

movement), and to the works of Feodor Dostoevsky (whose writings influenced Barth in his work on *The Epistle of the Romans*).

Also during this time Barth became acquainted with Emil Brunner another young Swiss pastor in an adjoining canton.

Both Thurneysen and Barth became religious socialists, and Barth took the side of the workers in Safenwil who were attempting to gain better working conditions and more adequate wages. Because of his stand on social issues some of the people in the village referred to him as the "red pastor", and in his own congregation one of the factory owners left the Reformed Church and joined the Old Catholic Church. The leaders of the religious socialist movement, Ragaz and Kutter, claimed that socialism would usher in the kingdom of God while the church was wasting its time on individual salvation.

Then came the great WAR.

In his book *The Humanity of God*, Barth reports his first serious disillusionment with Liberal Theology. He writes:

One day at the beginning of August of that year (1914) impressed me personally as the day of doom, when ninety-three German intellectuals published their approval of the war-policy of Kaiser Wilhelm and his advisors; among whom to my horror I was compelled to recognize the names of nearly all my theological professors, whom I had heretofore devoutly honored. Confused by their morality, I saw that I could no longer follow their Ethics and Dogmatics, their biblical expositions and historical constructions. I realized that for me at any rate the theology of the nineteenth century no longer had any future.

As the war progressed, the young pastor was faced with the crushing realities of life! As he stood before his people, preaching the "good advice" of Modernism with its easy formula for peace on earth, the cannon at Verdun punctuated his sentences and punctured his optimistic social gospel! He found to his dismay that, instead of a message to meet the desperate need of men's souls, he had only a collection of superficial human speculations!

Barth began an intensive study of the Bible, especially the writings of Paul, and discovered that the Bible took a realistic view of life and of man's ability to save himself and society. He discovered that the God of the Bible was not the God of his teachers, and that man cannot of himself know or speak of God. He took up a study of Romans and discovered, not man's religion and religious ethics, but man's sin, God's judgment, and yet God's grace and forgiveness through faith. In 1916 Barth wrote, "I began to recover noticeably from the effects of my theological studies and the influences of the liberal-political pre-war theology." By 1917 his new views began to crystalize, and in 1918 he wrote his commentary on Romans. In addition to his biblical studies, Barth had turned to Luther and Calvin, and to Kierkegaard, whose influence on his thinking was great. During the next year this young unknown pastor of a small village church became famous, largely through the publication of his *Romerbrief* (*The Epistle to the Romans*).

In 1921 Barth published the completely re-written second edition of *Romans*. In its preface Barth included a statement of his ultimate first principle:

If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the "infinite qualitative distinction" between time and eternity, and to my