

For Such a Time as This

A Daily Devotional

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021



A Mid-Week Excursus:

Typically, I begin these devotions with a passage of scripture. However, for this day, it might be best to take a step back from scripture and offer a bit of writing that is certainly less-than God's word to us; but helps us to comprehend what scripture is really saying.

The following is from Karl Barth's introductory statements for his commentary on the third chapter of Paul's Letter to the Romans:

History is the display of the supposed advantages of power and intelligence which some men possess over others, of the struggles for existence hypocritically described by ideologists as a struggle for justice and freedom, of the ebb and flow of old and new forms of human righteousness, each vying with the rest in solemnity and triviality. YET one drop of eternity is of greater weight than a vast ocean of finite things. Measured by the standard of God the dignitaries of men forfeit their excellence and their serious importance – they become relative; and even the noblest of human moral and spiritual attainments are seen to be what they really are – natural, of this world, profane, and 'materialistic'. The valleys are exalted, and the high hills made low. Ended is the conflict of good and evil, for men are ranged upon one lie, and their secrets are judged before God and before Him only.

All right, all right – there is a lot here that requires some thought and explanation. I appreciate deeply your willingness to travel this 'Barthian' path with me through the Epistle to the Romans. I 'invoke' it upon you only because I am convinced that it is Barth who has best understood old Paul himself.

Barth understood Paul's purpose in his letter to his friends in Rome; he wanted them to understand repeatedly, above, and beyond, beneath and under-girding, that it is the movement of God's action in Jesus Christ which is the central point of all human history; the 'hinge' upon which all our history, all our actions, all our programs and purposes, swivel, as it were, around the loving purposes of God. We want to think of history as the record of human achievements and advancements; Paul wants us to see human history as the record of God's active work in our midst. It is a perspective that is not only fresh with Paul; it is worth our full consideration!

Prayer for the Day: (From *The Valley of Vision*)

Thou Maker and Sustainer of all things, day and night are thine, heaven and earth declare thy glory. Fit me, then, for every scene and circumstance. Amen.

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