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Valleys of the Bible

Unchecked translation by DeepL from German into English

**"...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
But we all, beholding with unveiled face the glory of
the Lord as in a mirror, are changed into the same
image from glory to glory,
namely, by the Spirit of the Lord."**

2 Cor. 3, 17-18

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Introductory Scriptures

"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named, that he may give you to be strengthened with power according to the riches of his glory through his Spirit in the inner man; That the Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, being rooted and grounded in love, that you may be able to comprehend fully with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of the Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. But to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus, to all generations of the age of ages! Amen.-"

Ephesians 3:14-21

"and have your delight in the Lord, and he will give you what your heart desires! Command the Lord thy way, and trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Yea, he shall make thy righteousness to shine forth as the light, and thy judgment as the bright noonday. Keep still unto the LORD, and wait for him. Do not be angry with him whose way succeeds, With the man who practices deceit. Stand from anger, and leave off wrath; Be not enraged. Only evil will come of it."

Psalms 37:4-8

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord; but as high as the heavens are above the earth, so much higher are my ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow fall from heaven, and return not thither till it have watered the earth, and fertilized it, and made it green, and given seed to the sower, and bread to him that eateth - even so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and perform that for which I sent it!"

Isaiah 55:8-11

"For God hath shut up all together in unbelief, that he might pardon all. O depth of riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and unsearchable his ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his coadviser? Or who has given him before, and it shall be recompensed him? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to him be glory forever and ever! Amen."

Romans 11:32-36

Valleys of Scripture- by Adolf Heller

[By Adolf Heller: Valleys of Writing](#)

Dear friends, my brothers and sisters, you saints and beloved of God!

It is my heartfelt joy to be in your midst. I have come here with great expectation to be blessed by the Lord with you. For these days God has given me something by which He has deeply moved and refreshed me in the last weeks, namely a testimony about the valleys of the Bible. What do these mean for our personal lives, and what do they want to tell us in their prophetic meaning?

First of all, let me refer to a word of the most famous philosopher, Immanuel Kant from Königsberg, who once testified: "In times of trouble and tribulation, the fourth verse of the 23rd Psalm was worth more to me than all my philosophy and all my writing." What that verse says, I think we all know inside and out, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. " When I first read that, I said to myself, "If Kant, with his great erudition, thought this one word was more important than anything he had in the way of spiritual knowledge, then it's certainly worth immersing yourself in that word."

So I was led to read what the Bible says about valleys. I found that valleys are images of humiliation and dying, of fear and gloom. Mountains, on the other hand, are signs of power and greatness, a representation of the pleasure and refreshment, joy and rejoicing that God has shown mankind.

If one says of God, He is only a God of the mountains, He is worshipped only then and one gives oneself to Him only then, when He blesses, but a God of the valleys He is not, in the valleys the other gods, the demons, are stronger than He, then He becomes unwilling, then He is offended. That is what the Syrians reproached Him with! Let us read in 1 Kings 20: "It came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben Hadad mustered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek to battle with Israel. And the children of Israel were mustered and supplied with provisions, and they went out to meet them. And the children of Israel encamped opposite them like two little flocks of goats. But the Syrians filled the land. Then the man of God came near and spoke to the king of Israel, saying, "Thus says Jehovah: Because the Syrians have said that Jehovah is a God of the mountains but not a God of the valleys, I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you will know that I am Jehovah! - And they encamped, these opposite those, seven days. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the battle began. And the children of Israel smote the Syrians, an hundred thousand men of foot in **one** day. And the

rest fled to Aphek into the city. And the wall fell upon the twenty and seven thousand men that were left."

Now God had proven that He is also a God of the valleys. This is, from a purely historical point of view, an interesting historical event. But only when the Word of God addresses us personally by revealing our hearts and, in connection with that, unveiling the essence of God to us and allowing His power, purity and love to flow into us so that we become partakers of His essence, only then does it fulfill its actual purpose. As long as one has not experienced this and experiences it again and again, one knows God and His Word only superficially. His Word wants to communicate His essence and His divine revealing power to us, so that it heals us from our pride and our dejection, our irritability, lust for the eyes and lust for the flesh. And God can do this far better in the valleys than on the heights. He can do it more thoroughly on our dying paths than when we hop from one mountain top to another like a gazelle. Therefore, we must get to know God as the God of the valleys.

Didn't Satan also reproach God regarding Job: Your servant, of whom you boast so much, is only pious because he is doing so well. But lead him once into depths, there it will be shown that Job gives up his piety. And God takes this suggestion and leads Job into the depths, into the pain, into the suffering.

Here we learn to understand a Pauline word that is usually understood in a one-sided way: 1 Cor. 2:9. There we read: "What no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and what has not entered the heart of man, God has prepared for those who love Him. But unto us God hath revealed it by His Spirit." If one reads this passage only up to this point, one gets the idea that what no eye has seen is the glory above, what no ear has heard may mean the music of the spheres, and what has come into no man's heart may mean the fullness of God's splendor and glory.

Is it permissible to grasp this word in this way? Yes, one may! And this is how every little child in Christ will take it at first and testify to it with great joy. But let us read further! We usually fail to do so when we come across a word that delights and inspires us. First of all, however, I would like to read how it does **not** say, "for the spirit searches the heights of God." No, it doesn't say that! In 1 Cor. 2:10 it is said that the Spirit also searches the **depths of** God. But what are the "depths of God"? Ps. 36, 6 gives us the answer: "Your judgments are a great depth." The meaning and duration, purpose and salvation yield of the judgments are searched by the Spirit of God, and He also reveals these depths to us.

In this light, let us look again at the word in 1 Cor. 2. Paul knows that our God leads us into the depths. And what we learn in our worst sufferings and

bankruptcies, that we understand why God allows such a thing at all, **that** has not come into any man's heart!

So if we want to grow into the depths of God, we must first dare to look into the depths. Many do not even know that the life of faith includes not only the heights of blessings and joy, but also the depths of fear and hardship. What Christ experienced and suffered on the cross, when dying and in the realms of the dead, He gives us an after-experience for, of course in a tremendously mitigated measure. For we must be made like Him in all things and be made perfect like Him through suffering. So it is written, and whoever really and substantially believes, also willingly, even if not with hallelujah, enters into it. Therefore, the life of the firstfruits and the elect is mostly a wandering through valleys and depths.

So let us understand: valleys and depths are necessary for our purification, sanctification and perfection. Therefore, when the enemy says that God is not a God of valleys, the answer of our Father of love is: I want to show you that I am a God of valleys and that I reveal myself much more deeply and happily in them, that I let you grow into a much closer, more substantial communion of love with me than is possible on the heights.

We do not need to long for or want to conserve the feelings of joy and spiritual highs of our revival and conversion period, because we will experience much greater and deeper joys and bliss later on in our death journeys. "Now I rejoice in sufferings," says Paul in Col. 1:24. Before, he rejoiced in his joys and suffered in his sorrows. But now, in the vision of Ephesians and Colossians, he rejoices in his sufferings! We want to learn this in these days and experience not only the heights of Langensteinbach, but also the depths of Langensteinbach together.

Of the many valleys of Scripture, I will name eight of them. Many years ago, I once tried to compile all the valleys of Scripture. They have become my strength and life, my joy and my mission. May the Lord also give us something of them in the hours ahead! Let us consider

1. valley siddim = Earth hardness or demon valley, in which we are all naturally stuck in one way or another;
2. valley of Hebron = Valley of communion that leads us to salvation;
3. valley Eskol = valley of grapes, joy, the first fruit of God's love;
4. valley Achor = Valley of Tribulation, which we can only walk through in a godly way when we have Hebron and Eskol behind us;

5. valley Ajalon = Valley of the wild beasts, in which one realizes shocked what lies there all tied up in our subconscious;
6. valley Kidron = Valley of darkness and filth, dirt and excrement, through which David and Jesus once passed and which we cannot be spared either.
7. valley of Jehoshaphat = Valley of Judgments, through which everyone, without exception, must pass in their own way;
8. valley Beraka = Valley of praise, where all suffering and lamentation are overcome and only praise and worship remain.

1. the valley siddim, the earth resin or demon valley

For this we read Genesis 14:10-20 (Please look it up!). One closed city alliances at that time, similarly as later in Greece, and led against other cities war. Five kings had united and revolted, and in the process Sodom and Gomorrah had also been invaded. Many found death, "and the rest fled into the mountains. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their meat, and departed: and they took Lot Abraham's brother's son, and his goods, and departed: for he dwelt in Sodom."

This last note "for he dwelt in Sodom" has much to tell us. We must remember how it was with the separation of Abraham and Lot: the elder, Abraham, could be silent and love and yield, while the younger demanded and took. Those who can love have always won. Whoever has not yet learned this, whoever still wants to assert his own will, may well be able to speak piously, perhaps even very well, but he is not yet redeemed.

These old cities like Ur in Chaldea or here Sodom did not consist at all of "broken houses" as we imagine it so often, no, these were for the time quite modern, partly more beautiful and more splendid cities than the today. Lot's wife must have loved the social life, otherwise the separation would not have been so difficult for her. Her two daughters were so corrupted by the sins of Sodom that they did such hideous things as we read later.

"He dwelt in Sodom." He fared according to the saying, "In for a penny, in for a pound." So Lot was indeed captured by the enemies and dragged away. If he had been on the heights, in a tent like Abraham, he would not have lost his freedom nor his goods.

When we come to faith, we are faced with the moral decision of whether to choose the Abrahamic line of total surrender, separation from the world and sin, and build the altar of worship, or to "seek the best of the city" and in doing so be righteous like Lot, of whom it says: "He tormented his righteous soul day by day

with its lawless works by what he saw and heard." You can read about this in 2 Peter 2:7, 8.

Again and again, we are faced with the decision of whether to choose the Abrahamic line of total surrender and separation from the world and sin in every form and build the altar of worship, or to engage in culture and art, pleasure and honoring the world as Lot did. One can very well do that and still be a "righteous" person. But how many torments he had to suffer not only inwardly but also outwardly! He lost everything, and if he had not had Abraham, he would have perished.

If our salvation is genuine, we choose the Abrahamic line. This is also what many revived and new converts do in their first zeal. But little by little, they bring back the bricks that the idols were made of. For example, many men and women threw away their cigars and cigarettes when they were converted. But when they fell into a pious torpor a few years or even decades later, they reached for them again.

"For he dwelt in Sodom"! When it becomes clear to us that we have again slowly but surely slipped into Sodom, we should pray together with holy resolve alone or after honest confession with an authorized brother: "Lord, I will no longer dwell in Sodom, remain in the valley of Siddim and perish thereby; let me dwell like Abraham on high and be fed from God's springs!" Where do you dwell? Where do I dwell? He who still tries to assert himself and to assert himself under all circumstances, he who is still full of rejection and hatred against some brother, even if it is the "most horrible person of the world", and does not want to give him the hand of reconciliation, he still dwells in Sodom.

I have to ask who was the luckier one here. Abraham or Lot? And yet again and again our flesh tends to dwell in Sodom! We should examine ourselves without reserve, in which relationship we still stay in Sodom. For Lot lost everything: house and home, wife and daughters, possessions and wealth. But of Abraham we read that he was rich in gold, silver and cattle. Abraham had kept everything, but Lot had nothing; everything had been lost. And yet Lot was righteous and believed from the heart.

That God often places two such types side by side is of deep significance. Many overemphasize unilaterally, "We are perfected in Christ!" Yes, that is right, praise and thanks be to God for that! The Father really looks at us in Christo, even the weakest and most miserable. But in practice, we still walk either the Abrahamic or the Lot line. And this has its consequences for this life and the life to come. Those who do not want to admit this do not know the Scriptures and deceive themselves. Would that we did not belong to such!

The Lot Way of the flesh is always looking for compromises. He constantly asks: "What is still allowed? Surely not everything can be sin! Man must still have something in which he can take pleasure! The spiritual way of faith, however, goes the way of totality and uncompromisingness. Today these wonderful words, which have an inherent liberating power, are constantly misused by Satan in advertising and propaganda. There one reads for instance large and screaming in newspapers and on advertising columns of an "uncompromising" toothpaste! As if a toothpaste could also compromise! How the enemy leads us, and especially our poor, endangered youth, around on a fool's rope!

Lot - Abraham: this juxtaposition is of deep significance. There are pious people who never became free and joyful in their lives, never were released from the secret sins of sorcery, sex, mammon, unforgiveness, lust for power, etc., because they never made the decision like Abraham to renounce everything and wait for the city whose creator and builder is God.

Abraham, besides time and age, the symbols of earthly alienage and divine worship, had a third: the spring. Those who live on the stagnant water of the cisterns know nothing of the wonderfully refreshing spring water of the Word of God, which makes us a spring ourselves (Jn.4:13; 7:37-39). Pastor Böhmerle, this gifted man of God who is still not properly understood today, spoke of spring people in contrast to cistern people who cling to some dogma, some religious leader, and yet have no real life from God despite all their pious knowledge and achievements.

God's word, prayer, fellowship and breaking of bread are our spiritual life forces. The enemy wants to block their flow again and again. It is necessary to repeat the decision for Christ in practical life day after day and night after night in thanksgiving and worship. It is necessary to switch over again and again. It is like steering a ship: you cannot set the route just **once and** then let everything run and go. Because at sea there are all kinds of imponderable things, so you can't let the wheel out of your hand. So we also need in the spiritual life not only a one-time change and adjustment, because one slips very easily from the Abraham line into the Lot line, until one ends in Sodom and perishes in it. We can only be helped by those who walk the Abrahamic path themselves. Only a pure person is allowed to sprinkle the water of atonement so that the unclean become pure (Exodus 14:20).

We must and can come to the point, like Abraham, that we are truly fed up with God. Then we can also bless the people who behave rudely towards us, as Lot did towards Abraham. However, it is not children and young men who can bless, but only fathers in Christ. As it was in Corinth at the time of the apostle Paul, so it is today. There are ten thousand disciplinarians of every stamp, but very few

fathers in Christ. May we reach out in humble zeal to become and remain such until the Lord comes! - -

If we evaluate the Word of God only as a collection of historical events, we see in it a kind of miracle book, which the simple may consider true, but the educated smile at. However, if the Bible has become God's Word, i.e. if it reveals itself as God's self-representation, as a revelation of His innermost being, then we see eternally valid truths in it. Let us note that, according to the Scriptures, highs are divine benefits, while lows mean judgments, represent distress, despair and dying. God is a God of the depths or the valleys means: there He comes close to you in essence, there He wants to talk to you, save you and bless you. There He reveals His deepest and most real things to you and releases what is inherently placed in you to a wonderful unfolding He is not able to do this on the heights of blessings to the same extent as in the depths of suffering. There He communicates Himself to us and satisfies our most secret longings, of which we ourselves are only vaguely aware. Thus the inconspicuous note in 1 Kings 20:28 gains a deep, mysterious power in our lives. Only then do we understand Psalm 130:1: "Out of the depths I call to Thee, O God!" and also grasp the word of Wallenstein: "Night must be when Friedland's stars shine." If the brightest light of sweet communion with God, who makes you completely happy, is to shine for you, then it must be night with you. Why? Only then will you see the stars!

God is intent on using the embarrassing, distressing, difficult things that man would like to shake off to make us break. After all, one wants to enjoy, longs for splendor and joy, and in doing so carries a volcano of desires within oneself that threatens to destroy us. Therefore, God must first somehow lead us to the zero point, so that we become quite small, yes, to nothingness, so that He can then reveal and communicate His high, essential beauty to us. - -

Siddim, the Earth Resin Valley, is a deep depression that one day collapsed and became the Dead Sea. This Dead Sea plays a mysterious role in the thoughts of God. It is 400 meters below sea level, and it contains precious minerals and salts. It was in this valley that Lot dwelt, and he dwelt in Sodom. However, although he was a leading man, he could not overcome the moral low he found there and therefore tormented his righteous soul. At last he lost his wife at the fall of Sodom, who did not want to detach herself from the place of her enjoyment of life. Then we see how terribly the moral standard of Sodom showed itself in his two daughters: they became mothers of Moab and Ammon by their own father (Genesis 19).

Spiritually, we also experience the valley of Siddim. For the earth is a demon valley through which we must pass. But it is a big difference whether we go through it as Lot or as Abraham, whether we have enough of tent, altar and

spring or whether we have to torment ourselves with the things of Sodom, which captivate us inwardly, and almost perish from them.

This valley will who knows how soon, be on everyone's lips. Compare my writing: Israel and the World Powers in the End Times! We stand in many ways before great end time events. Only most do not see them, because they do not want to see them . - –

Valleys are depths, constrictions, sufferings, but at the same time they are places where one experiences the presence of God, His innermost being and essence much more happily than is possible on the heights of blessings and joy. When we grasp this, we immediately gain a different attitude towards everything that approaches us. Then we begin to learn to give thanks always for everything (Eph. 5, 20), even for situations that lead us into humiliations. We stop grumbling. After all, it is necessary to come into a complete unity of mind with Christ. For this alone is the root area from which all divine powers, blessings and authority grow.

2. the valley of Hebron, the valley of the community

One gets fellowship only in the valley, i.e. in humiliation. There is no divine, essential communion in glory for us that is not born out of communion in humiliation. Let us think of the many young Protestant and Catholic clergy who found each other as brothers under shellfire at the front and learned to cry out to God together! How many touching incidents have we heard testified to.

Whoever is not one with Christ in humiliation cannot possibly have fellowship with Him in glory. If we do not die with Him, we will not live with Him. Therefore, we do not have to be crucified, because we could not bear the humiliations to the same extent as He did. Everything is proportioned to the individual. It is so important that we grasp: God has allotted to me exactly the ups and downs I need for my salvation and perfection. He treats me as an undivided individual being. No doctor can do that with regard to his patients, and no teacher can do that with regard to his students. Only our God can do that, since He is perfect in wisdom, power and love. Nevertheless, many say that He is unjust in the treatment of His creatures. But we know from His Word, through the Holy Spirit, and from our own and others' experiences that all His ways with all His creatures are absolutely right. Each of us will at one time break out into shouts of exultation, "The Lord has well considered all things, and made all, all things right; give glory to our God!" But blessed is he who learns to say this in faith even now! His ways of judgment and grace are always the right ones, and if I am broken and humbled in the process, then even more so. But if we can say not only yes, but also amen and hallelujah, that is much more.

Genesis 37:13-20: "And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed in Shechem? Come, that I may send thee unto them. And he said unto him, Here am I. And he said unto him, Go and see the welfare of the flock, and bring me word. And he sent him out of the valley of Hebron; and he came to Shechem. And a man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said: I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed. And the man said, They are departed from here: for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. So Joseph went after his brethren, and found them at Dothan. And they saw him afar off; and before he came nigh unto them, they devised a plot against him to kill him. And they said one to another, Behold, here cometh that dreamer! Now therefore come, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and let us say, An evil beast hath devoured him; and we will see what shall become of his dreams."

Joseph is a type on our Lord, the head, Benjamin is a type for the church, His body, the body. Now Paul says: My gospel is prophetically proclaimed in

advance, and yet again testifies that it was hidden (Rom. 1,2 and 16, 25). What Paul reveals in all its clarity only in the epistles on the one hand, is proclaimed in advance in a wonderful way on the other hand. Whoever begins to see this once through the Holy Spirit from the Word of Truth will never again be so foolish as to say: The Old Testament is none of our business, we have nothing to do with it. Right division of the Scriptures is a division of the Scriptures, but never a division of the Scriptures!

Joseph, a picture of Jesus Christ! What a tremendous show opens up to the view of faith founded in the Scriptures. We will only point out one or two miraculous things. When Joseph was born, Rachel, the beloved wife, said: "The Lord add another to me! (Gen. 30:24). But this was Benjamin! He was the God-given addition or complement to Joseph. But this makes him a wonderful prophetic reference to the church. For the body church is called plärooma = completion or addition, fullness or full measure (Eph. 1:23; 4:13). Let us prayerfully search the Scriptures to see if we do not find a number of references to the Joseph-Benjamin relationship as a model for the greater, more glorious relationship Christ - church or head and members, before we reject this view or accept it unchecked! Both would be wrong.

"Go and see to the welfare of your brothers!" God's heart aims at the welfare, at the happiness of people. That is why we find so many beatitudes in the 5 books of Moses, In the Psalter, in the prophet Isaiah, in the Sermon on the Mount, in the Pauline epistles and in Revelation. Put them all together, and you will have a far greater, more rewarding experience than the most exciting novel, the most wonderful movie, or the most interesting television show.

However, our God, the great unknown, as we must call Him, does not only want the welfare of the people, He also seeks the welfare of the flock! Have we ever thought about this? We pious people do not know much about the animal world. But the mission of the Son in the example of Joseph also has to do with the welfare of the animals. Is it not written in Ps. 36, 6: "You save men and cattle, Jehovah!"? Does not the Lord hear and listen to the cries of ravens and the roars of lions? Do you think God does not rejoice at the eye of the deer and the leaping of the squirrel? What a grouchy God most people have! That is why they themselves are so grouchy. For "as one is, so is his God, therefore God became so often a mockery!"

Our God is a God of joy and well-being! He has created the world primarily for His own happiness. "When I created the earth, the morning stars rejoiced together, and all the sons of God exulted"; we read as God's self-testimony in Job 38, 4-7.

Joseph was sent from the valley of Hebron = community and came to Shechem = allotment. Israel had special allotments or covenants. Does not Jesus say: "I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"? If one overemphasizes this word alone without the uncounted "Again it is written", then one could prove to every non-Israelite with it that Jesus did not come for him, therefore he has no claim to His salvation at all. With such methods one declares everyone to be a false teacher who does not swear by his own dogma and is zealous for his own organization. Let us, however, in humility and faithfulness, let the Spirit of God introduce us to the whole truth!"-.

"And a man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?" This is the question we must ask ourselves again and again in the holy hours of the day and night: What do I really want? What is my heart longing for in the last, deepest reason? Most people do not even know! But we believers should know it! If things are right for us, our heart wants the Lord, because the Lord wants us! If we knew how strong the desire of God and Jesus Christ for us is, we would say with Zinzendorf "I have only one passion, and that is Him and only Him!" - "What do you seek?" What is your real, deepest purpose in life? Health, long life, family happiness, career success? All these things are not sin; but whoever is truly and essentially seized by the Spirit of God wants Him, Him and only Him! Whether He leads us to hell to perform mighty tasks, which we will undoubtedly have to do there one day, or across all heavens into the radiance of light of the glory of perfection, it is all the same. The actual hope of the congregation is directed in person to God and His Son, who is our Lord and Head and whose complement or completion we are; Israel, on the other hand, has a factual and material attitude. It therefore waits for new heavens and a new earth; but we wait for the Lord Himself!

"I am looking for my brothers; tell me where they are grazing. And the man said, They are departed from here (Shechem), for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan."

Dothan means law in German. Thus Israel has left its allotted, the promises and promises of God, and has placed itself under the law. We only have to read chapter 19 of the 2nd book of Moses, which precedes the chapter of the legislation, Exodus 20. There, in verse 8, all the people say to Moses not, "All that the Lord has said **He will** do," which would have been faith and trust, but they say, "All that the Lord has said **we will** do!" Who was behind it tells us Acts 7:53: "The law ye received at the commandment of angels, and observed not." The attentive Bible reader will find an abundance of passages in Scripture that confirm this directly or indirectly.

Israel went from Shechem to Dothan, from the assigned under the law. Joseph, the son, went from Hebron, the fellowship with his father, via Shechem to

Dothan, to seek and find his brothers. Only in this light do we understand the statements of the Scriptures about the humiliation of the Lord under the angels, about what He did and became for the sake of the angels and much more.

Joseph found his brothers in Dothan, "and they saw him from afar" (Genesis 37:18a). Israel has only ever seen its Messiah "from afar". Balaam also speaks regarding the Lord: "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near" (Num. 24, 17). Israel to a large extent still believes today that it will receive its Messiah, but it does not recognize Him in Jesus of Nazareth.

"Then they devised against him a plot to kill him" (Genesis 37:100). Dothan, law! "The law directs wrath (Rom. 4, 15). It brings nothing to completion (Heb. 7, 19), awakens sleeping sin (Rom. 7, 7 ff) and is a ministry of death (2 Cor. 3, 69). How well we understand in this light Joh. 19,7: "We have a law, and according to it He must die!"

And they said one to another, You, there comes that dreamer!" The true believers always appear to "the sober Christians" as dreamers, fantasists and fanatics. It is not possible otherwise. If a man has certainty of salvation, he is a Pharisee in the eyes of the pious world and a dreamer in the eyes of the godless world. And if he has a salvation ministry or even a fruitful salvation authority from God, then he is considered a fanatic. This must be so. For "woe to you if anyone speaks well to you!" (Luk 6:26). There will always be people who listen to us with gratitude, respect and love, but there must also always be those who fight us and hate us for the sake of our testimony. And if there are also those in your life who fight and revile you without cause, then pay them back in a divine way by loving and blessing them and praying for them! Thus we justify and avenge ourselves in a godly way for the glorification of the Father and the Son. - *Addendum by Brother Muhl*: Did you pay good attention to what verse 15 of Gen. 37 says? "A man found him (Joseph), and behold, he was wandering in the field." Joseph is a Christ actor. If he is a reliable silhouette, something of what is written here should also be found in Christ. Do we find anything in the life of Jesus to which this word applies? Answer from the house group: Jesus did not have where He laid His head! Brother Muhl: Right! That's right! If I am in a region that is completely unknown to me, I must first of all, if there is no one there to ask, wander around in this landscape that is foreign to me. and this was exactly the case for the Lord Jesus: He, who knew of no sin, wore the likeness of the flesh of sin on Him (Rom.8,3; 2.Cor.5,21), that is, a likeness that was completely foreign to Him. He wore exactly the opposite of the garment that was normal for Him. He was holy and righteous and came into the cosmos that was full of enmity against God. He was a stranger everywhere, a stranger, despised and hated, although He knew of no sin, the only sinless man on earth. The only orientation for Him was that the Father gave Him step by step instructions and guidance. He

says of Himself: "I have wandered like a lost sheep" (Ps. 119, 176). If the whole Scripture testifies of Him according to His own words, then the Psalter, according to many contexts, in the very first place! - -

If the head was a wanderer, we should also find in the Bible that the most faithful believers were wanderers. This is exactly what we read in Heb. 11:37, 38: "They were stoned, cut in pieces, tempted, died by the death of the sword, went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, had want, tribulation, adversity, of which the world was not worthy, wandered in deserts, and mountains, and clefts, and the dens of the earth." These were the most faithful, the suffering heroes of a passive nature. The first group of people of faith in Heb. 11 were active heroes. They were strong and experienced miracle after miracle. Here, however, with the second group, who were miserable on the outside but glorious on the inside, their heroism consisted of wandering. Are we not ashamed of these wanderers? I have done it sometimes, my brothers! We haughty, demanding economic miracle people are not at all worthy to walk in the line of the "but others" of Heb. 11. That is why God gives us so much good, because we do not have the spiritual stability at all to go through such sufferings.

Jesus, too, was a homeless person in His earthly manifestation. He was without a permanent residence, just like Paul, His most faithful follower. The apostle to the Gentiles had just been called with the wonderful word "You are a chosen armor to me!" (Acts 9:15), when he already had to flee and be lowered in a basket at night at the city wall of Damascus (Acts 9:25).

There is nothing of divine guidance in which we are not somehow placed in one way or another and die through it! Caleb ("he is like a heart" or "the one with the whole heart"!) was assigned Hebron (community). So there is also now a body, which is of one spirit, of one mind with God and therefore comes as Christ body into the closest community with him. Only Joshua (Jesus) and Caleb (The Community) reached the holy land of promise without death. All the other men of strife who went forth died in the wilderness. What a mighty and wonderful prophecy, - to the foolish a folly, but to those who love the Lord undivided in heart an inexhaustible joy! Now let us understand Joshua 14:13, 14 a little better, where we read, "And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance unto this day, because he was a complete follower of the Lord God of Israel." So there is a **complete following** as opposed to a divided, imperfect one. He who is still offended and grieved, seeking himself and his honor, unable to love and bless his friends and enemies from the heart, does not yet **fully** follow the Lord. Scripture also says this in many contexts. In the valley of Hebron one experiences and practices the most intimate communion there is: that of the body with the head, the Christ of God! Blessed is he who may really and substantially live in it! - -

A subtle hint to the meaning of Hebron we read in 2 Sa. 2,34: "Joab and his men walked all night". Joab was a friend of David; his name means God is Father. "... and the light dawned at Hebron."

The light rose in Hebron, the day dawned. Or the other way around: When the sun rose, they were in Hebron, they found fellowship. This says and also 1 John 1:7: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another." The light is dawning in Hebron!

If two do not have fellowship, one or the other or both do not walk in the light. Then neither has fellowship with the joys and sorrows of the other. Fellowship does not depend on equal gifts or knowledge, but on walking in the light. As soon as two people step into the light with each other, they have fellowship. How often have I experienced that when someone put all his sorrow before God into the light, there was immediate fellowship. Before, they were "unsympathetic" to each other and had avoided each other. It is really like this: if we do not have fellowship, either one or the other or both lack the change in the light. But only then, when the light of joy and fellowship dawns, does essential life and lasting spiritual fruit arise. May this happen to all of us, so that we do not get stuck in the dead end of religious bossiness and know-it-all attitude!

From Hebron the Lord Jesus went to his death to bring the fallen creation back into the fellowship with God from which it had fallen. But this future and perfect fellowship will then be so blissful and essential, so completely blissful for the creatures and the Creator, that the price of eons of separation will not have been high. - -

In Numbers 13:22a we read: "And they went up by the south side, and came unto Hebron; and there were Achiman, and Sheshai, and Talmai, the sons of Enak. These giants and sons of Enak are descendants of the union of angels and men, and play a strange and mysterious part in Scripture. Giantism occurs wherever heavenly and earthly beings or forces are mixed. Even today, many an experienced pastor is faced with the fact of so-called "angelic visions". Because this often occurred in Canaan, it had become ripe for judgment. God therefore gave the order to eradicate it. But because the deeper causes and the higher aims of such measures are not understood, God is called cruel. By the invasion of the spirit world a mixture had arisen, which was an abomination to the Lord, because Israel should consist of pure blood.

In 4. Mo. 13, 22ff it says further: "But Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt." When I read this for the first time in 1918, I thought: well, a sentence got into the text from some foreign source that does not fit into the context at all. But when you know that Hebron is an image for the God-

community and Zoan means "foreign inn" or "house of bondage", a light comes on.

When an angel or a demon comes to a human being to dwell in him, the human being is a foreign hostel for him. There are many more such intrusions of darkness, sin and sorcery than we realize. When a person is possessed, he no longer has freedom of spirit, soul and body. A power of darkness emanates from such people. You can see it in their looks and behavior.... But the one who is completely devoted to the Lord is joyful and radiates something of the goodness and kindness of God.

Before Zoan, a settlement of satanically inspired powers, was built, Hebron was already there, the promise of fellowship with God. Before the world was created and Satan, sin and darkness powers were there, already the Lamb was "provided" who should and would carry and remove the sin of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ.

This wonderful truth is indicated here, clearly recognizable to faith: before Zoan, Hebron was already there; because God wants to have fellowship with all His creatures, also with His enemies. Rather His heart full of love and longing is not satisfied. This is what He said and swore with many oaths.

Seven years before Zoan, Hebron already existed, which, according to our archaeologists, is supposed to be the oldest city in the world and of which they have excavated seven layers built on top of each other, buried again and again.

Victory was there before the battle began. Salvation was guaranteed even before creation. There our heart laughs that God does not need to take any embarrassment measures, but that he saw everything before the beginning already in its final result. He was aware of everything and every end already before its beginning. According to Luk. 14, 28 a man who builds a tower should sit down and calculate the costs, whether he would really be able to finish his project. Otherwise, as the following verses say, he would be ridiculed by everyone because of his inability.

And this should happen to God? Whoever believes this does not know God! Yes, it is downright blasphemy to think such a thing possible, that our Father of glory could plan and even conjure up something, only to see that the power of the devil and of men are stronger than His power and His love, and that He cannot complete His All, but must be content with a small percentage of redeemed sinners.

The final communion of all beings and worlds with God is guaranteed; bondage and alienage, on the other hand, may only exist during the eons and will cease

once God will be all in all. Blessed is he who may grasp and hold this according to the word of the Scriptures and the testimony of the Holy Spirit! - -

4. the valley of Eskol, the valley of grapes, of joy

"And they came as far as the valley of Eshcol" (Num. 13:23). We would have to look up all the passages about grapes and wine to find confirmation that grapes and wine are images of joy. Wine drinking, like everything else in the world, can also be exaggerated. "Wine and must take away the mind." This testimony of Hosea 4:11 is very clear. Everything that does not remain in divine measure has a destructive effect; however, what conforms to God's holy standards brings blessing and joy.

"They cut there a vine with a bunch of grapes, and carried them two by two on a pole." Traveling growth in humans, animals and plants not infrequently has its cause in an ungodly mixing of flesh and spirit. When a believing circle works carnally with mammon, politics and propaganda, giant assemblies are formed, but the pneumatic content gradually dwindles. In the places where the first atomic bombs fell, giant growths arose in people, animals and plants. This dazzles at the first moment outwardly, but is inwardly rotten, sick and ungodly.

"... also pomegranates and figs" (Genesis 13:23). If the grape is the image of joy, the pomegranates are an image of love and the figs with their many seeds and pips are a symbol of fertility.

Israel's history is represented by a series of plants, starting from the hyssop that grows out of the crumbling wall, the cedar, the thorn bush to the olive tree, the symbol of the spirit. Each plant, he said, represented a characteristic side of Israel. Here, in the Valley of Escol, we have grapes = joy, pomegranates = love and figs = fertility.

Verse 24. 25: "That place was called Valley of Eshcol because of the grapes the children of Israel had cut there. And they returned from scouting the land after the lapse of 40 days." We often find the number 40 as the number of trial, testing and probation. For example, Moses spent 40 years in Egypt, 40 years with the sheep, and then 40 years in the wilderness.

The scouts went as far as the valley of Eskol and looked at the land. They reported that it was beautiful and fertile, but that the giants, who lived in cities with high walls, made such an impression on them that they felt like locusts. Therefore, they cried out not to enter and rather to renounce this dangerous gift of God.

Then the wrath of Jehovah was kindled that day, and He swore and said, "The men who came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall not see

the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, because they did not fully follow Me." (Deuteronomy 4:32, 11).

The Scriptures often speak of a complete discipleship and conversion up to the Lord. There is also a conversion and discipleship that goes only as far as the moral. Abraham was a man of complete discipleship and devotion, and so were Isaac and Jacob, although their lives were not free of moral weaknesses and faults.

Two men, however, were to enter the Promised Land: Joshua and Caleb, Joshua, more precisely Jehoshua, means Jesus in Greek and is a type on our Lord. Caleb, in German, "like one heart, like one mind", is a type on the church of Christ. Both of them were to be the only ones of all the men of twenty years of age and over who went out to take up arms to attain the promised inheritance. In Num. 32:13-15 we read, "The wrath of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and He caused them to wander in the wilderness 40 years, until all the generation was consumed, which had done that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. And behold, you have risen up in your fathers' stead, a brood of sinful men, to add to the fervor of Jehovah's anger against Israel. If ye turn aside behind Him, He will leave it longer in the wilderness, and ye shall destroy all this people."

Israel was to be eradicated as the bearer of salvation. But with that the birth of the Messiah was in question. Without total obedience and complete discipleship, one cannot enter the promised inheritance, except through death and horror and many severe judgments. However, we are to rejoice in the Valley of Escol! God offers us benefits; but the greatest benefit is Christ, the solution of sins granted through Him alone, the holy communion of love with the Father and the Son. Whoever rejects these benefits thereby commits himself to judgment. Our sin is not that we have lied or stolen once or more, but that we do not believe in Him! If we reject the place of salvation and all that is offered to us in the Lord, we thereby place ourselves under the wrath of God. **This** is sin! "He who does not believe, that is, takes refuge in God, will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36) This is true for all salvation bodies and creatures. The fact that God, through judgment and grace, will nevertheless succeed, even if it is only after eons, that all take refuge in Him, that is a second thing, which we only hint at here, but do not want to bring into focus.

The Father's heart is deeply moved by love for all of us. But if we, out of fear and unbelief, defiance and love of sin, do not want to shelter ourselves in His Son, this offends God. That is why, in our meetings, we must always put the listeners before the decision, show them the way of the total breaking of the self and the necessity of the total surrender. If we do not do this again and again with holy seriousness, then we sin and have at best a following of religious know-it-alls or omniscient people who think they are more than others. And the Lord protect

us from this! If we are too lively and pushy for some and too doctrinaire and dead for others, it does not matter to us. The final decision about the value or unvalue of our service and zeal is made by the Lord and not by a person or an organization, no matter how biblical it may appear to be. - -

Let us therefore ask ourselves in holy earnestness: Have I really given my life undividedly to the Lord? Are there not some here who have made no beginning in faith at all? Why don't you fall down before Him this very day and say to Him, "O God, if You are a Savior, a Redeemer, a Liberator, if You can really completely satisfy the burning desire of love in my heart, then reveal Yourself to me!" Do it this very night, do it now in spirit with holy resolve of heart, before I have finished speaking this sentence. The Lord certainly accepts you, today, now, this very moment! That He does this, and that many have experienced it and continue to experience it, may be experienced in every God-given evangelization. Praise be to the Lord for this! -

Jehovah's anger flared up because Israel did not accept His offer. Two tribes were still beyond the Jordan: Gad and Reuben. They had plenty of cattle, and because they saw that there was good pasture where they were, they decided to stay. The other tribes grumbled, "Shall we go into battle alone and take the trouble and danger of fighting, and these think only of their welfare? It is the tragic secret of our life that we do not want to go the ways of death prescribed by God. This is true for awakened people as well as for "leading" men who do not want to give their religious ego and their soul-flesh power position to death. The first step over the Jordan, the river of death, literally: the hurrying towards it, consists in coming to the Living God as lost sinners and handing over our botched, albeit religiously dressed up life to Him without reserve. If you cannot do it alone, then go to an empowered brother who can truly and substantially serve you with helping, blessing, healing hands. - -

"And they turned and went up into the mountains, and came as far as the valley of Eshcol, and scouted it. And they took of the fruit of the land in their hand, and brought it down unto us. And they gave us word, saying: The land is good, which Jehovah our God giveth us. But ye would not go up, and were rebellious against the commandment of Jehovah your God. And ye murmured in your tents, saying, Because Jehovah hated us, He brought us up out of the land of Egypt." (Deut. 1:24 ff) Imagine that! First the cruel tribulation in Egypt that had become unbearable, then the miraculous deliverance that ended with rejoicing and praise, and then such murmuring!

"Jehovah wanted to give us into the hand of the Amorites (commanders or opponents), so that they would destroy us. Whither shall we go up? Our brethren have made our heart despondent, saying, A nation greater and higher than we, cities great and fortified unto heaven, and also the children of Enakum have we

seen there. Then said I unto you, Be not dismayed, nor be afraid of them. Jehovah your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you!" (Deut. 1:27-30).

So Moses spoke and continued, "Jehovah was also angry with me and said, '**You** also shall not enter in! Joshua the son of Nun (the son of the Abiding Place), who stands before you, **he** shall come in!" (verse 37, 38).

And then things happened without order! Israel wants to make up for everything by their own achievements. Tragedies occur as they are described in Joshua 7 (Achan). Defiance and disobedience, humiliations of all kinds, falls into sin with half repentance follow, so that God's effort for Israel seems to be a complete failure. And yet, the people and land of the Most High, still under the curse today, will be a bearer of blessings in the midst of a garden of God. Where today there are still deserts and depths and places full of demoniacity, soon paradise fields will blossom, in which the Creator and His creatures will have their high joy!

Let me say a few more words of God from perhaps the most delicious book of sacred writings, whose inexpressible beauty and depth have delighted me for years!

Song of Songs 4:12 - 4:1: A closed garden is my sister, my bride, a closed fountain, a sealed spring. What sprouts from you is a pleasure garden." In this pleasure garden of God, we are shown 9 fruits: "Garnets along with noble fruits, cyper flowers along with nard; nard and saffron, spice cane and cinnamon along with all kinds of incense, myrrh and aloes along with all the most excellent spices." Thus God sees in the spirit the demon valley full of dirt and filth and sin, when it will be renewed according to His promise.

Let me now try to interpret these fruits spiritually for us. For everything that Israel will one day outwardly possess and enjoy in holy rejoicing, we, the members of the body of Christ, already have in spirit and in essence. In Gal. 5:22 we read, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, temperance." If we compare the nine fruits in the Song of Songs with the ninefold unfolded fruit of the Spirit, we see how many parallels there are, how the author of the Bible, the Holy Spirit, does not contradict himself and lets say through the mouth of the apostle Paul exactly what is also written here in the Song of Songs.

According to Hohel. 4:15, Israel is "a garden spring, a fountain of living waters, streams flowing from Lebanon." We know that the Dead Sea contains "accursed" water. But wherever living water comes, that is, sweet spring water, all will be well; for it will become a river of life flowing from the altar of God (Ezek. 47).

"Wake up, north wind!" (Hohel. 4,16). The north wind comes from the land of demons, of darkness. The Bride has realized that the north wind is as important

as the south wind. Who among us has the courage to pray, "Come, north wind"? Who in Christian churches, fellowships or free churches has the courage to practice biblical church discipline, as Paul did, handing a sinner over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. 5:5)? I have always been deeply moved by the bridal prayer. How heroic is the love of the bride! Our brother Arthur Muhl once said, "The love in the Song of Songs is just the opposite!" Only those who have died to this side of God's love understand the word: "North wind, blow through my garden, let its fragrances drip! My beloved come into his garden and eat the fruit delicious to him! - I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride, and plucked my myrrh." Myrrh means suffering or bitterness. The sufferings you have gone through for God's sake are the delicious fruit to Him, which He first seeks and plucks! Your heart and mine are also a garden of God, and the fruits He seeks in it are fruits of the Spirit. "Eat, friends, drink your fill, beloved!" (5, 1b). **That's escol!** This is what we learn in the Valley of Joy, and we are no longer afraid of the giants, but we grow into confidence: the wonderful God is stronger than everything; even the deepest valleys serve Him, to pour His Fatherly mercy into us and to gift us with His blessed love.

Addendum by Arthur Muhl: I hope that it has happened to all of you as it did to me. What Brother Heller was given to witness to us, that has lit all seven lights on the golden candlestick of my heart! On our theme of the valleys, one more word from the Song of Songs! In ch. 2, 1 we read, "I am a daffodil of Sarongs, a lily of the valleys." The beloved of the Lord, it may be an individual, the daughter of Zion, or the whole body of the Christ, namely the pure virgin of 2 Cor. 11:2 - all will one day be perfected in His love and will speak before His face: "I am a daffodil, a lily of the valleys." People whom God has led through valleys of death, sin, tribulations and constrictions, thus become a glorious, fragrant lily for Him. But what does the lily mean? The Lord Jesus testifies about it in Matth. 6, 29: "Truly I say to you, Solomon in all his splendor was not clothed like one of these". In these simple flowers, God represents nothing less than His own glory.

Let me enter one more forgotten valley, a valley that is not particularly mentioned by name, but which we can immediately name, because in connection with this valley mighty flames blaze that are able to illuminate for us the depth of the glory of our God. It is found in Neh. 2:10-16. What was the situation? A troop of God's people had returned from the Babylonian captivity to rebuild the temple and the walls of Jerusalem.

Their leader Nehemiah reports about it: "The king had sent army commanders and horsemen with me. And when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard it, it grieved them greatly (isn't it the same today?) that a man had come to seek the good of Israel."

Do we still know a time when the word also applied that God had sent a man to Jerusalem to seek his brothers? Do we still know a Nehemiah, a perfect cultivator? Yes, Jesus Christ is the perfect caretaker of His body and His garden Israel!

Now let us open our hearts to the Scriptures from the Lord through His own Word. "And I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days." And the Lord Jesus? He spent the last three days of His life in Jerusalem. "And I arose at night, I and few men with me." Was it not the same with the Lord Jesus? Only a very few went the way to the end with Him, who fed thousands, healed the uncounted and did good deeds without measure.

"But I had made known to no man what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem." Relative to Christ, it is all seven times-seventy times more wonderful what He was about to do. "He entrusted Himself to no man, for He knew what was in man." (John 2:24, 25) After all, He was the sin-offering Lamb of God for Israel and for the whole world. And that in Jerusalem! And there was no beast with me, save the beast on which I rode." We know the beast of burden and the son of the beast of burden (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:2). The beast of burden, the donkey, is, figuratively speaking, Israel, and the son of the beast of burden is the Lord. "And I went out by night through the valley gate." One of the gates of Jerusalem is called the Valley Gate. Do we not think there, deeply related to Christ, of Ps. 23:4: "And though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death :“?

".... towards the dragon's fountain"! Jesus goes through the valley gate, to the cross, His soul was poured out into death, and He was sent by the Father to the lowest places of the earth to preach the Gospel there, "against the dragon's fountain". Who is the one who has the power of death? The devil, the dragon! And exactly against the heart of the dragon Jesus goes.

"... and after the dung gate". What does the governor of God have to do with the dung gate? He has not only visited the monstrous dunghill of the world, but has identified Himself with it, has let Himself be made the dung, the scum, the sin of all! Dragon source, dung gate! After these two pillars of darkness had collapsed (with Samson a whole empire collapsed with two pillars!), it continues: "I visited the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and her gates, which were consumed by fire": Can one still visit walls, which are broken down, and gates, which are burned? When the Lord visits Jerusalem, He sees what is no longer or not yet there. "Your walls are steadfast before me" (Ps. 69:16). He is, after all, the God who "calls the non-existent as if it were there" (Rom. 4:17). But to the ruins He says: "Break forth in joy, rejoice altogether, you ruins of Jerusalem!" (Isa. 52:9). You and I may also rejoice, yes, we should rejoice and shout, although our life, seen from the outside, resembles a heap of ruins in many respects. For

the consequence will be that it will then and thereby go to the spring gate and to the king's pond, as it is written: "And I went over to the spring gate and to the king's pond." Thus, the old dunghill of the old creation becomes a fountain of blessings and a kingdom of His love!

Do we now understand Paul a little better when he exclaims, "How unsearchable are His judgments and unsearchable His ways" (Rom. 11:33)? "And there was no room to pass for the beast that was under me." So Nehemiah dismounted and continued on foot. What does this have to say to us? The Lord was riding on a donkey. Through this animal was represented His physicality, His abased humanity. When He advanced against the Dragon Spring, He could not do so in the body of flesh; that would have been impossible. There was no way through. Only when He was made alive in the spirit, He could pass through and reach the goal.

"And I went up the valley by night, and visited the wall; and I came in again by the valley gate, and returned." Out of the grave the Lord came again by the resurrection and returned home. "But the rulers (elders and chief priests) knew not whither I went, nor what I did: for I had made known nothing until then unto the Jews, and to the priests, and to the nobles, and to the rest that did the work. "But to us, the least of all the saints, He has made all things known! Amen.

4. the valley of Achor, the valley of tribulation

The history of this valley is exceedingly captivating. We read two short scriptural contexts from Joshua 7 and Hosea 2. Let us pay close attention, for no one is spared wandering through the Valley of Achor for a shorter or longer time.

Joshua 7 tells the story of Achan. Israel was on its victorious march to the land God had promised it. This was a cursed land at that time, where demon-possessed, judgment-ridden people lived. Now, while God's chosen people were moving forward from victory to victory, Achan did something that God had forbidden. All the spoils were to belong to the Lord. That was the law. Now Achan found a beautiful coat of sinear and silver, along with a golden rod and a valuable sword hanger. He lusted after it. He took them and buried them.

Here we have a prime example of the development of every sin. Eve sees the delicious fruit, David sees Bathsheba, Demas sees the shining world cities full of lust and luxury on his missionary journey with Paul. Sin mostly finds its way into our lives through the eye. We see something, desire it, take it wrongfully, and hide the whole story of sin.

After Achan's sin, Israel's triumphant progress falters. The Lord is defeated and everything comes to light. By casting lots, they find out that Achan is the guilty

one. He is summoned, confronted, and he cannot deny. Touching and of deep prophetic meaning in this scene is the fact that Joshua addresses him with the words "My son!". Is Achan then still a son of Jehoshua after his crime? Yes, he is and remains so! Is the rich man in torment still a "child" of Abraham? Certainly, because Abraham addresses him as such (Luk 16:25). So the Lord sees in him still or already, as one understands it, a son of Abraham!

Jos. 7, 19: "My son, give glory to God and make a confession, yet make known to me what you have done and do not hide it from me!" By making a confession of one's sins, one honors God. By concealing one's sins, one does not give glory to God; one falls into pressure and urgency, fear and weariness and gloom, and can no longer live a victorious life.

Joshua does not say, "Get this story straight with God," but commands, "Make it known to **me**!" and "Do not conceal it from **me**!" There are confessions that must be made before men because one cannot get right with God alone. One cannot get rid of sorcery and grave sexual sins alone; one does not obtain forgiveness or deliverance. Every pious attempt to forgive one's own sins - and many believe they can - fails. One shies away from embarrassment and does not want to humble oneself. But this is a dishonor to God that never lets us become free and joyful. One honors God by confessing to a man. There are no rigid laws here; one must let the Spirit chastise and admonish and be obedient. Then our life is bright and victorious and fruitful. - -

"And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Verily I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: I saw among the spoil a beautiful coat of sinear, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a golden rod, fifty shekels in weight; and I lusted after it, and took it; and, behold, they are buried in the earth within my tent, and the silver under it. And Joshua sent messengers, and they laid it before Jehovah. Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the mantle, and the golden rod, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his small cattle, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought it into the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, How hast thou brought us into tribulation! Jehovah will bring you into tribulation in that day! And all Israel stoned him, and they burned them with fire, and cast stones at them; and they set up a great heap of stones over me, in which is there unto this day. And the Her turned from the fires of His wrath. Therefore they gave that place the name Tal Achor until this day." (Joshua 7:20-26).

Now the triumphal procession of Israel continued. But if this were all that is written of Tal Achor, you would say, "Woe is me! How often have I embezzled my time, which belongs to the Lord, and my money, which is also deeply His, and used it for vanity and sin, looked upon a woman to covet her, even though it was not in the most evil sense, and yet committed adultery before God!"

That is why I must also show you the other side. For the truth as set forth in Scripture is bipolar. If one, as we all tend to do, singles out only one side, one becomes a fanatic; only when one sees both sides, as the Lord did when He pronounced His "Again is written!", does one recognize the sacred harmony of opposites. Opposites always appear to our natural, carnal-mental thinking as mutually exclusive. With God, however, they form an inner unity on a higher level. - -

When someone sins, he not only sins personally, but he burdens the whole church to which he belongs, making its victory impossible. What a serious matter this is! This requires that we must let what is sin in our lives dissolve, that it must burn with divine flame. This flame is called a "flame of Yah". This is of serious and yet also wonderfully beatific significance. In Song of Songs 8:5 and other passages, which in the Elberfelder translation are rendered exactly as Jah only in the lower note, this name appears 16 times. Who knows something of the deep meaning of biblical numbers, thinks here immediately of the fact that there are 16 fruits of the flesh according to the Galatians letter. Four is the number of the world and 16 is 4 times 4. If this does not appeal to you and convince you, then let it lie. Maybe God will show it to him later in other contexts.

Since names reveal the essence of a thing or person according to Scripture, only half of God's essence and character is revealed in Yah, the first half of Yahweh's name, and that is His judgment, holiness, earnestness and severity. This is also taught to us by the whole of Scripture.

The other side, which leads us into His very being, is His love and grace, His mercy and His grace. Even the judicial uncovering and burning out of our defilements and unfaithfulness is grace (1 Cor. 3, 11-15). Love is a flame of Yah (Hohel. 8, 6), as we read. What is somehow sinful in our lives (pious pride, envy and unforgiveness and whatever it may be), we must, no, may dissolve by the power of the blood of Christ and let it burn out by the fire of the Holy Spirit. In the Millennial Kingdom this is fulfilled outwardly. There, in the valley of Hinnom, an unquenchable flame will burn, i.e. a flame that no creature is able to extinguish, but which will be transformed and transfigured by God after the work is done, like everything and everyone. But the firstfruits experience this already now in their earthly existence of lowliness and do not need to go through any more hell and fire judgments in the coming eons. - -

"Put me like a signet ring on your heart!" the beloved asks the beloved in the Song of Songs (8:6). The signet ring is the symbol of divine authority. It was worn either on a cord on the chest, the seat of the heart of love, or on the hand, the image of power. Therefore, the bride's sister continues:".... and like a signet ring on your arm". The upper arm and shoulder symbolize power. The high priest wore the twelve precious stones representing Israel on his heart and on his

shoulders. According to Ezek. 28:11-16, these precious stones were also found on Satan's garment before his fall. Let us open the Scriptures and believe all that is written! What we are able to grasp, we grasp, and what is not yet opened to us, we leave modestly.

"Love is violent as death, hard as Sheol her zeal; her embers are blazes of fire, a flame of Yah." God loves us so much that, if necessary, He will cast us into hell for eons. For even hell is a demonstration of God's love. The bride of the Old Testament already knew this.

"Great waters (an image of tribulation, nations and spirit powers) are not able to extinguish love, and streams do not overflow it. If a man would give all the wealth of his house for love, he would only be despised." (Hohel. 8,7) In the deepest and last reason "the man" is always God respectively Christ, and "the house" is first always Israel ("house of Israel), but last the universe. In a narrower sense, the house is our body and the church of the body of Christ. With the help of these few keys, many things are unlocked for us, and divine truths become great and alive to us.

If someone came to me and said, "I am in distress and despair. There is a debt in my life that I need to get rid of. Please, hear me out!" What would you think if I answered him, "Here are five marks; please, go, I don't have time!"? If a man gave all the wealth of his house instead of the love expected of him, he would be despised; so also God would be despised in His own eyes if He wanted to dispatch His creatures with things and things, gifts and treasures, instead of giving them Himself, giving them all His love in the Son. What a wonderful truth shines out for us here!

"Lord, give yourself to me, and take me from you!" is how you learn to pray fervently in the Spirit when you have really looked into God's heart. - -

Love is strong as death, says God's word, and its embers are embers of fire, a flame of the Lord. Just as death swallows up everything in itself, incorporating it with desire, so does love. One day, it will lead everything in and with itself to essential unity.

Without death we would not know what life is, without night we could not appreciate the day, without knowledge of darkness the light would not be sweet to us, and without enmity and horror we never understood the value of mercy and kindness. Someone wrote a book, "What do we owe to sin?" His answer was: the whole full revelation of God's love. Only sanctified faith can grasp this in a divine way. For others, such a question and answer can become a snare of the devil.

If I would have described only one side of the meaning of the valley Achor, this would have to lead to the hopelessness and the despair. Therefore I still read the necessary supplement, the counterpart, which belongs to it. Let us turn to Hosea 2:14-23! This passage begins with the words, "Therefore I will entice them (unfaithful Israel) and lead them into the wilderness." When our lives are not right, when we have become spiritual adulterers, i.e., preferring anything to the Lord, God lures us into the wilderness to set us right.... In the deserts of loneliness and the valleys of sorrow, God brings us to self-knowledge and repentance. "I will speak to her heart, and from there I will give her her vineyards, and the valley of Achor a door of hope."

This valley Achor, where a heap of stones rests on the decayed corpse of Achan, is a door of hope, and from there you get its vineyards, the essential joys of our blessed God. If you let yourself, my brother, my sister, be led into the wilderness and allow God to speak to your heart (in Hebrew also: conscience), then you become still and say, "I need it, Lord, strike!" But through this, every valley Achor becomes a door of hope for you, and you get new vineyards, new God's delights in your heart and life.

"And she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day that she came up out of the land of Egypt."

What Israel has healthy there, in Ex. 15, was a song of worship. So, who knows how soon, the holy people will sing again. There is a melancholy folk song of which one verse reads, "When the heart is emptied, it will never be full again." Here, on the other hand, it says, "She will sing again as in her youth. Your heart may not be as full of peace and joy, strength and purity as it once was, but believe it can become much fuller! When we have lost a grace through sin and unfaithfulness, God does not give it back to us in equal measure, but He gives a much greater one! "But He giveth greater grace: therefore saith He, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (Jas. 4:6).

"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me, My husband; and thou shalt call me no more, My Baal (Canaanite deity of fertility, but also of the sin of fornication). And I will put away the names of the Baalim from their mouths, and they shall no more be mentioned by their names. And I will make a covenant for them (Israel) in that day with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of the air, and with the creeping things of the earth; and I will make them dwell in safety. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, and will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in kindness, and in mercy."

But now it is written in Jam. 2,13: "Mercy boasts against judgment (or: triumphs over judgment)". With God, every end is always greater, more beautiful and

more satisfying than the beginning. For Israel it remains that its way goes through deep judgments, but its end is overflowing God's goodness and mercy.

"And I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the LORD. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will hear, saith the Lord; I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they (these three) shall hear Yisreel (the barren plain)." Talk about a chain reaction of hearings!

Grain or bread is an image of Christ's flesh,

Must or wine for His blood, i.e. His soul,

Oil an image and symbol of the Holy Spirit

In the Lord's Supper we take His flesh in the bread and His blood in the wine, His soul to us and have in us through faith the Holy Spirit, thus the whole Christ! Whoever does this in faith is blessed in essence. But whoever is not able to grasp this and takes bread and wine only as a memorial meal, will also be blessed according to his level and faith. Let it be done to each according to his knowledge; only one should never argue because of this different vision that God gives to His own (Rom. 14, 4-6).

"And I will sow them unto me in the land, and I will have mercy upon the Lo-Ruchama (non-my people). And I will say to Lo-ammi (non-my people), You are my people; and they will say, My God!" Then Israel's marriage will be fruitful, and children will be born to it like dew from the dawn (Ps. 110:3). These are spirit begettings, whereby everything that is begotten begets again, so that a chain of begettings comes into being, which has an effect all the way into Sheol. Israel will experience this very soon, and we can already grasp and experience it inwardly in our life of faith.

And all this is the result of God making the Valley of Achor a door of hope to great, unimagined bliss. Whatever sorrow and guilt there may be in your life, - there is a door of hope to a life of blessedness and glory. Sufferings, humiliations and fears make us capable of understanding others who are in the same needs, and at the same time make us capable of serving and helping them as the Lord has helped us. Thus, there is a chain reaction of spiritual begetting in our lives. This is the fruit of the valleys that God has ordained and that we all must suffer and die through in some form. This is the only way to serve others in essence. Therefore, despite the vituperations of godless and pious enemies, we continue on our path of faith, so that we may help the tormented and despairing around us and be a divine visual lesson to the invisible powers that watch us. For the princes of darkness and wickedness realize: these people can be thrown into the dirt, they always get up again, purify themselves by bowing and confessing, and

praise and give thanks even more than before. And this is a triumph of the grace of our great and glorious Savior God! - -

5. the valley of Ajalon, the valley of wild animals

We arrive at the fifth valley. It is a horrible valley, but no one can be spared from passing through it. It is called Ajalon = valley of the wild animals. What we inwardly live through and suffer through, believe through and love through, is necessary for salvation. Because "only by tribulation here the way leads to you"! Therefore, it is important that we gratefully accept all of God's guidance without rebelling against it or complaining and lamenting. As every tunnel has an end, so does every valley. We will recognize this with joy at the end of our explanations.

Let us first turn to Joshua 10:12-14. There we read an incident much ridiculed and reviled, but of marvelous significance for the faith. First it says: "At that time (when Joshua defeated the Amorites) he went up from Gilgal."

Gilgal / Golgotha is starting point and destination

Gilgal comes from galgal = to turn around, to roll, so it means to turn around or to roll away. It has the same root as the Hebrew Golgotha, where God rolled away the sin and guilt of the world onto His Son. This Gilgal plays an important role in the history of Israel. It was the starting point for many battles, it was also the place to return to for refreshment during the battle, but it was also the place to go to after victory or defeat. This is an important indication for us that we should go to Golgotha before every battle to strengthen ourselves, and after every battle to rededicate ourselves to the Lord.

Joshua 10:7-8, "And Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the men of war. And Jehovah said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid of them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them will stand before you.' God does not say, If you fight valiantly and smite them, I will deliver them into your hand, but, I **have** delivered them into your hand! We must learn to grasp and realize the victory accomplished by God Himself over all and everything. Jesus is the victor over everything, even over the beasts in our hearts: lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life. To them we may say in faith: You are defeated, the Son of God has accomplished a perfect redemption! Now He alone has authority over all and everything.

Verse 9: "And Joshua came upon them suddenly; all night long he went up from Gilgal." Our whole life is such a going up by night, for the true Sun, Christ, has not yet risen. It has set on Calvary; but the night is far advanced, and the day is at hand (Rom. 13:12). Golgotha is the starting and source point for everything;

our wandering is always a wandering through the night, - but up to the eternal goal.

Verse 11 and 12: "And Jehovah confounded them (the enemies) before Israel; and he (Joshua) made a great slaughter among them at Gibeon, and pursued after them by the way to the high place of Beth-horon, and smote them as far as Azekah, and as far as Makkedah. And it came to pass, as they fled before Israel--they went down from Beth-horon--then Jehovah cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, that they died. There were more of those who died by the hailstones than of those who killed the children of Israel with the sword."

It has been learned from ancient inscriptions that at that time huge hailstones more than a meter in diameter were hurled from the sky. In this way, God destroyed the nations ripe for judgment.

Sun and moon stood still in the valley of Ajjalon

Verse 12: "Then spake Joshua unto Jehovah, in the day that Jehovah delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still at Gibeon; and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon."

Can a man stand and command: Sun, stand still, and you, moon, too? This report has often been ridiculed. You have a clock! Do the hands go forward, or can you also turn the hands backward if you want to? Yes? And God should not be able to do that? Sun and moon are only hands of His world clock. We have just not yet learned thoroughly enough what it is about the omnipotence of God! That is why we do not trust Him with such a thing. But the one who has an idea of His greatness is able to believe it without intellectual difficulties. He, who gave the laws of nature, can also change or reverse them once. There are reports from that time that once there was a day that lasted twice as long as an ordinary day. These reports are written in stone. Our faith is not based on such reports, but solely on the infallible word of God, which never passes away, even when heaven and earth will pass away.

Gibeon means castle of the height. The story of the Gibeonites is wonderful. One could title it with: Story of a ragamuffin. They are one of the many foreshadowings of the church in which the gospel is "promised beforehand" according to Rom. 1:2. "Sun, stand still in the castle of the heights, and you, moon, in the valley of the wild beasts!" What a powerful word for the one who begins to understand the figurative language of the Holy Scriptures!

Sun and Moon = Christ and Satan

God's Word distinguishes between clean and unclean animals and between wild animals (animals of the field) and domestic animals. These terms do not quite

coincide, for the pig, though a domestic animal in many countries of the earth, is an unclean animal. The sun is a sign for Christ and the moon is a sign for Satan. Christ works from the castle of the height, the glory, the upper world of light, and Satan has his work in the valley of the wild beasts. This has a deep meaning. Where the healing sun shines, there is no need for a doctor, says an Italian proverb. The moon, on the other hand, does strange things. For example, when a person is under the magic of the moon, his weight is greatly reduced, so that after authenticated, controlled experiments moon addicts can walk over very thin sticks, sticks that otherwise do not carry two kilos, people under the spell of the moon can walk over roof ridges or climb down wobbly, loose lightning rods and roof eaves without any misfortune.

The moon also has strange effects on the soul of man. We understand this only when we have understood the biblical meaning of the moon. God's word calls it "the little light that rules the night" (Gen, 16l: It raises the sea, for example, and thus creates ebb and flow. The wisdom of the small, haughty man can only state **that** it is like that, but not explain why it behaves like that. From many contexts of the word of God we see that the sun represents Christ, the moon on the other hand his counterpart, Satan. With the help of a concordance, one should prayerfully read all passages.

Now, which of the two serves God? Most people will say that it is only the Son of God, while the enemy is his opponent. This is true; and yet, from the overall view of Scripture, we must recognize that Christ serves God **consciously**, while the devil serves God **unconsciously**. This is a strong consolation for the saints and beloved of God who discover the Valley of Ajalon in their hearts and are almost in danger of breaking over it at the first moment. All true children of God have experienced this and experience it again and again. Who denies this, knows neither the scriptures nor himself.

Victory over the enemy in the valley Ajalon

In Rev. 12:1 we read: "And a great sign appeared in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet. In former times one put the foot on the neck of the defeated enemy. Today, one takes off his suspenders and laces, does not let him shave for days and weeks, and then puts him on display in public trials as an inferior, vile creature with a criminal physiognomy. Without doubt the paganism of former times acted more divine than the Christianity of today!

During excavations, it was found that there were lines carved on the footstools of kings. For a long time people did not know what this meant, until they deciphered in tombstone inscriptions that for every province a king conquered,

for every enemy he had defeated, a line was carved into his footstool. He had and kept in the image his enemy under his feet.

In the same way it was here, or it will be once, when the woman, Israel, has the moon, the satanic powers and forces, under her feet, thus will be saved and restored. If one wants to defeat something in the Ajalon valley of his heart and life, a hereditary disposition or a sin bondage, then one says to oneself: You must finally get this under your feet!

In Rom. 16:20 we read concerning the church of the body of Christ, the election from the nations: "But the God of peace will in a little while tread Satan under your feet." Only when we have the enemy under our feet through the obedience of faith are we able to live an overcomer's life in God's power. Otherwise we remain in a lust of the eyes and the flesh, however fine, and in the arrogance of life, even if it presents itself in religiously disguised imperiousness, in a need for recognition, bossiness and pharisaic know-it-allism. Until the Lord comes, the church will still have to go through much blindness and self-deception, weakness and folly; nevertheless, our Head will perfect all who are truly and intrinsically His own through judgment and grace! - -

Only when we come to understand the imagery of Scripture do we understand why Joshua commanded, "Sun, stand still!" He wants to say with it: If it becomes dark now, we have not yet completely defeated the enemy; therefore, Lord, stand still above the height, shine on, let the victory, which You fight for, become a total victory for Your glory!

Therefore our message, which is given to us, is: We want to live out the total victory of Christ Jesus. In the Ajalon of our heart, no matter how pious it may be, there lives, apart from the disposition and possibility of lust for the eyes, carnality and pride, so much envy and strife and unbroken self-will that one could despair. But in Christ Jesus we may be victorious over this. Whoever does not strive for this goal of faith and this attitude, God will not bless him in the long run, even if he considers himself the most pious and lets himself be considered so.

Israel perished because of the non-eradicated Gentile nations, and we perish because of our non-eradicated sins. Israel perished for lack of knowledge. Knowledge, however, is not knowing, but a loving relationship with God, in which the Holy Spirit begets with our spirit. Where this divine act of grace and love does not take place again and again, there is no essential knowledge, no becoming one of two for the procreation of new life.

"Moon, stop!" We want to know your methods by which you work (2Co 2:11)! When the moon rises, the animals work, and indeed all the animals of the forest (Ps. 104:19-21). But when the sun rises, these wild beasts retreat and encamp in their dens (v. 22). Our pride, our unbroken selves hide. According to verse 19, the sun knows its setting, the Lord knows His death. His manner of death and His hour of death. We do not know about our downfall, - but the sun, Christ, the Lord, knows and wants it.

God "makes" darkness

Psalm 104:20: "You make darkness." This is a short word, heavy in content, which some twist to their own destruction. It does not mean that darkness has become through evil, sinister powers, but that God has "made" it. From this one believes to have to conclude that God created evil and the evil one as such and thus man is not to blame at all for being evil and remaining evil. Thus the moral freedom of man is abolished or at least remains in question. For many people, such one-sided teachings open the door to sin.

How does God "make" darkness? Simply by withdrawing. "The sun knows its setting", it sets (verse 19). But when does God, the Lord, the Holy Spirit withdraw? When one does not want Him! He says, in a sense: If you do not want Me, then do what the devil commands you to do, what your evil heart tempts you to do! God is so sure of His victory that He lets His creatures, even His enemies, do what they want for a certain time.

The night = the time of the animals, the animal, the demons

What happens in the night? We have already seen that all the beasts of the forest stir: our sins and lustful desires awake in the absence of Jesus Christ, assault and torment us. Is it the same with pious people, even with a Paul, for example? Romans 7:8 may give us the answer: "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, caused every lust in me." If he had written "In the adulterers and murderers," we would have let that stand. But he says "in me!" So there was no lust or desire which, if not as an act, yet as a desire and impulse, arose in Paul. "Every lust in me!" That is Ajjalón, that is the valley of the wild beasts!

The more obediently and resolutely we try to fulfill all laws and commandments by our own strength, the stronger the sin sleeping in us becomes, all the evil hereditary traits in us awaken. Only when we say: I am thoroughly contaminated, all evil dwells in me, I will perish without You, O God, then our devotion becomes complete and we become free and happy. Only then have we grasped the redemption of Jesus Christ. Do we understand now what it means: "He made the

moon for the appointed times"? Everything that is created and has come into being has a beginning and therefore an end; however, the Father and love have always been and therefore never cease.

In Job 34, 14. 15 we read a wonderful parallel how God makes darkness, how death comes into the world. This does not happen by a positive act of creation, but by Him withdrawing on and into Himself and hardening His shedding of light, life and love and not wanting to know anything or anything anymore about God. This is the greatest punishment for a creature, when God withdraws from Him.

That is why David, when he heard that the child of Bathsheba had died, anointed his head, got up and ate. Now he knew: I am not abandoned, God deals with me, deals with me, at first in judgment, but He still cares for me! But what does the Lord do according to Job 34, 14. 15, so that the flesh passes away and the man returns to dust, i.e. dies? He directs His heart and His spirit only to Himself, and then everything sinks into night and horror. In this simple, in a certain sense negative way God "makes" night. Now, in the night, all the animals of the forest stir. It is a fact that in the so-called "blue hour", the time just before and just after midnight, when a large part of people are under the influence of alcohol, nicotine and sex, is the time when the demons make their play. Therefore, it is important for a person who wants to become physically and spiritually healthy and joyful, pure and strong, to lie down in God's arms and sleep during this time. Sleep before midnight has been proven to have twice the value of sleep after midnight. This is not a fairy tale, as some "night owls" would have us believe, but a fact that has been tried and confirmed by many doctors and lay people.

The night is no man's friend, but especially the time between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m.. That's when the wild animals stir, that's when crimes happen, that's when people sin, that's when Satan unleashes his power. Therefore, it is good for the body and soul of man if he does as the sensible animals do, who go to sleep shortly before sunset and wake up shortly before sunrise. The fact that the devil wants to make this impossible through our civilization, the entertainment industry, etc., is proof of the correctness of this statement.

After, then, comes about because God withdraws. We are still living in the day of grace. But "the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). Do you know who this nobody is? It is the enemy who has his being and does his work in the night. But God is "someone", namely the greatest and most beautiful, the only one who really exists, the strongest and most lovable.

Psalm 104:21: "The young lions roar for robbery and demand their food from God." Do you believe that God responds to the roars of robbers who make demands on Him? Yes, He does! That is how fundamentally kind He is.

"The sun rises; they (the wild beasts of the night) retire and encamp in their dens." (v. 22.) When daylight comes, the nocturnal predators disappear. When the Christ sun rises over a life, our evil desires retreat to their dens, that is, to the subconscious and unconscious, and are no longer allowed to function and rule. When we occupy ourselves with the Word of God, praying alone and together, serving and loving one another, our desires and urges that were doing their mischief before disappear. They are still there, but hidden in their caves, waiting for the time when it will be near again and they will be allowed to do their thing again. The evil, murderous lodger must remain in his assigned basement and may no longer dominate our senses and thoughts, our speech and actions.

Verse 23: "Man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening." Here faith sees the true man Jesus Christ, who will go out to "His work" until evening, that is, a whole God's day of a thousand years (2 Pet. 3:8), to exercise His Messiahship in the Kingdom of Peace. But on the evening of this day of God the devil will be let loose again, the wild beasts will come out of their high places again. Such is what the inimitable imagery of Scripture teaches us. - -

Joshua 10:13: "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed still, until the nation had avenged itself on its enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jashar?" There were more such books as the book of Jashar mentioned here. The Bible also refers to and acknowledges extra-biblical books. Paul even quotes contemporary philosophers and poets, people who deny the divine inspiration of the holy books hold this against us. But we are not baffled by this, and we hold fast in faith that the Bible is God's Word unconditionally and in all circumstances, and that every letter is coming to fulfillment as heaven and earth pass away. The ambiguities and contradictions, the impossibilities and obscurities are not in the holy books, but in our impudent, darkened human minds.

"And the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to set, about a whole day." So this day lasted not 12, or 24, but 48 hours! "And there was no day like it, before it, nor after it, that Jehovah hearkened to the voice of man; for Jehovah contended for Israel. And Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp at Gilgal." (verse 14. 15).

Whether Israel suffered victory or defeat, - before the battle, often during the battle and also after the battle the people went to Gilgal. This is an indication for us that we may command the Lord everything to the smallest detail. Nothing is impossible for Him, and He leads out everything, but really everything gloriously. Praise be to Him!

The "Valley of Ajjalon" of our life

Ajjalon is a dark depth where the wild animals stir at night. Only when the sun rises again do they lie down in their dens, as we read in Ps. 104:20-22.

We must not believe that after our salvation our natural heart will become a pleasure ground of pious feelings. Fight to the blood is promised to us! But a fight in which we stand on the side of the victor, with and in Christ Jesus. There is no desire that does not somehow live in us, that does not once come alive in our heart. That is terrible! Once a mature brother told me, "The older you get, the worse you get". This does not mean that one commits crimes; but it wants to say that one becomes capable of anything when God's grace departs from us. Many think: If one is converted long enough, one is so pious that nothing evil stirs. But the old flesh is no more good than the young flesh. To experience this is always a shock. I'm sure you all know the little book of hearts by Goßneer. The animals we see there live in us, in your heart and mine. And to have to go through this valley Ajjalon to worship, that is not a small thing.

When girls and women in pastoral care tearfully described to me their experiences with their brutal husbands, when they felt trampled in the dirt, I often told them the testimony of Ecclesiastes 3:17-19. There we read a downright cruel statement; but it is a word of God: "I said in my heart: because of the children of men it happens, that God may test them, and that they may see that they are animals in and of themselves. For as for the fate of the children of men and the fate of beasts, they have one fate; as these die, so die they, and **one** breath have they all; there is no preference of man over beast, for all is vanity."

This is the show from the earth. Scientists also say that there is no difference between man and animal in and of itself. They are right; outwardly, there is no fundamental difference. But in Christo and for the Father, man is a being highly exalted above the most radiant angelic princes of the universe. We stand between these two statements and must put up with being considered equal to the animals, or even beneath them. For when an animal has eaten and drunk enough, it ceases; but man often does not cease, but eats and drinks as much as enters into him. In and of himself, that is, without the Lord and the discipline of the Spirit, man is but an animal, often less than an animal.

A young man once asked Father Böhmerle, "Father, is dancing in and of itself a sin?" - "No, just dance in and of itself, then it is certainly not a sin," was the quick-witted answer. Another time a young farmer's son asked him, "Father, aren't boys and girls allowed to dance?" - "Yes, of course; the boys should dance at one end of the village and the girls at the other. Then it is not a sin."

A third word of this gifted, inimitable witness of God! Once a girl complained to him of her distress: "I have an acquaintance who wants to marry me. But he is

not a child of God, does not go to church and community and does not want to know anything about the Bible and prayer. Can't I marry him? I could pull him up to me"! "Well, let's do the rehearsal!" answered Böhmerle. The girl had to stand on a table and the priest ordered her: "Now pull me up to you"! But the girl did not manage to do that. Then he said: "Be careful, now I pull you down to me"! That went very easily. What a practical teaching that was! In the vast majority of cases, the unbelieving part pulls the believer down, and relatively rarely the reverse happens. - -

We must have the courage to realize that there is nothing good in us, we are only animals and spiritually we live in the valley of Ajalon. Who has not yet learned that his heart is filled with bad inheritance from Adam and Eve, so that he is capable of any crime, has not yet grasped the power and beauty of salvation. The deeper the humiliation of self-knowledge, the more luminous and delightful the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Did not even Paul testify that "Every evil desire" awoke in him? Apart from the God-man Jesus Christ, there is no created being in whom this was not, is not and will not be the case. Every person and every nation consciously and unconsciously represents its own being. That is why families and peoples choose coats of arms and flags corresponding to them, Russia has a bear, England a lion, Germany an eagle, France a rooster, China a dragon in its coat of arms. In this way, the nations show that they are animals in their innermost being. In the same way, God reveals His being of love and grace by choosing the most wretched and miserable, nothingness and zeros, such as you and I, in order to make of them the greatest and most glorious thing there is, the body of the Christ, the body of the Son. In the election, the character, the mind of the elector is revealed. We are deeply moved when we are allowed to recognize these connections under the discipline and guidance of the Spirit of God from the words of Scripture. Thereby not only our intellect is satisfied, but our heart is made happy by holy powers and delights. - -

The animals of the 22nd Psalm

When we speak of Ajjalón, the valley of the beasts, we think of a tremendous song of the Bible in which a whole series of animals are mentioned. It is the 22nd Psalm. In the first half of this sacred song, we encounter seven animals.

1. Animal: "Hind of the dawn". Jesus is called here in the heading Hindin or hind, which is hunted early. The hind blows her warm breath into the winter nests of the snakes in spring, thereby luring the snakes out, takes up the fight with them and defeats them. In the process, it often happens that she, the hind herself, perishes. Faith sees here a representation of the way Jesus defeats Satan and is himself killed in the process. Two biblical passages in which Christ is depicted as a hind hurrying from mountain to mountain are found in the Song of Songs. In 2, 17 she hurries to "the rugged mountains," and later, in 8, 14, to "the fragrant mountains." Now in the evil eon to the rugged mountains and later, in the millennial kingdom, to the fragrant mountains. There the bride sends the bridegroom. "Disembark, my beloved!" This holy love does not say: oh stay with me and do not go away, but it asks: go, fulfill your divine mission!
2. Beast: "But I am a worm and not a man" (verse 6). According to Jewish custom, the 22nd Psalm was prayed in its entirety by Christ on the cross and not, as one might think, only individual words from it. Like all Scripture, this sacred song is about Christ. "I am a worm"; a worm is a small serpent; man is called a "maggot" (Job 25:6); that is a very small serpent. And Satan, the old serpent, the dragon? In paradise he was a beautiful animal. Only by cursing him, he got a different shape and a different sprite. We find in Babylon wonderful representations of Satan as he was before his fall. How did the people know this? By the oral tradition of Adam and Eve, whereby certainly much lived on in the memory of the people.
3. Animal: "Many bulls have surrounded me" (verse 12). Bullocks are young oxen and bulls. They were brought as sacrifices by kings and priests. Only poor people were allowed to offer lambs, goats and doves as sin and trespass offerings; farrows stood around the cross. They are a representation of the principalities and powers of the invisible world.
4. Beast: "Bulls of Bashan have surrounded me" (verse 12). Bulls from the fat pastures of Bashan are great or powerful ones, representatives of the invisible world. And what was our Lord? A worm and not a man, a hind that is killed early. Yet He will have the strong to rob (Is. 53, 12)!
5. Beast: "They have opened their mouths against me like a ravening and roaring lion" (verse 13). The lion is an image of Satan, and as he opens his mouth against Jesus to devour Him, so the bulls and the bullocks also

opened their mouths. But He hung helplessly on the cross. What tremendous truths are revealed to us in this depiction!

6. Animal: "Dogs have surrounded me, a pack of evildoers has surrounded me" (verse 16). Dogs are a picture of the heathen, just as camels are. If we have the key: Dogs = a representation of the impurity of the Gentiles, Camels = a symbol of the pride and wealth of the nations, then we immediately understand many images of Scripture in their innermost meaning.
7. Beast: "Yes, You have heard me from the horns of the buffalo" (verse 21). Buffalo or wild oxen (Luther translates unicorns) were considered untamable by the Assyrians. Job 29:9, 10: "Will the buffalo (wild ox) want to serve you? Will you bind the buffalo with a rope to the furrow? or will he harrow the valley bottoms after you?" All of this, humanly speaking, is impossible. --

These seven beasts, hind and worm, bulls and bullocks, lions, dogs and wild oxen were, figuratively speaking, on and around the cross.

The 21st verse brings the turning point: "Save me from the lion's mouth"! So the head of the Lord was in His hour of death, figuratively speaking, in the jaws of the cruel lion. "Yea, Thou hast heard me from the horns of the wild oxen."

Then follows a program of 12 points, the fulfillment of which leads to full victory.

In the first part of the 22nd Psalm we see Jesus in the valley of the wild beasts. He himself, the Lord and the head of creation, is made sin, degraded to the animal world. He is the hind and the worm. Having become a curse, He hangs on the curse wood and dies; but He is rescued from the death-throat of the cruel lion, saved from the horns of the terrible wild oxen. All these powers will bow before Him. His victory song closes with the testimony of John 19:30 and 16:33c: "He has done it or accomplished it," overcoming the world through His triumph on the cross.

The need and fear in the "valley of the wild animals" is necessary!

On our walk through the valley of the wild beasts, we are spared nothing. There is no blessing and no derailment that is not inherent in our lives. The things that we have not yet passed, we still have before us. Not every challenge has to become action, but the possibility of sin, albeit in the very subtlest form, is always there for us. There is no adversity or anguish into which we do not enter and through which we do not have to die. Once we really serve the All, we come into contact with a vast amount of guilt and horror of people and angels. But we can serve and help others only with what we ourselves have been served and helped with by God. All evil is from us and all good is from the Lord. Into this reality the Holy Spirit lets the Gospel shine. But gospel is joyfulness, is delight and blessedness. God is filled with a will of delight, and if this does not flow through us, we have not yet grasped the real essence of the gospel. You cannot get into it, nor can you get into it through thoughts or feelings, nor can you take it over by resolutions of will, - you can only *die out the* highest love and the most glorious light. That is a secret of the valleys.

Those who are really in the process of dying to the world and to sin and to their own ego, we must tell them the message of grace and glory. If we do not do this, we drive such sincere people into gloom and despair.

Whoever has matured in faith stands in the divine field of tension of the middle without falling over to one side or the other. Children often stumble; fanatics always see only one side and not the complementary opposite pole. But those who really stand in the Word understand the harmony of opposites. Today, "faithfulness to the line" is demanded in all areas. Whoever is allowed to stand in spiritual maturity does not allow himself to be bound to lines, no matter how pious, but to the Lord and His Word alone, and to be guided by the Holy Spirit. When we are young, we remain faithful to our self-chosen "line" and go wherever we want. But when we have grown old, we stretch out our hands and the Lord will lead us His ways, which mostly our flesh does not want (John 21:8).

But we must never forget that the Word of Scripture, the Spirit of the Lord and the counsel of the brethren reveal to us the divine norms. "All things are yours!" we read in 1 Cor. 3:22, 23. The apostle Paul confirms this with the words, "All things are lawful for me" (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23). But those who take the position that we should make much more use of the word "all things are yours" are in great danger. If we are truly obedient to the Holy Spirit, we will not slip to the side of lawlessness, which covets everything, nor to the side of the law, which forbids everything that God has given in refreshment and comfort.

Man is destined to be the ruler over the animals

One more word about this strange valley, over which the moon and the sun stood still. In Genesis 1:26-28 we read something about the animals, our relationship to them, and our purpose in them. God states as the first purpose of man, "They shall rule." Man is thus set to rule, but not to be a tyrant and exploiter. For to rule in the divine sense means: to lavish oneself on others, to communicate oneself to them in a gratifying way. The reign of God is always, even in the greatest courts, a reign of love and grace. The worldly rulers live from their subjects, but the true rulers, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit live for their subjects! If you ask, "What is the meaning and purpose of our life?", God answers, "You shall rule!"

This is almost unbelievable to us, since man has become the slave of his lusts and urges, of his hereditary dispositions and environment, of industry and technology, of the whims of woman or man, and we are a thousand times poorly bound. No animal needs so long until it can move freely like the human being. Every duck can swim away immediately after its birth; every filly soon stands on its legs. But man needs almost a year of laborious care until he can walk to some extent. And this man shall rule

1. about the fish of the sea,
2. over the birds of the sky,
3. over the cattle and over all the earth and over all the creatures that move on the earth.

That is three spheres! We may well assume that the then created primeval man, the perfect, not yet divided man, was really able to rule over the lower creatures, otherwise God would not have demanded it of him! And indeed the older church fathers believed that Adam was able to rise into the air, to go down into the depths of the waters and to have his play with the fishes in the streams, lakes and seas, but lost this ability with his fall. Scripture has spread a veil over some things, and we must not want to penetrate what it does not say, just as we must not reject what God has clearly revealed. In any case, man shall have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, the cattle and the worms. - My friends, if we take this only superficially and literally, it is already a grandiose thing! Man has lost most of this dominion in the meantime. But if we start to read the Bible in the way we witness again and again in our lessons, then we realize with amazement that the

Fish of the sea are an image of the realm of the dead and the dead. God starts with the hardest, so He calls the fish first.

Birds of heaven are spirits that peck away the good scattered seed of God's Word. Doves are pure birds, symbols of the Holy Spirit; eagles, ravens and others

are unclean birds that bring whims and lusts, passions and temptations into our lives.

The animals of the field represent our natural urges. Every word of God is purified sevenfold (Ps. 12,6). Therefore, according to the Scriptures, there is also a sevenfold interpretation of each word, as we see from the sevenfold Holy Spirit and the ray of light refracted into seven colors. The vernacular speaks of a lamb's patience, a serpent's wisdom, a lion's courage, etc. In the large circle of the crowd, Jesus interpreted the concept of the seed differently than in the small circle of the disciples. We should learn from this for our conversations and our preaching of the word.

We are to rule over the death being (fish), the demon powers (birds) and the natural instincts (animals of the field). Man is supposed to be the crown of creation, the representative of the glorious, almighty God, created in the image of the Creator. However, we find the opposite today. Man is prone to innumerable diseases, to all evil, he is in despair, filling asylums and penitentiaries, and there are millions of men, women and children facing suicide. There is hardly anything to be seen of a reign of grace and love over all creatures.

And still God's program is fixed! What He has promised us, that He will also do. Faith may already anticipate, i.e. receive, what will one day appear outwardly in us, the congregation, in Israel, in the nations, in the angels and spirit powers, in the dead and the damned. Every word of God, after its various preliminary and partial fulfillments, will also find its complete fulfillment. The congregation may, yes, must see and testify to this.

That is why we are also led into the valley of the wild beasts, so that we may learn to rule over desires and wickedness, over lusts and crimes. You, too, whoever you are, who are still despairing of yourself, will, by God's judgment and grace, become a ruler over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over the cattle and the worms of the earth. That is God's program, and He also carries it out and carries it through! - -

The four dimensions of God

Let us listen to what is written in Job 11:7-10. "Can you reach the depths of God or fathom the nature of the Almighty? High as the heavens - what can you do? Deeper than Sheol - what can you know? Longer than the earth is their measure and wider than the sea. When He passes by and arrests and gathers for judgment, who will resist Him?" From Ps. 36:6 we see that God's judgments are called a great deep. Heights and mountains, on the other hand, are usually tensions. That is why valleys are ways through judgments. On those who resist,

they are executed outwardly and forcibly; real God-seekers, on the other hand, enter self-judgment voluntarily. "He who judges himself will not be judged." - "The Spirit searches all things, even the depths of the Godhead" (1 Cor. 11:31; 2:10) i.e. also the purpose of the constrictions and judgments that He places on His creatures out of love.

In our word of Job, the thoughts of God are listed for four dimensions. The so-called science, however, knows only three dimensions: Length, width and height. Thoughts, however, have the depth as fourth dimension. The sea is an image for the realm of the dead in many passages of Scripture. For example, Rev. 20:13 tells us that after heaven and earth have disappeared, the sea returns the dead. From this we see that the sea here does not mean the oceans of the earth.

In Eph. 3, 18 the same four dimensions are mentioned as in our Job passage. But they are listed in reverse order. We find such reversals of the order of enumeration even more often in the Scriptures. With humans, many things happen from the outside in, but with God, everything happens from the inside out. We also find this confirmed in the accounts of the tabernacle. The letter to the Ephesians reports width, length, depth and height; Job 11, on the other hand, tells us about height, depth, length and width. For us, God's Word is full of veins of gold, contains vaults of treasure whose keys have been lost; but through the Holy Spirit we learn to look into these things raptured and delighted.

In Job 12:7-11 something is said again about the animal world. This is an area that plays a major role in Scripture, but is treated very contemptuously by people, even though there are many "ladies" who have more time, money and interest for their dog than for the living God. This scriptural word tells us:

"Ask the cattle and they will teach you". The cattle should teach us something? The arrogant man renounces this. And yet this is written.

"And the fowl of the air, and he shall make it known unto thee; or speak unto the earth, and it shall teach thee. And the fish of the sea shall tell thee." The mute fish are going to tell us something? When a natural man hears this, who, like many pious people unfortunately, has no idea of the symbolic language of the Scriptures, he shakes his wisdom-filled or even empty, hollow head.

"Who would not know from all this that the hand of Jehovah has made these things? In whose hand is the soul of all living things, and the spirit of all human flesh? Should not the ear test the words as the palate tastes the food for itself?"

All valleys and depths serve the completion

To test God's language with the ear the way we taste an unknown food, this also includes asking the animals and the earth and learning something from them. We know that gems and pearls are created through heat and pressure or through

injury and healing. Also from our tears and sufferings once pearls and precious stones become, after we in the valley of the affliction and the animals became crazy at the sense of the life and tormented up to the blood, ask shaken: How can God permit such a thing? Let us finally learn to pray: "Lord, open the eyes of my heart, that I may understand something of the meaning and purpose of sufferings, which after all are only instruments of Your love". According to Scripture, there are darkneses or "depths," "deepest depths," "uttermost depths," and spaces "below the depths." According to Psalms 145 to 150, all beings and worlds, including the farthest darkness spaces, shall and will one day praise and glorify God.

According to Psalm 148, not only all the angels and hosts of the Lord, not only all the shining stars, not only the waters above the heavens (verse 1-4), but also water monsters and deeps, fire and hail, snow and fog, storm winds and wild beasts will worship the Creator rejoicing (verse 7-10).

One can consider such words as oriental exaggeration, as it happens even in Christian circles. But this is a disparagement of the sayings of God, before which we tremble, if we have understood, experienced and tested the essence of the Scriptures through the Holy Spirit. If today we often complain: "I have done everything wrong!", in the end we will once without exception jubilantly confess: "The Lord has done everything well!" From our failures God's possibilities of revelation become, which would not be without our misery. The fervor of love breaks through our misery and fills us with His blessedness. Therefore, we go through all valleys with faith and know: The end of all will be glory. The last, the saved and transfigured world, will be greater and more beautiful than the first, the unfallen creation. All the torments of the deep serve to make the high goal of perfection more radiant and wonderful than the beginning. - -

6. valley Kidron, valley Das of darkness and filth

Let us now go to another valley, the valley of Kidron. It is the valley where all the filth and the debris of the idolatrous altars of fornication were thrown. Kidron is a large valley to the east of Jerusalem, and its tributary valley is the valley of Hinnom, Hebrew: Gehenna, in German: Hölle. Each of us must go to this valley. Otherwise we will not get rid of our defilements of soul and spirit. And only after a liberation in the valley Kidron our life becomes bright and blissful.

What worries the world's urban planners and city builders most today is garbage collection. The greater the prosperity, the more masses of garbage grow. The trash cans of the West are overflowing; we can't believe all that is thrown away. The problem becomes worse when we think of nuclear waste, because the remains that are left there are extremely dangerous to life. What should be done

with it? Shoot it into space or dump it in the sea? You would have to put thick lead jackets around it and take other precautions. That is a serious problem

The detoxification of our lives

But even more important is the detoxification of our body, soul and spirit. Our waking consciousness, subconscious and unconscious are much more contaminated and corrupted than we suspect. The removal of the poison from our body eats much more important than the supply of new strength. Four weeks without purification, without removal of feces and urine means certain death. On the other hand, one can fast for a few weeks without difficulty. In this field there is an incredible ignorance among people.

The valley Kidron is the place of the garbage, the refuse, the sewage. Imagine if there was no toilet in a house, nor a drain, nor a way to dispose of garbage. What do you think there would be?

As it is in the earthly-material, so it is also in the soul-spiritual. A person who does not allow himself to be detached and emptied of his dirty thoughts, words and deeds, who does not seek to get rid of his inhibitions and states of fear, is truly

bad about it. If a child of God does not want to go to the valley Kidron, does not want to let himself be detached from malice and envy, arrogance and lie, mammon spirit and carnality, then all pious prayers and all pious talk are of no use, - he suffocates in his filth. This is only too true! The garbage misery of the modern cities is also the misery of the modern man in our world full of disgrace, dirt and poison.

All the valleys that Israel had to pass through served a God-given purpose. Even the valley of Gehenna, where the flame of burning was not extinguished (Mark 9:44), belongs to the household of God. The removal and destruction of the rotten and evil is important and vital. Therefore, we bring all our wickedness and stupidity, our sin and shame immediately to the valley Kidron, the valley of purification in self-judgment, or later to the valley Gehenna, where compulsorily all are brought who do not voluntarily purify and cleanse themselves. Let us carefully read 1 Cor. 3:13-15!

What God cannot dissolve into joy and holy happiness by the spirit of grace and goodness, He melts once by fire in front of the judging stage of Christ or in front of His holy, great, white clay. Let us never forget this!

What are we building on the Christ foundation?

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, I as a wise master builder have laid the foundation; but another buildeth thereon: but let every man see

how he buildeth thereon. For no other foundation can any man lay, save that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:10, 11)

The ground on which we stand is not a "lineage," a particular "dogma," or a "theological view," but Jesus Christ. Not whoever has this or that alleged "higher knowledge" but whoever has the Son has eternal life (1 John 5:12). Whether he has learned to distinguish between the body and the bride of Christ or not is irrelevant. It also does not matter whether he sees the ultimate goal of God's ways or not, but rather that he willingly and completely lets himself be emptied of his own ego, his inferiority or superiority, his arrogance or his depressions, and allows himself to be truly and essentially filled by Jesus, abides in Him and longs for His coming from the bottom of his heart. This is the life from God, and where this is missing, one lives from special teachings and hobby horses, which do not impart a life of victory, no essential joy and power in service and testimony.

The laying of the Christ-foundation of our salvation and our salvation was *God's* business; but whether we build on this foundation gold, silver and precious stones or hay, straw and stubble, that is *our* business, for which we have to give an account one day. Let us not forget, however, that much of what we consider to be gold, silver and precious stones is in reality nothing but hay, straw and stubble, while conversely, much of what was thought to be hay, straw and stubble will one day reveal itself to be essential spiritual fruit. What we have done to the poorest and least, we have done to the Lord (Matth. 25, 40). Even if we do something stupid, but are driven by love, it is valuable and precious in God's eyes, because He looks at the heart.

What is nothing, God chooses

In John 3, the Lord Jesus talked with a professor of theology about regeneration, and in John 4, He talked with an adulteress about the nature of worship. We would have done exactly the opposite. With a high spiritual gentleman we would have talked about worship, but with a licentious woman we would have talked about conversion. But our Lord certainly did not make a mistake.

Do you know why He acted this way? Because it pleased Him so! "You have hidden it from the wise and prudent, but have revealed it to babes. Yes, Father, for so it was pleasing in Your sight"! (Matth. 11, 25. 26).

When I could grasp this, I stopped praying: "O God, when You chose me, You made a mistake, for I am a very poor wretch in whom there is nothing good." Only "nothings" are chosen, so it is a great grace to have been truly undone (1 Cor. 1:26 - 29).

It's all about the coronation!

Before the judgment seat of Christ, there will be a judgment of praise, reward and crowns, but no one will be condemned there. At a sports festival, there are gold, silver and bronze crowns or wreaths. But will the others who do not receive awards be executed because of that? No! In the same way it will be one day in front of the judging stage of Christ. He who has built wood, hay and straw, his work burns; he is neither praised nor rewarded nor crowned, but he is and remains saved, yet as through the fire. The fire has burned away all that is good for nothing.

The crowned will not look down on the uncrowned, and those who have not been crowned will not envy the victorious. In the consummation, all human-earthly things are eliminated. And yet everything will happen just as the Scriptures describe it in earthly images and parables, but much more real and substantial than we are able to imagine. - -

Kidron is the valley where garbage, dirt and destroyed sin buildings were destroyed and consumed. We, who believe, may already go to the valley Kidron again and again and burn and destroy some things. What takes place here inwardly does not need to be carried out there outwardly. We should and can renounce here already in the spirit all that of which we are ashamed. Only then do we have the right and the power to tell others in holy earnestness and to help them to be really and essentially detached from their lusts and passions. Through our prayer of faith, with or without the laying on of hands, those who are bound become free. But we do not boast about this! Otherwise, the consecration and authority of our ministry would be lost.

Ittai moved across the Kidron

We want to mention another man who went over the Kidron, Ittai. We read about this in 2 Sam 15:19-23: "Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, 'Why do you also want to go with us? Turn back and stay with the king, for you are a stranger and have even wandered into your place. Yesterday you came, and today I should let you wander with us? But I will go where I go. Turn back and lead your brothers back; goodness and truth be with you! But Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, in the place where my lord the king shall be, whether it be to death, or whether it be to life, there shall thy servant be also. Then said Davit unto Ittai, Come and pass over. And Ittai went over, and all his men, and all his children that were with him. And all the land wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over. And the king passed over the brook Kidron." Ittai means both "the Lord is with me" and "I am with the Lord." This is a living relationship and back relationship. When we are with

God, He is with us; and because He is with us, we are with Him, placing ourselves completely and undividedly on His side.

Ittai did not want to remain at Absalom's disposal. For him, David was the true king. But David did not immediately say, "Yes, stay with me!" He rather admonished: "Turn back and stay with the king!" But Ittai wanted to share the lot of the rejected and wandering one.

For David, just like the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul, was a wanderer and homeless. What a resolution of Ittai's! "And if I have to die with you," he wants to say, "I will stay with you!" So we too may stand on the side of our Lord and Head, who was rejected by the world and still is. Our watchword must be: "If I perish, I perish. But if I perish, I enter into life."

Humiliation paths are blessing paths

After David realized the genuineness of Ittai's heart's resolve, he let him go with him. The way over the brook Kidron was a painful way of humiliation and death. Thus he had laid aside his royal power and splendor, he had given everything to death and was henceforth cast alone upon his God.

Such hours, when we realize that we are profoundly only wanderers, having nothing but the living God, such situations of throwing everything away, we need again and again. Without them we freeze in dead piety and lose joy and fullness. It is not enough to talk or pray oneself into a frenzy of enthusiasm from time to time, to let loose a pious firework and unintentionally become a dazzler who presents more outwardly than he really is inwardly. It is necessary to recognize the brook Kidron as a God-sanctified place of blessing and to remain in it until one has learned the lessons that the Lord wants to teach us in the wisdom of His love. Therefore, let us continue on our way with joy, and we will experience wonderful things. Let us dare to be lonely, persecuted and reviled outwardly, - the more blissful we will become inwardly. What is the name of *your* Kidron Valley?

The purification of the temple of our body

In 2 Kings 23:4 we read, "The king (Josiah) commanded Cilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second rank, and the keepers of the threshold, to put out of the temple of Jehovah all the vessels that had been made for Baal, and for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the coasts of Kidron, and caused their dust to be brought near Bethel."

What does this story mean for us personally? What does the temple of God shade in view of our person? The temple is close to the scripture an image for our body. There are all kinds of dark things in the folds of the heart. But they belong out into the light! There is no greater grace on earth than to first

thoroughly embarrass and expose ourselves before God and a faithful person. This is a truly great gift. But most pious people do not dare to enter into this total bankruptcy, and do not want to bring out from the courts and hiding places of their hearts these things of sin and shame. However, the Holy Spirit does not rest until He has taken all the images of shame out of our consciousness and subconsciousness and thrown them into the valley Kidron. That is why it is so important that we enter this valley again and again, in order to bring into it everything that burdens us in secret and makes us unfruitful for service.

The valley Kidron stretches like a semicircle around Jerusalem and flows into the valley Hinnom = Gehenna. You certainly understand if I now say to you with great seriousness; This message is of no use to you, even becomes an accusation to you, if you do not smash all the shameful things hidden in the secret nooks and crannies of the heart and bring them to the valley Kidron.

1. Chrom. 29:16 tells us, "The priests went into the inner parts of the house of Jehovah to cleanse it." This was the sanctuary and the holy of holies. Not only the outer court, but also the specially consecrated places required the
2. Purification. We may compare the arms, legs and abdomen of man to the forecourt, the breast with its nobler organs to the sanctuary and the head as the uppermost and most important part of the body to the holy of holies. Not only did the priests find all kinds of dirt and excrement in the forecourt (this is quite natural, since sacrificial animals were slaughtered there every day), but also in the sanctuary and holy of holies they came across vile, lewd things that did not belong there at all. The Scriptures, as well as certain sources of the literature of the time, report shocking details about this. All this garbage was taken to the Kidron Valley and burned.

A home without sewage, from the sink to the toilet to the garbage disposal, becomes a stinking pest in no time. This applies to our body household to an even greater extent. Likewise, an uncleaned child of God is in a process of self-poisoning that must lead to spiritual death. Here lies the deeper reason why there are so many unhappy, tormented and fruitless children of God. From time to time they let themselves get into a spiritual frenzy by supposedly "higher" and "deeper insights," but all the oratorical fireworks do not help them to purification and recovery. Sad and burdened, they vegetate on and know nothing of the channels of God's blessing that are available to us.

The valley of Kidron is related to the valley of Gehenna, where the flame does not go out. Only when you live through these valleys and die through them may you grow into God's purity and power, peace and joy.

God sanctifies and uses the Kidron Valley

Another wonderful word from Jer. 31:40: "The whole valley of borrowings and ashes, and all the region unto the brook Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate eastward, shall be holy unto Jehovah." Surely one would think that a valley of corpses, ashes, and refuse would be an abomination to God. Certainly, that is the case at first. But when these decaying, stinking waste materials are cleared out, they are holy to Him. This is incomprehensible to us at first. But once we understand that the unholiness of the saints is holy to God, we begin to understand this. Our Father needs the curse, the death, the darkness, the corruptible. After all, He transforms curse into blessing, death into life, darkness into light, and corruptible into incorruptible. Nothing is pointless and purposeless in the universe of our God. It is true that He is not at all pleased with everything that is now. Sin and curse, suffering and death, damnation and hell are by no means an object of joy to Him, as some people with morbid piety think, but He uses them for His purposes of salvation and glory and resolves them with regard to their nature and duration. This is what God's Word says in many contexts and examples.

So also here! Because the last sentence of our verse reads: "It (the Kidron valley) shall not be cut off nor destroyed in the eon." This valley remains until into the millennial kingdom, because near this kingdom of peace shall come a much greater, crueler world war, as God's word says. - -

God creates life from death and in this way works an increased glory of His glory. He who can take this in faith does not become careless. He does not think that a serious, holy walk is not so important. Whoever thinks like that, this message does not belong to him, the Holy Spirit does not transfigure it to him, and it does not essentially belong to him. Only broken people understand and grasp it. Proud saints who think that they have never committed a sin and that they are always and everywhere in the right and therefore must always be the first are neither able to understand nor to grasp this message in its ultimate depth. Because God's building material of the future glories are the waste products in the valley Kidron!

We do not allow this message to be bent, either to the right or to the left. We bless the valleys and depths, praise the grace of God and thank the Lord always for everything, also for Diddim, Achor, Ajalon and Kidron. Only who may grasp this, suspects something of the full redemption!

7. the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of judgments

Today we come to the seventh and eighth valley, the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of judgments, and the valley of Beracah, the valley of praise. These valleys

are, in a way, the crown of what we have looked at so far. After all, we started with the worst, the Valley of Demons, and went through the Valley of Communion, the Grape Valley of Joy, through valleys of tribulation and wild beasts to the Valley of Darkness, Filth and Dirt.

Now we come to the valley of Jehoshaphat and read Joel 3. There it says: "Sies, in those days and at that time, when I will turn the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem ". The captivity of God's people among the nations shall cease, Israel shall return home to its land at the end of time. Has this not already begun? Have we not been experiencing this for years? Is it not happening before our eyes?

".... then I will gather all nations." There are as many nations as there are princes of heaven. For every nation has its representative in heaven. The prince of Israel is the archangel Michael. For a long time, Germany thought that Michael was its representative. That is why people also speak of the "German Michel". But this was a mistake. However, no nation was as close to Israel in terms of blessings and sins, judgment and grace as the German people.

"...and bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat." Jehoshaphat means: the Lord judges, or: the Lord is judge. "And there I will judge them concerning my people and my inheritance Israel, which they have scattered among the nations."

God will call all nations to account. "Yes," I hear the critics say, "surely God Himself brought about the battle against Israel according to His own words!" Certainly! God uses the nations as instruments of punishment against His disobedient people. But the Gentile nations have gone way over the top in God's judgments. And for this they are judged by God.

"My land they have divided." All division is repugnant to our God, for He is a God of unity, of summary, who wants to be all in all at the end of His ways Every rending and division torments. What the Lord has created, He wants undivided for Himself. Therefore, He is also an enemy of divided hearts. Or let us think of the brokenness of the Body of Christ as it now presents itself to our eyes. Or let us remember in this context the divided Jerusalem and the divided universe. Divided things are an abomination to God!

"They have cast lots over my people; the boy they have given for a harlot, and the girl they have sold for wine which they drank. Quickly, with haste will I bring your doings back upon your head." God judges nations and individuals according to how each has behaved toward His earthly covenant people and His church. We create our own standards of judgment. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you." (Matt. 7:2). If you are kind and gracious to your enemies, God is also kind and gracious to you. Because the standard by which God will one

day judge is our behavior toward Israel, we should say much more often in our prayers with faith: "Lord, bless Your people and inherit Israel!" and : "Prosper over Israel!" By saying this from our hearts, blessings come upon us. "He who blesses you will be blessed!" After all, we see how quickly and strongly National Socialism came under God's judgment because of its hatred of the Jews. We will also see this with regard to the other peoples once in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

"Let the nations arise and go down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations around. Put on the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, stamp, for the winepress is full, the vats overflow. For great is their wickedness."

No word of Scripture, no biblical concept has been so distorted and turned into its opposite as the word judgment. For to judge actually means to make right. Judgment, justice and righteousness mean almost the same thing, since they have the same word root. Once we have grasped this, we begin to see many things with divine eyes.

For most people, court is something they want nothing to do with. Many fear being called as a witness in a court trial. Divinely speaking, to judge is profoundly to do right. That is why those who are rebuked in court are blessedly praised: "Behold, blessed is the man whom God judges (or rebukes)!" (Job 5:17).

"A judge who condemns is good only for destruction.

The office of the right judge is to restore!

and according to Scripture, the sentence applies:

"People *execute*!

God is *setting things right*! "

If we hold this and read all the scriptures about judgment in this view, we also understand the beatitude about judgment, and it is difficult for us to say, "Lord, judge me!" It certainly also means: lead me into a crisis. Crisis is the moment when illness reaches its peak. Our life goes through continual crises, so that sometimes we think we cannot bear it any longer. All God's ways are judgment, but all His purposes are glory.

What is more important when I have to go to some place: that I know my destination, or that I set out and take the path under my feet? Both are necessary! Therefore, messages of judgment and the proclamation of glory are not mutually exclusive, but indissolubly belong together.

In Deut. 32:4 we read, "All His ways are right." This contains the concept of rightness, of order, of being made right with punishment. Therefore, God is also

called in this verse a God of amen or faithfulness, whose doings are perfect. Both the way of Israel, which is an image of the way we live, and the ways of the nations and the whole creation go through humiliations and fears. All life consists of valley wanderings. That is why we may always recognize from the whole of Scripture: God's ways lead through crises and judgments, contain hidden blessings, and end and culminate in the radiance of light of eternal glory. We go from one shock to another. When you think, now all the problems of your life are settled, now I can finally breathe a sigh of relief, another misery, another hardship comes immediately. In Psalm 103:7 we read of God, "He made known His ways to Moses, His deeds to the children of Israel." But what He has purposed in secret, He has not let Israel know, He has kept it for Himself. "That which is hidden is the Lord's, our God's, but that which is revealed (unveiled, revealed) is ours and our children's even unto the eon, that we may do all the words of the law." (Deut. 20:29). God requires that we, the members of the Body of Christ, believe every promise. But Israel wants to do (and is supposed to do, even at first) all that the Lord commands herself. Here we are talking about a double: the secret will and the revealed will. Creation, Law, Israel, His Kingdom, belong to the revealed will of God. But our Father also has a secret will, and this veiled will belongs to Him. Has He not revealed it? Yes, to the apostle Paul and thus to us. As soon as we have grasped this, we are arrogant people in the judgment of the semi-pious and followers. But don't we read in Eph. 1,9: "He has made known to us the mystery of His will"? And not according to the degree of our sanctification or law-keeping, but "according to His good pleasure"!

But this is only one side. It is also a fact that God reveals His heart and thoughts to us according to the degree of our faithfulness and love. For "He does nothing, except He has made it known to His friends". It is, after all, scriptural teaching and experience that the Lord gives more insight, joy and peace to such a person who lives a hidden life with Him than to one who makes God only the Sunday fringe decoration of his life. This, in turn, does not exclude the fact that never a creature or its good qualities cause our God to reveal His secrets, but that this profoundly causes His own pleasure, His divine will of delight.

We read in Joel 3 that all nations shall arise to go into the valley of Jehoshaphat. Here we are not only talking about the nations living in the end times, but certainly also about the exterminated peoples of earlier millennia who have sunk into the realms of the dead. According to God's Word, the soul of every human being goes to its nations in the realm of the dead at death. We read this in many contexts of the Scriptures.

But is it possible, one might ask, that all the nations enter this relatively small valley? The valley of Jehoshaphat is east of Jerusalem. There all nations will be

judged at the coming of the Lord to earth. The standard will be whether they have been friendly or spiteful to His brethren. The brothers of the Lord according to the flesh are His people Israel, the spiritual brothers are us. It is quite possible to accommodate 2 to 4 billion people in a valley expanded by God. This can be easily calculated if we take Lake Constance as a comparison.

We make completely wrong conceptions of the functions and the nature of the body, the soul and the spirit, of plants and animals, of the movements of the stars and the celestial beings. Goethe is right when he exclaims, "We live in mystery!" But we do not need the study of natural sciences or circumstantial calculations or proofs, but simply believe what God says. And when our Father says in His holy word: "I will gather all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat," we believe it.

The valley of Jehoshaphat is perhaps a little larger than Lake Constance. So we may take it quite literally that in the valley of Jehoshaphat all nations will be judged according to their behavior towards Israel. How this judgment will play out is described in verses 18-21 of Joel 3: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall be dripping with must, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall be full of water; and a fountain shall break forth out of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Sittim. Egypt will become a wasteland and Edom a desolate wilderness because of the violence done to the children of Judah, as they shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah will be inhabited for the eon, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. And I will cleanse them from their blood, from which I had not cleansed them. And the Lord will dwell in Zion."

Do we not already experience this inwardly in our personal lives? Whoever is brutal and selfish toward others, his spirit and soul become a wasteland and desert. His life becomes fruitless and dies. Egypt and Edom will experience this very soon. But Judah will be blessed; all its land will become a dwelling place of God, and the glory cloud of the Lord will be over every dwelling. These promises are being fulfilled outwardly to Israel and the nations. Inwardly, however, we, the Body of Christ, may experience it even now. If we live in the living praise of God (Judah means praise!), the glory of the Head also shines over our lives. Genuine faith consists in taking upon ourselves, voluntarily and vicariously, that which sinners will one day experience in terms of judgment and punishment. We judge ourselves and complete in our flesh what is still backward from the tribulations of Christ. Then, even in the depths of our lives, the weight and splendor of God's glory will shine forth. We go voluntarily into the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of judgments, and do not wait until all nations are gathered there. After all, we are the called out ones and the firstfruits. Therefore, we voluntarily and joyfully anticipate everything, including the judgments. In the

Valley of Jehoshaphat, we always go through humiliation, bankruptcy and inner death. Well and, if we allow ourselves to be completely saved and to be really and essentially freed from envy and avarice, from ingratitude and unforgiveness, from sexual and sorcerous sins!

It is a deep misery that so few believers know how to come to a real liberation and a lasting life of victory. If things of our past keep coming before us in spirit and soul, and we keep falling into our favorite sins, then we should go to a faithful person and have a thorough talk with him once before God. If one cannot renounce satanic ties on one's own, then one should ask for pastoral help. When a God-believer may absolve us by laying on our hands, an indescribable happiness and deep joy enters us. My brothers and sisters, is this true? Faith means: to take into one's life even now what is coming in the distant future, both judgment and grace. But a faith that wants only glory and flees judgment and daily death is lazy and worthless. But the converse is also true: a proclamation that knows only dying and the altar of sacrifice, but neglects or even reviles the message of joy and glory that dominates Scripture, is a dangerous error. God, in grace, preserve us from both aberrations. Then our lives may stand in the holy balance of divine truth and be fruitful and delicious before our Father and the visible and invisible world. - -

8. the Beraka Valley, the Lobe Valley

Tonight we come to the eighth and last valley. It is the valley of Beracah, the valley of praise (2 Chron 20:26). When we have judged ourselves and have come to real solutions in the anxieties and distresses of the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of judgment, then the full salvation in Christ shines on us in an essential and blissful way. Then we no longer need to envy and quarrel, to nag and criticize, to revile and slander, but may in innermost unity with Christ praise and give thanks at all times and bless even our enemies. Then a holy joy is born in us that no suffering on earth can destroy. Let us therefore open our hearts to the Beraka message, so that the Lord may give us all that He Himself so heartily desires.

2 Chron. 20: "And it came to pass afterward, that the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, and with them of the Meunites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. And they came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, A great multitude is come against thee from beyond the sea, from Syria: and, behold, they are at Hazozon-tamar, which is Eingedi. - Then Jehoshaphat was afraid, and set his face to seek the LORD; and he proclaimed a fast over all Judah. And Judah gathered together to seek help from the LORD; even from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the Lord before the new court, and said, Jehovah, God

of our fathers, is it not Thou that art God in heaven, and art Thou not the ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? And in Your hand is strength and power, and no one is able to stand against You. Hast Thou not, our God, cast out the inhabitants of this land from before Thy people Israel, and given it to the seed of Abraham Thy friend for ever? And they dwelt therein, and built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, When calamity cometh upon us, sword, judgment, or feast, or famine, and we come before this house, and before thee-for thy name is in this house-and cry unto thee out of our affliction, thou wilt hear and save. And now, behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and those of mount Seir, among whom Thou hast not permitted Israel to come. Our God, wilt Thou not judge them? For there is no strength in us from this great multitude that cometh against us, and we know not what to do, but upon Thee are our eyes."

The situation in which Israel was then, seen inwardly, is again and again ours. Our enemies, be they human beings or dark forces, who want to burden, torment or even destroy us according to spirit, soul and body, are too strong for us. We are filled with fear and are fully aware of our weakness and powerlessness. Search we do not know what to do. There is nothing left for us but to turn our eyes to the Lord. His Word, His Spirit and the brethren alone can give us right instruction. What Israel did then, we do today. Every word of God has, besides its preterialistic or past fulfillment, also a presentistic or present fulfillment. Everything that Israel experienced and suffered according to the flesh, in which it failed, was humiliated, punished and set right again, we also experience. Paul emphasizes in 1 Cor. 10:11 that all these things (namely the experiences of the wilderness wanderings) are examples and admonitions for us.

"And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little children, and their wives, and their sons. And Jachaziel (the Lord will look, or care, or: cause to look) the Levite of the sons of Asaph, upon him came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation. And he said, Take heed, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat. Thus says the Lord to you: Fear not, nor be dismayed at this great multitude; for not yours is the battle, but God's!"

The first thing that the God-commissioned Jachasiel says is a word against the fear and terror that had befallen Israel in the face of their distress. Now these two pieces, fear and terror, are the characteristics of the post-Nachite animal world. Let us read Genesis 9:1, 2: "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto him, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth: and let the fear and the terror of you be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air." Fear and terror, however, were not limited to the animal world; Israel and the nations were also repeatedly weighed down and shaken by them. They became the hallmark of all creation. That is why the biblical mystic says: "Creature only fears". This means that fear and dread, terror and horror are inherent in

everything created. Only then, when we have understood this, we learn to see the woe of the world with divinely enlightened eyes and see through the lie and deceit of all beaurocracy, politics and sports, economy and technology, advertising, propaganda and fashion. We see that the world, deceived by the powers and forces of darkness and hatred of Christ, is destroying itself through its poisons of pleasure and its carnal lust, its lust for the eyes and the ridiculously insane arrogance of life.

One becomes free from fear and terror only through the obedience of faith. But not otherwise. That is why the first thing Israel is told in its hopeless situation according to human judgement is that they should not fear and not be frightened, because their fate and lot is not a matter of evil people or dark forces, but of God. We who believe and are saved must also learn this first. Only God's saints and beloved are free from fruit and terror in truth. All other beings and worlds may try to suppress, deny, whitewash their fear and horror; - they will not succeed, since the Lord alone knows and knows everything and directs and guides according to His plan and will. Both Israel's struggles of the past, present and future and ours, the church of Christ, decreed, are not vicissitudes of fortune and misfortune abandoned to chance, but profoundly a test of God's power, a proof of His omniscience and love, indeed, the vindication of all the Father's ways with all His creation established before the foundation of the world. Only when we grasp this in faith and hold on to it in worship are we redeemed in truth and no longer need to be frightened or afraid.

And Israel was to learn this in the valley of Beracah. Therefore God tells him in wonderful accuracy of His foreknowledge (2 Chron. 20:16): "Tomorrow go down against your enemies; behold, they come up the hill of Ziz, and you shall find them at the end of the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel."

When we stand in the living praise of God and know ourselves secure in His peace, we too may grasp and experience in the holy obedience of faith: "You will not have to fight; go, stand and see the salvation of the Lord upon you! Fear not and be not dismayed; go out to meet the enemy, for the Lord will be with you. - Then Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord to worship Him. And the Levites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with an exceedingly loud voice." (V. 17-19).

And now comes the mystery of Beraka, the miracle of the Valley of Praise, which has already become a help and a blessing to countless people in need and distress. I know of many whom I know personally that they took this mystery into their practical lives and experienced one miracle of grace after another.

"And they rose up early in the morning, and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in the Lord your God and you will be established; believe His prophets and you will prosper. And he consulted with the people." (V.29).

This is something wonderful: the ruler did not command, but consulted with his subjects, sought advice from the people and consulted them.

And he appointed singers unto the LORD, which sang praises in holy array, and went forth before the scaffolded, saying, Praise the LORD: for his mercy endureth for ever. And at the time when they began to rejoice and sing praises, the Lord set an ambush against the children of Ammon, Moab, and those of mount Seir, who had come against Judah, and they were smitten." (V. 21.22).

Isn't it incredible? Here is a huge army of enemies, and against this battlefield a small band of Jews marches, and in front of the soldiers, in front of the vanguard, the singers march in holy adornment, praising and glorifying God. What army commander sends a regimental band against the enemy and behind it the soldiers? But this is how victory was won in Beraka, the valley of praise!

This is how we must do it! Before every battle, at the approach of every difficulty, before the adversities and burdens of work and family come upon us, we should send holy singers ahead into the fray. God defeated the enemy when His people *began to rejoice and sing praises*, not when they *stopped* praising and worshipping. In this way, and not otherwise, we are able to become victors in all our struggles and hardships.

"And the children of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, to destroy them, and to destroy them." Now the enemies become divided among themselves, and by fighting each other, Israel does not need to fight.

"And when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, one helped another to perish". Israel's enemies destroy themselves. The kingdom of darkness breaks in and of itself, for the devil destroys his own people. We see this in many a context of Scripture. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were thrown into the fiery furnace, they remained alive, but those who threw them in perished miserably. "The refined eats the members of his body," says God's Word (Job 18:13). Jesus, on the other hand, feeds and cares for the members of His body. Again and again we see that in the end the enemy destroys himself, that unbelief and sin are destructive forces. But when we offer "sacrifices of praise" without an exhilaration of soul, but trembling and hesitating in faith, God's enemies break.

A believing soldier was assigned in the last war to stand guard at a very dangerous point that was under heavy fire. He had to stay there for two hours; the others had ducked out. When he returned, his sergeant asked him, half mockingly and half respectfully, "Surely you were afraid during those two hours?" Then the witness of the Gospel answered, "If you had been as afraid as I was, you would have run away." With this he wanted to say: I persevered in spite of my fear, because I stood there with God.

I am convinced that the holy singers in the valley of Beraka, who began to sing praises in obedience to the faith, were also very afraid. They saw the mass of enemies with their cruel and dangerous weapons and still obeyed. Their praise was a sacrifice. And sacrifices of praise always lead to victory. For some inexplicable reason, the enemies renounced each other. Here faith can only marvel and worship!

Why don't we start our day with praise and rejoicing, even when fear and unbelief want to grip us? Then we should experience the unsubstantial collapse of the things that seem to stand against us. When we begin with rejoicing and singing praises, God prepares a defeat for the enemy. Therefore, let us not wait until we feel like praying, but let us go with thanksgiving and praise into all situations of our fear, need and weakness. We have no strength in ourselves, but looking to the Lord we walk the path of obedience. And this is victory, complete and joyful victory!

"And Judah came up into the mountaintop toward the wilderness; and they looked round upon the multitude, and, behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground, and none had escaped." There is a total victory over sin and worry, fear and gloom only when we go into battle with rejoicing and singing praises, saying, "O God, I am small and poor, and Thou art great and rich; I can do nothing, but Thou canst do everything!"

"Then came Jospahat and his people to rob their spoils." That was permitted and quite in order at that time. Spiritually, it is also our blessed right. He who is able to grasp this, let him grasp it! "And they found among them both possessions and dead bodies." This word here for dead bodies can also mean outer garments. "... and precious vessels in multitude; and they plundered for themselves until it was no longer bearable. And three days they robbed the spoil, for it was great. And on the fourth day they gathered together in the valley of Beracah, for there they praised the LORD: therefore the name of that place was called the valley of Beracah unto this day. And all the men of Judah and Jerusalem turned back, with Jehoshaphat at their head, to return to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD had given them joy in their enemies. And they came to Jerusalem to the house of the Lord with harps and with lutes and with trumpets. And the terror of God fell upon all the kingdoms of the countries; when they heard that the LORD had

contended with the enemies of Israel. And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat had rest; and his God made it rest round about." (2 Chron. 20, 25-30).

The fighting stopped, the enemies came no more. The victory was total because God won it. Believe in the total victory that Christ has won for you, and your life will be a walk in the valley of Beraka, full of praise and thanksgiving and joy.

Let us be told that when we are weak, know nothing, can do nothing, and face a multitude of enemies, there is still a way to win the victory: "Stand and see the salvation of the Lord" (2 Chron. 20:17) and "The Lord will fight for you, and you shall be quiet" (Ex. 14:14). In such a situation, one waits in faith and tells his God, "Now I am anxious to see how You, Lord, will handle the situation." That's when you stop fighting yourself and let God let the enemy destroy himself. The Valley of Berakah is a picture of how we can defeat the enemy through praise and thanksgiving; we overflow, encompass and destroy him according to Col. 2:6,7 through our thanksgiving.

In this word of Paul, 7 stages of faith are mentioned, one more beautiful than the other. They are images from various fields of human life, children's play, student life, plant growth, construction, etc. The last image is from the field of strategy, the art of war. "Overflowing with thanksgiving" means: to seize from the flanks, to surround, to encircle. In this way we are able to defeat the enemy in spite of his strength, to which we are only poor grasshoppers (Exodus 13:33), through praise and thanksgiving, when we give thanks and worship against our feelings, in spite of our weakness, even when only fear and terror are in us. Sacrifices of praise overcome the enemy!

Let us read Psalm 8:2: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast founded praise." In some translations, instead of praise, it says power. But the Lord Jesus translated it praise in Matt. 21:16. We are even less than children and babes to the principalities and powers of the heavenly worlds. "For the sake of Thy afflictors," it continues. Does God also have oppressors? Yes! For thousands of years He has been accused and blasphemed by insolent men and dark demons. But He wants, through our praise, "to silence (or repent) the enemy and the avenger."

Here we have two names of Satan; he is the enemy and the vengeful one in contrast to God, who is the Loving and Blessing One. God puts in the mouth of the children and infants His praise and His glory to silence His adversary or to make him turn back. He could shout even louder than His enemy, drown him out or even destroy him, - but He does not! He puts praise into the mouth of the weak, and thereby His opponent is silenced.

We cannot possibly defeat and disarm the forces of darkness that want to torment and destroy our lives by our own strength. But the moment we start

praising and rejoicing like Israel in Beracah, God ambushes the enemies and leads us to complete victory.

We would like to understand the meaning of our valley walks: it goes from the Demon Valley through many valleys and finally through the Judgment Valley to the Lobe Valley, because every self-judgment leads to thanksgiving and joy. I am urged to point out this connection again and again. If we allow ourselves to be judged and punished by the Holy Spirit, our heart will be filled with praise and thanksgiving, and through this we will be able to hold on to our inheritance in death and lead a victorious life, despite all burdens. If we live in self-judgment as long as we are in the body of sin and death, then we will surely reach the goal of His eternal joy with God's help.

God's miracle in the desert - by Adolf Heller

[By Adolf Heller: God's Miracle in the Desert](#)

All that Israel experienced in the flesh is a warning example, an admonishing speech of God to us. In some form or another, we experience and suffer the same hardships and temptations, even if only in spirit and soul. It is of fundamental importance for our practical life of faith that the Apostle Paul shows the Corinthians, nations like us, the history of Israel in the light of these inner connections when he writes: "I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from a spiritual rock which accompanied them. But the rock was the Christ. But God was not pleased with most of them, for they were laid low in the wilderness. But these things happened as examples for us, so that we do not lust after evil things, just as they also lusted... All these things happened to them as examples and were written for our admonition, upon which the end of the ages has come" (1Co 10:1-11). "All these things," that is, not just one or another, are examples (types) and are to serve as encouragement or admonition to us. They are to keep us from corrupting, evil desire. For even for the believer there is the possibility of becoming an idolater, committing fornication, and murmuring against God's leading.

In order to save us from the errors and aberrations we can encounter, the apostle directs our attention to God's miracles that Israel experienced in the wilderness. They are miracles of grace and judgment. They reveal, on the one hand, the ingratitude, apostasy and total inability of the people to do anything good, and on the other hand, the holiness and faithfulness of God, who reveals His longsuffering and patience again and again.

Of the many and varied miracles of God in the desert, we want to pick out twelve and look at them more closely.

1. Bitter water becomes sweet
2. The feeding with manna
3. The rock at Horeb gives water
4. Nadab and Abihu are consumed by fire
5. The fire of the Israelite camp
6. Miriam becomes leprous
7. The downfall of the Korah pack
8. Aaron's green staff
9. The rock at Meriba gives water
10. The salvation through the brazen serpent
11. Balaam's talking donkey
12. The Jordan stands still

In reflecting on these events, let us not only look back at what happened, but also try to understand what all these things have to say to us in our current struggles, hardships and temptations. In addition to this retrospection into the historical and insight into the personal, we also want to mention the prophetic significance of the miracles of the desert. For every word of God, every figure and every event aim at the future and reveal to faith what will be. For "that which has been is that which will be; and that which has happened is that which will happen. And there is nothing at all new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, Behold, this is new - long ago was it in the ages that were before us" (Eccl. 1:9,10).

1. bitter water becomes sweet

In Exodus 15:22-25 we read, "Moses caused Israel to depart from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Sur; and they wandered three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And they came to Mara; but they could not drink the water of Mara, for it was bitter. Therefore they gave it the name Mara (bitterness). And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD, and the LORD pointed him a wood; and he cast it into the water, and the water became sweet."

After the glorious mercy of God at the Sea of Creation, Israel sang the song of Moses. This song is sublime and wonderful. It contains neither lament nor petition, but consists only of thanksgiving and adoration. It will even be sung at

the sea of glass in connection with the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3). Its content is the praise of the works and ways of God.

Now, however, after the salvation from Egypt it does not go immediately into the promised country, in it milk and honey flows, - no, God leads the people into the big and terrible desert, into the waterless plateau Sur (in German: Mauer or Mahner). This was an incomprehensible guidance for the people. For they had been promised a glorious land full of fruits and blessings, a rich garden of God! And now this disappointment!

Don't we feel the same way in life? After high points of wonderful blessing and refreshment, salvation and help, our way leads into hot, stony deserts, where no water of refreshment gushes. Just as Israel had to taste the bitter water of the curse at that time, so many disappointments, tensions, and sufferings are also prescribed for us. Of course, we see afterwards how salutary and necessary all these painful, bitter things were! But when we are in the midst of them, they almost tear our hearts apart with unnameable pain.

What did Israel do? It grumbled! Do we do it differently? Hardly; otherwise Paul would not have had to write to the Corinthians, "Neither murmur, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."

The grumbling of believers is a much worse sin, dishonors the Father of love and faithfulness much more than any words and deeds of the world that God does not know. The grumbling spirit dampens the Holy Spirit and opens the door to the corrupter.

The basic partial goal that the church of the present time should now achieve is not a special achievement in this or that area, is not absolute moral perfection and untouchable holiness of our lowliness, but is summarized in the apostolic words: "Give thanks in everything, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18).

What is triggered in our hearts when we come to Mara, when bitterness and disappointment enter our lives? Giving thanks or grumbling? God certainly does not ask us to rejoice over every sorrow. After all, He knows us much better than we know ourselves, and knows that we are flesh. But we may and can make all our concerns, even the dark and painful ones, known before Him with thanksgiving. We need not let the dark, paralyzing grumbling and worrying spirit overwhelm us, as Paul writes in Phil. 4:6: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known before God."

Moses cried out to God in his distress. Then he was shown a piece of wood to throw into the water. The man of God did so, and lo! - the water became sweet.

Do you know this wood, this staff, which turns the undrinkable bitter water of the curse into the delicious fresh water of the blessing? Is this wood - "cursed is he who hangs on the wood!" - not a symbol of the cross? Is it not - "Your rod and staff comfort me" - a symbol of the cross?

Image of faith? Let us learn, as often as we come to a mara on our pilgrimage, to throw the cross into it in faith! For "all these things" are models for us, and were written for our

Encouragement. So here, too, we are not dealing with an arbitrary one-time event with no deeper meaning, but with a divine plan and outline for our personal life of faith.

Everything, no matter how difficult and painful, which we take in view of the cross and in faith, turns into blessing and benefit. We will be happy if we do not only believe this to be true in theory, but can also experience it in practice! Then, not only do we no longer have to grumble and complain at every opportunity, but we may rather go through all difficulties with thanksgiving and adoration.

But not only in our personal lives is the wood able to change the bitter water of the curse into fresh water of blessing, also with regard to all nations and the whole creature this will become apparent in God's time and hour. Christ, by virtue of His cross, will one day renew the whole creation. For Golgotha means the fundamental elimination of guilt and curse and is the turning point of world events. Therefore also the culture peoples, who are in many pieces unconsciously their own prophets, calculate their time events before and after Christ or speak nevertheless clearly of a "turn of time"!

God could have given Israel fresh water immediately or turned the bitter water into fresh water by an act of divine grace. But he does not do so, but lets the wood be thrown into it. Wood is also a frequently used image of humanity in Scripture. Just think of words like: "I see people like trees", "If this happens to the green wood, what will happen to the dry wood" etc. Through the incarnation of the Son of God, all curses are transformed into blessings. Therefore the poet sings adoringly:

"Its rays, full and free,
Make Creation New Too!"

2. the feeding with manna

It is not easy to pick out some from the abundance of fine references and typical circumstances and to leave so many delicious things lying around. How much could be said about the closing words of Exodus 15:26: "I am the Lord who heals you (or: your physician)"! Or what

Strong prophetic content has the short note in the last verse of this important chapter that there were 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees at Elim! Who would not think of the 12 tribes of Israel and of the fact that the number of all nations according to the Scriptures is 70? After all, the Lord also had two circles of disciples, first the Twelve who were not allowed to go any road of the Gentiles, and then the Seventy who were sent to the nations.

After the hot, waterless Sur comes the lovely Elim (ram strength, mighty trees) with its springs and palms. But from Elim the train goes to Sin (thorn, clay, excrement!), the terrible desert God provides in every way for the salutary balance of joy and sorrow, of woe and delight in our lives.

The people had learned nothing in Mara. For instead of trusting God and waiting for His help, the congregation grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt by the hand of the Lord, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate bread to satiety! For you brought us out into the wilderness to let the whole community die of hunger." Then the Lord said to Moses: "Behold, I will rain you bread from heaven; and the people shall go out and gather the daily necessities of their day, that I may try them, whether they will walk in my law, or not. And it shall come to pass, on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be double of that which they shall gather daily" (Exodus 16:3-5).

"Morning by morning" the children of Israel gathered the God-given food of heaven (Exodus 16:21). This has something to say to us as well.

God gave the manna from heaven. But the people had to gather it. In the same way, everything is given to us in Christ Jesus without our having to do anything. But it is necessary that we take hold of the goods of salvation in faith. And not occasionally, but "morning by morning"!

We need grace for grace, or grace for grace. It is necessary to let oneself be filled with God's grace again and again. That is why the apostle Paul wishes his letter recipients grace again and again. They had been made partakers of grace, but now it was necessary to take grace for grace from the available abundance.

Wherever one neglects one of these two sides, wherever one does not always reckon with the fact that everything has long since been prepared by God and is there without our intervention, or where one thinks that one only has to let everything run its course, that everything will already become right by virtue of divine predestination, wherever one switches off our God-worked energies of faith, as it were, then one goes astray. Only the realization of the two sides of truth keeps us in the holy balance of divine harmony.

Moses commanded not to leave any of the manna until the next morning. "But they hearkened not unto Moses, and some left of it until the morning: and worms grew therein, and it stank. And Moses was wroth with them" (Exodus 16:20).

Whether curiosity, laziness or defiance were the cause of the disobedience? In any case, the food of heaven became something inedible and disgusting. It is the same for us. That which God has given as a blessing can, if not used properly, become a stench. Law-keeping can turn into Pharisaism and pious zeal into religious fanaticism. Or let us just think of what has been made of the so-called "sacraments"! Something originally given to God spoiled under the hands of men.

Manna is, as one poet says, "soul food." The Scripture calls it "angel's bread", "bread of the strong" or "bread from heaven". It was not a true, lasting food, but only a model on the essential bread that the Father gave from heaven. Thus the Lord says in John 6:48-51a, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live into the eon."

The natural bread from the sphere of this earth is for the body alone; the manna, the angel's bread from the heavenly world, is for the soul (i.e. for body and soul); but the God's bread from the sphere of the inaccessible light is for the spirit (deeply natural for body, soul and spirit). Every bread is a model for the next higher level; after all, the Lord also says that man does not live on bread alone, that is, on earthly bread, but on every word - and in the deepest essence Christ is the Word! that comes from the mouth of God.

The feeding of the Israelites in the desert was a prophetic model of the salvation of the world. Just as Israel received its sustenance from heaven in the form of manna, God gives the life of God to the cosmos through His Son, the true bread of life.

The Lord testifies to this in Joh. 6, 32. 33, when He says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you: Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the essential bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down out of heaven and gives the life of God to the cosmos."

The Lord confirms this glorious truth in verse 51b with the words, "But the bread which I will give is my flesh, which will give for the God-life of the cosmos." -

3. the rock at the Horeh gives water

At Horeb, Israel again grumbled because there was no water. They made the blasphemous claim that they had been led out of Egypt only to die of thirst in the desert. Moses feared being stoned to death and cried out to God for help. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and the rod wherewith thou hast smitten the river, take it in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand there before thee upon the rock of Horeb; and thou shalt smite upon the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people shall drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the strife of the children of Israel, because they had tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD in our midst, or not?" (Exodus 17:5-7).

What a wonderful revelation of Christ we receive here! We see from 1 Corinthians 10 that the rock that went with Israel was none other than Christ. And now God commanded to strike this rock so that water would come out of it and the thirsting people would be watered.

The beaten rock! Who would not think of the cross here? There the Lord was beaten. More senseless than the beating of a rock with a staff was the murder, which one committed on the purest and noblest of all people. And, nevertheless, a source of the salvation and the blessing was opened by the beating in both cases!

Just as the grumbling of the people was the cause of the rock being struck in the wilderness, likewise, in human terms, the sin of the world was the cause of the Son of God being killed. The wickedness creature is only able to open up new depths of love and glories of grace in the being of God. What a blessed truth!

Just as Moses, by striking the rock, did only what God had willed and commanded, so all the powers that put the Lord to death were nothing but executors, compliant instruments in the hand of God. If they had recognized his hidden wisdom, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Water flowed from the smitten rock; the crucified Christ is the source of all salvation and blessing for the fallen creation. The salvation and perfection of the world has its cause in the cross of Golgotha. From here grace and peace flow renewingly through the universe. Therefore Paul writes in Gal. 6, 14: "But let it be far from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."

The apostle does not boast "of the cross", as most translations say rather inaccurately, but "in the cross". Apart from the basic truth that Christ died for us, there is also a wealth of salvation truths arising from it and building on it. He is not only the Lamb, but also the High Priest, the King, the Head, the Lord, the Judge, the Redeemer and the Finisher, to mention only a few of His offices and dignities.

Paul boasts of the cross, but he does not boast "only of the cross", since he emphasizes and mentions other truths much more than the basic fact that Christ died for us. He rather boasts "in the cross"! Not as a ruler and admirer, but as a crucified one he does his service. This is what he wants to say.

From Christ, the smitten rock, flow the waters of salvation. Water is a frequently used biblical image for divine salvation and blessings. The value of "living water," that is, freshly bubbling spring water as opposed to dead or salty waters of decay, is naturally much more appreciated in the hot Orient than here.

The smitten rock has not only prophetic and symbolic significance, aimed at Israel and Christ, but also has much to say to us for our personal lives. If, according to Goethe, we must be either hammer or anvil, the position of a believer in the present world is that of an anvil. Not as if the pious should be sissies and cowards! The daily life of many believers has proven the opposite in countless cases. However, like our Lord and Head, we may learn the holy heroism of silent suffering. We are not to become beating rocks, but beaten rocks. This is completely contrary to our natural human nature. We understand Goethe very well that four things are repugnant to him: Tobacco, garlic, bugs and - the cross.

It is easy to speak of Pauline lines of the church of the body of Christ. But when you are put into practice, when you really become a smitten rock, then things look different.

How does Paul say about himself? "Everywhere afflicted... persecuted... cast down... always carrying the death of Jesus in our bodies...so death is at work in us..." (2 Cor. 4:8-12). This is truly what it means to be a smitten rock! He, the inspired apostle, who is given to us as a teacher and an example, says of his

suffering in 1 Cor. 4:9-13: "We are presented as the last, as destined to death...we are fools for Christ's sake...we are weak...we are despised.... until the present hour we suffer both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are beaten with fists, and have no appointed dwelling, and toil, working with our own hands. Reviled... persecuted... blasphemed... we have become the refuse of the world, the refuse of all until now".

Was not Paul also a beaten rock? And yet no complaints, no bitterness came out of his mouth. How he had learned in the lamb school of Jesus! In the dungeon of Philippi, despite his sore back, he sings songs of praise and thanksgiving! He blesses his enemies, tolerates any vituperation and prays for his persecutors. Not bitter water of cursing, but fresh water of blessing gives this beaten rock.

And you and I? Are we not also beaten rocks in some relationship, in some area? Hasn't life disappointed and deceived us in this or that part or even all along the line? Have we not often reaped ingratitude, envy and hatred, when we thought we had sown only love and good?

The rock at Horeb is cut and gives fresh water! Horeb means in German: desert, wasteland, wilderness.

There Moses strikes the Christ-rock; there the fresh water of blessing flows upon the ungrateful, grumbling people of Israel. What mighty examples and admonitions, shameful to us, are enclosed in this simple fact! Would we learn from it! -

4. Nadab and Abihu are consumed by fire

Exodus 10:1-3 tells us, "The sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, each took his censer and put fire in it and put incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said unto Aaron, This is that which the LORD hath spoken, saying: In those who come near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace."

How often we read about "Aaron and his sons after him"! To them the position as high priests seemed quite secured. Let us only think of the names they had been given: Nadab means "volunteer" or "prince", and Abihu means "my father" or "the father remains as he is".

So it is not surprising that these two men became confident and lost the holy timidity that is our due even in the most intimate love relationship with God.

They offered "foreign fire". They did not follow the holy rules exactly and thought they could act according to their own discretion. They were sons of the high priest and successors of their father! It was a foregone conclusion among the priests and the entire people that they would one day hold the highest and most glorious office in the Israelite cult.

"Stranger Fire." What does this mean? In the final verse of the previous chapter, in Exodus 9:24, we read that fire went out from God Himself and consumed the offering made to Him. This was a proof that the offering was pleasing in His sight. Therefore the people rejoiced and fell on their faces in worship.

Also later, in Exodus 16:12,13, it is commanded that Aaron should not use any, a "foreign" fire to offer the incense before God. Rather, it says, "He (i.e., Aaron) take a pan full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD ... that the cloud of incense may cover the lid that is on the testimony, and that he may not die." Moreover, regarding the golden altar of incense, God had commanded: "Ye shall not offer strange incense upon it.... most holy is it to the Lord."

Similar laws apply in the heavenly regions for the heavenly beings, of which everything earthly is only an image and afterimage. Thus we read in Rev. 8, 4, 5: "The smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar..." It was not from any fire, but from that of the heavenly altar that the angel's censer was filled.

Every sacrifice and every worship that is not ignited by God Himself or in a way that corresponds to Him comes from the flesh and soul and is an abomination to Him. God was not pleased with Cain's offering, however valuable it may have been in and of itself, but with Abel's (Genesis 4:4, 5). Because Abel offered his sacrifice out of faith (Hebr. 11, 4).

Are there not also many Cainite sacrifices in our country? How much "unreasonable worship" happens when one is not willing to lay oneself on the altar as a sacrifice pleasing to God! That is why Paul writes in Romans 12:1: "I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable worship."

All foreign fire of spiritual enthusiasm has no value because it is not taken from the altar of God. If the pure holy love of the Father is not the origin and purpose of our life and service, everything else is of no use. That is why the apostle sings

in the Song of Songs: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become a sounding brass or a resounding cymbal. And if I have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so that I move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I distribute all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I lay down my body to be burned, but do not have love, it is of no use to me" (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

How much foreign fire has our tongue, this "unsteady evil full of deadly poison," kindled and carried on! How right James is when he writes: "Thus the tongue is a little member and boasts of great things. Behold, a little fire, what a great forest it kindles! The tongue is a fire, the world of iniquity. The tongue is set among our members, as defiling the whole body, and setting on fire the course of nature, and being set on fire by hell" (3:5, 6).

Let us learn from Nadab and Abihu never to take our relations with God lightly, nor to take our position with Him for granted, but to live before Him and praise Him in the holy timidity that befits us, as a growing son should toward his father!

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But we would like to point out three short words before we leave the serious chapter of Nadab and Abihu, namely the end of the third verse. There we read the short and yet so serious sentence: "And Aaron kept silent."

What sorrow and surrender are enclosed in these three words! What would it have meant for the father to see his two sons die such a terrible death! How perfectly understandable it would have been, if Aaron had lamented and moaned aloud, yes, if he had started to complain and grumble against God's guidance.

None of this is the case. Aaron was silent. He had learned something in the school of his God from the leadership of his people after all. He knew about the incorruptible holiness, but also about the love and faithfulness of his God: whose ways of education are just and wholesome.

From us, the congregation of the Christ body, God may also demand more because of the increased light He has given us in Christ Jesus. Not only mute submission to His will, but praise and thanksgiving "always for everything". This alone is the secret of our preservation in the Lord and of a victorious, joyful life and testimony, that we learn to go through all the anxieties and hardships of this time and world as thankers and worshippers. - (To be continued.)

5. the fire of the Israelite camp

"It came to pass, when the people complained, that they were evil in the ears of the LORD: and when the LORD heard it, His anger burned, and a fire of the LORD burned among them, and devoured the end of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and Moses prayed unto the Lord, and the fire ceased. And they called the name of that place Tabherah (fire), because a fire of the Lord had burned among them" (Numbers 11:1-3).

How many salvations and preservations Israel had already experienced since its deliverance from the yoke of Egypt! And yet neither gratitude nor trust had come alive in him, let alone self-condemnation and change of heart.

Again and again, it quarreled with God's guidance. Their constant mistrust and grumbling must have offended the Lord. Nevertheless, God carried the disobedient and unruly people as if on eagles' wings.

God can bless and lead on only where thanksgiving and obedience, devotion and trust form the basis. But where one mistrusts and grumbles and complains, He must create the necessary self-knowledge and self-condemnation through judgments and ways of breakage, so that the creature no longer expects anything from himself, but everything from Him.

However, the person who has not been truly renewed by God's Spirit can neither give thanks nor trust. He always thinks that he somehow gets a raw deal, is somehow disadvantaged and oppressed, and therefore does not come to true, lasting peace. All religious worship and the occasional flare-up of holy feelings and resolutions do not help in the least.

Even the continuous enjoyment of divine blessings is not able to change the basic attitude of the natural man towards God. The best proof of this is provided by the so-called "little time" after the messianic kingship of Jesus Christ (see Rev. 20).

What will it be like there?

In the Millennial Kingdom, the most favorable preconditions are created externally to satisfy mankind in every way. Satan, the enemy and tempter, is bound; peace and fertility reign in the animal and plant world; the vitality and age of mankind are wonderfully increased; wars are abolished, and rich blessings of all kinds renew the face of the earth.

"When the thousand years are completed, then Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go forth to deceive the nations that are in the four corners of the earth, the Gog and the Magog, to gather them together to war, whose number is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the host of the saints, and the beloved city..." (Rev. 20:7-9 a). As soon as the devil is released, it becomes evident that the external benefits were not able to bring about a real renewal of humanity. The nations are again seduced by the enemy and driven to war.

The unregenerate man belongs under the law and the judgment. Only he who has become a new creature in Christ is under the dominion of grace. Therefore, Israel could not stand and walk holy and pleasing before God, even though they cried out in foolish presumption: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do"! (Ex. 19:8).

If it had confessed, we speak humanly and foolishly, "Lord, we have failed manifoldly and have no strength in us to fulfill Your holy will; work Thyself in us and through us that which is pleasing in Thy sight!", then its history of salvation would have been completely different. But God must first make manifest what is flesh. And for this He uses law and transgression, judgment and damnation.

That is why He also let the camp of the grumbling Jews burn. The fire of judgment is the inevitable consequence of disobedience and rebellion against God. It is an inner necessity of nature that no creature can be spared. God must show what sin is and where it leads.

The Lord has no pleasure and no pleasure at all in the various ways of judgment in the desert. How often does He tell His disobedient people that they are only being led in this way so that their true attitude will be revealed and they will learn to recognize themselves and their God! It must learn its own thoughts, its completely corrupted state of nature And for this purpose the heavy, dark ways serve.

Isn't it just like that in our lives? Only in dark hours of bitterness and need, in a predicament or deep despair do we realize how much defiance and mistrust, how much selfishness and arrogance actually lie within us. And how grateful and full of holy joy we are then, when these dark guides are behind us and we were allowed to experience and receive new solutions, illuminations and directions, new devotion and deeper, more blessed revelations of salvation and messages of glory!

If instead of giving thanks and trusting, we complain and grumble against God, His holy fire of judgment also eats at and within us, so that we may cry out to Him and come to know and love Him better.

But not only Israel's camp and our own heart, but also the whole universe must pass through such a judgment of fire to be purified and restored. Let us remember only two testimonies of the Scriptures that prove us this greatness, important truth, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament.

In Zeph. 3, 8. 9 the Lord promises: "Therefore wait for Me, for the day when I arise to the prey! For My decree is to gather the nations, to gather the kingdoms, to pour out My fury upon them, all the fierceness of My wrath; for by the fire of My jealousy shall the whole earth be consumed. For then will I change the lips of the nations into pure lips, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, and serve Him with one accord."

The wrath of God pours out on the gathered nations, and the fury of His fire consumes the whole earth. This world fire, from which nothing is spared, is truly greater than the fire at the end of the camp of Israel!

But wonderful is the result! "Then", that is, after this terrible world conflagration, the lips of the nations will be transformed, and all, even the nations that have long since sunk into the realm of the dead and have been exterminated, will call upon the name of the Lord. But whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved! And then they, who were once enemies and rebels, will serve Him without exception. What glorious prospects are these!

Peter confirms these promises of God in the third chapter of his second letter when he writes: "The day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a mighty noise, but the elements on fire will be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be burned up." Not only the earth, but also the heavens will be seized by this fire of destruction.

But what is the consequence of this?

The 13th verse gives us the goal of this burning of earth and heaven. "But according to His promise we expect new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." Not endless raging on of the fire of judgment but also not cessation of existence, but renewal are the consequences of this divine fire of wrath. The entire creation, the heavens and the earth, will be remolded, purified and made fit for God.

And what God will one day do outwardly to the whole universe, He is now doing inwardly to us, His own. Therefore, we want to willingly and gratefully endure the various firings that are necessary for our perfection and glorification. -

6. miriam becomes leprous

The account of Miriam's leprosy is found in Genesis 12:1-15; Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had taken.... And they said: Has the Lord spoken to Moses alone, has He not spoken to us also?... And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them ... and the cloud departed... and behold, Miriam was leprous as snow.... And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, O God, pray heal her.... And the people departed not till Miriam was taken up again."

We have only given the most important points, but for the sake of internal coherence, read the whole of chapter 12.

Miriam means in German: disobedience, unruliness or rebellion. The same woman who, as leader of the Israelite women, sang the wonderful song of redemption in such pure harmonies, here becomes the accuser, grumbling against the privileged place God had given to Moses. She takes offense at the fact that her brother took a Cushite as his wife. Because of this, in her opinion, moral fault, he should be unworthy to remain a speaking vessel of God.

Perhaps jealousy and envy were the decisive factors, and the matter with the Cushite woman was only a pretext - in any case, God does not allow His instrument to be touched and insulted. Since Moses has learned to be silent and does not justify himself, God speaks very seriously to the begrudging brothers and sisters of His prophet.

Does not this story repeat itself in a thousand variations in the circles of the pious? Did not James already write about wars and disputes "among you"? Not in the "ungodly and wicked world", but "among you", among the believers, there were wars and quarrels already at the time of the apostles. Evil desire and envy are the causes of quarrels among the pious, as is evident from the first verse of the fourth chapter of this letter.

Paul accuses the Corinthians of exactly the same thing in holy indignation when he asks them, "Since there is envy and strife among you, are you not carnal and walking after the manner of men?" (1 Cor. 3:3).

Miriam and Aaron took offense at their brother. Who gives them the right to do so? The people who always take offense at others and nag at them and find fault with them prove that there is something wrong with themselves. For it is written: "He who walks by day does not offend"! (John 9:11). Love bends under the burden and hardship of the brother and helps him in the spirit of meekness. Envy, however, indignantly takes offense, grumbles and exalts itself over him.

Miriam was punished with leprosy. The leprosy is an image of sin. For a time, what she was inwardly, also appeared outwardly in visibility and appearance. This is an act of judgment and grace at the same time, just as all God's judgments are trailblazers of His grace.

The reverse as with Miriam we find with the Lord on the mountain of transfiguration. There His inner glory, His divine doxa, broke through the lowly shell of His earthly body for a moment. This radiant splendor was the visible expression of His inner, essential being, just as Miriam's leprosy shadowed her present being.

That in the resurrection the new body represents exactly what man is inwardly is already taught by the Old Testament. Thus we read in Daniel 12, 2. 3: "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: these to everlasting life, and those to shame, to everlasting abhorrence. And the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament of heaven, and they that direct the many unto righteousness as the stars, for ever and ever."

The believers of the present time will also be revealed with regard to their very personal preparation, their inner becoming. The work of salvation is perfect, sufficient and all-sufficient; the foundation of our salvation has been laid by God Himself in Christ Jesus, so that no creature can either take away or add to it. The foundation of salvation is inviolable for every creature. "But let every man see how he builds upon it. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall make it plain..." (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

Our life and conduct will one day be revealed and judged before the judgment seat of Christ. There, not all believers will receive the crown of righteousness indiscriminately, but only those who have loved Christ's appearance (or return). In fact, the Lord does not hand out the crowns in His capacity as a gracious Savior and Beneficent, but as a "righteous Judge". Let us carefully read 2 Tim. 4, 7. 8! In a sense, we have before us the last legacy of the apostle who is about to depart.

Therefore, we want to pay double attention to this serious and important word, so that we do not deceive ourselves in this serious question.

Miriam became leprous. Her inner being and essence presented itself outwardly on her body. "The cloud departed," we read in Genesis 12:10, and the result was the sickness of the grumbling, envious woman. When the cloud of God's presence of grace departs, there are only revelations of darkness and shame.

Let us therefore remain in the cloud of light of God's presence! If we allow ourselves to be enlightened and instructed by it at all times, we will never have to experience the tragedy and sorrow that lies in the three words:

"The cloud gave way."

Through the intercession of Aaron and Moses, Miriam was restored to health. But God did not act as if nothing had happened! No, she had to be locked up outside the camp for seven days according to the law of leprosy. But by this she delayed the departure and onward march of the people. She, who had led the victory chorus of the women at the Red Sea in sacred alternating song, was now the cause that the people got stuck and did not move on.

That Miriam nevertheless regained honor and prestige among her people is evident from her mourning at her death in Kadesh (Genesis 20:1). Yes, God Himself recognizes the services of Miriam when He calls out to Israel. "I brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of service, and I sent Moses, Aaron and Miriam before you" (Micah 6:4).

So we learn a double lesson from the story of Miriam's leprosy. On the one hand, God lets His holiness shine through now and then and reveals what is flesh, even if the flesh wraps itself in a pious cloak of moral indignation. On the other hand, God answers the intercession of His creatures suffering with Him and gives restoration and healing, yes, He sinks the sins of His own into the depths of oblivion and never remembers them again.

These two sides of divine ways of education and preparation, the serious and shattering one of His holiness and the comforting one of His all-conquering love and all-covering grace, let us never forget as long as we are down here on the way of becoming!

7. the downfall of the Korah pack

Another of God's judgment miracles is described to us in Genesis 16. Korah was a Levite from the family of Kohath (Ex 6:16-24). He allied himself with Dathan, a

son of Eliab from Reuben, his brother Abiram and 250 other respected Israelites against Moses and Aaron. These rebels denied the priesthood of Aaron and the leadership of Moses and emphasized that the whole community in all its members was holy.

The severity of the punishment reveals the greatness of the sin. God wants to destroy the rebellious people, but thanks to the intercession of Moses and Aaron, He shows mercy. The people retreat from the dwelling place of the rebels, and the earth splits and swallows up the whole mob of the wicked together with their relatives and their possessions.

250 men who had appeared with censers to offer incense are consumed by their own fire. Here we have a clear parallel to the incident with the foreign fire. How holy it is to deal with the holy, lest it corrupt us ourselves! Whoever somehow carries and handles instruments of the Lord, i.e. is in the service of God, has heavy responsibility and should let himself be purified and sanctified in a special way. This important truth is repeatedly illuminated in the Old and New Testaments for all healing bodies.

Their pans are beaten into sheets, with them the brazen altar is to be covered. Thus the brazen altar becomes a reminder of the sin of the people and the holiness of God.

It is significant of what metal the various utensils are made. Everything that is somehow connected with sin and judgment is made of iron and ore (copper or brass). Atonement, however, is symbolized by silver, and faith or fidelity by gold. Whoever knows how to read these symbols draws deep and rich profit from seemingly incidental biblical accounts.

The death of the rebels embittered the people, so that they reproached Moses and Aaron. Then came a new plague that killed 14,700 people. Only the atonement, which Aaron offered in a priestly spirit, warded off the destruction. When he offered the incense, "he stood between the dead and the living".

What a sublime example! Aaron, by virtue of the atonement he made, put a stop to death. As mediator and reconciler he stands with a merciful heart between the dead and the living. How much greater is Christ! He offers neither incense nor animals, but himself. Nor does he merely make sin cease, but restores all things, restores all that ever corrupted and destroyed any creature. He is Lord over the dead and the living, that all may live and serve Him.

The demise of Korah's pack was a divine warning sign. This is what Genesis 26:10 tells us, where we read: "The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and

Korah when the pack died, in that the fire consumed the 250 men and they became a sign".

There are teachings and exhortations in Scripture that apply only to certain salvation times and salvation bodies.

have any validity. For example, the law of Israel has no binding power for us, and many promises of the non-Pauline scriptures do not apply directly to us. As nations, we receive our instructions regarding our calling, position in God's plan of salvation, our ministries and completion from our glorified Lord and Head through the Apostle to the Gentiles Paul.

In addition, however, there are certain basic truths that are valid for all times and generations. For example, Jesus says in Mark 13:37, "But what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" Here the Lord clearly distinguishes between "you" and "all". On the other hand, He emphasizes that the commandment of watchfulness applies to all generations of people. As important as it is that the whole scripture does not apply to all, but must be "rightly divided" or "rightly dissected", it is also important that there are universally valid truths which have comprehensive validity and meaning.

Thus, the story of Korah also contains a general divine instruction. If it only applied to Israel and had nothing to say to us, the nations, Paul would certainly not have written 1 Cor. 10:1-11. We may and must take the whole scripture as an exhortation and encouragement for us personally.

We read a small but very important verse concerning the Korah's pack in Deuteronomy 26:11, where it says: "But the sons of Korah did not die". If we follow the history of these descendants of Korah, we encounter the delicious fact that they played an important role in the temple service. Namely, they held the office of gatekeepers and cultivated sacred music and song poetry.

In addition, there is a second thing. When David was persecuted by his adversary Saul, he had only a few faithful who stood on his side. Among them were the sons of Korah, as can be seen in 1 Chron. 12:1-6. How very different their behavior was from that of their fathers in the desert!

From the family of Korah came Heman, David's song master. The Scriptures call him "the shaker (or seer) of the king in the words of God, to exalt His power" (1 Chron. 25, 5). Heman means in German: auspicious faith or faithful singer. Of the 24 heads of David's musical departments, no less than 14 were sons of this Heman.

We will not leave the story of Korah without mentioning the Psalms of the sons of Korah. These are Ps. 42-49, 84, 85, 87 and 88. We already saw that the sons of Korah had been spared when their father and his pack and all the children of his allies were swallowed alive by the earth. Why God's grace had preserved them, the Scriptures do not report. In any case, we can understand that the sons of Korah were so filled with gratitude because of the salvation that had befallen them that they consecrated their lives to the holy service of the Lord.

Medieval commentators point out that in the sons of Korah God created an example of living piety precisely where it should be least sought. From the descendants of a sacrilegious and rebellious man arise holy singers whose faith-strengthening songs are and will be an inheritance of the faithful of all times.

Whether the holy songs of the sons, prophetically seen, do not also apply to their ancestors? Let us read, for example, the somber, almost melancholy 88th Psalm! What is written there literally fits to those who were swallowed up by the earth and went down into the pit. The sons of Korah speak of being counted among those who go down into the pit, of being stretched out among the dead, of being laid in the deepest pit, in darkneses and depths, of God's wrath being heavy upon them, of being shut up away from their intimates and not being able to come out, and so on.

We read something similar in the first psalm of the sons of Korah, in the 42nd Psalm. All the waves and billows of God have gone roaring over them, and yet the holy song ends with the wonderful words of consolation and promise: "Why are you bowing down, my soul, why are you so restless within me? Wait for God! For I shall yet praise Him, that He is the salvation of my countenance and my God"!

When, at the end of God's ways, all the nations and all the kindreds of the earth shall praise the Lord, then shall Korah, the rebuke, also join in the jubilant song of salvation. -

8. Aaron's green staff

After the destruction of Korah's pack and the punishment of the grumbling Israelites, God miraculously vindicated His servant, Aaron the high priest. Deuteronomy 17:1-11 tells about this: "The Lord spoke to Moses and said, 'Speak to the children of Israel and take from them one staff each for a father's house from all their princes, according to their fathers' houses twelve staffs; you shall write the name of each one on his staff. And the name of Aaron shalt thou write

upon the staff of Levi: for one staff shall be for every head of their fathers' houses...The man whom I shall choose, his staff shall sprout.... And it came to pass on the morrow, as Moses entered into the tent of the testimony, behold, the rod of Aaron had sprouted of the house of Levi: it had

Sprouts sprouted and flowers brought and almonds ripened.... . And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring back the rod of Aaron before the testimony, to keep it for a sign unto the rebellious, that thou mayest make an end of their murmuring before me, and that they die not...".

We already saw that wood is a symbol of humanity. The Lord calls Himself green wood and refers to the unfaithful Jews, who are ripe for judgment, as dry wood. Exactly the same image we find in our scripture passage. As a sign that Aaron or his lineage is truly chosen by God, his staff turns green and sprouts blossoms and fruit.

In the desert, as in the Orient, sprouting and greening is an image of healthy, youthful, fresh life and joyful prosperity. Let us think of Ps. 92, 12-14: "The righteous will sprout like the palm tree, like a cedar on Lebanon he will grow up. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord will blossom in the courts of our God. Even in old age they sprout, are full of sap and green". Or we read Prov. 14:11b: "The tent of the upright will blossom".

The fact that God makes a dead wooden stick sprout, blossom and bear fruit overnight is a striking symbol that He is able to bring life out of death. There was no difference at all between the twelve sticks. They were all barren and dead and had in themselves no possibility and ability to blossom like a living tree, to sprout leaves and bring forth fruit. With this, God wants to show that Aaron is by nature no different from the rest of the Israelites. His task and dignity is not based in him, is not based on what he is and has in himself, but solely in God's calling, to which God has determined and ordained him.

This is also of great importance for us. We were not chosen by God, nor were we chosen because we were nobler, better and more capable than others, - no, it is a free, undeserved act of God that happened to us. By nature we are not one iota better than the worst and most depraved people. We are of the same flesh and blood as they, and our possibilities of sin are by no means less than theirs.

God made Aaron's staff blossom and bear fruit. This confirmed his privileged position once and for all. But this deed was prophecy at the same time. For what God promised to the one tribe through His wonderful symbolism, namely life and fruitfulness, was later promised to all tribes, to the whole people. Let us read

about it Isa. 27, 6: "In the future Jacob shall take root; Israel shall blossom and bud; and they shall fill with fruit the face of the earth".

Jacob, the erratic, scattered cursed people of the earth, shall take root. What a mighty promise! Just as the unfaithful Jacob became a godly Israel, so also the people of Jacob shall become a people of Israel. And this shall blossom and bud and fill the earth with fruit. Buds, blossoms and fruits - here and there! Now, however, what in the fourth book of Moses refers only to the tribe of Levi, in the Isaiah promise applies to the whole people. Shortly before the legislation God had said to the whole people of Israel: "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation!" (Ex 19:6). Not only a holy tribe that was to do priestly services was planned, but a holy nation that was to occupy royal priestly positions. But since the people as a whole failed, God initially chose only one tribe, which He blessed and prepared.

This is how God always proceeds. He anticipates a selection, by which He represents which are His intentions and thoughts. But this beginning is only a model and guarantor for the whole. That is why Paul writes in Romans 11:16: "But if the firstfruits are holy, so is the mass; and if the root is holy, so are the branches."

Just as the tribe of Levi is the firstborn for the whole nation, so the whole nation is the firstborn son among all nations (Ex 4:22). All nations will see the salvation of God and share in His glory. This is evident from very many promises in Scripture. But not only the human world and the earth, but "every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all that is in them, I heard say, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).

Thus Aaron's green staff is not only a vindication of the high priest who was reviled by the people, but much more than that. It is, like everything in Scripture, deeply a revelation of the ways and purposes of God in Christ Jesus. For the Son of God alone is the tree that bears fruit, whose leaves do not wither and who succeeds in everything he does (Ps. 1:3).

Christ, the true, essential greening rod of God, is the leader of salvation, the duke of bliss. He will not only draw a few, but at the God-given time and hour all to Himself (Joh. 12, 32), make all things new (Rev. 21, 5).

The Lord is the beginning of all creatures, the firstfruits of God. His Father led Him through suffering to a higher level of glory and bliss than He had initially. Exactly the same happens to the whole creation. It too goes through night to

light, through breakage to new creation, from death to life. Thus the greening staff of Aaron is quite a prophetic image of the ways and goals of God with the peoples and the whole universe.

9 The rock at Meribah gives water

"The children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin (German: thorn or prick).... and there was no water for the congregation, and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people were disputing... And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather the congregation together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give its water.... And Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his staff twice: and there came out much water, and the congregation drank, and their cattle. Then the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron, "Because you have not believed me to sanctify me in the sight of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. This is the water of Meribah (Haderwasser), where the children of Israel protested and the Lord sanctified Himself in them" (Exodus 20:1-13).

At first glance, it might seem that this story is just a repetition of the incident at Horeb, where the rock also gave water. But there is an important difference between these two accounts.

Both at Horeb and at Meribah, the people complained and grumbled because there was no water. But while God said at Horeb that Moses should strike the rock, at Meribah He commands to *r e d e* with the rock. Surely there is a big difference between hitting a man and talking to him! This comparison is quite appropriate, because the rock was, as Paul clearly testifies, the Christ.

But what did Moses do? Instead of talking to the rock, he hit it again. And that twice. This was perhaps a transgression of divine commandment born of excitement.

Now one should assume that the Lord would not give the promised water with such obvious disregard of His will. After all, the promise was tied to a condition, and the condition had not been fulfilled! And yet God gave the water of blessing. The people and the cattle were not to suffer hardship for the sake of Moses' unfaithfulness.

This has something to say to us. How often do we hear that a person whom God blesses in some way or sets up for blessing, thereby provides proof that his life

is completely in order and that he is walking along lines pleasing to God. But this need not always be the case. God does not refresh the thirsty people because of Moses' faithfulness, but in spite of his unfaithfulness. He acts according to the needs at hand. With the disobedient tool He settles accounts later.

So it can also be that God uses a person for years in blessing and that the tool itself absolutely does not act and walk in a godly way in every respect. Just as Moses continued to be a leader and only at the end of his life reaped the fruit of his disobedience, so at the deathbeds of successful, admired people one can witness harrowing scenes full of self-reproach and confessions of guilt.

God blesses for the sake of His promise and Himself, but not for the sake of the perfection of the instrument. Let us remember this truth. It keeps us personally from recklessness and pride, keeps us in humble dependence on the Lord, and does not let us become servants of men.

But the story has even more to tell us. What was quite right and God-ordained the first time was wrong and against God's commandment the second time. There is in Scripture, besides great universal truths, a "present truth," as Peter writes in 1:12 of his second letter, "I will take care always to remind you of these things, even as you know them and are established in the present truth."

For example, the commandment to eat meat existed after, but by no means before, the Flood. What was right and good at the time of the law household, is it later, when the grace has appeared, absolutely no longer. If a child plays and often falls down, there is absolutely nothing wrong with it; but if an adult wanted to do that, it would be a bad sign.

That is why the apostle Paul testifies about himself: "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, thought like a child, judged like a child; when I became a man, I put away (eliminated, removed) what was childish" (1 Cor. 13:11).

You hit a child, but you talk to an adult. As inaccessible as a child is to reason, it would be insulting and wrong to chastise a person of full age. This also applies to the spiritual. "Shall I come to you with a rod?" Paul ironically asks the puffed-up Corinthians, suggesting that they should be long past being treated like little children.

The story of the smitten rock, besides this personal, uplifting meaning, also has a deep prophetic meaning. The smitten rock is an image of the smitten Christ. At His first coming, He was rejected, mistreated and nailed to the cross. Now, however, since He has been born through His Spirit in the

made His dwelling place - "Christ lives in me" - He should no longer be blasphemed and grieved. Our relationship with the Lord today is far more spiritual and mature than was the relationship between Israel and Jesus. Our obedience, our faithfulness, and our love should and can be much higher and more intimate than those of His disciples and contemporaries. For we know Him as the transfigured One, as the Head over the universe, who will carry out the purposeful thoughts of God through His church.

Christ suffered once when He was beaten on the cross at His first coming to this earth. Is He being beaten now as well? Is there anything left to add to His sufferings? His substitutionary atonement is undoubtedly completed once and for all. But in His members He suffers even now; what His own endure, He endures, and in all their affliction He Himself is afflicted.

Perhaps in this light we understand Col. 1:24, where the inspired apostle writes: "Now I rejoice in sufferings for you, supplementing in my flesh what is still backward from the tribulations of Christ for His body, which is the church."

When the same Saul snorted threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, Christ did not call out to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute mine?" but rather, "Why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4). And again He testifies in the next verse: "I am Jesus whom you persecute"! Christ suffers in His own; in His members He is persecuted and beaten until the hour.

Just as the Rock, despite being struck twice, nevertheless gave water and thus satisfied the needs of the thirsting people, so Christ also blesses now and allows His unconditional mercy to prevail, although He is repeatedly insulted and blasphemed in His own.

What a wonderful God of faithfulness, who remains faithful even when His creatures are unfaithful! -

10. salvation by the brazen serpent

In spite of many graces and love, preservation and help, Israel grumbled again and again.

Thus Genesis 21:4-9 tells us: "They set out from Mount Hor, the way to the Sea of Sheol, to go around the land of Edom. And the soul of the people grew impatient on the way; and the people spake against God and against Moses, saying, Why have ye brought us up out of Egypt, that we should die in the wilderness? For there is no bread and no water, and our souls are disgusted with

this miserable food. Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many people of Israel died. Then the people came to Moses, and they said: We have sinned in that we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; beseech the LORD that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses made supplication for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and put it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, every one that is bitten, and looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, when a serpent had bitten any man, and he looked up unto the serpent of brass, he lived."

We also want to pick out only a few essential features from this story and see what the brazen serpent and its later history has to tell us.

Saraphs, burning or fiery serpents, were sent by God as punishment for mistrust and grumbling.

Are not these burning, pain-causing serpents an apt image of our consciences and minds when we are not in grateful obedience before God? Have we not often experienced that our heart is full of fear and anxiety, full of piercing doubts and burning shame, as long as our relationship with the Lord is not in order? Must not even a Goethe, that lap child of happiness and success, confess in a letter to the Countess von Stolberg about a time full of joy and pleasures: "In all this it was to me like a rat that has eaten poison; it runs into all holes, slurps up all moisture, devours everything edible that comes in its way, and its interior glows with inextinguishable fire?" -

Moses again becomes the mediator of salvation. Quickly a winding groove is dug in the desert sand; ore is melted and poured into the moistened sand to cool. In the meantime, a long wood was prepared, the bronze snake was attached to it and the pole with the symbol of sin was rammed into the ground.

Not the one who struggled against the fiery serpents, not the one who, forgetting his own need, helped others, but the one who, believing, looked at the lifted up serpent, all at once became healthy. The Lord Himself testified that this event foreshadowed Golgotha with the words: "As Moses lifted up a serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15).

What a simple and important lesson the serpent of brass gives! It is not our efforts and accomplishments, but the faithful, trusting look at the Lord lifted up to the cross that is able to heal the burning wounds of the fiery serpents most

completely and immediately. It is not in what we are and do that our crying conscience is silenced, but in what the Lord is and what He has done.

Not a device from the sanctuary or holy of holies was exalted, but a serpent. The Christ made sin and not the model of the holy Son of Man Jesus means the basis of our salvation. How much this simple truth is still buried and distorted today, even in the most pious circles! Again and again, justification is made dependent on some meritorious work of the creature instead of on the all-sufficient saving act of Christ. Neither repentance nor confession, restitution nor forbearance and service, but the cross alone is the supporting foundation of our salvation. Looking at the bronze serpent, looking at the crucified Christ, conveys salvation to us.

Man tends to get attached to visible signs and forget the essence, the spiritual content of a thing or truth. We find this also when we follow the story of the brazen serpent. Namely, the children of Israel took the nechustan (copper plate, copper serpent) with them and later offered sacrifices to it. Instead of the living God, they worshipped dead metal.

King Hezekiah (in German: meine Stärke ist der Herr), the son of Alias, carried out a thorough reform soon after the beginning of his reign. It brought an internal purification and unification, the abolition of the "high places", the sites of nature worship and superstition. In the process, he also destroyed the Nechustan. Perhaps the Israelites had thought of the Egyptian serpent god Serapis or imitated the multiple serpent cult of other peoples when they worshipped the bronze serpent, - in any case they had forgotten the living God and the miracle of His ways of salvation and had fallen into an external idolatry.

Are we not in the same danger? Do we not also place God-given means in the center and thus displace the Lord Himself? Does not the intimate contact with God often fade away in our lives because of all external things, which in and of themselves are neither wrong nor evil? How many advocate this or that "doctrine" with great zeal and acumen, sacrificing time and energy, money and goods for trivialities?

And what about the community of love and unity of life with and in Christ? How many rest on real or imagined salvation experiences they made years or decades ago, and have slipped from the state of being awakened or even of being caught and filled with God's spirit into a dead ceremonial of inner or outer church kind! The word: "Wake up, you who sleep"! Paul did not call out to Gentiles who were far from Christ, but to members of the Christian churches.

What is the name of the Nechustan to whom we sacrifice? Let us smite it, that a new thing may arise, and that Christ alone may truly become all things to us! Let us not forget that all those things are written for our admonition!

11. Balaam's Talking Donkey

One of the most contradictory, mysterious figures in Scripture is Balaam. He is a pagan seer from Pethar (in German: Auslegung oder Stadt des Traumdeuters) on the Euphrates. Balaam means corrupter of the people or curser of the people. He was a shiverer or seer, a man to whom God spoke, and who was so convinced of His omnipotence that he acknowledged and testified to the impotence of every creature to God.

On the other hand, Balaam was a clairvoyant in the manner of the Chaldean magicians who exploited his gifts for monetary gain. Although he did not consciously want to fight against God, he had nevertheless wanted to be of service to his pagan friends. His clear knowledge on the one hand and the dark, ungodly urge of his heart on the other hand brought a strong ambivalence into his person. Seized by divine enthusiasm, he had to bless where he should and wanted to curse. His prophetically enlightened view foresaw the break-up of the pagan world powers and looked into the time of the Messiah.

His deceitful advice to entice the Israelites to idolatry through the wives of the Moabites and Midianites reveals the wickedness of his heart and shows that the temporary enthusiasm for God and the spiritually given vision of divine ways and goals do not mean inner renewal and transformation. This is a serious warning for us.

Therefore, during the holy war of revenge against Midian, Balaam was killed with the sword (Deut. 31, 8; Joshua 13, 22). The Lord Himself puts his shameful behavior in perspective when He has the church of Pergamos told in Rev. 2, 14: "I have a little against you, that you have such there who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a nuisance before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication."

But the outer historical framework, as captivating as it is, shall not concern us in detail. We want to deal here only with what the miracle of the talking donkey has to tell us.

We have already seen that Balaam was a conflicted man. God had given him the clear, unmistakable instruction concerning the messengers of Balak and Moab: "You shall not go with them, you shall not curse the people"! (Exodus 22:12).

The seer first obeyed this order and said to the princes of King Balak, who were waiting for an answer, "Go to your own land, for the Lord has refused to allow me to go with you!" (verse 13).

Soon more and mightier princes than the first time came and again asked Balaam to curse Israel. Instead of firmly rejecting them, the summoner gave way to the tempting voices in his heart and again asked the Lord what he should do.

Here now a peculiar way of education of God begins, which we want to pay attention to. The Lord lets Balaam go! God lets himself wring something from stubborn creatures now and then. He knows that they can only be helped if He first of all leaves them to their self-chosen course of destruction. He does not rape and force, but entices and admonishes and lets - let us think of the father of the prodigal son! - He lets the stubborn creature go its own way.

So Paul also testifies to the men in Lystra that God lets all nations walk in their own ways. Is this not also the case with the individual man, that the Lord lets him walk first and succeed in many things, if he closes his heart to grace?

But God does not let His creatures run into ruin without further ado. Again and again, without forcing or raping a creature, He works holy stopping points into its life through judgment and grace.

Three times the angel of the Lord stood in the way of the disobedient Balaam. But let us read what the sacred document of God tells us about this: "Then the anger of God was kindled, so that he went; and the angel of the Lord stood in the way to resist him. But he rode upon his ass.... And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, and the ass turned out of the way and went into the field; and Balaam smote the ass to turn her again to the way. Then the angel of the LORD entered into a hollow way among the vineyards: a wall was on this side, and a wall on that side. And the ass saw the angel of the LORD, and pressed against the wall, and pressed the foot of Balaam against the wall; and he smote her again. Then the angel of the Lord went on again, and entered into a narrow place, where there was no way to turn out, either to the right hand or to the left. And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; and the anger of Balaam was kindled, and he smote the ass with the staff. Then the LORD opened the ass's mouth, and she

said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have now struck me three times?" (Genesis 22:22-28).

In many ways the faithful God of mercy tries to save His erring creatures from deviations and detours. Here He uses a dumb beast of burden. It does not take much wit to make fun of this story. The prophet Jonah in the fish belly and the talking donkey of Balaam have always been cheap targets of unbelieving mockery. We do not even make scientific investigations whether and under which conditions it could be possible that the prophet could pass through a narrow gullet and could endure three days in the bowels of a fish, and that a donkey speaks with a human voice.

We believe what is written, whether it is interpreted to us as stupidity or malice. It is enough for us that the Lord Jesus, the eternal mouth of truth, who cannot lie, said: "Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish". The Lord did not say that he should have been or could have been in it, but that he was in it. And this little word "was" from their mouth of the Son of God weighs us more than all real or sham science of even so clever people.

It is the same with the ass of Balaam. Peter writes in the 2nd chapter of his second letter about false prophets and unjust unrighteous ones that they "left the straight way, went astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but received a rebuke of his own folly: a speechless beast of burden, speaking with the voice of man, rebuked the folly of the prophet" (verse 15.16).

If the Old Testament is not right, then the New is not right either. And if Moses or the prophets deceived themselves and us, so also Peter and the Lord Himself.... no, we do not want to pronounce this word. One may speak of poetic folk tradition, deception of the senses and the like, if one rejects the reports of the Bible, - we believe what is written and hold fast to it. Not our darkened reason nor the so-called sure results of science - as important and indispensable as they are in their place! - form the basis of our faith, but God's word alone.

Let us reflect a little on the personal-educational and prophetic significance of the story of the talking donkey!

First, something personally edifying! God let Balaam go after his second request for permission to travel with the messengers, yes, He even commanded him to go to Balak. And yet, in holy earnestness, He put obstacles in his way three times. Has God not thus time and again "fenced in with thorns and built up a wall" the erring way of Israel, as is written in Hosea 2:6? Didn't He also stand in our way in

varying forms when we, as worldly people or children of God, wanted to go astray or take a detour?

It often turned out that the foolish was wiser than the high of this world. A donkey had to teach a seer! It is only to our own harm if we overlook and run over the God-ordained stopping points in our life and let nothing more be said to us. If humility is the crown of virtues, then many greats and rulers of the religious world have lost the crown long ago.

The animal saw beings that man did not see. Was that only at that time so, or is that also for usually the case? We do not know! We read that the Lord had to unveil the eyes of Balaam first, so that he could see the angel, while with the donkey nothing is reported about an unveiling of the eyes. But we do not want to dare to make firm assertions on this, even with the help of strange observations. In any case, the apparent detour of the donkey was more reasonable than the straight path intended by the seer.

So also in our life some apparent detours are nothing else than divine preservations. Our self-chosen path would sometimes have driven us directly into the sword. Even if we do not recognize this now or only rarely, we will understand it one day when we are with the Lord. But in faith we may already grasp this with regard to all His ways and praise and thank Him for them, however dark and painful they may often appear.

The language of the donkey was also prophecy. For the Scriptures speak in unmistakable words about the fact that one day even the beasts of the field will praise and glorify God. First of all, let us remember a word of Psalm that testifies to the fact that God's salvation refers not only to human beings but also to animals. In Psalm 36, 6b, David writes: "People and livestock You save, O Lord." Let us also look up Isa. 43, 20. There God himself says, "The beasts of the field will praise me, jackals and ostriches."

How far not only the animals, which have only spiritual, animal life, but even the "lifeless nature" according to our opinion, will praise and glorify God one day, we can see from verse 7-10 of the 148th Psalm: "Praise the Lord from the earth, you water monsters and all depths! Fire and hail, snow and mist, you tempestuous wind that sends forth His word, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild beasts and all cattle, creeping animals and winged birds!"

Now and then, God lets shine through something of what He will do one day. Should anything be impossible for our God? As incomprehensible as His ways may often appear to our blind eyes, as unerring and sure of victory He goes His

way of judgment and salvation with all His creatures. He is truly a wonderful and glorious God! -

12. the Jordan stands still

Joshua 3:14-17 reports: "It came to pass, when the people arose out of their tents to pass over Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; and as soon as the bearers of the ark came to Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brink of the waters--the Jordan being full upon all his banks all the time of the harvest--then the waters flowing down from above stopped; they rose up like a dam, very far off, at Adam, the city that lies sideways from Zarethan; and those flowing down to the sea of the plain, the salt sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed through, over against Jericho. And the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry land in the midst of Jordan; and all Israel passed over on dry land, until the whole nation was fully passed over Jordan."

The Jordan River plays an important role in Scripture. Its name means "the one who falls down" because it has a very steep slope. The Jordan River is an image of death. That is why it is spoken of as the river of death. Its importance lies neither in its low traffic possibilities nor in its abundance of fish, but mainly in the fact that it forms the border of Canaan.

Just as one came out of the wilderness into the land of promise by crossing the Jordan, the one who has gone, so the river of death is the entrance into life, the daily dying with Christ is the sharing of His holiness and glory.

But how was the overflowing, raging river crossed, since neither bridge nor ferry existed? By carrying forward the ark of the covenant! The ark of the covenant was the most holy device of the tabernacle and symbolizes the presence of God. In it lay the tablets of the law, the staff of Aaron and the manna jar (Hebr. 9, 4), shadowing God as light, spirit and love. His holy light being is revealed in the law, as life-creating spirit He reveals Himself at the dead staff of Aaron, and His caring love He showed through the manna, the bread of heaven, the model on Christ.

Where the people in right inner condition carried forward the ark of the covenant, they went from victory to victory. The ark of the covenant, the image of the present God, also brought the raging waters of the Jordan to a standstill, so that Israel passed through dry-footed, "until the whole nation had fully passed over the Jordan".

What does this story, which faith does not ridicule, ridicule or try to explain rationally, but just believes, have to tell us? What truth can we learn from it for our personal, practical lives?

If we hold the two symbolic interpretations foreshadowed by the falling river of death; and the ark of the covenant, this incident is not difficult to understand in its morally beneficial application.

As long as we live and walk in the presence of God, the death essence of the world and sin cannot overflow and sweep us away. Did not the Lord himself say: "Whoever lives and believes in me will not die for the eon"?

Again we read in Ps. 68, 20: "God is a God of salvation to us, and with the Lord are the exits from death (or: from the being of death)". With and in our exalted head we may go on pilgrimage untouched through all death-being in and around us, as once Israel under Joshua. What an important truth for our daily life in the midst of a world enslaved to the law of sin and death!

The Jordan stands still! We can experience this not only in many ways in ourselves now, but it will also be the case one day really and essentially in the whole world. Where the ark of the covenant, God's presence, dwells, the Jordan must stand still, death must not continue to work. Once God's glory will fill the whole earth. This is promised many times. Yes, even more: God will be all in all (or everything)! Only then is that which

The symbol of the ark of the covenant has become reality to the fullest extent. Already in the Kingdom of Christ He does not need this symbol anymore, as Jer. 3:16, 17a testifies: "It shall come to pass, when you multiply in the land and are fruitful in those days, says the Lord, that it shall no longer be said: 'The ark of the covenant of the Lord,' and it will no longer come to mind, nor will it be remembered, nor will it be sought after, nor will it be made again. In those days Jerusalem will be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations will gather to it because of the name of the Lord."

But before God, who is light and spirit and love, death cannot stand. Therefore the prophet rejoices: "He swallows up death in victory (or: forever), and the Lord will wipe away tears from every face, and the reproach of His people He will remove from all the earth. For the Lord has spoken" (Is. 25, 8).

The holy seer on Patmos testifies: "Death will be no more" (Rev. 21:4), and Paul teaches: "The last enemy to be put away (eliminated) is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). That this refers to spiritual, physical and second death is self-evident. For between the first and the second death there is only a difference in degree, but

no difference in essence, just as the aeonic life, the indissoluble life and the life from God do not mean anything contrary.

Through God's holy presence, now in the believers and later, until the goal of perfection, in the whole universe, all death will be brought to light and thereby abolished. "He reveals the depths of darkness and draws out the shadow of death into the light" (Job 12:22).

But if God unveils something, He does not do it to let it continue in its darkness and death being. On the contrary! Paul writes in Eph. 5, 13: "What is unveiled by light is made manifest, for all that is made manifest is light." Where God lets His judging, rectifying light shine in, there is an end to all death and all darkness. This is true now for our practical being prepared, and it will be a joyful, blessed truth at the end of all God's ways in His universe-wide creation.

The ark of the covenant brings the Jordan to a standstill, - God's presence is not only able to put a stop to death in all its effects and concomitants, but transforms it into overflowing, light-filled life. For He lets all creatures go through a new creation and forms "life out of death" (Rom. 11, 15).

Of the many miracles in the desert, we have seen many together. Some more could be mentioned.

Who would not think in our context of the standing still of the sun in Gibeon and of the moon in the valley of Ajalon (Joshua 10:12)? How manifoldly God has spoken in judgment and mercy to His disobedient, defiant people, and how little He has accomplished to this hour!

And yet no word from His mouth will be powerless. Each one will accomplish what it is sent to do. The Father of Glory will certainly achieve His final goals without any compromise on the way He has foreseen before. But we may already enjoy the salvation yield of what has happened before. For the miracles of God in the wilderness "befell those as examples, and are written for our encouragement, upon whom the final results of the eons have come."

The path of life - by Arthur Muhl

[By Arthur Muhl: The Way of Life](#)

The way of life and the way of death (Jeremiah 21:8-10)

8And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death[a]. a) Deut. 30:15,19

9Whoever remains in this city will die by the sword and by famine and by pestilence. But whoever goes out and crosses over to the Chaldeans who are besieging you will live and have his soul as a prey[a]. a) Ch. 27:12, 13; 38:2, 17, 18; 39:18

10For I have set my face against this city for evil and not for good, says the LORD[A][a]. It will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire[b]. A) w. is the saying of the LORD a) ch. 39:16; 44:11, 27; Am. 9:4 b) ch. 32:28, 29; 34:2, 22; 38:18; 39:8.

11 And to the house of the king of Judah <shall you say>: Hear the word of the LORD[a]! a) Ch. 22:1, 18 12 House of David, thus says the LORD: Hold judgment every morning and deliver the robbed from the hand of the oppressor[a], lest my wrath break out like a fire and burn unquenchably because of the wickedness of your deeds![b] a) Ch. 22:3, 15, 16; Ps. 82:3, 4; Prov. 31:8, 9 b) Ch. 4:4

13 Behold, I will look upon you who are enthroned above the valley[a], above the rock of the plain[B][b], says the LORD[A], - who say, Who will go down against us, and who will come into our dwellings[c]?

A) w. is the saying of the LORD B) w. you inhabitant of the valley, the rock of the plain; meaning Jerusalem a) Isa 22:1, 5 b) ch. 17:3 c) ch. 49:4, 5; Kla 4:12

14 And I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings[a], says the LORD[A]. And I will kindle a fire in their forest, and it will devour everything around them[b]. A) w. is the saying of the LORD[a] Ch 17:10; Prov 1:31; 12:14; Mic 7:13 b) Ch 6:19; 17:27; 22:7; Ezek 21:3.

Jeremiah 21:8-14 (Elberfelder Revised Translation with reference passages):

Jeremiah speaks to the people of Israel, to Judah, first of all: Thus says Jehovah - Behold I lay out for you the way of the

Life before and the way of death. Who remains in this city will die. By the sword, famine, pestilence. But whoever goes out and crosses over to the Chaldeans, Nebuchadnezzar's military, who besiege you, he will live. And his soul shall be a prey unto him. Strange way of life - strange way of death. "For I have set my face against this city, for evil and not for good saith Jehovah. It shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire." This is what happened when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. "And unto the house of the king of Judah shalt thou say, Hear the word of Jehovah, house of David, thus saith Jehovah. Hold judgment every morning, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my wrath break out like a fire, and burn unquenchably because of the wickedness of your doings." This was during the first phase of Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem.

Let us compare Jeremiah 27:6: "And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, my servant".

V.8: "And it shall come to pass that nation and kingdom which will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar, and will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, the same nation, saith Jehovah, will I punish with the sword, famine, and pestilence, until I have destroyed them by his hand.

V.11 "But the nation that will put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will leave in their land, says Jehovah - and they will cultivate it and dwell in it.

V. 12:" And I spake unto Zedekiah king of Judah after all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and ye shall live. Why would you, you and your people, die, as Jehovah has spoken about the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon, and do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, you will not serve the king of Babylon!"

V. 17: "Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon - and you will live".

What should we say about this? First of all nothing at all. We'll take note of that first and foremost!

Jeremiah 29, 1 "And these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent to the remaining elders of those who had gone away, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had led away from Jerusalem to Babylon.

V. 7 "Thus Jeremiah writes to the Jews imprisoned in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar:

"Seek the peace of the city whither I have led you away, and pray to Jehovah for it! For in their peace you shall have peace!"

Although the event that God had Nebuchadnezzar carry out, so He identifies with this event.

V. 10: "For thus says Jehovah: as soon as 70 years are full for Babylon, I will take care of you and fulfill my good word to bring you back to this place, for indeed I know the thoughts I think about you, says Jehovah. Thoughts of peace and not for the sake of happiness, to grant you exit and hope, and you will call upon me and go and pray to me and I will listen to you and you will seek me and find me, for you will ask for me with all your heart! And I will let myself be found by you, says Jehovah, and I will turn your captivity and gather you from all nations and from all places where I have driven you, says Jehovah, and I will bring you back to the place from which I took you away.

As warriors of Jesus Christ, Paul wants to tell his young co-worker Timothy: suffer tribulation as a true warrior of Jesus Christ. All the men of war in the whole world beat everything around them short and small - and the men of war of Jesus Christ let themselves be beaten short and small by everyone around them - is that a difference?

It is not a pious wish of the apostle Paul and our God that before all things we pray, intercede and supplicate and even give thanks for all people and for all who are in highness! And 99% of them all do not please us at all! ... so that we can live a quiet calm life in all godliness and worthy seriousness!

Now we have before us a young splendid man, much beloved. His name is Daniel. Dan-i-el means judge - my - is - God. A Daniel has surrendered all his concerns, legal matters and everything that afflicts him to the God who alone judges rightly. I hope we are all Daniels in that we have completely surrendered all our concerns to this wonderful God - then we are also much beloved ones.

Ch. 1:4 Nebuchadnezzar's command that the young men be instructed in the scriptures and the language of the Chaldeans.

Before Nebuchadnezzar stands Daniel, a young man from the arch-enemy Israel, from Jerusalem, who was given to him by God as a

prisoner has been subordinated. This young Daniel is a prime example of the position of God's people in relation to the respective worldly authorities

appointed by God. Nebuchadnezzar is maximum worldly authority ruthless opponent and enemy of Jerusalem.

Ch. 1,17: God gave them knowledge and insight in all the scriptures and wisdom of the Chaldeans. So God had them trained by the professors of Nebuchadnezzar in highest schools. And Daniel had understanding of all visions and dreams.

Ch1, 20: In matters of insightful wisdom, which the king inquired of them when they were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar after 3 years with many other Chaldean students. There the king found that they were tenfold superior, wiser, to all the scribes and conjurors throughout his kingdom. This means looking back at the mighty exam taker Nebuchadnezzar, that if he could find that these Jewish young men were ten times superior to his own students, then I dare say Nebuchadnezzar is at least 11 times superior. Ch. 2:19: Then God made known the mystery to Daniel in a night vision. Vers. 22: God reveals the deep and the hidden. He reveals the dream that Nebuchadnezzar dreamed. Daniel says to the king: "Wise men, conjurors, scribes and soothsayers cannot tell the king, but there is a God in the heavens who reveals it.

I would have said to the N. instead of Daniel: The God of heaven, whom I serve, has made known to me the dream that the king dreamed and its interpretation, namely - God has shown the king what will happen at the end of days. Daniel, however, says: The God of the heavens has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen at the end of days. Daniel has taken a position pleasing to God with his answer towards this world ruler - subordinate! The following subtleties become quite clear through this. After Daniel resolved in his heart not to defile himself with the king's table food, which Nebuchadnezzar decreed for all the students (Dan.1:8), Daniel requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he not defile himself. And God gave Daniel grace before the chief of the eunuchs (because Daniel placed himself wholeheartedly under the dependence God had placed on him).

Daniel did not say - in am a Jew and do not eat what we are not allowed to eat - If I ask someone for something, who is the greater, who is the dependent?

Then Daniel requested from the chief: Dan. 1,11: And Daniel speaks to the overseer, whom the chief of the eunuchs placed over Daniel and his friend. The chief denies Daniel's request not to "defile" himself with the royal diet according to his faith. After all, the Supreme explains to Daniel exactly why he cannot give in to his request, because it is his head that is at stake if Daniel should perform worse without the special royal diet. Now Daniel turns to a subordinate of this chief and tells him: Try it with your servants for 10 days. Daniel makes the

following suggestion: give us vegetables to eat and water to drink, and then may our appearance and the appearance of the young men who eat the king's table food be tested - and do with your servants according to what you will see. And he listened to them and tried for 10 days. Daniel and his friends stood more splendidly than all the others after these 10 days. Then the overseer put away their table food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables as well.

Is our God completely exact when we, for our part, take this exact subordinate position to an authority that absolutely does not suit us?

Dan 5, 8-12: We are in the castle of Belshazzar, who brought out the highly holy devices of the temple in Jerusalem and blasphemed the God of Israel. Then the writing appears on the wall - the horror is unbelievable. The king's mother hears about it and comes and speaks to the king: v. 10: "As a result of the words of the king and his mighty ones, the queen, the king's mother, entered the house of the banquet. The queen lifted up and said: "O king, live forever! Let not thy thoughts be troubled, nor thy complexion change. There is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods, and in the days of thy father Nebuchadnezzar, enlightenment and understanding, like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and king Nebuchadnezzar thy father made him chief of the scribes, of the conjurors, of the Chaldeans, of the astrologers, and of the diviners, because an extraordinary spirit and knowledge and understanding, a spirit of interpreting dreams, of explaining riddles, and of untying knots was found in Daniel, to whom the king gave the name Belshazzar. Let Daniel therefore be called, and he shall show thee the interpretation. Thereupon Daniel was brought before the king. Thou Daniel couldst read the writing. V. 17. Then Daniel answered and spoke before the king (compared to Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar is even more satanically charged!). Your gifts may remain to you and give your gifts to another, but I will read the writing to the king and make the interpretation known to the king. You O king, the most high God has given to Nebuchadnezzar, your father, the kingship and the greatness, the honor and the glory. (Daniel says this with the full conviction of his whole heart!) and because of the greatness He bestowed upon him, all peoples and nations trembled and feared before him, saying "Whom he would, he slew, and whom he would, he let live. Whom he would, he exalted, and whom he would, he humbled. But when his heart was lifted up to presumption and his spirit hardened, he was overthrown from his royal throne.

V. 21: and his body was wetted by the dew of heaven, until he realized that God, the Most High, rules all!

There the grace of God lets dew of the sky drip on this, to the judgment fallen, tyrant as long as, until he recognizes God and gives him the honor. Classic, global universal example of how God deals with all His enemies, through all judgments. If we now recognize this, immediately place our thoughts under the faith of Christ, completely accept the attitude of our God, then it will be easier for us to also subordinate any governmental leader we dislike.

Dan. 6:4: Then Daniel surpassed the rulers and the satraps because an extraordinary spirit was in him, and the king intended to set him over the whole kingdom.

This is now already Darius the Mede. Now still the conquerors of the Chaldeans, the Medes and Persians come - the mighty king Cyrus. He puts Daniel in the second place after himself.

Another man of God: Joseph:

Genesis 39, And Joseph found favor in the eyes of Potiphar, Pharaoh's chamberlain. The chief of the guard, an Egyptian man had bought him from the Ishmaelites. And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a man that prospered, and was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and that Jehovah made all that he did succeed in his hand. And Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. And he appointed him over his house, and all that he had he gave into his hand. And it came to pass that since he had given all things into his hand, that Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. Did Joseph, 17 years old, submit himself then? Did he serve this high Egyptian as a slave as if he were serving his God? Answer: Yes! Is he then also blessed by his God? Yes!

Genesis 41:38 (we know the intermediate story!) And the word of Pharaoh in the eyes of all his

Servants "Will we find one like this, a man in whom is the spirit of the gods? And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "After God has made all this known to you, there is no one so wise and understanding as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall obey your command.

This word in Hebrew is so wonderful: "And all the people shall hang on your mouth, shall kiss your mouth!" Only around the throne I will be greater than you. And Pharaoh said to Joseph:

"Behold I have set thee over all the land of Egypt". And Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand, and put it on the hand of Joseph..... What does this mean? In all the transactions that Pharaoh himself has sealed up to now, that they have become legally valid, Joseph now has the blank power of attorney. Why? In the house of Potiphar, Joseph has given proof of total willingness to serve, impeccable submission practiced. The Lord exalts him. Quickly a side question: where then did this Joseph, this Christ-actor, grow up? In Israel, for example - they threw him out. He became great in the land of Ham - Egypt is the head of Ham. Is our God once again more generous than all of us pious people? Are his thoughts much higher than our pious thoughts. Even by quite a bit higher! In the 2nd chariot he drives through the country. One called before him: Prostrate yourselves before him. And he set him over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man move his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh gave to Joseph the name Saphnath Paneach! That means: Savior of the world, of the cosmos. Was he? The whole house of Israel was saved, the father's house. All the land of Egypt was saved and the whole world was saved. God instituted a global famine for Joseph's sake. All the world came to Egypt - to Joseph. And his father's house suffered famine and then we know how it was allowed to end so wonderfully in different sections. Why? This wonderful Christ-actor subordinates himself to Pharaoh, the head of Ham, the chief of the head of Ham. Because God led it that way. Are we allowed to say that? What then does Joseph say as a model of classical, spiritual, God-pleasing submission? Against such authorities who do not suit us at all, in whom God is not pleased either. These are opponents of his people

I am Joseph your brother - terror - do not be afraid, for it was not you who brought me to Egypt, but God. Was he angry with his brothers, could he have been angry with them? As we all are. So faithful is God that he then gives exaltations and honors to those who are blameless in submission, where it does not suit them at all. So God brought Joseph to Egypt in order to make such a worldwide salvation possible, as it is on this day. You, however, Judah, who said to the brethren: What profit have we, if we let this one die, starve - now the merchants come, then we have another profit. You intended to make it evil - and that is their business. The designs, the considerations, the thinking and striving of the human heart is completely our business, of the creature. God does not interfere in that. Therefore, when God judges, He judges only as He knows our hearts. "You, however, intended to make it evil. God, however, when He had investigated and recognized your evil thoughts about me, approved your evil

thoughts to be carried out, intended to make it (now God is again quite humble) good.

Now we have before us an Israelite under a Persian king with the wonderful name of Ahasuerus. It is the uncle of Esther, Mordecai.

Esther 2, 21: In the same days, when Mordecai was sitting in the king's gate, so in the king's council, Bigdan and, two of the king's chamberlains, were enraged by those who guarded the threshold and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. The matter became known to Mordecai, and he reported it to Esther the queen, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. And the matter was investigated and it was found and they were both hanged on a wood and it was inscribed by the king in the book of the events of time. One night the king cannot sleep. He has the chronicles of the Medes and Persians brought to him to read there. Now he comes to the place where it is written that this Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin, Mordecai, saved his life. - Mordecai, sees that this magnanimous pagan king, under whom we are still captives, is now to be put to death. Could such thoughts have arisen in him? On the contrary - he saves the life of this king! Perfect submission! Proof that he prayed for him and that he recognized this whole subordinate position of his God as given and behaved practically accordingly. HE sends for someone and asks him, "What reward was given to this Mordecai?" (ch. 6:3)- Answer: nothing! Was Mordecai therefore evil? Not at all! It was natural for him. The morning dawned. Haman appears, who already got signed by the king with signet ring, sealed, all Jews in the whole kingdom, from India to Ethiopia are killed on that and that day, all. Haman appears to the king early in the morning with his confidence of victory. Now the king asks him the question, "What shall happen to the man whom the king particularly honors?". What did Haman think? Of course, the king means only me - can mean only me. Wonderful things he proposes. And the king says: "Haman you have to do that immediately with the Jew Mordecai!". And so it happened that instead of all the Jews, all the opponents of the Jews were killed. Why? Because a son of Benjamin so perfectly submitted himself to this antidivine, but God-appointed, authority.

What was it like with David and Saul?

"Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me?" David in front of King Saul. He has the corner of his skirt in his hand. David, the one anointed by God, instead of Saul, is constantly pursued, sought after by this Saul. He is to be killed. The whole house of his father. And how is it here? Here we have a glimpse into the heart attitude

of this David, who shows what attitude towards his persecutor. We know the story: he has him in his hand, has spared him.

Saul and Jonathan have fallen. David intones a lament: "How have the heroes fallen, Saul and

Jonathan, blessed were they in their life, and are not separated in death, etc."

Do not rejoice at the fall of your enemy! Solomon in divine wisdom. For the Lord could see it and would turn away wrath from your enemy, because your attitude is more reprehensible than your enemy before God.

And now comes our apostle Paul!

Matth. 10, 39: Jesus: Whoever seeks and finds his soul will lose it. Now we are the same: way of life and way of death! And whoever loses his soul to me will find it. Small simple word.

Romans 12 begins with the words: I exhort you therefore brethren by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed.

1 Peter 2:13 and 17: Paul: Submit yourselves to every human institution for the Lord's sake. Let it be to the king as overlord, or to the governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers but for the praise of those who do good. For thus it is the will of God, that by doing good ye may silence the ignorance of the ignorant! (By what? By doing good) As free men and women who have not made freedom a cover for wickedness, but as slaves of God, show honor to all, love the brotherhood. Fear God, honor the king (What was there a king - who does not suit us at all - we all would not have honored him - Peter and all of them thousands of believers in the Lord Jesus, Jews, zealots for the law, get the instruction: Honor the king!

In another place still Paul : Honor the emperor - what was the emperor's name at that time? Nero! Give to Caesar what is Caesar's (Nero!).

Paul:

Timothy 2:2 - we all know this: "That supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and still life in all godliness and dignified earnestness. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior God, who desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Even our very

unpleasant overlords on our earth (so that they all come to the knowledge of the truth!).

Philippians 4, 22: Rejoice always...and let your gladness be known to all men. All the saints greet you, especially those from the house of Caesar, Nero. Did Paul also intercede for Nero? Did he give thanks for him? He commends us to become his imitators. And how God answered that among the next government officials of Nero a whole number came to the living faith.

Luke 20, 25: But he said, (v. 22 the question, Is it lawful for us to give tax to Caesar Caesar or not? - but perceiving their guile, Jesus said, Why tempt ye me? Show me a dinar.

Whose image does he have? And they answered and said, Caesar the emperor. And he said unto them: Pray therefore to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's:

Please - is that a double track? Answer: Yes, it is! But a duplicity ordered by God. Does anyone object to this? Neither do I

Acts 27:14:

(Celebration of breaking of bread on the high seas - landed - before they land in Malta - 14 days on the high seas - remained without food - one night an angel of the Lord appears to whom Paul ministers and tells him: God says: Paul do not fear - I have given you all who are with you in this ship of misfortune. What does that mean in German? I have given you all of them, to you Paul? To lead them as slaves to Rome? No, to lead them away as slaves of Jesus Christ! All the ship's men, sailors, prisoners, soldiers, and whatever else was on the ship. I gave them all to you. What does Paul do. He encourages them, gives the testimony of this message. After you 14 have eaten nothing, it is necessary for your salvation that you take food. He himself began, took bread, gave thanks, broke it in front of everyone, and said: "Take of it, all of you. And so it happened. Breaking bread on the high seas, among what kind of company? Not quite as pious as this. Does anyone object to this - indeed, almost all the pious. If it becomes offoenbar to them, the things may look, but blissful people we become, godly people. Now Paul comes with the last word:

Luke 17,33 still tells us: Whoever loses his soul, gives it away, says yes to the disposal that God has authorized holy angels. Whose soul sins, it must die. Which soul of us has not sinned? Have we already signed our death warrant? That it is right from our God who crucified our old man with Christ? Made our old man die with Christ on the cross. Is it written that way? Yes!

Let our old man be buried with Christ! It is also written in Romans 6. Have we already signed this judgment. Yes I have signed it with hallelujah! Instead of being hanged on a gallows by myself, nailed to the cross according to the law, the mercy of our Father has planted us all together in the wounds of Jesus, identified us with the Crucified. Wonderful - there already flowed all the love of the Christ - crucified with him - and all his fullness of God, which he put out and his soul and his God-form and his spirit - glorious. So it is worthwhile to submit in everything, like the Lord Jesus. Did he also put himself at the disposal of the emperor and the king and the high priests and his friends and enemies to all. Be my imitators!

Paul: Romans 13:

Every soul submits to the authorities, because there is no authority except from God - and those who are (exist, are present) are decreed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists the order of God. But those who resist will bring judgment upon themselves.

Interjection.: Brother Muhl, is it not written - you shall obey God more than men. Yes, who is speaking here? A man or God? - Firstly and secondly - the disciples do not say this to the worldly authorities, but they say it to those who are hostile to Christ, to the religious, to the high priests. They had to keep silent.

For the rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. But if you do not want to be afraid of the authorities, practice goodness (toward whom?). - Towards these very authorities! They are grateful for every soul subordinated to them.

Who else knew the faithful man of God, a Jew, Hungarian? He lived in Hungary when Hitler was also

Hungary had occupied. One day the whole quarter, where many Jews lived, was sifted through and all the Jews were taken out and shipped away. In this place it was terrible. One job they were assigned to, in a boggy area, had to take out clay bales with a treadmill and make them available to a factory. This Hungarian was also assigned to this work. 3 or 4 Jews had to work there at the same time. He told them about Jesus. This went around among the other prisoners like wildfire and everyone tried to have fellowship with this Jewish Christian at the dirty work. The rumor of this man got to the highest authority in this city. This Nazi supreme let him come before him. What happens. The boss is standing at his work desk. As Ungar enters, the man's fountain pen rolls off his desk onto the floor. Brother Ungar immediately jumps over, bends down, picks it up and reverently hands it

to the superior. Not a word - dismissed - back to work.- The next day, this colonel gave the order to return the entire group of male and female Jews who were led away with Ungar to the apartments from whence they came. Fact. Trifle - Glory!

So good work, right - especially towards them. Yes, when we give thanks for them and pray for them, we can't behave any other way. If it really comes from the heart. For she, this authority, is God's servant (Nebuchadnezzar, my servant!) to you for good. But if you practice evil, fear, for she does not bear the sword in vain. Suffice it to us so slowly. Paul notices the opposition from what side? From the addressed and addressed - from the addressees. He repeats himself about 5 or 6 times - says the same thing.

"For this reason you also pay taxes. For they are God's officials who are continually employed for this purpose. Pray to all what is due them: the tax to whom the tax is due - the duty to whom the duty is due, the fear to whom the fear is due, the honor to whom the honor is due. Be indebted to no one for anything, but only to love one another. For he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

One day Paul and his co-workers arrive in Asia. There, where he has to write to Timothy in the last letter: You know that all who are in Asia have turned away from me. There Paul writes: there were such tribulations imposed on us in Asia, beyond our ability, so that we despaired of life. Does Paul need anything? It is written that "the Lord does not try the sheep of the flock"! But the shepherds, like a Paul "so that we despaired of life!". "But, having signed the testimony of death in ourselves! "

I - we have signed the death sentence according to the law decreed by God. Our whole old man is doomed to death and ruin by sin. Out! So, if we perish now, then only what we have already acknowledged and signed happens. And from that moment on, they were back on their feet.

How is it with us now. Every outer body of ours is a temple of the Holy Spirit! Has God also decided that one day this temple will be demolished, given over to decay? Answer: Yes. Who had the power of death before Golgotha? Satan! For whom Nebuchadnezzar is a model! "Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. Now therefore present these your bodies as living sacrifices pleasing to God. Go forth therefore, submit yourselves to the power which I have acknowledged and made my servant.

example of Daniel to over all the models already discussed: At one point it all stops. But only there. If a man of God, who serves or belongs to the one and only

true God, is required to worship something or someone or some other God than this one and only true God, then he is required to worship the one and only God.

God's faithfulness as the basis of our joy - by Karl Geyer

[Karl Geyer: God's faithfulness as the basis of our joy](#)

The gospel is the good news of God about His Son (Rom. 1, 1-3). After all the suffering that has come into the world through Satan, sin and death, God Himself now lets proclaim the great joy that He is preparing for mankind through the mission of the Son. And this joy shall be given to all people.

True joy began when the Son of God came to this earth and was born as a man. God with man! The angels loudly proclaimed the Good News that God, with the coming of His Son in human form, was pleased with man, first with the One, and in Him also with all others.

The Son of God is our joy

The delight of God, the Son, is also our joy. The great joy for the world began when He was born. It still begins today for man with Christ being born in him.

As the Son was growing on earth, so He is still growing in every person in whom He is born. With this growth of the Son in us (in other words, with the transfiguration into His image from one glory to another), there is also a growth in joy.

While the suffering of the carnal man bends his back more and more, so that he finally leaves this world in grief and disappointment, the youth of the spiritual man is renewed in old age, like the eagle renews its plumage. His joy grows in the midst of suffering, so that he can confess with Paul: "Now I rejoice in sufferings" (Col. 1:24). But the seven stages of joy are called: joy - more joy - much joy - great joy - high joy - inexpressibly glorious joy - complete joy.

God can rejoice in man again, and man can rejoice in his God, since the Father has re-established communion between Himself and us through the Son and in the Son. The Father loves the Son and we love the Son. He is the common object of our love and joy. Therefore, *in the Son we have* fellowship with the Father. Therefore, whoever does not have the Son, does not have the Father. But he who has the Son has the life that came to us from the Father through the Son. The life of the Father is in His Son. Therefore, whoever has this Son, has in Him and through Him also the Father. Through this Son he also shares in the same joy that the Father has in the Son and through the Son in man.

Joy through community

Whoever wants to bring joy to people must bring them into fellowship with the Son of God and thereby into fellowship with the Father. In this way alone there is complete joy (1. Joh. 1, 1-4).

It was the separation from the Father's heart of God that deprived man of the possibility of complete joy throughout the millennia. Through the Fall, communion with God was destroyed. In place of life, light and love, death, darkness and fear had come. Satan held not only the first man in the fear of death throughout his life after the Fall, but also all descendants conceived in the image of fallen man. A ghastly stream of sin, sorrow and death runs through the world.

The first question in the Old Testament sets forth to the horrified man what he has lost by falling: "*Where are you?*" - The "where" points to the wrong place, while the "are" reveals the wrong state, the lost "being".

Dead in transgressions and sins, expelled from fellowship with God, planting the field with sorrow, bearing children with pain, standing in enmity with the deceiver, awaiting the end with fear - that was the existence and condition of the former image of God.

Was this life actually worth living? - God had *given it to* man (Rom. 1, 24.26.28).

God remains faithful to fallen man

But the faithfulness of the one who had called the world into existence did not allow it to be over. He wants that the outcast does not remain outcast from Him (2 Sam. 14, 14). He has mercy on all His works. He cannot deny Himself. He remains true to Himself. Even if the abandoned humanity goes its way in complete corruption, so that He has to put it away by the judgment of the great flood in front of His face, - He remains faithful to Himself and creates a new one by making a second beginning with Noah.

Man remains man when he is on his own. The flesh is of no use for the purposes of the Kingdom of God. It can only reveal its unreliability. The descendants of Noah forget to give thanks and rise against their savior. He must judge them at the tower of Babel.

But He still remains faithful! - Again He starts a new one. Out of all nations He chooses one man, Abraham, and gives him and his descendants great and glorious promises for the future. But they do not obtain them, but go there in

hope, not knowing how God would establish the promised. Even the arch-father Jacob exclaims, "I will go down with sorrow into the pit."

The people of choice, which according to God's testimony is the smallest and most wretched of all nations (Deut. 7:7), suffers in Egypt, the fiery furnace. There is no strength in the unfaithful people to free themselves. He leads them out on the path of a miraculous salvation and lets them experience His great power in the desert. - At Sinai He gives the people law and justice. But so terrible was this face that the people could not stay at the mountain, but fled. They sent Moses as mediator and negotiator. In their hearts lived the same fear that once filled the first man when he hid from the face of God after the fall in the garden under the trees. To God's first question to man, he replied, "I was afraid." And so, through the millennia, they have all lived under the bondage of the fear of death, whether Jews or Gentiles.

The law did not take away the fear of death, but only increased it. It came in addition to work knowledge of sin, so that sin appeared as exceedingly sinful. Thus the situation became clearer. The helplessness of man with regard to redemption and beyond that to the acquisition of the God-likeness was proved juridically flawlessly. The hopelessness would have been appalling if God's faithfulness had not continued to go its way, placing one promise of the Savior after another on the lampstand. Thus, the law became the disciplinarian toward the Christ.

In His faithfulness, God Himself comes into the flesh

While the people thus groan under the condemnation sentence of the law and stretch out in longing for the coming Redeemer (even if not in the mass, but only in the dawn), the time is fulfilled which the Father has set to finish the service of the law and to announce to all the world the great joy which He Himself wants to give it in the Son of love. The great Amen, the faithful witness (Rev. 3:14) leaves the Father's house and comes to this poor earth. What an event! - -

God comes into the flesh! Who can grasp such faithfulness that pursues the lost until it finds it? - The Creator cannot leave His creature. Love therefore urges Him, and faithfulness does not allow it otherwise.

Even if the creature was unfaithful, He, the Creator, cannot deny Himself. He remains faithful against the unfaithful and against Himself. He must bring Himself to fulfillment. He cannot deviate from the counsel of His will for His own

sake. Thus, He continues to go His way in faithfulness and comes into the flesh to redeem His creature from the flesh.

"The angels looked on and praised His name aloud!" When the Son left the Father's house to descend to this earth through all the heavens, the inhabitants of those worlds descended with Him to praise such a miracle and to proclaim to the world the message of joy that the Eternal Faithful had prepared for it. With the angel, who had to announce the good news to the shepherds, was immediately the crowd of the heavenly hosts. They all wanted to see the great mystery that had been announced: *God revealed in the flesh*. Heaven was empty to them when the object of God's love was no longer there, but on earth. Then they all descended to be witnesses of this event.

God is with us!

Down on earth, however, in all the night and darkness, there were individual children of men in whose hearts there was a desire to regain what had been lost through the fall of the first head of humanity. Not only in Jerusalem were some waiting for the promise, but even in the other lands that had no promises, there were souls longing for the light, despite the even greater darkness. From the heart of such men who had followed the light of the guiding star comes the first question of the New Testament, "Where is He?" - –

The first question of the Scriptures: "Where are you?", which the Creator addresses to His lost creature, is followed here, after a long period of education and waiting, by the echo, the counter-question: "*Where is He?*" - The creature, man, asks for his Creator, his God! And His name Immanuel, i.e. God with us, says that the time of separation is over.

The faithfulness of Him who first asked for His lost creature did not tire in its sustaining patience and its searching shepherd love until the desire to return to Him burst forth in the creature's heart. And this cry still echoes hour after hour throughout the groaning creation in labor pains: "Where is He?" - It is the cry of all living things for the sustainer of life, for the Savior of the world. And God heard this cry and gave the answer by naming the bearer of the Good News: Immanuel = God with us!

Overcoming all anxious fear through the joy of communion

This was a different message from the one at Sinai. Not the darkness of the clouds, lightning and thunder put fear into the hearts of the shepherds in the

field. No, when fear wants to creep into their hearts, because God's glory lights up the night, the first word that sounds out to them is: "Do not be afraid!"

When the first Adam falls, he answers his Creator's question, "I was afraid." When the second Adam, the Lord Jesus, comes into the flesh, He has it proclaimed, "*Fear not!*" - This may be a change!

God does not come to the people with demands this time. He wants to announce good news. The angel says: "Behold, I proclaim great joy to you, which will be to all the people!" And the crowd of the heavenly hosts proclaims it with a loud voice, that now again a man is on earth, in whom God can be pleased. This had not been the case since those days in which the fallen man still walked with his God and creator in community in the garden. - After millennia of reign of fear of death and horror this turn!

John writes: "The life has appeared!" - Yes, when he was allowed to walk with the Word made flesh on this earth, it was not enough for him that he was allowed to behold the glory of the only begotten daily, no, he touched the Word of life, as if he wanted to test whether it was really true and not a dream that God walked among them, ate with them and revealed His glory to them.

Of all the words that the Word made flesh spoke to them, none burned so brightly in his love-hungry heart as the one he mentioned several times, "that your joy may be complete. This is the driving force of his ministry, and he himself gives it as the reason for the written proclamation of the Good News or for the writing of his letter (1 John 1:4).

Peter also picks up this thought in his letter under the guidance of the Spirit of God. He writes in 1 Petr. 1, 8 that the end of the test of faith is an inexpressible and glorious joy.

The first sin is immediately followed by fear. God had threatened death as the fruit and reward of sin. When man now committed the sin, the fear of death immediately fell upon his stained heart and conscience. - It is still the same today. Fear follows every sin. The temporal pleasure of sin causes fear for now and later. But whoever begins the other way around, that is, begins with the fear of God, has peace and joy in the Holy Spirit and both temporal and eternal delight.

The child of God may experience how, with the growing perfection in love, the fear of death recedes from his heart. Dying is no longer made difficult for him by sin. The sting of death, sin, is removed. In the heart of the child of God dwells a

fear of a completely different kind, the reverent fear of being able to grieve the Father. It was in this fear that Joseph stood when sin stretched out its arm to him. The Holy Spirit still calls us to this fear today. It is a permanent condition in the hearts of believers who strive for perfection in sanctification. But this fear is not followed by torment, but causes the jubilant joy with which one sings of victory in the tabernacles of the righteous.

There, love has reached its goal with a human heart. No anxious fear can cloud our joy anymore. We rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy. He who still has that other fear of death in his heart is not perfected in love. He may have made a beginning as a child of God, he is and remains saved, but he is not perfected in love, he has not grown up to the one who is the head, but has remained a child, has not put away what is childish.

This condition has its correctness for all of us at the beginning of our life of faith, but it testifies to a lagging behind in growth if it is not replaced by becoming more complete in love.

He who loves is from God, because God is love. But because there is no fear in God, there can be no fear in him who is in God or rests in God.

Perfect unity

In which heart doesn't the desire arise: "I want to sink into the sea of love instead of thinking about myself! This gives frankness to the heart and lets us know that as He is in the world, so are we. God looks at us as if His beloved Son were standing before Him. Since the Father is one with the Son, He is also one with all those who are in the Son and in whom the Son is. And also all these in whom the Father and the Son dwell are one among themselves. "I am in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in one." And further says. He: "...that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us" (John 17).

Could there be anything greater for a believing heart than to be with the Father and the Son and all the

believers to be completely one in love? - Of all the sources of joy that our hearts can find as we walk through this world, which is for us a place of alienation and a desert, is this not the fountain of all joys? "All my springs are in you!"

Faith rests on God's faithfulness

And to whom do we owe all this? - Is there anything in us worthy of being loved? Do we have any claim to fame for being born in the lands to which God called His messengers by saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us"? - May we reproach the Japanese and the Chinese and so many other peoples for not having the Gospel preached to them in the past centuries? Does not the curse on Ham and his descendants already indicate that the dark peoples should come later? - Does not the Scripture testify already from the first day of Pentecost that *the Lord* added as many of them as were ordained to eternal life (or were to take their turn in those days) (Acts 2:47; 13:48)? - Does not the Lord Jesus tell His own disciples, "It was not you who chose Me, but I who chose you" (John 15:16)? - We will never be able to go beyond the sovereignty of God in His universe. But we are not responsible for that, but we are responsible for what we have received. For God does not demand anything from one that he has not received, but according to what one has received.

Our calling and election are not based in us. If it really depended on us, no one would ever be converted. There would also never be any certainty of faith if our salvation depended only one percent on our own performance. Who would be able to say of himself that he had really fully achieved this one percent? - But where would the joy of certain faith remain if our hearts were filled with uncertainty about our salvation and the outcome of our journey? - There the bondage of the fear of death would not be broken, and slavish fear, fearful chastisement would never let us enjoy His full love. But faith can rest only in the finished work of Christ. The faithfulness of God has done everything that had to be done so that the despondent human heart can come to rest, to peace. Faith only needs to accept, only to acknowledge that the work of God in Christ is perfect and the only way to be justified, sanctified and perfected. Thus faith rests not on the faithfulness of man, but on the faithfulness of God. Without this faithfulness of the Father of all spirits, no spiritual fruit could ever come into being either. Thus, love, peace, joy and every kind of spiritual fruit rest on the faithfulness of Him who called us (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3-5 and many more).

God's faithfulness will preserve us

Is it not a rock foundation for a believer to know: Must the child of God still fearfully tremble whether he will be preserved until the end? Yes, is it not downright blasphemy of the faithfulness of Him who called us, if we doubt His preservation? The Scripture, and this is He Himself (for the Word made flesh and the written Word coincide), says about this: "He will fortify us to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord. God *is faithful*, by whom ye are

called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor. 1:8, 9.) It does not say: He *can fortify* us, but: He *will fortify* us. And in 1 Thess. 5, 23.24 the word of God tells us: "But *He Himself*, the God of peace, sanctify you completely; and let your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you; He also will do it." And how wonderfully He does it, the Eternal Faithful!

Among the disciples of the faithful witness was one, Peter, who thought he could be faithful himself. At the Lord's prophecy that on the night of betrayal and imprisonment all would be angry with Him, Peter misses himself to remain faithful. He did not know the depths of the defiant and then so despondent human heart. He fell. In utterly terrible curses and oaths, he denied the Lord. Where was Peter's faith? Where had love, peace, joy gone?

But the faithful witness had prayed for him before that his faith would not cease. He had also told him this before the prophecy about the denial. When Peter, after the denial, was reminded of that prophecy by the look of love, the shame of his unfaithfulness made him weep, but the consciousness: "The Lord in His faithfulness has prayed for me before that my faith may not cease" made him cope and not despair about the depth of his fall.

Faithfulness has ordered everything in the beginning so that the outcome will be right. Otherwise, how could faith be happy about the arrangement of our past, - how could love in the present have and keep its continuance in Him, - how could a certain hope for the future fill our heart, if He would not be faithful?

God's faithfulness causes worship and joy

What can man actually still do in view of such deeds of God? - Wouldn't it be shameful to want to do anything in order to bring about guarantee and security for oneself? - There is only one thing to do: to sink to our knees in astonished admiration of the greatness of such love and faithfulness of God and to worship the one who has done it with us in this way.

In worship, however, the sufferings of the present time seem small and not worthy of comparison with the future glory that is to be revealed in us. There the heart longs for the still pending event of the redemption of our body, so that the completed unity may be revealed. The spirit feels with the groaning creature, which is still in birth pangs and cannot be born until the firstfruits of the spirit are at home. And *we rejoice* that the creature will also be raised to the same glorious freedom as the sons of God (Rom. 8:18-21). And we rejoice that all things work together for our good. And *we rejoice* that our lives are so

completely in His hand that not a hair falls from our head without His will. Yes, *we rejoice* with inexpressible and glorious joy in our salvation and our Savior, knowing that the Father is for us, that the Son is for us, and that the Holy Spirit is for us. Who should separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:28-39)?

In view of such a position as sons in the Father's house, Paul sings in Romans 8 that glorious exultation of sonship. He praises the love of him who called us by glory and virtue and carries us with a faithfulness that exists only once in the whole universe, namely with him who is faithfulness itself and whose name is called: "Faithful and True" (Rev. 19:11). And through all the Pauline letters it sounds again and again: "Rejoice, and again I will say to you, rejoice."

What sounds in your heart and mine when it hears such a message? - Is there an echo? Do related tones resonate? Is our heart as full as that of those poor shepherds at Bethlehem? Does praise of God and glorification of the Eternal Faithful come forth from it? Or do we sit by the fountains of water and not drink? Do we hear the Good News from the mouth of angels: "Behold, I proclaim great joy to you," and do we mope in spite of everything?

How it must hurt God's heart when His high message of joy can no longer make our hearts sing and resound! What should He still have to say to us, if such faithfulness to love no longer triggers joy in our hearts?

"Blessed are the people who can rejoice!"

"God is my rejoicing!"

"And these things we write unto you, that your joy may be complete!"

The Dead of the Desert - by Adolf Heller.

[By Adolf Heller: The Dead of the Desert](#)

26 And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 27 How long shall I suffer this wicked congregation to murmur against me? I have heard the murmuring of the children of Israel, which they raise against me. 28 Therefore say to them, As I live, says the Lord, I will do to you just as you have spoken in my hearing. 29 Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and all your mustered men, the whole number, from 20 years old and upward, whom you have murmured against me; 30 none of you shall come into the land over which I have lifted up my hand [to swear] to let you dwell in it-except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun!

31 But your children, of whom you said that they would become a prey, I will bring them in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32 But your own dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your children shall be shepherds of cattle in the wilderness for forty years, and shall bear your whoredoms, until your dead bodies be consumed in the wilderness! 34 According to the number of the 40 days in which you have explored the land - so that each day is a year - you shall bear your iniquities for 40 years, so that you may know what it means when I turn away [from you]! 35 I, the Lord, have said it: Truly, this is what I will do to all this wicked congregation that has gathered against me; in this wilderness they shall be routed, and here they shall die!

Genesis 14:26-35

1 The hand of the Lord came upon me, and the Lord led me out in the Spirit, and set me down in the midst of the plain, and it was full of dead men's bones. 2 And he led me round about past them; and, behold, there were very many in the plain; and, lo, they were very barren. 3 Then said he unto me, Son of man, can these bones come to life again? I answered, O Lord, Lord, thou knowest!

4 Then said he unto me, Prophecy over these bones, and say unto them: Ye withered bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5 Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will put breath in you, and ye shall live. 6 I will give you sinews and make flesh grow over you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, that you may live; and you will know that I am the Lord!

7 Then I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied, there was a noise[3], and behold, a shaking, and the bones moved together, one bone to another. 8 And I looked, and, behold, they had sinews, and flesh grew on them; and skin was drawn over them; but there was no breath in them yet.

9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say unto the breath, Thus saith the Lord God; Breath, come from the four winds, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me. Then the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet - a very, very large army.

11 And he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are all the house of Israel. Behold, they say, "Our bones are withered, and our hope is lost; it is finished with us!" 12 Therefore prophecy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I will open your graves and bring you up out of your graves, my people, and I will restore you to the land of Israel; 13 and you shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up out of your graves, my people. 14 And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live; and I will bring you again into your land; and you shall know that I am the Lord. I have said it, and I will do it! says the Lord.

Ezek.37, 1-14

God's judgments are purposeful. They are not, as some think, endless and purposeless, but in the end they bring about the God-ordained state of righteousness, of being right. That is why the psalmist also testifies: "To righteousness the judgment will return" (94, 15), and Jam. 2, 13 teaches clearly and unambiguously: "Mercy rises (boasts or triumphs) over judgment.

Any attempt to dismiss this and hundreds of similar statements about the duration and purpose of the judgments brings to mind Satan's question in Paradise: "Should God have said?" Yes, God has said! But his word can be understood only by his spirit. Whoever is not seized by the spirit of love and mercy, God's innermost, very own being and essence, will neither want to understand nor be able to understand. That is why one should never argue about such ultimate questions. They will always pass over the curse-laden earth in the dust robe of ignominy, just as the truth made flesh did 2000 years ago. - —

As Israel wandered through the desert, it grumbled and claimed that God had brought it out of Egypt only to let it perish miserably in the wasteland. "I will do

as you have said!" (Genesis 14:28) the Lord promised and made true also here the important principle that he first lets happen to every creature according to his (i.e. the creature's) faith.

Of the 600,000 men of valor whom the Lord had led out of the iron furnace of Egypt under signs and wonders with a strong hand to prove his power and his love, only two reached the destination of destiny, the promised land. The others 599998 perished in the wilderness, and only the children born on the way, led by Joshua and Caleb, entered the Canaan promised to the people. Even today, the bones of the grumbling Israelites who succumbed to their lust pale in the deserts through which they wandered.

Whoever does not know God's word and heart stops at this fact and explains that Israel did not reach the God-ordained goal because of its unbelief and sin, but was worn out and destroyed, which is also testified by Genesis 14:29-33 among many other passages. Read this moving word from God's own mouth carefully! The Lord gives the defiant, disobedient Israelites this historical view of what is before their eyes. That is all he tells them. If faith knew nothing else but this judicial end, the so-called doctrine of annihilation would be right, and the end of all the ways of the world would be a bankruptcy of God. But not only the world without Christ stands on this ground, but also the mass of the awakened and many pious people.

This is also irrefutably shown by Israel, whose desert journey is a model for our situation (1. Cor. 10, 1-11). The masses do not believe but deny that God is really able to make his word true. They did not trust him with the power, the wisdom or the love to really fulfill his promises and oaths. That is why the Lord let it happen to them first according to their faith, respectively according to their unbelief. God lets every creature go its own wrong way for a while and, humanly speaking, taste the bitter fruit of its distrust and rejection against him.

That he nevertheless ultimately comes to his goal is a second, overriding truth that makes the heart of the believer rejoice in holy joy. When the Lord says that Israel shall *not* enter into his rest, this does not at all mean that it will *never* reach the promised Sabbath. In the end, without any doubt, God nevertheless comes to his goal, which he set before the foundation of the world in himself and which he will achieve not only in spite of, but precisely through all apparent opposition. For everything that he wants, what pleases him, in which he has his joy and delight (and is God pleased with the death of the sinner?), he does, yes, he and not the creature, which is not capable of it from itself at all. And he carries

out this will of his delight without the slightest deduction not only in the heavens and on earth, but also "in the seas and in all depths" (PS. 135, 6).

This tremendous truth runs through the entire Scripture. May unbelief or half-belief fight against it or smile at it, it shines out everywhere for faith. When Pastor Böhmerle was once asked to name a few passages of Scripture that reveal the correction of the entire creation, he replied in his original, witty way: "I would have to copy the entire Bible from front to back!!!"

We will try to see this truth, that not judgment but restoration is the last thing, also with regard to the wilderness migration of Israel. The migration of the people saved from Egypt was at first a complete failure, and not only a failure of Israel, but also an apparent failure of God, who because of the unbelief of his "firstborn son" (Exodus 4:22) was not able to carry out what he had promised and conjured up.

But it does not remain like that! Let us just open Ezk. 37 and read slowly and prayerfully this mighty, moving prophecy! What a wonderful picture unfolds before our mind's eye, a sight that human imagination would never be able to create.

Deserts were full of withered human bones. These formed "the whole house of Israel" (verse 11 a). They themselves consider a restoration from this their condition impossible and therefore say. "Our bones are withered; our hope is lost; we are gone (Kautzsch: It is over with us!)." Is this not the opinion of the masses concerning those who are judged by God and those who have been given away?

But what does the prophet say when he is asked whether these bones will ever come to life again? We should and can learn a lot from his answer! Since it was not revealed to him, he could not know it. We can only understand, administer and testify to that which has been revealed to us by God from His Word through His Holy Spirit. Therefore the prophet says in humility and modesty: "Lord, you know" (verse 3 b). Upon this confession, he receives the commission to prophesy over the bones of the dead and to proclaim the word of God to them (verse 4). Not zealots and shouters, but the humble and obedient, who are bound to God's word alone, are given commissions from the sanctuary.

The answer of the people to the question whether there was still a hope for them was: "With us it is finished! The prophet dares to give neither an affirmative nor a negative answer, according to the revelation of God that was given to him or not. But what does God himself say? In verse 5. 6 we read about it: "Thus says

the Lord Jehovah to these bones: Behold, I bring breath into you, that you may live. And I will put sinews over you, and flesh will grow over you, and I will cover you with skin, and I will put breath in you, that you may live. And ye shall know that I am the Lord."

Now Ezekiel is also able to believe in the restoration of Israel, and he prophesies according to God's command. He does not contradict the Lord by saying that this is not possible, that it cannot be, that Israel does not deserve this, that it is right for those who have been killed, that they are endlessly and irretrievably given away, and what more such objections are against the clear promises of God's intention of salvation and completion. Ezekiel does not do that. He believes and obeys. "Then there arose a noise, and, behold, a roaring: and the bones drew together, bone to bone. And I looked, and, behold, sinews came upon them, and flesh grew, and skin drew over them above. But there was no breath in them yet" (verse 7 b. 8).

Now the mighty army of more than half a million Israelite men, which had once been worn down in the 40-year desert journey because of its unbelief and defiance, was there again! What a sight this will be one day, when what the prophet saw in the spirit, who knows how soon, literally and really takes place !

But there was no breath, no spirit (Hebr. : mach, LXX: pneuma) in them. Here we have a prophetic example for the fact that Israel will be gathered in the end times first of all purely externally, in its folk substance, but is not yet filled with the spirit of God in its entirety. This will only be the case with Israelite-Christian firstfruits, who, however, will have to die a martyr's death. This must be taken into account! Before a real renewal by the holy spirit takes place, the people of earthly choice will first fall to the antagonist of their Messiah-King, the Antichrist, in the 70th week of Daniel. This is now in the offing. Only individual real heralds, who know Jesus and proclaim the coming kingdom and its ruler, may do their service, but, as we indicated above, they will be sacrificed and perish, like all first liners of every body. And yet, without their witness, the Kingdom cannot arise. These are tremendous and wonderful things that we should see and witness much more clearly in their biblical context.

Once, when God's time and hour have come, "an exceedingly great army" will be filled with the spirit of the Lord and "stand on his feet" ready to march into the promised kingdom (verse 10 b). Then what God had promised so often will be fulfilled: He will bring His earthly people and inheritance to the destination He has chosen for them "from the foundation of the world" (Matth. 25, 34; Rev. 13, 8). We, on the other hand, the members of the Christ body, who were chosen

before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1, 4), have a heavenly goal and inheritance.

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Unbelief has always been right for a time! For millennia of total annihilation it has triumphed; but God will always and unconditionally *be* right, even when all seems lost. The right of the Lord, which is the Christ, *keeps the* victory. It will not cede the total victory to a single being in the vast universe, nor let it be disputed or obscured. And the God who once gave or will give life and breath to the dead of the desert will certainly fulfill the holy promise that "He Himself gives (grants or bestows!) life and breath and the universe to all" (Acts 17:25).

Blessed be His holy, wonderful name for this!

Inner Goals of God - by Adolf Heller.

[From Adolf Heller: Inner Goals of God](#)

Many people become misguided about God because they know nothing of His inner purposes. They see only hardship and misery, suffer from the injustice and hatred of their environment and despair of change and themselves. Finally, their tormented life seems so senseless to them that they are no longer able to believe in a God of omnipotence, wisdom and love.

We experience this again and again, and not only with outspoken worldly people, but also with those who have been awakened, even with many who thought they were truly "pious" for years or even decades. The painful experience of PS. 73, 2-16 is something that everyone has to go through once, so that their trust is based on God alone. This happens mostly by learning to spiritually understand the holy purposes of all earthly hardships, the divine inner goals of all world events and to affirm them by faith (cf. verse 17-28!).

Only children and fools see a dentist as an evil man who wants to torture poor people on his torture chair and takes pleasure in their pain. Do we not often, spiritually speaking, resemble such children and fools? Only when we have looked into God's heart do we begin to understand His wonderful tender love and care, to taste His goodness and faithfulness, and to comprehend His inner purposes. How unspeakably arduous, how; bitter and humiliating was the way Israel was led and is still led to this very hour! Especially the forty-year wilderness journey seems to have been a senseless torment to our natural senses. But how does God look at the matter? What was his hidden inner goal? In Deut. 8:2-5. 16 b we read about it: "You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God made you wander these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, to try you, to know what is in your heart, whether you would observe his commandments or not. And he humbled thee, and caused thee to hunger; and he fed thee with the Man, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, to make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but that man liveth by all that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord. Your garment has not fallen apart on you, and your foot has not swollen these forty years. Know then in' your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you . . . to try thee, that he may prosper thee in thy end."

This wonderful insight into the purpose of our sufferings and hardships, this vision of delicious inner goals, shines even brighter in the New Testament. Let us

think, for example, of the well-known word in 1 Cor. 5:5, where Paul, with apostolic authority, hands over a sinner to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. If there were a point here, fear and horror would fill our hearts unceasingly. But it goes on, and the following words reveal to us the purpose, the inner aim of this measure which seems so cruel: ". . . that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Not endless punishment or annihilation, but salvation is the purpose of God when he chastises so sharply. Only those who grasp such connections in faith can become and remain joyful from the heart even in the midst of the distress and destruction that burns around us.

Or let us turn a few pages further in our letter to the Corinthians and read 9, 25-27: Paul speaks here of an almost desperate struggle in a "total commitment". What it means when a person or a people uses everything and makes every sacrifice and the end and result is only agony and ruin, we have all experienced on our own bodies, It is therefore quite understandable that times after wars and catastrophes are always times of freedom of the flesh and the rapture of sin. One wants to make up for what one has neglected, since every moral attitude of renunciation and sacrifice proved to be senseless foolishness and one was not only ridiculed but even punished for it.

But how completely different the situation becomes when you know that no sacrifice you made for the sake of God and Jesus is in vain! Our struggle of faith does not consist of strokes of the air. The enemy is really thrown down and defeated, and the imperishable crown of glory is waiting for us. Only those who have been given the introspection of God's ultimate goals can joyfully endure injustice and poverty, humiliation and slander.

The same context can be seen in 2 Cor. 12, 7. An angel of Satan, a messenger of hell, was allowed to beat Paul with his fists. Whether it was an ugly, painful eye ailment or some other disease, we do not know. In any case, Paul was anything but a celebrated, admired "leader" who never lacked for welfare, possessions and enjoyment. The very opposite was the case! The reason for this humiliation was that the apostle was in danger of exalting himself because of the high revelations he had received. His Lord wanted to save him from this and chose the way of poverty, weakness and lowliness for this purpose, because, humanly speaking, there was no other way. Do we not also, you and I, want to say "Yes, Father!" with all our heart to the bitterness and hardships that God, in His wisdom and love, placed in our lives? Oh, that we could! How blessed we would be, and how fruitful and blessed would be our hidden service to the poorest and least of this world!

The apostle handed such people over to Satan, who pushed away their good conscience and suffered shipwreck in their faith. In what in detail this

Surrendered to the enemy, we do not know exactly. It was probably an exclusion from the community, perhaps associated with pain, illness and mental suffering. It may have been different depending on the case at hand. What such apostates endured was obvious to all. Hidden, however, was the purpose, the divine inner goal of such a measure. They were to be freed from their blasphemies (Dächsel: their shameful speeches); only for this purpose the sharp discipline served, to which they were subjected by the divine authority of the apostle (1. Tim. I, 20).

The wisdom of God's ways, the planned, well-considered arrangement of all cosmic events to a higher goal, the alternation of joy and sorrow, of misery and refreshment, "of honor and dishonor, of evil rumor and good rumor" (2 Cor. 6, 8) has a profound purpose of such great and blessed magnitude that we are not even able to grasp it in the wretchedness of our present body and soul life: the divine purpose of all the leading of our life is summed up in the three little words "for our glory" (1 Cor. 2, 7)! Here every lamentation and every complaint against repulsive people or circumstances must fall silent; here faith can only be deeply bowed and blessedly silent and worshipful.

Why did even the Son of God have to be humbled and taste the bitterness of death among the angels, the messengers and servants of the throne, whom God charges with folly and who veil their faces in His radiance of light? He, "for whose sake the universe is and through whom the universe is" (Heb. 2:10 a), made many sons of God through his suffering and brought them to glory (verse 10 b). Now he is "crowned with honor and glory" (verse 9 a). It was grace, a favor and a show of love from God that he tasted death for all (verse 9b).

The natural man gladly renounces such a "favor" and "grace", but the spiritual man, who has seen something of the inner purposes of God and has tasted the powers and wonders of that essential world, confesses with Paul: "I forget what is behind and reach out to what is before me; I hasten toward the goal set before me, toward the prize of victory up there, to the reception of which God has called me in Christ Jesus". (Phil. 3, 13 b. 14 according to the Mülheim translation).

Jesus, the beginner and perfecter of faith, saw two things before him: shame and joy (Hebr. 12:2). Joy was the still distant inner goal of God, shame, on the other hand, was the path that his tired, dust-covered feet walked daily and that led him to the cursing wood of deepest shame. It may also be translated thus, "Instead of the joy set before him, he endured the cross and did not despise the shame." This gives a deep, precious meaning. Christ, as a sinless man to whom

death had no right, could have entered immediately into the joy of the restored full communion of God. Then he would have been spared the shame of dishonoring criminal death. But he does not! He endures the cross and disregards, i.e. does not pay attention to the disgrace.

But what enables him to go this way? Our text tells us: the view of the joy ahead of him. He knew about the coming eons of completion and joy. He also knew that he was entitled to them. But he did not want to usurp all that was rightfully his and his due. Just as he did not hold on to God's equality like a robbery, i.e. as something that was absolutely his own (in war robbery and booty were rightful, untouchable property of the victor!), but gave it away, so he did not want to take it back earlier and also not in a different way than God had decreed. And the divine order was the cross! The Lord had the authority to do both: to leave His life and to take it back (Joh. 10, 18). Also in this testimony we encounter the term *entolä* - inner goal. Christ made use of these two powers to realize divine inner goals at the right time and hour and in the right way.

Because Jesus saw the hidden, essential inner goal of joy, he was able to walk the path of shame and suffering. If already - we speak humanly - our transfigured head needed the inner vision of divine joy to walk his path prescribed by the Father, how much more we, who are so blind and shy of suffering, so alienated from God and selfish! In this light, let us understand why the enemy cares so much about getting out of the

joy, the glad tidings of our salvation and our glory, by mixing up a series of threatening legal demands, with which he drives the awakened and faithful into inferiority burdens and fear? He who has truly understood the deep, pure sound of the Gospel, who knows something of the joy ordained by God before us, goes his way to the goal with praise and thanksgiving, heedless of the hardships and bitterness which the Father of love in his wisdom has allotted to us. To this end, may God make His marvelous inner purposes shine ever more clearly and substantially upon us, so that in truth we may become those who seek and think of those things which are above, where the Christ is, seated at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1).

1 If therefore ye have been raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where the Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God. 2 Seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth; 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with the Christ in God. 4 When the Christ, our life, shall be revealed, then shall ye also be revealed with him in glory.

Col. 3, 1-4

Four ways to the Una Sancta - by Karl Geyer

[By Karl Geyer: Four Ways to the Una Sancta](#), 1948

Signposting scriptural words

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all."

Eph. 4, 3-6.

"But not for these alone do I pray, but also for them which believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one; that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me."

John 17:20-23.

"And all the earth had one language, and one speech: and it came to pass, as they went eastward, that they found a plain in the land of Sinear, and dwelt there. And they said one to another: Well, let us paint brick and burn hard! And the brick served them for stone, and the earth resin served them for mortar. And they said: Come, let us build us a city and a tower, the top of which shall reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, that we be not scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And Jehovah went down to see the city and the tower which the children of men were building. And Jehovah said, Behold, they are one people, and have all one language, and this they have begun to do; and now nothing shall be withheld from them that they shall devise to do. Let us go down and confuse their language there, so that they may not understand each other's language. And Jehovah scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth; and they ceased to build the city. Therefore they gave it the name of Babylon (= confusion); because at that time Jehovah confused the language of the whole earth, and from then on Jehovah scattered them over the whole earth".

Genesis 11:1-9.

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have not yet received a kingdom, but have received power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind and give their power and authority to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Rev. 17:12-14.

"But Pilate and Herod became friends on that same day, for before they were enemies against each other".

Luk 23, 12.

"But the whole multitude cried out at the same time, saying, Away with this, but let us have Barrabas."

Luk 22, 18.

"And when the thousand years shall be fulfilled, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go forth to deceive the nations that are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to war, whose number is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

Rev. 20, 7-9.

"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot vain things? The kings of the earth arise, and the princes take counsel together against Jehovah, and against his anointed: let us break their bands, and cast away their cords from us."

Psalms 2:1-3.

"This is not the world that comes from above, but a r d i s c e , s e e l i s c e , d e m o n i s c e ."

Jam. 3, 15.

Introduction

The spiritual movements of our time all aim very strongly at unification in all areas of the entire public life of mankind. No sector is exempt from this. In world

politics, through the international agreements of the Geneva Convention, the Hague Court of Arbitration, the League of Nations, the United Nations, the World Congresses of Trade Unions, and all sorts of other events, one has for decades been clearly striving for a central government for the humanity of the whole earth.

As the rationing measures prove, economic life also had to follow this course toward standardization. Even if the individual processes are often still deficient, in principle the decision has been made, and no one can completely escape it. The interconnectedness of the world economy is already too great for that, and the interdependence of the individual branches of the economy is far too obvious.

Cultural and intellectual life is also in a state of rapid harmonization, especially since the invention of the radio and the development of the film industry,

telegraph, airplane, etc., brought the continents closer together. Through the exchange of students and professors, international news bureaus, associations of the world press, world exhibitions, world Olympiads and many other means, the path of unification was also clearly taken in this field.

It is therefore not surprising that the area of religious life is not exempt from this process of standardization. Indeed, it is here that this trend is most noticeable. The reason for this lies in the fact that, in the final analysis, all expressions of human life and all processes of world events require a worldview justification. All that exists in the world has a valid foundation. That is why the individual and the whole ask again and again: "Why did this have to happen?" Those who know the connection between the spiritual causes and their effects in contemporary events also know why every movement demands a spiritual, i.e. ideological justification. To do without this justification would mean to give up the basis of existence from the outset. For all processes are temporal; but the spiritual idea from which they originate is supra-temporal. *A l l e s G l ü c k a b e r*, (and this is the aim of all measures of mankind which are supposed to have a meaning and to be of general interest), *w i l l E w i g k e i t*, *w i l l t i e - f e*, *t i e f e E w i g k e i t* (Nietzsche). That is why the right to change the orders of human existence is always sought to be somehow morally justified and religiously underpinned. Just compare the most prominent periods of development in human history, especially the prehistory of revolutions.

Since everything temporal demands its deeper justification and derivation from the eternal, it is readily apparent that mankind's will to unify all areas of life cannot leave the religious field unaffected. Rather, the swell is most strongly felt

here, because it is precisely here, in the innermost chamber of the human spirit, that thesis and antithesis meet most directly.

But it is also easy to see that the slightest error in the inner mental view of things must have disastrous consequences in its outer effects; for a small difference of angle in the center of the circle results in a larger arc at the periphery, the further one draws the circles. This happens because the competition of all religions are all in the light here. The way of mankind from the wrong decision of the first Adam in paradise to the antichristianity and the open rebellion of the whole mankind at the end of the millennium (the thousand year kingdom) prove this clearly and unequivocally.

It is therefore necessary to look so critically at the reasons for unification in no other sphere of life than precisely in the religious sphere. If a wrong motive creeps in here or even becomes decisive, it changes the whole spiritual view and leads to incalculable effects, against which all external catastrophes are only small accidents.

Nowhere, therefore, is the word "Test the spirits to see if they are of God" (1 John 4:1) more appropriate than in this area.

What does not come from God comes from the creature and therefore does not last. Only the unchangeable can create eternity. Everything else carries from the outset the germ of death and decay.

With this importance of the human central area, it is no wonder that all spiritual powers set out here to set the course of world history where the smallest change has a worldwide effect.

We are therefore obliged not only to let the undoubted justification and expediency and necessity of unification present itself to us, but still more to present the training forces, the inspiring spiritual powers, which stand behind this movement.

If we allow ourselves to be deceived by propagandistic tricks and methods here, we will succumb to the onslaught of the lying spirits ourselves in the end and help to accelerate the breakthrough of the system of the end times.

Man, in all the decisions he has to make in any field of life, takes one of the four paths possible for him:

1. the path of earthly wisdom,
2. the path of spiritual wisdom,
3. the path of demonic wisdom,

4. the path of divine wisdom.

This is also true of the drive for religious unification in general and the drive for U n a S a n c t a in particular.

In the following, let us consider in detail these four ways in which the various groups seek to realize the Una Sancta!

1. the way of earthly wisdom

The unification of the various tribes, ethnic groups and peoples of a geographical area into one nation is often confronted with great difficulties, the overcoming of which usually takes place only after centuries of struggle. The more the common interests come to the fore, the sooner the struggles can be replaced by negotiations. However, these negotiations very often represent only another form of war, the so-called cold war. The present offers examples of this in such large numbers that it is unnecessary to go back to older historical events.

Among the difficulties facing the unification of different sections of the people into a viable nation, diversity of religion is the greatest. Note in this

Just compare the fight between Jews and Arabs, who are both racially descended from Abraham! Or one compares to this also the quarrel between Hindus and Mohammedans in India, where the difference of the religion makes the national unity impossible. Is it any wonder, then, that people who, for political or economic reasons or for any other interest, long for a popular union, try everything to remove this greatest obstacle by seeking, with all the means of cunning and violence at their command, to create a common religious platform broad enough to accommodate all concerned?

There is really no lack of justifications for such an approach. Is not expediency alone a sufficient reason in and of itself? - The unification into a larger whole is supposed to stimulate the economy, to improve the social conditions, to raise culture and civilization. Are such improvements not "Tatchristentum" or at least general moral achievements? - Should not the success, then, namely the raising of the whole standard of living, be reason enough to justify the leveling or elimination of religious differences? -

Depending on the strength ratio of the individual groups, the rulers pushing for unification exert more or less palpable pressure on individual parts (minorities) or on all. With the carrot in one hand and the stick in the other, the path of "ideological reform" and "religious renewal" is taken to create the foundation

for the new state structure. Whether the "reformers" are promised land for settlement, state offices, economic advantages or positions of honor, or whether the resisters are subdued through training, internment, protective custody, liquidation, expulsion and other means, depends only on the situation at hand. The despots of earlier millennia practiced these practices in exactly the same way, usually even more openly and honestly, than the people's rulers of later times. In principle, however, it makes no difference whether a Roman Caesar had the followers of a worldview that was inconvenient or hated by him nailed to the cross at the gates of the capital, or whether Charlemagne had them crucified at Verden a.

d. Aller had the heads of the pagan Saxons put to the sword, or whether today somewhere they strive for unity with "more modern" means, starting with the exclusion of the inconvenient from any influence on public life up to the complete boycott (Rev. 13, 16-18).

Nor have the methods become any more honest. If a minister somewhere has become inconvenient for his colleagues, he becomes unacceptable for the cabinet and is forced to "leave" the cabinet.

health considerations" to submit his resignation. Whether this very common occurrence takes place in a democracy, a monarchy or a dictatorship is irrelevant for the honesty of the justification and presentation of the event.

The lie of convenience has become one of the main tools of national and international politics. Indeed, it represents the very essence of the national economy, while the military and economic performance of a nation is its own public measure. Light and wealth that are the main measures of well politics. This is not to be expected otherwise in a world whose God and Prince is a liar and a murderer of men from the beginning. By these two great powers, the lie and the violence, mankind is largely ruled without knowing it.

Effectivity is not a consideration for the competition and the correctness of an enterprise. After all, the lie of purpose also happens for reasons of expediency and does not thereby become truth by any means. And we have seen in practice how far one got by teaching: "Good is everything that benefits the people; bad is everything that harms the people. With this state morality, one can justify all measures that one considers necessary to bring about a standardization in all areas of life.

That the State, once it has begun to follow this path of expediency, will, if these principles are consistently carried out, be in constant conflict with the e v i - l o p m e n t s o f t h e G o d t l i c R e c o m m e n t , is unalterable.

The state needs a social model to back up its measures. Whatever contradicts it, it eliminates, regardless of how it does so. It therefore recognizes the activities of religious communities insofar as they are useful to it, and it suppresses everything that is not expedient for the unified operation of the state.

How this affects, for example, the employment of civil servants, the establishment of schools, the organization of the press, radio publications, etc., can be seen day by day in the practice of the most diverse countries.

If, therefore, on the part of the state, the cooperation of the denominations and the union of the churches are "zealously promoted," this may make a "very good impression" on the masses and be recognized as "exceedingly expedient" and "lying entirely in the interest of the people." But the purity of the motives and the correctness of the way is just as doubtful as in the case of Verden a. d. Aller or the Bartholomäusnacht in Paris or the expulsion of the Salzburger or still other events of recent history which are closer to us.

T h e way of the world may seem very reasonable and obvious to all who are guided by political, economic, social, cultural, and other reasons of expediency. It is, however, in conflict with the way of God. For God is love, and Christ is truth. They do not work with lies or force, even where it seems expedient to do so.

T h e way of the world has as its aim the temporal fulfillment of man's libidinous longing, the creation of the most comfortable opportunities for the enjoyment of this earthly life, the granting of a maximum of earthly goods.

If this were the way to transform man into the archetype of his being, namely into the image of God and Christ, we Christians, too, could only welcome any promotion in this direction. But if the elimination of merit leads to the dissolution of inwardness and character and personality, and thus falsifies and sabotages God's goals with man, we must reject this path, however plausible and humanly expedient it may seem.

The promotion of the formation of the Una Sancta by the way of earthly wisdom is therefore not only suspicious to us, but we reject it unequivocally and completely, both in its motives and in its aims.

2. the path of spiritual wisdom

The methods of earthly wisdom certainly cannot be called beautiful. Open and hidden tread

The result is that the path reveals traits of lies, meanness, crudeness, selfishness, refined calculation, and inhumanity. It is therefore not surprising that those circles, which have a feeling for personality values, feel repelled by this way. Man does not live by bread alone. With the solution of the political, economic and social question in the sense of expediency the last need of man is not satisfied by far. In the long run, no sentient being can live without spiritual pleasure; it withers away.

Man wants to be man; and he wants this in the highest degree of his mental dispositions, powers and abilities. Only in their development does he unfold his better humanity, namely precisely all that which essentially raises him above the animal. The highest expression of this humanity, however, is art. In it the soul of man rises to its summit achievements and represents in its works its highest ideals.

This has nothing to do with the expediency of earthly wisdom. A living room can be inhabited without a painting hanging in it or a statue being placed there or a musical instrument sounding or a library conveying to us the treasures of the spirit. But bread alone does not make the soul resound. It becomes desolate in the material alone and dies of the listlessness of pure usefulness. It needs something that lifts it above the dullness of the pure treadmill of earning bread. And art offers it that.

And isn't this much more binding on people than everything political and economic?-

Do not people of all nations and religions and races and worldviews stand in reverent admiration before the marble statues of the ancient Greeks? -

Do not the notes of a masterpiece of music speak quite directly to all hearts, forcing us under their spell and uniting us imperceptibly in common devotion to the pure pleasure of listening?

Do not the paintings of our galleries and museums proclaim the beauty of the earth to all its visitors without distinction? -

Doesn't a great work of poetry, such as Goethe's Faust, speak far beyond the narrow boundary posts of a nation? -

And don't the sporting competitions and displays of a World Olympiad bring people together much more easily and quickly and better than wars and other violent methods of politics? -

Yes, are they not the great spirits of mankind who speak to us here and lead us to the high aims of the human spirit and the highest delights of the human soul?

-

Shouldn't we therefore put the *Seelisch in ihrer höchsten Wirkung* in art in the service of human reconciliation? - Could it not substantially promote the aspirations to the Una Sancta if it were presented in artistically high-quality forms and if the religious content of art were emphasized? - Yes, is not artistic devotion already a preliminary stage of religious feeling? - Is it not precisely through art that one can imperceptibly put the soul into any desired mood? - Shouldn't we therefore try to achieve the spiritual harmony of the masses in this way and thus influence people religiously with the help of art and lead them to the Una Sancta? -

What an attraction the temple dances form in the pagan religions! How unspeakably strong is the mass suggestion of the processions! The solemn rites of the consecration acts of all religions force the people into their spell and shake them mentally up to tears.

Would it not be wise then, through atmospheric spaces, through magnificent images, through monumental statues, through splendid priestly vestments, through magical illumination and surprising lighting effects, through ingratiating and entrancing music, through captivating delivery and wisely calculated words, through solemn liturgies and consecrating performance, to create the ground on which all feel comfortable and therefore at ease? -

Without doubt, this path of spiritual wisdom is more sublime than the robust-seeming

Way of earthly wisdom. It is a very important path and will therefore undoubtedly have a stronger attraction in times of economic prosperity, when the mere question of existence, i.e. earning a living, does not pose any difficulties.

In times of need, however, all spiritual magic loses its effect. Under the rubble of bomb-destroyed

Cities lying, one renounces magic light effects and artistic dances. The homeless

Even the most atmospheric music would only be a mockery of the bitter fate of a displaced person who is starving and freezing and in despair. In such situations it turns out that the *seelich* path does not lead over the man. When they are *recommissionally* that a *sou* good, they are able to measure to measure.

Even in this way, that holy unity cannot be achieved which, according to God's will, is eternal.

shall endure. All *seelish* his good *begreance* and don't the goodly world development. The psychic, the spiritual man, does not hear what is of the spirit of God. The divine is foolishness to him and he cannot recognize it (1 Cor. 2:14).

How could we therefore use any mental means on the way to the representation of the unity of the spirit?!

Spiritual and spiritual are two too different areas for us to mix them together (Heb. 4:12).

Well in the *reauditi* to *Una Sancta* b. *See-lish* *elustgewinn* is not a ground lab ities for the *glau* b that works the world; for the lust of this world is, after all, out of the world and cannot go beyond it. Yes, the spiritual gain of pleasure as a substitute for spiritual joy is a deceptive maneuver of the greatest style, which Satan organizes in order to blind man, so that he does not see the essence and does not recognize the truth.

It is therefore of almost symptomatic importance that Goethe in his *Faust* so belittles Satan (*Mephisto*) and on the other hand declares the striving higher, the striving effort of man to be sufficient for salvation.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are not of the Father but of the world (1 John 2:15-17). But the world resists the Father. Therefore, how can the lust of this world build divine things? -

The path of spiritual wisdom is humanly determined and not divine. Therefore, faith is not able to walk it.

3. the path of demonic wisdom

Satan is the god and prince of this world (2 Cor. 4, 4; Joh. 12, 31; 14, 30; 16, 11; Eph. 2, 2). The demons are his helpers; he is their ruler (Matth. 9, 34; Mark. 3, 22; Luk. 11, 15). But the nations of this earth serve (without their knowledge) this secret ruler of the present evil eon (age). What they sacrifice, they sacrifice

to the demons (1 Cor 10:20). That is why all their efforts always end in war and war cries, in destructions and devastations, in revolutions and rapes, in oppressions and theft of countries, in individual and mass murder, in theft, deceit and lies.

Lower and Gewaltatsindication of the states of the End contribution. The Satan, the First of the Gewalt the air (Eph. 2, 2) is a liar and a murderer of men from the beginning (Jn. 8, 44).

The kingdoms of the world are transferred to him for this eon, which is therefore also called the evil eon (Gal. 1, 4). He also asserts his claim to power even to the Son of God (Luk 4, 5. 6), and Christ allows this to stand. But since Satan knows that this age of his rule is coming to an end (Rev. 12, 12), he seeks to prolong his reign with all the signs and wonders of the lie and with all the means of God at his disposal. Since he has no divine, creative power like the Son, to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given, Satan has to gather the existing forces and powers of the cosmos in the Antichrist in order to assert himself in his world dominion by this last and most powerful and rest loss summient of all possibilities.

Canner hisation of the religion with the Religion. - Now and nime!

There is no other way than to bring the church into its own world.

The old serpent has always been more cunning than all the beasts of the field. Therefore, Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and also lets his servants take the form of servants of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:14).

With all the wisdom of the demons, the greatest deception maneuver in the history of the world is carried out to deceive, if possible, even the elect (Matth. 24, 24; Mark. 13, 22; 2. Thess. 2, 8-10 and others).

In order to bring about this world unity church, it is first necessary to prepare the apostasy from the truth of the gospel in systematic subversion, so that the clear testimony of the power of God is silenced and the pseudo-Christianity can take its place. Where the signs and wonders of the lie are not enough, hidden or open violence helps.

Satan first lets the Antichrist appear in religious garb as a pseudo-Christ. He concludes a concordat with the masses for a week of years (the last of Daniel's seventy weeks of years). This alliance for religious renewal develops an extremely successful activity. The temple is restored in unimagined splendor.

Burnt offerings and food sacrifices are offered, and the influx to this for a world men's carrying - reform of the religion of the End contribution is so great that halfway through the week of years the Antichrist can drop the mask so that he himself sits down in the temple and lets himself be worshipped as God over all (2. Thess. 2, 4; Matth. 24, 15 and others).

After the lie has done its service in this way, the open, brutal violence can complete the work that has been started. All who do not submit to the last world ruler and accept the mark of the beast will be persecuted and exterminated.

The providing tactic of the Satan is because with the commission. On the one hand, he seeks to undermine the truth through scientifically disguised biblical criticism. He has the weapons he once wants to use openly against Christianity forged in the lecture halls of theological faculties and seminaries. There, in the last two centuries, "in scientific work", the Son of God has been stripped of his sonship with God and the Word of God has been stamped as the word of man. Thus, of course, it was deprived of its authority and thus of its judging and sifting power over the hearts of men and paved the way for a "rational" religion of mankind.

That the God and prince of this world powerfully promotes the striving for a world unity church, whose doctrine puts man in the center, pushes the interests of man into the foreground and paves the way for man to ascend the throne in the religious unity stamp of the future, also in the religious currents outside of Christianity, is not surprising, since the nations sacrifice what they sacrifice to the demons anyway and are thus more accessible to demonic wisdom from the very beginning.

As one symptom (among many others), I am citing here only a short press note that has just come to my hand while writing these lines.

The Evangelical Press and Information Service (EPI) brings in number 8 of the 1st volume of January 15, 1948, under the headline

"A modern Religion der Friedliebe" the following news: The religious community of the "Bahai", which has its origin in Persia, has come before the public these days in Frankfurt with a series of events in order to bring its thoughts of world brotherhood and the unity of mankind to the German public.

Since the founding of their religion in the middle of the last century, 4 million people in 83 countries have declared themselves to be Bahai. In Germany, the number is still small, but it has almost doubled since the end of the Second World War. The Bahai faith makes demands of great political and social topicality: a world government, a world language and a world arbitration court to settle international differences, education for all, socialization, research into truth and agreement between religion and science. The starting point is the idea of the unity of humanity. The world is one homeland. All people should be brothers and sisters to each other. It is the teaching that led Tolstoy to confess that the creator of the Bahai faith, the Persian nobleman Baha'u'llah' possessed the key to unlocking the secrets of the universe.

The Bahai do not know any fight against other confessions. Baha'u'llah' has stated that the prophets of all religions taught the correct wisdom for their time. But religion is progressive; truth is changing. This insight is at the core of the Baha'i's loyal stance. Nevertheless, they have been persecuted: the Bahai have suffered 25,000 victims in Persia, and Hitler also fought these believers of peace and equality of all people; in 1937, the religious community was banned in Germany.

The Bahai do not know a "religious community" in the sense of other churches. They have no churches (only one temple each in Chicago and Ukraine) and no priests. (Dena)

Note especially in this note the citation of Tolstoy and his confession that the creator of the Baha'i faith, the Persian nobleman Baha'u'llah' possessed the c h l u s e l t o e x p e r i e n c e t h e g e n e r a l s o f t h e U n i v e r s u m s .

However, there is something of "obsession" here, namely an obsession in the direction that 2 Cor. 11, 14. 15 and others show us.

Further, note how, on the one hand, there is room for all religions and prophets of all times and peoples, but on the other hand, the truth is made out to be unchangeable, so that the One, the unchangeable, Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and forever, is no longer the truth, but one among many among the countless seekers of truth. The testimony of God: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," is thus stamped as a lie (1. Joh. 5, 9-12; 2, 22.23;

4, 1-6), and the self-testimony of the Son would only be self-assertion. The reason for the judgment of the high council, that Christ had to die because he had made himself the Son of God, would then be justified.

The path of demonic wisdom is also followed by other movements. In spiritism and occultism, in card-reading and fortune-telling, in astrology and in many religiously camouflaged attempts of all kinds, one looks for "the key to the discovery of the truth of the universe.

Truly, whoever has eyes to see, recognizes the similarity with that first experiment in paradise, the result of which was to be for man: "You will be like God and know what is good and evil." Already at that time the serpent promised man "the s c h l u s e l t o e x p e r i e n c e t h e g o o d s o f U n i v e r - s u m s " and today more than ever 1. Tim. 4, 1. 2. applies.

In order to "align" all these movements with Christianity, it is necessary to take away its revelatory character and thereby stamp it as a human religion among many others. Therefore, Satan must first make sure that the word of God loses its authority. The first question of the old serpent is therefore again and again: "Should God have said...?" - In this way of critical doubting and doubtful criticism, in the guise of scientific research, the two-edged sword is deprived of its sharpness, by which alone it is the right judge and arbiter of the thoughts and attitudes of the heart, the divine criticos (Heb. 4:12, 13). But man's only weapon with which he can overcome the tempter is thereby knocked out of his hand, as the Son of God did in the wilderness when he reproached Satan: "Again, it is also written!" Faith comes from preaching, and preaching comes from God's Word (Rom. 10:17). Where the Word loses its divinity, preaching also loses its divine mandate and faith its divine foundation. This clears the way for m e n s c h e n w o r t a n d m e n s c h e r r i g i o n .

To compensate for the loss of substance within the Christian churches, the form was emphasized all the more loudly. It is true that this form of godliness has largely lost its power, so that the true believers turn away from it according to divine instruction (2 Tim. 3, 5). The masses, however, are sought to be religiously interested and to elevate church life by embellishing the service, by expanding the liturgy, by richly decorated vestments, by statistical proof of top performance and success in all areas, by tighter organization, by mass marches as displays of power and influence, and by strengthening the hierarchy. All registers of mass psychology and mass suggestion are pulled.

More and more obviously, the various churches and free churches are already following this path today. The silent pressure on hearts and consciences is effectively supported by clever advertising, suggestive propaganda, and the use of all available power possibilities, which find their expression in increasing ordinances and regulations and decrees, in resolutions and decrees, in working

communities and world covenants, and prepare imperceptibly but constantly the priestly rule. It is irrelevant whether it is a pastor's church or a preacher's church or a covenant. The character of the biblical original church has been largely lost and the church-politically oriented system has taken its place.

He who does not know that the unbelieving world cannot fall away from something that it does not possess, but that the deception is in the name of the Church, and that the deception is in the name of God, does not even realize the greatness of the satanic deception organized with all the signs and wonders of the lie, and is in immediate danger of being included in the seduction that threatens even the elect.

Among the three ways to the Una Sancta mentioned so far, the way of the d e m o - n i s c h e w h i c h i s t h e most obvious. Satan's aim in promoting the world unity church is not to establish the reign of God and Christ, but to prevent it. He needs the greatest possible r e l i g i o n o f all times to prepare the world domination of the Antichrist.

To whom the narrow way of the elect, whose number according to the Lord's own word is only small, does not seem to be in keeping with the times (and indeed it is not), the biblical orientation is lost and he is pushed all by himself onto the broad way of the many. He may still hold to the Word himself, but insofar as he goes the way of the mass church, he unwittingly supports the preparatory development and expansion of the world church of the Last Days, in which everyone has a place, except the church of the cross.

The church of Jesus Christ walks with its Lord and Head the path of suffering and death that leads to the divine

Glory leads. Everything that can be achieved through the means of o r g a n i s a t o r i c a l c o m m u n i c a t i o n o f t h e

M a s s e s , w h i c h i s n o t w h i c h h a s a m o u n t o f t h e w o r k a n d a n d t h e a d m i n i s t r a t i o n o f t h e w o r k a n d t h e a d m i n i s t r a t i o n o f t h e w o r k a n d t h e a d m i n i s t r a t i o n o f t h e w o r k a t i o n o f t h e w o r l d , serves to eliminate the cross walk.

But to abandon the way of the cross and suffering means: to forego the solution. Faith can never make this renunciation. Therefore, we reject this path of demonic wisdom even more decisively than the other two creaturely paths.

4. the path of divine wisdom

Faith does not need human foundations. It does not look at the visible, the temporal, but at the invisible, the eternal (Hebr. 11, 1; 2. Cor. 4, 18). His confidence comes from the faithfulness and immutability of God Himself. He lets him act, and he trusts him that he will lead the work that has been started in the individual believers and the entire church to its full goal and end. For he, who said that the gates of hell should not overwhelm his church, has also promised that he will build this church all his life.

He calls people out of the world by his word and baptizes them by his spirit into the one church, which is his body. Just as the procreation of a child is a sacred mystery of the parents, which is fulfilled without the help of foreign hands, so the Spirit of God blows wherever he wants and begets people from death into life. Thus, everyone who is born of the spirit is born (John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

So as they are being of the Geisteborn are not many original begiven by God. His birth out of the being of God can therefore neither be brought about nor even prevented by a creature or an earthly organization. God Himself is the begetting through His Spirit. Children of God are born out of God. He gave them His life and thus made them partakers of His nature, and He Himself, through this communication of His Spirit, added them to the church of sons, the church of Christ, which is His body (1 Cor. 12:13, 27; Eph. 3:6; 4:4; Rom. 12:5).

As little as a creature can add us to this church, just as little can a creature exclude us from it. No one can come to the Father without the Father drawing him (John 6:44, 65; 14:6; 10:20; 17:6-10). And God is faithful who has called us into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1, 9). But His gifts of grace and callings are incalculable (Rom. 11, 29). In all of this no one is His co-counselor (Rom. 11, 34-36; Eph. 1, 4, 11; 2. Tim. 1, 9). The Father has given to the Son all those who are His. Among them all is the church of sons, the church of saints, the riches of the glory of the inheritance that the Father gave to the Son (Eph. 1, 18).

To all that the Father gave Him, the Son gave the same doxa, the same glory of being that the Father gave Him (John 17:22). It consists in the communication of the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of glory (1 Pet 4:14). He communicates the life of the Father and the Son to us (Joh. 7, 38, 39; 4, 14). Whoever does not have Christ's spirit is not His (Rom. 8, 9).

The their habilitiy in the World of God and Christi is the groundlage of Einstruction (Jn 17:22). The encondition of Glaub-
disting the Geist (Eph. 4, 3). It was established and brought about by God Himself when He poured out His Spirit and love into our hearts (Rom. 5, 5). Through this He created the unity of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13).

The enessign of Genstand the Geschöpf nication and the Geschapt and the Geschafft. God tlical, wesen have struction
on scan only be Godt worke. And he will do it!

But for us, who were placed in this unity of the spirit, in this living communion of beings with Himself and His Son Jesus Christ, it should be our most sacred concern to present this God-given position to the world in a way that corresponds to the dignity of our calling (Eph. 4:1) and to preserve it in its original purity (Eph. 4:3). This is the will of God and at the same time the last great longing of the Son.

But the will of God is fulfilled through faith that works through love (Gal. 5, 6; 1. Tim. 1, 5).

So we receive our position in the church through the communication of the Spirit, who is a Spirit of the

Being glory, which is truth. The representation of this truth happens through love. It holds the truth, the essential (Eph. 4, 15). When were the was the
elevention of love, we bring alle to the Christushin, and where the general development (Eph. 4, 15 basic text).

This is the good way to Una Sancta.

When the Lord was about to finish His work on earth and was about to leave this world and go to the Father (Jn 13:1), He gave His own who were in the world and were to remain here after His departure and continue His work, a final demonstration of His love and a one-time command for the service they were to perform. He showed them His love in the example of the washing of the feet, and as a final command He told them to love one another with the same love with which He had loved them (John 13:34). By this love the world would know that they were His disciples (Jn 13:35), and from the continuation of this love would come the fruit that they would bear for Him (Jn 15:8-12).

After telling them this, he talked to the Father about them again. In a last, wonderful, high priestly prayer, he presents to the Father that which alone could guarantee and secure their unity. But he does not ask the Father for them alone,

but also for all those who believe in him through their word, that they may be one, just as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, so that they also, the believers, may be one in them both, so that the world may know that the Father has sent the Son (John 17:20-23). In the vision of unity, the world should recognize the sending of the Son by the Father and believe in him.

V o l l e n d e d unity ! Not theoretical unity! Not only recognition of a doctrine of unity, but its full realization and representation.

Has Christianity fulfilled this one commandment of love and allowed itself to be perfected into one, so that the world has the one and only goal upon which it can believe and recognize that Christ is not some human founder of religion, but the Son of love whom the Father sent into the flesh?

With deep pain we must say: No! We have failed! The many who call themselves by his name have split into hundreds of churches and free churches, communities and denominations (denominations), and even those who took his side in conscious surrender of life are divided into countless circles, groups and little groups.

Is it any wonder when the world asks, "Of your hundreds of Christianities, which variety is the right one?" -

There is more truth in this irony of the world than in such a Christianity that became a mockery, because.

The world confirms with its criticism the fact that a God of life cannot be where there is no life.

Certainly, most representatives of any confession will defend their system and claim that truth is with them. But they understand by truth a doctrine, that is, a thing, whereas truth in the sense of Scripture is the essential, and that is only in the essential, the One who carried the immortal essence of God in Himself and brought it into this world. He could say, "I and the Father are one." Therefore also he could testify of himself, "I am the truth." Truth, therefore, is not a thing, but a person. Satan, however, the god and prince of this world, as ruler over things and things seeks to objectify, to materialize everything. In this way, he also brings Christians to consider truth as a thing and to argue about it objectively. Thus, Christianity, which disputes about doctrines, becomes a pious materialism, and it carries the germ of death just like any other materialism.

L e b e n a b i l i t y i s c o m p l e t e d l i v e , a n d l i v e i s c o m p l e t e d l i v e .
Where there is no love, there is no life, because this arises only from the union

of lovers. And where there is no life, there is no love, because love is possible only among the living. One is not without the other. Where there is love, there is also life, and where there is life, there is also love. That's why St. Hildegard says, "Where there is greater life, there is greater love, for there is God and His glory."

But the Scripture testifies: "The world is in life" (Eph. 4:15). The liberties cannot be completed. No matter how opinionatedly one may argue and consider oneself to be as orthodox as one likes, truth exists only in love, for love is the essence of God; and truth, the essence, is only in essence. Therefore, without love there is no truth, but only truth in love. For Christ, the Son of love, is truth, and he can be held only in love. Therefore he also testifies in his word that all faith without love is n i c h t s (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Even if you know all the secrets and move mountains and give your possessions to the poor and allow yourself to be burned as a martyr, without love everything is useless. Only he who remains in love remains in God and God in him, because God is love (1 John 4:16).

Because most of the so-called confessors of Christianity do not have and practice love, they also do not have the truth, namely the essence. Even though they may have a vision of God, they deny the power that is only in God's will, in love (2 Tim. 3:5). Such pseudo-Christianity is a greater abomination to God than the cold, dead world. He spews it out of his mouth.

Th e b e c a u s e a n d t h a t t h e l i v e o f C h r i s t i a n w o u l d b e l i k e t h e l i v e o f t h e F a t e r i n h e r, t h e S o h n w a s, t h e r e b r i n g w i l l b e t h e c o m m i s s i o n w h i c h t h e v e l o w e d e v e l o p m e n t i n g w i t h t h e F a t e r a n d t h e S o h n e a n d t h e i r e v e l o p m e n t a t i o n .

Where this perfect unity does not exist, one does not speak of love and not of truth, i.e. beingness. God is the essence and cannot be banished into forms and expressed by formulas. In the same way as he only gained essential form in the Son and was made known by him, so also today his essence can only be represented essentially. Where love was poured into human hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5, 5), His essence is present, His divine nature is present (2 Petr. 1, 4). And all who have this same nature within them long for one another, strive together in the holy impulse of the love poured into their hearts. The one Spirit unites them into one body, the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). All are members one of another and mutually united by the same, one Spirit, as they are with the Head. T h a t i s t h e e s s e n c e, b e c a u s e i t i s t h e t r u t h, a n d t h e S p i r i t i s t h e e s s e n c e, i s t h e t r u t h (1 John 5:6).

Those who seek unity of form strive for uniformity. This is about the method of Wesenhaft. In place of the organism, in which many diverse members are held together and guided by a life force from within, it sets the organization, in which like entities are united by a form from without. Thus the organization is under a dead letter law; the organism is guided by a spirit of life.

Are we an organism? - Are we guided by the spirit of life from God? - Are we, together with all the people and God's servants, the living entity of the Church, the body in which the Father made his dwelling with the Son and is also present in essence? -

God, the Wesenhaft, would not let himself be affected by anything. What he has not wrought himself does not exist before him. He does not judge people by their affiliation to any Christian church or denomination, but by this: "Whoever has the Son of God has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12). "Whether Christ I have, there or not" (Rom. 8, 9); for the Spirit is the seal of God on His property, on His children (Eph. 1, 13). Sons are only those who have the spirit of sonship and can cry out, "Abba, dear Father!" (Rom. 8, 15).

The sons of a father, who all call the One who gave them life father, cannot say that they are not brothers among themselves! In the same way, all those who have God as their Father are children of God and brothers among themselves. There are no half-brothers, no stepsiblings. Whoever loves the one who gave birth also loves the one who was born of him (1 John 5:1). He who does not love his brother is in love with God (1 John 3:14). And whosoever shall say that he loveth God, and hateth his brother, the same is a liar: for how can a man love God, whom he seeth not, except he love his brother whom he seeth? (1 John 4:20). Here we know that we have entered into life from the dead, because we love the evil one (1 John 3:14).

Do you love your brothers, i.e. all those whom God has brought into your life through His God and who are your children? - Make no mistake. God does not understand by brothers the members of your religious community! He uses this name to refer to His children who have His life in them. Do you love all of them exactly as you love the Father and the Son, and as the Father and the Son both love each other, and as both love you? - If not, then ask yourself if you are not in death, for he who does not love his brother remains in death. And by love God does not mean your affection for those who belong to your circle, but the love with which he loved us and which he poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. It is the same love with which Christ loved the church and gave himself for

it. By this we have known love, that he laid down his life for us; therefore we also are guilty of laying down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16). This is love in deed and in truth (1Jn 3:18).

Will we not at last truly repent of the terrible blasphemy of the name of Christ by Christians who call themselves by His name but do not represent His essence, His love? -

To all those, however, who honestly repent of this, we offer the life of the God Christ in die Bruderhand. We do not want to form a special circle. There are more than enough of them. But we follow with a loving heart Christ and with any brother the Christian Communication with the Heiligh. We do not separate ourselves from anyone who bears the mind of Christ and is His conscious property. Rather, we yearn to practice love to all people, beyond all human barriers.

Cognitive differences do not separate us. Differences of form do not hinder our love. Only the common love that was in Christ must be present (Phil. 2, 5).

For us there are no fences. Because the Word testifies that He has taken away the dividing wall of the fence, we no longer recognize fences. Let others build fences, or repair and strengthen old fences, and thereby sin against the brethren, - we follow over all fences. They are Una Sancta, they are a hill, allowed, christly church, member the community of the hillity. We belong to it; we are with it in word and in deed, in deed and in deed. With all who belong to it through the same, one Spirit from God, we are united in indissoluble unity, and we are obliged to live with them in the bond of love.

Close

The god and prince of this world, Satan, wanted the establishment of the dominion of the Son of Man and the

Prevent the coming of the kingdom of God at all costs. Therefore, at the beginning of the Lord's activity, he tried to deceive Him by trickery, and when he did not succeed in this temptation, he proceeded from Gethsemane to Golgotha with all the means of the power of darkness (Luk 22:53).

These two direct encounters of the Son of God with the prince of this world are the two sharpest warning signals that the Father Himself has placed on our path

of faith. Satan is trying the same methods with which he tried to trick the Son of God and then eliminate him by force on us as well.

After the baptism, in which Christ testified his willingness to go to death for the will of the Father by his immersion in the Jordan, the river of death, he was immediately led by the spirit into the desert, so that he would be tempted by the devil. There it was to be tested and proven whether he would go the way of earthly wisdom or the way of (his own) soul wisdom or the way of demonic wisdom or the way of divine wisdom.

Satan waited until the situation was most favorable for him. After 40 days of fasting, the Son of God was hungry. He had the same body of flesh as we do. It was on this weakest and most vulnerable part of man that the devil began his art of seduction.

"Sprich, dass das Steine sich Brot!"

Bread for the body. This has remained Satan's first point of entry into man's world to this day. Whoever loosens the bread, has the mass! After all, they go their way according to the motto: "What bread I eat, that song I sing!"

There is no working for the world development of the End of economic nation is that the bread of the nation is in the hands of the people. Anyone with eyes to see can already clearly see the tendencies in this direction today. There is hardly a more convenient and effective way than to simply exclude the defaulters and "non-disciplinarians" from the allocations of the charitable gifts of the Christian relief organizations. The keystone of this way is written in Rev. 13, 16.

The second stage of the temptation in the wilderness was to get the Son to make a show by throwing himself down from the pinnacle of the temple.

Even the ancient Romans knew that in addition to bread, people also wanted games for their mental amusement and satisfaction. Panem et circenses!

The devil knows this even better. That is why he sought to make the son of God perform this act, through which he would bring the people's souls into high tension.

The world unity church of the end times will also have to offer world theater from the highest temple pinnacles of human art and culture in order to be sure of the masses' approval.

The third stage of the temptation in the wilderness consisted in putting the Son of God into the intoxication of power of a world ruler. After the bread for the life and the pleasure for the soul, now the lust for power of the God came.

The original sin of Satan was self-conceit, the desire to rule over all others (1.Tim.3,6; Is.14,12-14 and others). He also wanted to seduce the Son of God into the same sin.

But the son wanted to serve and not rule.

The world unity church of the Last Days must dominate all areas of public life. It must be the leader in all areas of this world. Her theology, which is constantly at the height of human research, will be "the queen of sciences. Her art will give to all sensual and spiritual pleasure the nobility of religious consecration. Her morality will be rationally the ethos of the natural man, who has thus at last come to full ecclesiastical recognition and confirmation of self-devotion.

In the temple of the end times, man sits on the throne and lets himself be worshipped over everything that is called God. Then the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place, where it should not stand. But the harlot who puts this abomination there is the church of the end times.

Satan's tactics have been the same from the beginning of human history. In the same three areas of body, soul and spirit in which he tempted the Son of God, albeit without success, he successfully tempted the first human couple in Paradise (cf. Genesis 3:6).

The woman saw that the fruit of the tree

1. be good for food,
2. Pleasure would bring for the eyes,
3. Insight.

So:

1. Food for the body,
2. Pleasure for the soul, 3. insight for the spirit.

The devil awakens the same three main instincts in every human being:

1. **Carnivorous,**
2. **Eye candy,**
3. **Pride of life.**

See 1 John 2:16.

The antichristianity of the end times unites these three areas in its worldview and in its way of life and grants people

1. in the way of earthly wisdom the full and unlimited satisfaction of his carnal lust;
2. In the way of spiritual wisdom, the unreserved satisfaction of the lust of the eyes;
3. by the way of demonic wisdom the satisfaction of the pride of life in the erection of the power of the self-chosen world ruler.

Thus, in the end times, the rulers of the earth who go the way of earthly wisdom lend their power to the beast, the Antichrist (Rev. 17:12-14).

The false prophet, who is not concerned with the spiritual renewal of people through Christ, but with the seduction of the masses through mental intoxication, makes the crowd willing to worship the beast with the spell of highest pleasure gain (Rev. 19, 20; 16, 13. 14; 13, 11-18).

But Satan, the chief of demons (Matth. 9, 34; Mark. 3, 22; Luk. 11, 15), who disguises himself into an angel of light (2. Cor. 11, 14) to blind the unbelievers (2. Cor. 4, 4) and if possible to deceive the elect (Matth. 24, 24), prepares the arrival of the Antichrist with all the power and all the signs and wonders of the lie (2. Thess. 2, 9, 10).

The dragon, as well as his earthly tool, the Antichrist, and his master of ceremonies, the false prophet, let all demonic forces work (Rev. 16, 13. 14). The end times are especially characterized by the increased effectiveness of the demons (1Ti 4:1). In the face of them it is necessary to keep one's clothes by special vigilance, i.e. to keep oneself pure from all defilements of body, soul and spirit (Rev. 16, 15; compare also Rev. 7, 14; 12, 11; 20, 4).

This is the h o l l i s h d r e i n g c o n t r i b u t i o n o f t h e E n d : the dragon, the Antichrist and the false prophet, who will be judged together in the lake of fire after a short triumph (Rev. 19, 20; 20, 10).

Thus, the wisdom of this world comes to nothing (1 Cor. 1:19-24; 2:6-8). The wise men of this world think that they have found the solution to the problems of world history in their principles of this worldliness. It is very difficult for man to get rid of this delusion. That is why not many wise men come to faith (1 Cor. 1:26).

The world with the V a t e r and seeks to break away from the divine ordinances (Ps. 2:1-3) in order to go its own way as it sees fit; but its own wisdom leads it to ruin.

But also the soulish man, the artist and poet, the aesthete and idealist and a l l e i r g e n d w i t h m e n s c h e n c u l t t r e i b e n d s , w h o are conscious of their noble humanity, can only with difficulty place themselves in obedience of faith under the revealed will of God and consciously go the way of the folly of the cross; T h e f l e i s c h w i d e s t h e G e i s t , and the spiritual man, the psychikos, does not hear what is of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14). Cor. 2:14). That is why not many noble people penetrate to faith (1 Cor. 1, 26). How can those believe who take honor from one another (Joh. 5, 44).

Those who came to power and dominion in this world are already strengthened above average in their self-confidence by their position and are thus virtually pushed onto the path of self-exaltation on which Satan fell (1. Tim. 3, 6; Is. 14, 12-14). It is very difficult to renounce honor, prestige, power and dominion and to voluntarily go the way of self-abasement, service and sacrifice. Only one did this in a perfect way: Christ. S a t a n a b e r w i d e s t h e S o h n . Therefore, it is very difficult for the powerful of this world to take a different course than the god and prince of this world, the devil; and that is why only so few powerful people penetrate to faith (1 Cor. 1:26).

The assembly of the begotten of the Spirit, the Ecclesia of the living God (1 Tim 3:15), whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20), consciously follows the way of the cross. Through the cross the world is crucified to her and she to the world (Gal. 6, 14). Christ lives in her (Gal. 2, 20; Eph. 3, 17; Phil. 2, 5-8; 3, 7-14; Cl. 1, 27).

He suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us also go out to him outside the gate and bear his reproach. For we have no lasting city here, but the one to come we seek (Heb 13:12-14; 2Co 6:14-18; 2Ti 3:5; Rev 18:4).

In the new, open world, where God lets the nations go their own way (Acts 14:16; Romans 1:18-32, especially verses 24, 26, 28), the people of God have no home in this world. They are pilgrims and strangers down here. Their citizenship is above in the light (Phil. 3, 20. 21). Therefore they do not seek the honor and recognition of the world, not even of the religious world, which is also a part of the world according to the principles of man, but they seek what is above, where the Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God (Col. 3, 1-3). They have no part in the agglomerations of the masses for the attainment of their own m e n s c h - h i t s z i e l e o f G l a u b e s g e h o r s a m . From the building of the city of Babel

and the tower whose top was to reach to heaven to make a name for itself, through the founding of all world empires away, the Babylonian, Medopersian, Greek, Roman (also the Roman Empire of the German Nation) and all attempts of earthly upstarts to found a giant empire that was to serve as a stepping stone to the world unity empire of the Last Days, up to the appearance of the antichristian empire itself, they have always been only tolerated among the masses of the people of this world. As Abraham had to go out of the world in order to establish his calling and election and to become a bearer of blessings for others, so also today the *e c c l e s i a*, *H e r a u s g e n e s*, goes its way of alienation among all nations and religions and systems and confederations. Their faith and walk among the nations are placed solely on the will of God as He has made it known to us in the Son. That is why the church is perceived as a foreign body among all nations, and it itself knows this and goes its way of alienation and pilgrimage consciously and clearly as the way of God and the way of divine wisdom, knowing that none of the princes of this eon has recognized this wisdom, which is predestined for our glory (1 Cor. 2:6-16). It is a way of rejection with the rejected one, the Christ, to whom they preferred the murderer Barrabba, only to impose their own will, even their own religious will, as embodied in the high priests, scribes, Pharisees and elders. It is the way of the cross, which *v e r a l l e s t r u c t i o n s* of man without *G o t t a l s t o r i t y* and is therefore hateful to the natural man. All people of faith, all those called out, must experience this hatred in themselves. They are planted with their Lord and Head to the same death (Rom. 6, 3. 4), but thereby also called to the same glory (Col. 3, 4).

"But the sufferings of this present time are not worthy even to be compared with the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:17-23).

"For as the Father hath highly exalted the firstborn, the Christ, above all heavens, and above all principality, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:20-23).... ,
"a l s o a u c h , the members of the church of his body! He has also raised us up and made us sit with Christ in the heavenly places" (Eph 2:1-6).

The partakers of His sufferings and His shame are also His glory, *C h r i s t i d o x a* (2 Cor. 8:23).

Therefore, let us go out to Him outside the *L a g e r* and bear His reproach! (Heb 13:12-14). Let us endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they may not only be saved, but may obtain the glory that is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:10-12). And let us do this with fear (Col. 1:24-29).

This path through life to glory is the path of the one whom God made wisdom for us (1 Cor. 1:30). But the wisdom of God is a mystery revealed by the Christ of glory, and this hidden wisdom God ordained before the eons for our glory (1 Cor. 2:7, 8).

To those who go this way, God has prepared that which no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and which has not entered into the heart of man.

But to us He has revealed it through His Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-16).

So let's go back to him!

Final words

One remains

Behind all life, death sounds day and night,
and the powerlessness to banish it is the misery of life.
Man may walk brightly through earthly time,
over each of his steps stands: transitoriness.

May we begin a thousand times the number of works,
they must all finally come to an end.
If the traces of our work still announce happiness for a long time -
once the last foreboding sinks back into nothingness.

The long lines of generations sank into the dust;
Glory of thrones and crowns was robbed of rust;
The splendor of rich cities burned in the night;
Princes fell, empires vanished with their splendor.

What people strived to create, custom and culture,
everything that beautified the world, was only for the fire.
Great spirits' highest struggle, art and science,
In the changing tides of time are swept away again.

One remains, when world and space and time disappear without a trace:
Jesus Christ yesterday, today and forever.
The creative power of life is indissoluble,
brought into the world by the Son of eternal love.

Once after all madness darkness and death gray,
He will build His kingdom full of light and eternal clarity.
The deepest longing of all beings will be completely satisfied,
and from every human face God's image shines.

K.G.

Prayer

Lord, grant me one thing in my life,
In my walk through this earthly world:
That immortality shines through
me completely And
temporality never holds me captive.

Let me not waste the strength of my longing On
things that are doomed,
And direct my soul's longing for home To
You Yourself - far beyond space and time.

Protect me from deceitful appearances,
From all that perishes in the judgment of the world!
Let my love overflow,
On all that is in Your image!

K.G.

Life worth living

Where truth does not dwell in the bottom of the heart,
the deepest being is not healthy.

Where love does not guide the whole being,
life is only an empty appearance.

Where the spirit does not lead, guide and drive,
all existence remains only dead form.

He who did not find his origin in God, did
not yet overcome his dichotomy.

Only where God poured into one heart,
time and eternity flowed together.

Where eternity reaches into time,
life becomes immortality.

And this life alone is
worthy of being lived by us.

K.G.

Only when we finally leave everything

Only when we finally leave everything
that is not pleasing to You, O Lord,
the deceptive work begins to fade, with
which the lying prince of the world
wants to bind us in a thousand ways,
in order to snatch us away from the grace
into which God has placed us.

Only when we finally leave everything,
Sin's dark undertow foams,
We are able to hate the lust,
Which oh so often deceived us.
Then the light is born in us,
to which God has chosen us,
the salvation that never deceived anyone.

Only when we finally leave everything
that does not praise and honor our Lord,
And lovingly embrace Him alone,
Who desires our whole heart,
His goodness' victory and blessing will flow
to us in all our ways,
our deepest being will be transfigured.

Only when we finally let go of everything,
Do we experience what grace means. The
splendor of wealth, the noise of the streets
no longer
enchant
our spirit.

Only those who lose themselves completely in God,
The Lord can lead them to fullness,
Where He praises the Father with us.

A.H.

Only you!

I lift my empty hands To You,
O Father, who loves me,
You know my woe and know the end,
It is You who gives me everything,
For that which I procure for myself,
Has not endurance nor comfort nor strength.

I carry all my anxious longing,
Lord, before your holy face.
How often hot tears cloud the
brightness and light of tired eyes.
What does not come from you, O Jesus,
does not please me, never pacifies me.

I place spirit and body and soul
In your hands, to your heart.

What I choose willfully,
That pulls me staggering downward.
Perfect gifts flow only from
Your grace light nature.

Therefore I will leave everything else,
I want you, only you alone.

In your loving embrace
Rests all my happiness and bliss.
You are my life and my salvation,
My earthly and my eternal part.

A.H.

Heb 13:8

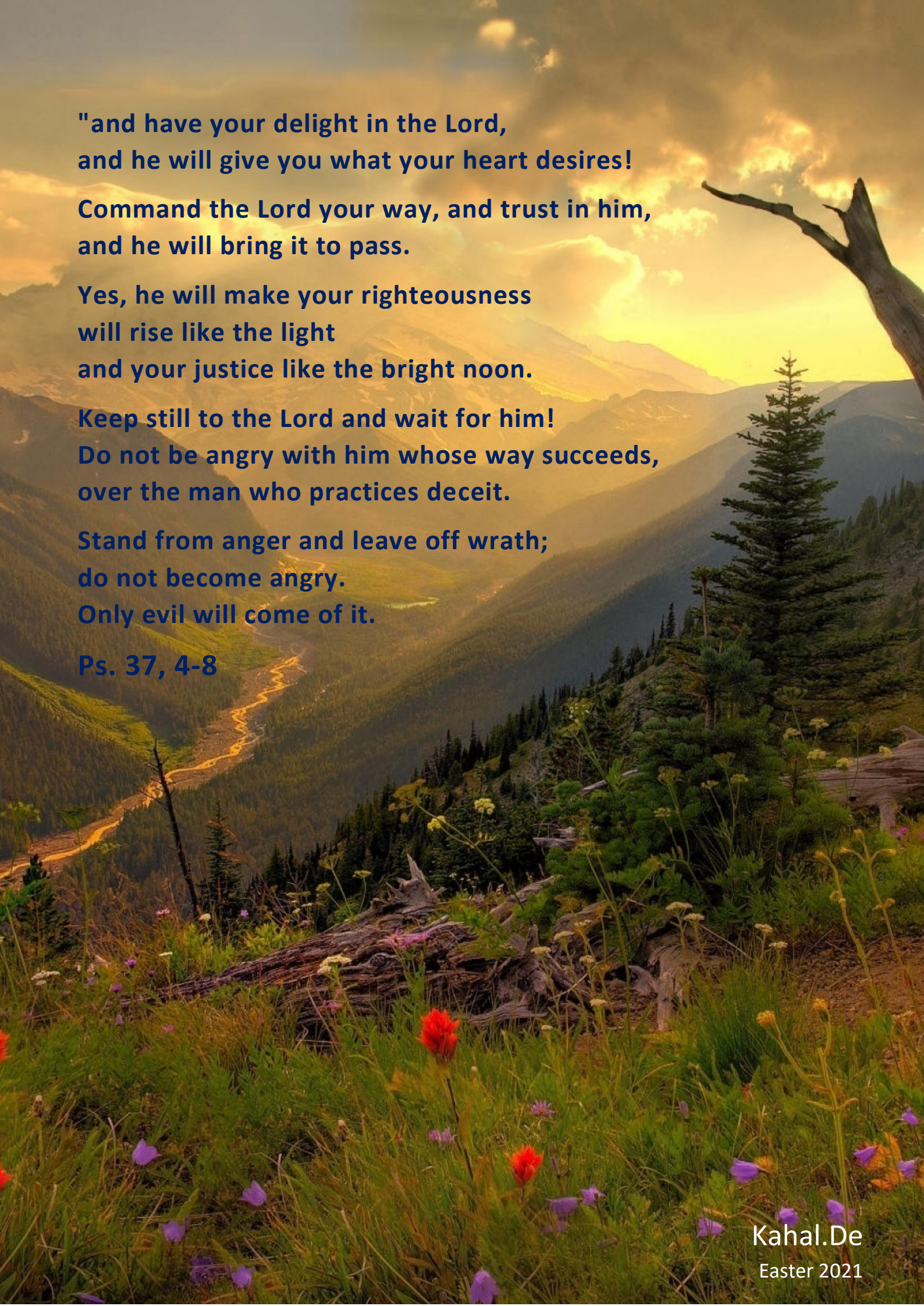
Jesus Christ is the same,
Yesterday, today, forever!
All the heavens' vault of splendor,
Wank, depart, and break; -God
will control every evil
And renew the whole world
More glorious than ever,
As His mouth once implored.

God's word is never broken.
Victorious are His Son and Spirit.
He will do what He has promised,
And carry out what He has promised.
Glorious, precious and exquisite,
More beautiful than it has ever been,
All stands at the end through
the work of Calvary.

Every mouth will praise Jesus,
Every knee will bow before Him!
Everything is transfigured raised
higher than the cherubim.
Our Lord always remains the same
In love's eternal kingdom
Endlessly shining, great and clear
Yesterday, today, forever.

A.H.

Arthur Muhl said somewhere: "
When I am in a valley, with
high mountains to my left and right and the enemy behind me,
then - there is only one way, forward;
and only one direction to look, upward.



**"and have your delight in the Lord,
and he will give you what your heart desires!**

**Command the Lord your way, and trust in him,
and he will bring it to pass.**

**Yes, he will make your righteousness
will rise like the light
and your justice like the bright noon.**

**Keep still to the Lord and wait for him!
Do not be angry with him whose way succeeds,
over the man who practices deceit.**

**Stand from anger and leave off wrath;
do not become angry.
Only evil will come of it.**

Ps. 37, 4-8