning to man's response. But this conception goes further than might at first appear. It is not merely a subject-object relationship in which that which issues from man the subject assumes meaning as it is directed to Christ the object. The object acts on behalf of the subject, is substituted before God for the subject.

Reconciliation between God and man is a work of grace which calls for man's response in appropriating that which God offers. But man in sin cannot and will not do what this transaction requires of him, therefore grace does it for him and upon him in Jesus Christ. Grace has undertaken to give the delivering answer in our place, to surrender human autonomy and godlessness, to bear testimony to human depravity, to justify God against man, and therefore to appropriate God's grace. This is what Jesus did for us in His incarnate ministry and death. He simply believed.⁽²⁾ Barth takes *πίστεως Ἰησοῦ* in Romans 3: 22, and Galatians 2: 16, as a subjective genitive. The basis of our deliverance is Christ's faith. We believe in Him; but it is His faith, not ours, that appropriates to us the saving grace of God. This is the meaning of His vicarious suffering. He can do this for us because He is God's Son, and therefore God Himself, and so He is the Judge before

(1) Dog. p. 242.

(2) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 6.

(1)
whom the answer is given for us. Man's faith is valid before God as it is related to Jesus Christ. God looks upon the believer in Christ, regards his faith as grounded in Christ's faith.
(2)

(3) Faith is a human act. We must act toward God as only man can act. Barth assumes this as granted, but he insists that it is not a primary concern with the man who thinks from the viewpoint of faith in Christ. He is thinking as one who has been delivered by Christ from a condition in which he was hopelessly lost. His deliverance is attributed altogether to his Saviour, not in part to himself. In his reply to Brunner's Natur und Gnade, Barth uses the illustration of a man saved from drowning. He was struggling against the current, but his strength failed. Then just as he was sinking and lapsing into unconsciousness, a strong swimmer grasped him and lifted him into a boat. Now as he tells of his deliverance he does not emphasize the fact that he had a certain capacity to be saved from drowning, for he remembers that his deliverance was due altogether to his friend's ability. That he was a man drowning, and not a lump of lead is not the point, and has nothing to do with the man's testimony.
(3)
So it is with the testimony of the Christian. He gives all the credit for his deliverance to

(1) Ibid. p. 7.

(2) Ibid. p. 8.

(3) "Nein!" Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 14, p. 16f.

Christ. Barth feels that when a believer speaks of his natural capacity for fellowship with God, he is refusing to acknowledge his full dependence upon grace, as true faith must do.

To be sure, man has a definite capacity for faith, but it is not to be classified with other capacities, innate or acquired.⁽¹⁾ It is itself the work of grace. His natural capacities are on a different level, as Barth reminds Brunner, and therefore not to be made a part of the Christian's testimony concerning the work of grace. On this score he rejects Brunner's distinction between the formal and material image of God in man. Brunner holds that the material image was completely destroyed by sin, but the formal image, man's natural capacity for faith, remained. Barth insists that the two cannot be separated in such manner, that if we hold that the formal remains and is active in reconciliation, we secretly admit that something of the material remains also. It is only an abstraction, he thinks, that employs such a distinction. From the viewpoint of faith we take the simple, positive position that we were hopelessly and completely lost, and our deliverance is altogether the work of grace. Man was created in the image of God in Christ; in sin he fell from that relationship, died in complete separation from God; then Christ reconciled him in a new work of creation in Himself. Therefore, the image of God is not something that man possesses

(1) Dog. p. 250.

and exercises, but it is his life in Christ which God creates for him and imparts to him through the Holy Spirit. The distinction very clearly is in the approach to the question. If we are making a strictly theological approach, we see that man's life in Christ is altogether God's work. If we are starting from an anthropological viewpoint we stress man's natural capacity. Barth insists that true faith must be concerned only with the theological view. Man's importance in creation is not the point at stake, but God's grace that judges and saves man. "There is no question of a heightening or lowering of his existence, it is a question of the (1) grace and judgment of God upon his existence."

Faith, then, is a genuine experience of grace, the most real experience that the Christian knows. The limitations of his sinfulness have been set aside - in so far as God's reconciling work in that event is concerned, though man remains a sinner in the flesh - and he has been brought into a real experience of the Word of God. (2) He believes. He is the subject of faith. It is indeed his faith, though he knows at the same time that it is God's work of grace in him. (3) The believer has no difficulty in reconciling these two statements, for he is saying it of himself on the basis of that which has been made known to him in an act of grace that sweeps aside all reliance upon self. He is not speaking theoretically as an observer,

(1) Dog., Thomson's trans. p. 272.

(2) Dog., p. 250.

(3) Ibid. p. 258.

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(1) Dog., Thomson's trans. p. 272.

(2) Dog., p. 250.

(3) Ibid. p. 258.

nor is he telling others what they must do. He is acknowledging that Christ is the Lord of his very existence.

(4) Faith involves repentance. Grace never allows man to forget that he is a sinner. Though it brings God's reconciling Word to him in spite of his limitations, it never lets him forget that in the flesh he is homo peccator. To the hour of his death he is selfish, proud, arrogant, rebellious. The grace that enables him to believe, accentuates in his thinking his sinfulness. He can never believe in Christ without remembering that he is a sinner, and abhorring himself even as he yields to Christ. His faith is exercised in an event in which he sees God in His holiness confronting him in his sinfulness.⁽¹⁾ If one is ashamed to confess this he does not speak in faith. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."⁽²⁾ We are not at the end of God's way with us, where sin will be overcome finally and completely, but we are on the way, sinful and yet holy, sanctified sinners. "Therefore sin is still there, but in the sin there is repentance which bows before the justice of God, which accepts the judgment that is spoken over us, which brings

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 290.

(2) I Jn. 1: 8f.

about perception and confession of sin." This is the work
 of the Holy Spirit in chastising us. He leads us to see the
 stark reality of our sin. He puts upon us the burden of sor-
 row for sin.⁽²⁾ Repentance is an essential part of faith under
 God's grace,⁽³⁾ which rests ultimately upon Christ's interces-
 sion for us in God's judgment.⁽⁴⁾

Faith sees the emptiness of all human work. It is
 the sin of unbelief to build our hope on our human act of faith.
 It is not faith but grace that saves.⁽⁵⁾ Faith gives assurance
 only as it is directed to God, not as it claims merit for it-
 self. If we take pride in our religious life, even in our
 repentance and confession, we are worse than the Pharisees.⁽⁶⁾
 True repentance in faith leads us to see that the best that we
 can do is only vanity, therefore it leads us to cast ourselves
 completely on the mercy of God.

(5) Faith is always accompanied with struggle.
 Barth's word here, which he has adopted from Luther, is
 Anfechtung. It means temptation, tribulation, struggle, all
 in one. Faith is not the act in which grace delivers the
 Christian from all conflict in abiding peace, it is rather

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 297.

(2) Ibid. p. 304.

(3) Ibid. p. 306.

(4) Cf. "Nein!" Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 14, p. 20.

(5) Eph. 2: 8f.

(6) Cf. Zur Lehre v. H. G. p. 72.

the act in which God confronts him with judgment in order to save him. The more he realizes the true meaning of grace the more intense does the struggle of faith become. He knows himself to be simul peccator et justus. That is a conflict that is humanly irreconcilable, only God can give peace. Even as he sees all human and religious possibilities failing, he believes and hopes only in God. Then in the very moment of human defeat, as he cries out in despair to God, the victory comes. And he knows that it is not his victory, but the triumph of the Holy Spirit in him.⁽¹⁾ We have peace in Anfechtung: peace as we look unto Christ and what He has done for us; Anfechtung as we look upon ourselves.

Is faith, then, man's act or God's work? Barth answers that it is both. "It is a divine gift in that it is a human venture."⁽²⁾ It is the work of the grace of God through the Holy Spirit in the Christian.

4. MAN'S RESPONSE OF OBEDIENCE

The reality of sanctification is the problem of obedience,⁽³⁾ which is the more active side of faith. It is true that faith is a passive reception, an acceptance of the work of grace that God does upon man, but it is also true that it is the active response of man in obedience to God's command.

(1) Zur Lehre v. H.G. p. 80. Cf. also Z.d.Z. 1927, p. 299f.

(2) Credo, p. 87.

(3) Die Theologie und die Kirche, p. 366f.

(1) Obedience is the Christian's acknowledgment
 of God's claim upon his life.⁽¹⁾ He yields to it in fear and
 joy, not knowing just what it may mean for him; he goes forth
 not knowing whither he goes, but he obeys in faith through
 the Holy Spirit because God demands it. Faith does not ask
 for an explanation of the abyss between God and man, but
 standing on the brink it decides to obey and follow God, recog-
 nizing that it has been bridged in Jesus Christ.⁽²⁾ It simply
 lays hold upon the promise of being "led into all truth."⁽³⁾
 There is, to be sure, an element of knowledge in the believ-
 er's response, for the claim is laid upon him in language
 which he must hear.⁽⁴⁾ Faith involves the knowledge that he
 stands before God, even as it involves the will to stand
 there.⁽⁵⁾ He knows that God is speaking, and he responds in *the believer*
 accepting that Word with the significance which he believes
 it has for that life situation in which it comes to him,
 but it provides no chart for the days ahead. In each situa-
 tion he must again hear and obey.

Sanctification embraces both the divine Entscheidung
 and the human Anerkennung, which means that obedience is the
 believer's decision to abide by God's decision.⁽⁶⁾ The divine

(1) Cf. Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 296.

(2) Cf. Credo, p. 44.

(3) Dog. p. 16. Sc. ref. is Jn. 16:13.

(4) Dog. p. 214.

(5) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 286f.

(6) Credo, p. 6.

decision is God's election that issues in His call to definite men. It comes in terms of the Gospel of grace and the Law of judgment and command.⁽¹⁾ It therefore precipitates man into the struggle of obedience and disobedience. From the human side it is a futile decision, everything that we know as our own would lead us to despair of its success. Shall we say then that it is "A foolhardy venture? No, precisely not, but obedience. Obedience by virtue of the same grace which has accepted the sinner as a sinner. Therefore obedience in disobedience, obedience in time, obedience in a decision, in decisions which in their littleness and relativity might appear quite incommensurable with that great decision. But this is our sanctification, that through grace we are placed in these little relative decisions."⁽²⁾ A mere attitude of willingness is not enough, it must be an act, a definite decision.⁽³⁾

It is man's acknowledgment of God's personal presence in absolute power.⁽⁴⁾ Man is not dealing with mere facts, certainly not with fate. He recognizes the presence of a Person who has the right and the power to shape and direct his life. He sees the need of putting his life at the disposal of God, and he does that in obedience. Just

(1) Dog. p. 215f.

(2) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 302 f.

(3) Dog. p. 216 f.

(4) Ibid. p. 214f.

as sanctification means God's act in taking man under claim as His own possession, it also means man's act in approval, acceptance of that claim. We must see both sides if we are to understand the doctrine.

(2) Again, obedience is the Christian's surrender to Christ as the Lord of his life. In the doctrine of sanctification this takes us a step beyond the act of acknowledgment.⁽¹⁾ The Christian recognizes God's claim upon his life, and submits to it. "He yields to the authority of another. This is not in contradiction to the concept of self-determination, but it means that as such the self-determination of this man takes place at a definite point in a definite context. It has found its beginning and ground in another higher determination."⁽²⁾ Man's response in sanctification must always mean the surrender of his will. If it is not that it does not actually mean the lordship of Christ in his life. This is the point at which the Holy Spirit focuses the Gospel and the Law. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," means that the believer is to surrender every thought concerning God, every conception of God, as well as all the devotion of his life, to the God who reveals Himself in His Word. "The grace of revelation forces the dethronement of these other gods because it first

(1) Barth's discussion of this phase of acknowledgment, which he gives as the last of nine definitive statements concerning it (Dog.p.217), is used here in connection with this discussion of surrender (Beugung) for the sake of clarity and to avoid overlapping.

(2) Dog., Thomson's Trans. p. 237.

(1)
forces us into the dust." Sanctification precludes all
thought of division of interest and affection. "Thou shalt
love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy
soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."⁽²⁾
"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."⁽³⁾

In this full surrender of the life to God in
faith and obedience, the reality of God is made known to
man.⁽⁴⁾ It is a surrender that embraces the complete reign
of Christ, not only in all religious spheres, but also in
all moral and political realms.⁽⁵⁾ "The field is the world."
This is the response that God desires of man, and it is the
only response that will suffice under the sanctifying act
of God's grace, which makes us His captives.

The surrender of the will is true humility. The
Christian must humble himself before God, and then he must
constantly be on guard against the danger of putting his de-
sire above Christ's will. Even when we are putting forth
our best effort in His service, and feeling that we are making
some progress in the work of His Kingdom, we may be setting up
our wills above His, doing that which pleases us and sanctify-
ing it by labeling it Christian. Even then we may be in great
danger of disobedience, or we may be actually guilty of going

(1) Credo, p. 17.

(2) Mark 12: 30.

(3) Matt. 6: 24.

(4) Credo, p. 23.

(5) Ibid. p. 52. The Sc. ref. is Matt. 13: 38.

contrary to His desire. "The very man who has received God's revelation will ascribe this fact - that God is really present to him as God - altogether to revelation, and not at all to himself, altogether to grace and not at all to nature."⁽¹⁾ Sanctification means that the Christian really submits his whole life to the lordship of Christ.⁽²⁾

(3) Once more, obedience is the believer's response in which he presents himself as a sacrificial offering (Opfer) to God. In acknowledging God's claim upon his life, and in surrendering to that claim, he must present himself without reservation to be used in His service and for His glory. It is in this act of obedience that the human speech of the Church about God becomes God's Word to man.⁽³⁾ In its services of worship, prayer and preaching, the Church seeks diligently to abstain from the thought that its prayer to God or its testimony to the world will prove valid because it is its word. It does everything as a sacrificial offering to God, because God commands it and it rejoices in obedience. Its desire, as Luther expressed it, is "that nothing else should take place therein, than that our dear Lord Himself should speak with us through His holy Word, and we again speak with him through prayer and praise."⁽⁴⁾

(1) Credo, p. 16.

(2) Ibid. p. 55.

(3) Dog. p. 49f.

(4) Quoted by Barth in Dog. p. 50. Thomson's translation, p. 54, used here.

This means that the Christian must take up his cross, must suffer with Him and for Him in obedience to His command. We do not really know God in His revelation if we do not know this truth in actual experience. "And so far as He, as Father of Jesus Christ, gives Himself through the Holy Spirit to be known as our Father, we come to see that we can only follow Jesus Christ in taking up our cross, that our baptism in His name is the baptism into His death, and that we must die with Him in order to live with Him (Rom. 6: 3f), that our life as the life of His own is hid with him in God⁽¹⁾ (Col. 3: 3)." Sanctification means following Christ on God's way, and that is always the way of suffering, the way of the cross.

God requires it of the Christian, and the Christian meets the requirement in offering himself on God's altar. This does not mean that the weaknesses and desires of the flesh are set aside, or supplanted, by a spiritual, moral, pious humanity. It means simply that our entire humanity, with its sinfulness and its desire to be holy, is forfeited to God, presented as an offering to Him.⁽²⁾ The grace with which He speaks to us the forgiveness of our sins leads us to see that this new life in Him must be had at all costs. We must flee to Him and put our very selves upon the altar, to be consumed for His glory.

(1) Credo, p. 23. Cf. also Dog. p. 407f.

(2) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 298. The Sc. ref. is Rom. 12: 1-2.

Barth emphasizes this point in his doctrine with a lengthy quotation from a sermon by Kohlbrügge, in which he pictured the ceremonial sacrifice of the Old Testament as a symbol of the believer's offering of himself to God. He said that man sees "his last life poured out upon the earth, the last covering is taken from him, head and fat, all reason and spirituality goes on the wood. Entrails and thigh, heart and love, and every support upon which he strides so firmly, are declared to be impure. They must be washed and laid upon the wood. Beneath is the fire, over which is the wood, and upon that man is laid with his whole ego, with his reason and all that he has from God, with his heart and his senses, with his power and might ... He is set on fire and the fire eats up head and fat, entrails and thigh; that nothing may come out of it before God, but dust and ashes ... Will not this stench from his head with which he has made himself to be God, his fat with which he has assumed the place of the Holy Spirit for himself, his heart with which he has fancied that he could love more and purpose better than God, his thigh upon which he often supported himself as if his will and course were the most important thing, will this stench not aggravate God all the more, so that He will descend with his fire and consume the altar with such sin and man with such essence? Man sees it and is astonished. The ox goes up in the blazing flame, with all that it connoted. It went throughout all heaven. Man stands and is astonished.

God has accepted it, and has transformed the stench into loveliness before Him. He sees and is astonished that the ox has gone up with his sin; the flame of wrath has become the blaze of love; the flame of destruction has become a flame of deliverance. In this flame man in the midst of his lost condition has gone up to his God and he goes home justified; this is certainly true.⁽¹⁾"

Two statements should be made about this offering of the Christian to God, to set forth Barth's meaning adequately. The first is that it embraces the whole life. "But now it is this life that is claimed by God. There are no provinces of which we can say: God has no concern there - God does not need to interfere there. It is not as if there were a religious sphere where we are open to advice, and alongside of it another where life has its own laws and we let nothing of the light of God stream in upon us. But just as mercy embraces the whole, so the whole is placed likewise under the rigour of grace. Nothing less than all is what God wants and uses!"⁽²⁾

The second is that the validity and genuineness of the believer's self-offering to God is grounded in Christ's death. The sacrificial offering that Kohlbrügge pictures indicates, says Barth, the sanctification as well as the

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 298f. The quotation is from Twenty Sermons, published in 1846, second edition, p. 26f.

(2) The Christian Life - p. 36.

justification of the believer. He is justified "because the sacrificial offering that is well pleasing to God has been presented for us and accepted by God - and sanctified because and in so far as we also are offered with it."⁽¹⁾ Our offering is real only in so far as it points to the offering that has been made by Jesus Christ. Our obedience is our recognition that we cannot obey but that Christ has obeyed perfectly for us. Nevertheless we bring our surrendered lives to Him as a sacrifice, and because we are helpless but in earnest, through His grace and mercy He accepts us. His act of grace in taking us captive is effective in our act of faith and obedience in presenting ourselves to Him, as a sacrificial offering on the altar of His service. "To sacrifice means to acknowledge ourselves and our existence as taken in claim by God."⁽²⁾

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 299.

(2) Vom Christlichen Leben, p. 24.

CHAPTER IV

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

The doctrine of sanctification is concerned with the Christian's relation to God in the sinful world. In whatever form it is stated it must define that relation. It therefore must take full account of sin, the forgiveness that grace provides, and the status of the Christian before God subsequent to forgiveness, as well as the moral and spiritual kinship between God and the reconciled sinner. In other words, justification and sanctification must be studied in their mutual relations within God's reconciling work if either is to be understood.

1. TO BE DISTINGUISHED BUT NOT SEPARATED

The main interpretations of sanctification that have been set forth in Christian history fall rather easily into three classes that may be distinguished by the treatment that they give of the relation between it and justification. One separates sanctification from justification, another merges them, while a third seeks to relate them to each other without separating or merging them.

(1) Antinomianism separates them. It employs the abstract method which results in an empty conception of faith, for it ignores obedience as an essential element in faith. It

(1) Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 82.

holds that since Christ's death has satisfied all the requirements of God's justice the Christian is under no obligation to obey His commands. Some holding this position have gone so far as to say that "good works are hurtful to salvation."⁽¹⁾ This is an extreme statement, but the error in principle is common to all doctrines that separate justification from sanctification,⁽²⁾ for they imply that there can be faith without works.

Barth follows Luther and Calvin in insisting that these two doctrines are not to be separated. They are two sectors of the circle of Church Dogmatics that cannot be understood apart from the relation that each bears to the other.⁽³⁾ Justifying grace, he says, descends to us vertically and becomes real to us when it cuts the horizontal of our existence. The point where the vertical cuts the horizontal is our sanctification,⁽⁴⁾ our obedience to the Word that is spoken to us. The Holy Spirit requires and enables us to believe and obey, even as He brings the Word to us, in a concrete situation. We understand neither the meaning of the grace that justifies through faith nor of the grace that sanctifies through obedience, if we attempt to separate the two. As one cannot separate the fragrance from the color of a rose and keep the rose in its

(1) Quoted by A.H.Strong, Systematic Theology, 1886, p. 487.

(2) Cf. Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 81.

(3) Z. d. Z., 1927, p. 281ff.

(4) Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 82f.

natural beauty, so one cannot abstract justification from sanctification and keep reconciliation as the work of grace in Christ upon man. Barth cannot be charged with holding an easy view of sanctification. He regards it as work, the work of obedience to the Holy Spirit that requires man's best effort. Without such work there is no faith.

(2) Roman Catholicism merges them. It makes sanctifying grace the basis of justification, defining sanctification in terms of a moral renewal that is accomplished by divine-human co-operation through the Church, which means that man is justified by his works in co-operation with grace. It holds that there is an actual obliteration of sin in the work of grace applied through the sacraments: original sin being removed by baptism, and mortal sins being taken away by the sacrament of penance⁽¹⁾. "The Catholic idea maintains that the formal cause of justification does not consist in an exterior imputation of the justice of Christ, but in a real, interior sanctification effected by grace, which abounds in the soul and makes it permanently holy before God (Cf. Trent Sess. VI, cap. VII; can. XI). Although the sinner is justified by the justice of Christ, inasmuch as the Redeemer has merited for him the grace of justification (causa meritoria), nevertheless he is formally justified and made holy by his

(1) J. Pohle, "Grace", in The Catholic Encyclopedia, V. 6, p. 703.

own personal justice and holiness (causa formalis), just as a philosopher by his own inherent learning becomes a scholar, not, however, by any exterior imputation of the wisdom of God (Trent, Sess. VI, can. X)⁽¹⁾." According to this view the divine and human forces concur, mutually pervading each other, so that the result is "one theandric work."⁽²⁾

Being made permanently holy by this process of infusion of grace there remains only the need for continuing in the state of grace through the regular and proper observance of the requirements of the church. Moehler's statement is that "by the mutual interworking of the Holy Spirit and of the creature freely co-operating, justification really commences. If man remains faithful to the holy work thus begun, the Divine Spirit, at once sanctifying and forgiving sins, communicates all the fulness of His gifts,- pours into the heart of man the love of God, so that he becomes disentangled from the inmost roots of sin, and, inwardly renewed, leads a new and virtuous life,- that is to say, becometh really just in the sight of God,- performeth truly good works - the fruits of a renovation of spirit, and sanctification of feeling - goeth from righteousness on to righteousness, and in conse-

(1) Ibid. p. 704.

(2) John Adam Moehler, Symbolism: Or Exposition of the Doctrinal Difference Between Catholics and Protestants, As Evidenced in Their Symbolical Writings. London, 1843, p. 121.

quence of his present religious and moral qualities, acquired through the infinite merits of Christ, and His Holy Spirit, he is rewarded with celestial happiness.⁽¹⁾"

(3) The Reformers sought to distinguish them without separating or merging them. To combat the Roman Catholic teaching that justification is through works they laid hold upon the doctrine of election, which refers the reconciliation of man to God's gracious purpose that is prior to and independent of man's response. They said that it is all of grace, mediated to man through faith, hence there is no merit to be attached to man's work. To refute Antinomianism they went on to say that faith necessarily produces work. Hedged in between the Catholic doctrine of justification by works on the one hand and the Antinomian doctrine of justification without works on the other, they were led to make a distinction between justification as an act and sanctification as a process or progress. They said that there is no co-operation between man and God in justification, for it is solely the work of grace and man's faith is a passive reception; but after the initial act there comes a period of progressive renewal of life in sanctification made possible by the conjoined work of the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. "Sanctification, once begun, daily increases"⁽²⁾

(1) John Adam Moehler, Op. cit. p. 117f.

(2) The Greater Catechism, The Third Article of The Creed; cf. also Adolf Köberle, Rechtfertigung und Heiligung, pp. 122ff, and 185f.

as man continually becomes purer. Calvin defined it as the work of grace by which God lays his claim upon man, taking possession of him as his own property, but he also treated it as a process that follows upon regeneration. "The re-generated makes progress slowly⁽¹⁾" toward the restoration of the divine image in him. This "is not accomplished in a single moment, or day, or year; but by continual, and sometimes even tardy advances, the Lord destroys the carnal corruptions of his chosen, purifies them from all pollution, and consecrates them as temples to himself; renewing all their senses to real purity, that they may employ their life in the exercise of repentance, and know that this warfare will be terminated only by death."⁽²⁾ He likened this progressive phase of sanctification to running a race, studying in school, or growth.⁽³⁾

Lutherans and Calvinists generally have followed this trend of thought in the direction of treating sanctification as a gradual and co-operative work of grace and faith. One modern Lutheran holds that the believer "grows in personal holiness by more and more overcoming sin in his heart and life and by cultivating and exercising the Christian graces and virtues."⁽⁴⁾

(1) Göhler, Calvins Lehre von der Heiligung, p. 54.

(2) Calvin's Institutes, Book III, Chapter III, Section IX.

(3) Göhler, Op. cit. p. 55ff.

(4) Joseph Stump, The Christian Faith, 1932, p. 276.

Köberle devotes a chapter in his book on the subject to "The Significance of Sanctification with Reference to the Loss or Preservation of the State of Faith,"⁽¹⁾ in which he develops the thought that progressive sanctification saves faith from decadence. If faith does not grow in daily discipline, says he, it wastes away, and the accompanying virtues of the Christian life deteriorate in like proportion. Mellenbruch says quite bluntly that regenerated man co-operates⁽²⁾ freely with God; not as an equal partner, to be sure, nevertheless there is a working together. A. A. Hodge, in commenting upon this doctrine in the Westminster Confession, puts it thus: "It must be remembered that while the subject is passive with respect to that divine act of grace whereby he is regenerated, after he is regenerated he co-operates with the Holy Ghost in the work of sanctification. The Holy Ghost gives the grace and prompts and directs in its exercise, and the soul exercises it."⁽³⁾ Charles Hodge interprets Ephesians 4: 22-24 as teaching that believers are to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in the work of sanctification. The Christian, in his view, is gradually conformed to the image of God through the gracious influence of the Spirit of God dwelling in us.

(1) Adolf Köberle, Rechtfertigung und Heiligung, Chapter VI.

(2) Parl L. Mellenbruch, The Doctrines of Christianity, 1931, p. 129.

(3) A.A.Hodge, A Commentary On The Confession Of Faith, 1869, p. 267.

He says that it is primarily the work of God - a supernatural work - but it also involves the co-operation of the believer.⁽¹⁾ Shedd says, "The believer co-operates with God the Spirit in the use of the means of sanctification."⁽²⁾

The view of the Wesleyan Methodists treats sanctification as a gradually achieved victory over sin. Pope's statement is that "Sanctification, negatively considered, is purification from sin; considered positively, it is the consecration of love to God: both being the direct and sole work of the Holy Ghost, and their unity holiness."⁽³⁾ Following upon the initial experience there is "a perpetual weakening of the susceptibility to temptation: what was at first a hard contest gradually advances to the sublime triumph of the Saviour's 'Get thee hence Satan!' Every active and every passive grace steadily advances: and sin fades out of the nature. Every habit of evil is unwound from the life: until at length the Christian can say, like his Master, 'The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.'⁽⁴⁾" Fletcher interpreted the Wesleyan position as distinguishing between two justifications, one occurring in the day of conversion and the other being culminated in the day of judgment. "With respect to the article

(1) Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, V. III, p. 225.

(2) William G.T. Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 1889, Second Edition, V. II, p. 555.

(3) W.B. Pope, A Compendium of Christian Theology, 1879, V. III, p. 29.

(4) Ibid. One volume edition, 1875, p. 518.

upon which justification will turn: although the meritorious cause of both our justifications is the same, that is, the blood and righteousness of Christ, yet the instrumental cause is very different; by FAITH we obtain (not purchase) the first, and by WORKS the second.⁽¹⁾"

Barth's view is in line with that of the Reformers in many respects, but different on two important issues. He conceives sanctification in terms of God's claim of ownership laid upon the believer's life rather than in terms of renewal; and he regards it as accomplished in an act rather than as protracted through a period of moral and spiritual growth. He feels that these two points are important enough to call for a restatement of the doctrine, for ignoring them opens the door to the evils of synergism and Semi-Pelagianism. This tendency, whether it is in Roman Catholicism or Protestantism, is built upon the same weakness that renders the views of Aquinas and Augustine unacceptable. Barth rejects Brunner's 'Erhaltungsgnade' because he regards it as linked up, at least by implication, with the "Augustinian scheme of the indirect identity of human and divine action," and with the "Thomistic scheme of the co-operation of the divine causa materialis and human causa instrumental⁽²⁾is." In the writings of Augustine the basal error, he thinks, is in the assumption that man has a capacity which,

(1) The Works of the Reverend John Fletcher, 1851, V.I, p. 213.

(2) "Nein!" Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 14, p. 22.

quickened into new life by grace, makes possible a continuous relation between God and man, between the Spirit of God the Creator and the spirit of man the creature.⁽¹⁾ Augustine built his view upon the facts of creation, original sin, and reconciliation: holding that in creation man received the image of God, which was despoiled in the fall and restored in reconciliation. And he accounted for this reconciling work of God in man with his doctrine of grace. But he conceived this grace as a gift to man, a deposit in man, which may become the basis of a gradual development in fellowship with God. This is the *analogia entis* which Barth regards as "the invention of the Antichrist."⁽²⁾

He feels that Augustine's doctrine of sanctification goes astray in his failure to conceive it eschatologically. He held that grace is a gift (a datum) from God which man possessed; while Barth holds that it is an act of giving (a dandum) in which God possesses man, and which must ever be renewed in other acts.⁽³⁾ Augustine's view tends toward a static conception of the work of grace in man, first in actu and then in statu; whereas in Barth's view the work of grace is conceived solely as dynamic, always in actu. He recognizes the value of Augustine's work in combatting the error of synergism. In his opposition to the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians

(1) Cf. Zur Lehre v. H. G. p. 43.

(2) Dog. Vorwort, p. VIII f.

(3) Cf. Zur Lehre v. H. G. pp. 41-46.

he laid great stress upon the work of grace; the establishment and the existence of the Christian life he ascribed to the free and undeserved work of the Holy Spirit; he taught that justification is through faith, and that faith is the gift of God.⁽¹⁾ But in the end, says Barth, the Bishop of Hippo took a position that proved to be not a refutation,⁽²⁾ but an acceptance, of the fundamental principle of synergism.⁽³⁾ He sought the meaning of justification in the reality of the new obedience of the believer. "He not only allowed sanctification to coincide with justification, but he allowed justification to be absorbed in sanctification.⁽⁴⁾ He understood grace as *inspiratio bonae voluntatis atque operis*, and faith as communication of a particular human capacity to will and to accomplish that which the law commands."⁽⁵⁾ It is in the development of this conception that we have the Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacraments, according to which both justification and sanctification are gradually realized as the believer receives grace through the sacraments administered by the Church. Hence the work of Christ in reconciliation is not sufficient and final, but is to be completed in man's work.

(1) Ibid. p. 58.

(2) Ibid. p. 61.

(3) Barth's reference is to De Civ. Dei XXI, 16 and 27.3.

(4) De Corr. et gratia, 2,3.

(5) Zur Lehre V. H.G. p. 58. Here Barth has another reference to Aug. Conf. X., 29, 40, XIII, 9.10.

One may also see in much of the current Protestant teaching concerning sanctification a development of this same principle of grace from Augustine, though as a rule it is apart from its application to the sacraments. It is a doctrine of gradual growth in grace as the believer seeks daily to do the will of God. But in both cases the implication is that our compliance has certain merit.

Any view, Barth tells us, that gives merit to man's act, even when it is an act of faith, that suggests a way whereby in doing certain things man may attain unto grace, is in principle synergism. "When man's work, under any pretext or in any form, is made the condition of his fellowship with God, then the Holy Spirit is forgotten and sin is made to overcome ⁽¹⁾ sin." To avoid the error of all tendencies to conceive sanctification as the believer's growth in grace, or gradual attainment of moral and spiritual character, he insists that justification and sanctification must be treated as the two sides of the one sovereign act of God, to be distinguished but never to be separated. God acts freely in sanctification. His decree that claims the believer as His property, to be used solely according to His will, is in no sense conditioned upon what man does. There is no co-operation between God and man, there is only service under sovereign grace. Sanctification cannot be

(1) Zur Lehre V. H. G. p. 57.

described as the work and piety of man, not even "under the pretext of glorifying God." It is "exclusively the act of God upon man."⁽¹⁾ This is the basis upon which man believes and obeys. We live from event to event under the mercy of the Holy Spirit of promise - God eschatologically present⁽²⁾ - not from stage to stage in the growth of grace.

2. SIN AND THE SINNER

The two central evils, according to Barth's thinking, that grow out of a confusion of justification and sanctification are an inadequate conception of sin and a failure to appreciate the significance of the work of grace in the life of the sinner. To fail at either point is to misconstrue the very foundation upon which the doctrine of sanctification rests. If we regard sin as a problem that man can solve by the help of God, we do not take it seriously enough, we do not understand what it actually is. In like manner, if we look upon the work of grace as merely inspiring or supplementing the effort of man, we fail to take sufficient cognizance of the fact that God and man are in two distinct categories, so distinct that any relationship between the two must be established solely by the mercy of God that man cannot merit.

The distinction that Protestant thought usually makes between justification and sanctification with respect

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 283.

(2) Zur Lehre v. H. G. p. 94ff.

to the solution of the problem of sin may be simply stated. It is said that justification is the removal of guilt, while sanctification is the (gradual) removal of the power of sin. Or, one cancels the fact of sin while the other purges out the pollution and defilement of sin. Or, justification introduces a new relation of the sinner to the justice of God, while sanctification effects a change in the character of man. Or, in one sin is pardoned, while in the other sins are subdued. The weakness of such a statement is apparent when related to the conception (set forth above) of sanctification as a progressive co-operation between God and man. The clear implication is that sin is conquered in some measure by man, and therefore it does not correct the two evils indicated in the preceding paragraph. Barth seeks to correct them by relating the Reformers' contention that reconciled man continues a sinner- simul peccator et justus - to the conception of revelation as an act. In justification God forgives sin, but He does not annul the sinfulness of man. In sanctification God claims the justified sinner as His own, in spite of the fact that man remains sinful.⁽¹⁾ We may follow his view here along three lines.

(1) The grace of God in Christ reveals sin to man. "In that the Christian lays hold upon the grace of God in faith

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 294ff.

and obedience he perceives himself to be a sinner, and only in perceiving himself to be a sinner does he lay hold upon the grace of God in faith and obedience.⁽¹⁾ But this knowledge must come to him as the work of the Spirit in connection with revelation, for "man, even the Christian, does not know that he is a sinner, namely a sinner against God. Whence should he know it? To be sure it is told to him through the Word."⁽²⁾ If we do not receive our conception of sin from grace we compare ourselves with others, and always such comparisons result in our favor. But when we are confronted with God's claim we see ourselves as hopeless and helpless sinners.⁽³⁾ We know that our "powers, without the Holy Spirit, are full of wicked affections, and are too weak to perform any good deed before God."⁽⁴⁾

Here we pick up again Barth's emphasis upon the relation between the Gospel and the Law. When one approaches the Gospel from the Law he thinks of man as coming to Christ because of his consciousness of sin and guilt, which the Law has quickened. When Barth approaches the Law from the Gospel he says that man has no consciousness of sin and guilt until the grace of Christ is revealed to him. In the former case despair because of sin is the background against which man

(1) Ibid. p. 286.

(2) Zur Lehre v. H. G. p. 69.

(3) Cf. Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 287f.

(4) The Augsburg Confession, Art. XX.

thinks of Christ; while in the latter case Christ is the
 background against which grace enables man to see his sin. ⁽¹⁾

It is not our consciousness of sin that makes us see our
 need of the Gospel, it is the Gospel that makes us see that
 we are sinners. ⁽²⁾ This is the only way that man comes to
 recognize his sinfulness. At Calvary we see that sin is
 not a mere human mistake, a disease that awaits a cure, but
 godlessness, arbitrary rebellion against God. Did men put
 God's beloved Son to death? That is the picture of sin, our
 sin, my sin. We do not get that conception of sin before we
 receive the Gospel, we get it from, through, and with the
 Gospel.

When man in faith considers the death of Christ,
 the fact of his sin overwhelms him as truly as the darkness
 enveloped Calvary. ⁽³⁾ There grace and sin met, and from the
 human side sin appears to have overcome grace; but the death
 of Jesus should never be considered apart from His resurrec-
 tion, and there the darkness retreated in defeat before the
 light of His glory. We must remember both, and it is God's
 grace that accomplishes both. Not until grace leads man to
 contemplate this event does he grasp the fact of his sin.
 Only through the work of grace in faith can man know that

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 40ff.

(2) Cf. Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 288, and Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32,
 p. 15f.

(3) Cf. Credo, p. 81.

he is a sinner, which means that through the Holy Spirit he must hear the word of judgment that is pronounced upon him
(1)
in the cross.

The grace of God in Christ also reveals to man the nature of sin. The doctrine that sanctification is a process in which grace gradually increases while sin gradually decreases, whether it is the Roman Catholic teaching, or the Protestant view that follows Schleiermacher, fails
(2)
in that it does not deal seriously with the meaning of sin. Grace and sin are qualitative opposites, but we do not know that distinction save as it is revealed to us. That which man calls sin might be righteousness before God, and that
(3)
which he calls righteousness might be sin before God. Barth feels that his approach takes us to the root of the problem. He is not concerned to point out specific sins, but he seeks the principle that is basal in all unrighteousness, and he finds it in unbelief. "Simple sin is evidently never this and that action on which we lay a finger, but is alone opposition to God's law, to His gracious act of acquitting and
(4)
convicting, which means unbelief." Therefore sin is disobedience,
(5)
wilful rebellion against grace. This was Adam's

(1) Zur Lehre v. H. G. p. 70.

(2) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 291.

(3) Zur Lehre v. H. G. p. 70.

(4) Ibid.

(5) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 5.

sin. He wanted to break over the creaturely limitations that had been put upon him and become as God. This is also our sin, and it is made worse by our refusal to acknowledge our participation in his sin and guilt. When we consider our own rights, that we belong to ourselves rather than to God, and so seek to decide concerning the use to be made of our lives, we sin. As sanctification takes us under God's claim, to be conformed to His will, so sin opposes the full application of that sovereign claim. Thus we do not know what sin is until we know about this claim.

We need to keep in mind the distinction between the fact and the consciousness of sin. Barth recognizes that the world is under the dominion of evil, that all have sinned. He takes note of Paul's statement that men who have not heard the Gospel are under sin, but he reminds us that Paul speaks of it as dead.⁽¹⁾ In the act of revelation man's iniquity is accentuated in his consciousness. It becomes concrete, live, burning sin when he is confronted with Christ. "Sin burns us when it comes in the light of forgiveness, not before."⁽²⁾ In faith we know that our every act can only be sin, and therefore must be forgiven, made righteous, by God. When God speaks to us and we look within ourselves for some basis of justification we are only compounding our iniquity. This

(1) Ibid. p. 17.

(2) Credo, p. 42.

is the significance of the statement that the lawyer, in the discussion concerning the neighbor in the tenth chapter of Luke, desired "to justify himself." "Indeed, who would do otherwise," asks Barth, "when he is confronted with the claim of God? Precisely this desire is human disobedience uncovered
(1)
at the root." This is the sin of pride that is ever with us. As long as we remain in the flesh we have this sin, although at the same time we are righteous in Christ - simul peccator et justus. The fact that we are righteous in Christ leads us to emphasize the fact that we are sinful in the flesh. We
(2)
see that even our so-called good desires are sinful. It is this that we must confess as we look by faith unto Christ;
(3)
any other confession of sin is only self-righteousness.

(2) The grace of God in Christ justifies the sinner. It reveals his sin to him in the same act in which he is told that it has been cancelled before God in Christ. The fact that he lives in a sinful world, even in sin, is not altered. Justification is God's declarative act in which He accepts Christ's intercessory work in man's place, and thereby gives man a status of righteousness before Himself in eternity. This justification of man by God in eternity is as real as Christ is real, but as long as man lives in

(1) Cf. Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 18.

(2) Ibid. p. 20.

(3) Cf. Credo, p. 110.

sinful flesh he does not enter into the full realization of that state. "No more and no less than God Himself was needed that this simple thing should occur, that man should confess sin and bear its punishment. That this has occurred, this is reconciliation, this is the reconciling word of revelation. And this is the grace of reconciliation that has⁽¹⁾ been ascribed to us, that God looks upon man with the same good pleasure, in the same peace, in which he looks upon⁽²⁾ Christ." To be sure, this treatment of sin is not based upon any quality or merit in man, for he is a deserter, a traitor, a rebel; but it is based upon the fact that our sin⁽³⁾ has been confessed and borne by Christ, who "has interceded for us and has made good that which we made evil.... So He makes us righteous, that is our justificatio, justification. We cannot justify ourselves otherwise than by believing that we are justified through Him. Our righteousness is therefore His righteousness which is ascribed to us through His word, and is made our own in that we believe His word because it⁽⁴⁾ is His Word."

Nevertheless we remain sinners. Simul peccator

(1) The word 'zugesprochen' carries a meaning with Barth that is not easy to translate. In general usage it means adjudged, ascribed; but with Barth it points to that which God has spoken to man, which therefore must be true even though we do not see its full meaning now. Hence it is that which comes to us as a promise that must be accepted by faith.

(2) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 294.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid. p. 295.

et justus describes the reconciled man. This is a paradox that only redemption will solve, but that does not alter the fact that it holds here and now. Our sin is forgiven before God, but our sinfulness is not set aside in the flesh; we have peace with God, but only because He forgives us for His own sake, "therefore peace in the midst of that which is no peace, righteousness in the midst of judgment, life in the midst of death, sustained through God's mercy and through nothing else, therefore in our misery and not otherwise."⁽¹⁾ We are sinful and justified at the same time.

(3) The grace of God in Christ also sanctifies the sinner. Justification points to God's treatment of sin; sanctification points to God's treatment of the sinner, but both are the one act of God's grace upon man. As justification is God's declarative act, grounded in His electing grace; so also sanctification is God's act of electing grace in which He declares that the man who is justified in Christ is set apart unto Christ as His own peculiar possession. His sinfulness in the flesh is not set aside, but he is claimed by God in spite of his sin and because of his justification in Christ. In a sense man lives in two realms: in faith where his life is made righteous before God by grace, and in the flesh where he remains sinful.⁽²⁾ In both realms he belongs to

(1) Ibid.

(2) Credo, p. 30f.

God, is claimed by God in sanctification, but his justification points primarily to his righteous life before God in Christ, while his sanctification points particularly to his obedience to Christ in his life in the flesh. Justification is the reconciled sinner seen from above, as righteous in Christ; while sanctification is the reconciled sinner seen from below, as possessed by Christ.⁽¹⁾

This is quite different from the view that holds that the Christian attains by degrees to a state of piety or goodness. The reconciled sinner sees that he is thrown completely on the mercy of God and therefore belongs to God. He does not claim that he has overcome, or is overcoming, sin. He confesses only that Christ has justified him, and that now he belongs entirely to God. "He can only believe and obey, which means acknowledge the claim which has been pronounced upon him."⁽²⁾ Sanctification is God's act in making man the sinner to become His own possession, not in making him to become sinless, not even in part or by degrees. The believer is sanctified in sin. Paul addressed the Christians in Corinth as "called holy".⁽³⁾ He did not think of them as approaching sinless perfection, but he did desire to lay upon their hearts the fact that they belonged to God. Christians need to let that fact control their think-

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 292.

(2) Ibid. p. 296.

(3) Ibid. p. 297.

ing, without forgetting that sanctification throws the believer into the struggle of grace against sin.

These three phases of the problem of sin are to be related to one act of grace. In the same event in which our sin is revealed to us, it is forgiven, and we are sanctified, taken in claim by God and for God. Furthermore that event is not to be regarded as the initial stage of a state of grace, but as a work that must ever be repeated at the discretion of God. Therefore an experience of grace does not mean that our sin is set aside, but rather that it is magnified. In the one event we come to appreciate our sinfulness and misery, our reconciliation to God in Christ, and the possession of our lives by God through the Holy Spirit. There is no room in such a conception for the doctrine of sanctification as a progression toward sinlessness.

3. ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE

Another relation that Barth sees between these two phases of God's reconciling grace is that justification is eternal and absolute, while sanctification is temporal and relative. This does not mean that while God justifies us we must sanctify ourselves; or that one is fixed while the other is variable. Both, as one divine act, rest in God's unchangeable will. The distinction is with reference to

the realm in which the divine action occurs and to which it relates. One relates to eternity while the other relates to time, but in both cases God acts upon man. Justification is related solely to the eternal realm where there are no variable factors, for God's rule is absolute; and where there is no contradiction or paradox, for sin is not allowed to enter. That which God does in Christ is absolute and final. It relates to man in his present state of sinfulness, but only by revelation; it does not alter the present sinfulness of man, nor does man's sin alter God's decree justifying him. That decree is God's absolute decision which is executed in Christ. It means that man's sins are forgiven, that before God he is righteous in the righteousness that is imputed to him in Christ. This absolute decision is also executed now in the sinner through the Holy Spirit. It must be made man's justification through faith, but that faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in man. Therefore justification remains God's eternal, absolute decision.

Sanctification, on the other hand, is temporal and relative in that it points to God's claim upon man in his sinful present. It means that he must heed and obey God here and now. We must flee to God, though our hands are empty and always becoming emptier, though we are sick in sin and constantly becoming sicker, and throw ourselves upon His mercy. In our temporal reality we are sinful, in need

of the covering of God's grace, which He has already provided. In His eternal election He chooses us for Himself, and then in our temporal reality He enables us to acknowledge and obey that absolute decision. In this sense our sanctification is relative; our decision of obedience is relative to His absolute decision of election. Every day we must believe and obey anew. But these decisions, though they are genuinely our own, are not to be construed as mere human action. They are our response that the Holy Spirit working in us enables us to make. He puts us in the place where we believe and obey. In that place our faith and obedience must be understood as the obedience of the Spirit⁽¹⁾ ("Obedientia Spiritus", Luther zu Rom. 12: 3, 1515). Man's obedience in sanctification has value only as it is related to God's absolute work of grace.

4. LIFE AND DEATH

True faith directs the attention of man to God's glory in all things. It will not allow him to think of any of his acts or attitudes as having merit in themselves, or of his life as being an end in reconciliation. He is only a means, an instrument, used to accomplish God's will. The obedience of faith, in which God's Spirit mediates justifying and sanctifying grace to us in Christ, must always praise

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 303.

and magnify the mercy of God and acknowledge the righteousness of His will.⁽¹⁾ He created us out of nothing, He makes us righteous in Christ though we are sinful in all our thoughts and deeds, He makes us to be His own children and uses us in the accomplishment of His wise purposes.

In justification, says Barth, grace points to the life of the sinner for God's glory. Man is dead in sin; really dead, not just partly or apparently dead. He is in a state of moral and spiritual impossibility. As a dead body has no life at all in it, and therefore cannot raise itself to renewed activity, so the sinner has no righteousness at all in himself and cannot enter upon a righteous life. Because he is dead in sin and there is no righteous life in him, he does not have the ability to co-operate with God in his justification. "But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved)."⁽²⁾ "Mercy blesses us; daily, hourly, makes good that which we daily, hourly make evil. This is the wonder of the reconciled sinner, the wonder of our justification. This is the Christian life⁽³⁾ under the Gospel.

(1) Cf. Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 306ff.

(2) Eph. 2: 4f.

(3) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 298.

The other side of the same divine act points to the death of the sinner. In sanctification "God says to the living, die!"⁽¹⁾ This means that the entire life of the believer is forfeited to God. Having received the justifying mercy of God we are to present ourselves - rather to be presented - to God as a sacrificial offering. We are not to regard anything that we are or have as our own, or as valid before Him, but all is to be consumed in this offering that is presented to Him. Thus we become not only hearers of the Word, but doers as well. The Christian life is not a triumph, not a striving and succeeding, but an acknowledgment of God's right to use us according to His desire. The way of faith is the way of the cross, the way in which the cross of Christ is translated into the Christian life.

(1) Ibid.

CHAPTER V

PERFECTION AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Does sanctifying grace make righteous men out of evil characters? The question points to man's present life before God while he remains in the flesh. It is not enough to say what may take place after death; it is man's present plight in the righteous judgment of God with which we are concerned. When his sins are forgiven, is he also and at that moment made righteous? And is that righteousness perfect, or only partial? If it is partial does he then grow toward the attainment of perfection? And does his righteousness before God have any effect upon his life as a Christian before the world? Barth's doctrine of sanctification does not overlook these questions. A careful study of his view will lead us to definite and clear answers. Let us seek first the relation of his view to the question of perfection, and then follow certain lines along which sanctification in his view applies to Christian conduct.

1. PERFECTION

The doctrine of perfection, as it is generally treated in Christian theology, has two elements: the negative, which points to entire freedom from sin; and the positive, which is full conformity to the will of God. The

definition given by Henry B. Smith may be taken as representative. "Perfection is nothing less," he says, "than the complete sanctification of the whole man - in the intellect, heart, and will, so that he is in all his powers perfectly conformed to the will of God, so that even the spontaneous desire for what is sinful is excluded."⁽¹⁾ We may proceed from this definition to examine Barth's view, and for the sake of clarity the discussion may follow a threefold distinction.

(1) True in Christ. Barth's approach directs our thinking at once to the fact that our righteousness is in the life that we have in Christ before God, which is the basal question in perfection. Christian theology is not concerned with the righteousness that is measured by human standards, or human judges, for that could not be true righteousness. If that were our concern it would not be a theological question, but one of philosophical or sociological ethics. Christian perfection is to be measured by the standard that is both revealed and imparted to man in Christ. Our life in faith is "hid with Christ in God."⁽²⁾ There we are perfect. In Him we are new creatures,⁽³⁾ "a new creation." This is the spiritual resurrection that

(1) Henry B. Smith, System of Christian Theology, 1897, p. 580.

(2) Col. 3: 3.

(3) II Cor. 5: 17, Moffatt's translation.

is the present work of the Spirit in the life of the believer. Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."⁽¹⁾ He was speaking of two phases of the resurrection of the believer: the bodily, which God will accomplish in the future; and the spiritual, which He accomplishes in the present. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that God, "being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."⁽²⁾ This is God's perfect work in man. This is what Paul meant when he said that "the law is spiritual."⁽³⁾ It points to the "fact that our life is raised up with Christ."⁽⁴⁾

The perfection of the believer is the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to him by the Holy Spirit. All that Jesus did in His incarnation, death and resurrection, as well as all that He is doing in His present intercession, points to the creation of a new life in man.⁽⁵⁾ In

(1) Jn. 11: 25f.

(2) Eph. 2: 4-6.

(3) Rom. 7: 14. Cf. Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 14.

(4) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 14.

(5) Cf. Credo, p. 134f.

faith through grace we are identified with Christ. When He reconciles us, He transforms our condemnation into justification. He accepts us in Christ as if we were sinless and perfect, and that means that, in so far as we live in Christ by faith, we are actually without sin and perfect.⁽¹⁾

Our sanctification means that "we really have been crucified, have died, and have been buried as sinners in and with His flesh; that we, really clothed with the righteousness of the obedience which He confirmed with His flesh, have been raised in and with His flesh; and that we are taken along with Him on His way, on which he has suffered, died, and risen. That all this is as true for us as for Him, though it is always hidden from us, that therefore all this has occurred in us, this is what is revealed to us in faith, and therefore through the Holy Spirit."⁽²⁾
⁽³⁾
 This is the truth to which our baptism points. The Christian knows from God's Word through the Holy Spirit, that he has such righteousness, such perfection, but he also knows that it is true only in the life that he has in Christ. Within the relationship that is based altogether upon God's grace, he is perfect, even now. But in so far as his life consists of his own human action, he knows that he is sinful.

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 27ff.

(2) Credo, p. 134f.

(3) Rom. 6. 4ff.

Therefore Barth says that Christian perfection is hidden from the believer.

(2) Pursued in the Christian life. Barth's view goes a step further. The righteousness that God imputes to the believer in Christ becomes the basis of his quest for perfection. But we must bear in mind certain fundamental distinctions if we are to avoid error and confusion here. The first one is with respect to sin. Man does not pass from consciousness of sin into a state of righteousness. On the contrary he does not appreciate the meaning of sin until he is reconciled to God in Christ. Hence reconciliation does not introduce an experience in which man sees his sinfulness set aside, but one in which grace magnifies sin in his thinking. This is an elementary distinction for the Christian that removes the basis upon which the doctrine of a gradual attainment of sinless perfection is held. A serious error of both the Roman Catholic and the Wesleyan views is on this point. They introduce an arbitrary classification of sins. The Catholic doctrine undertakes to say that certain sins are serious while others are not. Those designated mortal require the treatment of special grace, while the venial may be removed in the routine observance of the ritual of the church. In the Wesleyan view that which is classed as sin in the unregenerate is labeled a mistake, or a weakness of the flesh, in the sanctified life.

The inevitable result in both views is a too easy way to perfection. In fact, it is not perfection at all, but self-deception through definition. To the entire problem Barth makes a distinct contribution in stating the meaning of sin in the Christian life. It is what grace reveals it to be, not what man thinks it is. It is essentially self-trust, self-seeking, instead of trust in God, seeking His glory. As such it remains with us. If there is any growth in grace it is a growth in the consciousness of sin that grace produces in man. Every act of revelation accentuates the sinfulness of man.

Another distinction follows upon this. It is that the believer's righteousness is never inherent, but always im-
 (1)
 puted. Here again Barth's view is to be distinguished from perfectionist doctrines generally. They have held that the motive in the quest for holiness is the believer's inherent desire
 (2)
 to imitate Christ, with the promise that he may become so identified with Him as to be able to live a perfect life. Barth's view is that the motive is imparted to man in the work of grace, which is always a discontinuous event. The revelation that brings God's Word to man also brings the desire to hear and obey. The believer knows that his very existence with God depends upon the grace that is given only in God's free choice. He lives upon the knowledge that God has spoken to him, and the hope

(1) Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 66.

(2) Köberle treats this as one of the four motives in the response of the believer to the sanctifying grace of Christ, though he conceives it as the power of grace that is inherent in man after regeneration, and he does not hold out the promise of perfection in this life. See his Rechtfertigung und Heiligung, p. 189f.

that He will speak to him again. The distance between God and man remains. It is bridged only from God to man in an act of revelation, never from man to God in a process of growth. Therefore the conception of a growth in the gradual attainment of a sinless state is foreign to Christian faith. To entertain the notion is to relapse from faith to the sin of self-righteousness.

This involves a third distinction, which points to the struggle between sin and righteousness in the Christian life. It is not a contest between the evil and the good in man, but between the sinner and grace. Man is not divided, his entire nature is sinful; but the Spirit of God works upon him to conquer sin. John wrote, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."⁽¹⁾ But he also said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."⁽²⁾ According to Barth's view both statements are at once true of the Christian. The life in Christ, begotten of God, is righteous; but the life in the flesh is sinful. It is the righteousness of Christ imputed to the Christian in faith through the Holy Spirit that makes his perfection a present truth; it is the sinfulness of the flesh, the evil of the world in which man lives as a participant in

(1) I Jn. 3: 9.

(2) I Jn. 1: 8.

its very nature, that hides this truth from him. The Christian is faced with conflict and suffering, but he does not despair. Rather he sees in it a cause of rejoicing and praise to God for the gift of His grace. His perfection in Christ is a source of comfort, but never of contentment. It is a cause of gratitude to God, but never of human pride. The man who believes that the perfect righteousness of Christ has been imputed to him does not speak of his own perfection. He seeks only to bear witness to the grace of God. To claim sinlessness is itself a great sin. To claim a partial victory in self over sin is also a sin. The true mark of perfection is to confess that only Christ is perfect. We do not 'have' righteousness as an attribute that we may possess. We can only be made righteous in Christ. Therefore the pursuit of righteousness on the part of the believer is not with a view to attaining to perfection in himself, but to submitting in complete obedience to the will of Christ.

(3) Realized in redemption. The perfection that is ours in Christ, but hid from us in the flesh, is made real to us in the redeeming work of the Holy Spirit. That work will be consummated in the final resurrection, but it is also vouchsafed to us in hope through the Spirit in His present operations upon the believer. "The grace of God, Jesus Christ Himself, gives us what we need in

order that our justification and deliverance accomplished in Him may also be a reality in us, which is the Holy Spirit of power, and love, and discipline (II Tim. 1: 7).⁽¹⁾"

The Spirit of power to trust Him; the Spirit of love to serve Him and our fellow man; the Spirit of discipline to guard us against forgetting that we are wholly dependent⁽²⁾ upon Him.

The interpretations of the doctrine of perfection fall into two general classes with respect to its realization. One teaches that it may be realized in this life, that complete sanctification may be experienced before death. The other holds that it cannot be consummated until after death. In the first class may be found the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian views, along with the Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Oberlin, and other statements. It is to be noted, however, that in every case it is relative and not final perfection that is meant. In the Catholic view it is measured by a statement of the law which is adjusted to the conditions of men in this life. It is a state of life that is free of mortal but not of venial sins. The Wesleyan doctrine defines perfection in terms of conformity to the law of love, but it is for them a law that is adapted to the present order. John Wesley

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 30.

(2) Ibid.

repeatedly denied that he taught the possibility of sinless perfection. The Oberlin position introduced a Calvinistic note into the Wesleyan view by defining perfection in terms of full consecration to God in conformity with the moral law. But Finney and Mahan went on to interpret the law in terms of man's present ability. Pelagian views generally have been based upon the conception of sin that is derived from the natural conscience rather than from special revelation, and that defines it as that which man can overcome without the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

The fundamental weakness in all such views, as has been pointed out, is that they accommodate the conception of sin and law to the ability of man under present circumstances. It does not help to teach the possibility of perfection if we mean something less than perfection. If we are to be clear and consistent in our thinking we must have no evasion or compromise as to the criterion. If it is Christian perfection it must be measured by the revelation in Christ. There sin is shown in its true light, and the law of God is not accommodated to the ability of man.

The other view, championed by the Reformers, holds that there is a progressive victory over sin in the Christian life, but it is not completed until after death. In regeneration man is made a new creature, but there is left in him a remnant of depravity which must be overcome gradually through sanctification. The consummation of that

growth toward perfection comes after death. One of the chief criticisms raised against this view has been that it makes death a redeemer, or perfecter, of the faithful. Another is that it makes sin a necessity in the Christian life. The criticisms are not unanswerable from the Reformers' viewpoint, but they do indicate a weakness in their view that Barth's position overcomes. He says that the perfection that is to be revealed fully after death has already been accomplished in Christ. Death has nothing to do with the consummation of sanctification, but only with its final revelation. Inasmuch as it has already been accomplished in Christ and will be fully revealed through the Holy Spirit in the final resurrection, and inasmuch as the Spirit of God is present now, the reality of his complete sanctification is brought home to the Christian through the Spirit in His present work of revelation. In hope it is made real to us now as we are told what is our relation to God in Christ. We shall be brought into a full possession of it in the final revelation when Christ returns.

In this view, then, perfection is altogether the work of grace and not at all the consummation of the efforts of the believer. Neither instantaneously nor gradually is he to achieve perfection in this life. He neither achieves it nor possesses it as a gift so long as he is in the flesh.

Nor is it a process of achievement to be consummated after death. It is the work of grace in Christ that is accomplished upon the believer through the Holy Spirit. In the same event in which his perfection in Christ is revealed to him, his great sinfulness in the flesh is seared into his consciousness. He knows that in himself he is hopelessly sinful, but in Christ he is made perfectly righteous.

2. INCENTIVE TO CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

The doctrine of Christian perfection in Barth's view must not be so stated as to leave the impression that the life in Christ that the believer has in faith is set apart from his life in the world. That is a misunderstanding of Barth's view that is rather common. He says quite pointedly that the believer's life in Christ is related directly and urgently to his life in society, but always as coming from God by grace and not as arising in man. It is the source and direction of the Christian life with which he is concerned. The source is grace through faith, the direction is "unto the praise of his glory," and in between is the whole of life with all of its relations. The doctrine of sanctification relates these two poles, and the whole life between, to the lordship of Jesus Christ. The Christian - a sinner reconciled by grace - lives in society as one who rec-

ognizes that his entire life belongs to Christ. He therefore submits to and rejoices in God's control of his life in every decision and act. This embraces all moral questions of relations to the world, as well as all spiritual questions of his relation to God. Deeds, habits, and motives must be brought into subjection to this one all-embracing claim of sanctifying grace through which he now belongs to God. He recognizes the fact that he is not to choose his way through life, but that Christ chooses it for him and reveals it to him in concrete acts and situations. He can only obey and follow. But in that act of obedience certain motives are aroused, which come to him from the Spirit as a part of the act of revelation and sanctification. We may consider now the principal incentives to Christian living that sanctification involves.

(1) Hunger and Thirst After Righteousness

The sanctified believer knows that true righteousness exists only in Christ. In himself as man he can know only sin, but in faith his attention is directed to Christ and there is aroused in him a longing for His righteousness. He is ready to say with Paul, "Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ,

and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.⁽¹⁾ It is quite impossible, says Barth, for a man to be reconciled without having this desire for the righteousness that is imputed to him.⁽²⁾ He will seek it with his whole heart. A reconciled sinner who has been claimed by God is one "who cannot be satisfied at all with that which is today, who must in his private and social existence strive with all his powers after something better, even though he knows that tomorrow will only be another day, and ever a day before the last day. He must simply go toward the rising sun, even though he knows that in no case will his feet bear him into the sun."⁽³⁾ His faith always means a struggle, he is never content with what he can acquire in the world. He strives to keep his eyes upon Christ, seeking the things that pertain to Him and His reign. He forsakes the ways of ease and convenience, and follows the way of the cross, for he knows that in that way, and only in that way, is his life to be satisfied with righteousness.⁽⁴⁾ This is what it means to be sanctified by God. The believer

(1) Phil. 3: 8f.

(2) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 304f.

(3) Ibid. p. 305.

(4) Ibid.

seeks the righteousness of God with his whole heart, and when it is granted to him in Christ he knows that it is altogether of grace. In fact, it is grace that gives him the desire as an essential part of the act of reconciliation. Nevertheless it is a genuine hunger and thirst after righteousness that impels him to follow Christ.

(2) Gratitude

(1) (2)

Barth follows Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism in grounding the obedience of the Christian in his gratitude for grace. In his arrangement of the doctrines he treats it under the viewpoint of redemption, but it involves the believer's response to the total work of God's grace upon him. We may recall here the statement that in sanctification man belongs to God as a slave belongs to his master. That is true, as viewed from creation and reconciliation, but it is also true that through the Redeemer we are made children of God. Hence our obedience is not that of a slave cringing in fear before his master, but that of a child to his father. Both must be kept in mind, for the believer knows that he belongs to God as completely as the slave belongs to his master, but into the midst of his fear as a slave has come the love of God his Father through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit leads him to obey God's command in love and gratitude. "Obe-

(1) Cf. Alfred Göhler, Calvins Lehre von der Heiligung, p. 16f.

(2) Heidelberg Catechism, answer to Question Two.

dience is gratitude, disobedience is ingratitude."⁽¹⁾

No other fact in his life is to be compared with the great deed of wonder in which he is reconciled to God in Christ through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Redeemer. He regards it as altogether the work of grace, which he in no sense at all merited, and therefore he is overwhelmed with sheer gratitude. He confesses, with the Heidelberg Catechism, that he is not his own, but that he belongs to Christ; in body and soul, in life and death, his entire being belongs to Christ. What will he not do for Him who so completely rescues him from the condemnation of sin? All moral and religious enthusiasm is consumed in his gratitude. "Now the commandments of God point out the righteous wrath which he has escaped, but also the way of gratitude which he must now enter upon timidly but obediently."⁽²⁾

Paul's phrase, "unto the praise of his Glory," finds its way easily into the thinking and writing of Barth. This is the end in view in our redemption, "having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ."⁽³⁾ This is also the motive in Christian obedience.

(1) Z. d. Z. 1933, p. 303.

(2) Credo, p. 135.

(3) Eph. 1: 11f.

"So faith and obedience can be nothing else but grateful praise of the mercy of God which the lost receive. Justification is justificatio impii and sanctification is sanctificatio impii. We have not earned either."⁽¹⁾ Through pure love and free grace He has reconciled us unto Himself, unrighteous and sinful as we are. All that we can do in response, the best that we can do, can only be an expression of our gratitude to Him for His great love.

Gratitude is indeed a deep motive. If it is genuine, and if it is the controlling motive in our action, we think only of that which is pleasing to God. We gladly give ourselves completely to Him because of the great gift of Himself to us. It excludes any claim that we might think of making for ourselves. We cannot think of one who is genuinely grateful asking for recognition of, or reward for, the expression of his gratitude. Love and gratitude blend in the deepest sources of man's conduct before God, and both are evoked by God's act in giving His love to us. The Christian's deed in faith is his response in gratitude to God's deed of love, and so it must be a complete surrender of himself for the praise and glory of God.

(3) Love

The Gospel and the Law are summed up in the twofold command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 306.

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor⁽¹⁾ as thyself." It is the Law under which the Christian lives, but it is the Law that is contained in the Gospel; which is to say that this complete love is required of us, and yet, inasmuch as it is quite impossible for sinful man to render it, it is also provided for us in Christ.

(a) Consider the Christian's love for God. It is not first and foremost our love for Him, but His love for us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our⁽²⁾ sins." He performed this great deed of love because He is in Himself love. God is always personally present in His action. It is not His act that is the source of Christian love, for that would make an event the object of our thought and gratitude, but it is God in His act, and that means that He is the Subject of our love. Both must be kept in mind. He is the Subject in that He gives us His love and commands ours; He is the Object in that the love that He gives us must be returned to Him as our act. "For the love of Christ constraineth us."⁽³⁾ It is the love of God in Christ for us (taking the *Χριστοῦ* as a subjective genitive), not

(1) Mark 12: 30f.

(2) I Jn. 4: 10.

(3) II Cor. 5: 14.

our love for Him, that constrains us. In the act of revelation He makes His love known to us, and because of the very essence and nature of His love, it enables us and requires us to love Him. God's love for us is at once the norm and the source of our love for Him.

Sanctification, then, is the work of grace in which the believer is put in a relationship that is motivated by divine love. As the love of God reconciles man, so the love of God in the reconciled man moves him to believe in and obey Christ as Lord. He must love God completely, with his whole life, for God requires nothing less than all. Sanctification means that the whole man is claimed by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Man cannot live in Christ beyond the realm of this love. His human love for God is altogether inadequate; in fact, it is sinful. It is only acceptable to God as He views it in Christ. True love "seeketh not its own,"⁽¹⁾ but gives God all credit and glory. Genuine Christian love⁽²⁾ never claims that it is the love of Christ. It seeks only to witness to His love for us. We love Him, give ourselves to Him, rejoice in His lordship over us, but we confess that it is always His love for us that enables us so to respond to Him.⁽³⁾ "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments," is both a prom-

(1) I Cor. 13: 5.

(2) Dog. p. 51.

(3) Jn. 14: 15.

ise and a command - a command within a promise.

(b) Christian love is also directed to the believer's neighbor. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is the second part of the command that is not to be separated from the first. Here, again, we speak of divine love acting in human lives, not of human love that arises out of man's natural capacity. Interpreters generally have seen in this second part of the command an indication that the Christian's love for his neighbor has its origin and its standard in his own human love for himself. But Barth insists that this part of the command must be related to the first, and the entire command is directed to the one to whom God's love is imparted in an act of revelation. The Gospel always comes to man as both grace and law. Love for self is neither the source nor the standard of the Christian's love for his neighbor. (Barth sees in the phrase "as thyself" a veiled reproach to man's love of self. Jesus is not commending self-love as a standard, but He is driving the message home to the heart of His hearer, laying bare the emptiness of all that man boasts of as his good deed.) It is the love for God - and that means the love of God for man which produces in man his love for God - that is the source and standard of the Christian's love for his neighbor. He loves his neighbor only as he acts under the compulsion of God's love in him. One may say that the love of

God that comes to man in Christ is a river that divides itself into two streams. One is the love of the Christian for God, while the other is the love of the Christian for his neighbor. The water in both streams is from the same river; Christian love in both cases is the love of God in us.

We love God in the neighbor, and the neighbor in God. Or, to put it in other words, love for Christ is the fundamental principle of love for the neighbor, and love for the neighbor is the expression of love for Christ. This does not lessen the urgency of exercising true love toward our fellow man, it emphasizes the fact that if our love for God is genuine we will love our fellow man. Barth's position here will be made clearer if we seek an answer to the question, Who is my neighbor?

He takes the view that basically and theologically Christ is the believer's neighbor. This is the point of application in the parable of the Good Samaritan. After telling the story Jesus put the question, "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?"⁽¹⁾ It was not, Whose neighbor was the unfortunate man? but, Who was his neighbor? The answer was apparent enough. It was the man who bestowed mercy upon him. Even so is Jesus Christ the believer's true neighbor,

(1) Luke 10: 36.

for He is the one who delivers man from his hopeless plight in sin. With this interpretation Barth brings the two commandments together. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," both point to Christ.

On that basis we must go on to ask, Who is my human neighbor? The answer is not to be made according to geographical or social, or racial considerations, but solely on the basis of the conclusion stated above. Having recognized that my first love is due to Christ, because He has given Himself in love to me, I must also see that my neighbor is the man through whom Christ confronts me with His claim upon my obedience. He is a 'sign' to me of what Christ wishes me to do, and therefore he is a 'sign' of Christ's presence confronting me. When the believer is sanctified through grace he asks, "What shall I do?" The absolute answer is, Believe and obey! The concrete answer will come to him from the Holy Spirit speaking through the Bible, or through the witness of the Church, or through a man who is in need of his deed of testimony. When it comes through a fellow man in need, he is the believer's neighbor and a 'sign' of the presence of Christ confronting the believer. This is the message of Matthew 25: 31-46. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" (V. 40). Obedience to Christ in loving and serving the

neighbor is the necessary other side of reconciliation.

As we cannot speak of justification without sanctification, so we cannot speak of the claim of God upon our love without seeing that the neighbor is the medium through whom that claim is laid upon us in a concrete situation. If I am not willing to love and serve my neighbor whom God places before me, I have not heard the Word of forgiveness.

The deed of love that we are to render to the neighbor in his need is a deed of witnessing to him concerning the grace and love of God. That is his greatest need, and that is the one deed that sanctification requires of the believer. Whatever he may be or say in loving the man in need, it must point to Christ. God speaks through him, making his witness to be the Gospel of reconciliation to the neighbor. Hence there is a twofold act of witnessing in such a concrete situation. The Holy Spirit speaks through me to my neighbor, commanding his faith, and through him to me, commanding my obedience. The Spirit's witness through me to him is a message of forgiveness, of justification; while the message through him to me is one of sanctification.

(4) Hope

True Christian conduct is always action in hope, in looking to the fulfilment of God's promise. "The power of our faith as sinners, and of our obedience as sinners,

is the hope based upon the future redemption which reconciliation accomplishes.⁽¹⁾ The life in Christ has a very definite eschatological perspective. We live in this world, but not for this world. If we do not have an anchor of hope in that other realm where Christ is, "we are of all men most miserable."⁽²⁾ It is this other-worldly character of our thinking that makes it "reliable, humble, objective." Christian faith remembers that "in hope were we saved."⁽³⁾ It remembers that we live now in the realm of nature, but we are destined in Christ for a life in the realm of glory. We live now in an intense struggle, but by hope we live in the realm where the struggle ceases. Justification and sanctification must be understood as eschatological conceptions. We have not yet entered into a full realization of them, nevertheless the fulfilment of them is granted to us now in hope. "In this hope we believe and obey. In this hope we endure in perceiving God as the Lord, but ourselves as dust; we endure in living a life which is enacted on the knife-edge between the permission to live and the necessity of dying, between eternity and time, in the freedom of the great decision and yet in the pressure of the little decisions."⁽⁴⁾ Our hope is in Him "who accomplishes in us His own divine will."⁽⁵⁾ Sanctification

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 307.

(2) I Cor. 15: 19. Quoted in Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 307.

(3) Rom. 8: 24.

(4) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 309.

(5) Credo, p. 144.

means that we rejoice in the accomplishment of that divine will, whatever it may involve, for we know that in Him it must eventuate in the glory of God.

It is to be remembered that Barth's view accounts for these motives as put in man in the act of revelation. They do not arise naturally in man, nor are they a by-product of grace that abides in man after the initial act of reconciliation. They are always the work of the Spirit of God upon man in a timeless event. Barth defines the Christian life as the act in which God speaks to man in Christ through the Holy Spirit, in which God manifests His grace to the be-
 (1)
 liever. "The fundamental significance of the Holy Spirit for the Christian life is that our participation in the event of revelation is included in the occurrence itself, as an
 (2)
 event of divine action."

3. STANDARD OF CONDUCT

May the Christian know with any definiteness what the claim of God upon his life requires of him in concrete acts of obedience? Barth's answer points to the Word of God, remembering always that it is a threefold Word - spoken, written and revealed - in which God Himself is present. His position here may be set forth in a nega-

(1) Cf. Zur Lehre v. H. G., p. 47.

(2) Ibid. p. 48.

tive and a positive statement.

In the first place he denies that man can devise a valid code of ethics, or standard of the sanctified life. Such a conception goes contrary to the basis of his whole view. It suggests that man can determine what is pleasing to God. It leads to putting the will of man before the will of God. It forgets that only God can reveal His will, and that He does it in an event, in an act, and never as an abiding deposit in the mind of man. It forgets that man remains in conflict, simul peccator et justus, and that he is therefore incapable of codifying God's will. It leads to all the evils of justification by works, of conceiving of the Church as a social institution, or of the Bible as the history of man's quest for God. This is the fundamental error, Barth thinks, of all philosophical ethics. It assumes that man can determine what his conduct must be in order to merit the name Christian. This is what Paul called, "The
(1)
weakness of the law in the flesh." It points to human work, human attainment, with which man may be content, victories in which man may take pride. In fact, it indicates that man presumes to take God's place in his life, and that is the basal sin of unbelief. It breeds zeal for God, but it is a false zeal, it is sin. "Sin triumphs in this zeal more, infinitely more, than in that which we think we know

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 18. The Sc. ref. is Rom. 8: 3.

as idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, and burglary; infinitely more because here in His gift of the Law, in the misinterpreted decalog, in the misinterpreted words ^{-ue/!} of the prophets, in the misinterpreted wisdom of Solomon, in the misinterpreted Sermon on the Mount and the Apostolic admonition, God Himself has been made the occasion and pre-
 text of sin.⁽¹⁾ Barth puts all forms of so-called Christian conduct into one general class with respect to such a man-made standard, and releases his most biting irony in describing them as works of sin that men call righteous, in which they try to justify themselves in leaving out the
 faith which God requires of them in Jesus Christ.⁽²⁾ All of this, in the final analysis, is justification by works, and therefore it is sin. It puts Christ to shame, cruci-
 fies Him anew in the midst of Christians.⁽³⁾ The only true view of ethics, Barth contends, is the theological, which is grounded in sanctification. Sanctification is the event in which God takes man captive in His Word through the Holy Spirit and man yields his entire life to Christ in faith and obedience, and theological ethics is the interpretation of that event.

In the second place, Barth's view is built upon

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 19.

(2) Ibid. p. 19f.

(3) Heb. 6: 6.

the positive assumption that the Word of God provides for the Christian a standard that is complete and sufficient. In the Bible he is to hear that Word spoken to him; he is to read it and listen to God. The Word there is always both absolute and concrete. The man who hears God's Word asks, What shall I do? And the answer is, Obey! Obey the absolute command that is written in the Bible: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."⁽¹⁾ Then the concrete command God speaks to the believer, laying His claim upon him specifically for some definite act, in the moment that He speaks in this absolute command. Man does not hear the absolute if he does not also and at the same time hear the concrete command. Therefore sanctification cannot be a mere routine matter of studying the Bible and then going forth to do what one reads there. Much less can Christians draw up a set of statements to serve as a criterion by which they are to judge between what is righteousness in man and what is sin. There is a standard, as definite as the needs require, and it is given to man in an act of revelation, which always comes in the threefold Word. The believer reads the Bible, which is the written Word; is confronted with his neighbor in a concrete situa-

(1) Mark 12: 30f.

tion, and therein is the Word witnessed, proclaimed, to him; and the Holy Spirit speaks to him through the Bible and the neighbor, and thus the Word of God is revealed to him. This is the doctrine of sanctification through the Word, the basis of theological ethics, the only true standard of Christian conduct.

4. CONSCIENCE

In his threefold perspective (creation, reconciliation, and redemption), Barth considers conscience as a factor in the Christian life under the viewpoint of redemption. There are at least three good reasons for doing so. (1) It emphasizes the fact that conscience is not an expression of man's natural moral capacity. There is, to be sure, a moral element in man's nature, as is evidenced by the various distinctions between good and evil conduct to be found among men everywhere. But the man to whom God's grace has come in an act of revelation perceives that in himself he is utterly incapable of making a valid discrimination between God's righteousness and man's sin. Because he is thoroughly sinful he cannot know true righteousness at all unless it is revealed to him. Barth feels that to recognize the validity of the natural conscience is to open the door to natural theology. This is one of the points on which he and Brunner differ, as is shown in his "Nein!" Brunner

takes the position that the conscience is a phase of the 'formal' image of God in man, which was not completely destroyed by sin, and to which we can appeal in presenting the Gospel to people who are hearing it for the first time. Barth sees that this is a compromise, in part at least, of the basal principle that man can do nothing at all to save himself, or to help God to save him. He comes back to his premise that sanctification is altogether the work of grace upon man, that it is always an act, and never a quality which is recognized in man or imparted to him.

(2) This approach to conscience also calls attention to the fact that it is the Christian's response as a child of God. Under the viewpoint of creation he is God's creature; under the viewpoint of reconciliation he is a reconciled sinner; while under the viewpoint of redemption he is a child of God. Living in gratitude to God for the fact that he has been made God's child and in the hope of the full and final revelation of redemption, his response to God's command in the midst of social and moral situations is that of a child who delights to do the will of his father. His conscience witnesses to him concerning the will of his heavenly Father with reference to concrete action that must be in line with the relationship which he has with God in Christ.

(3) This view of conscience also stresses the

fact that it is the work of the Holy Spirit in man. He is God the Redeemer. It is only through His presence and action that we are able to know what is God's will in any situation. We are completely dependent upon Him for guidance and ability for every decision.

When we focus these three points in the perspective of redemption we appreciate the place of conscience in the struggle that characterizes the Christian life. The sinful nature of man protests against that which grace makes known to us, and true faith protests against that which our sinful nature approves. As children of God we find in ourselves only transgression.⁽¹⁾ "A good conscience is an accusing, disturbing, checking, disquieting conscience; a conscience that does not go with us but against us, a conscience which, after it has heard the proclamation of the forgiveness of sin, is not freed from the fear concerning our sin, but in this fear⁽²⁾ more than ever makes terror." Yet in the midst of this distress over his sin there comes to the believer the joy and freedom in which he "knows himself to be righteous before God."⁽³⁾ Thus the Holy Spirit chastises and comforts, comforts and chastises the Christian. The Gospel is not proclaimed fully if it does not convey along with the promise of the forgiveness of sins the admonition to "purge out the old leaven,⁽⁴⁾ that ye may be a new lump."

(1) Cf. Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 302f.

(2) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 304.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 11. The Sc. ref. is I Cor. 5: 7f.

CHAPTER VI

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Sanctification is a work of God's grace that necessarily involves the Church. One is not to be understood apart from the other. The doctrine of sanctification defines the Church, and the doctrine of the Church gives direction to the doctrine of sanctification. Barth's view of the inter-relatedness of all the doctrines of the Word of God prepares us for the close relation between these two. They are two of the points that make up the circle, each of which is affected by the lights and shadows that fall upon it from the other. And both are considered from the viewpoint of faith, which means that we must allow the content of the work of grace as it is performed upon man in faith to determine the doctrine; the doctrine takes its form and derives its content from the object of faith rather than from man the subject. We must speak of the Church from within, allowing it to determine our view, rather than from without as a spectator. In a seminar discussion Barth illustrated the importance of this viewpoint with a parable of two men observing a figure in a stained window. One stands outside the Church edifice and sees only the dark outline of the figure, at best a silhouette; the other views it from within where the light from the altar falls upon it, bringing out the

rich colors, and making the face to glow as with life. In faith we speak of sanctification and the Church from within, from the point where the light of revelation concerning the Church falls upon sanctification.

I. RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO GOD

Nowhere does the Barthian method apply more forcefully than here. He is thinking not of that which exists in man, or in groups of men, but of that which exists in Christ, which is related to men only in so far as God's work of grace is performed upon them. Therefore we are not to think of the Church primarily as an institution, not even as an institution for the preservation of revelation or for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. To be sure, it sustains a vital relation to revelation, but it is in no sense the depository of revelation, as the ark was the depository of the tables of the law. It indeed does sustain a very important relation to the Kingdom, but not in the sense that a human - or even a divine-human - institution is charged with the task of introducing into the world a type of society which may be termed the Kingdom of God.

First and last the Church must be understood as event: not something static, but something that occurs; not something that society possesses, but something that God does. The Church is God's work upon men which He accom-

plishes in Christ through the Holy Spirit - or, we may say, in revelation through the Holy Spirit - and in which man participates only in the act of faith. The true Church exists only in the frame of this event, this decision between God and man.⁽¹⁾ We may make this clear in three statements.

(1) The foundation of the Church rests in an act of grace,⁽²⁾ which must ever be repeated. In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on Pentecost, God established the Church. They were chosen by God, Christ was their Lord. The Spirit spoke to them, and by His power they proclaimed Christ, the Word of God, to the people. In that event the Church was founded, and in the repetition of that event through grace and faith it has its existence. When Simon Peter made his great confession of Christ under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, this event that is the Church occurred.⁽³⁾ It is in this conception that we are to understand the significance of the promise that Jesus expressed in the words, "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and

(1) Theol. d. K. p. 365f.

(2) Cf. Credo, pp. 121-123, and Theol. d. K. p. 367.

(3) Cf. Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 9, p. 28f.

whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in ⁽⁴⁾ heaven." The Church is still a reality in the relationship between God and man, not because there has been a continuity or succession of its organized life from generation to generation since Pentecost, but because again and again the Spirit speaks the Word of God to men and enables them to hear, and obey, and bear witness to others. Where that event occurs the Church exists; where that event does not occur the Church does not exist, regardless of its form of organization or its claim to apostolic succession.

This act of God in founding the Church is rooted in election, as is His act in sanctification. The men upon whom the Spirit came on Pentecost were chosen in eternity to be the recipients of His grace on that day. The summons, the call, that brings men together as Church is only the counterpart of the election which destines them to be Church. (In supporting this part of his conception Barth might do well to call attention to the Greek tenses in Matthew 16: 19. A literal translation would be: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.") This election and call may also be stated as sanctification. Men are elected, called, claimed, set apart; in brief, men are sanctified by God to His service. This claim of God

(1) Matt. 16: 18f.

upon man is a sovereign act of grace, not in any sense conditioned on human action or conduct. Out of His free grace He chooses men, calls them through His Word that is spoken to them by the Holy Spirit, and takes them under His control to be used as His own possession for His glory. When that occurs the Church exists. "Where the true Church is, there⁽¹⁾ is God worshiped and praised as absolute Lord."

Barth insists that both doctrines - of the Church and of sanctification - are theologically grounded. There is the ecclesiastical view that regards the Church as an end in itself. The *analogia entis* makes it identical with God in the elevation of the Host, the forgiveness of sins, and other functions in which it acts for God in the dispensation of grace. There is also the view that may be termed sociological, which regards the Church as a voluntary human society in which the members covenant together for spiritual exercise in the service of God. The first view makes too much of the Church, and the second makes too little of it. The first exalts the Church to the throne of God, while the second removes it too far from His throne. Barth sees in the theological view the only way of understanding the true nature and function of the Church. It is established by God's act in the sanctification of believers for His service in the present world order. It is holy in that it has been taken

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 283.

under claim by Him. The holiness of the Church consists in its relation to God's holiness, not in the piety of its members; in that God has it at His disposal, not in that it has God at its disposal.⁽¹⁾

(2) The true Church exists as the earthly body of Christ. It was founded by Him, therefore He is its head. It exists only as it is actually controlled by Him. When it is separated from Him as Lord, it ceases to be His earthly body in the present order and becomes only a dead frame of that which it should be. It can only be His body as He directs its every movement. "The Church is indeed the Kingdom of Christ in the Zwischenzeit."⁽²⁾ All that He did and does in His reconciling and revealing work points to the Church as His way of accomplishing among men through the Holy Spirit the redeeming will of God. "The Church exists, therefore, because Jesus Christ is our Lord, sitting at the right hand of God."⁽³⁾ And it exists as holy, under His control, because "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it."⁽⁴⁾

In that the Church exists in this relation to Christ, it is contemporaneous with Him in His revelation. It exists in the eternal-temporal event in which God lays His claim upon man, and as such it is contemporaneous with that other

(1) Cf. Theol. d. Kir. p. 299.

(2) Credo, p. 123.

(3) Ibid. p. 113.

(4) Eph. 5: 25f.

eternal-temporal event in which God's Word "became flesh and dwelt among us." As it was necessary for Him to assume human form to reveal God to man, so it is necessary now for Him to have an earthly body, which is the Church. But as the human form of Christ was incident to the revelation, so the temporal aspect of the Church must be considered as incident to the eternal. Actually the Church exists, Barth says, in two times (aeons): the present, which is the interim (Zwischenzeit) between the ascension and the parousia; and the future reign of glory. When the Church proclaims the Word of God to men - or, when God reveals Himself to men through the testimony of the Church - that proclamation points to the ascension and the parousia; otherwise it is not God's revealed Word. In living upon revelation, in remembering the time of revelation which was closed with the ascension of Jesus, the Church exists in the present, in the Zwischenzeit. In faith in Christ who is now at the right hand of the Father, in expecting His return, it exists in the future realm of glory.⁽¹⁾ Between the proclamation of the Word of God by the Church in the remembrance of Christ's ascension and the proclamation in the hope of His second coming the act of revelation occurs. It is done by God in the freedom of His grace; it is His act of revelation in and through the message of the Church. "What this true future of the Church is, and therefore what is the

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 104ff.

object of the real and earnest expectation of the Church, follows directly and forcefully out of its present which is constituted through the reign of Christ. As we have seen, this present signifies contemporaneousness with Jesus Christ. In this present is, indeed, the divine power of His resurrection effective. In this present the Church remembers the time of revelation.⁽¹⁾ But as it remembers the time of revelation it also expects the second coming of Christ. The proclamation, indeed the life, of the Church is in this twofold perspective.

This means that Christians should regard the Church as existing solely for the purpose of serving Christ. It does not live for the pleasure of its members, or for the accomplishment of human ideals. It lives always under the cross of Christ.⁽²⁾ It must die with Him if it is to live with Him. It not only was founded by Christ, but its foundation is ever and again to be renewed in the repetition of that event in which He speaks His Word through the Holy Spirit, commanding and providing the full obedience of its members. The viewpoint of faith, that looks back to the ascension and forward to the parousia, "reminds the Church that was established through the resurrection that as such it stands under the cross, which means, in the hiddenness

(1) Credo, p. 105.

(2) Ibid. p. 107. Cf. also Z. d. Z. 1931, p. 91.

of God, through which only He himself penetrates when it pleases Him. It reminds it that the relationship of head and body is not reversible, that saving omnipotence is the power of the Lord, which is over us and for us, but without becoming our power. It reminds the Church of the patience of God, but it therewith also reminds it of the claim of God under which it exists as Church. It places it under the law of humility.⁽¹⁾

(3) The nature of the Church is seen also in its relation to the Word of God through the Holy Spirit. It is really a twofold relation, both phases of which must be kept in mind at all times, and both of which are essential to the event that constitutes the Church as the body of Christ on earth. The first is the fact that God speaks in Christ through the Holy Spirit, and men hear in faith. Where God's Word is spoken, heard, and obeyed, the Church comes into existence. The other is the witness of believing and obeying men before the world to that which has been heard. Where the Church proclaims God's Word in confession and preaching, and men hear and believe God through the witness that is given, there the Church really exists. Therefore it lives upon God's Word.⁽²⁾ This Word given through the Holy Spirit is its source of inspiration and guidance, its basis of hope,

(1) Credo, p. 102f.

(2) Theol. d. Kir. p. 364.

its chart and compass for its course in the world.

The Church lives in the service of the Word, in obedience to God in the event in which He has spoken and will speak again, in the proclamation of that which has⁽¹⁾ been heard. Of such central importance is this fact to Barth that he feels that all theology must be designated *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*. The Church is in the world "with⁽²⁾ a book in its hand." Its task is to proclaim, to expound, to preach that book as the witnessed and written Word of God. When and where believing men bear witness to other men concerning that which God has spoken to them through the Bible, and others hear God speaking to them through this witness, then and there the Church exists.⁽³⁾ It is sanctification that makes the language of the Church to be true proclamation.⁽⁴⁾ This is the event that makes the Church to be Church, the earthly body of the heavenly Lord through His Spirit. The Word of God is not spoken and heard in the present order without reference to the Church, and⁽⁵⁾ the Church does not exist save as God speaks and is heard.

The doctrine of sanctification means that the Church serves the Word of God. This is its supreme task,

(1) Cf. *Theol. d. Kir.* p. 323.

(2) "Der Christ als Zeuge", *Theol. Ex. Heute*, heft 12, p. 12.

(3) *Theol. Ex. Heute*, heft 9, p. 29.

(4) *Dog.* p. 49.

(5) *Theol. Ex. Heute*, heft 9, p. 29.

its *raison d'être*. On this ground Barth protested against the German Christian movement. The Church, he said, does not have to serve man; it serves only the Word of God. It need not be concerned about calling men back to the Church, but its consuming concern should be that men shall hear the Word of God in the Church.⁽¹⁾

It is in this connection that Barth recognizes the importance of the canon. It was not an act of the Church as an institution that gave authority to the canon, but the fact that the Bible imposes itself as canon upon the Church.⁽²⁾ There are no human criteria by which we are to measure the Word of God. It affirms itself to us, we do not prove it. "The Scripture rules the Church, the Church does not have to rule the Scripture. But it must be clearly understood that it is the Scripture as a tool in the hand of God."⁽³⁾

This conception of the Church in relation to God's Word indicates the importance of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Barth calls them signs. They are not channels of grace in the sense of the Roman Catholic doctrine, nor mere symbols as some of the free Churches teach. They are signs, taken in a dynamic sense, very much as Calvin interpreted them. In them God is present, His Word is proclaimed and heard. Baptism is the sign of the grace that is executed in justifica-

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 1, p. 24.

(2) Dog. p. 110.

(3) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 9, p. 29.

(1)
tion and sanctification. The Lord's supper is the sign of the death of Christ for man, an event that has its contingent contemporaneousness with us in faith, which means that the believer shares in the incarnation and death of Christ.⁽²⁾ The Christian life is to be understood as a life between baptism and the Lord's supper, though without implying growth in grace.

2. THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO CHRISTIANS

What has been said concerning the nature of the Church in its relation to the triune God in His revelation prepares us to consider the bearing of Barth's doctrine of sanctification upon his doctrine of the Church as it is related to believing men. This relationship may be traced along four lines. (1) He holds that the Church is fellowship between God and man, the fellowship of faith and obedience. In the chapter on "Die Kirche und die Kultur" in his book Die Theologie und die Kirche, he gives a comprehensive statement of this position. He says there that the Church is: (a) a fellowship established by God; (b) a fellowship of faith and obedience; (c) a fellowship that lives on God's Word;⁽³⁾ and (d) a fellowship of sinful men. It is, therefore, distinguished from every other conception of fellowship. It

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 281.

(2) Credo, p. 134.

(3) Theol. d. Kirche, p. 364f.

is created by God in the event in which He speaks to man, giving him sufficient grace to believe and obey. It is not a relationship into which man enters voluntarily because he desires to draw near to God, but a relationship that God creates out of His free grace. Faith and obedience are born out of the Word and live upon it. It is an act of decision that is so completely conditioned by God's speech that the believer must ever cry out, "Dear Lord help my un-⁽¹⁾belief."

It is the sanctifying act of God's grace that binds him to God in this fellowship that is the Church. He belongs to God; God takes him as His own, in spite of his sin, gives him a task to perform and grace with which to perform it. This is his sanctification, and it puts him at once in the Church, for the Church is composed of sinners who have⁽²⁾ been claimed by God. The members of the Church are bound to⁽³⁾ God by this common tie of God's claim upon them. Therefore the Christian does not join the Church, does not initiate his relation to it; he is already in it when he becomes a Christian. For when the Holy Spirit brings God's Word to him, and enables him to believe and obey, God creates there the fellowship that is the Church. Then his act in affiliation with the Church is his confession of faith in Christ.

(1) Theol. d. Kir. p. 366.

(2) Ibid. p. 365.

(3) Ibid. p. 366.

In hearing the Word of God we are not free to do as we choose, but we are taken captive and bound in our thinking and speaking. That means that when we hear, we are already⁽¹⁾ in the midst of the Church as testifying Christians. We do not actually hear unless that hearing involves testifying.

It is from this viewpoint that Barth points out that men are not to exercise control over this fellowship. The members of the Church are not to set up their own arbitrary conditions upon which others may enter the fellowship. This is, again, the basis upon which he rejects the German Christian movement. This fellowship is not conditioned, he says, through blood, and therefore not through race, but only through the Holy Spirit and baptism. When the Church excludes Jewish Christians, or treats them as belonging to⁽²⁾ a lower class, it ceases to be a Christian Church. This is a good example of the practical application of his doctrine of sanctification with reference to the Church.

(2) Barth also speaks of the Church as a realm, or place in which God deals with man. It is the realm in which occurs the eternal-temporal event of grace that constitutes the Church. This is his conception of the Church as embracing the relationship between God and man, whereby he is able to concede that a human response is involved without granting that the response has such merit in itself as

(1) Ibid. p. 372.

(2) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 1, p. 24f.

to allow man to think of it as his work. "One can say bluntly that in founding the Church Christ establishes this interim as proof of the divine patience. As such the Church is space given to us for repentance, for conversion, for faith.⁽¹⁾ It is "the place and the means of the grace of God,"⁽²⁾ where the sinner and Jesus Christ meet.⁽³⁾ Therefore it is "holy, set apart according to its origin and mission as place and means of the divine action of revelation and reconciliation in distinction from every other institution and communion."⁽⁴⁾

In this realm of repentance, faith and obedience, the Church is a body of sinful men who have been reconciled and sanctified by grace through faith. Here, again, we see Barth's doctrine of sanctification intertwining his conception of the Church. He regards the Church as an assembly of the called-out, those who have been summoned to a holy relationship with God. He uses the Greek 'ecclesia' and the German 'Aufruf' to point to this aspect of the life of the Church. The Church is an assembly of sinners who have been taken captive by God, called out of the relations of the world into this unique relation with God in Christ, and com-

(1) Credo, p. 123.

(2) Theol. d. Kir. p. 296.

(3) Ibid. p. 297.

(4) Ibid. p. 291.

missioned with a special task under God's control. Therefore it is holy, a holy communion. It is a congregation of reconciled sinners who have a common concern, who are bound into a unity.⁽¹⁾

(3) The Government of the Church must accord with its foundation. As an assembly of reconciled sinners who have been sanctified by God, how is the Church to govern itself in its internal relations and in its relations to the state? This is a very important question, and it concerns both the doctrine of sanctification and of the Church. Barth answers not with rules, but with a principle. Sanctification means that the government of the Church is indissolubly tied in with its foundation. The question, Who rules the Church? is a part of the question, How, when and by whom was it established? It was established by Christ in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on Pentecost.⁽²⁾ It is to be governed in the same way. As its establishment was not committed to man, so neither is its government. It remains under God's control in so far as it remains the true, holy Church.

But we may press the question for a more specific answer. Is it possible for the Church in any way to be related to state government, or must it be free and independent of all such relations? Is the so-called free Church the only

(1) Cf. Credo, p. 120.

(2) Cf. Ibid. p. 122.

true Church? And, again, what bearing does his doctrine have upon the form of government that the Church is to have within itself? The answer is that it is not the type of Church-state relationship as such, nor the form of Church government as such, that gives it true character. It is conceivable that a state Church might be genuine, while a free Church might be no Church at all; or the reverse might be true. A Church might have a presbyterial, or episcopal, or hierarchical form of government, and be true or false. The determining principle is that Christ shall be recognized in the Church as absolute Lord. If the state-Church relationship is founded on the principle that the voice of the state government carries greater authority than the word of Christ, then it is no Church. On the other hand, if a free Church assumes that its members are free to exercise authority within the body according to their choice, it is no Church. It is only true Church where Christ reigns as absolute Lord. This principle is to be applied to all such questions. No human authority or government should be placed between the body and the head in any matter that concerns the true nature and function of the Church. To recognize any such authority, to allow any word of man to take the place of the Word of God, is to cease to be the true Church. Therefore there can be no Gleichshaltung between the Church and the state. Each is to recognize the other; each is to respect the realm of

existence and function of the other; each is to lend support and sympathy to the other. One is not to be subordinated to the other, or submerged in the other. Neither are they to be separated abstractly. The same men are in both. The personal relationship of Christians to the Church and to the state under the lordship of Christ is the larger point and also the point of solution. It is there that the true doctrine of sanctification is to be applied. Men who are owned and controlled by Christ will serve Him supremely both in the Church and in the state. Then one realm will not be subordinated to the other, but Christ will reign over both through the same men.

(4) This calls for a statement concerning Barth's conception of the Church as visible and invisible. His strong emphasis upon the nature of the Church as established by God in the eternal-temporal event of revelation would seem to indicate that he overlooks the existence of the Church visible. However, he is concerned to hold both phases of the nature of the Church in his doctrine. "It is essential to the Church," he writes, "that nothing human is strange to it, that it is always and everywhere the Church of man, the Church of definite ages, peoples, languages, cultures." The Church invisible is not to be thought of as something apart from and beyond the Church visible as a sort of over-half of the Church

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 9, p. 27.

visible. They are not to be thought of as "two species
 (1)
 of one genus." The distinction is not that one is eternal while the other is temporal. The invisible is in the visible, the eternal is in the temporal. The Church is for this world order, and when Christ returns it, as it now exists, will cease to be, and will become the Church of the redeemed. But while it exists here it is at once temporal and eternal, visible and invisible. Those to whom God has spoken, who have believed and obeyed Him in hearing His word, who are justified and sanctified by His grace, understand this dual nature of the Church.

It is only by uniting the invisible and the visible that we appreciate the real nature of the Church, and its claim upon the lives of believers. One cannot be in the invisible Church without the necessity of being identified with the visible. One may be in the visible Church without being in the invisible, but one may not be in the invisible and hold himself aloof from the visible. The sanctifying work of grace places the believer under the command of God, in obedience to which he is identified with the Church, both visible and invisible. He serves God and his neighbor through the Church. But we must guard against the temptation to judge

(1) Theol. d. Kir. p. 290.

whether or not some who are in the visible are truly in the invisible. Such decisions always rest with the Holy Spirit, not with man.

3. THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO SOCIETY

One fact looms large in all that Barth says about the Church: it is always distinct from the social order. If we lose sight of that fact we fail to conceive its true nature and function. It is in the world and yet not of it. It stands apart from the world, sanctified to God in a unique relation. But what is the mission of the Church in the world? Is it to identify itself with social and political movements that have as their objective the general welfare of mankind? Or is it to hold itself aloof from them? We say that its task is to proclaim the Word of God, but is it to be simply a sounding board sending out a verbal proclamation? Barth answers that there is a definite and serious burden laid upon the Church on behalf of humanity. The proclamation of the Word of God by the Church is not limited to the oral sermon, but includes the entire life of the Church in all the relations and associations that the members have, not only with other members of the Church, but with the world. It is an interesting sidelight on this point that Thurneysen, the man who is Barth's closest theological associate, lectures to the students at the University of Basel on *Seelsorge* (the German term that means the care

of souls, and embraces the pastoral ministry of the preacher). In the classroom and in his pastoral work, as minister of the Münster Kirche in Basel, he applies these doctrines in which he and Barth are in general accord.

Barth conceives the task of the Church in terms of Kultur. As we should expect, he defines the term theologically, which means, for him, also eschatologically. He is not thinking of that which is suggested in the very broad word 'civilization', nor of the idealistic connotations of the German word 'Kultur'.⁽¹⁾ He means rather the humanity that is envisaged in God's work of creation, reconciliation and redemption. "Kultur is the task, established through the Word of God, of realizing the destiny of man in the unity of soul and body."⁽²⁾ It transcends all other principles and conceptions to be found in social movements. It does not contemplate man in the abstract, but the individual man in concrete situations. The task of the Church is not to proclaim philosophical and ethical principles, but to witness in such manner that each member will be confronted with this burden on behalf of his fellow man. Perhaps it will be less confusing if we retain here the German word to distinguish it from the rather loose English word 'culture', keeping in mind Barth's theological definition of it.

(1) Cf. Theol. d. Kir. p. 368.

(2) Ibid.

Kultur is the task of the Church that is rooted in creation as seen through reconciliation in view of the promised redemption.⁽¹⁾ We cannot think of the creation of man save in terms of reconciliation, for we know him only as sinner, and he is reconciled by the same God who created him. God created man in Christ for fellowship with Himself, but we can think of that only as a promise, for man the sinful creature is utterly incapable of such fellowship. Therefore God reconciles the sinner in Christ. But that reconciliation occurs only in the event of the spoken revelation, and God speaks now only through the Holy Spirit of promise in the testimony of the Church. The promise of God in creation must be executed by God in reconciliation and realized in redemption. Under the viewpoint of creation Kultur means the promise of that which man shall become;⁽²⁾ under the viewpoint of reconciliation it points to the law that commands the sanctified sinner to put his faith and obedience to work in God's service;⁽³⁾ while under the viewpoint of redemption it points to the border beyond which God makes all things new in the fulfilment of his promise.⁽⁴⁾ In other words, the Christian regards his fellow man in the light

(1) Theol. d. Kir. pp. 373-385.

(2) Ibid. p. 373.

(3) Ibid. p. 378.

(4) Ibid. p. 381.

of what he may become in Christ; he regards himself as bound under God's command, commissioned for service in obedience to the Lord, and therefore obligated before God to minister to his fellow man; and he regards both himself and his fellow man as placed under God's command and promise that point to the perfecting of His saving work in redemption. On the basis of this message, and within its limits, the Church is to serve God for the welfare of mankind. This is a part of the meaning of the cross to which the Church is sanctified.

This, Barth thinks, puts all the work of the Church that points toward the betterment of society, on a solid foundation, the only true foundation. Recognizing that the Church is made up of sinners who have been
(1)
reconciled, all barriers between Christians and others are swept aside. All men stand on a common level of need before God. If some have heard the saving Word they are not to consider themselves in any sense superior to those who, for any reason, have not heard. On the contrary, their faith, obedience, and gratitude will make them witness to other men concerning God's grace. From this point of view the Church must look upon all men as God's creatures, and therefore as subjects of God's promise which can only be - but must be - carried to fulfilment in

(1) Ibid. p. 374.

reconciliation and redemption. These other men do not know even the first phase of this great truth. In sanctification God commissions the Church to proclaim the whole truth to them. The holy Church first hears this threefold message concerning man, and then proclaims it in word and work to men. "Yea, and the Church would not be the Church if in its existence - but also in its doctrines and conduct - the law of God, His commands, His questions, His admonitions, His indictments, should not become visible and apprehensible for the world, for state and society; if just the message of the grace of the triune God, according to the three articles of faith which quite alone form the task of the Church, should not become as such the prophetic witness of the will of God against all sinful boasting, against all lawlessness and unrighteousness of men." Therefore the Church works for the attainment of the loftiest conceivable objective in society, which is the realization of the 'humanity' that God proposed when he created man. It works for the welfare of man, the man whom God has made and loved. "Homo he is, even though he is homo peccator, whom God addresses in Christ, and therefore humanity is the promise - man is capable of sharing in this promise - which is revived with the mighty establishment of God's legal claim in Christ. Just as the con-

(1) Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 11.

ception of Kultur indicates, this promise to man means perfection, unity, completeness in his sphere as creature, as man, even as God in His sphere is perfect, complete, Lord⁽¹⁾ over nature and spirit, Creator of heaven and earth." This is man's possibility only in Christ, which serves to intensify the sense of obligation that should rest upon the Church in discharging the task that sanctification imposes. The Church accepts the task in fear and joy.

The Church, then, is God's instrument for accomplishing His objective envisaged in creation, and sanctification is the method. Through the witness of His Word in the Church man is to be transformed by grace into the humanity of His purpose. The Church is not to be concerned with changing the social order, with setting up programs and methods of a new society. Its concern is solely to serve God in pointing men to Him through His Word. This is a definite commission, no other program is needed. It gives promise of achieving all that is needed, for it is God's way, freighted with His grace.

This is the principle upon which the Church must face all questions and tasks arising in the social order. It cannot be disinterested in them, it cannot abandon them to so-called experts, but it must face them as situations in which this God-given commission is to be applied and

(1) Theol. d. Kir. p. 375f.

(1)
worked out. The Church must relate itself to the social order by sending men forth to witness for God in all their relations to society. There may be social institutions with definite programs and methods, with which Christians may identify themselves. But those institutions are never to be conceived as taking the place of the Church. They are to be regarded as opportunities through which Christians may give their witness before the world to the grace of God. The control of the life of the believer which Christ exercises through His Word - and the proclamation of that Word is the chief task of the Church - extends through the Church into society. The Church is under God's command, its faith and obedience must work.

(1) Ibid. p. 377.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the exposition given in the preceding chapters it is now in order to set forth some general conclusions. The writer has purposely deferred this task to the last chapter so that questions, criticisms, and conclusions might be related to the view as a whole. Too frequently the Barthian theology has been rejected on the basis of a statement of it that is unjust because it is inadequate. Our concern now will be with the main principles of the doctrine in his view, judging their validity by the Scriptures, and by certain pragmatic tests and doctrinal questions.

1. THE PRIMARY MEANING OF SANCTIFICATION

We may begin with a summary discussion of the basal conception of sanctification that this view presents. And it falls logically into a threefold statement of definition and distinction.

- (1) God's claim upon man rather than
a change in man's character.

Our investigation has revealed that Barth's view of sanctification is distinct from the general conceptions that have dominated Christian thinking since Augustine in

the definition that he gives of the relationship between God and man that it involves. Roman Catholic and Protestant views alike have treated that relationship as one of moral and spiritual kinship based upon a transformation that is effected in the character of man. Interpretations have varied as to the accomplishment of the change (Roman Catholics teaching that it is a phase of justification, which is the work of the grace of God committed to and administered by the Church in co-operation with the faith of man, and Protestants holding in the main that it is accomplished by the grace of God as the Holy Spirit operates upon the heart of the believer by means of the Word of God), but there has been general agreement in taking it to be the primary meaning of sanctification. Calvin came nearer to the position that Barth has taken than has any other, and it is apparent that Barth took his cue from him, but he failed to carry his conception through distinctively. He looked upon sanctification as the establishment of God's claim of complete ownership of the believer's life, but he also treated it as the development and continuation of regeneration. Calvinism has consistently followed in this path of treating sanctification in a dual definition. The Westminster Confession defines it as the gradual destruction of the body of sin in a war between the regenerate and the corrupt natures, in which the regenerate part

gains the victory "through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ." Kuyper says that regeneration is not enough: "But it requires the Holy Spirit's additional and very peculiar act, whereby the disposition of the regenerated and converted sinner is brought gradually into harmony with the divine will; and this is the gracious gift of sanctification⁽¹⁾." Charles Hodge's definition of sanctification is that it "consists in the gradual triumph of the new nature implanted in regeneration over the evil that still remains after the heart is renewed⁽²⁾."

Barth insists that the primary and essential meaning of sanctification is God's complete ownership and possession of the believer. Reconciliation, to be sure, embraces justification and regeneration, but sanctification must ever be distinguished as God's claim on man. In faith we think not of our possession of a new character through regeneration, but solely of the fact that we belong exclusively to God through Jesus Christ. Which of these two positions is nearer the teaching of the Scriptures? Does the Bible support Barth, or does it require that sanctification be treated as a continuation or development of regeneration? We may seek an answer to that question by

(1) Abraham Kuyper, The Work of The Holy Spirit, p. 449.

(2) Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, V. III, p. 224.

asking three others.

(a) What is the meaning of the scriptural terms 'sanctify', 'holy', and 'sanctification'? In the Old Testament the verb 'sanctify' is a translation of $\psi \tau \rho$. Efforts to trace this word back to its primitive meaning have not met with pronounced success, largely because it is strictly a religious term,⁽¹⁾ but it is generally agreed to-day that it most probably meant to set apart from a common to a special relation, or to dedicate fully to the use and service of God. This meaning may be seen in the fact that in the employment of its cognate forms in Pre-Israelitish Palestine it denoted a relation of the priests and priestesses to their gods that drew its significance from the conception that the people had of their deity. Those who were called holy belonged to the gods that the people worshiped and were expected to represent the gods to the people at the shrines. It may not be without significance that the Old Testament word 'harlot' is a translation of the Hebrew $\eta \psi \tau \rho$ which means a sanctified (consecrated) woman. It was the conception that the people had of the nature and character of their gods that determined the type⁽²⁾ of life and service that they expected of their holy ones.

(1) Cf. Article on "Holiness In The Old Testament," by J. Skinner, in A Dictionary of The Bible by James Hastings, 1899, V. 2, p. 395.

(2) Cf. W. Robertson Smith, The Religion of The Semites, p. 132f.

For them the idea of holiness made no moral demands upon their lives, but it did involve the notion that they belonged to their gods. In the Old Testament the same basal conception of sanctification as a relation of devotement to God holds. The moral and spiritual tone of that relation is different, because the conception of God that is based on revelation is different. The requirements that this view of God places upon the relation are met in justification, forgiveness, and regeneration, while sanctification points to the establishment of the relation.

We appreciate more clearly the significance of $\psi \tau \rho$ if we compare it with $\lambda \lambda \eta$, which means to reduce to a common use by dissolving a covenant obligation. The common was not necessarily degraded, but was applied to the ordinary needs of man while that which was holy was recognized as belonging solely to God. So God made Israel His own possession, set apart from all other peoples. "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."⁽¹⁾

The word in the New Testament that corresponds to $\psi \tau \rho$ is $\alpha \gamma \iota \omega \varsigma$, which is also exclusively a religious term. Wherever it is found it carries the thought of a relation that can best be described as possessed by God, or

(1) Ex. 19: 5, 6.

surrendered to Him. This accounts for the abundance of uses in Biblical literature and the scarcity of uses in earlier Greek. It occurs only once in the Tragedies (Aeschylus, Suppl. 858), and that is a doubtful passage. It may be found in Herodotus (II. 41: 3, and II. 44: 1), Xenophon (Hell. III. 2:19), and Plato (Critias 116C, and Crito 51A). In all these instances, save the last passage, it is used in connection with the temple ($\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$), showing an effort to give an added significance not carried in $\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\varsigma$. A temple is a sacred place, but when it is spoken of as a 'holy temple', the fact is stressed that it is recognized as standing apart from common relations and as belonging peculiarly to the gods worshiped there.

The root is $\acute{\alpha}\gamma$, from which was developed $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ and later $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$. There were probably two original meanings, distinguished only by the breathing. $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ had the meaning of guilt, curse, or pollution; while $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$ signified expiation for guilt, or a sacrificial offering. We do not have this distinction in the New Testament, for $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ does not occur, but we do have a resultant distinction on the basis of the root of $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$. $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$ seems to have developed from the root $\acute{\alpha}\gamma$ by way of $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega$, from which $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$ is made. Then from $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$ came $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$. It seems reasonably clear that the root idea here is sacrifice, or consecration, a con-

clusion that is generally supported by the studies of
 (1)
 Curtius. From ἁγίος was formed ἁγιάζω (along with
 ἁγίω) which Stephanus gives as meaning 'to cause to
 (2)
 be holy', or 'to devote to sacred use'. He then quotes
 Brunck as holding that ἁγιάζειν means to offer or conse-
 crate something to the gods.

Ἄγιος also developed from the root ἁγ . At
 first it probably had the same significance as ἁγίος,
 but soon came to mean that which is set apart from things
 that defile, and so that which is pure. Thus the two
 words parted company, ἁγίος denoting that which was con-
 secrated in reverence to God, and Ἄγιος meaning that which
 was clean or pure. This development had already taken
 place when the words were used in the writing of the New
 Testament, as may be shown by a comparison of the passages
 in which the two words occur. It seems therefore to be a
 fair conclusion that the etymology of the Hebrew and Greek
 words, שׁוֹפָר and ἁγίος, lends support to the view that
 sanctification points primarily to a relation of divine
 ownership rather than to the moral and spiritual trans-
 formation of man.

(b) What is the meaning of the terms 'holy' and
 'sanctify' as they are applied to Jesus? In three instances

(1) Principles of Greek Etymology, by Georg Curtius. Fifth
 Edition. Translated by Augustus S. Wilkins and Edward
 B. England.

(2) Stephanus, Thesaurus Graecae Linguae, V. I. p. 313f.

He is spoken of as the Holy One. In John 6: 69 Peter says, "Thou hast the words of eternal life and we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." The sinlessness, or moral perfection, of Jesus was not the point of his confession. The reason others were leaving the Master was that they were not willing to accept His teaching concerning His unique relation to the Father and His consequent position as Mediator between God and man, whereas Simon gives as his reason for remaining with Jesus his conviction that He is the One who holds in His being the very fountain of life itself.

In I John 2: 20 the reference is to Christ in a messianic sense. As the Holy One He is the anointed of God, and in turn He is the One who gives the anointing of the Holy Spirit to His followers. It is His prerogative as the Messiah of God to bestow His Spirit upon His elect. In like manner the contest in Revelation 3: 7 adds to ^{ε/}κλειος a messianic force. He holds the key of David, as may be expected only of God's anointed. Finality and divine power seal His decisions and acts, as may be expected only of one who had the Father's complete sanction and favor. It is a relation that takes its meaning not from the sinfulness of man and the contrasted sinlessness of Jesus, nor from the creaturely imperfection of man and the contrasted perfection of Jesus, but from the fact that He is the Divine Lord, to whom all the powers of existence belong.

John 10: 36 records that He referred to Himself as the one "whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world," placing His sanctification in His pre-incarnate relation to the Father. Humbly the Son of Man confessed that he was on the mission that the Father purposed and provided. In the prayer recorded in the Seventeenth Chapter of John, in which He said, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself," He was executing to the utmost all that this relation required. He did not withhold so much as a drop of His blood. All belonged to the Father for the accomplishment of the purpose for which He sanctified the Son. And the Son gladly gave all, though the giving involved indescribable suffering.

We may conclude that the term does not point to moral purity or perfection in its reference to Jesus Christ. Yet it is often said that it applies to Him in one sense, and to Christians in another, the difference being that we are sinful and therefore our sanctification must involve a cleansing or an overcoming of sin. That is to be answered by calling attention to the fact that the Greek had other words available that clearly point to an act or process of purging, which could well have been used if that had been the primary meaning intended. We readily notice the ease with which *ἁγιάζω* is used in the Seventeenth Chapter of John's Gospel now of the disciples, then of Christ, and

again of the disciples. There is no abruptness in passing from one to the other.

(c) Does the Bible generally support the view that sanctification points primarily to God's possessive claim upon man rather than to the moral transformation of man? The answer to this question must build upon the conclusion drawn from the word study indicated above, and then go beyond it in the examination of the contexts in which the conception of sanctification occurs. Not all such passages can be referred to here, but examples may be chosen as indicating the way the stream flows.

Exodus 13: 2 refers both to animals and to man, but there can be no doubt about the meaning: it is God's claim of ownership, and His demand that Israel acknowledge that claim. In Exodus 29: 27~~8~~ the command is that a part of the wave-offering, the altar, the tent of meeting, as well as Aaron and his sons, should be sanctified to the use and service of God. Similar passages are to be found in the Thirtieth and Fortieth Chapters of Exodus, and throughout Leviticus, particularly the Eighth and Tenth Chapters. In many cases specific commands are given concerning the distinction between the clean and the unclean, the pure and the impure, and the washing and cleansing that were required in preparation for sanctification, but in every case the dominant conception is that of setting the object apart for God's use in a special relation. In Moses' experience

at the burning bush the place where he stood was 'holy
 (1)
 ground', because God was there speaking to him and laying
 His claim upon him for special service. The term 'holy place'
 occurs so many times in the Old Testament that one dare not
 begin listing passages. It always designates a place set
 apart as belonging completely to God, where God is to be wor-
 shiped and served. There were also holy days and years that
 were holy because they belonged to God in a special sense.

In very much the same vein of thought the Bible
 speaks of God's decree in claiming men for a holy relation
 to Himself. Israel was chosen to be a holy nation, and
 Christians are regarded as "an elect race, a royal priest-
 hood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession."
 Aaron and his sons were sanctified, set apart to God es-
 pecially for the purpose of ministering as priests. The
 church is sanctified by Christ on the basis of His work
 in loving it, giving Himself up for it, and cleansing it.
 Paul referred to himself as a bondservant (δοῦλος, from δέω
 meaning 'to bind') of Jesus Christ, "called to be an apostle,
 separated (ἀφωρισμένος) unto the gospel of God," and he ad-
 dressed his readers in Rome as "beloved of God, called saints."
 His prayer for his friends in Thessalonica was that God would
 sanctify them wholly. He wrote to the Corinthians that they
 belonged to God, for they were "bought with a price."

The language that records our Lord's prayer in

(1) Ex. 3:5.

(2) Ex. 19:6; Lev. 11:44f; 20:26.

(3) I Pet. 2:9.

(4) Ex. 40:13f; Lev. 8:30.

(5) Eph. 5:26f.

(6) Rom. 1:1.

(7) I Thess. 5:23.

(8) I Cor. 6:20.

John 17: 17 points quite definitely to sanctification as an act of setting the disciples apart in a special relation of devotement to God. In commenting on this verse Chrysostom explained

ἁγιάσον αὐτοὺς by ἀφόρυσαι
αὐτοὺς τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τῷ κηρύγματι.

So also did Corderius interpret it, while Theophylactus

put it ἀφόρυσον αὐτοὺς τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τῷ κηρύγματι, καὶ θυσίαν αὐτοὺς ποιήσον τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.⁽¹⁾

There are some eighty uses of ἅγιος in the New Testament in which the reference is directly to believers. Of these fifty-eight simply speak of certain followers of Christ as holy ones, or saints. There are twenty-one instances in which ἁγιάζω is used with direct reference to Christians, and possibly seven such uses of ἁγιασμός, and two of ἁγιωσύνη. Grouping the uses of these four forms of our word (omitting ἅγιος and ἁγνίζω because of the development indicated above), we find that in only ten of the passages does a word for cleansing enter the context. In some of them it is quite easy to distinguish sanctification and cleansing as two phases of reconciliation. In others the task is not so simple.

In Hebrews 9: 13, 14 the word that we have translated 'defiled' literally means 'made common'. So the thought is, "If the old ceremony of sprinkling those who had been reduced to a common relationship had the effect of setting them

(1) H. Stephanus, Op. cit. V. I, Part 1, p. 305f.

apart to a unique relationship of cleanness, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works and set you apart in a holy relationship of service to the living God?" In this higher realm it is not so much a cleansing from fleshly sins that is meant, as it is the deliverance from the conception of salvation by works to the glorious reality of serving God.

In I Thessalonians 4: 7, where cleansing and sanctification are mentioned together, the root idea of being set apart, or taken in claim, is the deeper and broader thought. Moral purity is included as essential to the life that is pleasing to God, but sanctification points beyond that to the foundational fact that the believer must acknowledge God's possession of his entire life. Neither fornication nor any other form of uncleanness should be tolerated in such a life.

Along with Ephesians 5: 26f we might put I Corinthians 6: 11 and II Timothy 2: 21. To all three we may apply Barth's use of the Reformers' principle that justification and sanctification must be distinguished but not separated. Certainly there is no suggestion that men whose lives are defiled by sin are set apart to divine service without having that condition of sinfulness affected by God's call. He whose life is unclean because of sin can-

not come into the presence of God, cannot be used as a living instrument for the accomplishment of His will, without being transformed by the grace of God into the likeness of Christ. But that is the work of grace in justification and regeneration. God claims for His own possession that which He justifies and regenerates, and He justifies and regenerates that which He sanctifies. Sanctification points to God's possession of the believer, whereas justification indicates His forgiveness of the sin and guilt of man. Both acts of grace occur in every experience of reconciliation. Knowing this we must seek to "cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7: 1). Our sanctification, being the work of the Holy Spirit upon us, involves the desire to bring this relation of holiness ($\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omega\sigma\mu\acute{o}\nu\eta$, the state of being possessed by God) to full consummation.

(2) Work of sovereign grace acting upon man rather than a divine-human co-operation.

In this phase of Barth's view there are two contrasts with opposing positions. The first is that sanctification is a divine work upon man rather than a human act of self-dedication; and the second is that it is altogether the work of grace and not a co-operation between man and God. The first points to the initiation of Christian holiness, while the second refers to its gradual development. There

should be unhesitating agreement among Christians that the Scriptures assume that the initiative in sanctification is with God, and yet the position of many of the 'Higher Life' writers is voiced by Doty when he says, "When man sanctifies himself to God, then God sanctifies him unto Himself."⁽¹⁾ J. T. Crane says, "Thus the believer gives himself to God, and God, in return, gives himself to the believer (Ezek. XXXVI, 25-29; I Cor. III, 16, 17; VI, 19; 2 Cor. VI, 16-18; Eph. II, 22)."⁽²⁾ But he adds, "This sanctification, which is received by faith, is the work of God within us."⁽²⁾

Köberle has clearly and forcefully indicated the weakness of the doctrine of man's self-sanctification.⁽³⁾ In this as in much of the earlier part of his book he is in general agreement with Barth. A number of passages that are characteristic of the Scriptures as a whole might be cited which set forth the thought that it is God who sanctifies.⁽⁴⁾ There are, to be sure, passages that call upon man for self-sanctification, but such a call is posited upon the fact that it is God that sanctifies in the first instance.⁽⁵⁾

(1) Thomas K. Doty, Lessons In Holiness, 1881, p. 59.

(2) J. T. Crane, "Sanctification", Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, by M'Clintock and Strong. V. IX, p. 331.

(3) Adolf Köberle, Rechtfertigung und Heiligung, 1930.

(4) Ex. 31: 13; Lev. 21: 8, 15, 23; 22: 9; Num. 8: 17; Jer. 1: 5; Ez. 20: 12; 37: 28; II Chron. 7: 16; Eph. 5: 26; I Thess. 5: 23; Heb. 2: 11; 13: 12.

(5) Ex. 19: 22; Lev. 11: 44; 20: 7, 8; I Pet. 3: 15.

The point of difference between Barth's view and the generally accepted interpretation on this score becomes more apparent as we press the inquiry into the nature of man's response. His position is that this response must be considered only as obedience, not at all as co-operation, and as obedience that is made possible by the grace of God. The difference between the two views here is broad. One who co-operates with God is a partner with Him in a divine transaction. But one who can only obey must remain distinct from God, on a human level as a servant, or as a child. We are God's workmanship, not His co-workers. The passage that is usually quoted in support of the view that believers are God's partners is I Corinthians 3: 9: "For we are God's fellow-workers." But a careful reading of the Greek shows that it actually supports Barth's interpretation. 'Fellow-workers' is a translation of one Greek word (*συνεργός*), which is the nominative case and so is in apposition with the subject of the verb (*ἐργμεν*). The word 'God' is in the genitive (*θεοῦ*), a possessive genitive. The translation must turn upon the reference of the *συν* in *συνεργός*, and Greek syntax gives the answer. If the *συν* were meant to be taken with *θεοῦ*, with the resultant meaning that we co-operate with God, we should have *θεοῦ* in the associative-instrumental case. But since the genitive is used the *συν* points to the subject of the verb, with the resultant meaning that we, as fellow-workers, belong to God. And this is in agreement with the context. The point is not that of working with God, but

of several servants working together under God's providential control, all belonging to God. Indeed this is the dominant note of the entire Bible. Man's response is within the covenant that sovereign grace provides. Not only the covenant, but repentance and faith with which man responds are themselves the gift of God. We are to remember that it is the reconciled sinner speaking of himself who says that sanctification is altogether of grace. It was Paul - and who did more than he in the early spread of the Kingdom of Christ? - who wrote, "But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me⁽¹⁾."

One may question seriously whether it is morally possible for sinful man to sanctify himself. If we grant that sin is essentially rebellion against God, a stubborn refusal to do His will, a selfish desire to assume the place of control over our lives that rightfully belongs to God, we must also grant that sanctification - the possession of our lives by God for His glory - is a reversal of sin. It can come only by the grace of God through the Holy Spirit.

This leads to the question whether the believer's obedience may be considered his own free response. Is he free to obey or disobey? If he is, his act of obedience is in some minimum measure a co-operation with grace. If he is not free to decide, two conclusions would seem to follow:

(1) I Cor. 15: 10.

first, man's act is not genuinely his own, and therefore not, in the full sense, a moral act; second, both the obedience of the believer and the disobedience of the unbeliever are to be attributed to divine sovereignty, and therefore God is the author of sin as well as of faith. Köberle has given a very lucid presentation of the three principal efforts that have been made to solve this problem. They are: deterministic monergism (the extreme Calvinist position with its supralapsarian implication); Pelagianism; and synergism. Then he advances a fourth, which is his own solution. In his view the positive decision of faith is to be reckoned as the work of grace to the glory of God, while the negative choice of disobedience is altogether man's work on the basis of which he is condemned. Man cannot deliver himself from sin with a valid act of faith, but he can destroy himself with a rebellious act of unfaith.⁽¹⁾ But this is not a complete solution. It simply makes the line between divine sovereignty and human freedom a bit thinner. If man can do nothing at all in saving faith but must depend solely upon grace, it must follow that the disobedient are not saved because God withholds grace from them, which is tantamount to saying that they are predestined to condemnation. Köberle admits that his view involves an incomprehensible paradox, but he defends it on the ground that any solution that does justice to both sides of the problem must inevitably involve the

(1) Adolf Köberle, Op. cit. p. 172f.

element of paradox.

Barth's answer to the question is advanced on the basis of a definition of freedom from the standpoint of faith. The reconciled sinner knows that now in Christ he is free - free to act in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit and by the power of grace - for the first time. Outside Christ he knew nothing of freedom, for he was the slave of sin. And now the freedom that is given to him in grace is not the privilege of making all decisions for himself, of being his own master, but it is the "freedom of being bound" in sanctification, which means that Christ is his sovereign Lord in all decisions. Köberle would say that this is, in effect, deterministic monergism and therefore must face the charge of embracing the supralapsarian implication that God is the author of sin. In reply Barth holds to Calvin's double-edged doctrine of election, but feels that we are justified theologically in reckoning concretely only with the positive aspect of it. We know concretely of election to reconciliation, but our knowledge of election to condemnation is on the general principle of the sovereignty of God. Just so soon as we attempt to speak concretely of the negative phase of election we branch off from theology into speculative philosophy, for we depart from the fundamental basis of our whole view, namely, faith in Christ as the medium through which God reveals Himself to man. On this ground Barth insists that man's response is his own voluntary act. He is

able to believe and obey because God gives him grace. He acts in faith as man, but as reconciled to God in Christ. (1) "There is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ;" and so his act of faith is his own response made possible by the creative work of grace.

But this does not clear away the difficulty. It is one of the points on which Barth's view calls for further development. The most satisfactory answer will come in a definition of God's sovereign purpose that embraces the provision for man's free moral choices. Man is free to accept or reject the grace that is proffered, but having accepted it he sees that it is only by grace that he is saved. The strength of Barth's position on this score is that he perceives the problem as one of sin that must be solved by grace through faith, and not a question of finite and infinite capacities.

The reason for occupying ourselves seriously with the question of freedom is to weigh the element of responsibility and incentive in the obedience of faith. There is no compromise on this score in Barth's view. Sanctification requires of the believer his best, his all. But it does not set before him a law to which he must conform or be condemned; rather it places before him the Gospel that enables him to conform to God's will in Christ. We do not understand the meaning of sanctification unless we see that it calls for man's full and free obedience.

(1) II Cor. 5: 17, Moffatt's translation.

- (3) A discontinuous act rather than a continuous process.

The two conclusions that have been drawn concerning Barth's conception of the primary meaning of sanctification - that it is the establishment of God's ownership of the believer's life, and that it is the work of grace upon man - lead us to consider this phase of the doctrine in which he stands quite apart from all the other interpretations that have been recognized in the field of Christian theology. With all the varying views there has been general agreement that it is either a continuous growth or an abiding state of holiness.

In Roman Catholic thought justification and sanctification are merged into one life-long process. The Church has a reserve of grace out of which to administer forgiveness in this gradual work of justification. Two stages are distinguished: a preparatory period followed by a state of holiness. In order to arrive at the state of justification every one must pass through a process, "which may be likened to the gradual development of the child in its mother's womb."⁽¹⁾ In this process, again, two periods are distinguished: "First, the preparatory acts or dispositions (faith, fear, hope, etc.); then the last, decisive moment of the transformation of the sinner from the state of sin to that of justification, or

(1) "Grace", by J. Pohle, The Catholic Encyclopedia. Robert Appleton Co., New York. 1909. Vol. 6, p. 701.

sanctifying grace, which may be called the active justification (actus justificationis); with this the real process comes to an end, and the state of habitual holiness and sonship⁽¹⁾ begins." Sins may be committed within this state of habitual holiness, but they are only venial sins, which do not incur "the sentence of eternal woe."⁽²⁾

The Westminster Confession follows this view in treating sanctification as a continuation of regeneration, in which "the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they (the regenerated) are more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice⁽³⁾ of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." And further: "And so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."⁽³⁾

It is this conception of sanctification as growth that has persisted among the vast majority of writers. Hodge⁽⁴⁾ likens it to the growth of a tree. Regeneration changes the nature of the tree, makes it good, and sanctification nurtures its growth. According to Knudson "Sanctification sustains

(1) Ibid. p. 701.

(2) A Catholic Dictionary, p. 503.

(3) Westminster Confession, Chapter XIII. Cf. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 35.

(4) Charles Hodge. Op. cit. V. III, p. 226.

the same relation to regeneration as growth to birth."⁽¹⁾
 Mellenbruch holds that "Sanctification is the growth and
 development in the spiritual life."⁽²⁾ Or, it is "the process
 whereby the Holy Spirit nurtures and trains into the new
 spiritual life the regenerated and converted child of God."⁽³⁾
 Yet another describes it as the gradual becoming in all the
 areas of life of that which regeneration makes us in the
 center of our being.⁽⁴⁾

The Wesleyan view is that entire sanctification,
 which is attainable in this life, comes gradually for some,
 while for others it is sudden. Pope took the position that
 sanctification is a gradual process leading to Christian
 perfection, which is attained after perseverance in the ex-
 ercise of love, in submission to God's will and in obedience
 to all His commands.⁽⁵⁾

Schleiermacher defined regeneration as "the divine
 act of union with human nature and sanctification as the state
 constituted by that union."⁽⁶⁾

Barth's basis for rejecting all such views is his

- (1) A. C. Knudson, The Doctrine of Redemption, p. 411.
 (2) Parl L. Mellenbruch, The Doctrines of Christianity, p.130.
 (3) Ibid.
 (4) Cf. Joseph Stump, The Christian Life, p. 106 and p. 113.
 (5) Cf. A Compendium of Christian Theology, by W.B.Pope, p.518.
 One Volume edition of 1875; or V. III pp. 28-99; 1879 Edition.
 (6) F. Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, p. 509.

premise that holy God and sinful man are in fundamentally different categories. The only connection between the two must come from God in an act of revelation. Its continuity or repetition depends solely on the free grace of God, never on any condition that man can control. This would seem to be supported by those passages in the New Testament where $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ is used in the aorist tense, such as John 17: 17; I Corinthians 6: 11; Ephesians 5: 26; I Thessalonians 5: 23; Hebrews 10: 29 and 13: 12; and I Peter 3: 15. The force of the aorist is punctiliar, not linear, and so points to an act rather than a process. There are a few instances in which $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ is used in the present tense, but never so as to indicate that the sanctification of a believer is a gradual process. Hebrews 2: 11, where the present form is used, refers to the sanctification of many individuals, rather than to a progressive hallowing of a few. "Both he that sanctifieth and they that are being sanctified are all of one." The 'they' points to an unending stream of Christians, each of whom in his time is taken into claim by God. So also in the Tenth Chapter and verse fourteen: "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (or, being sanctified). The one offering holds for all the long stream of men and women who are being called of God. From the standpoint of the individual Christian sanctification is an act, rather than a gradual

process; but from the standpoint of the One who sanctifies it is an unending repetition. God's method of reconciliation remains the same, but the revelation of that fact to man must ever be a concrete act of sanctification, not a process.

In the distinction that Paul made between the natural mind and the mind of Christ we find definite support for Barth's position here. "Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.⁽¹⁾" If the natural mind knows not the things of God and yet we know them through the mind of Christ in revelation, one of two conclusions must follow. Either we are delivered from the thought world of the natural mind, or the things of the spirit are mediated to us by the mind of Christ in discontinuous acts of revelation. The first does not agree with Paul's thought in the context, and in other passages, but the second does.

Are we then to understand Barth as teaching that there is no continuing result of sanctification in the life

(1) I Cor. 2: 14-16.

of the believer? Or, to put the question differently, is there no growth in grace at all for the Christian? His protest against the usually accepted views of sanctification as growth in grace is directed primarily to the teaching that through experience man may acquire spiritual insight and power, or piety, which he may consider as his possession or attainment. Barth would always hold the Christian to the viewpoint of faith in Christ. There is no growth in the sense of an increase in that divine quality that we call grace, for it is always the same with God.⁽¹⁾ The mature believer is in the same grace that blessed him when he was a child. The mercy of God in forgiving and sanctifying man is ever the same, and man remains completely dependent on it throughout his life. His life, justified and sanctified, is in Christ. Within the limits of that point of view something definite may be said concerning the believer's growth.

The act of revelation, in which God speaks His Word to man through the Holy Spirit and man hears and obeys, is repeated at God's will. There is nothing that man can

(1) This is said in face of Barth's earlier statement in his Vom Christlichen Leben (1926), that "God's mercy not only has no end, but grows and increases. While we descend stage by stage, it becomes greater and greater and accompanies us" (McNab's translation, p. 31). He sees more clearly now the danger in suggesting that the grace of God grows in the Christian life. It is the danger of encouraging the believer in a self-reliance that subtly opens the door to Pharisaism.

do to bring about such an event; it is always an event of God's free will. There is a continuity in the repetition of revelation, but it is only in grace. Our faith is rooted in our election and calling in each event. "There is no advancement to experience and achievement on the basis of which we could say something else than that the grace which we have is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of the Word that comes to us."⁽¹⁾ As in the first experience of hearing and obeying God's Word, so in every subsequent experience, the believer must not think for a moment that he can do, even in the least important matters, that which only God's Spirit can do in him. He must constantly be on guard against setting himself on the throne⁽²⁾ of God.

Again, sanctifying grace imparts to the believer the desire to obey God's will perfectly. That perfect obedience becomes a goal toward which he strives, but he knows that his future is in God's power and providence, not in his own powers of decision and achievement. He knows that his life in faith is "hid with Christ in God" and that therefore he must "strive after that which is⁽³⁾ above." But he also knows that this faith can only mean

(1) Z. d. Z. 1927, p. 284.

(2) Ibid. p. 292f.

(3) Col. 3: 1f. Cf. Theol. Ex. Heute, heft 32, p. 14.

for him "A life of repentance in a daily dying of the old
 man, in a daily resurrection of the new."⁽¹⁾

2. SANCTIFICATION AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

The point at which Barth's theology meets ethics is the doctrine of sanctification, for he sees that the chief problem of ethics is rooted in God's claim upon our lives, rather than in our philosophical theories or self-centered choices, or even in our "so-called religious experiences."⁽²⁾ It is hardly fair and accurate to say with Reinhold Niebuhr that Barth's view results in a separation of religion and morality,⁽³⁾ or with Paul Means that it "leads to religious and ethical confusion."⁽⁴⁾ On the contrary, it is very clear in stating the demands that sanctifying grace makes of the believer in matters of life and conduct. Its strength lies in what many of Barth's critics regard as its weakness, namely, in rooting the Christian life in grace and revelation rather than in values set up by man.

(1) Grounded in Grace

He takes the position that ethics must be treated

(1) Credo, p. 135.

(2) K. Barth, The Word of God And The Word Of Man, p. 140f.

(3) Reinhold Niebuhr, Moral Man And Immoral Society, p. 68.

(4) Paul B. Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 146f.

theologically, as rooted in the sanctifying grace of God. Sanctification is the establishment of God's absolute claim upon the believer's life, and theological ethics is the interpretation and application of that fact. The Christian ethic is not man's view in putting God before him as the Good towards which he points his life, but it is the act of grace in so relating man to God as to evoke from him conduct that is in conformity with God's will. As McConnachie puts it, "Whereas man's life was at best a life towards God, now it is a life from God and in God. God is now behind him instead of in front of him; he does not need any more to strive for a place, he is placed.⁽¹⁾" The goodness of human action must be perceived in the relation that it sustains to the purpose and command of God as revealed in His Word.

This interpretation grounds Christian ethics in the grace of God with respect to the problem of sin. There are two essential phases of this problem that must be met: one is the necessity for revealing to man the sinfulness of his sin, and the other is the need for counteracting, or overcoming, man's sin in relation to God. Barth's view cannot be charged with evading either of these demands. He holds that God's act of revealing His command to man is at the same time a judgment, in which man's action, even his

(1) John McConnachie, The Barthian Theology And The Man Of Today, p. 258.

best effort, is uncovered as transgression. Nevertheless He accepts man's response as good and worthy in Christ, and actually makes it to become a valid work of obedience. Here, then, is both an uncompromising righteousness in judging sin and an unfailing mercy and love in reconciling the sinner.

It further grounds ethics in the grace of God by establishing it upon the basis of God's order and control. Not according to what is beneficial to the social order - no utilitarian ethics here - but according to what is required in God's realm, are all questions of conduct to be decided. Sanctification places man under the regulation (die Ordnung) of God the Creator, so that his entire life - with all its relations to man, to the world and to God - belongs to God. The believer recognizes himself as owned by God, committed to Him, under His control. He is to live in obedience to God's command. There are certain relationships based upon the order of creation (die Ordnungen, Barth calls them, by which he designates the obligations of life with respect to work, marriage, family, and conduct), but they are not to be identified with the command of God as Creator with which He controls the life of the believer. If we identify die Ordnung with die Ordnungen we imply that the conduct of the Christian may be reduced to a routine observance of the amenities of life. Christian conduct

is ever subject to the command of God; we are never to consider that we have conformed to His will simply by following a program of ethical conduct that we have formulated, even though it may be based upon our recognition of the fact that God is Creator. The doctrine of sanctification means that the Christian faces every concrete question of conduct from the standpoint of God's command. His action is a bound action - bound to the will of God through revelation. He is never to say what he is to do; he is only to wait upon God for His command.

(2) Is This View Too Objective?

Barth's treatment of sanctification as exclusively the work of grace invites the criticism that it is too objective to be practicable in the realm of ethics. It is the work of grace upon man but not in him through co-operation with his latent powers. The new life that we have is 'in Christ', imputed to us but not inherent in us. The implication, therefore, seems to be that our relation to God in Christ is a reality that is over us, removed from us, but not within us. This appears to be the direction that his interpretation of the image of God in man is taking. The image of God is not something made in man, whether as to form or content, but is a relation to God in which man is created in Christ. The image of God is Christ in whom man is created and loved by

God. In the Fall man rebelled and fell from the relation to God that was given to him in creation, and so the image was not destroyed, but man was separated from God in that he died in sin. Now through the incarnation and reconciling work of Christ we are restored to the image of God in Him. And so reconciliation is not a restoration to its former activity of man's natural capacity for God, but is the creation anew of that righteous relation in Christ.

The Church visible has its true reality in an invisible relation that is constituted in the event of revelation. It is not the institution that we see, with its organization and building and program of activities, that is the true Church. In that event in which God elects to speak to His people through the witness of the Scriptures, and by His grace they hear and obey, is the Church true and real.

Does this treatment remove the reality of the work of grace beyond the realm of actual experience and human endeavor? In answer to this question three or four phases of Barth's view must be recalled. In the first place he is thinking from the standpoint of God's reconciliation of sinful man. The man who has heard the reconciling Word of the Gospel and the sanctifying command of the Law knows that in himself he was and is hopelessly and helplessly sinful, utterly incapable of co-operating with God in the work

of salvation. In sheer gratitude he is constrained to give undivided credit to God for his experience of grace. In the second place, Barth is not thinking of the life in Christ as something that is quantitatively or spatially objective to man, but as a relation to God. Because of sin it must be a work done for man, never by him.

Again, the distinction is noetic, and not ontic. We can only speak of sanctification from the standpoint of revelation. We can know this holy relation to God only as it is revealed to us in Christ. This does not mean that sanctification has no reality in being, but it does mean that it is revealed to us primarily as action, the action of holy grace upon sinful man.

Finally, we must not fail to recall Barth's emphasis upon the subjective side of sanctification in the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. That which God reveals to us in Christ is made available and real to us in the Holy Spirit, who operates upon us through the Word. Without compromising the strong emphasis that he puts upon man's utter dependence upon God, Barth points out that the work of grace upon man becomes definite and concrete through the Holy Spirit.

When we understand Barth's position we see that it is not so objective as to be impracticable in the realm of ethics. On the contrary, it gives promise of being more

fruitful of righteous conduct than other views that locate the source of motive and strength in the character and endowments of man. His approach to the problems of ethics from sanctifying grace is more likely to conduce to clear moral discernment and perspective. It lays upon man the most exacting demands, sets before him the loftiest criterion of righteous conduct for the judgment of his life, commissions him to serve God and man according to a divine pattern, and promises him the strength of divine grace for every task assigned to him, but it also tells him that every thought and deed must point to the glory of Christ, in whom he has his life.

(3) Does This View Provide The Necessary Incentive For Christian Ethics?

This question is prompted by the criticism that has just been considered. If sanctification is altogether the work of grace, it is asked, is there any possible incentive to holy endeavor that may appeal to the Christian? One may introduce an answer to the criticism implied here by a counter question. Has Calvinism proved unethical in its influence on society? It has, on the contrary, given rise to more streams of influence for social betterment, political democracy, and ethical challenge than any other movement in the past millennium. And Barthianism is more exacting in its demands upon the believer than Calvinism.

Barth emphasizes the Scripture teaching that God's presence is our sanctification. He is perfect in righteousness, infinite in wisdom and power, and unlimited in love and mercy. What greater motive could actuate us than the conviction that we are owned by Him and the consequent desire to be used by Him in a divinely appointed service? In God's sanctifying act, when the Father of infinite love reveals Himself to sinful man, we should expect man to be moved by an incentive hitherto unknown to him. And because the glorious presence of God overwhelms him, he unreservedly says that it is all of grace.

One of the chief problems of ethics is to induce man to serve unselfishly. This is done in Barth's view of sanctification by showing that the believer is united with Christ in His death and therefore the thought of self-improvement or self-realization is removed from our act of obedience. Thus the motive is purged, captured and controlled by Christ.⁽¹⁾ The root of all sin, and so the cause of all unethical conduct, is selfishness, self-seeking, setting our wills above His. Hence the most thoroughly ethical requirement that can be laid upon man is that of submitting himself fully to the Lord.

A conception of grace that transcends the possi-

(1) Cf. II Cor. 5: 14f.

bilities of finite and sinful man provides a far greater motive in service than any that is rooted in sinful man. Reinhold Niebuhr touches upon this truth in his recent book. "The prophetic movement in Hebraic religion," says he, "offers an interesting confirmation of the thesis that a genuine faith in transcendence is the power which lifts religion above its culture and emancipates it from sharing the fate of dying cultures."⁽¹⁾ It is not a man-made objective to point to in the ethical life that is needed. "Whoever would act wisely," said Plato, "whether in public or in private life, must set the idea of Good before his eyes."⁽²⁾ Rather what man needs is to understand that the Word of God has the power needed to produce changes in life and in history.⁽³⁾ This we have in the event of revelation.

If we understand Barth's use of the three realms, or orders, in which man is related to God we shall see that his position is not lacking in emphasis upon ethical incentive. The fact that God claims man as His own must be regarded from three viewpoints. As Creator He gives life to man; as Reconciler He issues His Law in the Gospel; and as Redeemer He gives us the promise of His glory. We perceive the meaning of His sanctifying grace as the call that comes

(1) An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, by Reinhold Niebuhr. Harper & Bros. 1935, p. 30.

(2) Quoted by R. N. Flew, The Idea of Perfection In Christian Theology, p. 1.

(3) Cf. Dog. p. 157f.

from the Creator, as the authority that resides in God the Reconciler, and as the voice of conscience that the Redeemer creates in us. Or, to use another of Barth's trilogies, the content of the command of God the Creator is order (ordnung), of God the Reconciler is humility, and of God the Redeemer is gratitude. And that means that man's response to the Creator is faith, to the Reconciler is love, and to the Redeemer is hope. These three viewpoints are not to be separated in any ontic sense, but only logically. God the Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer is the one God who is revealed to us as Father in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The sanctifying work of grace must be seen from all three angles if it is to be grasped. All the elements just noted enter into every event of revelation. When we insist that man's acknowledgment of God's claim upon his life is a blending of faith, hope and love directed toward God who created him, reconciled him, and redeems him, there need no longer be any question of proper incentive. One wonders whether there could be a higher or deeper incentive.

(4) Program of Christian Living

Does Barth's view provide a definite program, or code, of ethical conduct? When the believer acknowledges the claim of God upon his life he asks, What shall I do?

The Christian doctrine of sanctification must have an answer ready. But that answer must accord with the fundamental basis of the doctrine, which means that we are not justified in setting up some standard or criterion of conduct and then invoking divine authority to validate it. Reinhold Niebuhr has seen this danger and warned against it. "The weakness of orthodox Christianity," he says, "lies in its premature identification of the transcendent will of God with canonical moral codes, many of which are merely primitive social standards, and for development of its myths into a bad science. The perennial tendency of religion to identify God with the symbols of God in history, symbols which were once filled with a sanctity, of which the stream of new events and conditions has robbed them, is a perpetual source of immorality in religion. The failure of liberal Christianity is derived from its inclination to invest the relative moral standards of a commercial age with ultimate sanctity by falsely casting the aura of the absolute and transcendent ethic of Jesus upon them." To avoid these extremes Barth points our attention to the fact that God speaks to us in concrete situations with a definite command. We are not to say what is commanded of us in sanctification, for we should then have to employ abstract statements to cover

(1) An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, by Reinhold Niebuhr, p. 9f.

many and varying situations, and we should also be guilty of passing judgment upon what God requires, or of exercising control over the sanctifying work of grace. We are to say only that God commands when He sanctifies, and we must obey. Sanctification does not embrace a theoretical truth, to be interpreted or conditioned by man. It sets forth the truth of God personally spoken in a concrete event that involves man's decision for or against God's command. We may say, then, that Barth's position sees a principle of guidance rather than rules of conduct, and that is more practical in the long run.

We may press the question a bit further and ask whether there is any basis of agreement as to what is the ethical life that the Christian should live. The answer points to the Bible as the Word of God. Through it God speaks to man in human language. It tells us what we are to do in response to God's claim upon us. We are to believe and obey God as the absolute Lord of our lives. We are to repent of our sins and confess them to God. We are to abide by His revealed will. But the Bible is never to be put in the place of God, by suggesting that the mere written word is final. That conception actually puts man in the place of God, for he decides what the Bible teaches. It is rather to be taken as the written witness to the revealed and spoken Word of God. It is the record of what

God has said to His people in other generations, but it is the Word of God for us only as He speaks through it in a concrete situation.

Barth's principle of contingent contemporaneousness bears definitely upon this point. By it he emphasizes the eternal presence of God acting upon history from without. For example, the first commandment he takes as a theological axiom and therefore as applicable in principle to every situation. It is, however, not to be sought out as a timeless truth which we may then attempt to apply. We are rather to regard ourselves as contemporaneous with the event, and therefore subject to the command of God when He speaks. "The concern is not with a timeless relation, but with a history that is enacted in time between God and man."⁽¹⁾ But that history is subject only to the free choice of God, and not at all to the work of man. God binds man through revelation, but man cannot bind God, not even to the Bible. The attitude of the Christian to the Bible is to be one of submissive and obedient hearing as God speaks. It is not primarily a source book upon which we may draw in setting up our codes of ethics, but it is the place where we may hear God speaking and commanding. As we read it we wait upon His Word, expecting Him to speak, even as He has spoken before.

(1) Z. d. Z. 1933, p. 300.

3. BARTH'S CONTRIBUTION

It is proper that the concluding section of the present study should take the form of an appraisal of the definite and distinctive contribution that Barth is making to Christian theology in his interpretation of the doctrine of sanctification.

(1) In his statement of the doctrine. Interpretations of sanctification have been so completely dominated by the notion of a moral renewal that its fundamental meaning has been crowded out. In the rare cases in which the conception of divine ownership has been taught, it has been lost to view in the development of the doctrine of growth in personal purity and piety that has been conceived as following upon the initial act of regeneration. Barth is making a noteworthy contribution in insisting that the doctrine points solely to the claim of God upon the Christian for complete ownership of his life. If by this he meant to ignore the truths of justification and regeneration, his view would thereby be rendered incomplete and unsatisfactory. But in relating sanctification to justification he rounds out his view while insisting that the distinct meaning of each be emphasized. Only on the basis of this conception can the doctrine be wrought out thoroughly and stated adequately. No doubt Barth will render a service of profound and abiding importance to Christian theology when he gives full and formal expres-

sion to his view of sanctification in subsequent volumes of his Dogmatik.

(2) In putting sanctification at the center of theology. In suggesting that the various doctrines of the Christian faith are related as the points that form a circle, he thinks of the center as fixed by God in His act of self-revelation. But he does not allow us to forget that the root of the doctrine of revelation is the lordship of God, which means divine freedom. As Lord He is absolutely free to unveil or to veil Himself, to make Himself known to man and at the same time to remain God absolute. ⁽¹⁾ The statement that the root of the doctrine of the Trinity is the revelation of God as Lord has as its corollary the doctrine of sanctification. We are acquainted with the principle of divine lordship through the act in which God places His claim upon our lives, requisitions us to be His own possession. Aside from sanctification we do not know God as Lord, and if we do not know Him as Lord we do not know Him at all. Or, to state it differently, there is no revelation without sanctification.

Such a view has strong support in Scripture. When Jehovah spoke to Moses through the burning bush the voice said, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." The burden of the

(1) Cf. Dog. p. 337.

revelation was that God was commandeering Moses for special service in delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage. When young Isaiah was given his vision of Jehovah in His temple he heard the seraphic chorus singing, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." And in that same event of revelation the divine voice said, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" To which Isaiah answered, "Here am I, send me." If we would understand the relation of the disciples to Jesus Christ in His work of revealing God to men we must go to the prayer that is recorded in the Seventeenth Chapter of John: "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth." When Christ revealed Himself to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road He laid His hand upon him to be a vessel of God's message to the Gentiles. In each of these cases revelation came in an act of sanctification. It is not in a declarative statement from God that man may pass judgment upon, in accepting, rejecting, or modifying it; it is rather God's Word that pronounces judgment upon man as God's servant and child. It is not a statement, upon the basis of which some may go on to a subsequent experience of sanctification; it is rather the act of God in which He makes the fact of His lordly claim known and effectual to man. The truth that God gives in revelation is the Christian's to give in testimony, not to keep locked up in his soul. It is in giving

God's Word to others in obedience to the sanctifying Spirit that the believer enters into a realization of the truth that the Word contains.

Too often sanctification has been merged with or subordinated to some other doctrine and thus lost to view. There has perhaps been more confused thinking on this subject than concerning any other doctrine - and where there has not been confusion there has been almost complete neglect of it. The cause of both the confusion and the neglect has been in the failure to grasp its distinctive meaning. Once that meaning is fully grasped the doctrine will move to a place of primary and determinative importance; theology will cease to be abstract and become concrete and vital; and the glow and glory of preaching will hover over every doctrine. Barth conceives theology as "the attempt which undertakes by means of human thought and human speech to give a scientific explanation of the question concerning the basis and the law of the Church and its proclamation.⁽¹⁾" It is with him, therefore, a vital task. The interpretation of theology that gives such prominent importance to the preaching of God's message to the world by the Church must be fresh and challenging. And the development of his conception of theological ethics as a part of Dogmatics gives promise of a more prophetic Christianity than we have known

(1) Z. d. Z., 1933, p. 306.

in recent times.

(3) In stating the doctrine of God. It is on this score that Barth has received much of his sharpest criticism among British and American writers. They feel that his view removes God too far from us. He is charged with sacrificing the cherished doctrine of divine immanence on the altar of authoritarian certitude. Garvie says that in Barth's thought "God's moral and spiritual immanence in the world is denied, and His transcendence affirmed, in a quite unbalanced way."⁽¹⁾ He dismisses the Barthian theology with the rather intolerant dictum, "The more I learn of it the less I like it."⁽²⁾ It is on the same charge of an unbalanced transcendentalism that Gore rejects Barth's view. He champions the cause of immanence, insisting that "the voice of God from without or from above must correspond with His voice from within the heart of man in his conscience and reason."⁽³⁾ Barth's most effectual answer to all statements of this criticism lies in his conception of sanctification. He does not deny the immanence of God, but he says that we can know Him only as Lord. It is in the fact that the lordship of God implies His moral and spiritual transcendence that we are to find the suggestion

(1) Alfred E. Garvie, The Christian Ideal For Society, p. 467.

(2) Ibid., p. 465.

(3) Charles Gore, The Philosophy of The Good Life, p. 239.

that God is not in His universe. To be sure, Barth sees the truth of God's immanence, but he also sees more clearly than some of his critics the fact that God is in His universe as Lord. We recognize this fact adequately only as we acknowledge His absolute claim upon our lives.

In similar vein does the doctrine of sanctification define other phases of our conception of God. Always the corollary of the lordship of God is the sanctification of man. This is the note that must be kept uppermost in our thinking concerning the Trinity. Christ is Lord and we are His servants, purchased by Him in His work of creation, reconciliation, and redemption. We do not have Christ as Savior unless He has us as the Lord of our lives. And the same term must apply to the Holy Spirit. Sanctification introduces us to a relation to Him in which He possesses us as the Lord who makes the reconciling and sanctifying work of Christ effectual in us. The Spirit is not a power for us to use in accomplishing the work of God, but the infinite Lord who works upon us, in us, and through us. On this basis Barth's attitude toward Pietism is not so negative as so many think. Instead of being against it as
(1)
Köberle interprets him, he actually grounds it in sound doctrine, lifting it out of the realm of religious sentimentalism and enthusiasm, and rooting it in the work of

(1) Adolf Köberle, Op. cit. 283f.

grace in revelation, reconciliation and redemption. The Pietism that Barth attacks is the self-generated type that some seek to achieve by following a given procedure of devotion. The kind that his view magnifies is the work of grace in the life of the obedient believer. Here the motive is not the desire to be good for the sake of personal achievement, even in the spiritual realm, but the desire to obey Christ for His glory. Not the piety of the Christian in cultivating the spiritual life, but the possession of the Christian by Christ, is the true meaning of sanctification. That points to genuine piety, but under the lordship of the Holy Spirit.

Barth's contribution in this connection also points to the application of the doctrine of sanctification to various movements that have as their objective the generation and direction of the forces that make for a higher plane of Christian living. He is suspicious of all 'movements', an attitude that we appreciate the more we study the history of the various projects that have been set forward in the name of sanctification. The 'Heiligungsbewegung' in Germany, with its subsequent 'Gemeinschaftsbewegung', the 'Holiness Movement' and the 'Higher Life Movement' in England and America, had some truth to commend them, but they were centered largely in the men who propagated them, or in certain forms of procedure. On one occasion, just before going

to Germany, Pearsall Smith is reported to have said, "If the Lord will give the people of Berlin into my hand, as he did at Oxford"⁽¹⁾ On his return from Germany he cried out in the midst of a speech at Brighton, "All Europe is at my feet!"⁽²⁾ Barth shows that the true doctrine of sanctification must avoid all such man-centered emphases, and must ever acknowledge the absolute lordship of the Holy Spirit in a direct relation to the Church. That is the only movement that faith champions. It is along this line of reasoning that Barth rejects the Oxford Group Movement.⁽³⁾

(4) In his view of sin. The criterion by which Scripture always judges sin is the relation to God that is in agreement with His will. Three or four passages may be cited. In the third chapter of Genesis God is Lord and man is creature, and the relation between the two is established upon God's will and man's obedience. That which Adam did was sin because it violated that relation. In venturing to decide what was right or wrong he supplanted the supremacy of God with an appeal to his own desires and judgment.

Another is the account of the temptations of Jesus. The tempter directed his attack upon the Lord along the line of His relation to the Father. It was proper that Jesus

(1) Quoted by B.B. Warfield in Perfectionism, V. I, p. 321.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Cf. "Kirche Oder Gruppe?" Evangelische Theologie, 1936, heft 6.

should have bread, but He was to live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." To cease relying upon that relationship, even in one act of providing food for Himself in His own way, would have been sin. Again, it was proper that Jesus should have the assurance that the Father would keep Him from harm, but it would have been sin in tempting God if he had thrown Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, thus challenging God to save Him. He would have violated the relation that was the basis of His life and work if He had attempted to prescribe how God should act. Once more, it was proper for Jesus to desire to possess the kingdoms of the world, but only in the way that would glorify God. To seek them in any self-designed manner, or in any way that God had not decreed, or in any way that would detract from the glory of God, would be sin. In all three temptations the criterion is the relation between Jesus and God that involved Jesus' messianic calling and work, His sanctification. No more adequate conception of sin could be given.

The same underlying principle is to be seen in Jesus' teaching concerning sin as given in the Sermon on the Mount. Murder is to be traced to hatred, adultery is rooted in lust, retaliation grows out of a maladjustment of the life to God's world. In every case sin is a defiance of the relation in which God reigns as Lord. If

man's inner life is owned and controlled by God there must be no place allowed for hatred, lust, or covetousness. Any thought that is self-centered is sin for it violates the principle of the lordship of Christ.

Paul Means shows that he has not understood Barth's conception of sin when he says that he "makes of evil not so much a real existential fact as a theological fact, which is in danger of being confined to a section of the catechism or a part of dogmatic theology. The concrete struggle against evil in the world is paralyzed by being reduced to a theological dogma, however dialectical this dogma may be."⁽¹⁾ Instead of retarding the struggle in any way, his treatment of sin from the viewpoint of the life in Christ will arouse man to battle against evil.

Barth's conception of sanctification clarifies the doctrine of sin by defining the criterion by which it is to be judged. That which God has done for man in Christ reveals the relation that must obtain between the redeemed and the Redeemer. Any violation of that relation is sin. That is a practical and workable view that saves us from subjectivism and relativism in judging sin. It is not what man thinks it is, but what God's revelation shows it to be. His view therefore warns us against the danger of compromise

(1) Paul B. Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 146.

that must result when sin is judged by the natural conscience.

(5) Is his view corrective or constructive?

One of the most common criticisms of Barth's position takes the form of an acknowledgment that it has some value, while at the same time denying that it has any constructive worth. It has served as a much-needed corrective for Christian thinking in the years following the World War, we are told by many. Paul Means tells of a German saying that "Barthianism had provided the table with salt but had failed to provide the meat."⁽¹⁾ Is this a correct appraisal of his view of the doctrine that we have been studying? Against the Antinomian doctrine of sanctification without works, and the Roman Catholic teaching of sanctification through works, Barth's doctrine is a corrective. Sanctification is neither without nor by works, but his view is also constructive in showing that there is a true relation between faith and works in grace. The work of the Holy Spirit in the believer is of such nature as to produce works.

Against the Wesleyan doctrine that perfection is realized by the Christian in this life, and against the other Protestant view that sanctification is a process begun in regeneration and consummated after death, his view is a corrective. But it is also constructive in showing that the Chris-

(1) Paul B. Means, Op. cit., p. 144.

tian's perfection is in the work of grace in Christ, thereby drawing the attention of the believer from self and centering it in Christ.

Against the liberalism that attaches saving importance to man's work, and against the conservatism that is bound to man-made doctrines about God, his revelation-centered view is a corrective. But that very distinction makes it constructive. The basis of the true doctrine is God's act of revelation that justifies and sanctifies man.

Against the liberalism that sees in the Bible just another humanly written book; and against the conservatism that enshrines it in theories of inspiration, almost making it a god to be worshiped, his view is a *Amer.*² corrective. But it is also and thereby constructive. It builds upon the conviction that God has spoken to man in the past, whereof the Bible is witness, and that He will speak again through this same witness.

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